

**THEME OF OTHERNESS AND WRITING BACK: A CONTRAPUNTAL
ANALYSIS OF COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL NOVELS**

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Abstract

The British Empire spanned the Indian subcontinent, Australia, almost half of Africa, parts of North America and the Caribbean Islands during the colonial era and subjugated the people of these lands both physically and psychologically. The colonizers generated a Eurocentric ideology by creating simple but deep-rooted distinctions like self vs. other, master vs. slave, civilized vs. savage, white vs. black, good vs. evil, strong vs. weak, Occident vs. Orient, elite vs. subaltern and so forth in terms of knowledge, culture and in the daily life of colonized societies. For the British, the process of colonization was a part of discovering exotic and mysterious places which were to be “civilized” by them. So, through the use of the “Bible” and the “sword,” they imposed their language and culture on colonized minds. This influence had such a deep impact that many colonial writers have portrayed the Europeans as superior and the ‘self’ belonging to the ‘centre’ or ‘Occident,’ whereas the colonized people (of which they are a part) are shown as inferior and the ‘other’ belonging to the ‘margin’ or ‘Orient.’

The psychological domination that took place during the period of colonization persists even today. However, many postcolonial writers have successfully reshaped and redefined the constructed image of self and other by distorting the stereotypical images of colonized people, their cultures and languages in literature. Thus, they have taken the narratives to another level by giving voice to the other and by presenting their own colonial history and the consequences of colonization to match their own purposes. This thesis intends to look at the discourse of ‘otherness,’ from colonial representations to postcolonial realities of ‘other’ people and languages.

Introduction

The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much.¹

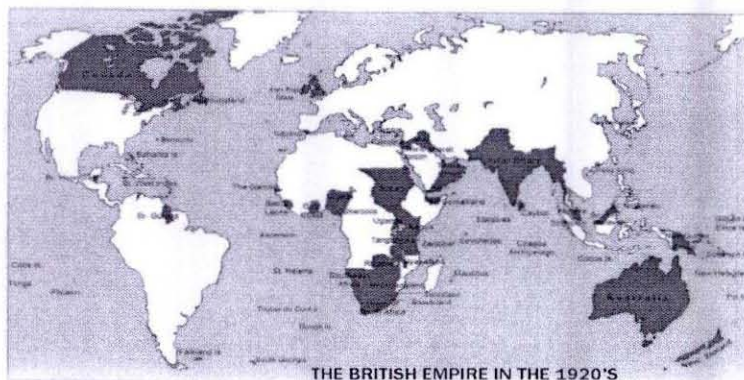
The geography of the unknown 'dark' world has always attracted the European travelers. As a result, exploration started with traveling to the East via land routes and across the Mediterranean ocean towards the Atlantic. Gradually, Europe discovered overseas lands in search of gold, ivory, slaves or agricultural resources and established imperial intercourse through trade and travel within those lands. This notion of travel, trade and settlement is absolutely Eurocentric that made the Europeans sole discoverer and narrator of the rest of the world. In fact, Columbus' discovery of the 'New world' was the first step towards colonialism which occurred during the fifteenth to twentieth centuries.

In 1492, the British arrived in the Caribbean, killed or enslaved its native people and colonized them through physical control and administrative procedures. However, as Britain was not in a position to colonize the powerful Mughal Empire, it focused on trade with the Indian subcontinent. Afterwards, by defeating Nawab Siraj-Ud-Daulah in the Battle of Plassey in 1757 and gaining administrative power over the Indian subcontinent, they attempted to psychologically enslave the indigenous Indians through the power of English education. On the other hand, in Africa, colonization took place by preaching Christianity through missionary activities. Later, the British enforced their language and literature in the formal education system to colonize the Africans psychologically.

Slavery was also one of the significant mediums in strengthening the British Empire in

¹ Joseph Conrad. *Heart of Darkness*. Ed. Robert Kimbrough. 3rd ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002. p. 10.

Africa as well as in the West Indies. Until the abolition of slave trade in 1807, Britain forcibly transported about twelve million African slaves to the Americas, Brazil and the Caribbean across the Atlantic through “the middle passage,” a term used to locate the triangular trade direction.² Thus, those people were displaced from their known lands to unknown places by slavery, imprisonment and invasion of the colonizers. The exiled slaves worked as unpaid labor on coffee, cotton, cocoa and sugar plantations, in gold and silver mines, in agricultural fields or in houses as servants in North and South America.



Map showing the British Empire in the 1920's

Thus, the most powerful empire in the world was built up by the British which expanded to the Indian subcontinent, Australia, parts of Africa, North America and the Caribbean Islands. Western imperialism had dismissed those colonized lands and their people as backward, primitive as well as mysterious. The colonizers established two different segments of the world—the West or the Occident and the East or the Orient. The relationship between the Occident and the Orient reflected a “relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony.”³ Thus, the imaginary binary and geographical gap between the colonial centre and its peripheries constructed the

² Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. London: Routledge, 2004. p. 213.

³ Edward W. Said. *Orientalism*. India: Penguin Books India, 2001. p. 5.

notions of imperial superiority, attitudes and experiences. One of the first revolutionary attempts to analyze colonial representations of the Orient was Edward W. Said's remarkable book *Orientalism* in which he remarks that:

A line is drawn between two continents. Europe is powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and distant... It is Europe that articulates the Orient; this articulation is the prerogative, not of a puppet master, but of a genuine creator, whose life-giving power represents, animates, constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries... Rationality is undermined by Eastern excesses, those mysteriously attractive opposites to what seem to be normal values.⁴

The British viewed and documented other lands, its people and culture as exotic and inscrutable with all the negative attributes of darkness. Many common terms were used to describe these colonized lands, such as undeveloped, primitive, developing, traditional and so on which were dissimilar from and subordinate to the centre. Said also points out the generalized conceptions of the Orient, "its strangeness, its difference, its exotic sensuousness and so forth"⁵ that shapes the history and perceptions of the world. In history and culture, we get to see "European superiority over Oriental backwardness"⁶ as Europeans believed that the colonies cannot have independent history or culture. Therefore, the uncivilized territories deserved to be ruled by the Europeans who were responsible for bringing civilization to those barbaric places:

The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience... The Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture.⁷

⁴ Ibid. p. 57.

⁵ Ibid. p. 72

⁶ Ibid. p. 7.

⁷ Ibid. p. 1-2.

The white Europeans took 'the burden' of writing the history and constructing the identity of the Orient. Said notes that the Western writings portray the Orient as an irrational, weak and feminized other which is contrasted with the rational, strong and masculine West. According to Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin:

'Virgin territories' (never virgin, but the inhabitants were considered to be uncivilized and thus having no legal rights of ownership) were opened up by exploration to trade and settlement, their original inhabitants killed, displaced or marginalized within European settler communities.⁸

Therefore, geographical differences and a hierarchical relationship were constructed between the two worlds during colonialism. Through the process of 'othering,' Europeans evolved a powerful discourse which was used to teach the colonized people to view themselves through the eyes of the colonizer and to adopt their ideology.

The process of 'othering' refers to the construction of a 'self' against an 'other.' It is a way of labeling one's position and identity while disapproving an other. The racial, sexual, religious, economic, ethnic, geographical or ideological indicators of social demarcation also shape the positions of the priority and the other groups. According to Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin:

In postcolonial theory, the term has often been used interchangeably with otherness and difference...The self-identity of the colonizing subject, indeed the identity of imperial culture, is inextricable from the alterity of colonized others, an alterity determined, according to Spivak, by a process of othering.⁹

Therefore, through the process of othering, one group excludes and marginalizes another group in a social or psychological context. One tends to characterize the other through stereotypical images that make the other dissimilar from one's own group.

⁸ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. op. cit. p. 97.

⁹ Ibid. p. 12.

During the colonial period, the British established themselves as the 'self' while marginalizing the colonized countries and its people because they could not have defined their position without the process of othering. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, othering is

a process by which the empire can define itself against those it colonizes, excludes and marginalizes. It locates its 'others' by this process in the pursuit of that power within which its own subjectivity is established.¹⁰

By defining and placing the subjects outside the margins of the self, the notion of the other is constructed. This process includes "the assumption of authority, 'voice' and control of the 'word,' that is, seizure and control of the means of interpretation and communication."¹¹ The notion of other subjectivities is formed in colonial discourse through the process of colonization, as Said has argued that the process of colonizing is one of othering. People referred to as the others are from regions and groups outside the hegemonic power structure, especially belonging to the colonies of the British Empire. The stereotypical representations of other lands, people, culture or language in literary works dominate the psychology of both the colonizer and the colonized. One only needs to look at the fictional representations of other people, lands and languages in works like Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* and so on to realize how 'others' are perceived. In fact, the physical and psychological domination of the former colonizers and their representations of the other remain even after the colonial process is over. As a result, the writings of and from the Orient and the stereotypical perceptions of the other become distorted and invalid.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 158

¹¹ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Empire Writes Back*. London: Routledge, 2002. p. 96.

In order to solve this problem, Edward W. Said coined the term ‘contrapuntal analysis’ to necessitate a vision in which colonial process and literature are viewed simultaneously. It is used in interpreting colonial texts, taking into account intertwined histories and perspectives of both the colonizers and the colonized. Contrapuntal reading takes in both accounts of an issue and addresses both the perspectives of imperialism and the resistance to it. It is reading a text

with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts.¹²

This analysis facilitates find out the hidden political or culture implications that has only been briefly addressed in a text. Therefore, in order to challenge the voicelessness of ‘other’ people in Western, colonial literature, Said proposes that:

We must therefore read the great canonical texts, and perhaps also the entire archive of modern and pre-modern European and American culture, with an effort to draw out, extend, give emphasis and voice to what is silent or marginally present or ideologically represented (I have in mind Kipling’s Indian character) in such works.¹³

As a result, there are many canonical texts that have been rewritten to counter the colonial portrayal of the Orient, its people and culture as exotic and savage in contrast to the civilized and progressive white Europeans of the centre. Some examples are Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea*, J.M. Coetzee’s *Foe* and Peter Carey’s *Jack Maggs*. These writers have reversed colonial positions by giving voice to the other in the original texts and by making the subaltern speak. Through their writings, the idea of the other has been blurred and the world has been able to see the same subject from different perspectives. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin claim that, “the

¹² Edward W. Said. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage, 1994. p. 59.

