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Hybrid Aesthetics and Politics of Resistance; Re-inventing the Western Dramatic Form in Derek Walcott's *Dream on Monkey Mountain*

Abstract

Colonization whereas on one hand ruled the colonies with a political fist also undervalued the native culture. Therefore, cultural colonization was more consequential since the native mind, consciousness, and aesthetics were forced to internalize Eurocentric paradigms. In post-colonial discourse this situation is often explained as cultural violence undertaken by the colonizer. After indigenous cultures were declared antediluvian, regressive, and nowhere near western modernity the body of knowledge produced locally became insulated, and was consequently stymied. However, in post-colonial literature textual resistance became the central norm, and writers writing from margins began to question the hegemonic western aesthetics. Therefore, this paper argues that in the play *Dream on a Monkey Mountain* (1970) Derek Walcott by reinventing the western tradition of drama, rooted in Greek dramatic tradition, restores the lost luster of Caribbean dramatic forms. However, the process of reinventing western dramatic form, levied with cultural aesthetics of mongrel, produces a hybridized form of dramatic art. In his own right, Walcott believes in mixing and mingling cultural forms and holds no illusion against a tendency where the indigenous mind is distracted by utopian ideals of pure and total restoration of history and culture. By sticking to an experimental vision *Dream on Monkey Mountain* borrows from the western tradition of drama but not at the cost of staking out indigenous aesthetics to colonial body of cultural incumbents. Indeed, the hybridized dramatic form generates textual space for political and ideological resistance, and Walcott's play implicates colonization responsible for devaluation of local art forms, and insists on the urgency of revamping them.

After Edward Said's monumental work *Cultural Imperialism* (1993) critics and theorists have long dwelled upon the ramifications of the empire's project of replacing indigenous culture with western culture. The de-colonization, often celebrated as a closure of colonial rule, is actually an on-going process, and more importantly in the global North after the Second World War the modus operandi of controlling a non-western territory or geography underwent a transformation. To many, globalization is another form of imperialism in disguise. Inevitably, colonial departure ensued a counteractive discourse apprehending methodologies and processes of subjugation the empire imposed on native populations. To that end, post-colonial writers' commitment to retrieve and reinstate indigenous founts of

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culture translates into a resistance against the empire's invidious incursions on local, native, and regional aesthetics.

Derek Walcott's play *Dream on a Monkey Mountain* is a rejoinder to colonial dispensation of western aesthetics embedded in the genre of Greek drama. Walcott writes a play choosing the form of a surrealistic dream interjected with episodic sequences, a protagonist who is a hermit, and an action almost cyclical therefore registering a break from the conventional western drama having a linear plot, hero of sublime stature, and a resolution. One night Makak, the protagonist sees a dream and decides to dismount from the mountain to travel towards Africa. The journey to Africa is a journey towards roots and origins, and of course towards indigenous ways of life disrupted by colonial intervention. However, the way Makak is treated by the cell keeper Lestrade recalls the times of colonial violence. Makak wants to return to the monkey mountain, perhaps the primitive way of life, but the colonial officialdom personified by law and prison holds him back from returning to natural life. Makak's vulnerability, unlike the classical tragic hero, is emphasized in episodes of exploitation, interspersed with brusque humorous situations, of which he is an easy prey. However, he leads the local crowd promising them to take to Africa, and is anointed as king, a sarcastic mimicry of the ways Empire invades and captures native minds and territories, and even so erase their aesthetics. What remains intriguingly paradoxical is the ending of the play as Makak's dream breaks and he finds himself again in the prison cell, and afterwards even happily returns to the monkey mountain. The action of the play perpetuates figments of protagonist's imagination who comes across people from the lower strata of Caribbean, each one affected by colonial injustice manifested in scenes of dead white people brought to the court of justice. In one of the most perspicuous scenes in the play the local crowd is shown fancying vengeance on the symbolic apparition of the white woman haunting Makak's dreams. Therefore, Makak embodies the duality of cultures, of mixed heritages. The varied aspects of a dreamer, charmer, healer, and a ruler converge in his character. Similarly, the play weaves African, West Indian and English traditions to the effect of creating a hybrid tapestry of aesthetics, a combination of indigenous and western elements. This paper argues that in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* Walcott by reinventing and re-creating the western tradition of drama reinstates indigenous aesthetics of dramatic art. The indigenous art forms not only represent cultural sensibilities of a particular locale but also serve as sites of resistance against colonial aesthetics.

