

**Representation of Africa in Post-colonial Anglophone Writings:  
V. S. Naipaul, Chinua Achebe and J. M. Coetzee**

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**April 2014**



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A Thesis Submitted to

The Department of English and Humanities  
of BRAC University

by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for The Degree of  
MA in English

April 2014

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

At first, I would like to offer my deep gratitude to my thesis supervisor Professor Firdous Azim for giving me her valuable time and patience. She corrected my uncountable mistakes as well as guided me throughout my thesis work. I would also like to express thanks to Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam for making me understand the phenomenon of post-modernity in literature. I am grateful to Sonika, Anika and Parvez for their assistance in writing my thesis. Lastly, I am grateful to my parents who have always encouraged me to complete my paper successfully.

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**ABSTRACT**

Post-colonialism and post-modernism are literary movements that can be viewed together. In this context post-colonial Anglo-phone literature about Africa is written from different points of view by post-colonial writers like Chinua Achebe, V. S. Naipaul and J. M. Coetzee. All of them represent Africa as a hybrid and complex society. Their treatment of Africa is different from each other. Naipaul carries on traditional orientalist discourse while Achebe propagates a counter discourse in representing Africa. In both writers periphery becomes the focus of their representation; however they portray different concepts of Africa. J. M. Coetzee opens a new face of representation where he blends post-colonial phenomena with the techniques of post-modern writing. He renounces the authorial point of view to empower the language of narrative, showing that language is autonomous and rather than using it as a means to establish any particular ideology, it is interpreted by the reader to resolve the question of interpretation.

## INTRODUCTION

The moment I realized in reading *Heart of Darkness* that I was not supposed to be part of Marlow's crew sailing down the Congo to a bend in the river, but I was one of those on the shore, jumping and clapping and making faces so on, then I realized that was not me, and that that story had to be told again.

*Chinua Achebe in an interview (1989)*

Representations of Africa are ambiguous and ambivalent in the writings of post-colonial writers. Chinua Achebe, V. S. Naipaul and J. M. Coetzee are the most renowned of the writers as they are most vibrant in their depiction of post-colonial identity, hegemony, racism, violence and resistance. Instead of concentrating on the hybrid nature of post-colonial African identity Achebe shows Africa as a universe that has its own tradition with a unique way of life. On the other hand, racism, violence and the problematics of African identity are the most discussed issues in Coetzee's narratives. Moreover, Naipaul in his fiction and travel writings examines Africanism from the point of view of an outsider. Representations of African identity by this triad reflects many dimensions of the cultural, social, and psychological phenomena of Africa in the emerging era of post-coloniality.

In *What is Literature?*(1947) Jean Paul Sartre argues that language is used in literature as a tool not only for clear meaning, but also to portray the world from a certain political view point. In the same line, Roland Barthes claims that the structure of writing is created under a historic reality with political implications. In further discussions of his theoretical approaches, Barthes deals with the "problem of meaning", asserting that there are usually two ways of writings; one to deconstruct the trend of history by re-writing the history of a certain territory and

two, to follow the path of his or her ancestors by continuing the trend of writings which support and elaborate it and as a result becoming a part of a grand narrative. Barthes explains that writers self-consciously produce meaning through their writings (Contemporary Critical Theorist, Roland Barthes 70). He points out that language either prolongs the bourgeois ordering of 'the world of meaning,' or can develop a self-conscious engagement with that world. In this way, a writer questions and reorders existing discourse by weakening existing bourgeois ideological hegemony. This identification of two ways of writing is described by Barthes, in *S/Z* (1970) and *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973) (70). Following this line of thought, we observe that Naipaul represents the first category of writing whereas Chinua Achebe's initiative is to 'question' the bourgeois ideological hegemony. As in Orientalist approach where African people and tradition are represented as Other by Joseph Conrad, Naipaul can be categorized as a traditional writer who strengthens the bourgeois tradition of discourse. On the other hand, Achebe's approach towards literature is, to quote Culler, "to problematise the meanings [of] our cultural codes otherwise confer, and thus to unwrite the world as it is written by prior discursive parties" (70-71). In post-colonial discourse, the meaning of narrative, is dependent on the position of writing, and as structural theorist Ronald Barthes argues "meaning is not decided by material reality, but by positions in systems of discourse" (73). Now, if we have to diagnose meanings of the discourses attempted by the two writers we have to find out Achebe's and Naipaul's position in post-colonial discourse which will ultimately answer the debate on representation in the post-colonial world. Though, Achebe and Naipaul have their unique ways of representing Africa, their political goals are clear. Achebe represents Africa from a native point of view; on the other hand, Naipaul is self-consciously strengthening and extending the pre-established myths of Orientalism. Both Anglo-phone writers neither of whom can allow delight English as their

mother tongue. If we investigate we will observe that African culture and history or established tradition in African languages was totally absent in English writing. As a result, Achebe is an intruder in this field. In our discussion, we will see how Achebe has succeeded in establishing a new discourse by representing the Other in a manner in which the Other becomes the Subject.

Anglophone writers often use opposing discourses to create meaning which are ambiguous and double-edged. Therefore, the process of deconstructing the writing is the most important feature in post-structuralist and deconstructualist criticism. Claude Levi-Strauss had defined language as “as a system of sign and linguistics as a branch of semiotics” (1273). This has been used by post-structuralism to show that every structure is oppressive and when language is used as structure to create an ideology it can be oppressive too. As a result, post-structuralists and post-modernists, rather than using language as a tool of establishing an ideology, try to detach a writer from his or her writings. In this way, language becomes autonomous. This is why; meaning is created by readers and is removed from its structure. That is why Barthes empowers readers by calling it “reading-as-rewriting” as the reader participates in the critical dialogue. This is best encapsulated in the theory of the “The Death of the Author” (74). J. M. Coetzee’s *Foe* provides a good example of this. The use of metafictionality questions the authenticity of the narrator. Meta-fictionality and inter-textuality enable post-colonial writing to explore the ambiguity of meaning and identity. Coetzee mingles post-colonial and post-modern techniques of writing to explore the conflict between an authorial and reader’s point of view. It stresses on the intentional silencing of voices by Western canonical writers and questions the authenticity of Western discourse. Elements of metafictionality in *Foe* (1986); question previously established trend of meaning in *Robinson Crusoe* (1724). However, the text does not try to establish a Truth. The novel contains three stands distinctly represented by the



writer, reader and observers (critic) which construct a variety of meanings. The metafictional element in the novel intertextualises *Robinson Crusoe* to deconstruct its myth and also to empower readers by giving other possibilities to the story. Coetzee's other renowned work, named *Disgrace* (1999) depicts post-apartheid South Africa. It helps the reader to see the altered picture of colonialism where subject positions have been altered due to change in politics and power positions. However racism has its claws all over South Africa. It is important to note that the first part of the novel echoes Fanon's idea of the Black inferiority complex as expressed by a student who unconsciously submits herself to her unconscious desires only to revolt against them later on. The novel depicts the psychological metamorphosis of both the races in a new emerging historical context. That is not simply hybridity or mimicry. It is rather a conflict of suppression, hate, resistance and misunderstanding. In representations of Africa, the text does not simply confine itself to the realm of representation and re-representation. It deals with problems of language or of the limits of language. As Andy Stafford and Susan McManus say "For Barthes, the interplay of theorizing and writing means renouncing the drive to an authoritative and all-encompassing metalanguage and, in turn, this leaves us with the multiplication of spaces of theorizing and writing" (81). This applies to the representation of South Africa in J. M Coetzee's novel.

In the first chapter, V. S. Naipaul's non-fiction *The Masque of Africa* (2010) and fiction *A Bend in the River* (1979) are together explored to see the traces of orientalist representation of Africa in these writings. As a master of post-colonial writings, Naipaul encapsulates the phenomenon of post-coloniality in both his fictional and non-fictional writings. In his representation of post-colonial Africa, the continent is often portrayed as a land of failure. However, in his fictional character such as in Salim we observe an alienated personality with a

feeling of insecurity and restlessness in search of a personal space. He becomes a mimic man who struggles to cope with his environment. He neither identifies with Africa or India, nor with Europe. Naipaul's protagonist is a post-colonial psychological phenomenon. However, interestingly in the representations of Africa in Naipaul's writings, we observe Subject and Object dichotomy where Africa is represented as Other.

In *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *Arrow of God* (1964) Chinua Achebe (1930-2013) brings Africa to the centre from the periphery by penetrating into African identity. He challenges the previous discourses saying that it represented Africa from an outsider point of view. Here, Africa becomes Achebe's subject with a notion of self-criticism as well as a criticism of earlier discourse about Africa. Africa is not a territory without civilization and tradition; rather it is a continent of prehistoric traces that differs from western civilization. It is not a static civilization; rather it changes under the influence of colonial rule. Whether this change is good or evil is questionable but Achebe has successfully participated in the post-colonial trend of writing back to the centre.

Finally in the representation of Africa, J. M. Coetzee rejects conventional idea of writing from an authorial point of view; rather he denounces any subject position to give the discourse totally an autonomous identity. In *Foe* (1986) the author combines the techniques of post-modernism and post-colonialism to explain a conflict of representation. He empowers the reader as well as the language instead of giving the writer the full authority over the discourse. In a further attempt, he gives an example of a changed subject position in *Disgrace* (1999). As this binary position of dominant and dominated is a timeless phenomenon, Coetzee stresses on the point that in a discourse one writer can propagate a particular subject position, if he or she cannot renounce his or her authorial point of view by giving the language an autonomous identity.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THESIS: ORIENTALISM

“I had to go to the documents in the British Museum and elsewhere, to get the true feel of the history of the colony.”- Nobel Lecture by V. S. Naipaul (2001)

V. S. Naipaul's confession of acquiring knowledge about colonialism from the British Museum illustrates his understanding of history. We can easily connect his way of representation with Edward Said's famous book *Orientalism*. Naipaul's preconception is shaped by the discourse established by the Occident writers, mainly travel writers or religious preachers. No doubt his simple assertion will help us to understand his position in representing Africa through using of Said's theory of Orientalism. Instead of being a successful writer in representing an ambiguous African identity consisting of the characteristics of hybridity, hegemony, homelessness, alienation, anxiety and mimicry, we see him as a propagator of Orientalism due to his depiction of African civilization as an embodiment of failure.

Naipaul is often a target of post-colonial critics who accuse him of being cynical of worlds Other than the European. Corruption, disorder and violence are also clearly depicted by Chinua Achebe in his essay named “The Trouble with Nigeria”. This particular essay describes the true picture of Nigeria: corruption, problem of tribalism, the unpatriotic nature of Nigerian people as well as the immaturity and dishonesty of the country's politicians. Moreover, Achebe depicted the problem and possibilities of the Igbo clan in this particular essay. The impression of a reader after reading the essay will not be different from that of Naipaul's writing about Africa, often, the picture is even worse. However, the accusation against Naipaul is that he represents African people as if they are solely responsible for their downtrodden condition. Naipaul's

representation follows the line of Orientalists like Conrad. He confesses at the very beginning of his travel book *The Masque of Africa* (2010):

... I would drive the fifteen or so miles to Entebbe, where the airport was and where, on the lake in Africa, there was also (as there was in other British colonial towns) a botanical garden, pleasant to walk in. Sometimes (a reminder of the wilderness by which we were surrounded, but from which we were protected) the ground of the garden was flooded in parts by water from the Lake seeping through. (Naipaul *Masque 2*)

The writer is in a botanical garden, a colonial enterprise which gives a flavor of wilderness, while keeping him safe from the actual wilderness of Africa, as we observe in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: "... the wilderness . . . seemed to draw him to its pitiless breast by the awakening of forgotten and brutal instincts, by the memory of gratified and monstrous passions . . . this alone had beguiled his unlawful soul beyond the bounds of permitted aspirations" (Conrad 112). This is the beginning of the African journey for both Conrad and for Naipaul. Naipaul begins his narrative by giving a hint of a difference between colonial 'wilderness' and African natural 'wilderness', and that the 'wilderness' of Africa is not safe but had been tamed by colonizers.

Moreover, Naipaul, is a self-proclaimed descendent of Conrad, as he declares his admiration for Joseph Conrad in one of his Interviews: "Conrad's value to me is that he is someone who, 60 to 70 years ago, meditated on my world, a world I recognize today. I feel this about no other writer of the century . . ." (Conversation with V. S. Naipaul, 9). In the same interview, he adds:

It is remarkable that Conrad could look at that world with the utmost seriousness. What an achievement! Can you imagine the pressure not to see it? Asiatics are people that simply didn't exist as individuals. In the novel of the 19th century they are just background, never more. Well, what a wonderful thing to do, to study the difference between two different kinds of people. With Conrad you have a great effort of understanding, of sympathy - do you feel that?" (A Conversation with V. S. Naipaul, 10)

Conrad has also been reinterpreted by Chinua Achebe in his essay “An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*” where he says: “*Heart of Darkness* projects the image of Africa as “the other world,” the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man’s vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality” (1614). When Joseph Conrad becomes one of the guides for our travel writer, we are led naturally to references of Western historiographers and travel writers, such as Stanley and Speke in *The Masque of Africa*. References from Speke abound while describing Mutesa, the wide eyed son of Sunna, who is shown to be as cruel as his father; a powerful king of pre-colonial Africa. Speke admires the civilization of Mutesa, and declares that that civilization has been destroyed by the Arabs. Naipaul also refers to Henry Morton Stanley who is a British journalist as shown in *A History of Africa: African societies and the establishment of colonial rule, 1800-1951* (2006), and describes him as an enthusiast about spreading Christianity in Africa. He has jotted down his experience of travelling in *Through the Dark Continent* (2012), similarly to Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, where the narrator is looking for Mr. Kurtz. This reminds us of the symbol of darkness that connects the two authors Stanley and Conrad. The inter-textuality is obvious, though there is no proof that Conrad was influenced by Stanley. However, it shares a trend of thought which had successfully been developed in the discourse of Orientalism.

In *The Masque of Africa*, V. S. Naipaul wishes to reach at Africa’s “beginning of things”. This is an effort to discover the root of African beliefs. The inner meanings of African ways are discovered through a discussion of the religions, mythical histories and cults through European travel writers. Most interestingly, the narrator says that he is going to be neutral about African customs. However, his method of representation draws a line between good and evil which tends to show the rituals of African belief as obscure even to its own people. This is because Africans

do not have a written history; only some documents by some western travelers which are followed by Naipaul as main sources of African history. However, it is important to remember that though Naipaul tries to search the “beginning” of African beliefs, he actually depends on some documents from the very recent past. Also African oral tradition is discarded as a resource. Here, we have to remember that while western civilization is established on written documents, African civilization is rooted in its oral tradition. But according to Naipaul Africa cannot be discovered without the help of earlier white travelers.

