Dream on Monkey Mountain is designed to be sequenced as one might imagine a dream to be sequenced; it is illogical, contradictory, and does not follow typical aspects of spatial and temporal awareness. In order to overcome the loss of reality that a reader might feel when reading the play, Walcott must depend on the language of the dream to give meaning to the message. As a result, Walcott litters his language with puns, metaphors, imagery, extended associations, and symbolism. Of all these stylistic devices, Walcott depends mainly on the use of metaphor to illustrate the key concept in his play: the reclaiming of blackness in order to forge an independent West Indian identity.

In his use of metaphors, Walcott appears to be enticing not only a new, ameliorated perspective of blackness, but also seems to be creating the foundation for a new, individual West Indian identity that is separate from the identity habitually contrived by West Indians and based on Western European culture and influences. The metaphors introduced by Walcott not only attempt to make the familiar concepts unfamiliar, but also attempt to realign traditional notions of whiteness and blackness.

The investigation into Walcott’s reclaiming of blackness will derive its basic foundations from linguistic precedents that have been established regarding metaphor’s powers to institute both semantic change and conceptual change. A review of these theories along with evidence from the play will be presented in order to substantiate the claim that Walcott attempts to tweak the normal associations linked with whiteness and blackness in order to not only reconfigure the definition of these notions, but also to change the actual conceptions that speakers of English have in relation to these terms.

In Walcott’s view, language provides a direct link to one’s identity and, therefore, Caribbean English is capable of providing the West Indies with a unique identity, a true cultural identity. Walcott considers the preservation of the West Indian dialect to be of paramount importance and strongly believes that it needs to be protected from the possibility of its condemnation as mimicry. To Walcott, if the West Indian dialect is fated to be nothing more than mimicry, then the hope of a distinctive West Indian culture is impossible, and Caribbean culture will be meaningless, except perhaps as an image of Western Europe (*Caribbean 7*). According to Walcott (1974), language, within the West Indian dialect, is the image of release that the “new world Negro” will depend on to overcome their “disappointingly ordinary” existence. The ordinary black West Indian, who, according to Walcott, needs to be stirred into bitterness, thence perhaps to action, has the propensity to be as avaricious and as banal as those who had enslaved him. To Walcott, what would deliver the new West Indian from servitude is the possibility of a language that goes beyond the obstructions of mimicry - a language or a dialect
which had the ability and force to invented names for unique cultural perspective and items (Twilight 16-17). For Walcott, what would create this new language and hence a new identity is poetics and unique, inimitable symbols (Caribbean 9-12). Hence, language has the power of creation and the people, like actors, are awaiting this new language (Twilight 17); a language he helps to form through his works; a language which basis is seen in the metaphors used in Dream on Monkey Mountain - the same metaphors that help the main character, Makak, shed his dependence on Western European thought.

Language, with deference to metaphor, is used by Walcott in Dream on Monkey Mountain to approach the problem of cultural identity within the mind of the colonized. In wrestling with this dilemma, Walcott carries on a tradition of post-colonial criticism that was first begun by Naipaul and later by Fanon. For Fanon, identity for the colonized was problematic because all attempts at an individual identity were likely to be seen as nothing less than mimicry (33-34). This process of mimicry was a direct result of colonial indoctrination in which Caribbean men and women were denied an autonomous cultural identity and were forced to find legitimacy through the imitation of Western models (110). Fanon referred to this as the adoption of “white masks” and it finds its corollary in Dream on Monkey Mountain with the white mask that Walcott's character Makak depends on as an inspiration. Like Fanon’s prophecy, Makak’s dependence on the white mask for inspiration only leads him toward madness.

Naipaul is concerned with similar themes and laments the lack of true West Indian history as an indication of a mimicry culture. According to Naipaul, history is built upon achievement and creation, and since nothing had been created in the West Indies, no history can exist. The lack of history in the West Indies is related both to Western influences and the mimicry of Western power structures within the Caribbean, which, according to Naipaul, only defrauds the people of the West Indies (27-29).

These theories, summarized and applied by Walcott in Dream on Monkey Mountain (Hogan 118), come to be symbolized by Walcott’s idea that black West Indians live in a paradoxical world; they are white in the mind and black in the body. This paradox, to Walcott, came into existence at a point in the development of the West Indian culture when the new world black had tried to prove that he was as good as his master, when he should have been trying to show not his equality, but his difference. The result of this approach is that Walcott’s generation of West Indians came to view life with black skin but through blue eyes (Twilight 9). Walcott, however, does not solely blame the Western Europeans for the current identity crisis of West Indians, for, in the Caribbean, everyone is a stranger. According to Walcott, the claim of being African is not the Caribbean inheritance, but a bequest—an inheritance based on their indentured condition upon arrival. The ancestors of today’s West Indians shared in the complicity of slavery and, as a result, there is no clear group on which to exact revenge. Not being able to rationalize a clear policy of oppressor and oppressed (Twilight 10), Walcott looks elsewhere for the future identity of the West Indies and finds that it lies in art, and art to Walcott is language (Twilight 18).
In an attempt to bring about an independent identity for the West Indies in *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, Walcott manipulates the colonizer’s language. In his treatment of the colonizer’s language, Walcott endeavors to produce a new identity for the West Indies using a calculated methodology that envisions not only semantic change, but also conceptual reinvention. In order to demonstrate that Walcott attempts to radically reconfigure language in order to provide the West Indian with a unique expressive ability and the opportunity to develop an isolated identity that is the creation of the West Indian culture and not an instance of mimicry, it will be necessary to ground the argument in linguistic theories that help support Walcott’s premeditated linguistic manipulation. Within this argument are two core assumptions: 1) Walcott is attempting to alter the semantic associations that have been typically coupled with the ideas of whiteness and blackness; 2) within this reassociation of ideas, Walcott is attempting to modify the speakers’ conceptual system. Central to this argument are metaphors, as they have both the proclivity to bring about semantic change as well as the ability to influence conceptual systems.