¹³ Ibid. p. 78.

rereading and the rewriting of the European historical and fictional record is a vital and inescapable task at the heart of the post-colonial enterprise.”¹⁴ Writers such as J.M. Coetzee, Wilson Harris, V.S. Naipaul, George Lamming, Patrick White, Chinua Achebe, Margaret Atwood, Jean Rhys and many others have ‘written back’ and reinterpreted works from the colonial canon.¹⁵ In this way, postcolonial authors have gained the opportunity to defend against and correct the existing distortion of postcolonial subjectivities and positions. Helen Tiffin calls it “canonical counter-discourse” in which

a post-colonial writer takes up a character or characters, or the basic assumptions of a British canonical text, and unveils those assumptions, subverting the text for post-colonial purposes.¹⁶

This counter discourse has provided a new perception of the history which is written from the perspective of the colonized rather than that of the hegemonic power. Therefore, the process of othering/otherness and the representation of the other in English literature are important postcolonial themes that need to be analyzed. In exploring the different dimensions and perspectives of colonial and postcolonial representations and reality, I have taken two important terrains in this paper that bind the notion of self and other in literature; these are the issues of language and the creation of subject positions. Using novels from the colonial and postcolonial period, my research will demonstrate how relationships between the colonial centre and margins, its people and languages in each, are inscribed and later re-inscribed in literature. These two categories—other languages and people, will be analyzed in two broad chapters.

¹⁴ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Empire Writes Back*. op. cit. p. 196.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 33.

¹⁶ Helen Tiffin. “Post-colonial Literatures and Counter-discourse.” *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. Eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2003. p. 97.

The first chapter will look at the issues and representations of language in English literature. As the English language was imposed on the colonies, colonized people got to learn and believe what the British colonizers had depicted in their literature. Thus, the power of language was one of the most important mediums to spread a Eurocentric ideology in the colonies. Many postcolonial writers, such as Chinua Achebe and Salman Rushdie, have attempted to represent their reality and give voice to the other by using English in their narratives. However, the postcolonial authors who were educated in English are in-between two or more languages. This situation causes stress and anxiety and gives rise to various issues and debates, but it also stimulates creativity. Hence, questions may arise about the language in which postcolonial subjects should speak—in their mother tongue or the colonizer's language? Or should the postcolonial people invent a new form of English by hybridizing it with their native languages and contexts? This chapter will further acknowledge these problems by exploring the language debate in Africa and in the Indian subcontinent and the hybridization of English that ultimately help postcolonial countries to strengthen their power and positions.

In the second and last chapter, I will be analyzing the stereotypical projections and racist perpetuations of 'other' people in former colonies. With the power of language and religion, the British Empire colonized and marginalized those people through their exoticized representations in colonial narratives. There are numerous arguments and counter arguments on how the once colonized people have been represented in literature and what their realities were actually like. Particularly, many postcolonial writers have attempted to dismiss their inferior positions by highlighting the real pictures of the 'other.' For example, the African or Australian protagonists in Chinua Achebe's or Peter

Carey's writings function differently than their colonial representations. This chapter will also discuss the subservient role of women as the ultimate other in history. The discourse of White men, however, fails to define the position of a colonized male and a White female. Moreover, the binaries of self and other are subjects to be merged that give rise to postcolonial hybridism.

Therefore, the two chapters of conflicting ideas will attempt to analyze and uphold colonial depictions and postcolonial realities of 'other' languages and people. Finally, by integrating various perspectives, this thesis will try to resolve the ambiguities in the conclusion.

Chapter 1

Other Languages: Representations, Issues and Debates over Language in Africa and in the Indian Subcontinent

[L]anguage was the most important vehicle through which that power fascinated and held the soul prisoner. The bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation.¹⁷

The colonial process and imperial oppression begins by empowering and controlling the language of literature and the medium of education. Literature, as it embodies the best of language and culture, is a powerful means to build, rebuild and un-build realities and histories. For example, one of the ways that the British colonizers established their rule in postcolonial lands was through the power of English language and literature. The colonizers insisted that “Europe and its languages would be the center of the universe”¹⁸ and they documented Africa and Africans as inferior, uncivilized and animalistic in Western literature and art. Gradually this notion became permanently established in the psychology of both the Europeans and the colonized people. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin:

Language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of ‘truth,’ ‘order,’ and ‘reality’ become established. Such power is rejected in the emergence of an effective post-colonial voice.¹⁹

Thus, the British colonizers propagated cultural hegemony and a Eurocentric ideology through English, as language “relates to representation and identity—and the

¹⁷ Ngugi wa Thiong’o. “The Language of African Literature” *Decolonizing the Mind*. Nairobi: Heinemann, 1986. p. 9.

¹⁸ Ngugi wa Thiong’o. “Imperialism of Language: English, a language for the World?” *Moving the Centre*. Portsmouth N.H.: Heinemann, 1993. p. 32.

¹⁹ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Empire Writes Back*. op. cit. p. 7.

value and function of the act of narration itself.”²⁰ The colonizer held the power of discourse while the colonized was forced to learn English that was imposed in his/her education system and daily life. However, as a world language, English has the power to resist the stereotypical portrayal of an exotic orient and to give voice to the other which will reverse the position of self and other. It is “a tool of power, domination and elitist identity, and of communication across continents.”²¹

This chapter will illustrate the power of the English language in positioning self and other in history and literature. In the first section, I will be pointing out how the English language has played a significant role in silencing postcolonial voice and stereotyping ‘other’ people, their languages and lands. The second section will be demonstrating the attempts of postcolonial writers to re-construct their identity, culture and nation by writing their literature in English and by altering the voice of self and other. However, postcolonial writers are divided into two groups based on the choice of language in their literature. The debates for and against using the colonizers’ tongue in narrating postcolonial reality will be discussed in the third section. Finally the concluding paragraphs will discuss the role of a hybrid English, especially Africanized and Indianized English (Caribbean and other forms of English are not discussed in this chapter), in postcolonial societies to strengthen their power and positions.

²⁰ Simon Gikandi. “Introduction: Modernism and the Origins of Caribbean Literature.” *Writing in Limbo*. London: Cornell University Press, 1992. p. 27.

²¹ Braj B. Kachru. “The Alchemy of English: The Spread, Functions and Models of Non-Native Englishes.” *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. Eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. op. cit. p. 291.

Representation of Other Languages in Colonial Texts

[T]he canonical nature and unquestioned status of the works of the English literary tradition and the values they incorporated remained potent in the cultural formation and the ideological institutions of education and literature.²²

Many European texts like Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) have portrayed African people as uncivilized and devoid of any language. In the whole book, we get to see only a few utterances from the Africans which portray them as incomprehensible and in eternal frenzy:

The prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us—who could tell? We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse.²³

The protagonist Marlow does not find them capable of producing any sophisticated speech: “[t]hey howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces.”²⁴ Therefore, he confesses that, “I don’t understand the dialect of this tribe.”²⁵ Their speech is fragmented in sentence and meaning, representing their fragmented characters, distorted psychology and subjectivity. They are capable of “quarrelling in hurried whispers”²⁶ and making only “violent babble of uncouth sounds”²⁷ or “short grunting phrases, which seemed to settle the matter to their satisfaction.”²⁸ The first words that we hear of their distorted language refer to cannibalism: “‘Catch ’im,’ he snapped, with a bloodshot widening of his eyes and a flash of sharp white teeth—‘catch ’im. Give ’im to us.’”²⁹ The other occasion is the announcement of Mr. Kurtz’s death: “Mistah Kurtz—he

²² Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Empire Writes Back*. op. cit. p. 4.

²³ Joseph Conrad. *Heart of Darkness*. op. cit. p. 37.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 61.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 43.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 37.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 42.

²⁹ Ibid.

dead.”³⁰ The use of the dialectic Afro-English on the parts of the uneducated Africans can be seen as an attempt of Conrad to downgrade their language as well as symbolically represent the relegated status of Africa. On the other hand, the Europeans control the voice and language. As Marlow claims, “but I have a voice, too, and for good or evil mine is the speech that cannot be silenced.”³¹ Thus, by taking away the capability of speech from the Africans, Conrad implies that the African natives are subhuman and lack communication skills.

In Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River* (1979), the Africans get a biased and false representation of their history and civilization through European books. As the protagonist Salim says, “[a]ll that I know of our history and the history of the Indian Ocean I have got from books written by Europeans.”³² He also believes that, “[w]ithout Europeans, I feel, all our past would have been washed away.”³³ His belief and appreciation for European knowledge is further strengthened as he gets to know from his friend Indar that, “Raymond knows more about the country than anyone on earth.”³⁴ Historian Raymond, who “had made Africa his subject,”³⁵ embodies the workings and methods of historical representations of Africa. As a matter of fact, Salim gets impressed by Raymond’s “distinction of intelligence and intellectual labours”³⁶ very quickly. Ironically, “there are no books”³⁷ written by this knowledgeable character yet, but Salim is informed that he is going to publish a grand book on imperialism. This can be linked with the articles of Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* where he entrusted Marlow with a bunch

³⁰ Ibid. p. 69.

³¹ Ibid. p. 38.

³² V. S. Naipaul. *A Bend in the River*. India: Picador, 2002. p. 13.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 145.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 211.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 150.

³⁷ Ibid. p. 200.

of his papers with a note: “exterminate all the brutes.”³⁸ Both Kurtz’s pamphlet and Raymond’s book reflect their Eurocentric notion of Africa, its people and an outsider’s view of the colonial process. Moreover, Raymond’s articles raise questions in terms of validity as he only records the events those can suit the people in power and reinforce a Eurocentric ideology. As Salim begins to read his articles he gets the impression that “Raymond didn’t seem to know”³⁹ and that he only gives his limited vision of African history and is “stuck with the newspapers.”⁴⁰ His writings cannot be valid as he “didn’t seem to have gone to any of the places he wrote about; he hadn’t tried to talk to anybody.”⁴¹ Thus, Salim doubts the validity and legitimacy of African historical documents and sources given by the Europeans and becomes aware of their duplicity:

[T]he Europeans could do one thing and say something quite different; and they could act in this way because they had an idea of what they owed to their civilization...they could express both sides of their civilization; and they got both the slaves and the statuses.⁴²

Even though Raymond does not have the “true knowledge of Africa” and has “less feel for it,”⁴³ his documents are given importance and validity since he is a European scholar to the African people. Thus, in colonial narratives, European knowledge and the English language is given preference while marginalizing the languages of the other.

³⁸ Joseph Conrad. *op. cit.* p. 51.

³⁹ V. S. Naipaul. *op. cit.* p. 210.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 209.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 210.

⁴² *Ibid.* p. 19.

⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 210.

Writing Back

To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture. The Antilles Negro who wants to be white will be the whiter as he gains greater mastery of the cultural tool that language is.⁴⁴

The British colonizers spread the English language across the world in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries during their settlement in different colonies. Gradually, influenced by the community of its use, the form of English has transformed into new varieties. It no longer exists in the form of the Queen's language; rather, English has flourished into diverse forms, that are now frequently referred to as 'world Englishes' and the literature from postcolonial nations is also called 'third-world literature,' 'commonwealth literature' or the 'new world literature.' It is true that the languages of the other lands or peripheries are "shaped by an oppressive discourse of power. Yet they have been the site of some of the most exciting and innovative literatures of the modern period."⁴⁵ As William Baer argues, "The English language is nobody's special property. It is the property of the imagination."⁴⁶ Thus, by using the given language of the colonizers in creating literary pieces, postcolonial writers can portray their realities while rejecting Western stereotypical projections and ideologies about the Orient.