Naipaul starts his travel in Uganda, then proceeds to Ghana, Nigeria and Gabon; finally ending in South Africa. His journey in Uganda started with a visit to the sacred place of Mutesa described in the chapter “The Tomb at Kasubi”. This is where the past is examined with help from John Hanning Speke; Naipaul is explaining African tradition with information derived from Speke:

Mutesa was only twenty-five, almost as cruel as his father, but at the same time outward-looking, a man of intuition and intelligence. He liked the guns he got from Speke; he liked the compass and other instruments he saw Speke using. . . . But Mutesa’s Baganda people, with their gift for social organization, their military discipline, and their elaborate court ritual, evolved over some centuries, has a civilization of their own. They built roads as straight as Roman roads; . . . . he said the Arabs were liars; and thirteen years later, when he met the explorer H. M. Stanley, he asked his help in getting English missionaries to come to Uganda. (Naipaul *Masque* 4-6)

Mutesa is good and less cruel than his father as described by the western traveler as he seeks help from the English as well as being generous to Christian missions. The acknowledgement of an African civilization is also interesting. However, the reason of this acknowledgement becomes clear when Speke says that Africa had its own civilization once, but they had lost it to the Arab invaders, and eventually regained it with the help of Europeans. It serves two purposes: first, Arabs are held responsible for the destruction of African civilization

and finally, only Europeans can bring back their civilization with the blessings of Christianity. Speke did not acknowledge the injustice of British or European colonial rule over Africa, and does not think that colonial rule is bad. He makes fun of the Arab traders in Africa: “. . . The Kabala Sunna, known for his great cruelty, had welcomed the Arabs. He liked their toys. He especially liked the mirrors; he had never seen his face before, and couldn't get over it” (Naipaul *Masque*, 4-5).

Unlike Mutesa, his father Sunna is shown as cruel as he had accepted Arab traders and their gifts. Islam and Arabs are represented as outsiders to Africa as an occupation force as well as colonizers and destroyers of African culture and traditions. Though Christianity and Whites are no different to Arabs as colonizers; they are represented as a peace-bearers, educators as well as saviors of African history. Naipaul's narrative tries to justify British rule by asserting that Africa had its own tradition or history before the Arab invasion. British rule had reincarnated the lost civilization of Africa. This justifies British rule in Uganda. Europeans have given African people the light of education, restored what Arab rule had destroyed. Speke did not consider Arab and British rule from the same point of view. He sees one as destructive, the other as constructive, instead of calling them both outsiders. This type of justification was also common in Asia. For example, Amitav Ghosh in *The Glass Palace* (2000) and *The Sea of Poppies* (2008) shows how the British justify their rule over the region in the name of freedom to the local people from the cruelty of local kings or zamindars. They claimed that the local bourgeoisie were brutally oppressing the people and as a result they had to establish rule of law in the regions by defeating the local elite. This is the justification for European invasion of other's lands.

The current political situation is shown as chaotic in *The Masque of Africa*. Bloodshed and tribal wars have devastated Uganda. The representation of Africa as a land of violence is

echoed in *A Bend in the River* (1979). The depiction of tribal wars, bloodshed and corruption are described as a natural African phenomenon:

.....; and you understood that what was once bush in an unimportant area of a small colony had become valuable building land. The shiny new corrugated-iron roofs gave you the feelings that in spite of the bad recent past, forty years of bad *as anything in Africa* – murderous tyranny followed by war and little wars – there might be a money frenzy down there now. (Naipaul *Masque 2*) [My Italics]

The leaders of Africa are seen as brutal, criminal and corrupt and autocratic. The big man in *A Bend in the River* is no different from Idi Amin. However, Africa is a land that has a gifted leader like Nelson Mandela as well. The long period of repressive colonial rule in Africa is completely ignored. In keeping with Said's understanding of how non-European civilizations are Othered in Orientalist discourse, Naipaul focuses on the exotic life of a castrated drum bearer in *The Masque of Africa*. Moreover, to stress his point he brings a descendent of a drum-beater who confesses that he is not actually castrated: “. . .He added that the kabaka's drum-beaters had to be castrated, since they were always about the Kabaka and were likely to gaze on the Kabaka's women. This was said more to thrill us than anything else. He himself was not castrated” (Naipaul *Masque 11*). The representation shows the contradictions between myth and reality. What had been already established by the earlier discourse is different from what is happening; showing a duality in Naipaul's writings. The myth was that beaters were castrated, but the reality reveals the falseness of the myth.

Similarly, human sacrifice is described by Naipaul's predecessors. Naipaul repeats this by referencing a presenter in popular media. Popular media, as we know, is another form of spreading the messages of neo-colonization. Popular media tries to abolish cultural diversity by trying to establish western cultural influences and is backed by western capitalist corporations. As my paper is trying to draw a connection between the existing orientalist trends it will not be



wrong to say that popular media is another version of orientalist trends. That Naipaul takes a representation from this media as a source to carry on traditional allegations against African “cannibalism” is significant: “Some days later I was looking at a magazine program..... The woman presenter said—with a degree of ease, like someone only stating a fact about the monument—that nine men had been sacrificed at the time of the building” (Naipaul *Masque* 14). Then the text refers to the past with the help of a narrator named Prince Kassim: “But later, when I heard from Prince Kassim, Mutesa’s Muslim descendant, that in old days human sacrifice was a common practice when they put up the pillars or laid the foundations of a tomb,...” (Naipaul *Masque* 15). As mentioned earlier, Naipaul constantly uses western sources. Reference of Speke is frequent in the first part of Naipaul’s book: “When Speke went to Uganda in 1861 Mutesa was Kabaka, exercising a most despotic kind of power in his court, killing people ‘like fowls’ (as a visitor said); .....” (Naipaul *Masque* 15). The techniques of intertextuality prove Naipaul to be a part of the Oriental discourse established by Western writers. Narrative techniques are important to understand the meaning in discourse. Traces of earlier Western writers are evident in Naipaul’s writing.

Orientalists are cruel. Naipaul proves this by inserting the cruel story of burning the Mutesa’s brothers by his mother as an epilogue or night time story of a witch. Elements of fairy tales can be observed everywhere in this part. It is narrated as a mother or grandmother telling a bedtime story to thrill their child or grandchild: “... Unless you knew what was going to happen you might miss the drama in Speke’s pages.....” (Naipaul *Masque* 17). Speke had mentioned only once that during a music-playing session half the brothers were “manacled”. Naipaul uses these references to make a good story:

There was another piece of the coronation preparation that Speke witnessed. The woman who cut Mutesa's umbilical cord was now a figure of honor in the court. . . . Speke, walking in the neighborhood of Mutesa's palace one day, came across Sunna's palace. . . . The bush begins to seem ordinary: no romance, no history, seems possible in that wet red earth. (Naipaul *Masque* 18-20)

As Africa does not contain any records of history; a history of Africa can only be gathered from books by early Western travelers.

Stanley says that Sunna was born in 1820, became Kabala in 1836. He was dead when Speke came to Uganda in 1861-2, and Speke, *a geographer above everything else, writes about him only tangentially*. For living details of Sunna you have to turn to Stanley, though he came to Uganda many years later, in 1875, during his east-to-west crossing of the continent. Many people were still alive then who knew the terrible Sunna, and Stanley, with the Newspaperman's relish for a good story, got them to talk. (Naipaul *Masque* 22) [My italics]

Naipaul relies on Speke for a reference to African history even though Speke is a geographer and wrote only "tangentially" about the kabala. Stanley was a journalist, and "good stories" and "true stories" were demanded by the newspapers. It shows that Naipaul's two sources have no credibility and most of the stories about Sunna are about cruelty, revenge, injustice and abuse of power. The killing of the people of Busoga is described in detail to show how brutally Sunna used to take revenge.

Part five of "The Tomb at Kasubi" starts as "In 1875, when Stanley passed through Uganda on his east-to-west crossing of the continent, he saw Mutesa, then about thirty-eight, at war against Wavuma people on the shore of Lake Victoria. ...." (Naipaul *Masque* 26). Naipaul depicts not only a written text, but also a reproduction of Mutesa's drawing by Stanley to illustrate on the history of Africa: "... The engraving of Stanley's book, many of them based on photographs by Stanley; show what the watchers would have seen. They show the beautiful boats lined up...." (Naipaul *Masque* 27). And the history of a part of Africa evolves with Stanley: "When Stanley next saw Mutesa, Mutesa was in high spirits..... Stanley talked him out

of that, and Stanley also, to everyone's relief, mediated a peace between the parties" (Naipaul *Masque* 28). It is important to remember that Stanley was not a professional historiographer or a specialist of history, but Naipaul has agreed or relied on his description as a history of Africa.

Edward Said asserts in *Orientalism*, in the chapter of "The Scope of Orientalism":

Yet any account of Orientalism would have to consider not only the professional Orientalist and his work but also the very notion of a field of study based on a geographical, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic unit called the Orient. Field, of course, are made. They acquire coherence and integrity in time because scholars devote themselves in different ways to what seems to be a commonly agreed-upon subject matter. (50)

V. G. Kiernan termed the effort of the Occident to construct the Other as exotic, mysterious and unbelievable as a "day-dream". Rather than a "day-dream" we can then return again to Said to see how the materiality of this discourse was established:

. . . When a learned Orientalist travelled in the country of his specialization, it was always with unshakable abstract maxims about the "civilization" he has studied; rarely were Orientalists interested in anything except proving the validity of these musty "truths" by applying them, without great success, to uncomprehending, hence degenerate, natives. Finally, the very power and scope of Orientalism produced not only a fair amount of exact positive knowledge about the Orient but also a kind of second-order knowledge—lurking in such places as "Oriental" tale, the mythology of the mysterious East, notions like Asian inscrutability—with a life of its own, what V.G. Kiernan has aptly called "European's collective day-dream of the Orient". (Said 52)

The discourse established by the Occident is claimed as "positive knowledge" and focuses in its own way on the reality of the situation:

. . . Yet this is not to say that they know all there is to know, nor, more important, is it to say that what they know has effectively dispelled the imaginative geographical and historical knowledge I have been considering. We need not decide here whether this kind of imaginative knowledge infuses history and geography, or whether in some way overrides them. Let us just say for the time being that it is there as something *more* that what appears to be merely positive knowledge. (Said 55)

Orient is generally assumed as the East. However, if we consider the entire discourse of Orientalism, it will also include the periphery of Africa. As in the discourse Africa is also

considered as the Other of the West. Naipaul never directly states that Africa or Asia is a direct opposite of the West or that they are the Other in Western discourse because he is well aware about overlapping identities of post-colonial era where East and West become integrated. That is why rather than only comparing Africa with the West; he analyses ideological conflicts in Africa. Naipaul uses African people or local newspapers as his “native informers”. One of his narrators is Susan whose identity is amply revealed by her name: “So here, for Susan and people like her, was another cause for disturbance, something before the horrors of Amin and Obote, something that went back to the time of the British protectorate (which Mutesa had wanted). It made now for a full century of disorder” (Naipaul *Masque* 31). Her name is Susan Naluguwa Kiguli. Her father gave her a Judeo-Christian name then she self-consciously included her clan’s name and she also bears her father’s name. She thinks she is a still part of her clan:

‘My first name is Susan. It was given by my father.’ Who had disappeared in the Amin time. ‘He had an aunt whom he adored, and she had this name. So it was a sentimental choice for him. Yet I know it is a Judeo-Christian name, and when I came to the university I added my clan’s name—Naluguwa, which means “of the sheep clan”. I feel it is very part of my identity – here you have your own name. I could go as Susan Naluguwa, but I use my father’s surname too—Kiguli- because this is how the school registered me’ (Naipaul *Masque* 31)

And Susan continues describing herself as a hybrid colonial being. She explains the duality that is represented in her accepting modernity as a blessing from colonial rule or from the West. However, she is conscious that this modernity is also destroying her culture. She recognizes that civilization is not universal. It varies from region to region and time to time and that one civilization could not be compared to another. That is why Achebe once said that “Africa is a universe”; it is a universe within itself. It has its own periphery. This universe is their own universe, only “their own” as Susan remarks:

'I feel that it is so much part of the colonial experience, which was not pleasant. When a person or race comes and imposes on you, it takes away everything, and it is a vicious thing to do. Much as I think the West and modernity is a good thing, it did take away our culture and civilization, and even if it is gentle it does make us doubt our roots. For example, the imposing of their own ideas, dogmas and doctrines, saying that theirs were the best. There was no two-way dialogue with them trying to understand how our minds and heritage or culture worked. I feel that my people had a civilization. It was different but it was their own. I taught myself to write in Luganda.' After writing her poems in English, 'I feel humiliated that the school did not teach us our mother tongue.' (Naipaul *Masque* 31-32)

She does not end here but describe goes on to how her land, religion, customs and social structure were broken and grabbed by the white colonizers. Their king was sent to exile and he was forced to hand over the kingdom. In between quotes from her, Naipaul mentioned that Susan's sister was writing a book on Speke, Grant and the missionaries. Naipaul was totally aware of the movement of "The Empire writing back". The details of the forthcoming book are not mentioned. We can guess that her sister was not praising those missionaries or Speke who wrote about Africa. It clears Naipaul's position.

Prince Kassim is another narrator who describes himself as an educated person:

It is true that foreign religions took over the command of the society. They converted the leaders and the flock followed. . . . *My own attitude is that the power of traditional religion is myth and superstition. Because of my educational background I have been told it is a pack of lies.* I grew up comfortable with the idea of one God. (Naipaul *Masque* 38) [My Italics]

The educational system is obviously a Western one that taught the ideologies of western civilization. The educational system in Africa in the colonial period is described in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Decolonising the Mind* (1986). Ngugi describes how his mother tongue was repressed through the educational system established by the British:

And then I went to school, a colonial school, and this harmony was broken. The language of my education was no longer the language of my culture. . . .

It was after the declaration of the state of emergency over Kenya in 1952 that all the schools run by patriotic nationalists were placed under District Education Boards

chaired by Englishmen. English became the language of my formal education. In Kenya, English became more than a language: it was *the* language, and all the others had to bow before it in defense.

Thus one of the most humiliating experiences was to be caught speaking Gikuyu in the vicinity of the school. The culprit was given corporal punishment – three to five strokes of the cane on bare buttocks- or was made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM STUPID or I AM A DONKEY.” . . .

. . . Thus children were turned into witch hunters and in the process were being taught the lucrative value of being a traitor to one’s immediate community. (11)

Similarly, Prince Kassim’s education had taught him to devalue ancient rites as superstitious.

And there is no doubt Prince Kassim will strengthen Naipaul’s views on human sacrifice: ““The shrine was burnt because it is a place where a lot of human sacrifice was going on. Three months ago they found a body of a young child very mutilated” (Naipaul *Masque*37). African people are shown as still sacrificing humans in their rituals, and remain as brutal as Speke or Stanley had shown.

Naipaul shows the native who believes that violence, corruption and anarchy is a result of the forced inclusion of other alien cultures:

. . . Once you remove cultural restrains you have chaos and anarchy. People put under this will do anything to survive.’ This was like the point Prince Kassim had made. ‘They will do anything and at the same time they want the technological advances of the world. The race for these technological luxuries has replaced culture. Our religion was not savage. It was based on the veneration of the ancestors. If your father dies you venerate him. You give a libation to the ancestors before you drink. The destruction of traditions and the lack of cultural restraint, especially for the people who have been brought together by colonial power and told to form a nation, could only bring disaster.’ (Naipaul *Masque* 59)

Colonial rule washed away African culture and customs, which were then seen as witchcraft.