As a native of the Caribbean, Derek Walcott draws heavily upon the African carnival, mythology, folklore, and oral narratives. The main theme of the play is the construction of African identity in the aftermath of the long historical process of colonization. The white man came with a body of knowledge which denigrated every form of native life. Resultantly the Caribbean native, a culturally multifarious unit, were declared aesthetically vacuous hence in colonial discourse the serotype of savage appears with a ruthless frequency. In colonial imagination the figure of savage is shorn of all possibilities of any cultural improvement or refinement. To all ends, the native people and culture became the object of an arguably superior Western gaze refracted through the colonial episteme. The project of colonial scrutiny of the native rendered the later culturally inferior inducing self-hatred and historical amnesia. In fact, centuries of colonial

oppression forced the native to internalize a self-image essentially inferior to “colonial other” in terms of their history, art, and culture.

Aime Césaire in “Discourse on Colonialism”, argues: “I am talking about millions of men whom they have knowingly instilled with fear and complex of inferiority, whom they have infused with despair and trained to tremble, to kneel and behave like flunkies” (7). In response to oppression of this intensity and magnitude Walcott in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* revives a cultural identity, quintessentially indigenous, by both re-casting of and improvising upon the western tradition of drama. In other words, by re-employing western dramatic form from an indigenous perspective Walcott attempts to redeem a Caribbean consciousness relegating it from colonial descriptive. And since Walcott is well versed with the tradition of Western drama therefore in order to retrieve the Caribbean dramatic forms becoming suppressed with the colonial arrival Walcott reinvents the prototypical genre of Greek tragedy. Therefore, *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is a hybridized interaction of Caribbean and western forms of dramatic art. Walcott enmeshes the two traditions of dramatic forms accomplishing an alternative discourse of resistance against the colonial practice of deprecation of native aesthetics. Since the taking over of the native territories of Caribbean is nothing short of an event of tragic proportion therefore in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* Walcott employs the conceptual framework of Greek tragedy with an intention of uncovering the horrors of colonization. For this we need to revisit the salient aspects of Greek tragic drama incorporated in *Dream on Monkey Mountain*.

After Renaissance took over European continent in the domain of dramatic art the genre of Greek tragedy was vehemently appropriated. In the literal sense, “tragedy” means goat song “tragos (goat) and ode (song). It was a form of religious ritual performed at the altar of the god Dionysus. The citizens, wearing goat masks, would indulge in singing and dancing. Later on, the songs sung at this occasion were termed as choral odes. Thespis was arguably the first playwright who initiated a dialogue between the Chorus leader and the first actor. This development can be understood as Greek tragedy in its embryonic form. What remains a pivotal point in discussion on Greek tragedy is the role of the Chorus. Friederich Schiller in his essay, “The Use of the Chorus in Tragedy” posits that Greek tragedy had its origin in the Chorus and though, in time it became independent, it may still be said that poetically, and in spirit, the Chorus was the source of its existence (20).

The centrality of Chorus in Greek tragedy can be ascertained from the fact that it performed a variety of structural functions. Significantly, with Chorus elements of music and lyricism were also introduced in the story or plot which otherwise would have remained either prosaic or profusely horrific. What really set apart Greek drama from the beginning is its avoidance of showing raw violence on the stage. Therefore, spectacles of violence and bloodshed were either implicative or symbolic denoting an off-stage action. But eventually the Chorus’ leader became a vehicle of transmitting details of gruesome acts of the human world. For example, the murder of Agamemnon is revealed to the audience through the Chorus. Similarly, in *Oedipus Rex*, the Chorus advises Oedipus to observe restraint in resolving his conflict with Creon. Oedipus accuses Creon of plotting against the throne. The Chorus intervenes by advising that it is not the right time to indulge in

personal conflicts because the Polis (the City State) is faced with plague and disorder. These two examples demonstrate that the Chorus represents the collective cultural consciousness of the Athenian society. Dramaturgically, it performs the most important function: it forges an aesthetic link between the audience and the characters on the stage. It also critiques the choices made by the tragic heroes and explains the moral and political consequences of these choices to the audience.

The Chorus also represents a fine balance between human rationality and the metaphysical boundaries of existence. In other words, the Chorus calls for the necessity of having a philosophy of life, faith, and intellect. But the faith which the Chorus demands is conditional, and has certain limitations. At a certain point in the tragic conflict human rationality proves inadequate in answering complex existential questions. Beyond this, one must rely upon divine knowledge to restore the upended moral and political order. In *Oedipus Rex*, tragic tension is created on the stage when Oedipus rejects the divine intervention/knowledge in dealing with the plague ravaging the city. He assumes he can end the plague as he once rid the city of the Sphinx.