English can also be used as a tool of resistance to regain power as Shakespeare's Caliban did in *The Tempest* (1623). As Prospero forced his language on him, Caliban curses Prospero in the same language:

Caliban: You taught me language, and my profit on't
Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you

⁴⁴ Franz Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press, 1967. p. 38.

⁴⁵ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Empire Writes Back*. op. cit. p. 8.

⁴⁶ William Baer. *Conversations with Derek Walcott*. Jackson, Mississippi: University of Mississippi Press, 1996. p. 109.

For learning me your language!⁴⁷

According to Syed Manzoorul Islam, “The other Englishes are a Calibaniseque protest at the inequalities of the colonial experience. They reflect the subaltern’s view of the world, the mimicry of the dispossessed.”⁴⁸ In addition, in his poem “Listen Mr. Oxford Don” (1985), John Agard satirises the form of the Queen’s English and corrupts it with Caribbean dialect. By threatening the appropriation of the Standard English, he attempts to make his own language combining English and Creole vernacular to his purposes:

...I ent have no gun
I ent have no knife
but mugging de Queen's English
is the story of my life...
I slashing suffix in self-defence
I bashing future wit present tense
and if necessary
I making de Queen's English accessory/to my offence.⁴⁹

On the other hand, the written form of English is quite a foreign concept to the Africans as African literature predominantly contains oral literary tradition. For example, in Vera’s *Nehanda* (1993), the Zimbabwean people fail to understand the potential power of written words as oral language is the most inherent and important part of their lives and souls. Ibwe notices the need for retaining orality as their society collides with the written forms of English language:

Our people know that power of words. It is because of this that they desire to have words continuously spoken and kept alive. We do not believe that words can become independent of the speech that bore them, of the humans who controlled and gave birth to them. Can words exchanged today on this clearing

⁴⁷ William Shakespeare. *The Tempest*. Ed. Stephen Orgel. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. I, ii, 362-64. p. 121.

⁴⁸ Syed Manzoorul Islam. “Definition of Commonwealth Literature.” *Other Englishes: Essayes on Commonwealth Writing*. Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 1991. p. 5.

⁴⁹ John Agard. *Mangoes and Bullets: Selected and New Poems 1972-1982*. London: Pluto Press, 1985.

surrounded by waving grass become like a child left to be brought up by strangers? Words surrendered to the stranger, like the abandoned child, will become alien - a stranger to our tongues...The paper is the stranger's own peculiar custom. Among ourselves, speech is not like the rock. Words cannot be taken from the people who create them. People are their words.⁵⁰

We get to see the concept of oral literary tradition in Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958). He deliberately writes his novel in the colonizer's tongue from the point of view of an insider and an other as his purpose is to change the misconceptions of the Western world's notions of Africa. He attempts to show the fact that Africa is not a silent or incomprehensible continent that *Heart of Darkness* made it out to be. Also, he uses the world language English in order to make Africa a unified continent by uniting different African tribes, ethnic groups, languages, religions and societies and to resist the domination of neo-imperialism. In the novel, the subaltern is given voice through Okonkwo, a tragic Igbo hero, who represents an African reality that was unknown to the rest of the world. Moreover, Achebe transforms the English language into a distinctly African style by ornamenting the entire text with Igbo words, phrases, traditional folk tales, five translated songs and twenty-seven proverbs. The folk tales depict the oral culture and community values of the Igbo people: "Ikemefuna had an endless stock of folk tales. Even those which Nwoye knew already were told with a new freshness and the local flavour of a different clan."⁵¹ Many of these stories and fables are told in the form of a rhyme or song: "The rain is falling, the sun is shining/ Alone Nnadi is cooking and eating."⁵² Okonkwo also shares "stories of the land—masculine stories of violence and bloodshed"⁵³ with his son Nwoye and his adopted child Ikemefuna. These

⁵⁰ Yvonne Vera. *Nehanda*. Harare: Baobab Books, 1993. p. 40.

⁵¹ Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*. New Hampshire: Heinemann Publishers, 1996. p. 25.

⁵² Ibid. p. 28.

⁵³ Ibid. p. 37.

stories, as well as the art of language are very important in African culture. In addition, proverbs play a unique role in Igbo culture indicating their intelligence and knowledge: “Among the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten.”⁵⁴ Through these proverbs and stories the Igbo tribe has built a foundation for their oral culture.

Besides, Achebe presents different languages and dialects of different African tribes: “his (Igbo interpreter) dialect was different and harsh to the ears of Mbanta. Many people laughed at his dialect and the way he used words strangely.”⁵⁵ Achebe also shows how the Igbo interpreter is competent enough to communicate in or translate two languages: “the white man began to speak to them. He spoke through an interpreter who was an Igbo man.”⁵⁶ However, the other Igbo natives are unable to understand the language of the white man as Okonkwo’s friend Oberiaka states that, “[h]e said something, only they did not understand him...He seemed to speak through his nose.”⁵⁷ It shows that just as the Europeans consider African languages incomprehensible, the Africans also look on European languages as strange and incomprehensible. Thus, Oberiaka’s statement can be seen as a mirror image of Marlow’s statement about the distorted language of the Africans in *Heart of Darkness*. In the end, Achebe deliberately mocks the European representation of an African hero, echoing Conrad’s novella, as the District Commissioner intends to write only a chapter on Okonkwo’s life while it actually requires a whole book to depict the actual story:

The story of this man who had killed a messenger and hanged himself would make an interesting reading. One could almost write a whole chapter on

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 5.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 102.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 144.

⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 98.

him. Perhaps not a chapter but a reasonable paragraph, at any rate. There was so much to include, and one must be firm in cutting out details. He had already chosen the title of the book, after much thought: *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*.”⁵⁸

Thus, Achebe conveys the beauty of the Igbo language in *Things Fall Apart* by translating and including Igbo proverbs, folk tales and songs in his English masterpiece. He successfully shows the world that the stereotypical projection of voiceless Africans in *Heart of Darkness* is invalid. In fact, by placing English literary forms into African classical frames he attempts to show that the future of African writing lies in the fusion of English language with oral traditions. With the help of an ‘Africanized’ English language, he wants to make a new Africa that will be able to resist the domination of neo-imperialism in the postcolonial era. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin have commented on how Chinua Achebe has “to transform the language, to use it in a different way in its new context and so, as Achebe says, quoting James Baldwin, make it ‘bear the burden’ of their experience.”⁵⁹

Similarly, prominent writer of Indian English Fiction Salman Rushdie uses a hybrid form of English blended with Indian terms to represent the vast canvas of India in *Midnight’s Children* (1981). He corrupts the English language by destroying its natural forms and attempts to dislocate it. This novel best illustrates his strategy of “Indianizing, revitalizing and decolonizing the English language.”⁶⁰ Rushdie’s creative English is frequently called ‘hinglish,’ ‘angrezi’ or ‘chutney English,’ “a language sounding un-

⁵⁸ Ibid. pp. 147-48.

⁵⁹ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Empire writes Back*. op. cit.. p. 10.

⁶⁰ Sisir Kumar Chatterjee. “‘Chutnification’: The Dynamics of Language in *Midnight’s Children*.” *Salman Rushdie’s ‘Midnight’s Children’: A Reader’s Companion*. New Delhi: Asia Book Club, 2004. p. 253.

English and Indian while remaining English and not being literally Indian.”⁶¹ He creatively combines English with Hindi and Urdu words which provides an oriental flavour to the novel and opposes the standard form of master discourses. This is probably done to subvert the English language which is associated with colonial powers and to fit the novel in the contexts of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Rushdie tries to destroy “the notion of the purity or centrality of English” by inventing new forms of existing English words or by effecting “creative hybridization.”⁶² Some examples are: ‘hot pakoras,’ ‘motherji,’ ‘dislikeable,’ ‘doctori-attache,’ ‘unbeautiful,’ ‘sonship,’ ‘memoryless,’ ‘historyless,’ ‘dupatta-less,’ ‘chutnification’ etc. His use of ‘hinglish’ creates humour when phrases like “brass monkey,” “little piece-of-the-moon” and sentences like “Enough of this tamasha,”⁶³ “Let me help, let me help, Allah what a man I’ve married, who goes into gullies to fight with goondas!”⁶⁴ or “I swear no food will come from my kitchen to your lips! No, not one chapatti, until you bring the maulvi sahib back and kiss his, whatsitsname, feet!”⁶⁵ occur. Moreover, there are echoes of the *Arabian Nights* which express the oral narrative style of the novel. Besides, the sentences are fragmented and many dots are used, through which incomplete themes are conveyed. All of these display the extent of Rushdie’s inventiveness and his mastery of the narrative in English. Moreover, Rushdie does not add a glossary or notes to explain the Hindi or Urdu words to the Western readers, as Chinua Achebe has done in *Things*

⁶¹ Tabish Khair. “Language Problems of Dialogue and Mapping.” *Babu Fiction*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001. p. 100.

⁶² Sisir Kumar Chatterjee. op. cit. p. 254.

⁶³ Salman Rushdie. *Midnight's Children*. London: Vintage, 2006. p. 32.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 39.

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 51.

Fall Apart. According to Mukherjee, Rushdie is “daring to translate idioms and puns mediated by no apology, no footnote, no glossary.”⁶⁶

Thus, Rushdie wonderfully puts together elements of colloquial Indian English. His ‘chutnification’ of the English language has been projected through fragmented sentences and themes, Western literary traditions, classical Indian mythology and religion, Indian colonial history, personal history, magic realism, fluctuation of time, and the abundance of colloquial Hindi and Urdu words in *Midnight's Children*. Rushdie’s taking control of English and bending it to his own purposes de-colonize English and postcolonial stereotypes. Therefore, Mukherjee comments, “the most significant challenge is the task of using the English language in a way that will be distinctively Indian and still remain English.”⁶⁷ This new dimension of Indian English writing creates further opportunity for the Indian writers to construct their subjectivity and ideologies through re-introducing ‘other’ as ‘self’ in literature and to have “as distinctive and authentic a voice as the American or the Caribbean.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Meenakshi Mukherjee, “Introduction.” *Rushdie's Midnight's Children: A Book of Readings*. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003. p. 9.

⁶⁷ Meenakshi Mukherjee. *The Twice Born Fiction* New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1974. p. 165.

⁶⁸ Tabish Khair. op. cit. p. 109.