Semantically, linguistic metaphor involves a transfer through a similarity in sense perceptions. Through metaphor, expressions that are already in use in a language are often usurped, giving rise to new meanings for old words (Anderson 309-310). Stem defines this change of meaning as a habitual modification of the semantic range of the word resulting in the word expanding its references so that it denotes one or more referents which it has not previously denoted in order to express novel ideas (31-34).

With regard to metaphor, this paper will follow a conceptual approach as conceived by Lakoff and Johnson in their book *Metaphors We Live By*. In their examination of metaphor, they claim that the conceptual system that humans use to think and act is fundamentally metaphorical in nature (3). According to their approach, the objective world is not directly accessible, but is constructed on the basis of the constraining influences of human knowledge and language of which metaphors are instrumental in creating. Lakoff and Johnson’s premise is that metaphors are similar to other concepts that govern our thoughts and structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how people relate to one another. Lakoff and Johnson contend that since metaphorical expressions in our language are tied to metaphorical concepts in a systematic way, the surface level metaphors that people utter can be used to study the nature of metaphorical concepts and understand the metaphorical nature of human activities (10-13). According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), because concepts are metaphorically structured, thought processes are conceived in largely metaphorical terms as many concepts are either abstract or not clearly defined by our experience, leading to a dependency on metaphors to understand them (5-6).

Inherent within the discussion of conceptual metaphors is their use in creating meaningfulness in relation to semantics. Lakoff stated that metaphors play a major role in semantics in that they provide a means in which highly structured domains of experience can be used to configure lesser domains of structure (194). This contention is supported by Black, who argued that metaphors can not only lead to semantic change in word meanings, but can also change the relationship between
the primary and secondary subjects and, in doing so, create new knowledge and insight. In this way, metaphors are creative and cognitive instruments that are indispensible for perceiving connections that, once perceived, are then truly present (19-21). Thus, a metaphor can show us how things are in the same way that charts and maps, graphs and pictorial diagrams, photographs and paintings can.

That Walcott uses metaphors in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* as a stylistie trope is evident. That he attempts to use metaphors to challenge and possibly reconfigure the reader’s conceptual system is less apparent. His portrayal of blackness and whiteness can be both within the bounds of current semantic association, while also displaying semantic opposition to conventional English expectations. Walcott often plays with the accepted associations given to blackness and whiteness by inverting their associations or making them less contrastive and dichotomous so that he may later have ground to modify them. Many of the associations that Walcott establishes for blackness and whiteness are in direct contrast with the contemporary associations given to them by the American Heritage Dictionary which defines associations of blackness as being synonymous with those things that are soiled, evil, depressing, gloomy, and sinister and inversely defines whiteness as being associated with fairness, generosity, and purity. In this way, Walcott attempts to defamiliarize language that has been both legitimated and habitualized (Fowler 41). The power of Walcott’s metaphors in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is based on the premise that they can be used to destabilitize language and perception and further deconsolidate what had previously been considered a legitimate area of social knowledge. Walcott uses metaphor as a linguistic practice to resist the tendency of habitualized language and to announce his right to explore other concepts other than those legitimated within the language in order to help formulate an independent identity for the West Indies. In linguistic terms, this exploration into demystifying perception through language is a process known as uncoding—disestablishing the received tie between a sign and a cultural unit—and optionally recoding—tying a newly invented concept to a sign and so establishing its validity (Fowler 42-44). This central questioning of language is part of the role of art as defined by the Russian Formalist Shklovsky, who critiqued language because he maintained that it created habitual perceptions and allowed for a sense of unquestioning automaticity. In order to combat this, Shklovsky looked to art, which he argued recovered the sensation of life and made objects “unfamiliar” again (Fowler 41).

This attempt to make the familiar unfamiliar through metaphor and its use in relation to both semantic change and cultural identity is key to this analysis of *Dream on Monkey Mountain*. This paper will argue that Walcott attempts to reconfigure the accepted conceptual metaphors that English has legitimated for the associations of whiteness and blackness in an effort to ameliorate blackness and help forge a new identity for the West Indies. This paper will examine the metaphors proffered by Walcott in relation to their implied associations and how these associations either sustain conventional associations or differ from the preconceived and accepted associations within the metaphorical conceptions of the language. A conceptual mapping of these associations will be offered as evidence of the semantic and conceptual change and this mapping will be used to further explore
the more intangible themes of the play and the intentions of the author.