Furthermore, the imagery of disease in the opening scene of *Oedipus Rex* connotes the birth of chaos in the physical universe. The solution lies in restoring the moral order, corrupted by Oedipus when he inadvertently married his own mother. The gods reveal that the murderer of King Laius is to be brought to justice for the restoration of a healthy social life. Tiresias, the blind prophet of Thebes foretells that Oedipus himself is the source of corruption. Driven by his own hubris Oedipus rejects the divine command and is ultimately brought to his fate. In a final act of redemption he blinds himself, a paradoxical gesture of defiance and submission. Clearly, from Oedipus' circumstances it is evident that Greek tragedy subscribes to a compact moral universe impervious against binaries separating the social and the religious as well as divine and the secular therefore Chorus is a veritable dramatic representation of a unity of the sacred and the profane. Raymond Williams in *Modern Tragedy* aptly argues that : "What the form then embodies is not an isolable metaphysical stance, rooted in individual experience, but a shared and indeed a collective experience, at once indistinguishably metaphysical and social, which is yet capable of great tension and subtlety[...]the chorus was the crucial element of dramatic form. (40)

Similarly, Greek Tragic heroes were mythopoeic figures. Since they were not drawn from everyday life, the audiences were able to develop an aesthetic detachment from them. The tragic heroes made rational choices, and yet for audiences larger than life figures. Therefore, at a human level they developed an affinity with the heroes but at a metaphysical level, they remained detached because the characters were drawn from the world of myth. The significant loss of social status of the tragic hero and the significant gain of wisdom in the form of tragic resolution validated the tragic process to the audience. Emotions of pity and fear were aroused and spectators left the theatre with a renewed faith in life and most importantly, the polis. The catharsis of pent up emotions of pity and fear was deemed necessary to create an emotionally balanced citizen. Thus, the tragic process became a metaphor for a journey from ignorance to wisdom (acquired through suffering), both for the tragic hero on the stage and the audiences

watching the play. In this sense, Greek tragedy performed a social function of developing an inalienable link between the everyday life and the metaphysical realm.

However, in the post-enlightenment era the removal of the chorus as an actor paved the way for what became known as modern tragedy. As a corollary to this development the hero or protagonist in modern drama is neither helped nor punished by the gods. In fact, in the cosmic scheme of Post-enlightenment gods do not interfere in human affairs leaving man to make his own choices. However, what remains common both in classical and modern tragedy is the element of suffering. The modern hero also suffers however his suffering is futile in the sense that it brings him neither solace nor resolution. He is faced with a tragic stalemate in which human rationality with its limitations is the only ground available to deal with his crisis deeply existentialist in nature. . In *Eumenides*, the inadequacy of human intellect leaves divine intervention as the only solution for the restoration of moral and political order. No such help is available to rational morality which views human nature as static and essentially to be governed by manmade laws. There are choices available to the modern man but these choices are not offered by any divine agency. Rather a cold, godless world, with its oppressive power hierarchies appears as the new antagonist. In the classical world gods were not always kind but they were unquestionably just. Contrarily, modern human beings suffer but they only have themselves to blame for their pain. There is no divine resolution to be expected as well. Raymond Williams terms this paradigmatic shift as "the very complicated process of secularization". (40)

Derek Walcott envisions the form of drama both malleable, eclectic, and capable of locating manifold subjectivities and contexts which in his case is the character of Caribbean. Since Caribbean aesthetics is historically oral therefore Walcott is interested in physical performative. In as in "A notes on Production" he posits that:

The play is a dream, one that exists as much in the given minds of its principal characters as in that of its writer, and as such, is illogical, derivative, and contradictory. Its source is metaphor and it is best treated as a physical poem with all the subconscious and deliberate borrowings of poetry. (206)

Clearly, Walcott re-envisages the age-old connection between poetry and drama. Greek tragedy retreats mythology the same as Caribbean culture dwells on diverse forms of folk dance and fertility myths. The Greeks called it dithyramb, an impassioned choral hymn accompanied with dance. Poetry, dance, and music forge a triptych of dramatic aesthetics evident both in ancient Greek tragedy and Walcott's regional verse drama. Moreover, the poetic nature of the play and its physicality are elements central to Walcott's notion of poetic drama. On the whole Greek tragedy dramatizes incidents taken from Homer's epic *Odyssey* in which characters are larger than life. Greek gods also appear as characters on the stage. Equally important epic poetry shows physical spectacles of war and its language is graphic befitting heroic themes. Even so, an epic emphasizes the physical stature of a warrior, a kind of immortal god. Likewise, the physicality of epic poetry also suggests the ways characters are presented on the stage, and a spectacle is created for the audiences so that they may develop an emotional empathy with characters. Furthermore, Greek drama followed a linear progression. Aristotle defined a good