Language Debate in Africa and in the Indian Subcontinent

When we speak the English language, we take on many worlds and many cultures, we are presented with diverse and conflicting positions of power and domination, of desire and identification. It is a complex arena, and exciting in the possibilities that this complexity creates. But most crucially, English spans a disturbed and disturbing terrain, which does not allow for fixed and comfortable positions, either for the writer or reader.⁶⁹

The question of the medium of expression is at the core of the identity of postcolonial literature, especially in colonized countries such as Africa and in the Indian subcontinent. In a piece of writing, a language can be used in its pure, standard form, in a style altered by translation or in a hybrid style in which forms of a different language/languages are incorporated into the main code. Hence, the question of the choice of language in literary works has been a hot debate in various circles. Opinions are sharply divided between two main camps. On the one hand, some writers are enthusiastic about using the languages inherited from colonization, while others reject this idea. One reason for using the English language in postcolonial literature has to do with the world audience. It is argued that writers, who use European languages, do so mainly to make their literary works cosmopolitan, assuming that their native languages could appeal only to a small audience at home. Salman Rushdie has noted that, "after all, few non-English-language Indian writers, other than the Nobel laureate Tagore, have ever made much of an impact on world literature."⁷⁰ The extensive and rich tradition of literary history of English persuades many writers to adopt it over their native tongues. English, as a world language, can also help to bridge the gap between two different races. For example, in

⁶⁹ Firdous Azim. "Whose English Is It Anyway? Problems of Identity and National Language." *Other Englishes: Essays on Commonwealth Writing*. Ed: Niaz Zaman, Shawkat Hussain, Firdous Azim, Kaiser Haq, Syad Manzoorul Islam, Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 1991. p. 42.

⁷⁰ Salman Rushdie. "Introduction." *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing: 1947-1997*. Ed. Salman Rushdie and Elizabeth West. Great Britain: Vintage, 1997. p. x.

Soyinka's *Aké* (1981), young Wole's knowledge of English facilitates him to get the help of an English officer to find his way as he gets lost:

“Kini o fe nibi yen?”

I knew the words were supposed to be in my own language but they made no sense to me, so I looked at the sergeant helplessly and said,

“I don't understand. What is he saying?”

The officer's eyes opened wide. “Oh, you speak English.”

I nodded.

“Good. That is venhrry clenver...What can I doon for you?”⁷¹

Chinua Achebe chooses to write in the hybrid forms in which English is intermingled with African languages and oral literary traditions. The narrative form respects his native traditions as well as recognizes the demands of an international audience. In his essay “The African Writer and the English Language,” Achebe discusses how the imposed language brings various ethnic groups together by providing them “a language with which to talk to one another.”⁷² He believes that English, as a world language, is the best medium of communication inside and outside a country and it also has the power to portray African realities. According to Firdous Azim:

The African writer, writing in English, is constantly faced with the task of using, of wielding and bending, the English language (as Agard does), to convey and hold African realities and experiences.⁷³

Through English, Achebe attempts to respond directly to those British colonial writers who have depicted Africans as ignorant and devoid of expression. He wants to bridge the gap between the former colonizer and the colonized through the world language English. He also points out that English is his language as well and that he is free to use it as he pleases even as a tool against the colonizers who brought the language

⁷¹ Wole Soyinka. *Aké: The Years of Childhood*. London: Collings, 1981. p. 46.

⁷² Chinua Achebe. “The African Writer and the English Language.” *Colonial Discourse & Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Chrisman Laura and Patrick Williams. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. p. 430.

⁷³ Firdous Azim. op. cit. p. 35.

to Africa. However, he states that Africans should implement their own 'Africanized' version of English:

I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.⁷⁴

On the other hand, many writers have refused to use a European language to express African or Indian realities since "an oppressor language inevitably carries racist and negative images of the conquered nation, particularly in its literature, and English is no exception."⁷⁵ In his book *The Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature*, Amit Chaudhuri questions:

Can it be true that Indian writing, that endlessly rich, complex and problematic entity, is to be represented by a handful of writers who write in English, who live in England or America and whom one might have met at a party?⁷⁶

In his essay "The Language of African Literature," Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o claims that language has a special power as it "carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world."⁷⁷ Language can not only control and imprison a person's identity but also direct his/her view of the world by creating "colonial alienation" with the native languages and by dominating "the mental universe of the colonized."⁷⁸ He also points out the role of the enforced colonial academic system that made the colonized children lose the freedom of using their mother-tongues while "English became the main determinant of a child's progress up the ladder of formal

⁷⁴ Chinua Achebe. "The African Writer and the English Language." op. cit. p. 434.

⁷⁵ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. "Imperialism of Language: English, a language for the World?" op. cit. p. 35.

⁷⁶ Amit Chaudhuri. "Introduction." *The Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature*. London: Picador, 2002. p. xvii.

⁷⁷ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. "The Language of African Literature" op. cit. p. 16.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

education.”⁷⁹ Gradually, this estrangement from a person’s root creates a sense of hegemony in his/her mind. Being educated in the English education system, colonial children continue the same cycle that was set up by the colonial rule: “the colonial child was made to see the world and where he stands in it as seen and defined by or reflected in the culture of the language of imposition.”⁸⁰ Nelson Mandela’s autobiography also describes this notion of psychological alienation from his native language:

On the first day of school my teacher, Miss Mdingane, gave each of us an English name and said that thenceforth that was the name we would answer to in school... The education I received was a British education, in which British ideas, British culture and British institutions were automatically assumed to be superior. There was no such thing as African culture.⁸¹

Although Chinua Achebe continues writing in the colonizer’s tongue, he questions himself that “[i]s it right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else’s? It looks like a dreadful betrayal and produces guilty feeling.”⁸² Rushdie also realizes that many people may think that Indian English writers “are simply betraying” their “own culture and linguistic prejudices.”⁸³ He further notes that many critics continue to condemn Indian English writers:

Its practitioners are denigrated for being too upper-middle-class; for lacking diversity in their choice of themes and techniques; for being less popular in India than outside India; for possessing inflated reputations on account of the international power of the English language, and of the ability of Western critics and publishers to impose their cultural standards on the East; for living, in many cases, outside India; for being deracinated to the point that their work lacks the spiritual dimension essential for a ‘true’ understanding of the soul of India; for being insufficiently grounded in the ancient literary traditions of India; for being the literary equivalent of MTV culture; of globalizing Coca-Colonisation;⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 12.

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 17.

⁸¹ Nelson Mandela. “A Country Childhood.” *Long Walk to Freedom*. London: Abacus, 1995. p. 15-16.

⁸² Chinua Achebe. “The African Writer and the English Language.” op. cit. p. 430.

⁸³ Salman Rushdie. “Introduction.” *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing: 1947-1997*. op. cit. p. xi.

⁸⁴ Ibid. p. xiii.

In fact, Rushdie's English has also been criticized for being limited in class and cultural issues:

Rushdie's English is a (highly stylized) reproduction of the consciously mocking, hybridized English of a cosmopolitan Babu/ baba generation, a culturally elitist, highly urbanized, often transcontinental, upper middle class.⁸⁵

On the other hand, as the West considers materials in English, there are only a few good English translations of popular writings by the iconic postcolonial authors. Moreover, there are other handicaps of writing in English like the impossibility to use a second language as effectively as the first, the failure to connect with the natives and the lack of authenticity which makes postcolonial literature merely an imitation of the Western literary forms. Achebe also realizes these problems that postcolonial writings merely replicate English literary style as English is the colonizers' tongue and the colonized "had never attempted to use it, had only learned to imitate it."⁸⁶ Rushdie also takes this issue in to account that:

English-language Indian writing will never be more than a post-colonial anomaly, the bastard child of Empire, sired on India by the departing British; its continuing use of the old colonial tongue is seen as a fatal flaw that renders it forever inauthentic.⁸⁷

Therefore, the debate over the choice of language is difficult to resolve as both the views are logical and convincing. In fact, Parsa Venkateswar Rao has observed that, "[w]e can never entirely overcome or negate the contradictions inherent in colonial experience."⁸⁸ Therefore, if using English does not effect the definition of African literature "in which an African setting is authentically handled or to which experiences

⁸⁵ Tabish Khair. op. cit. p 103.

⁸⁶ Chinua Achebe. "The African Writer and the English Language." op. cit. p. 434.

⁸⁷ Salman Rushdie. "Introduction." *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing: 1947-1997*. op. cit. p. xii.

⁸⁸ Parsa Venkateswar Rao Jr. "A Bit of Literary History." *The Book Review XXI.5* (1997): 12.

originating in Africa are integral,”⁸⁹ African writers can generously choose any form of language in creative writing. Since their linguistic backgrounds are marked by the code of their vernacular, they can deliberately attempt to adapt the English language to their linguistic and cultural contexts by ‘Africanizing’ it. Similarly, Indian writers are free to create literature in English. Many believe that it is a challenge for the Indian writers to narrate their experiences in a foreign language while bridging the gap between the two cultures, histories and ideologies. However, for one and a half centuries many Indian authors have successfully used English in creating rich and creative literature. Moreover, in a multilingual country like India, English can serve as the best medium of communication within and outside the country. According to K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar,

Indians have written—and are writing—in English for communicating with one another and with the outside world, for achieving self-expression too artistically, using English, if necessary, or necessarily, in an Indian way.⁹⁰

In recent times, the accent, terminology and conversational style of most of the Indians are distinctly unique that cannot be compared with any forms of English. Salman Rushdie has termed the cultural-linguistic amalgam of Indian literature as ‘chutnification,’ an indigenized version of English language that Indians have made their own. Today, more and more vernacular and regional words are being incorporated into the English language. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh summed it up when he said:

Of all the legacies of the Raj, none is more important than the English language and the modern school system. That is, of course, if you leave out cricket! Of course, people here may not recognise the language we speak, but let me assure you that it is English! In indigenising English, as so many people have done in so many nations across the world, we have made the language our own. Our choice of prepositions may not always be the Queen’s English; we might occasionally split the infinitive; and we may drop an article here and add an extra

⁸⁹ Chinua Achebe. “The African Writer and the English Language.” op. cit. p. 428.

⁹⁰ K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar. “Introduction.” *Indian Writing in English*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1962. p. 4.

one there. I am sure everyone will agree, Nevertheless, that English has been enriched by Indian creativity as well and we have given you back R.K. Narayan and Salman Rushdie. Today, English in India is seen as just another Indian language.⁹¹

Therefore, hybridization is the ultimate result of Indian English writing, which is seen in the writings of recent writers such as Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghose, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Arvind Adiga and Jhumpa Lahiri as opposed to the use of pure English by earlier writers like R. K. Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand. In present times the language used by these Indian writers is globally appealing simply because of the uniqueness and the diversity it presents compared to other dialects of English. Thus, Indian English or “Hinglish” is “distinctively Indian” and “suitable for any and all of the purposes of art, as those other Englishes forged in Ireland, Africa, the West Indies and the United States.”⁹²

Raja Rao also observed that:

English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up—like Sanskrit or Persian was before—but not of our emotional make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians...Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colorful as the Irish or the American.⁹³

Thus, the English language has played a key role not only in spreading colonialism in other lands, but also in decolonizing the colonial ideology in the postcolonial world, which ranges from resistance to self-affirmation. Today, the non-native Englishes have undergone significant changes which have been possible because of the writer’s imagination and hybridity. Postcolonial writers like Salman Rushdie and

⁹¹ Manmohan Singh. “Address by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh in acceptance of Honorary Degree from Oxford University.” London: Oxford University, 8 July 2005. 10 October, 2009.