The plot of *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is relatively simple compared to the deeper implications explored by Walcott. The drama is based on the dream of the central figure, Makak, who is spending a fitful night in jail. The dream centers around Makak as a sort of Black Messiah on a back-to-Africa mission in search of individual identity. His quest is partially inspired by the apparition of a white woman, as manifested in reality through a white mask, that represents the institutions of Western Europe that have been implemented in the West Indies. At the conclusion of the play, Makak realizes he can only be free to form an independent identity if he kills the white apparition, freeing him from the constraints of Western European culture. The dream ends when Makak beheads the apparition and wakes up.

That Walcott devotes most of his play to exploring the absolute valorization of whiteness and the absolute devaluation of blackness has been recognized (Hogan 107). From the perspective of identity, though, it is important to note that Makak’s complete development and self-actualization, which coincide with his search for identity, are only realized once he recognizes that the white woman is not just an inspiration, but is also symbolic of his continuing and subconscious allegiance to the Western European culture and philosophy which perpetuate and maintain the ideas that blackness is equated with ugliness and blacks with monkeys (Brown 420). For the purpose of this paper, it will be important to first substantiate the claim that Makak and the characters of *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, as symbols of West Indian culture, suffer from a loss of identity and that this loss of identity is related to the influences of the governing Western European culture. It will then be necessary to look at the associations Walcott gives to whiteness throughout the play and how they change diachronically as the play develops and how they relate temporally with the growth of Makak. Conversely, it will also be crucial to look at the associations that blackness is given throughout the play in relation to whiteness and how these associations for blackness change and evolve throughout the play. Both whiteness and blackness will then be reviewed with consideration toward Makak’s creation of self-identity and what the creation of this self-identification implicates.

**Loss of Identity**

The characters in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* are remarkably similar to the theories presented by both Fanon (1965) and Naipaul (1962). They have no history of their own and, as such, they seem to have no culture or identity except that which they mimic from the dominant, Western European culture. Their laws are foreign, their language is foreign, and their institutions are foreign; everything that they have seems to have been borrowed from another country. This is the root of the problem identified by Walcott: how can a people be free and claim to be independent when everything they own, think, and believe is not inherent to their culture or their forbearers? This is the role, then, of Makak—to find a new identity for his people and to start the process of identity creation. For the people Makak attempts to lead have no identity; they have no true names, no heritage, no tradition.
and Makak addresses them as such, “I see you all as trees, like a twisted forest, like trees without names, a forest with no roots” (248).

When Makak is first brought in to the jail and the warden, Corporal Lestrade, asks Makak what his name is, what his race is, and what his religious affiliation is, Makak replies that he has forgot his name; that his race is tired, and, with the assistance of the other prisoners, states that his religion is Cat’olique (219). Lestrade summarizes Makak’s confusion, “You forgot your name, your race is tired, your denominational affiliation is Catholic” (220). In doing so, Lestrade underwrites one of the major roles that he has in the play; to reveal the cultural emptiness of the West Indians and confirm their lack of identity. Lestrade later pinpoints the cause of identity crisis within the West Indian community in a Fanonian sense when Makak is put on trial and claims that he is inspired by the white apparition, his muse. To this Lestrade responds “It is this rage for Whiteness that does drive niggers mad” (228). Later when touring the market place, Lestrade tests the will of the vendors by challenging the observable through the mislabeling of items for sale (i.e. calling a melon a paw paw). The vendors agree with his pronouncements and Lestrade says, “I would like to see them challenge the law . . . but they paralyzed with darkness” (261). In this way, Walcott displays the identity crisis that most West Indians suffer from. They have no true sense of self, no name that they can call their own, no religion that was not borrowed, and no will with which to challenge the decrees of the Western European culture.

The ultimate fear of never having an identity, as theorized by Fanon and put into practice in Dream on Monkey Mountain by Walcott, is madness, which seems to be the path that many of Walcott’s characters are destined for. Makak defines himself once as going mad (232) and is defined by two other prisoners and potential converts as mad;

Souris: So how is the king?
Tigre: Mad like a ant. (293)

Lestrade is also prone to madness and, as he begins to question his own origins and identity, he realizes that although he appears to be going mad, he isn’t because his mind and his identity were never his to begin with:

Lestrade: My mind, my mind, what’s happened to my mind?
Basil: It was never yours.
Lestrade: Then if it’s not mine, then I’m not mad. (297)

Ultimately, Walcott gives the reader the sense that West Indian culture is not truly West Indian, but an imitation of Western European culture. West Indians, then, have no true identity that they can call their own, or even an identity that accurately reflects their lives or their experiences. Walcott squarely places the blame for this on whiteness and its clouding effects on the mind and on identity. Initially, Makak is seen, if not exactly to admire and accept whiteness and its function in West Indian society, to at least gather inspiration from it and to see
it as beautiful and illuminating. Here a paradox occurs: whiteness, in the form of the white apparition, serves as a muse for Makak's back-to-Africa movement and also as the thief of Makak's identity. Whiteness then, is both responsible for Makak's eventual freedom, but paradoxically responsible for his confinement. In the end, Makak rejects whiteness by beheading the white apparition in a mock trial (along with all the other figures responsible for enabling the dominance of Western European ideals) and it is only through this metaphorical denunciation of whiteness that Makak is able to come to terms with his own identity and begin the challenge of constructing a new one.