plot as being beautiful, meaning that it was neither too long nor too short. It had a proper beginning, middle and end and the events flowed logically and coherently. A probability of any sort of illogical development of either the characters or the plot was considered a structural flaw by Aristotle. Any missing links in plot progression were always filled in by the chorus. However, Walcott subverts the Aristotelian preoccupation with linear development of plot. His play is not only a dream dreamt by its characters but by its author as well. It is illogical, derivative and contradictory. These three elements on one hand show the impact of psychology on modern literature and on the other hand the prevalence of avant-garde experimental literary techniques such as flashback, collage, bricolage, and stream of consciousness. Therefore, Walcott also mixes and merges genres and forms, and is content with adaptation of western tradition of drama. Despite appropriating western tradition of drama, *Dream on Monkey Mountain* celebrates indigenous dramatic form, original and yet derivative, suggesting that Walcott borrows from western literary tradition with an intention of reinventing and subverting western aesthetics. In the theoretical conception of the play, Walcott subverts Greek notions of logical and sequential plot development. Symbolically, it is the rejection of western concept of scientific rationality, an epistemological drive behind colonization, a privileged asset of Eurocentric culture creating binaries of rational/ irrational, and of civilized/ savage. Furthermore, the element of contradiction is the essence of a dream however dream patterns are hard to discern and since according to Walcott they are rooted in our subconscious their interpretation is even more subjective. Therefore, subjectivities such as dreams cannot be completely deciphered. The dream sequence in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* resists the notion of closure, which in the language of drama is called resolution, instead the play upholds the modernist preoccupation with an open-ended text. This results in what Homi. K. Bhaba famously terms ambivalence. Accordingly, an indigenous writer, a blend of local and foreign consciousness, uses this ambivalence to his advantage.

Naturally, for Walcott dream or subconscious alludes to virginal primitivism embodied in Caribbean's flora and fauna, climate, and geography features set its culture and aesthetics apart from Europe. Similarly, the element of contradiction in the plot of verse drama such as *Dream on Monkey Mountain* signifies a native writer's vision of installing resistance against western aesthetics. Notably, this resistance is channelized through a dramatic form not consistent (linear) rather elliptical, sporadic, and deferential. The partially narrative and partially dramatic *Dream on Monkey Mountain* boasts a form which is derivative, contradictory and illogical exemplifying some of the contours of a diversified Caribbean indigenous literary aesthetics. At least, the dream form which Walcott envisages for his play diverges from the western tradition of drama. Walcott's dream-plot punctuated with elements of contradiction, absurdity, and inference is in direct contrast with elements of linearity, sequentiality, and temporality Aristotle champions as backbone of an ideal plot. Therefore, the indigenous background of the African locale gains more importance in Walcott's work than the ahistoricity of ancient Greek heroes.

To take this further, even the title of the play suggests that an indigenous protagonist is in a state of dream-like contemplative mood sitting on a mountain.

The context, locale, and geography are in consonance. Walcott, the author and a partial dreamer dreams of the journey of his African protagonist onstage therefore in the play's context dream is a metaphor of subjective musings.

Dream on a Monkey Mountain admits a cosmic world-view inhabiting dreamers set to retrieve their history and culture. Being once the subjects of an empire they are smarting from horrors of colonial subjugation. Sitting on the mountain literally on the residue of colonial wreckage the protagonist of *Dream on Monkey Mountain* musters up courage to tell his side of the story. The tragic history of Caribbean is a reality lived by its people who suffer from the inadequacy of an organized political resistance to overthrow the lasting menace of the empire. However, what redeems this situation is the indigenous aesthetics measured by ancient cultural rituals, mythology, music, and dance forms deeply integrated into Caribbean ways of life. Hence, a literary or aesthetic response to colonial occupation is also a political response. In other words, in order to counter colonial assumptions the Caribbean consciousness employs cultural forms as modes of political resistance. Clearly, Walcott is suggesting how important it is firstly to relish the dream of freedom. This dream of freedom may take diverse forms such as dance, music, and rituals. The dream-forms may not invoke a straightforward political action. Correspondingly, dream-form signifies an existentialist quest as much as a political understatement. Therefore, Walcott dream is a metaphor of a conspicuous world-view of Caribbean. However, what is significant to note here is that though colonization played havoc with Caribbean ways of life Walcott's world is not commanded by sacred powers.