<<http://pmindia.nic.in/visits/content.asp?id=44>>

⁹² Salman Rushdie. “Introduction.” *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing: 1947-1997*. op. cit. p. xiii.

⁹³ Raja Rao. “Author’s Foreword.” *Kanthapura*. Bombay: New Directions, 1963. p. v.

Chinua Achebe belong to the diaspora, embodying a hybridity which they can only celebrate. So, they continue the process of hybridizing the English language for their own purposes. Thus, by re-structuring English language and re-placing it in their contexts, postcolonial authors as well as people can be able to narrate their own subjectivity. The Africanized and Indianized versions of English are the sole property of these hybrid people as Kamala Das claims in her poem:

The language I speak
Becomes mine, its distortions, its queernesses
All mine, mine alone. It is half-English, half-
Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest,
It is human as I am human...⁹⁴

It is true that in order to maintain one's identity, history and culture, one needs to nurture one's own languages. However, English, though the colonizers' language, is required to make the world aware of the postcolonial people's demands and history. English can be seen as the 'lingua franca,' the commonwealth of all colonies through which sameness can be experienced. Thus, English can be seen as a means of bridging the gap between the former colonizer and the colonized. In fact, the writers from postcolonial lands have the power to reverse the position of self and other by their own literary style of writing. Therefore, the postcolonial people of the world should "aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience."⁹⁵ So, in order to uphold postcolonial necessities, we should continue the process of hybridizing the English language. Neither language can be neglected in our lives because our mother tongue is the internal language to communicate with each other and to construct the base of our identity, while English is the external language to match

⁹⁴ Kamala Das. "An Introduction." *The Descendants*. Calcutta: Writer's Workshop, 1967.

⁹⁵ Chinua Achebe. "The African Writer and the English Language." op. cit. p. 433.

up with the rest of the world and to reach the pinnacle of development. Only by combining both, can postcolonial people successfully uphold their realities to the world. Therefore, other Englishes, with the patterns of standard English and local content, have the power of giving voice to the subaltern, to resist the neo-imperial subjugation and to bridge the gap between the former colonizers and colonized.

CHAPTER 2

Other People: Stereotyping, Racial and Sexual Differences, Hybridity

Presumably the first instance in which one human perceived another as Other in racial terms came when the first recognized the second as different in colour, facial features, language, etc. And the first felt need for indigenization came when a person moved to a new place and recognized an Other as having greater roots in that place.⁹⁶

As Europeans were increasingly engaged in traveling to distant overseas regions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they came into contact with its exotic people whom they saw as the 'other' on racist grounds. This encounter as well as its fictionalization in literature and visual arts facilitated the Europeans to define their own identity as the self, while the people in the colonies were marginalized. Therefore, the other is constructed and altered by the Europeans to constitute itself as 'self.' As Terry Goldie writes:

Because there is no real line between self and the Other, an imaginary line must be drawn; and so that the illusion of an absolute difference between self and Other is never troubled, this line is as dynamic in its ability to alter itself as is the self. This can be observed in the shifting relationship of antithetical stereotypes that parallel the existence of 'bad' and 'good' representations of self and Other... We can move from fearing to glorifying the Other. We can move from loving to hating.⁹⁷

Otherness can be defined considering one's native culture, ethnicity, race, religion, geographical origins, social conditions or sexual identity. The other is always separate, dissimilar or distinct from the self and the projected European norms. Their dissimilarities are mainly depicted through their bodies, by means of skin colour, costume, eye shape, hair texture, dialect, accent, property, conduct or gender. Through the power

⁹⁶ Terry Goldie. "The Representation of the Indigene." *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. Eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2003. p. 235.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 233.

of colonialism, the British created the normative standards leading to the exclusion and discrimination of the other. According to Homi Bhabha:

The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction.⁹⁸

Thus, otherness produces difference and complicates the relationship between the self and other. There is always a boundary between these two binaries as it is not possible to locate oneself without locating the other:

One's sense of self is always mediated by the image one has of the other. (I have asked myself at times whether a superficial knowledge of the other, in terms of some stereotype, is not a way of preserving a superficial image of oneself).⁹⁹

Therefore, otherness is a historically, politically and culturally constructed category. The unequal power relationship reinforces prejudice, stereotypes and inferiority on the part of the other and projects a false representation of their reality. This chapter will look at examples from various colonial texts that often form and reform the identity of the other through stereotypical representations. A black man is not only viewed as “an animal” or “ugly” but also “expected to behave like a black man—or at least like a nigger.”¹⁰⁰ Thus, the real image of the colonized other gets taken over by the inauthentic representations in colonial literature that flourishes in people's minds and in history forever. In order to change this dominant identity of the colonized, postcolonial authors have attempted to counter such discourses and to portray a different image of the colonized subjects. However, these counter discourses, mostly written in the colonizers'

⁹⁸ Homi K. Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 2004. p. 101.

⁹⁹ Trinh T. Minh-ha. “No Master Territories.” *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. Eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. op. cit. p. 217.

¹⁰⁰ Frantz Fanon. “The Fact of Blackness.” *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. Eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. op. cit. p. 324.

tongue, give rise to postcolonial hybridism, the ultimate consequence of the colonial process. The second section of this chapter will explore these issues. Finally, in the third section, the construction of female identity and position under colonialism as well as patriarchy will be analyzed briefly.

Racial Differences: European Supremacy over Colonized Other

They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them...¹⁰¹

If we examine the literature of the colonizers, we will find that the other is always considered inferior from the colonizer's perspective. The colonized other is seen as being savage, irrational, uncivilized, ignorant, wild superstitious, criminal, excessively sexual and most importantly, inhabitants of unknown dark lands or alien territories. On the other hand, it is the "burden" of the white colonizers to direct them towards the light of civilization as Rudyard Kipling has asserted in his poem "The White Man's Burden" (1899). The title and the whole poem show Eurocentric racism and the prevalent attitudes of the white men to dominate and colonize the third world which is uncivilized. The view proposes that white people consequently have an obligation to rule over and ensure cultural development of people from colonized lands. He writes:

Take up the White Man's burden--
Send forth the best ye breed--
Go, bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait, in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild--

¹⁰¹ Karl Marx. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. Ed. D. D. L. New York: Mondial, 2005. p. 84.

Your new-caught sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.¹⁰²

The theme of Eurocentric exploration and settlement is also described in Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* (1899). In the beginning, we get to see the protagonist Marlow's eagerness to explore new lands which represents the European attitude towards the Orient, especially Africa. When he states, "I had got a heavenly mission to civilize you,"¹⁰³ Marlow expresses his intentions to enlighten the uncivilized Africans. The interest and obsession of a European man to conquer an unknown land can be considered as the first step of colonization:

[W]hen I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say: When I grow up I will go there.¹⁰⁴

On the other hand, Conrad dehumanizes the Africans in *Heart of Darkness* as they are frequently referred to as savages, animalistic, uncivilized, "dusty niggers"¹⁰⁵ and mostly seen as objects or cannibals. There is no African protagonist in this novella and all the natives are simply used as stage props. Marlow describes the habitations of the Africans as:

a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass-roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling, under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage.¹⁰⁶

Even "an improved specimen," the fireman, is described as follows:

¹⁰² Rudyard Kipling. "The White Man's Burden." *The Collected Poems of Rudyard Kipling*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1994. p. 334.

¹⁰³ Joseph Conrad. *Heart of Darkness*. op. cit. p. 11.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 21.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 37.

as edifying as seeing a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat, walking on his hind-legs...and he had filed teeth too, the poor devil, and the wool of his pate shaved into queer patterns, and three ornamental scars on each of his cheeks. He ought to have been clapping his hands and stamping his feet on the bank, instead of which he has was hard at work, a thrall to strange witchcraft, full of improving knowledge. He was useful because he had been instructed.¹⁰⁷

Conrad also keeps on using the racist word 'black' again and again in the novel:

"A black figure stood up, strode on black legs, waving long black arms, across the glow."¹⁰⁸ Moreover, Conrad makes a sharp contrast between the native mistress and the European lady. The native is shown as an exotic creature, devoid of any expressions or language: "She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent...She stood looking at us without a stir and like the wilderness itself, with an air of brooding over an inscrutable purpose."¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, Kurtz' fiancée is described as a sophisticated and educated White woman: "She came forward all in black with a pale head, floating toward me in the dusk. She was in mourning...She had a mature capacity for fidelity, for belief, for suffering."¹¹⁰ Thus, the European fiancée becomes the 'civilized self' whereas the other woman remains voiceless. By projecting these binaries, the British made the mission of colonization even easier. According to Kurtz:

We whites, from the point of development we had arrived at, "must necessarily appear to them [savages] in the nature of supernatural being—we approach them with the might as of a deity..." "By the simple exercise of our will we can exert power for good practically unbounded."¹¹¹

This statement can be related to the power relationship that Daniel Defoe depicts in *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). The narrator Crusoe represents the enlightened European while his man Friday demonstrates all the inferior characteristics that a colonized other is

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. pp. 38-39.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 64.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 60.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 72-73.

¹¹¹ Ibid. pp. 50.

expected to possess. Famous writer James Joyce saw Crusoe as an emblem of a British colonizer:

The true symbol of the British conquest is Robinson Crusoe, who, cast away on a desert island, in his pocket a knife and a pipe, becomes an architect, a carpenter, a knife grinder, an astronomer, a baker, a shipwright, a potter, a saddler, a farmer, a tailor, an umbrella-maker, and a clergyman. He is the true prototype of the British colonist, as Friday (the trusty savage who comes on an unlucky day) is the symbol of the subject races. The whole Anglo-Saxon spirit is in Crusoe; the manly independence and the unconscious cruelty; the persistence; the slow yet efficient intelligence; the sexual apathy; the practical, well-balanced, religiousness; the calculating taciturnity.¹¹²

Crusoe is seen as the founder and ruler of the new world and often referred to as the “king” and the “governor” of the island. He attempts to create a European social order by performing almost all the roles that the colonizers took during colonialism in different colonies. He colonizes the island, establishes his position over the land and its people, teaches his possession Friday the language of the centre and finally, enlightens him in the light of Christianity. Thus, Crusoe becomes the enlightened white who takes up the “white man’s burden” and “ravishes the virgin land.” He applies European technology, farming, religion, language and a basic political hierarchy and makes the other inhabitants civilized in the light of European culture. Therefore, the proud master of the island, Crusoe, writes:

My island was now peopled, and I thought myself very rich in Subjects; and it was a merry Reflection which I frequently made, How like a King I look’d. First of all, the whole Country was my own meer Property; so that I had an undoubted Right of Dominion. *2dly*, My People were perfectly subjected: I was absolute Lord and Law-giver; they all owed their Lives to me, and were ready to lay down their Lives, *if there had been Occasion of it*, for me.¹¹³

¹¹² James Joyce. “Daniel Defoe.” Ed. Joseph Prescott. *Buffalo Studies* 1 (1964): 24-25.

¹¹³ Daniel Defoe. *Robinson Crusoe*. Ed. Michael Shinagel. 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994. p. 174.