Modernity as Christianity was always connected with accessing recourses, and is part of capitalist bourgeois domination. However, pre-colonial African society was a pastoral society which had no connection with money. As a result modernity, money and church have a

bourgeois connection, and Africa is shown as “uncivilized” as it cannot serve the purpose of gaining more profit. As a result, ancient and pastoral cultural diversity of Africa had to be destroyed:

..... ‘Modernity wants us to sweep our culture away, and that will manifest itself in a political upheaval. A conflict between Christianity and traditional religion. . . . My grandmother told me this. But the missionaries called it devil worship. Culture does not die—today it is called witchcraft. . . . To me it’s all about belief and what treats you well. In traditional religion it was not about money. . . .’ (Naipaul *Masque* 60)

At moments Naipaul shows the ambivalent nature of post-colonial writing and in this way he is a bit different than his fore-runners. However, he returns to his usual manner of representing African life where he remains doubtful about Africa and African history and customs. He believes that:

Their history [Baganda people], however, has no dates and no records, because the Baganda people had no script and no writing. They have only a limited oral literature, which is a poor substitution for a written text that can be consulted down the centuries. Strangely, the absence of a script doesn’t seem to trouble academic or nationalist people; it isn’t a subject that is talked about. (Naipaul *Masque* 66)

This is as true as African academics have shown the world that their own past is not written in a form of history but preserved in oral tradition. They have not only raised the issue but also challenged the validity of English departments in African academies. Academics and intellectuals like Ngugi wa Thiongo clearly says in “On the Abolition of the English Department” that in their proposed department of literature, there should:

In addition to Swahili, French, and English, whenever feasible other languages such as Arabic, Hindustani, Kikuyu, Luo, Akamba, etc., should be introduced into the syllabus as optional subjects.

11. On the literature side, the Department ought to offer roughly:

(a) The oral tradition, which is our primary root;

(b) Swahili literature (with Arabic and Asian literature); this is another root, especially in East Africa;

- (c) A selected course in European literature: yet another root;
- (d) Modern African literature. (1997)

Moreover Naipaul has also claimed that the traditional oral culture is about to be lost:

To be without writing, as the Baganda were, was to have no effective way of recording the extraordinary things they achieved. Much of the past, the thirty-seven kings of which they boast, is effectively lost, and can be talked of only as myth. The loss continues. In a literate age, of newspaper and television and radio, the value of oral history steadily shrinks. (Naipaul *Masque* 68)

The answer to this is forced in “On the Abolition of the English Department”. The oral tradition is declared as “a living tradition”. To Naipaul it seemed to be dead because his ideas about Africa derived from the British museum or library and from Orientalist writers whose writings are only preserved in written forms:

The Oral tradition is rich and many-sided. In fact ‘Africa is littered with Oral tradition’. But the art did not end yesterday; it is a living tradition. . . . Verbal forms are not always distinct from dance, music, etc. For example, in music there is close correspondence between verbal and melodic tones; ... (Thiong’o 1997)

Naipaul seems to be trying to detach himself from his narrative. This tendency often boomerangs, as he is constantly trying to detach history from his narratives as *Orientalism* states: “Psychologically, Orientalism is a form of paranoia, knowledge of another kind, say, from ordinary historical knowledge. These are a few of the results, I think, of imaginative geography and of the dramatic boundaries it draws” (72). Said considered Naipaul to be part of this paranoia. Though he is considered a post-colonialist writer; he can also be described as a modernist as he is exploring a truth that can be gathered in the museums of Western libraries. The huge untapped resource of Africa in oral tradition which is the root of the history of African people is unknown to him. Naipaul is drawing synthesis from a thesis that has not actually happened in the place where he is applying his synthesis. He has taken a thesis from a knowledge gained from his own ancestry and taken the antithesis from the contemporary post-colonial



Africa only to put it into his early ideology that Africans are responsible for their own chaos. To him the British colonial era was a time of peace in Africa:

So Amin and Obote have a kind of ancestry. *The British colonial period, with law and without local wars, has to be seen as interlude.* But how do Africans live with their African history? Perhaps the absence of a script and written records blurs the past; perhaps the oral story gives them only myths. (Naipaul *Masque* 28) [My italics]

The relation of ancient history, oral culture and myth will be explored in the second chapter while discussing Achebe and other African post-colonial writers.

Naipaul continues his journey to Nigeria and observes as expected that Nigerians are extravagant, and carry a lot of luggage while traveling. Naipaul also mocks the legitimacy of the Nigerian state, doubting whether they have the legitimacy of independence or of a free state!

Nigerians have their own idea of status. They make sport with things that other people might take seriously; and diplomatic passport, with its many immunities, was one of the toys that had come to them with independence and statehood. . . . But in the Nigerians eye such a man would make much more of a show, would put the seal on his grandeur, if at Immigration, in full view of the waiting crowd, he could saunter through the diplomatic channel. (Naipaul *Masque* 82)

In an essay named “V. S. Naipaul: The White Traveler under the Dark Masque” Fadwa Abdel Rahman writes that western travel writers always adopt imperial ideology. This type of “stereotypical representation” of the Other by white travelers are inspired by the long lasting imperial era which had created a “false representation”. The essayist compares V. S. Naipaul with Gulliver of *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726) who denies his own self as Gulliver did, by showing Houyhnhms as the better half of a civilization. Abdel Rahman quotes from Edward Said’s “Intellectuals in the post-colonial World” that Naipaul is one such Gulliver who:

. . . belongs to a group of writers who specialize in the thesis of what one of them has called self- inflicted wounds, which is to say that we 'non-whites' are the cause of all our problems, not the overly maligned imperialists. . . . Naipaul's account of the Islamic, Latin American, African, Indian and Caribbean worlds totally ignores a massive infusion

of critical scholarship about those regions in favor of the tritest, the cheapest and the easiest of colonial mythologies about wogs and darkies. (169)

This type of representation has two visions; one is the dominant view that always condemns the “other” for their downfall, a kind of tragic hero view that has emerged from Shakespeare’s tragic hero whose follies or fatal flaw itself is the reason for his downfall. Though, most of post-colonial critics criticized Naipaul for this, it is a way of self-searching which can energize the Other to think about their lacks. However, it is also true that this kind of condemnation can permanently effect the psychology of the Other as Frantz Fanon explains in his *Black Skin White Masks* by quoting Professor D. Westermann, who says on his *The Africa Today* (1939) “The Negro’s inferiority complex is particularly intensified among the most educated, who must struggle with it unceasingly” (Fanon 14). In *A Bend in the River*, we see Indar who in spite of his education is a kind of alienated being. This may be Naipaul himself as Rahman says. In the same essay Abdel Rahman also argues that this type of representation is often instigated by a “sense of inferiority” of self from which the narrator wants to separate by assimilating himself with the ideology of the established structure. In this sense, Naipaul’s Nobel citation should be quote: “In this sense, one literary figure is chosen by virtue of his links to the metropolitan arena, or by his writing in its language to be a representative of whole peoples and cultures. V. S. Naipaul has evidently assumed such a representative eminence for many people in the West” (Rahman 170). The essayist argues that Naipaul is a modernist writer and not a post-modernist one, as he is actually representing a “right” kind of ideology from a specific point of view or more importantly from a subjective point of view established by western discourse. In an essay named “Intellectuals of the Post-Colonial World” Said points out how writers like Naipaul always try to prove how Africans themselves are responsible for their calamity. One cannot do anything for

African people as they are creating their own havoc. The theme is a recurrent one in Naipaul's writings:

. . . These people didn't like sending their children to school; they preferred sending them out to the roads to hawk and trade, to add to the family income. . . . You couldn't build them new houses with proper sanitation. You could not talk to them about poverty alleviation. You couldn't do anything for them; and they bred and bred. (Naipaul *Masque* 115)

Naipaul realizes that any myth derives from another myth has a link to the past. However, he could not realize that myth could not be created from thin air or without having any connection with reality. Maybe the reality is not of the near past but of the ancient past. Story and myth are not the same. When Speke writes in his book about Africa it becomes a sort of story, however when a community nourishes their past not in written form but as a form of oral communication from generation to generation it becomes a myth:

It was a perfect story for a place that was the cradle of civilization and the black race. If I had been introduced to the story told, so to speak, . . . But now, after a meeting with the grave chiefs, and after a sight of the garden that was the source of life, I understood a little more. For myths to take on life, they have to be supported by other myths; and there was enough support of this kind in Ife. (Naipaul *Masque* 132)

African travel writing operates as a kind of "field work", as Speke said in the early nineteen twenties: "They said it was started by European anthropologists. And, indeed, there was an American in the hotel at that moment, who had come to write about the Hausa and was now at the end of his 'field-work'" (Naipaul *Masque* 144). A writer or researcher from America is considered more important than African. He can be leveled as a 'tiny' writer who is writing from Africa: "They tiny writer in English said, 'The inwardness of the people in Kano is part of our identity, and maybe this is why the social and political advancement is limited.'" (Naipaul *Masque* 144)

Delacroix, an artist famous for his oriental representation, is brought in by Naipaul to stress the exotic topic of harem life in Africa. This follows the Orientalist depiction of the Orient as ideal, exotic and erotic:

Delacroix's picture of the ladies of the harem in Algiers shows idle women in colorful clothes. The vacancy of their minds shows in their faces. I suppose some such picture—the clothes, the idleness—had worked on the imagination of the Indian woman I met in Delhi some years ago who said she would have liked nothing more than to be one of the harem of the Emperor Akbar. . . . This was the picture that was given me later, by a woman whose mother had spent some unhappy years in the harem of a small Nigerian chief. (Naipaul *Masque* 147- 148)

Naipaul's mastery is that he can connect the past with present evidence. He connects his description of a harem by an Orientalist painter, and then asserts that he has evidence of its existence. In addition to this he has also included the pathetic life story of Laila to strengthen his idea.

Going on to Ghana; Naipaul states that both Arabs and Europeans came to Africa for slaves and gold. There is no sense of guilt or wrongdoing. It seems that it is very natural for European to come Africa for slaves and gold as he has already proved that Africans are uncivilized and brutal:

On this old map you have to look hard for Accra, the modern capital of Ghana, among the many sea 'castle and forts' set done since the fifteenth century—by Portuguese, Danes, Swedes, Prussians from Brandenburg, Dutch and English, all dreaming of gold and slaves—on this long east-west stretch of the African coast. (Naipaul *Masque* 153)

As usual, though 'Ashanti spirit; is appreciated but all credit goes to Christianity as "it made it mellower and less warlike" (Naipaul *Masque* 156). A noble savage named Richmond is shown here; he calls the British 'colonial master' and believes that they came to Africa for the "purely business" purposes. Moreover, he is very grateful that they gave them the Church, democracy and Jesus:

He [Richmond] said: ‘The colonial masters came here for business. Slave trade was a business. Maybe bad, but it was purely business. They took, but they gave us the church. That was a death knell to traditional religion. In the traditional religion, every king had his chief priest and elders to consult. It was a democratic system. It promoted sanity. People did not cross boundaries. The church came and overturned this. They brought in Jesus.’ (Naipaul *Masque* 176)

Richmond also explains how the English language was assimilated and how Christianity gradually succeeded in erasing traditional religions in this part of Africa: “‘It was new. It had a policy of assimilation, like the French in the Ivory Coast, but the English did it in an indirect way. They offered a faith that also brought education. It weakened the traditional religion; in that way it was like Islam. The only thing that has remained intact is the chieftaincy.’” (Naipaul *Masque* 178) He concludes by indirectly saying that whites are best for Africa and African people. He gives as example:

‘It is a passionate statement. Being born in Africa is like being born in ignorance. We are indolent. Yesterday I encountered a very embarrassing situation. The chief I went to see lives in a finished building, but it faces a public toilet. The chief was nothing wrong. I did not want to offend him by telling him that he was living by the cesspit. If I had sat there two more hours I would have gone to hospital, but he was comfortable. That is why I say the white man, bad as he was, brought enlightenment. We have a proverb that the man who has gone nowhere thinks his mother’s soup is the best.’ (Naipaul *Masque* 179)

In a chapter named “*The Forest King*” V. S. Naipaul describes Ivory Coast’s forest resources. Here, his reference is the Professor Gassiti who first introduced him to the miracle plant “*eboga*”. Professor Gassiti includes the value of the knowledge that they have gained from nature: “She said, ‘The closer we come to the pigmies the more we understand that the world has a soul and has a life. It has energy. Pigmies are like our memories of the past. They hold knowledge of the world’” (Naipaul *Masque* 237). Naipaul’s next narrator opposes the concepts of cannibalism established by the colonizers. Mme Ondo who is a high official in the civil

service strongly claims that Fangs were never cannibals: “Mme Ondo [a high civil servant] said, ‘Fangs were never cannibals. But we don’t know what is done in the mystical ceremonies. They may eat or not eat people. We don’t know. It was the colonial way to denigrate the Fangs because they saw the Fangs as fierce and warlike” (Naipaul *Masque* 245). Finally, he declares the most important value of their tribes: “Mme Ondo said, ‘Here when an old person dies we say a library has burnt down” (Naipaul *Masque* 245). This is the difference between the West and Africa. While in the West a library consists of books, in Africa an aged living person is called a library or an archive of knowledge. More importantly, Ondo also thinks that certain traditions and certain ways of belief are enshrined in oral tradition:

‘Hence certain traditions have become institutionalized over generations and cannot be lost. I agree that if a master of a forge dies, and does not pass the iron-smelting knowledge to his apprentice, the knowledge of the forge will die. But traditional rites like initiation and those connected with the oral traditional rites like initiation and those connected with the oral tradition have preserved their knowledge. (Naipaul *Masque* 248)

We do not know what Naipaul thinks in this regard because he remains silent on this particular issue. He just quotes what an African believes regarding their tradition and knowledge. He shows a clear line of ambiguity among the African narrators. None of them directly abandon their African lineage and assimilate with the European way of living. They are aware of the necessity of both African and European ideologies in their life. Naipaul should be credited for being neutral in this regard. He neither cherished nor criticized this view. In this regard he is often different from the earlier trends of Orientalists. He has not silenced any of the natives; moreover he gives them a space to express themselves. However, soon after he returns to his earlier self by saying that the African eats meat of everything associated with life which though unuttered can also be human being: “Local people liked what they called, in their manly way, ‘bush meat’. . . . Africans, like the French and the Chinese and the Vietnamese, eat everything, not only elephants

and dogs and cats, *but everything else with life*. (Naipaul *Masque* 254-55) [My Italics]

Interestingly, as he did give some space to Africans to explain their opinions; gradually he stands against them. Firstly, he indirectly says that as they eat all kinds of bush meat they can also eat human meat. Then, he hints that as the past had been erased, this land does not have a history:

When I was a boy in Trinidad, on the other side of the Atlantic, I used to think that the light and heat had burned away the history of the place. You couldn't feel that bush or sea had a history. To have a sense of history you needed buildings, architectures; and history came to the place—you seemed to see the change occurring—in Marine Square in the centre of the old Spanish town, and the few ambitious buildings of the British period. Here at Lambarene there was no architecture, only nondescript tropical buildings, in ochre-colored distemper, of no distinctive style, *that seemed to have eaten up the past*. (Naipaul *Masque* 274-275) [My Italics]

The text cannot remain apolitical as he has to deal with racial conflict in South Africa: “I had wanted, when I begun this book, to stay away from politics and race, to look below those themes for the core of African belief. But rather like Fatima looking for identity, I felt stymied in South Africa and saw that here race was all in all; that race runs deep as religion elsewhere” (Naipaul *Masque* 288). Here he brings Fatima who is a colored girl and being a colored girl faces difficulties in South Africa. South Africa is shown as a racial country. However, Naipaul's greatness as a writer is proved when he focuses on the ‘grey’ areas of post-coloniality: “So she grew up as ‘just a coloured girl’, without any identity. The Xhosa girls at the school all had identities, and she had nothing. She grew up in a coloured community. . . .She went on the pilgrimage to Mecca, but felt nothing; she saw only the restrictions on her as a woman” (Naipaul *Masque* 286-87). Each narrator Naipaul chooses represents ambiguous multiple identities of the post-colonial era. Most of them are hybrid in their conscience as well as in their physical existences. Neither of them is purely African or Western in their conscience nor in their practical

way of living. Depiction of such overlapping psychological states of post-colonial beings gives Naipaul a unique quality. As we will see in *A Bend in the River*, characteristics of homelessness and search of a being ends in utter despair and hollowness. In this travel book we see a similar picture:

She begun to look then for a black identity, but it was hard. Her coloured background again got in the way; the blacks rejected her as someone without a country or culture. So the whole South African journey for her was a discovery of pain: . . . It was only then that she understood the great pain and, with that, the deception, for Africans, of political freedom and the end of Apartheid. (Naipaul *Masque* 287-88)

She cannot relate herself to African blackness and she never will be accepted in the fair world. A fear of homelessness of alienated soul always dictates in fictional as well as in non-fictional characters of Naipaul's writings.