On the other hand, the Greek universe is defined by divine commands and its main purpose is the maintenance of the dominant political order. In an Attic drama a hero is often a victim of his ancestors' religion he protects. Greek heroes do not find themselves in a state of conflict with the societal forces, rather, they are confronted with the ontological questions of human existence and the meaning of "being". Despite showing conformity to existing order with no exception Greek heroes too learn about their limitations and surrender to divine command. Oedipus, for example, learns humility through immense suffering. Contrary to this Walcott borrows from western tradition of drama reinvents it, infuses indigenous elements, and thereby subverts a socio-political order codified by colonial imaginary. He uses the form of western tradition of drama not to appease angry gods but to counter a political behemoth of empire.

Despite sharing structural similarities with ancient Greek drama the Caribbean drama outweighs the observance of sacred. Evidently, the way colonization imposed Christianity on the native populations of Africa and Caribbean disillusioned them. Resultantly, Christianity in Africa was abated with local superstitions, rituals, and beliefs. At the heart of the indigenous mind was averse to religious re-ordering of colonial projects. The natives despite being outwardly Christianized remained, intrinsically, attached to their myths and folklores which were neither dogmatic nor orthodox. Indeed, Africa being a host to an array of endemic religions and tribal belief-systems was more secular at heart. This spirit of secularism is manifested in the lingual register of *Dream on Monkey Mountain*. For one thing, Greek tragedy, as compared to post-colonial Caribbean

drama, happens to be apolitical because it does not call for any political revolution instead it reaffirms hierarchies of religious order.

On the other hand, in African and Caribbean plays namely written by Wole Soyinka, Ben Okri, Ama Ata Aidoo and Athol Fugard there is a recurrent appearance of the congregation of ancestral spirits, a structural device, in the form of a ritualistic dance called Egungun in Nigeria. The dance is a kind of equivalent to masque or masquerade performed in Elizabethan courts. The ritualistic dance of spirits signifies the place of mythic consciousness in African life. A step further, the African drama transmutes this mythic consciousness into political consciousness. The ancestral spirits, a character similar to chorus in Athenian drama, is a political mouthpiece. Similarly, the plot in an African drama takes stock of a situation where those afflicted with colonial injustices turn to supernatural spirits for guidance, intercession, and beneficence however the supernatural does not command any sacred overhauling of the society. The ancestral spirits do not either transmit prophecies like Delphi. Therefore, African plays dramatize a prototypical situation signifying Africa's political failure, being not able to disembark from colonial legacy. African tragedy is political per se because the African/ Caribbean writers dream of the restoration of a native African episteme which would help deal with the ravages of colonization both at an aesthetic and political level. These are diametrically opposed teleological conceptions.

In a preface to part one of the play, Walcott quotes from Sartre's prologue to *The Wretched of the Earth*. It reads as follows:

Thus in certain psychoses the hallucinated person, tired of always being insulted by his demon, one fine day starts hearing the voice of an angel who pays him compliments; but the jeers don't stop for all that; only, from then on, they alternate with congratulations. This is a defence, but it is also the end of the story. The self is disassociated, and the patient heads for madness. (211)

Fanon was a clinical psychologist and in *The Wretched of Earth* he views the working of the colonial empire as if a behemoth of psychic proportion. Often, it is the physical affliction, externalized in the imagery of slavery and indenture, which defines the horrors of colonial power however Fanon employs psychoanalysis, originally a European tool of physis diagnosis, and dissects the mind of the colonizer but more than anything else he mobilizes a narrative of native psyche ruptured by colonial intervention.

So, Sartre's analysis of Fanon's evaluation of the colonizer's psychological overtaking of the native subject unpacks a particular pattern of cognition developed in the aftermaths of colonial arrival. The psychological institutionalization of the native mind by the colonizer, of which perhaps Fanon is an unwilling victim, transforms the native mind through racial stereotyping. Therefore, colonial invasion was a traumatic event, and by implication the native is a psychological causality hence the expression 'patient'. The delirium, neurosis, psychosis and other psychic disorders identified as symptoms of the native mind were based on racial profiling. Therefore, Sartre describes a defence mechanism employed by the native struggling to deal with traumatic colonial experiences.