Thus, the text explicitly describes the colonial project of the British Empire. In fact, in the end, Crusoe refers to his island as a colony of himself:

In this Voyage I visited my new Collony in the Island, saw my Successors the *Spaniards*, had the whole Story of their Lives...Here I stay'd about 20 Days, left them Supplies of all necessary things, and particularly of Arms, Powder, Shot, Clothes, Tools, and two Workmen, which I had brought from *England* with me, viz. a Carpenter and a Smith. Besides this, I shar'd the Island into Parts with 'em, reserv'd to my self the Property of the whole, but gave them such parts respectively as they agreed on;¹¹⁴

After rescuing Friday from the cannibals, Crusoe immediately gives his subject a new identity without even knowing about his background. He names the boy according to the day they first met and describes him as following:

The Colour of his skin was not quite black, but very tawny; and yet not of an ugly yellow nauseous tawny, as the *Brasilians*, and *Virginians*, and other Natives of *America* are; but of a bright kind of a dun olive Colour, that had in it something very agreeable; tho' not very easy to describe.¹¹⁵

Moreover, he teaches Friday some rudimentary Western habits and English words, for example how to eat, speak or dress properly and enlightens “the Soul of a poor Savage, and bring him to the true Knowledge of Religion, and of the Christian Doctrine.”¹¹⁶

Having the power of narrative, Crusoe writes the story of Friday based on his point of view in his journal, whereas the true story of the other remains unheard:

In a little time I began to speak to him, and teach him to speak to me; and first, I made him know his name should be Friday, which was the day I saved his life. I called him so for the memory of the time. I likewise taught him to say Master, and let him know, that was to be my name. I likewise taught him to say Yes and No and to know the meaning of them...as soon as it was day I beckoned to him to come with me, and let him know I would give him some clothes; at which he seemed very glad, for he was stark naked.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Ibid. pp. 305-6.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. p. 149.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p. 159.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p. 149.

Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* portrays a similar relationship between a master figure that possesses power and a slave that is subject to that power. Prospero projects the image of a colonial imperialist, a civilizer and a noble ruler who brings in European knowledge and mastery and colonizes Caliban's island through his magic. On the other hand, Caliban is an ugly and tragic savage who is described by Prospero as "[a] freckled whelp hag-born—not honour'd with/A human shape."¹¹⁸ Caliban suffers terribly at his master's hands; however, it is Caliban who legitimates Prospero's rule and Prospero is aware of that:

We cannot miss him. He does make our fire,
Fetch in our wood, and serves in offices
That profit us.¹¹⁹

Since the readers get to know about Caliban's character through the eyes of Prospero, we only get a limited view of Caliban. He has been referred to as a "villain," "abhorred slave," "poisonous slave," "savage," "vile race," and a lustful "monster" by Prospero and Miranda. Although Caliban is the real owner of the island, he becomes the inferior subject and an other as Prospero learns about the island from him and then colonizes it through the power of his magic.

Similarly, in *Great Expectations* (1861), Charles Dickens portrays the image of Abel Magwitch through animalistic descriptions, where he is referred to as a "wild beast" by a sergeant¹²⁰ and compared to a dog and a "lower animal" by Pip.¹²¹ Magwitch's criminality is presented as an inescapable characteristic, reminding the reader of his

¹¹⁸ William Shakespeare. *The Tempest*. op. cit. I, ii, 283-84. p. 116.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. I, ii, 310-13. p. 118.

¹²⁰ Charles Dickens. *Great Expectation*. Ed. Charlotte Mitchell. London: Penguin Classics, 1996. p. 36.

¹²¹ Ibid. p. 227.

deportation and rendering him no longer English, but Australian. In the very first chapter we see Magwitch as a violent convict:

A fearful man, all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg. A man with no hat, and with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied round his head. A man who had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, and lamed by stones, and cut by flints, and stung by nettles, and torn by briars; who limped, and shivered, and glared and growled; and whose teeth chattered in his head as he seized me by the chin.¹²²

As the hungry man terrorizes Pip by threatening to eat his fat cheeks, heart and liver, we get a subtle reference of his cannibalism. Moreover, Pip describes Magwitch as inhuman and animalistic: “The man took strong sharp sudden bites, just like the dog... In all of which particulars he was very like a dog.”¹²³ The criminality of Magwitch makes him unable to function properly in London and is, therefore, removed from his own land and transported to Australia. Despite his success in Australia, he desires to get back to the imperial centre and get recognized by creating a gentleman out of the poor boy Pip. However, Pip is disgusted and repulsed by knowing the fact that a criminal is his secret benefactor as Magwitch secretly returns to England: “the abhorrence in which I held the man, the dread I had of him, the repugnance with which I shrank from him, could not have been exceeded if he had been some terrible beast”¹²⁴ and harshly asserts that their “ways are different ways.”¹²⁵ Finally, by attacking and murdering Compeyson, Magwitch proves that he does not fit into the definition of the metropolitan self and therefore, cannot be placed in London anymore. Being a European by birth does not hold him inside the society and puts him outside the centre into the margin, making him an other.

¹²² Ibid. p. 4.

¹²³ Ibid. p. 19.

¹²⁴ Ibid. pp. 319-20.

¹²⁵ Ibid. p. 315.

Thus, the other is not allowed to claim to be regarded as humans, considering that society regards him not as a full, rational human subject but as non-human or sub-human like property. Through their exploitative constructions by the West, the identities of colonized subjects get corrupted in history and literature. By othering and marginalizing the characters of Friday, Caliban or Magwitch, English identity is preserved as polite, mannered, sane and rational.

Writing Back

The world is what it is; men who are nothing, allow themselves to become nothing, have no place in it.¹²⁶

In order to reject and reform the inauthentic colonial representations and the Western portrayal of the other, postcolonial resistant voices have been asserted in many novels to uphold realities. It focuses on the position of the other and views the real world from the perspective of the colonized. This other, who represents the natives of other lands or slaves, is given voice, identity and individuality in postcolonial literature. Having seen various processes of othering in colonial literature in the form of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* or Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, the discussion now turns to postcolonial responses to and rewritings of the texts: Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* and Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs*. All the works focus on re-inscribing the characters of the other as the central protagonists of the texts, not as the marginalized and excluded others.

Famous Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe has criticized Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* to be an absolute racist novel as it dehumanizes the Africans and brings them to

¹²⁶ V. S. Naipaul. *A Bend in the River*. op. cit. p.1.

the level of animals: “Conrad saw and condemned the evil of imperial exploitation but was strangely unaware of the racism on which it sharpened its iron tooth.”¹²⁷ He also objects to the repetition of the word ‘black’ in the novella and mockingly asks Conrad if he was expecting a black figure with black hands and white legs. Achebe further asserts that Western culture should come out of their stereotypical opinions about Africans:

[S]ome advantages the West might derive from Africa once it rid its mind of old prejudices and began to look at Africa not through a haze of distortions and cheap mystifications but quite simply as a continent of people—not angels, but not rudimentary souls either—just people, often highly gifted people and often strikingly successful in their enterprise with life and society.¹²⁸

In order to reject the dehumanized projection of Africans and their languages in Conrad’s racist text, Achebe writes the novel *Things Fall Apart* as a counter response. In the novel, he describes the successful life of a wealthy, ambitious and respected warrior of the Umuofia clan in Nigeria. The protagonist, Okonkwo, has gained respect and success through his own hard work as “among these people a man was judged according to his worth and not according to the worth of his father”¹²⁹ unlike the European monarchy. He bravely resists European orders as he believes that it will gradually destroy their culture and that he will not be manly if he consents to join or even tolerate them. In their culture, colonized men are shown as feminized; as a result, Okonkwo’s son Nwoye, who converts to Christianity willingly, is banished from his home. Moreover, Achebe deflects Conrad’s accusation that Africans are evil and mysterious by showing the natives as also fearful of darkness: “Darkness held a vague terror for these people, even the

¹²⁷ Chinua Achebe. “An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness.” *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. New York: Norton, 2001. p. 262.

¹²⁸ Ibid. p. 261.

¹²⁹ Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*. op. cit. p. 6.

bravest among them.”¹³⁰ Even the women of the Igbo clan historically have important roles and the priestesses are treated as a deity. Thus, Achebe shows the other side of the reality through the eyes of an insider and an other. With all its brutality and superstitions, Africa is shown to have its own civilized tradition, culture, religion, language and manners in the novel. The different rituals and social customs, such as the ‘uri’ and ‘isa-ifi’ ceremony, wrestling competition, feast of the new ‘yam,’ civil manners to serve food, sharecropping and judicial system, further strengthens this notion. But their tradition and social bondage fall apart with the intrusion of British invasion. Achebe’s intention in the novel was to change the fixed notions and ideologies about Africans as primitive and savage by showing their peaceful pre-colonial state of affairs. He feels that these ideas need to be changed not only in the minds of the Europeans, but also the educated Africans, who have been taught to view themselves from a European point of view.

Similarly, the other is given voice in the subtlest retelling of *Robinson Crusoe* in *Foe* (1986) in which Coetzee displaces the original narrative by putting the figure of a female castaway called Susan Barton. Gaining the status of the female colonizer, Barton narrates the story and acts similarly as Cruso. She refuses to be dominated by Cruso’s rule by saying, “I am on your island, Mr Cruso, not by choice but by ill luck...I am a castaway, not a prisoner.”¹³¹ As a result, “[a]fter years of unquestioned and solitary mastery, he sees his realm invaded and has tasks set upon him by a woman.”¹³² In *Foe*, Barton offers the real story of Cruso’s adventure and gives specific physical descriptions of Cruso that the readers did not receive from *Robinson Crusoe*:

¹³⁰ Ibid. p. 7.

¹³¹ J. M. Coetzee. *Foe*. New York: Penguin Books, 1987. p. 20.

¹³² Ibid. p. 25.

The stranger's eyes were green, his hair burnt to a straw colour. I judged he was sixty years of age...In his belt were a short stick and a knife. A mutineer, was my first thought: yet another mutineer, set ashore by a merciful captain, with one of the Negroes of the island, whom he has made his servant.¹³³

She also discovers that Crusoe keeps no records and he has lost all desire to escape. However, both *Foe* and *Robinson Crusoe* keep Friday as a substantial character, though he is viewed very differently in each text. In *Foe*, Friday and Crusoe's power relationship turns into a good companionship. Crusoe depends on Friday for entertainment as well as for help, starting from building a shelter to finding food on the island. However, Friday's tongue is seen to be cut out, making him completely mute in *Foe*. Barton describes Friday as a black cannibal slave: "a Negro with a head of fuzzy wool, naked save for a pair of rough drawers."¹³⁴ She also confesses that: "I caught myself flinching when he (Friday) came near, or holding my breath so as not to have to smell him. I was ashamed to behave thus, but for a time was not mistress of my own actions."¹³⁵ As two subalterns cannot speak at the same time, Barton takes the position of a superior speaker and Friday of a subordinate. Thus, while trying to give the subordinate white woman a voice in *Foe*, the voice of a black man gets lost. Susan Barton becomes the sole narrator and she tells Mr Foe that:

I am a substantial being with a substantial history in the world. I choose rather to tell of the island, of myself and Crusoe and Friday and what we three did there: for I am a free woman who asserts her freedom by telling her story according to her own desire.¹³⁶

¹³³ Ibid. p. 8.