Makak, while not the only character to question whiteness in the play, is, however, the one character that is seen to valorize whiteness more than the others. From the beginning, the other characters, such as Souris, Tigre, and Moustique, are revealed to have a patented distrust and fear of whiteness, a fear they eventually pass on to Makak. The process of Makak losing his dependence on whiteness as an inspiration directly relates to the concentrated efforts of Walcott to alter the associations the readers might have with whiteness. As Makak begins to discover his identity and realizes that this identity is locked not within whiteness, but within blackness, there is a noticeable shift in the sentiment of metaphors used for both blackness and whiteness and the associations they might contrive. This shift is linguistically effective as it creates within the reader a feeling of defamiliarization; it is also effective because it allows Walcott to introduce new relationships within words and concepts that are different from those habitually associated with them.

Whiteness

Notions of whiteness in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* are the result of metaphor. The one figure that comes to symbolize whiteness through metaphor more so than any other is the figure of the white apparition. All uses of metaphor, however, that can be associated with whiteness should not be taken to represent the white apparition. Instead the white apparition and all the various metaphors that follow should be seen as representations of Western European culture, and specifically the effect that this governing culture has had upon the identities of West Indians.

Whiteness in the play takes on many predominant metaphors that range in associations. In a Lakovian sense, the metaphors used for whiteness throughout the play can be conceptualized as whiteness that is beauty, whiteness that is inspiration, whiteness that is control, and whiteness that is fear. Perhaps the leading metaphor found throughout the play is the referential use of the moon to signify whiteness. Whiteness as the moon can be understood in many different ways. The phases of the moon can be seen as bringing about the seasons and can relate to the agrarian need to plant crops and reap harvests. In this way the moon can be seen as indicator of change and influence, a formulaic harbinger of growth and rebirth. The moon can also be seen as giving light to the darkness, a relief of sorts against the unforeseeable, a flashlight that cuts through the night. This dismissal of the darkness through moonlight is usually moderated in the play by the presence of either smoke or fog, an indication that the moon, while giving light, is also responsible for creating a certain haze of disorder. Perhaps the most important role of the
moon, with regards to Walcott’s play, is what the absence of the moon symbolizes: the overwhelming darkness. In this sense, the moon as whiteness, can be viewed as a controlling factor in limiting the expansion and development of blackness. However the reader chooses to interpret the moon, it should be recognized that the moon is used by Walcott as a significant metaphor and obviously one that is able to control Makak’s personal identity and estrangement from blackness.

Whiteness is also personified in the play through various other metaphorical structures. For Moustique whiteness represents both fear and control. The fear is seen with the metaphorical use of white spiders to symbolize whiteness. Moustique, who fears spiders, has an encounter with a pregnant white spider that he kills and later realizes, through a more complex metaphor, that the few possible means available to him, as a Black West Indian, throughout his life were all white constructions and related to the same sense of fear that the white spider had instilled in him. In this fashion, whiteness, through metaphor, is shown to be not only terrifying but also controlling. Both Makak and Moustique sum up the sense of fear they find in relation to whiteness as being like a mass of silver needles prickling in their blood.

Besides the metaphorical presentation of whiteness as being a negative influence, Walcott provides many instances where whiteness is seen with benevolent associations. These positive characteristics of whiteness that are found throughout the play allow for the amelioration of whiteness and are often shown through the use of metaphors such as cotton, milk, lilies, clouds, and the white apparition that acts as Makak’s muse.

Makak summarizes whiteness’s various incarnations and associations early in the play when he attempts to describe God, who once spoke to him in the form of a white woman on Monkey Mountain. In his deposition to Corporal Lestrade, Makak alludes to the majority of associations given to whiteness throughout the play—the moon, a mist, a beautiful white apparition, and a spider—when he relates his dream to the court: “I will tell you my dream. Sirs, make a white mist in the mind; make the mist hang like a cloth . . . make it rise from the earth, like the breath of the dead . . . Make the web of spider heavy with diamonds and when my hand brush it, let the chain break” (226-227). In this one line, Makak sums up the power that whiteness has upon the West Indies. Whiteness has a fog-like quality; it is difficult to see and define and its clouding effects create a sense of confusion for those that come into contact with it. It is like the moon when it rises, but it seems to inculcate those things morbid and deathly and has little to do with the moon’s ability to shed darkness and provide illumination. The only hope that the West Indies has is that the Western European culture, in the guise of a spider, will get fat from its own gluttony and become weak enough that its chain of power and influence can be broken.