At times, the native mimics the colonial ways of life nurturing a false sense of association with the colonizer. In *The Mimic Men* (1967) V.S Naipaul admits that 'we mimic men of the New World.' It appears that the present day Caribbean hit by historical stasis holds no promise for Naipaul. Disillusioned with myths of romantic purity handed down by history he no longer yearn[s] for ideal landscapes' means like Walcott he hates to remain trapped in the ideal of an ideal history. The colonized societies as Naipaul insists are 'haphazard, disordered and mixed' therefore survive by copying, emulating, and mimicking the external arrivants. Cerelo, languages in their own right, by product of mixed heritages is an apt example of lingual mimicry. Walcott himself was born of a mixed heritage of St. Lucia where people communicated in French/English patois. In his essay 'What the Twilight Says' he endorses the power of mimicry and hybridity as integral elements of an evolving West Indian literary aesthetics. He casts doubt on the nativist origins of the drama *Dream on Monkey Mountain* demonstrates.

However, mimicking the white man does not resolve the conflict rather it complicates the process of establishing native identity. A part of the self yearns for the pre-colonial native subjectivity. But history has moved forward. The imagined subjectivity cannot be retrieved. Hence, in an effort to erase, or to come to terms with the Eurocentric cultural episteme the native subject becomes disassociated with his immediate present. Neither attached to his past nor to his immediate present the native mind collapses into a state of schizophrenic madness, the final outcome. of this painful process. So, the victim –patient analogy works well both with Sartre and Fanon since the patient hears the jeers and compliments simultaneously and is escorted both by an angel and a demon. The superior psychiatrist in the guise of colonizer diagnoses the native mind to be a carrier of insanity. The self of the native is fragmented and ends up in a space which can be metaphorically asserted as madhouse or asylum. In the madhouse of history, shorn of trappings of civilization, the native is caged like a mad animal. The classical and modernist-revisionist texts *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), *Jane Eyre* (1847), and *The Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) appropriating psychological operatives of the empire attest to this madness, identified by Sartre, a unique hallmark of the psychology of the captive mind. The native mind, an object of colonizer's psychic scrutiny, is diagnosed psychologically sick to be rescued desperately.

Consequently, Walcott rejects the idea of the revival of a pristine, unadulterated pre colonial culture but neither does he dissociate himself with the pre-colonial history entirely. Indeed, in his earlier poetry there is a strong nostalgic yearning for a past now irrecoverable. However, an indoctrinated attachment to the past blinding the present-day Caribbean from finding a way out of the conflicts rooted in colonial times is an unavoidable casualty of history. Walcott considers it another illusion, perhaps also unavoidable. In all likelihood, the scars of colonialism cannot be permanently erased from African history, mind, and collective consciousness.

Therefore, the native African cultures need to create a dialogic possibility between the past and the present. It is not a de-historicization of the past, rather an assimilation of the two cultures by celebrating the third space of hybridity that Caribbean and Africa despite having lived long under the yoke of slavery and

serfdom can return to their roots with the proviso them being not stuck in past and neither do they stampede their present to reach at an elusive future. The Eurocentric view of history rejects the African history as inconsequential, causing anxiety amongst the natives. Edward Baugh in “Walcott, Writing and the Caribbean: Issues and Directions”, argues that exercised by this anxiety about history, Walcott developed the idea of going beyond history, of transcending it (9).

The transcendental history, we argue, challenges grand historical narratives endorsed both by the native and the colonizer. Arguably, transcendental history, a form of ahistoricity, does not romanticize the past. Similarly, the tendency to glorify history disguised under nationalism is often a subservience to vague myths failing the test of time. No doubt, colonial tyranny and exploitation is very much real and has had significantly massive after-effects however any attempt to imagine a historical past essentially superior to colonial historiography is bound to be ironically caught up in the trap of the western episteme. Walcott rejects this romantic view of native history. He proposes to re-imagine the past as non-linear and non-temporal. The linear view of history is valorized by the colonizer, dividing the native history into the essentialist categories of pre-colonial and colonial period. .. This epistemic intervention works as a power tool to instill the colonial prejudices through the state educational institutions. The native is constantly reminded that the white man brought progress to his/her country. And before the arrival of the colonizers, native life was little better than that of animals. The tribal cultural values are denigrated and the white man, with his institutional heritage, becomes the ideal mode of human existence. Walcott contends that a total rejection of the colonial episteme would result in grave political disaster, considering the indelible marks it left upon the African identity. Hence, he rejects both the native and colonial models of history and desires a non-temporal and non-spatial history. He further states that:

West Indian man could be Adamic, if he freed his mind of the baggage of history and the awe of history. Adam had no history, and the all the world to name. What matters is not the history but the loss of history, the amnesia of races. What has become necessary is imagination, imagination as necessary as invention. (Walcott 53)

Therefore, Walcott employs the metaphor of Biblical Adam overlaying history of Caribbean with a humanism timeless in value. For Walcott history as a medium of ‘invention’ is of lesser value than ‘imagination’. In a way by extolling the power of imagination Walcott also romanticizes history. Even so, texts such as *Orientalism*(1978) by Edward Said establishes that one’s pride in history is rooted in topos of racism. Therefore, the West Indians in Walcott’s imagination, both genealogically and anthropologically, are descendants of *Adamic* set to defy histories constructed on rivalries and differences.