¹³⁴ Ibid. pp. 5-6.

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 24.

¹³⁶ Ibid. p. 131.

Thus, the female figure reverses the position of a white narrator and documents her story in history. This gives the readers an opportunity to experience the same adventure of Robinson Crusoe from the perspective of a marginalized other, a woman.

Another colonial counter discourse is Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs* (1997) in which the marginalized Magwitch of *Great Expectations* is given the narrative voice and is referred to as Jack Maggs, his English identity, unlike Provis in *Great Expectations*. The emphasis on Maggs' identity as an Englishman makes him English, not Australian as he asserts, "I am a fucking Englishman and I have English things to settle. I am not to live my life with all that vermin. I am here in London where I belong."¹³⁷ Moreover, Carey inscribes his own version of Dickens in his character of the writer Tobias Oates whose narrative about Maggs parallels Dickens' creation of Magwitch. Thus, Carey alludes to the power of colonial narratives: "Jack Maggs began to take the form the world would later know. This Jack Maggs was, of course, a fiction."¹³⁸ Therefore, both Tobias Oates' book in *Jack Maggs* and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* represent a fictional character of Jack Maggs/Magwitch through the European power of narration. Oates writes:

I write that name Jack, like a stonemason makes the name upon a headstone, so that her memory may live for ever. In all the empire, Jack, you could not have employed a better carver.¹³⁹

However, Maggs resists the imaginative categorization of himself and his life story that Oates' sensationally represents in his novel about convict life called *The Death of Maggs*. But when Oates discovers the adulterous affair of Maggs with Lizzie Warriner,

¹³⁷ Peter Carey. *Jack Maggs*. London: Faber and Faber, 1998. p. 128.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 326.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 280.

he begins “to heap up all his blame”¹⁴⁰ by creating a wicked and criminal counterpart of Jack Maggs. Thus, Carey’s retelling of the character of Maggs/Magwitch is devoted to correct the miswriting of the false representations of the other in colonial literature.

Unlike Dickens’ text, Carey’s narrative focuses on Maggs’ life and his attempt to justify his dark past despite the threat of imprisonment for returning to London. On the other hand, Carey projects the true character of Henry Phipps who is a selfish, arrogant, weak and a treacherous drunk unlike Pip in Dickens’ novel. He cares nothing for his benefactor and is totally unworthy of Maggs’ inheritance. Hence, the ideal of Englishness that Maggs has nourished all his life proves to be nothing but a deception, as fake as the gentleman Henry Phipps.

Thus, by writing back, these texts demonstrate the process by which colonial authors have othered and marginalized people from the colonies. At the same time, they have rewritten the pervading myths of other people that Europeans have created in popular colonial literature.

Sexual Differences: Women as the Ultimate Other

Women in many societies have been relegated to the position of ‘Other,’ marginalized and, in a metaphorical sense, ‘colonized,’ forced to pursue guerrilla warfare against imperial domination from positions deeply embedded in, yet fundamentally alienated from that *imperium*.¹⁴¹

Otherness can be traced historically to large gender disparities as in traditional male-dominated society, women are frequently considered as the other regardless of their nationality, class or religion and deemed to be emotional, unstable and the weaker sex. Women have always functioned within the discourse of men and the way patriarchy

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 326.

¹⁴¹ Referred to in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back*. op. cit. p. 172.

reduces women to the other is similar to how colonial discourse reduces people of different races and cultures to others. Although women are not as weak as projected by men, people perceive them this way because of the exclusion of their equal roles, stereotypical projections and men's effects to maintain power in the patriarchal society. The socially constructed nature of women, their treatment and social roles are at the core of their otherness. Moreover, women in formerly colonized nations are doubly colonized, both by imperial ideologies and patriarchal domination.

The social role and representation of a woman is always subordinate to the authoritative and central image of man who wants to see her primarily as a daughter/mother/wife or a sister. For example, both in *Heart of Darkness* and *Things Fall Apart*, the story is narrated by a male protagonist. In the former text women are isolated and protected: "They—the women I mean—are out of it—should be out of it. We must help them to stay in that beautiful world of their own, lest ours gets worse,"¹⁴² in the later oppressed and beaten up by their husbands: "No matter how prosperous a man was, if he was unable to rule his women and his children (and especially his women) he was not really a man."¹⁴³ Moreover, the traditional patriarchal society of Igbo tribe had a preference for sons.

Thus, in a society women always have to conform to the social norms, otherwise they are tagged as evil, as a monster or an insane. On the other hand, in "A Vindication of the Rights of Women" (1792), Mary Wollstonecraft points out that women have inferior mental ability than men: "The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove

¹⁴² Joseph Conrad. *The Heart of Darkness*. op. cit. p. 49.

¹⁴³ Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*. op. cit. p. 37.

that their minds are not in a healthy state.”¹⁴⁴ But she blames the role of society and the upbringing of women and considers this the primary factor responsible for women’s mental weakness and their inferior social status: “women are not allowed to have sufficient strength of mind to acquire what really deserves the name of virtue.”¹⁴⁵ Therefore, she suggests that women should give up their extreme passion and emotions and become sensible and rational in order lead a life with dignity:

...to speak with more precision, a well-stored mind, would enable a woman to support a single life with dignity, I grant; but that she should avoid cultivating her taste, lest her husband should occasionally shock it, is quitting a substance for a shadow.¹⁴⁶

This notion of the perfect conduct of a woman can be linked to Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847) where Jane Eyre behaves according to the norms whereas the other woman Bertha, Edward Rochester’s violent and insane secret wife, does not and therefore, stays locked in the attic of Thornfield Manor. Bertha, the lunatic white Creole, is fixed in the role of “the madwoman in the attic” while her story remains untold. This monstrous creature is dehumanized into a fearsome savage: “a discoloured face—it was a savage face” and Jane perceives Bertha as resembling “the foul German spectre—the vampire.”¹⁴⁷ She further describes her as follows:

In the deep shade, at the farther end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it groveled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing, and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ Mary Wollstonecraft. “A Vindication of the Rights of Women.” in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Eds. M. H. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt. 7th ed. Vol 2. New York. W. W. Norton & Company, 2000. pp. 166-167.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p.170.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. 181.

¹⁴⁷ Charlotte Brontë. *Jane Eyre*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. p. 297.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p. 307.

We witness Bertha's destructive and violent tendencies, for example, burning Rochester's bed, destroying Jane's veil, attacking Mason and haunting the house with her mysterious laugh. Bertha, the substandard other, is unable to access the freedom of England that Jane enjoys because she is legally inferior. Spivak views Bertha as "a figure produced by the axiomatics of imperialism"¹⁴⁹ and argues that:

In this fictive England, she must play out her role, act out the transformation of her "self" into the fictive Other, set fire to the house and kill herself, so that Jane Eyre can become the feminist individualist heroine of British fiction.¹⁵⁰

Although Jane often shows sympathy towards Bertha, she cannot help but agree and contribute to hiding Bertha in the attic through her silence and inaction. Thus, Jane is also part of the Victorian ideology even though she protests against the prevailing status of women. As a result, one woman is given voice and status through the sacrifice of the other.

On the other hand, in Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), the marginal character of Brontë's canonized feminist text is given the central importance. As the white Creole protagonist utters the words: "[t]here is always the other side, always,"¹⁵¹ the purpose of rewriting her story becomes evident to the readers. In Rhys' text, the other woman is brought out of the attic where she no longer remains a cliché or a "foreign," "half-caste" lunatic, but a real woman with her own identity, hopes, fears and desires. Thus, the subaltern speaks for herself by narrating her story. For the first time we get to know her real name that is Antoinette Cosway because "[n]ames matter"¹⁵² in conveying

¹⁴⁹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism." *Critical Inquiry*. 12.1 (1985) 247.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 251.

¹⁵¹ Jean Rhys. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982. p. 128.

¹⁵² *Ibid.* p. 180.

a sense of ownership and identity. As her husband Rochester tries to reconstruct her identity by providing a new name, Antoinette protests: "Bertha is not my name. You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name."¹⁵³ Not quite English and not quite native, she straddles between being a White European and a black inhabitant of the Caribbean. Even her own husband describes her with racial imagery as he cannot accept her as one of his own kind: "Long, sad, dark alien eyes. Creole of pure English descent she may be, but they are not English or European either."¹⁵⁴ So, the powerful figure of the husband who represents the image of a colonizer and patriarchal authority is both attracted and repulsed by the woman he overpowers: "I did not love her. I was thirsty for her, but that is not love. I felt very little tenderness for her, she was a stranger to me, a stranger who did not think or feel as I did."¹⁵⁵ In order to fit into the image of a proper English girl, Rochester changes her name to Bertha and forcefully transports her to London where he locks her in the attic of Thornfield Manor. According to Laura E. Ciolkowski:

Antoinette is deemed unsuited for English domestic bliss not because of any psychological disorder from which she might be suffering but because of the appetites and excesses she so liberally exhibits.¹⁵⁶

Thus, Rhys decolonizes the image of the other woman by projecting the true self of Antoinette and emphasizing her perceptions in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. However, a "white cockroach" in the Caribbean and a "white nigger" to the British,¹⁵⁷ Antoinette fails to find a peaceful place for herself and remains the other woman in the literary canon.

¹⁵³ Ibid. p. 147.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 67.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 93.

¹⁵⁶ Laura E. Ciolkowski, "Navigating the Wide Sargasso Sea: Colonial History, English Fiction, and British Empire." *Twentieth Century Literature*. 43.3 (1997): 343.

¹⁵⁷ Jean Rhys. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. op. cit. 102.

Similarly, in *Foe*, the story of a strong and dominant white woman is completely wiped out of history as Mr Daniel Foe (Defoe's given name) constructs the sole story of a white man's adventure in the island. The whole purpose of rewriting the story of Cruso is to give a woman a voice, but Barton keeps on mentioning that it is Cruso's story of which she is a part. Apparently, her true story is distorted at the hands of Foe as she asks him to narrate her adventurous island experience whereas Foe only writes the story of Robinson Cruso without even mentioning the name of the actual storyteller. Therefore, Barton reflects her story "as the one who came, the one who witnessed, the one who longed to be gone: a being without substance, a ghost beside the true body of Cruso."¹⁵⁸ Thus, Coetzee gives the readers a unique situation where the role and power of a woman becomes both important and rejected. Even Mr Foe claims that: "the true story will not be heard till by art we have found a means of giving voice to Friday."¹⁵⁹ Therefore, in *Foe*, the binaries of race and gender become merged and the power of the female narrator becomes at once valid and invalid. On the other hand, both Cruso and Foe use Barton to fulfill their sexual needs. She could easily fight them off, at least against sick Cruso, but she lets them have their way with her. Thus, the positions of Friday as a racial other and Barton as a sexual other get merged as both the subalterns keep on searching for their actual positions in the society dominated by the white men. Barton writes:

Friday's desires are not dark to me. He desires to be liberated, as I do too. Our desires are plain, his and mine. But how is Friday to recover his freedom, who has been a slave all his life? That is the true question. Should I liberate him into a world of wolves and commended for it?...There is an urging that we feel, all of us, in our hearts, to be free; yet which of us can say what freedom truly is? When I am rid of Friday, will I then know freedom?¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ J.M. Coetzee. *Foe*. op. cit. p. 51.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 118.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 149.