In contrast to this pejorative metaphorical image of the moon, the moon throughout most of the play is glamorized by Makak. It is the white mask, the tangible evidence of the moon’s existence, which acts as Makak’s inspiration in the beginning of the play. Whiteness is firstly represented by the moon when Tigre envisions Makak “masturbating in the moonlight” (225) and later, when Makak is
describing his muse, he depicts her as “the loveliest thing I see on this earth, like the moon walking along her own road” (227) and later still as “the moon climbing down the steps of heaven” (227). The moon is later mixed in metaphor by Makak with the pejorative clouding effects that whiteness has on blackness and identity. This clouding effect is also used in conjunction with the metaphor of silver needles prickling the blood (first used on page 227) to establish the intuitive fear that a black man must feel toward whiteness. As Makak describes:

Make a white mist in the mind, that mist hang like the cloth from the dress of a woman . . . and I walking through it on my way to the charcoal pit on the mountain . . . a man swimming in smoke and the bandage of fog unpeeling my eyes as I reach this spot I see this woman singing . . . a million silver needles prickle my blood . . . and I behold this woman, the loveliest thing I see on this earth, floating toward me, just like the moon, like the moon walking along her own road. (235)

While Makak views whiteness both euphorically and dysphorically, his business partner Moustique clearly views it as an onus and sees it as a subaltern notion that is meant merely to subjugate those that it commodifies. Walcott uses Moustique’s fear of spiders to metaphorize whiteness as a fertile culture that is capable of breeding fear and submission in those that it acculturates. He does so when he portrays Moustique’s horror of coming into contact with a pregnant, white spider that he subsequently kills:

Moustique: A spider. A spider was on the sack. A big white one with eggs. A mother with white eggs. I hate those things.
Makak: Where it?
Moustique: Look it. Kill it, kill it. [Grabs his hat and pounds it] Salop! Salop! When it pass over my hand, my blood turn into a million needles. (238)

While Makak portends the killing of the spider to be a sign of sinister outcomes, Moustique defends the killing of white spiders in a speech that clearly speaks of the West Indians right to choose their own future without the interference of Western influence: “... every man have to die. It have a million ways to die. But no spider with white eggs will bring it” (239). Moustique will later juxtapose the image of the spider with the image of the moon in a conversation he has with Basil. In this section, Basil demonstrates that Moustique is powerless to make any real decisions because the roads that have been chosen for him are all white roads and all lead to white ends.

Basil: You know where you are?
Moustique: At a crossroad in the moonlight.
Basil: You are standing in the middle. A white road. With four
Moustique later denounces the image of the moon as a muse as it is a hypocritical and fugacious muse at best and one that is full of enmity: "But I look at the moon and it’s like a plate that a dog lick clean, bright as florin, but dogs chase me out of the people’s yard when I go begging" (255).

Moustique, in this sense, is responsible throughout the play with the deconstruction of the laurels of whiteness and the reverse representation of whiteness as something that is destructive, controlling, and insidious. His portrayal of whiteness as being in opposition to the best interests of the West Indies is a guiding force in Makak’s eventual denouncement of whiteness in favor of blackness, but this denouncement is one that Makak reaches slowly, throughout the course of the play.

The first indication that the reader has that Makak is questioning the value of whiteness is when he begins to question whether his identity, as it relates to whiteness, is possible: “I can never reach the moon; and that is why I’m lost” (304). But Makak is not ready to disengage himself from whiteness yet, and, even in the creation of his new kingdom, Makak valorizes whiteness. Makak is fondly called the man “whose plate is the moon at full, whose sword is the moon in its crescent” (309) and his peacefulness is “gentler than cotton,” his voice is a dove, his “eye is the cloud,” and his “hands are washed continually in milk” (310).

It is only at the conclusion of the dream that Makak realizes that the positive associations that he attributes to whiteness are actually the association that are compelling him to act against his own best interests. It is the Corporal who asks Makak to behead the white apparition and destroy the beauty that he associates with it, for it is only through the destruction of the beauty that its power to compel will be lost:

Lestrade: She is the wife of the devil, the white witch. She is the mirror of the moon that this ape look into and find himself unbearable. She is all that is pure, all that he cannot touch... She is lime, snow, marble, moonlight, lilies, cloud, foam, and bleaching cream, the mother of civilization and the confounder of blackness... If you want peace, if you want to discover your beautiful blackness, nigger chop off her head... She is the white light that paralyzed your mind, that led you into this confusion. (319)

At which point, Makak realizes that he has been duped by the beauty of whiteness, and that his own identity can only be realized upon the destruction of whiteness.

The destruction of whiteness for the benefit of blackness as seen with the beheading clearly gives leverage to the idea that, within the play, the amelioration of blackness can only come at the sacrifice of whiteness. While the play’s meta-
Metaphors of whiteness are originally seen to match conventional associations, there is a marked shift between the presentation of whiteness at the beginning of the play and the presentation of whiteness at the end. That is to say that whiteness, within the play, contracts from its ameliorated position to a more pejorative connotation. This shift is necessary in order to logically allow for the significant transformation that the associations of blackness experience unilaterally with those of whiteness, but with a converse development: from pejoration to amelioration.

**Blackness:**

If whiteness in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is the result of metaphor, then it stands to reason that Walcott would depend on metaphor to describe blackness as well. While a multiplicity of metaphors are used to define blackness, there are only a few referents that are used more than once. The predominant metaphors for blackness that are found within the text are animal images, coal, and shadows. These metaphors, and the others found throughout the text, are always seen in relation to whiteness and at first appear to be contained within the auspices of whiteness (alluding that blackness cannot be defined without whiteness).