V. S Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* published in 1979, is a fictional rendering based on many of the insights in *The Masque of Arica*. This novel is a return to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in the context of post-colonial hybrid society. In the novel, we see the negative portrayal of Africa as a continent of violence and decadence. The presence of post-colonial hybridity and cross-cultural interaction among the characters shows how *A Bend in the River* is a progression of *Heart of Darkness*.

Salim is the protagonist as well the narrator of the novel. He is an alienated soul lost in Africa in pursuit for a suitable place of his own. He is an educated person. His notion of history and his past is as well constructed through the knowledge acquired from Europeans as he confesses: "All that I know of our history and the history of the Indian Ocean I have got from books written by Europeans. . . Without Europeans, I feel, all our past would have been washed



away, like the scuff-marks of fishermen on the beach our town” (Naipaul *Bend* 13). He is grateful to Europeans for giving him his past or in other words his trace of origin or identity. One can doubt that history as a branch of knowledge is enriched by the European historians. However, what is important in the representation of Naipaul’s narrative is that Europeans are depicted as the preservers of the African past. In an emerging African hybrid society, Salim experiences a crisis of identity as he is neither considered as a native nor as a foreigner. Neither native embraces him as their own nor does he embrace the native as part of his community. It makes him a person of Indian Diaspora where there always remain senses of homelessness.

However, to Europeans Africa is a relic. It has passed away. The civilization and culture of Africa is no more as Father Huismans senses that Africa is dying. He collects and preserves African relics. For him true Africa remains in museums: “The Masques and carvings looked old. They could have been any age, a hundred years old. But they were dated; Father Huismans had dated them. . . And to Father Huismans colonial relics were as precious as the things of Africa. True Africa he saw dying or about to die” (Naipaul *Bend* 72). The existence of African history and civilization in European discourse is denied or reduced to mere superstition. Moreover, in an era of post-colonialism; Africa becomes a blend of Europe and Africa; as a result it is not possible to see the existence of Africa separately; in other words the essence of Africa is dead to the Europeans. A European always believes that the true Africa is a land of superstitious beliefs, customs and bush life. In this emerging hybrid post-colonial Africa, true Africa can rarely be seen. Undoubtedly Naipaul intends to depict this hybrid Africa in his fiction.

In this novel, Africa is portrayed as a continent of failure. The narrator describes Africa as a continent where they always drink alcohol; even the children are habituated to it:

Beer was part of people's food here; children drank it; people began drinking from early in the morning. We had no local brewery, and a lot of the cargo brought up by the steamers was that weak lager the people here loved. . . . About women, the attitude was just as matter-of-fact. Shortly after I arrived my friend Mahesh told me that women slept with men whenever they were asked; a man could knock on any woman's door and sleep with her. . . . To Mahesh the sexual casualness was part of the chaos and corruption of the place. (Naipaul *Bend* 44)

The women of Africa are shown in an erotic way, simply as whores as they have no individual characteristics and all African women are the same. In this generalized representation; Africa is Orientalized. The African nation states are sites of failure where there is constant chaos and violence. In the novel, we see the African nations affected by war, semi-tribal conflicts or military coups. Rather than finding the true reasons, the novel shows that Africans themselves are actually responsible for their destruction: "Having destroyed their town, they had grieved for it, they had wished to see it a living place again" (Naipaul *Bend* 76). The narrator says that everybody in post-colonial Africa can have a gun as a result any African tribe could become a warrior tribe. Post-colonial Africa is always ruled by an army man. The Big man is an army person and he actually dictates the country. The brutality of the Big man is also shown by his cruel revenge against his perspective enemy. The nation experiences prosperity for a brief period by establishing "The New Domain" which becomes the place for education and intellectual practices. At the same line, the country also experiences an economic boom. However, it does not exist for long. Corruption returns. The government officers become corrupt:

It was outrageous. Prosper knew it was outrageous. In the old days five dollars was considered pretty good; and even during the boom you could get many things done for twenty-five dollars. Things had changed since the insurrection, of course, and had become very bad with the radicalization. Everyone had become more greedy and desperate. There was this feeling of everything running down very fast, of great chaos coming; and some people could behave as though money had already lost its value. But even so, officials like Prosper had only recently begun to talk in hundreds. (Naipaul *Bend* 321)

As a result, we can conclude that this is a representation of Africa that further strengthens the discourse of Orientalism. Furthermore, we see an echo of Conradian attitude as Salim says that Africans do not know how to live. He compares his own life with the Africans. He thinks that Ferdinand despite his education will not be any different. He considers himself to be different from and superior to African people.

In the novel, we do not see any African round character. Like in *The Heart of Darkness* we can feel an absence of African characters who can represent Africa. Zabeth is the only character who has been portrayed as a strong character, though she is considered as a magician. It means that she is also represented in an exotic manner. Zabeth is the only African character who has been portrayed as a positive African character. Still she is a magician: “Zabeth, as a magician or sorceress, kept herself away from men. But it hadn’t always been so; Zabeth hadn’t always been so; Zabeth hadn’t always been a magician” (Naipaul *Bend* 39). On the other hand, new Citizen of the time is represented as lazy and drunk: “Citizen Theotime would come in the morning, red-eyed and tormented looking, high on his breakfast beer, with a couple of comic books or photo-novels to see him through office hours” (Naipaul *Bend* 307).

However, V. S. Naipaul is not as biased as Conrad in *Heart of Darkness*. Naipaul is ambivalent in his representation of hybrid post-colonial Africa. He points out how Africa is still dominated by a Eurocentric ideology and how the idea of African history comes from European intellectuals: “If it was Europe that gave us on the coast some idea of our history, it was Europe, I feel, that also introduced us to the lie” (Naipaul *Bend* 19). He also shows how the new Domain is modeled on Eurocentric ideas; how at a historic point the White man of the Domain Raymond becomes powerful. Finally, the protagonist of the novel and his friend Indar are two hybrid personalities who struggle to find their identities. Both of them are displaced persons looking for

a place or home. In this post-colonial situation they cannot determine their identity because they have become part of both Western and African identity. It is important to mention that this Oriental identity does not only determined by the geographical existence of East as we see in *Orientalism* how even Arabs and Africans are as well orientalised within the discourse of Orientalism.

Naipaul is conscious of this timeless phenomenon of post-colonialism where colonizers become part of the natives as time progresses and power shifts. The narrator says about the Arabs that:

Once, great explorers and warriors, the Arabs had ruled. They had pushed far into the interior and had built towns and planted orchards in the forest. Then their power had been broken by Europe. Their towns and orchards disappeared, swallowed up in bush. They ceased to be driven on by their idea of their position in the world, and their energy was lost; they forgot who they were and where they had come from. (Naipaul *Bend* 16)

It shows how the intermingling of different races is an eternal phenomenon. In the novel, it also shown in the Big Man's confused state of being an African nationalist or being a Eurocentric leader. In his first attempt, he tries to create a good relationship with the West for both economic and educational purposes. He establishes the New Domain as an attempt to Europeanize the educational system. However, the big man changes his mind and initiates radicalization in a post-colonial world where there is no fixed identity and such experiments are bound a fail. Naipaul tries to show the ambivalent nature of post-colonial people. All characters in this novel have an ambivalent position as Said says in *Culture and Imperialism*: "My argument is that only the second perspective is fully sensitive to the reality of historical experience. Partly because of empire, all cultures are involved in one another: none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated and unmonolithic" (Said xxix). The novel portrays

Africa as an insecure alienated world; however, this is the real nature of post-colonial worlds which Naipaul has successfully portrayed.

Africa is shown as a continent of violence. The narrator says “The country, like others in Africa, had had its trouble after independence. . . Too many of the places on the way have closed down or are full of blood” (Naipaul *Bend* 3). Salim describes his experiences of his travel in his Peugeot from the coast to the Centre of Africa. The narrator thinks that the colonial period was miraculously peaceful “. . . he had travelled about the country during the miraculous peace of the colonial period” (Naipaul *Bend* 39). In the novel national and personal violence are depicted simultaneously. In an essay named “A variation on the Theme of Violence and Antagonism in V. S. Naipaul’s Fiction” Ben Abbes explains how and why Salim behaves in a sexually violent way:

Salim, in *A Bend in the River*, treats Yvette in the same way and with the same violence. As an Indian exiled from his society he lives an antagonistic relationship with his environment. He tries to avenge himself with Yvette the British wife of the Big Man's propagandist. She is in a way responsible for the country's present explosive situation, for she represents also the imperialist forces in Central Africa. In one of Salim's sexual encounters with this married woman Salim says: I spat on her between her legs until I had no more spit. All her softness vanished in outrage. Jimmy as well as Salim sees in these women the hidden forces that shackle their societies. Hence, sexual violence is inflicted on them in an awkward attempt to give one's action a meaning. In a society which "denies itself heroes" and where ambitions are abortive, violence in all its aspects proliferates and antagonism contributes in the dislocation of the society itself. (57)

Salim’s psychological disorder resulted from a sense of insecurity and homelessness and is undoubtedly the reason behind this incoherent behavior. His repressed soul revolts against his most adored one in whom he felt a sense of security and love in his insecure and loveless alienated life. However, in his unconscious mind he always feels that this sense of security is not permanent and will not be there forever for him. As a result, his unconscious revolts against this temporary sense of security.

Representation of Africa is revealed in the contrasting characteristics between Salim and Ferdinand. They always doubt each other. There is always a gap between the two of them. It seems that Ferdinand feels comfortable with Metty rather than with Salim. His mother decides to send him to a school in the town where Salim lives and appoints Salim as a local guardian. His mother thinks that education can only be learned from foreigners. In contrast to his mother Ferdinand doubts a foreigner. Zabeth believes that her son should acquire 'new skills' by educating himself. Zabeth wants Salim as one of his son's guide, however Salim senses mocking in the boy's eyes: "There was something distant and slightly mocking in his eyes." (Naipaul *Bend* 41). He senses that to Ferdinand he is a kind of intruder who is not African. He does not believe him in his education and status. Ferdinand is an epitome of native people of Africa who keeps a distance from people like Salim and his community because they still cannot believe those intruders. A sense of disbelief dominates the relationship between Salim and Ferdinand. Ferdinand as an African character is only described partially. He is portrayed as a boy from the bush who always wears a mask over his face:

In his face I felt I could see the starting point of certain kinds of African mask, in which features were simplified and strengthened; and with memories of those mask, I thought I saw a special distinction in his features. The idea came to me that I was looking at Ferdinand with the eyes of an African, and that was how I always looked at him. It was the effect on me of his face, which I saw then and later as one of great power. (Naipaul *Bend* 42)

This gap between the native and Salim evokes a sense of alienation. He cannot relate to the African way of life. As a result, as in Naipaul's travel narrative *The Masque of Africa*; Salim also discovers 'a mask' that is hiding Africa from him. Salim cannot associate himself with native Africans. This novel becomes a representation of an alienated post-colonial soul rather than a representation of Africa. Salim confesses: "The trouble was that I was unwilling –and very soon unable –to chat with him as I would have done with another African. I felt that with him I had to

make a special effort, and I didn't know what I could do" (Naipaul *Bend* 43). It becomes clear that Salim is unable to read an African mind because there is always a gap between the two. In contrast to Salim; Ferdinand becomes friends with Metty. They are very close to each other: "Ferdinand and Metty could drink in the little bars and openly pick up women or drop in at the houses of women they had got to know. It was I—as master of the one man and guardian of the other—who had to hide" (Naipaul *Bend* 45). It shows that Salim cannot relate with ordinary Africans. He always feels a distance from native Africans. In his unconscious he is a mimic man who tends to be a European.

Here comes a similarity between the author of the novel and the protagonist. In an essay named "Locating Naipaul: Not English, Not Indian, Not Trinidadian" Harish Trivedi explains Naipaul's homeless state:

Never perhaps has Naipaul lived on the edge of constant "hysteria" (in his own accurately chosen word) as during that first year-long sojourn in India in 1962-63; "it was a journey," as he simply enough summed it up later, "that broke my life in two" (Naipaul, "Two Worlds" 193). Ever since, Naipaul's life, though ostensibly tethered to a peg of a home in England, has been emotionally homeless and incurably footloose; it is as if he has chosen to be peripatetic by vocation (19)

Salim is in his identity no different from the novelist himself. Both of them are mimic men desiring a European identity ends in utter disdain of regrettable states. In another essay named "Claiming the Burden: Naipaul's Africa" Ranu Samantrai explains Naipaul's categorization of Europeans, Africans and Arabs races:

The primary groups of actors in Naipaul's Africa—Europeans, Arabs and an adjacent group of Indians, and Africans—each manifest a discrete sexual energy that determines their position on the evolutionary ladder leading to modern man. Africans are the most feminized and the least evolved; not surprisingly, Europeans occupy the pinnacles of both masculinity and development. Arabs fall somewhere in between, but do so because of a curious twist: they are not newcomers to civilization, but are rendered effeminate because their civilizations are too old. In other words, while Africans are pre-oedipal, Arabs are senile, made impotent by their great age. In each case, males are taken to be

representatives of the group, their virility serving as the measure of the group's development. Together, the three "races" of Naipaul's Africa form a parable of the colonial encounter that affirms European colonial rule as the only logical order that can govern all fairly. (52)

In this categorization we cannot put Salim in any group. It means he is of no group however intending to assimilate himself with the Europeans as characteristics of a post-colonial mimic man. In the same essay Samantrai concludes by saying:

The logical conclusion that must be drawn from *A Bend in the River*, then, is that Africa must be ruled by Europe, and for its own good. It must be protected from itself and its people, from the destruction that well meaning but incompetent women and children? Those who can never be the agents driving the machine of progress? Can wreak if left unregulated. Long after their official departure from the continent, Naipaul's Europeans continue to be the only people who can tame it. (59)

Salim approves this type of unquestionable acceptance of European superiority throughout the novel. As a result, Salim can never be a part of African soul instead who can be viewed as a post-colonial being posted in chaotic post-colonial Africa.