Consequently, the dramatic form of *Dream in the Monkey Mountain* subscribes to the transcendental version of history. Walcott envisions this version of history in his essay ““What the Twilights Says” saying that “one race’s quarrel with another’s God,” thereforesubjects of divided loyalties carry a fragmented sense of history. History is not linear rather fragmented and the linearity it wears on is a simulation a veneer exposed from time to time what the Irish poet W.B.Yeats in

his poem *The Second Coming* calls 'things fall apart'. Therefore, Walcott is resistant to the idea of an uninterrupted history as Caribbean was frequently invaded by the European powers. Therefore, in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* Walcott subverts the linear plot development of Greek tragedy. The characters are ahistorical, hence, the linearity of history is conceived in terms of the development of the protagonist onstage. The Greek tragedy tragic hero suffers from hamartia and demonstrates inordinate pride in his own human powers. At this point, the spectators develop an affinity with the character. Since the Greek tragic hero is a larger than life mythopoeic figure, the chorus also develops a human relationship between him and the audience. As argued earlier, the chorus does not question the demands of existing social and political order. Walcott re-appropriates this tradition to invent a form which celebrates indigenous aesthetic demands.

In part one of *Dream on Monkey Mountain* the chorus appears onstage and unlike the singing of the Greek chorus, the Caribbean chorus laments the existing social order. Moreover, the hero belongs to the masses deprived of their history, language and culture. The chorus in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is a collective lament of the long colonized masses de-contextualized, de-politicized, and de-historized,

In the opening scene of the play we are introduced to two prison cages placed on either side of the stage. Tiger and Souris, two half naked felons are squabbling and the chorus amplifies the volume of their lament:

Momma, momma

Your son is in de jail a'ready

Take a towel and band your belly. (213)

As the play progresses the lamentation also increases. Unlike the Greek chorus, the chorus in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* does not celebrate that power structures are discursive and unimpeachable instead it questions and critiques colonial hierarchies. The dominant image of the prison cells with a backdrop of choral lamentation creates a sense of helplessness in the audience. They feel a kinship for the incapacitated and downtrodden characters so to say colonization has a paralytic effect on the masses. Most importantly, this state of helplessness is neither the wages of mortal sin nor the wrath of any divine agency but the direct outcome of an oppressive socio-political order under which the colonized eked out their existence. Like T.S. Eliot's Prufrock who does not want the role of 'Prince Hamlet', Walcott instead of re-creating larger-than-life figures, characteristic of western canonical drama, searches for home-grown heroes. Commenting on this approach Edward Baugh argues that Walcott in his plays searches for a West Indian theatre rooted in the experience of the common people, drawing on their arts of performance, including their language, and that in the context of the colonial experience of the region. A central motive in this endeavour was to address the apparent or supposed absence of home-grown heroes for the West Indian imagination (57). Similarly, the language which Walcott's characters speak compliments their social position. Instead of emulating English idiom Walcott uses the local dialect which assimilates different forms of linguistic variations in the Caribbean. Even the English language which the characters speak with a

degree of insouciance could not escape linguistic disorientation. Walcott uses language and dialogue to accentuate lingual diversity in *Dream on Monkey Mountain*. The characters of African descent speak English for the most part, but it is often dialect with some local "patois" snippets of phrases, constructions, and turn of speech spoken by Makak especially, as well as Souris, Moustique, and Tigre. Notably, their names also symbolize inter-cultural patterns.