While there are only a few repeated metaphors within the play, there are many others that share similar associations. In a Lakovian sense, the metaphors used for blackness throughout the play can be conceptualized as blackness that is primitive, blackness that is dependent on whiteness, blackness that is nature, and blackness that is a guiding instrument. Perhaps the leading metaphor for blackness that is found throughout the play is the referential use of coal to signify blackness. Blackness as coal takes on many metaphoric associations throughout the play. It can be seen as being dirty and primeval; it is also used to symbolize the existence of a life similar to that found in hell, as well as symbolizing a nurturing force that brings about healing processes. In the play, coal is uniquely contrasted with elements of whiteness. It is compared to both milk and to diamonds, the latter of which is of interest as coal is the material of which diamonds are created. Coal is also drawn on as a means of support for two of the main characters: Makak and Moustique, both of whom depend on the production and sale of coal for sustenance.

Blackness is also personified in the play through various other metaphorical structures. Shadows are used as a metaphor for blackness—a metaphor that originally associated the West Indies as being only a shadow construction of the European colonizers. Makak later posits that he (as a spokesperson for the West Indies) has created the shadow, not the white man, and that this might be linked to a creation of a self-identity. When he reaches this conclusion, he is then able to guide and instruct his converts, moving freely toward Monkey Mountain for the first time without constraints or fear.

Corporal Lestrade, under the guise of mimicry and acting in his official capacity as law enforcer, is mostly responsible for the maintenance of the blackness as primitive metaphors. He, when he represents the government in his official capacity, constantly refers to the native population as being somehow beneath that of the colonizers, of being primitive beings unrelated to the human genome strain. Lestrade, though, as a mulatto, is neither black nor white, and in portions of the
dream sequence, mostly those in which he has denounced his role as administrator, he can be seen to adopt the furthering of both the pejoration and amelioration of blackness.

For Lestrade, the administer of justice, West Indian blacks are weak minded, primitive, and unevolved. In a direct reflection on the role of Darwinian theory in the lack of evolution among blacks, Lestrade states, “For some of the apes have straightened their backbone and started walking upright, but there was one tribe unfortunately that lingered behind, and that was the nigger” (217). When Lestrade first presents Makak to the court, he does not allow Makak to speak and addresses the court with these words, “I shall spare you the sound of that voice which has come from a cave of darkness, dripping with horror” (222). He continues in the same statement to say that even though Makak is the result of the primitive intellect of the West Indian black, he is a tame and obedient animal (222), after which Lestrade forces Makak to submit to a series of physical commands while the chorus sings a calypso akin to “Monkey See-Monkey Do.” Lestrade also complains often of the compliance of blacks in respect to the man-made institutions of Western Europe. In the market, talking with the inspector, Lestrade states that he “would like to see them (black West Indians) challenge the law . . . but they paralyze with darkness” (261). In these ways, Lestrade the administrator comes to be the character best associated with defining blackness as being primitive and weak-minded. It is likely that Lestrade’s inclusion in the play was for this very reason: to provide a voice Walcott could build upon in opposition. Lestrade, then, is the voice of Western European culture and represents the English language in its truest sense, with all its fallacies and preconceived prejudices, especially those that reaffirm the semantic associations of blackness and whiteness and the duality that is the result.

Walcott also represents blackness as encasing the essence of fear; not only the fear that whites have of blacks, but also the fear that blacks have of their own selves. Moustique paraphrases this fear when he says to a crowd of laborers about to attack him for misleading them into thinking he was Makak, “Die in ignorance! Live in darkness! You don’t know what you want” (271). In essence, what Moustique is saying is that he and Makak are essentially the same person, for there is little difference between the two of them in the eyes of the power structures that control and create images. Within the power structure, one black is no different than another; they are all conceived as one entity, but the West Indian blacks themselves do not recognize this as they are afraid to look inside to notice their own identity. Souris, another character that is in jail with Makak, epitomizes this fear of being not only black, but being black in relation to white:

Souris: When I was a little boy, living I darkness, I was so afraid, it was as if I was sinking, drowning in a grave and me and the darkness was the same, and God was like a big white man, a big white man I was afraid of . . . and that is what they teach me since I small. To be black like coal, and to dream of milk. (290)
A similar awareness of this fear is voiced by Tigre when he compares blackness to coals: “I see people black like coals, twisting and burning in hell” (292).

But blackness is also seen as a natural cogency, an influence that is not strictly dependent on whiteness because it is created by nature, not by man. Makak, when explaining his physical reaction to the sound of whiteness, describes it as “a brown river in flood” (229). And Lestrade, when questioning Makak, alludes to Makak’s testimony that God was not white, but black: “You claim . . . you had taken a photograph of God and all that you could see was blackness . . . that God was not white but black” (225). Moustique reinforces this when before he dies he sees “a black wind blowing, a black wind” (274), which could allude to an opprobrious future, but more possibly to heaven.