Naipaul's narrative style is an important tool of representing post-colonial writings. If we analyze Naipaul's travel writing, the boundaries between genres are usually blurred so that "the customary distinctions between fiction and non-fiction are of subordinate importance," as the Nobel Foundation puts it ["Press Release by Nobel Foundation" (172)]. However, I would also like to stress this particular point that he tries to fictionalize his non-fictional essay because he wants to fictionalize the African past. Naipaul is presenting it as unreal and exotic rather than just describing his imaginative power in his non-fictional writing. Though there is nothing wrong in using imagination creatively, the use of myth as fact makes it problematic. He describes the myth of sacrifice especially human sacrifice as a fact of the African past. Interestingly enough if we consider the sources of these stories, they seem to be part of myth. Let us look Derek Walcott's essay "The Muse of History", in this Walcott tries to focus on myth what is carried



from history. However, if we take myth in a literal meaning, it becomes an absurd representation of history. Myth is not history. It is true for Africa that the ancient past had not been archived in written form, and that it had traveled through time and through space through the story teller, we have to look at this history differently. However, to make it entertaining the story tellers of different times had modified their story in different forms as a result myth was created. Achebe in his representation of African Igbo culture has taken and used myth as it, not in a literal sense but as metamorphosed signs. “These writers [classicists] reject the idea of history as time for its original concept as myth, the partial recall of the race. For them history is fiction, subject to a fitful muse, memory. Their philosophy, based on a contempt for historic time, is revolutionary, for what they repeat to the New World is its simultaneity with the old” (329). Walcott truly realizes and emphasizes on the topic that “. . . Facts evaporates into myth. . . ” (371). V. S. Naipaul does not seem to understand the futility of using myth as a source instead he establishes African identity as an exotic to his readers.

Said in “Intellectuals in the post-Colonial World” shows how “a politics of blame” has flourished in post-colonial writing and distinguished two lines derived from Joseph Conrad. Naipaul is leading the trend who is representing the Other from the view point of a self or of the West instead of acknowledging a post-colonial identity. According to Said, Conrad’s narratives have a dual existence in post-colonialism:

The form of Conrad's narrative has had two lives in the post- colonial world. Its assertive sovereign inclusiveness has been reproduced by those who speak today for the West, what the West did, and what the rest of the world is, was, and may be. The inflections of this discourse are to exclude what has been represented as "lost" by showing that the colonial world was, religiously and ontologically speaking, lost to begin with, irredeemable, irrecusably corrupt. Moreover, it focuses not on what was shared in the colonial experience . . . . The effect of this discourse is to draw like-minded people- the aggressive Westerners and those people outside the West for whom the Ayatollahs speak- away from the ongoing interchange into a regrettably tight little circle. Inside the circle

stand the blameless, the just, the omniscient, those who know the truth about themselves as well as the others: outside the circle stand a miscellaneous bunch of querulous whining complainers who have spilt the milk and continue to cry over it. (49-50)

Said describes the second trend of Conrad's narrative as resistant of the totalizing view of the West, where Chinua Achebe declares an existence of Igbo culture as a possessor of its individual goods and evils. He represents the periphery and denies Europe as a centre of discourse of a universe. The second line is a resistance of the representation of the white self. More importantly a counter discourse is derived to defend the earlier discourse established by Conrad and his descendants like Naipaul:

. . .the second life of Conrad's narrative form, which indicates the existence of a perspective *from outside the representations provided by Marlow and his listeners. It is, above all, a profoundly secular perspective, and it is neither beholden to notions about historical destiny and the essentialism that destiny always seems to entail, nor about historical indifference and resignation.* To the extent that being on the inside results in shutting out, editing and subordinating the full experience of colonialism to the dominance of one Eurocentric and totalizing view, this one adumbrates the presence of a field without special historical privileges in it for one party over all the others. (52) [My Italics]

Now we can conclude this chapter by assuming that Naipaul is directly blaming Africans for their miserable situation, never the colonialists or the long period of colonial rule. He clearly bears traces from Conrad and represents his Orientalist trend by representing Africans as the Other. More specifically, in his representation, Africa is almost absent. He stresses on the emerging situations of post-colonialism in Africa as rootless, homeless and from the perspective of the alienation of the protagonist.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ANTITHESIS: RESISTANCE

. . .I have mentioned Naipaul again and again and I'll mention him again here as the case of a brilliant writer who sold himself to the West. And one day he'll be "rewarded" with maybe a Nobel Prize or something. Meanwhile he is getting a lot of attention. But I don't think I can get into that kind of act. (An interview of Chinua Achebe published in The Massachusetts Review, 285)

Resistance has come through re-representation of Igbo culture in the writings of Chinua Achebe. He does not represent one of the African clans as ancient or one rich or one of the oldest cultural identities in our universe. He represents African as a universe that possesses all the necessary elements of humanity within it. Humanity is not always liberal humanism as defined by Occidental writers rather a combination of the duality of human nature, a combination of good and evil, a combination of love and hatred. Achebe has taken myth as the ancient root of African civilization, which we have seen, is used to misrepresent Africa by V. S. Naipaul. Achebe has chosen this myth because he truly knows that myth came from the oral traditions of Africa. Myths provide him with a dense store-house of ancient African history.

Negritude has been posed as an antithesis to modern European humanism. European discourse used the ideology of humanism as derived from the European renaissance. Even while talking about humanism, the era of exploration of the 'new' world had also begun. Thus the Elizabethan period as well as the age of Enlightenment was based on humanist philosophy, which established the superiority of European knowledge and thought. However, with the age of discovery and conquest, European humanism denied the same kind of superiority to 'other' races and lands, but put the onus on themselves of 'civilising' other races. Thus humanism

worked as an epistemic break as Foucault describes in *Archeology of Knowledge* (1969). Thus Europe considered its science and philosophy to be superior, and anything other than these paradigms were not considered to be civilized or of any value. The same notion has been applied to religion, culture and superstition. In order to reverse this and to reevaluate African culture and civilization Senghor in his essay entitled “Negritude” declares “. . . , negritude is necessary in the world today: it is a humanism of the twentieth century.” (28) From the same point of view, this European standard of humanism is declared as “Murderous Humanitarianism” as Robin D. G. Kelley describes in his “A Poetics of Anticolonialism” while discussing about Aime Ceasaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955) (19). Industrialization was accompanied by the advent of capitalism, as well as the colonial venture. As a result, western civilization cannot be separated from a capitalist society that is directly connected with imperialism and colonialism as colonialism was directed to earning resources through invading other lands: “. . . They viewed fascism as a blood relative of slavery and imperialism, global systems rooted not only in capitalist political economy but racist ideologies that were already in place at the dawn of modernity” (Ceasaire 21). This western modern capitalist economy is based on a law of difference. The law of difference is reflected in the representation in post-colonial writings. As Abdul R. Janmohamed states in his essay “The Economy of Manichean Allegory”:

Colonialist literature is an exploration and a representation of a world at the boundaries of ‘civilization,’ a world that has not (yet) been domesticated by European signification or codified in detail by its ideology. This world is therefore perceived as uncontrollable, chaotic, unattainable, and ultimately evil. Motivated by his desire to conquer and dominate, the imperialist configures the colonial realm as a confrontation based on difference in race, language, social customs, cultural values, and modes of production. (19)

This is how, writers like Naipaul represents Africa on the basis of “Identity of difference” (19) and as Abdul R. Janmohamed says, he refuses to see the authenticity and unique characteristic of

a different civilization or culture: “If he assumes that he and the Other are essentially identical, then he would tend to ignore the significant divergences and to judge the Other according to his own cultural values.” (19) In this way the Western intellectuals ignore the basic characteristics of diversity between human races and initiate Orientalist discourse:

Instead of being an exploration of the racial Other, such literature merely affirms its own ethnocentric assumptions; instead of actually depicting the outer limits of ‘civilization,’ it simply codifies and preserves the structures of its own mentality. While the surface of each colonialist text purports to represent specific encounters with specific varieties of the racial Other, the subtext valorizes the superiority of European cultures, of the collective process that has mediated that representation. Such literature is essentially specular: instead of seeing the native as a bridge toward syncretic possibility, it uses him as a mirror that reflects the colonialist’s self-image. (Janmohamed 19)

Writers like Chinua Achebe questions established ideology based on ‘identity of difference’. Achebe’s purpose is however not to establish Igbo culture as superior to European civilization, but to show the existence of African history not as archived by colonialist writers, but which exists within African own heritage of negritude. As Aime Cesaire explains in his *Discourse on Colonialism*: “The very idea that there was a superior race lay at the heart of the matter, and this is why elements of *Discourse* also drew in Negritude’s impulse to recover the history of Africa’s accomplishments.” (21) It is a different identity, a different trend of history: “. . . exhumed from the past, spread with its inside out, made it possible for me to find a valid historical place. The white man was wrong, I was not a primitive, not even a half-man, I belonged to a race that had already been working in gold and silver two thousand years ago”(Kelley 23). Negritude turned out to be a miraculous weapon in the struggle to overthrow the concept of the “barbarian Negro”. As Cedric Robinson points out in *Black Marxism: The Masking of the Black Radical Tradition*, (2000) the civilization of Europe was enriched by the incorporation of ancient African knowledge, even while Europeans have tried to erase the trace of blackness from their culture:

. . .by extension the fabrication of whiteness and all the racial boundary policing that came with it—required “immense expenditures of psychic and intellectual energies of the West.” An entire generation of “enlightened” European scholars worked hard to wipe out the culture and intellectual contributions of Egypt and Nubia from European history, to whiten the West in order to maintain the purity of the “European” race. They also stripped all of Africa of any semblance of “civilization,” using the printed page to eradicate their history and thus reduce a whole continent and its progeny to little more than beasts of burden or brutish heathens. The result is the fabrication of Europe as a discrete, racially pure entity, solely responsible for modernity, on the other hand, and the fabrication of the Negro on the other. (22)

In contrast to established Orientalist discourse where a concept of universalism in the name of liberal humanism denies any existence of different characteristics of Other worlds as in the introduction of the second part entitled “Universality and Difference” of *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* explains:

The myth of universality is thus a primary strategy of imperial control as it is manifested in literary study and that is why it demands attention early on in this Reader. The universalist myth has, according to Chinua Achebe, a pernicious effect in the kind of colonialist criticism which denigrates the post-colonial text on the basis of an assumption that ‘European’ equals ‘universal’.(*Post-Colonial Studies Reader*,71)

As a result Chinua Achebe leans to the consciousness of negritude as Leopold Sedar Senghor explains in his famous essay named “Negritude: A Humanism of the Twentieth Century”:

No, negritude is neither of these things. It is neither racialism nor self-negation. Yet it is not just affirmation; it is rooting oneself in oneself, and self-confirmation: confirmation of one’s *being*. Negritude is nothing more or less than what some English-speaking Africans have called the *African personality*. It is no different from the ‘black personality’ discovered and proclaimed by the American New Negro movement. As the American Negro poet, Langston Hughes wrote after the first world war: ‘We, the creator of new generation, want to give expression to our *black personality* without shame or fear. . . . We know we are handsome. Ugly as well. The drums weep and the drums laugh.’ Perhaps our only originality, since it was the West Indian poet Aime Cesaire who coined the word negritude, is to have attempted to define the concept a little more closely; to have developed it as a weapon, as an instrument of liberation and as a contribution to the humanism of the twentieth century. (27)

Moreover, Achebe in his novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) actually tries to show a “different civilization” or an African humanism totally unique in its characteristics that is different from the capitalist western civilization:

. . . Ethnologists and sociologists today speak of ‘different civilizations’. . . . Who would deny that Africans, too, have a certain way of speaking, singing and dancing; of painting and sculpturing, and even of laughing and crying? Nobody, probably; for otherwise we would not have been talking about ‘Negro art’ for the last sixty years and Africa would be the only continent today without its ethnologists and sociologists. What, then, is negritude? It is- as you can guess from what precedes – *the sum of the cultural values of the black world; that is, a certain active presence in the world, or better, in the universe.* It is, as John Reed and Clive Wake call it, a certain ‘way of relating oneself to the world and to others’. Yes, it is essentially relations with others. Because of what it is, negritude is necessary in the world today: it is a humanism of the twentieth century.’ (Senghor 27-28)

Chinua Achebe represents the African world as a different humanism of the twentieth century that can be called negritude. His position of representing African identity is certainly in opposition of Naipaul and in the line of Fanon, Senghor, Césaire and others who are the propagators of negritude.

In “Discourse on Colonialism” Aimé Césaire discusses about colonization and civilization, showing how a line of Oriental discourse has identified civilization with Christianity, on the other hand has associated savagery with paganism, thus continuing domination on the basis of race. Césaire says:

. . . ; that the slaving apologists came later; that the chief culprit in this domain is Christian pedantry, which laid down the dishonest equations *Christianity= civilization, paganism=savagery*, from which there could not but ensue abominable colonialist and racist consequences, whose victims were to be the Indians, the Yellow peoples, and the Negroes. (33)

Unlike Naipaul in *Things Fall Apart* Achebe tries to find how European civilization is directly responsible for African misery. Though Europeans tend to show the superiority of their civilization Aimé Césaire thoughtfully explains how colonization has already corrupted white European civilization:

First we must study how colonization works to *decivilize* the colonizer, to *brutalize* him in true sense of the word, to degrade him, to awake him to buried instincts, to covetousness, violence, race hatred and moral relativism; . . ., all these patriots who have been tortured, at the end of all the racial pride that has been encouraged, all the boastfulness that has been displayed, a poison has been distilled into the veins of Europe and slowly but surely, the continent proceeds towards *savagery*. (36)

This is why he argues Nazism emerged in Europe. They have become the victims of what they have cultivated within themselves for a long time. They are the victims of what they had been practicing against others world as a result Ceasaire says they themselves are responsible for this barbarism: “. . . , it is the crime against the white man, the humiliation of the white man, and the fact that he applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the “coolies” of India, and the “niggers” of Africa.”(36) Ceasaire explains that is why the Western humanism is “Pseudo-humanism” (37). In the process of industrialization capitalism has thoroughly changed the basic ideology of western civilization. He stresses the point that capitalism in the name of humanism cannot but create a figure like Hitler “. . . At the end of formal humanism and philosophic renunciation, there is Hitler.” (Ceasaire 37) As a result, when Western Orientalist discourse represents or speaks, it represents a ‘pseudo-humanism’:

Who is speaking? I am ashamed to say it: it is the Western *humanist*, the “idealist” philosopher. That his name is Renan is an accident. . . .

What am I driving at? At this idea : that no one colonizes innocently, that no one colonizes with impunity either; that a nation which colonizes, that a civilization which justifies colonization—and therefore force—is already a sick civilization, a civilization which is morally diseased, which irresistibly, progressing from one consequence to another, one denial to another, calls for its Hitler, I mean its punishment. (Ceasaire 37-39)

In this way, a civilization led by colonizers metamorphoses into a civilization that sees others as non-human and as devoid of humanity and civilization: “. . . , who in order to ease his conscience gets into the habit of seeing man as *an animal*, accustoms himself to treating him like an animal, and tends objectively to transform *himself* into an animal. It is this result, this boomerang effect



of colonization that I wanted to point out” (Cesaire 41). As their souls are corrupted they use colonies as “a safety valve” where they pour out their hatred. “Between colonizer and colonized there is room only for forced labor, intimidation, pressure, the police, taxation, theft, rape, compulsory crops, contempt, mistrust, arrogance, self-complacency, swinishness, brainless elites, degraded masses” (Cesaire 42). The colonizers treat Other as an Object. They try to civilize the colonized by detaching them from their roots : “. . . I am talking about millions of men torn from their gods, their land, their habits, their life—from life, from the dance, from wisdom” (Cesaire 43). Colonized people are systematically demoralized: “I am talking about millions of men in whom fear has been cunningly instilled, who have been taught to have an inferiority complex, to tremble, kneel, despair, and behave like flunkies” (Cesaire 43).

*Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe was published in 1958 in the context of the fall of African culture as a result of colonial rule in Africa. Unlike Naipaul and Conrad, he has tried to interpret African characters and culture authentically. In the novel, we observe a representation of African culture that is full of vitality and action. Achebe as an African has tried to reveal the reason of the downfall of African glory. In that process he has also shown that this downfall is due to European colonial rule. Instead of being guilty of ‘double identity’<sup>1</sup> he has successfully used the language of colonizers as an instrument of protest against imperial power.

Achebe has portrayed African characters like Okonkwo without being biased. He shapes the character with its strengths and follies. In the same line, the novelist also portrays three

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<sup>1</sup> “The Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe, publishing his first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, in 1958, was criticized by an early reviewer for affecting to identify with African villagers when actually his university education and his broadcasting job in the capital city of Lagos should make him identify, it was implied, with the values of ‘civilization’, supposedly brought to Africa by Europeans. This emphasis on identity as doubled, or hybrid, or unstable is a third characteristic of the postcolonial approach.” (p 195-196) (Peter Berry, *Beginning Theory*)

generations of Okonkwo's family. In this process he has portrayed Okonkwo as a human being who can mediate his own life according to his own wishes. More importantly, he becomes a human character who expresses his anguish, fear and hatred. He is not a generalized personality like "The African". Moreover, Achebe shows how diverse Africa can be. He describes three characters of a family line as totally different from each other. He portrays Okonkwo's father Unoka as a lazy person who was an unsuccessful man throughout his life. On the other hand, Okonkwo's son Nwoye converts himself to Christianity, under the influence of the Christian missionaries. Achebe shows that Africans cannot be homogenized as Conrad or Naipaul had done in their novels. African characters have their individual identities and they are no less interesting as a character in a novel. Achebe represents this through Okonkwo's struggle to achieve a leading position in his clan. He is a family man as well as a warrior:

Okonkwo ruled his household with a heavy hand. His wives, especially the youngest, lived in perpetual fear of his fiery temper, and so did his little children. Perhaps down in his heart Okonkwo was not a cruel man. But his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness. It was deeper and more intimate than the fear of evil and capricious gods and of magic, the fear of the forest, and the forces of nature, malevolent, red in tooth and claw. Okonkwo's fear was greater than these. It was not external but lay deep within himself. It was his fear of himself, lest he should be found to resemble his father. Even as a little boy he had resented his father's failure and weakness . . . (Achebe *Things* 10)

He is a father as well as a killer. He has already killed five persons in different wars. Moreover, he kills Ikemefuna whom he considered as one of his sons only because: "He was afraid of being thought weak" (Achebe *Things* 43). However, after the killing, he suffers both emotionally and knows deep in his conscience that he had done a wrong act. His downfall begins from this point onwards. The great hero metamorphoses into a tragic hero. This is the main difference among Achebe and Naipaul, who has never tried to penetrate into an African soul. He has just applied his observations superficially while Achebe has successfully portrayed character.

African society is changing fast. Changing of religion is thus another important phenomenon of the novel. Nwoye also converts his religion from paganism to Christianity. All the villagers mock the missionaries and the interpreter, Nwoye becomes quite convinced:

But there was a young lad who had been captivated. His name was Nwoye, Okonkwo's first son. It was not the mad logic of the Trinity that captivated him. He did not understand it. It was the poetry of the new religion, something felt in the marrow. The hymn about brothers who sat in darkness and in fear seemed to answer a vague and persistent question that haunted his young soul –the question of the twins crying in the bush and the question of Ikemefuna who was killed. He felt a relief within as the hymn poured into his parched soul. The words of the hymn were like the drops of frozen rain melting on the dry plate of the panting earth. Nwoye's callow mind was greatly puzzled. (Achebe *Things* 104)

In a way, it is a criticism of contemporary African society. Achebe explores the loopholes of the Igbo society that also have a role in the abrupt changes. He has shown that it is much more the incoherence of the rituals of the Igbo culture rather than the pure attraction of Christianity has motivated Nwoye to change his religion. In a way, Achebe is also criticizing the Igbo society.

Achebe has humanized the African characters. Patriarchal African society is shown to be full of flaws. Women are shown as victims of Okonkwo's tyranny and rage. Though Okonkwo's first wife tries to save Ojiugo by lying to her husband, Ojiugo becomes a victim of her husband's rage during the sacred week: " Okonkwo knew she was not speaking the truth. He walked back to his *obi* to wait Ojiugo's return. And when she returned he beat her very heavily. In his anger he had forgotten that it was the week of Peace." (Achebe *Things* 21) Most importantly, through this simple incident Chinua Achebe has portrayed the hubris of a tragic hero. Okonkwo's rage is the reason of his downfall.

Achebe has also portrayed diversity among the Igbo tribes. He has described the taboos and superstitions of the tribes. In this process, Achebe tries to reveal African culture as real and diverse. He describes different clan festivals and customs. He wants to show African culture to

the world, which had only been seen through Western representations prior to this. Western writers like Conrad has depicted African culture as savage, exotic and mysterious. Achebe wants to reveal Africa to the world with the help of a “new English” as he himself had proposed in one of his essays. Achebe’s use of English language is interesting, as he uses lots of words from the Igbo language giving a new flavor to the English language. He has successfully used the colonizer’s language as he asserts in his essay “The African Writer and the English Language”:

What I do see is a new voice coming out of Africa, speaking of African experience in a world-wide language. . . . The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience. (433)

*Things Fall Apart* truly is a ‘new voice’ that shares the ‘African experience’ in English. Importantly, he also presents a new English to the world. Achebe declares that he intends to use the English language in his own way (434). He confidently declares: “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.” (434) *Things Fall Apart* is a very good example of this new use of English.

Furthermore, Achebe has used the colonial language for writing back to the Empire. His use of new English has successfully shown the reason of the falling apart of African culture, showing the ‘devil’ of colonization much more strongly than other writers. Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* reminds us of Frantz Fanon’s three stages of native writers using English as their medium of writing. The final phase is the phase of ‘Adept’<sup>2</sup> which Achebe has successfully achieved in this particular novel. Frantz Fanon says in his essay named “On National Culture”:

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<sup>2</sup> The term has been taken from Peter Barry’s *Beginning Theory*. “All postcolonial literatures, it might be said, seem to make this transition. They begin with an unquestioning acceptance of the authority of European modes and with the ambition of writing works that will be masterpieces entirely in this tradition. This can be called the ‘Adopt’ phase of colonial literature, since the writer’s ambition is to adopt the form as it stands, the assumption being that

Finally, in this third phase, which is called the fighting phase, the native, after having tried to lose himself in the people and with the people; hence comes a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature, and a national literature. During this phase a great many men and women who up till then would never have thought of producing a literary work, now that they find themselves in exceptional circumstances—in prison, with the Maquis or on the eve of their execution—feel the need to speak to their nation, to compose the sentence which expresses the heart of the people and to become the mouthpiece of a new reality in action. (41)

Achebe has successfully participated in this third phase called ‘Adept’ where he has created a literature of combat or resistance. This is an example of writing back to the centre. In this way, he has created a space for the national literature of Africa and other nations that Fanon asserts in his essay:

It is only from that moment that we can speak of national literature. Here there is, at the level of literary creation, the talking up and clarification of themes which are typically nationalist. This may be properly called a literature of combat, in the sense that it calls on the whole people to fight for their existence as a nation. It is a literature of combat, because it moulds the national consciousness, giving it form and contours and flinging open before it new and boundless horizons; it is a literature of combat because it assumes responsibility, and because it is the will to liberty expressed in terms of time and space. (47)

Violence is a frequent phenomenon in post-colonial writings. On this issue Achebe is no different from Naipaul. However, Naipaul has barely sought the reason behind the violence in colonized countries. In the last chapter, we saw how he has actually blamed African peoples for their violent nature, claiming that they are inherently violent. However, if we consider Fanon we will find that violence and disorder are natural outcomes of repression. And violent outbursts are a psychological phenomenon of a long repressed colonized soul. It is true for both individual as

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it has universal identity. The second stage can be called the ‘Adapt’ phase, since it aims to adapt European form of African subject matter, thus assuming partial rights of intervention in the genre. In the final phase there is, so to speak, a declaration of cultural independence whereby African writers remake the form of their own specification, without reference to European norms. This might be called ‘Adept’ phase, since its characteristic is the assumption that the colonial writer is an independent ‘adept’ in the form, not a humble apprentice, as in the first phase, or a mere licensee, as in the second. “ (Peter Barry *Beginning Theory*)

well as for the mass population of Africa. Pre-independent and post-independent periods of Africa are marked by violent periods of emerging national consciousness. This transition period is marked by frustration of alienated African identity. Because of capitalist colonialist domination, they had been forced to adapt to western ideology based on Christianity, which was posed in a direct opposition to paganism. As a result, a gap is created between past African identities and present hybrid identity, creating a feeling of insecurity. Frantz Fanon in his *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) discusses the violence in a newly decolonized country in the first chapter named “Concerning Violence”. He starts the chapter by saying: “National Liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people, commonwealth: whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduces, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon (Fanon *Wretched* 27). Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* is set in the colonial period where violence is a natural outcome. On the other hand, Achebe’s novel named *Man of the people* (1966) is set in the post-independent period of an African nation. Fanon can help us to understand the violent psychology of both these periods. As Achebe describes in his book the protagonist of the novel is an emerging intellectual of a post-colonial country. The reason of violence in such a new born country can be understood through Fanon’s analysis:

Individualism is the first to disappear. The native intellectuals had learnt from his masters that the individual ought to express himself fully. The colonialist bourgeoisie had hammered into the native’s mind the idea of a society of individuals where each person shuts himself up in his own subjectivity, and whose only wealth is individual thought. Now the native who has the opportunity to return to the people during the struggle for freedom will discover the falseness of this theory. (Fanon *Wretched* 36)

Though, Odili Samalu is not a person active in the struggle for freedom, he is an intellectual who tries to stand against the corrupt rulers of his country. He is an educated man a totally different identity from a traditional African person. In this regard we have to understand that ancient Africa was always based on community rather than individual identity. Interestingly, the

antagonist of the novel Mr. Nanga who was also a talented teacher had actually assimilated his position by grabbing the oppressor's position at a certain point in his political life. To quote Fanon: "In order to assimilate and to experience the oppressor's culture, the native has had to leave certain of his intellectual positions in pawn. These pledges include his adoption of the forms of thought of the colonialist' bourgeoisie (Fanon *Wretched* 38). Moreover, Fanon shows how they behave like "a common opportunist" (Fanon *Wretched* 38). The portrayal of Mr. Nanga the minister is that of a "common opportunist" who has taken the position of a bourgeois oppressor, and who has now replaced the colonizers. The period of building national consciousness is marked by violence as described by Fanon:

The colonized man will first manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people. This is the period when the niggers beat each other up, and the police and magistrates do not know which way to turn when faced with the astonishing waves of crime in North Africa. We shall see later how this phenomenon should be judged. What the native is confronted with the colonial order of things, he finds he is in a state of permanent tension. The settler's world is a hostile world, which spurns the native, but at the same time it is a world of which he is envious. We have seen that the native never cease to dream of putting himself in the place of the settler—not of becoming the settler but of substituting himself for the settler. (Fanon *Wretched* 41)

Fanon clearly mentions that in this stage, the native people will behave violently among themselves as they desire to place themselves in the role of 'the settler'. Another novel *Man of the People* is based on a conflict between two individuals, Odili Samalu and Mr. Nanga. The narrator Odili never liked the Minister and often criticized him. The narrator and his friend discuss the Minister's girl-friend, who is to become his second wife:

". . .; that man has no conscience."

"Just think of such a cultureless man going abroad and calling himself Minister of Culture. Ridiculous. This is why the outside world laughs at us." (Achebe *Man* 23)

The novel is constructed around personal rivalry and has an erotic tone. Moreover, it is a story of Odili's revenge as the powerful minister takes away his girl-friend. Finally, he avenges himself by winning over Mr. Nanga's fiancée. We can remember Fanon here: "The native's muscular tension finds outlet regularly in blood thirsty explosions—in tribal warfare, in feuds between sects and in quarrels between individuals" (Fanon *Wretched* 42). The novel is about the failure of leadership in African as Chinua Achebe asserts in his essay named "The Trouble with Nigeria":

The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal examples which are the hallmarks of true leadership. (22)

Achebe is also answering Naipaul by asserting that failure of leadership is not an inherent phenomenon of an African character. This is the result of a long history of repression. Fanon further explains this violence:

This characteristic on the part of the nationalist political parties should be interpreted in the light both of the make-up of their leaders and the nature of their followings. . . . The native intellectual has clothed his aggressiveness in his barely veiled desire to assimilate himself to the colonial world. He has used his aggressiveness to serve his own individual interests. (Fanon *Wretched* 47)

In *Man of the People*, we see how Mr. Nanga the minister has abused his power for individual interests. Also vivid in where the political leaders have to decide between adopting Western modes or not. As one of the leaders says in the parliament:

. . . Our true leaders are not those intoxicated with their Oxford, Cambridge or Harvard degrees degrees but those who speke the language of the people. Away with the damnable and expensive university education which only alienated an African from his rich and ancient culture and puts him above his people. . . . (Achebe *Man* 4)

In the same line the prime minister says: ". . . Never again must we entrust our destiny of Africa to hybrid class of Western educated and snobbish intellectuals who will not hesitate to sell their mothers for a mess of pottage . . ." (Achebe *Man* 6). Individual rivalries and quarrels permeate



every aspect of newly independent nation; and the repressed anger finds violent release, similar to Fanon's description:

. . . Yet in spite of the metamorphoses which the colonial regime imposes upon it in the way of tribal or regional quarrels, that violence makes its way forward, and the native identifies his enemy and recognizes all his misfortunes, throwing all the exacerbated might of his hate and anger into this new channel. (Fanon *Wretched* 55-56)

And soon these new-born nations undergo utter chaos and can see no way out of colonial disharmony: "That is why in certain under-developed countries the masses forge ahead very quickly, and realize two or three years after independence that they have been frustrated, that 'it wasn't worth while' fighting, and that nothing could really change. . ."( Fanon *Wretched* 58-59). These newly-born countries have a long history of colonialism and as a result: "It is true to say that independence has brought moral compensation to colonized peoples, and has established their dignity. But they have not yet had time to elaborate a society, or to build up and affirm values." (Fanon *Wretched* 64) At the individual level, the psychological parameter of repression and irruption becomes paramount. As Fanon goes on to say: "At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect. . . ., the people have the time to see that the liberation has been the business of each and all and that the leader has no special merit" (Fanon *Wretched* 74). Fanon truly assumes the view of ex-colonizers: "In plain words, the colonial power says: since you want independence, take it and starve" (Fanon *Wretched* 77). Writers like Achebe illustrate this point as they create stories where the past and present are connected, and the complex process of establishing national identity is delineated.