However, the binaries of self and other are ambiguous to locate as the positions can get merged. There are people who are in-between the self and other. This hybrid identity of the 'diasporas,' 'mulattos' or the inheritors of postcolonial culture and their positioning in literature is a critical issue. For example, in *A Bend in the River*, the protagonist Salim, from Indian Muslim descent, realizes that he does not have any foothold in the world. His anomalous position is reflected through the following statement: "We had become what the world outside has made us; we had to live in the world as it existed."¹⁶¹ Salim, Indar or Ferdinand's "divided loyalties" and the sense of not belonging to any particular land or country is the ultimate result of the movements of people brought about by colonialism. They feel a bitter sense of alienation not only from the country which belonged to their ancestors but also from the country in which they were born or brought up in but could not call their own. According to Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin:

The situation of the increasingly large number of diasporic peoples throughout the world further problematizes the idea of 'exile,' Where is the place of 'home' to be located for such groups? In the place of birth (*nateo*), in the displaced *cultural community* into which the person is born, or in the *nation-state* in which this diasporic community is located? ...Exile was also produced by colonialism in another way, as pressure was exerted on many colonized peoples to exile themselves from their own cultures, their languages and traditions. The production of this 'in-between' class, 'white but not quite', was often a deliberate feature of colonial practice.¹⁶²

Commenting on the sources and process of hybridity, Homi Bhabha remarks:

Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority). Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p. 286.

¹⁶² Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. op. cit. p. 93.

discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power.¹⁶³

This hybrid human being is what Macaulay had proposed in the context of British India who acts as an intermediary between the colonizers and colonized: “Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.”¹⁶⁴ However, the postcolonial subject fails to obtain the power and rank despite copying the education, language, literature or religion of the colonizer because of the gap between the binaries. As a result, s/he becomes caught in between, neither able to be elevated to the power and status of the colonizer, nor able to retreat to their own previous positions. Homi Bhabha traces the psychological changes in both the colonizer and the colonized:

It is true for there is no native who does not dream at least once a day of setting himself up in the settler’s place. It is always in relation to the place of the Other that colonial desire is articulated: the phantasmic space of possession that no one subject can singly or fixedly occupy, and therefore permits the dream of the inversion of roles... The fantasy of the native is precisely to occupy the master’s place while keeping his place in the slave’s avenging anger... It is not the colonialist Self or the colonized Other, but the disturbing distance in-between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness—the white man’s artifice inscribed on the black man’s body.¹⁶⁵

Thus, being caught in-between the desired position and previous identity, the colonial subject constructs a new identity combining both the identities. This hybrid persona is the ultimate result of the process of colonialism, where the hybrid human beings seem to be forever “seeking to occupy the middle ground.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Homi K. Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. op. cit. pp. 159-60.

¹⁶⁴ Thomas Babington Macaulay. “Minute on Indian Education.” *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. op. cit. p. 430.

¹⁶⁵ Homi K. Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. op. cit. pp. 63-64.

¹⁶⁶ V. S. Naipaul. *A Bend in the River*. op. cit. p. 18.

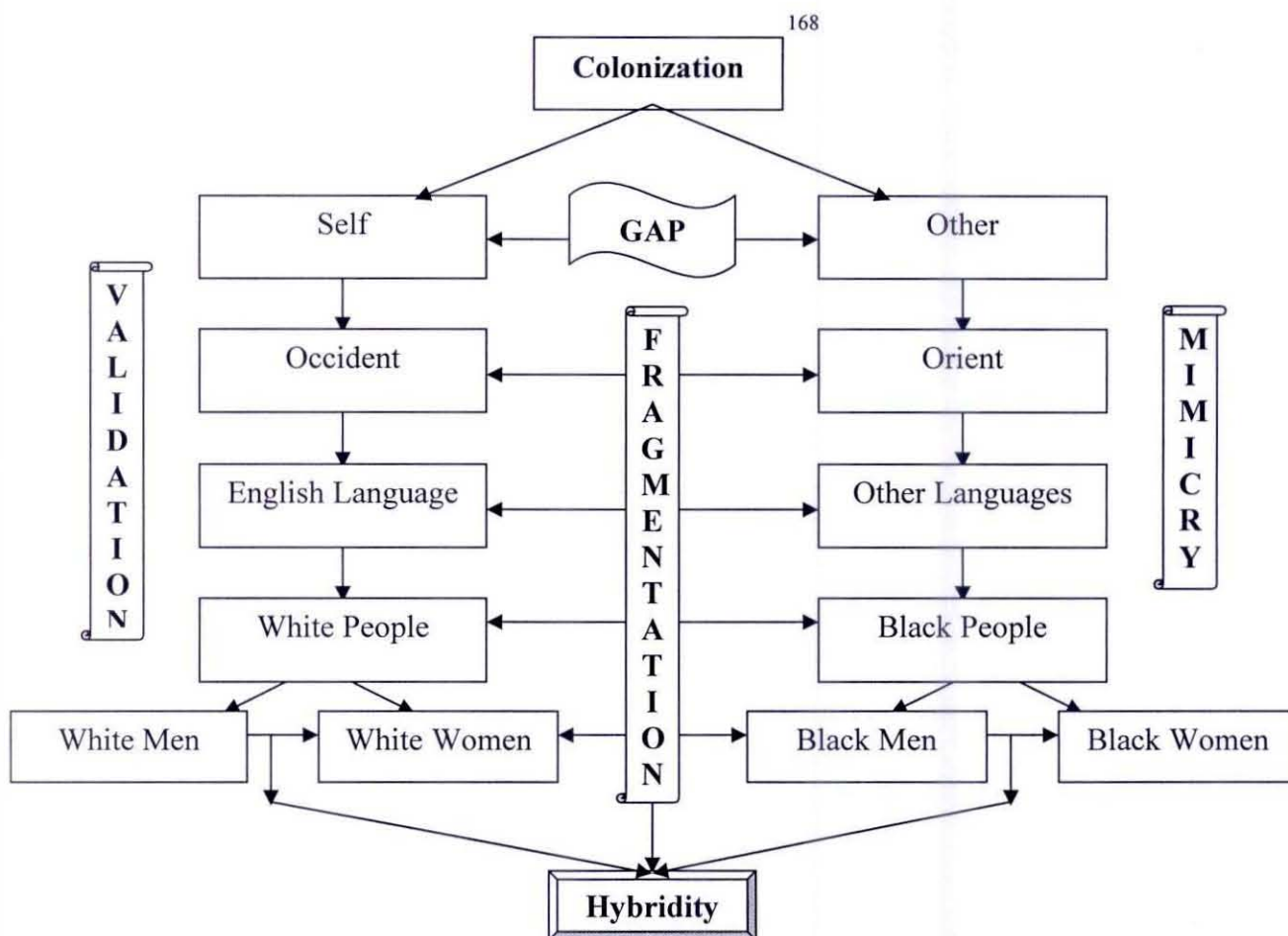
Conclusion

We live in a world that is full of segregations, conflicts, binaries and discriminations. With the power of colonization, the British demonstrated their superiority over other racial groups, while with the power of gender superiority, men have taken control over women in almost all societies. Both the priority groups construct their identity based on the comparison with the other. The gap between the binaries of the Occident and Orient, of English and other languages or of white colonizers and black colonized creates a sense of fragmentation in which the identity of the colonizers gets validation. As a result, the colonized subjects attempt to mimic their masters in order to elevate their position to that of the colonizers but become unsuccessful. These “mimic men” remain in-between the two binaries which gives their identity, language and culture a hybridized nature. However, the hybridized nature of postcolonial literature, people and culture can be seen as a strength rather than a weakness. As Bhabha notes in the preface of *The Location of Culture* that:

There is a kind of global cosmopolitanism, widely influential now, that configures the planet as a concentric world of national societies extending to global villages. It is a cosmopolitanism of relative prosperity and privilege founded on ideas of progress...A global cosmopolitanism of this sort readily celebrates a world of plural cultures and peoples located at the periphery, so long as they produce healthy profit margins within metropolitan societies.¹⁶⁷

This process of hybridity as a result of colonialism can be illustrated as follows:

¹⁶⁷ Homi K. Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. op. cit. p. xiv.



Hence, postcolonial writers like Chinua Achebe, Simon Gikandi or Derek Walcott have acknowledged their cultures with all its complexities and found themselves as products of the hybrid modern cultures. Moreover, many authors in the postcolonial era have rewritten the Western canonical narratives in order to dismiss stereotypical representations and generalization of the languages and people from the Orient. The telling of a story from another point of view can explore the gaps or marginal themes in a text. It can also be seen as a liberating act of the former colonies through which multiple realities come out with the reformation of postcolonial stands. These writers believe in living with all the facts of colonialism, taking it as a phase of history that

¹⁶⁸ The idea of the graph is taken from the senior students of BU-ENH.

cannot be uprooted or denied and moving towards a better future holding up what they have. They believe in changing the prevailing images and making new histories.

As the hybridization of cultures comes out as a product of colonialism, it is not possible to reject either the given outcomes of colonialism or the pre-colonial history. Therefore, postcolonial reality will only be upheld by combining indigenous culture and the effects of colonialism. Moreover, new values and customs need to be assimilated into the old traditions and habits. According to Said: “all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic.”¹⁶⁹ Therefore, people should celebrate whatever they have and whoever they are at present without getting involved in segregations and conflicts. As Helen Tiffin points out:

Post-colonial cultures are inevitably hybridized, involving a dialectical relationship between European ontology and epistemology and the impulse to create or recreate independent local identity.¹⁷⁰

Thus, by embracing a hybrid culture, the strengths of both the cultures can be combined. A cross-cultural society can be extremely effective in increasing communication, competence and success among the nations. Some people may seem very different from oneself, coming from a culture strange to him/her, worshiping another God; but all the varieties and differences of human characteristics and societies should be given the same status. Therefore, a better world can only be made if all the prevailing power relations of cultures, people, borders and languages are changed and are merged in order to bring out the best possible outcomes.

¹⁶⁹ Edward W. Said. “Introduction.” *Culture and Imperialism*. op. cit. p. xxix.

¹⁷⁰ Helen Tiffin. “Post-colonial Literatures and Counter-discourse.” *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. Eds. Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. op. cit. p. 95.

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