Blackness is also metaphorized as being a guiding force or natural energy that allows people to accomplish miracles and find faith in concepts other than whiteness. When Makak heals the sick peasant early in his dream he depends as much on blackness as he does on whiteness to bring about a sweat: “Now I want a woman to put a coal in this hand, a living coal. A soul in my hand . . . We will wait for the moon” (248). Later in the dream, when Makak begins to realize that whiteness isn’t absolutely necessary to guide him to Monkey Mountain he says, “and if the moon go out, I will still find my way; the blackness will swallow me” (286). The last dominant metaphor of blackness found within *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is the metaphor of shadows to represent blackness. The formation of this metaphor rests on the idea of creation and self-identity and upon this question: Are black West Indians merely a shadow of the established whiteness or are they independent bodies that are the creations of the blacks themselves? This is the very question that Makak asks when he states, “I was king among shadows. Either the shadows were real, and I was no king, or it is my own kinglyness that created the shadows” (304). But Makak is quick to counter this argument with the dominant belief that the West Indian black is only a creation of the Western European culture: “We are wrapped in black air, we are black, ourselves shadows in the firelight of the white man’s mind” (304).

Later, after Lestrade the non-administrator has killed Tigre, who was the last remaining character that embodied the spirit of the Western European culture—mainly greed—Makak is told that all that is left is jungle law and that he must press on toward Monkey Mountain. When Lestrade is told that Makak does not know where to go, Lestrade answers, “Put him in front. He’s a shadow now” (306). This reference to Makak as a shadow and a leader establishes that Makak has begun to find his identity, but that it was only through the suppression of whiteness (as seen in the death of Tigre) that Makak, as a shadow, was able to disassociate himself from whiteness in order to discover it.

Eventually this dismissal of whiteness in favor of blackness leads not only to a disavowal of whiteness, but an actual hatred of whiteness and its pernicious effects on the black West Indian. This is seen originally in an exchange between Moustique and Makak:

Moustique: Now a night will come when, because it is white, from
your deep hatred you will want it destroyed.
Makak: My hatred is deep, black, quiet as velvet. (315)

It is interesting to note that Makak refers to his hatred as black and velvet, and that this hatred, defined metaphorically as a blackness, seems to be a productive sort of hatred in that it can be used to destroy the whiteness that has misled Makak for so long. This hatred of whiteness will ultimately lead to Makak beheading the white apparition and discovering his own self-identity.

Discovery of Identity:

The ultimate focus in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is the theme of self-identity and the creation of the same. The ending of the play is an obvious allusion to Makak's tentative steps toward self-realization and eventual identity. Makak, as a representation of the black West Indian, plays a very important role in the notation of shifts between an identity created for a people by the colonizer and the creation of an identity by the culture which it represents. This creation of a black West Indian identity comes about through the death of the white apparition, a metaphor for Western European culture. The radicalness of this change is likely a necessity to defamiliarize the reader from their habitualized associations.

Fox states that Makak must kill the white apparition for three reasons: 1) so he can become self-reliant and forgo his dependency on western culture; 2) so he can come back to the real world and escape his vision with his experiences intact in order to learn from them; 3) so he can escape from his role as tyrant and as Messiah figure, both of which endanger him with their peril and agony (24). Fox does not discuss what this severing of relations might do to Makak or if a complete separation is actually possible. It is clear though that by the end of the play the white apparition has been exposed for what she is: visible. She is not only visible to Makak, but she is also visible to Souris and Lestrade. With her visibility, she loses her influence to inspire; she loses her influence to be mysterious, leading Souris to remark that he can see her "plain as the moon," a deflating and revealing statement. Uhrbach states that the observation of the moon in conjunction with the woman is a primary step to the characters losing their inspiration and their emblem of defined identity. According to Uhrbach whiteness becomes associated with too many other things and loses any value that it might have had (581-582).

Before the beheading of the white apparition, Lestrade runs through a list of metaphors used to describe her. This list, while likely not inclusive, shows the vulnerability that the white apparition now has. She is no longer mystifying and aloof; rather, she is common and approachable. In Lestrade's words, she is "lime, snow, marble, moonlight, lilies, cloud, foam, and bleaching cream, the mother of civilization, and the confounder of blackness... She is the white light that paralyzed your mind, that led you into this confusion" (318-319). By giving shape to Makak's muse, Lestrade destroys her ability to influence. She is completely tangible and no longer of any value to Makak. If he desires to continue in his growth, if he desires to find his own identity and the identity of his people, he must kill her, and he does.
After beheading the white apparition and awakening from his dream, Makak is allowed to leave the prison. Prior to his leaving, Lestrade offers him the white mask that Makak originally saw as the physical presence of his muse. In a defiant gesture he refuses the mask and leaves the prison alone. As Hogan states, Makak leaves, perhaps for the first time since his childhood, without the mask (116). The mask is only one example of his new self-identity. Makak is also no longer Makak. Upon waking he remembers his original name (Felix Hobain) and discards his pseudonym. He not only leaves the prison without his white muse, he also leaves the prison as a man, not a monkey.