African patriarchal society is also put through examination in Chinua Achebe's novels. Their ways of worship and religion are strongly portrayed. In *Arrow of God* (1964) Achebe

shows, as he also had done in *Things Fall Apart*, a picture of African culture as an identity with its unique characteristics:

*Ulu, I thank you for making me see another new moon. May I see it again and again. This household may it be healthy and prosperous . . . And let our wives bear male children. May we increase in numbers at the next counting of the villages so that we shall sacrifice to you a cow, not a chicken as we did after the last New Yam feast. May children put their fathers into the earth and not fathers their children. (Achebe Arrow 6)*

In *Arrow of God* Achebe has portrayed Igbo culture in its totality, not excluding patriarchal notions, such as the expectations and values attached to male children, who are only considered as members of their village or community. His examination of Igbo culture is done on its own terms, and its good and bad points judged within its own periphery. Thus the *Ezeulu* Chief Priest of Ulu utters the inner beliefs of his clan in his prayer:

‘I see.’ Ezeulu had forgotten temporarily that the nearer stream, Ota, had been abandoned since the oracle announced yesterday that the enormous boulder resting on two other rocks as its source was about to fall and would take a softer pillow for its head. Until the *alusi* who owned the stream and whose name it bore had been placated no one would go near it. (Achebe Arrow 7)

More importantly he tries to show the ancient past of Africa in opposition to Orientalist construction that eradicates that past. He has also outlined a history of the region as a story teller, bringing to life the oral culture that permeates African conscience. As a result, there is no mention of dates in their story telling:

In the past the six villages of were separated and worshipped different deity as a result they were vulnerable to the soldiers of Abam: “ Then the hired soldiers of Abam used to strike in the dead of night, set fire to the houses and carry men, women and children into slavery. . . . The six villages then took the name of Umuaro, and the priest of Ulu became their Chief Priest. From that day they were never again beaten by an enemy.” (Achebe Arrow 15)

This is the reason that history and myth blend in African writing. We can see a formation of myth:

‘I know,’ he [Ezeulu] told them, ‘my father said this to me that when our village first came here to live the land belonged to Okperi. It was Okperi who gave us a piece of

their land to live in. they also gave us their deities—their Udo and their Ogwugwu. But they said to our ancestors—mark my words—the people of Okperi said to our fathers: We give you not Udo but the son of Udo, and not Ogwugwu but the son of Ogwugwu. This is the story as I heard it from my father. If you chose to fight a man for a piece of farmland that belongs to him I shall have no hand in it.’ (Achebe *Arrow* 16)

The story does not only describe how history remains within a clan, but also describes how ethics is derived. However, Western intellectuals do not accept this as a history. They will always stress the point that Africa does not have a history and is therefore seen as devoid of civilization. As Derek Walcott explains in his essay named “The Muse of History”:

These writers [classicists] reject the idea of history as time for its original concept as myth, the partial recall of the race. For them history is fiction, subject to a fitful muse, memory. Their philosophy, based on a contempt for historic time, is revolutionary, for what they repeat to the New World is its simultaneity with the old. *Their vision of man is elemental, a being inhabited by presence, not a creature chained to his past.* Yet the method by which we are taught the past, the progress from motive to event, is the same by which we read narrative fiction. In time every event becomes an exertion of memory and is thus subject to invention. *The farther the facts, the more history petrifies into myth. Thus we grow older as a race,* we grow aware that history is written, that it is a kind of literature without morality, that in its actualities the ego of the race is indissoluble and that everything depends on whether we write this fiction through the memory of hero or of victim. ( 370) [My Italics]

Similarly, in *The River Between* (1965) Ngugi Wa Thiongo at the very beginning of his novel as an African narrator explains the setting in a mythic style to describe the history of the valley.

Giving a clear picture of the beginnings of civilization in that particular region:

It began long ago. A man rose in Makuyu. He claimed that Gikuyu and Mumbi sojourned there with Murungu on their way to Mukuruwe wa Gathanga. As a result of that stay, he said, leadership had been left to Makuyu. Not all the people believed him. For had it not always been whispered and rumored that Gikuyu and Mumbi had stopped at Kamen? And had not a small hill grown out of the soil on which they stood south of Kamen? And Murungu had told them:

‘This land I give you, O man and woman. It is yours to rule and till, you and your posterity.’

The land was fertile. It was the whole of Gikuyu country from one horizon embracing the heavens to the other hidden in the clouds. So the story ran in Kamen. Spiritual superiority and leadership had been left there. (1-2)

This is the way how the narrating of dateless facts metamorphoses into myth. Myth is created over a long period of time as Walcott mentions in his essay “. . . Facts evaporate into myth. . .”

(Walcott 371). African writers show their origins as a different stream from European humanism in order to draw out their own identities. As we saw in the essay “The Muse of History”:

... They believe in the responsibility of tradition, but what they are in awe of is not tradition, which is alert, alive, simultaneous, but of history, and the same is true of the new magnifiers of Africa. For these their deepest loss is of the old gods, the fear that it is worship which has enslaved progress. Thus the humanism of politics replaces religion. They see such gods as part of the process of history, subjected like the tribe to cycles of achievement and despair. Because the Old World concept of God is anthropomorphic, the New World slave was forced to remake himself in His image, despite such phrases as ‘God is light, and in Him no darkness,’ and at this point of intersecting faiths the enslaved priest surrender their power. But the tribe in bondage learned to fortify itself by cunning assimilation of the religion of the Old World. What seemed to be surrender was redemption. What seemed the loss of tradition was its renewal. What seemed the death of faith, was its rebirth. (Walcott, 373)

Achebe has shown how colonialism destroyed African culture. *The arrow of God* represents the arrow of white colonial power, a symbol of the destructive power of the white man. He goes beyond blaming colonization, to look at the violence that every society is subject to:

One man said that Ezeulu had forgotten whether it was his father or his mother who told him about the farmland. Speaker after speaker rose and spoke to the assembly until it was clear that all the six villages stood behind Nwaka. Ezeulu was not the only man of Umuaro whose mother had come from Okperi. But none of the others dared go to his support. (Achebe *Arrow* 17-18)

Achebe tries to analyze this violent tendency and shows it through a property dispute that had not been settled to everyone’s satisfaction:

‘What you should ask them, ‘said the other companion who has spoken very little since they set out,’ said the other companion who had spoken very little since they set out. ‘what they should tell us is why, if the land was indeed theirs, why they let us farm it and cut thatch from it for generations after generations, *until the white man came and reminded them.*’ (Achebe *Arrow* 20) [My Italics]

The white man's advent into Africa acts as a catalyst into breaking the long history of harmony, as white rule is established by breaking clan unity. The white man begins by creating this atmosphere of dispute, and then sets himself as the arbitrator between the tribes and as the force that can end war and violence and bring peace. ". . . The next day, Afo, saw the war brought to a sudden close. The white man, Wintabota, brought soldiers to Umoaro and stopped it. The story of what these soldiers did in Abame was still told with fear, and so Umouaro made no effort to resist but laid down their arms" (Achebe *Arrow* 29). Moreover, the white humiliates the natives and disarms them: "The white man, not satisfied that he had stopped the war, had gathered all the guns in Umouaro and asked the soldiers to break them in the face of all, except three or four which he carried away. Afterwards he sat in judgment over Umouaro and Okperi and gave the disputed land to Okperi." (Achebe *Arrow* 28). The role of white colonizers becomes clear throughout Achebe's narrative. It becomes self-searching as well stands as a counter discourse to western Orientalism, which had squarely blamed African peoples for their present miserable condition. And he has successfully shown that the harmony of African civilization was broken down by the intruders.

Against Naipaul's portrayal of the white man as peace bearer (*The Masque of Africa, A Bend in the River*) Achebe uses the word "pacification", thus questioning the white man's role. The contrast between peace and pacification remains moot here. "The club was the old Regimental Mess the army left behind when their work of pacification was done in these parts and then moved on" (Achebe *Arrow* 33). Achebe shows both the African as well as the colonizer's point of view:

Tony Clarke was dressed for dinner, although he still had more than an hour to go. . . . They said it was a general tonic which one must take if one own was to survive in this demoralizing country. . . . He was now reading the final chapter of *The Pacification of the*

*Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*, by George Allen, which Captain Winterbottom had lent him. (Achebe *Arrow* 33)

It reminds us of the tragic story of Okonkwo in Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*. There is a clear contrast between the reality of Africa and the colonizer's mind set. They have never considered Africans to be civilized, but have always thought of them as brutal, uncivilized and pagan, using the pejorative term of 'niggers' to describe them. Captain Winterbottoms' confession equalizes all European colonizers:

. . . Look at the French. They are not ashamed to teach their culture to backward races under their charge. Their attitude to the native rulers is clear. They say to him: "This land has belonged to you because you have been strong enough hold it. By the same token it now belongs to us. If you are satisfied come out and fight us." What do we British do? We flounder from one expedient to its opposite. We do not only promise to secure old savage tyrants on their—or more likely filthy animal skins—we not only do that, but we now go out of our way to invent chiefs where there were none before. They make ne sick.' (Achebe *Arrow* 37)

More importantly Achebe has shown how the true story is changed or modified by white discourse. They have entitled a conflict between two clans as a 'savage war'. Moreover they have established falsehood by denying the long African history of mutual trust and friendliness:

'Though guns have a long and interesting history. *The people of Okperi and their neighbors, Umuaro, are great enemies.* Or they were before I came into story. A big savage war had broken out between them over a piece of land. This feud was made worse by the fact that Okperi welcomed missionaries and government while Umuaro, on the other hand, has remained backward. It was only in the last four or five years that any kind of impression has been made there. . . . (Achebe *Arrow* 37-38) [My Italics]

Captain Winterbottom's voice is not merely an individual voice; Achebe shows that is the part of the process of African representation by the whites. This is indeed the established European hegemonic discourse, where history is metamorphosed to establish Africans as a brutal and uncivilized community of people:

. . . One thing you must remember in dealing with natives is that like children they are great liars. They don't lie simply to get out of trouble. Sometimes they would spoil a

good case by a pointless lie. Only one man—a kind of priest-king in Umuaro—witnessed against his own people. I have not found what it was, but I think he must have had some pretty fierce taboo working on him. But he was a most impressive figure of a man. (Achebe *Arrow* 39)

Africans, especially the elder wise men or old people are seen as stubborn who resist external influences. Both in Achebe's *Arrow of God* as well as in Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *The River Between* we have seen Ezeulu and Waiyaki's father send their children to learn white men's wisdom. They knew that white men have their power unequal to them as a result they realized that they have to learn their 'magic':

. . . He (Ezeulu) was not sure what to make of it. At first he had thought that since the white man had come with great power and conquest it was necessary that some people should learn the way of his deity. That was why he had agreed to send his son, Oduche, to learn the new ritual. He also wanted him to learn the white man's wisdom, for Ezeulu knew from what he saw of Wintabota and the stories he heard about his people that the white man was very wise. (Achebe *Arrow* 43)

Ezeulu as well as Chege knew that their world is changing abruptly so they need to change themselves as well: "‘The world is changing,’ he had told him. ‘I do not like it. But I am like the bird Eneke-nti-oba. . . . The world is like a mask dancing. If you want to see it well you do not stand in place. My spirit tells me that those who do not befriend the white man today will be saying *had we known before*’" (Achebe *Arrow* 47). In this way, Achebe shows that African community never was a static community, changing as the time demands. However, colonizers also change their strategy as they need to rule over their colonized land as we see in *Arrow of God*:

Back at his desk Captain Winterbottom read the Lieutenant Governor's memorandum again:

‘My purpose in this paragraph is limited to impressing on all Political Officers working among the tribes who lack Natural Rulers the vital necessity of developing without any further delay an effective system of “indirect rule” based on native institutions.

‘To many colonial nations native administration means government by white men. You are all aware that H.M.G. considers this policy as mistake. In place of the alternative of governing directly through Administrative offices there is the other method of trying while we endeavor to purge the native system of its abuse to build a higher civilization upon the soundly rooted native stock that had its foundation in the hearts and minds of and thoughts of the people and therefore on which we can more easily build, molding it and establishing it into lines consonant with modern ideas and higher standards, and yet all the time enlisting the real force of the spirit of the people, instead of killing all that out and trying to start afresh. We must not destroy the Africa atmosphere, the African mind, the whole foundation of his race . . .’ (Achebe *Arrow* 57)

In this way, Achebe counteracts the accusation that African society is static and immune to change, and becomes part of the counter discourse initiated through the negritude movement by his predecessors.



## CHAPTER THREE

### SYNTHESIS: RENUNCIATION

“Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing” (Barthes1322).

In an era of post-modernity, writers and theorists play with techniques of narrative to shift the focus from the narrator to the narrative itself. In the previous chapters, we observed the conflict between Subject and Object as well as the representation and re-representation from both points of view. Post-colonial writings show that these identifications are blurred so that one identity cannot be separated from the other. This means the dominant ideology represented the narrative voice is subverted and its perception of supremacy is somewhat compromised. In that case, the narrator’s ideology or viewpoint gets more priority than the agent the narrator is representing. Writers like J. M. Coetzee combine issues of post-colonialism and post-modernity in their writing to demonstrate this point. In his novel, he dissolves the question of representation by introducing Roland Barthes’ famous theory “The Death of the Author”. In this way, the narrator is renouncing his or her authority to represent any particular identity only to give language an autonomous identity.

Let us begin by looking briefly at *Disgrace* (1999) written in the context of the post-colonial period of South African post-apartheid. This novel shows a total change in the position of subject and other in the context of South Africa. In Coetzee’s representation the position of the blacks and whites are changing in the emerging situation in South Africa. In the novel we see Professor David Lurie and his daughter Lucy in a position of the Other. This is indeed a new departure. The professor is discharged from his university for having sexual relations with a

student named Melaine after a complaint is filed by her to the university. He leaves Cape Town and joins his daughter who lives in a rural area in a small farm. He helps her in farming and selling her goods in the local market. However, his daughter is raped by three intruders in their farm and he himself is badly injured by the attackers. Lucy does not mention being raped in her complaint to the police which irritates the old professor. She wanted to carry on with her life in the land peacefully. This ultimately creates a distance between the father and daughter. She became pregnant as a result of the rape. This is highly disturbing especially when he finds out that the three intruders were very close to their neighbor Petrus. Interestingly, Lucy does not want to quarrel with Petrus; rather she decides to have the child and settle for a compromise with the neighboring landlord. This is unacceptable to David. However, this story is not simply a story of losing dignity but also of reversing the racial position. In the changed post-apartheid era South Africa had to reverse its racial policies. This phenomenon can be understood through Fanon's psychological analysis in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), when the author shows how the native desires to take the position of a colonizer in other words of a ruler or of a Subject. The repressed desire of the native is evoked through the rape of Lucy. More interestingly, Lucy seems to take the burden of the rape as she does not complain to the police. It seems that she takes the responsibility of white repression or of bad doing of her earlier generations against the people of Africa. Her father can also be accused of that wrong doing as he himself knew he had committed "A mistake, a huge mistake" (Coetzee *Disgrace* 25). He had slept with his colored student and apologizes to her family. Despite the change in position, there still remains Subject and Other relationship between the two races. As a result, in Coetzee's representation of Africa; we still see a subject-object identity in the social structure. This does not invalidate Achebe and Naipaul's

representation of ambiguous hybrid African identity, but initiates a question of whether these two identities will always remain separate.