Moreover, a dominant single language carries nationalist aspiration, a situation historically unfeasible in the Caribbean. In Walcott's play language is both a site of representation and contestation. The play's language evokes an indigenous identity rooted in local folklore, myth, carnival and other art forms. In other words, the patois creates a dialogic possibility between colonial and West Indian aesthetics. The play's hybridized idiom admits that West Indies is a historically diverse nation. By not allowing the dominance of any single language Caribbean nation makes light of the nation as a monolith. Kelly Baker Joseph is of the view that "while not anchored to a particular nation, *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is specific to the nation-building process in the Caribbean, a process that lends itself to drama, dreams, and delirium (2). Joseph's argument points towards the possibility of decolonization through art. The home-grown dramatic art not necessarily subservient to Western tradition, rather disruptive and experimental, dislodges colonial myths on native life and creates a space for a theater of political resistance. Theatre is also a space for regional and national life and *Dream on a Monkey Mountain* too through the double bind of English and patois turns up as an exponent of a nationalism traversing narrow confines of ethnicity, language, and race. Therefore, Walcott's play does not espouse a single tradition nor a singular view of history rather taking a flexible view of history accommodates both the colonial and anti-colonial perspectives. Naturally, it results in an epistemic entanglement of the outsider/ insider, indigenous/ foreign, and colonizer/ colonized. In part 1, Corporal Lestrade, a mulatto, represents the colonizer. He takes pride in adopting the colonial notions of law, language, history, and culture. As the warden of the prison, he is bound to implement the Roman laws. He uses the language of the colonizer and his choice of vocabulary gives him a sense of pride because it helps him distance himself from the natives. In all intents, this is a form of hybrid mimicry. Corporal belongs to the comprador class facilitating colonial enterprise. Therefore, his character is a travesty of master-slave dialectic. On the other hand, the convicted felons Tiger and Souris continuously use the local dialect venting their feelings of angst and despair. Following the Greek pattern of dramatic performance, Tiger sings songs expressive of his helplessness and alienation. On the stage, the natives and the Corporal use two different variations of language. The native intentionally mangles the grammar of a foreign language, a part of the process of indigenizing colonial culture. Conversely, Corporal uses an English immaculate tone and content. Thus, the dialogic possibility is dramatized on the stage. The natives both mimic and re-create the colonial language as evidence of Walcott's dramatic vision, political, secular, and global.

Corporal: You are required by law to supply me with certain data, for no man is guilty except so proven, and I must warn you that anything you say may be held against you.

Tiger: (Singing)

I pass by de police station,

Nobody to sign de bail bond

Mooma, don't cry... (215).

It is through re-appropriation of language the native history is brought to the stage for recognition. *Dream on Monkey Mountain* challenges the romantic notion of celebrating the pre-colonial state of existence. The colonized cannot help imagining a romanticized past, devoid of fissures and contradictions, which literally does not exist. Those who espouse Marxist version of history, a tense wrangle between weaker and dominant classes, would agree that a hermeneutically sealed concept of past, either of an individual or of a group, actually expels the logic of political resistance. However, post-colonial literature is *political*. Therefore, even if Caribbean was a paradise lost to the colonizer, the desire of regaining the paradise through a theatre of political resistance settles scores in *Dream on the Monkey Mountain*. The indigenous art forms restore the lost trove of native aesthetics. For this to materialize, some if not all of African and Indian playwrights tend to reject the English language and write in their local languages. Walcott seems to have rejected this idea. In *Conversation with Derek Walcott*, he argues that the problem is not recognizing our African origins but to romanticize them (265). Thus, for Walcott the solution does not lie in a point blank rejection of colonial history. The history, in the present moment, assimilates whatever had happened in the past. And any attempt to strive for an imagined purity is bound to fail. Hence the indigenous aesthetics cannot be divided into essentialist binaries of white and black. Rather, the politics of assimilation is the only way forward. Moreover, search for an imagined pure history is futile because it entraps the Other within the colonial historiography which sees history in a linear fashion. Therefore, the choice of language by Walcott in the play is an attempt to resist the western tradition of drama. Walcott establishes the value of indigenous aesthetics through a deft use of theatrical imagery, plot, dialogue and language.

The process of decolonization is complex. It involves a negotiation between various historical, social and cultural forces. And the postcolonial desire to erase the colonial script is a dream. The form of the play *Dream on the Monkey Mountain* is also dream-like. Neither the native-dream stops dreaming nor the dream becomes reality. A perpetual agony, productive in nature, haunts the native in search of identity and historical stability personified by chat characters of a prior-master and the prisoners in the play. Similarly, colonization has changed the geographical and cultural landscape of colonized spaces. Hence, the desire and endeavor to resurrect an untarnished history on part of the colonized nations is a red herring. Walcott envisages decolonization celebrating hybrid spaces, especially in the domain of performing arts. He believes that hybrid art forms are resistant and restore the native's pride in his /her land and culture. *Dream on Monkey Mountain* represents such a type of a hybrid art form embedded with resistance against colonial epistemic violence. Above all, hybrid forms create a dialogic possibility between an imagined pre-colonial subjectivity and an immediate present. In *Dream on Monkey Mountain* by appropriating western dramatic tradition Walcott aspires for or a non-violent present.

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