**Overview of Conceptual Metaphors:**

In order to create a new West Indian identity and intrinsic to Walcott's efforts to reclaim blackness is the primal need to redefine the associations given to both blackness and whiteness. Walcott does this principally through his use of metaphor, which is a particularly effective method of deconstructing meaning because of the strength of metaphor to influence human change and human conceptual systems. In his attempts to convert the semantic associations that the language conventionally applies to both whiteness and blackness, Walcott creates new conceptual metaphors that challenge the habitualized associations that the sense had in the past. In attempting to defamiliarize the reader's conceptions, Walcott destabilizes the language and opens it up for the exploration of new ideas that differ from those previously accepted. These new ideas are created to not only devise new conceptual systems, but to also allow for the invention of a new West Indian identity. The conceptual metaphors that Walcott uses with *Dream on Monkey Mountain* can be seen through the surface level metaphors provided in the text. These surface level metaphors, when viewed chronologically, not only show a tendency towards either pejoration, in the case of whiteness, or amelioration, in the case of blackness, but are also seen to encase many of the preconceived assumptions of their senses. A Lakovian graphing of the dominant conceptual metaphors would have the following appearance:

**WHITENESS**

Whiteness is Beauty:
- The loveliest thing I see on this earth (227 and 235)
- The moon climbing down the steps of heaven (227)
- Gentler than cotton (310)
- She is all that is pure (319)

Whiteness is Inspiration:
- The white apparition as found throughout the text in her various forms
- Masturbating in the moonlight (225)
- I can never reach the moon, that is why I'm lost (304)

Whiteness is Control:
- Make a white mist in your mind (226)
-A man swimming in smoke and the bandage of fog unpeeling my eyes (235)
-No spider with white eggs will bring (death) (239)
-She is the white light that paralyze your mind, that lead you into this confusion (319)

Whiteness is Fear:
-Like the breathe of the dead (227)
-A million silver needles prickle in my blood (235)
-A spider . . . a big white one with eggs . . . I hate those things (238)
-When the spear of moonlight has pinned the white road tills its legs were splayed like a spider (270)
-She is the wife of the devil, the white witch (319)
-Now a night will come when, because it is white, from your deep hatred you will want it destroyed (315)

BLACKNESS
Blackness is Primitive:
-Various references to blacks as animals as found throughout text
-For some of the apes have straightened their backbone and started walking upright, but there was one tribe unfortunately that lingered behind and that was the nigger (217).
-The voice . . . which has come from the cave of darkness (222)

Blackness is Dependent on Whiteness:
-I would like to see them challenge the law (whiteness), but they are paralyzed with darkness (261).
-To be black like coal and dream of milk (290).
-And God was like a big white man I was afraid of (290)
-Ourselves shadows in the firelight of the white man’s mind (304)

Blackness is Nature
-A brown river in a flood (229)
-That God was black, not white (225)
-A black wind blowing, a black wind (225)
-I was king among shadows (304)

Blackness is a Guiding Instrument
-(When saving a life) Now I want a woman to put a coal in my hand, a living coal. A soul in my body (248)
-And if the moon go out, I will still find my way; the blackness will swallow me (286)
-(Willing Makak to guide) Put him in front, he is a shadow now (306)

The graphing of conceptual metaphors allows us to see how Walcott attempts to map out his design for semantic change through metaphorical categories.
In reclaiming blackness, Walcott expects the reader to adjust their conceptual structures to allow blackness to be seen as both a positive essence of nature and as a guiding instrument for constructive change. He does this at first by appearing to confirm the long held association that blackness has had with primitiveness and then allowing the reader to see that this primitiveness was based on the dependence blackness had on whiteness for its virtual creation and pejoration. After demonstrating that blackness is nothing more than a construct of whiteness, Walcott challenges the definitions of this construct and provides the reader with an opportunity to defamiliarize their conceptions and create new legitimate associations with blackness that are much more positive than past associations. In Walcott’s work, there is an inverse relationship between blackness and whiteness, whereas if whiteness is going to be seen as positive, then blackness must be seen as negative and vice-versa. Ultimately, by reassociating metaphors of whiteness with control and fear, Walcott allows his characters to construct a new identity through metaphors of blackness. This new identity is the result of the reevaluation of historic semantic associations and the creation of new conceptual metaphors.

1 The key example of a metaphorical concept that Lakoff and Johnson use in their theory is the concept that arguments are war. As an underlying concept, argument is war allows us to see that we don’t just talk about arguments in terms of war, but actually win or lose arguments as if they embodied war. We see the person we are arguing with as an opponent and the argument itself is structured by the concept of war (attack, defense, counterattack, etc.) (4). Other metaphorical concepts that Lakoff and Johnson discuss are “Ideas are food, plants, people, products, etc . . .” “Love is a physical force, patient, madness, magic, and war,” and “Life is a container or a gambling game” (15-51).

2 Shklovsky’s definition of art is useful if we consider that Walcott himself contended that art was the key to the establishment of a future identity for members of the West Indian community.

3 This same metaphor is used by Basil later in the play while demasking Moustique who is passing off as Makak in order to cash in on Makak’s fame. In the scene, Basil frightens Moustique with a spider, thus exposing him; “The eyes are dead coals and the heart is ashes. Ah friend, when the spear of moonlight had pinned the white road till its legs were splayed like a spider” (270).

4 The majority of the characters names are nothing more than animal reference, with Makak’s (monkey) and Moustique’s (mosquito) being among the most depreciatory. See Uhrbach (579) for more detail.

Works Cited