J. M. Coetzee's earlier novel *Foe* (1986) written as a parallel novel of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) by using post-modern techniques of inter-textuality, is most interesting in this context. This novel is not obviously set in Africa and in no simple way we can connect this novel with the title of this paper. However, if we take Friday as a metonymy for the black people, we can connect the novel with the representation of Africa. Though, he is not the protagonist of this novel his silence becomes one of the most important issues to the protagonist of the novel Susan Barton, a female castaway in contrast to a colonial male castaway. This simple presence of Friday or his silence connects the novel with Orientalist discourses that have constructed present day Black identity. The female castaway reveals her story to an author named Foe in Britain who converts her adventures into a popular fiction. Coetzee brings back Daniel Defoe (1660-1731) as Mr Foe in his metafictional novel. Susan's journey started for rescuing her abducted daughter. She started her journey in a ship for Lisbon but during a mutiny she was sent adrift. There she met Crusoe and Friday already living in the island for a long time. The said author refused to take her story of the island, instead he chooses her story pursue for her daughter. Later Foe's writing process was distracted by the writer's personal problems. However, Susan begins narrating her own story and so a new voice comes into play:

I would now *recount* to you the history of this singular Crusoe, as I heard it from his own lips. But the stories he told me were so various, and so hard to reconcile one with another, that I was more and more driven to conclude age and isolation had taken their toll on his memory, and he no longer knew for sure what was truth, what *fancy*. . . . But the next day he would tell me he had been a poor lad [Friday] of no family who had shipped as a cannibal boy and been captured by the Moors . . . and escaped and made his way to the New World. (Coetzee *Foe* 11-12) [My Italics]

Susan starts to narrate her story. More importantly, she states that she is recounting the story of a “singular Crusoe”. Here, it is important to mention that the earlier story of *Robinson Crusoe* was narrated through a male voice, while the same story is now recounted from a different and female point of view. The change of point of view is important as in the Orientalist representation Europe and the West are always represented as male or as a male voice and the Other world is always represented as feminine. The novel is not only challenging the established diagrams of earlier discourse but also tries to show that the story of the male castaway could be narrated in another way. Another way of interpreting *Foe* is that it is not only a novel but also a metafiction that is actually a criticism of Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*. At one point, Susan says : “ ‘With these words I presented myself to Robinson Crusoe, in the days when he still ruled over his island, and became his second subject, the first being his manservant Friday’ (Coetzee *Foe* 11). This is an indication that Crusoe is not only a castaway but also a representative of the West or Self; on the other hand, Friday is a representative of Africa or the Other. As there were no female castaways, the voice of a female castaway had never been heard. Coetzee is conscious of this phenomenon and is consciously giving a space to a female voice who claims her story to be as exciting as Crusoe’s ones. In his further attempt, the novelist is also disclosing the technique of creating an artifact or a fiction:

. . . he urged –“There has never before, to my knowledge, been a female castaway of our nation. It will cause a great stir.” . . . I replied; “but what little I know of book-writing tells me its charm will quite vanish when it is set down badly in print. . . . said Captain Smith; “but you may depend on it, the booksellers will hire a man to set your story to rights, and put in *a dash of color too, here and there.*” (*Foe* 40) [My Italics]

Susan questions the credibility of Crusoe’s claims about Friday, thereby questioning *Robinson Crusoe* itself. It questions an established discourse which had portrayed Friday as a cannibal without language or voice. Here in the novel it not only doubts the validity of the story but also

challenges the concept of pure truth: “Is that why you are forever looking out to sea: to be warned of the return of the cannibals? I would pursue; and he would nod again. So in the end I did not know what was *truth*, what was lies, and what was mere rambling” (Coetzee *Foe* 12) [My italics]. Susan is a voice that questions and continuously challenges the established Crusoe myth trying to say that what Crusoe had said in original *Robinson Crusoe* may not be the only truth. She always doubts Crusoe’s honesty:

“you speak as if language were one of the banes of life, like money or the pox.” Said I. “Yet would not have lightened your solitude had Friday been master of English? You and he might have experienced, all these years, the pleasures of conversation; you might have brought home to him some of the blessings of civilization and made him a better man. What benefits is there in a life of silence?” (Coetzee *Foe* 22)

These are actually questions to Daniel Defoe as the author of *Robinson Crusoe*. These questions remain unanswered. However, Caliban’s consciousness regarding language is also visible here. It tries to show that if the master teaches his language to his slave, the language can be used as a weapon against the master as Caliban did against Prospero. This metafictional novel tries to criticize the intentional silencing of Friday. Friday’s silence is not only the silence of a person but also a silence of the Other world. In the absence of the voice of the Other, Crusoe can imagine the world by himself. In this silencing process, Daniel Defoe has not left any space for self-representation for Friday. On the other hand, his protagonist has all the freedom of constructing the image of Friday. Susan’s is a voice that tends to deconstruct the idea of Friday established through Crusoe or by Daniel Defoe. She constantly questions Friday’s slaughtered tongue:

‘Crusoe gazed steadily back at me. Though I cannot now swear to it, I believe he was smiling. “Perhaps the slavers, who are Moors, hold the tongue to be a delicacy,” he said. “Or perhaps they grew weary of listening to Friday’s wails of grief, which went on day and night. *Perhaps they wanted to prevent him from ever telling his story who he was, where his home lay, how it came about that he was taken. Perhaps they cut out the tongue*

of every cannibal they took, as a punishment. How will we ever know the truth?" (Coetzee *Foe* 23)

The answer lies in this guessing. Nobody knows who Friday was and how his tongue was cut. The truth could never be arrived at as Friday himself would never be able to narrate his side of the story. Moreover, in *Foe*, Crusoe somehow accepts that slaves are necessary for prosperity and civilization:

. . . Was providence sleeping?"

"If Providence were to watch over all of us," said Crusoe, "who would be left to pick the cotton and cut the sugar-cane? For the business of the world to prosper, Providence must sometimes wake and sometimes sleep as lower creatures do." (Coetzee *Foe* 23)

Crusoe's words support slavery. In *Robinson Crusoe*, Crusoe is the only authority in the island. Friday was his only subject. Everyone else has unquestioningly taken the story of the island as told by the canonical author. However, Coetzee questions the authority of Crusoe; in other words, the words of the fiction of Daniel Defoe. In Coetzee's metafictional approach he does not only reveal a crafting process of a fiction behind a renowned colonial novel but also question the authority of a castaway through the medium of the voice of a female castaway:

. . . When I reflect on my story I seem to exist only as the one who has come, the one who witnessed, the one who longed to be gone: a being without substance, a ghost beside the true body of Crusoe. Is that the fate of all storytellers? Yet I was as much a body as Crusoe. I ate and drunk, I woke and slept, I longed. The island was Crusoe's (yet by what right? By the law of islands? Is there such a law?" (Coetzee *Foe* 51)

Susan's story does not attract a writer like Foe as she confesses: "I am not persuaded, despite Crusoe's fear, that there are cannibals in those oceans. . . . All I say is: What I saw, I wrote. I saw no cannibals; and if they came after nightfall and fled before the dawn, they left no footprint behind" (Coetzee *Foe* 54). A fiction or a narrative always needs elements of excitement to give it a flavor of adventure. Susan's island is no such island. Coetzee shows how a story evolves with

the inclusion of imagination, how a piece of imagination becomes a myth, how a mere work of pastime of Crusoe and Friday can once be misunderstood:

. . . In a year, in ten years, there will be nothing left standing but a circle of sticks to mark the place where the hut stood, and of the walls they will say, these are cannibal walls, the ruins of a cannibal city, from the golden age of the cannibals. For who will believe they were built by one man and a slave, in the hope that one day a seafarer would come with a sack of corn for them to sow? (Coetzee *Foe* 55)

Susan's island is not an exotic one. However, elements of fiction need to be exiting and exotic as it is usually seen in Oriental representation. Gradually, as a metafictional approach Coetzee is revealing the technique of writing fiction:

“Yes,” I would pursue, “If we were nearer the heavens there, why was it that so little of the island could be called extraordinary? Why were there no strange fruits, no serpents, no lions? Why did the cannibals never come? What will we tell folk in England when they ask us to divert them? (Coetzee *Foe* 43)

Susan's experience does not contain the elements of a fictional plot. This is another attempt by Coetzee to show the difference between a real life condition and a fiction as description. A real life experience often lacks what is expected in a fictional work. More importantly, a fictional work has a structure and needs to be shaped accordingly. It has a beginning, middle and end. However, post-modern approach has actually deconstructed the idea of structuralism instead it focuses on the idea of deconstruction where structure is challenged and deconstructed.

Coetzee repeatedly stresses on the silence of Friday and the absence of his tongue. Coetzee cunningly raises the question of history, where the whole truth is never told. By relating this to fiction, fiction is shown to become a discourse which fulfills the relationship between narrative and power: “. . . But what we can accept in life we cannot accept in history. To tell my story and be silent on Friday's tongue is no better than offering a book for sale with pages in it quietly left empty. Yet the tongue that can tell Friday's secret is the tongue he has lost! (Coetzee

*Foe* 67) Coetzee in *Dusk Land* (1974) quotes from Flaubert who was regarded as one of the pioneer Orientalist by Edward Said: “What is important is the philosophy of History” (Coetzee *Dusk* 1). In history, the silencing of voices is not new as colonial history writers always did in their historic writings. Coetzee in his metafictional approach tries to unfold the philosophy of history that has been constructed through European orientalist discourse.

In post-modern writings writers tend to reveal that fiction is an artifact and words are materials of this art work. It works as a magic. Coetzee does the same thing in his novel by showing that the novel is not only an art work but also a product of capitalist society that can also make a writer a popular and rich one: “This is the part of the magic of words. Through the medium of words I have given Mr Foe the particulars of you and Mr. Crusoe and of my year on the island . . . Mr. Foe is weaving into a story which will make us famous throughout the land, and rich too” (Coetzee *Foe* 58). In his rhetorical questioning he tries to find out the reason behind writing “. . . is writing not a fine thing?” (Coetzee *Foe* 58). Is writing a mere work of art? Said has already stated the argument that no knowledge is pure knowledge. This approach shows that writing is not only a personal matter or a personal view of a writer. Moreover, behind any kind of writing there is a process:

It is not wholly as I imagined it would be. What I thought would be your writing-table is not a table but *a bureau*. The window overlooks not woods and pastures but your garden. There is no ripple in the glass. The chest is not a true chest but a dispatch box. Nevertheless, it is all close enough. Does it surprise you as much as it does me, this correspondence between things as they are and the pictures we have of them in our minds?( Coetzee *Foe* 65) [My Italics]

In this way, Coetzee tries to uncover the process of writing fiction. “A bureau” is not a personal place moreover it is a public space where officials and the public interact.



Elements of fiction are not available in Susan's story even as she lists the 'strange circumstances' of her journey. However, it seems to her not as exciting as it should be. As a result, she tries to invent some strange stories and includes those in her story as fact:

. . . Then I made a list of all the strange circumstances of the year I could remember: the mutiny and murder on the Portuguese ship, . . . Dubiously I thought: Are these enough strange circumstances to make a story of? How long before I am driven to invent new and stranger circumstances: the salvage of a boat, or at last, the coming of a golden-haired stranger . . . Alas, will the day ever arrive when we can make a story without strange circumstances? (Coetzee *Foe* 67)

Now, Susan understands why Mr. Foe was interested in the word 'Cannibal'. Mr. Foe needs excitement in the story of Susana. He needs to make the fiction exciting and adventurous to his readers:

Alas, we will never make our fortunes, Friday, by being merely what we are, or were. Think of the spectacle we offer: your master and you on the terraces. . . .Who would wish to read that there were once . . . We begin to understand why Mr. Foe pricked up his ears when he heard the word *Cannibal*, why he longed for Crusoe to have a musket and a carpenter's chest. No doubt he would have preferred Crusoe to be younger too, and his sentiments towards me more passionate. (Coetzee *Foe* 83)

Among the invented stories the stories of a savage or cannibal seems to be most exiting for a reader.

In "The Death of the Author" Roland Barthes (1967) indicates annihilation of the identity of a writer. He writes: "Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing" (1322). Though the representation of Africa by three authors examined in this thesis actually differs in perspective, they all portray hybrid conditions where a clear line between Self and Other is blurred. As a result, Coetzee employs a different approach in representation. Coetzee begins where both Achebe and Naipaul end ". . . , the disconnection occurs, the voice loses its

origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins” (1322). In the essay Barthes empowers the readers. He stresses on the point that meaning will be absorbed by the reader:

The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text’s unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. Yet this destination cannot any longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply *someone* who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted. (1325)

As a result Coetzee is also asking what will be asked by the readers in a novel. He is more interested in what a reader can ask about a text. In his post-modern approach he asks: ““I ask these question because they are the questions any reader of our story will ask. . . Is the answer that our island was not a garden of desire, like that in which our first parents’ went naked, and coupled as innocently as beast?” (Coetzee *Foe* 86) Coetzee is challenging already established issues in the original *Robinson Crusoe*. It is important to remember here that this questioning is serving two purposes; firstly, questioning a grand narrative as a characteristic of post-modern metafictional writing and secondly, this is a voice of a reader more importantly a post-modern reader conscious of the theory of deconstruction. A conscious reader will obviously question the validity of Crusoe’s remarks in the original text of *Robinson Crusoe*:

. . . There was too little desire in Crusoe and Friday: too little desire to escape, too little desire for a new life. Without desire how is it possible to make a story? It was an island of sloth, despite the terracing. I ask myself what past historians of the castaways state have done—whether in *despair they have not begun to make up lies?* (Coetzee *Foe* 88) [My Italics]

In other words, he is also questioning Daniel Defoe’s construction of a fiction which is obviously a work of crafting. In his further attempt, Coetzee describes the craft of writing or a process of creating an art work that is described in post-modern literature as techniques of metafictionality. In *Foe*, he tries to reveal *Robinson Crusoe* as a work of art, or as an artifact:

‘Teasing and braiding can, like any craft, be learned. But as to determining which episodes hold promise (as oysters hold pearls), it is not without justice that this art is called diving. Here the writer can of himself effect nothing: he must wait in the grace of illumination. Had I known, on the island, that it would one day fall to me to be our storyteller, I would have been more zealous to interrogate Crusoe. . . (Coetzee *Foe* 89)

Coetzee describes the poetics of fiction as Aristotle did in his *Poetics*. He is blending the techniques of fiction and non-fiction: “It is thus that we make up a book: loss, then quest, then recovery; beginning, then middle, then end” (Coetzee *Foe* 117). In other words, Coetzee agrees with Barthes’ view that no writing is original, and every writer takes from his or her predecessors. When, Mr. Foe rejects Susan’s story of the island, she questions and analyses her own version of the story:

. . . The story I desire to be known by is the story of the island. You call it an episode, but I call it a story in its own right. It commences with my being cast away there and concludes with the death of Crusoe and the return of Friday and myself to England, . . . Taken in all, it is a narrative with a beginning and an end, and with pleasing digressions too, lacking only a substantial and varied middle, in the place where Crusoe spent too much time tilling the terraces and I too much time tramping the shores. Once you proposed to supply a middle by inventing cannibals and pirates. These I would not accept because they were not truth. Now you propose to reduce the island to an episode in the history of a woman in search of a lost daughter. This too I reject. (Coetzee *Foe* 121)

In the novel, a girl suddenly arrives and claims to be the lost daughter of Susan. However, this small anecdote also used as a specimen of how a story can be crafted by a writer:

“I have brought you to tell you of your parentage,” I commence. “I do not know who told you that your father was brewer from Deptford who fled to the Low Countries, but the story is false. Your father is a man named Daniel Foe. He is the man who set you to watching the house in Newington. Just as it was he who told you I am your mother, I will vouch he is the author of the story of the brewer. He maintains whole regiments in Flanders. . . . I repeat: what you know of your parentage comes to you in the form of stories, and the stories have but a single source.” (Coetzee *Foe* 90-91)

A writer is not only a writer but also a father or a breeder of a story. Another important issue included here is in that general readers tend to believe a well crafted story. They are quite

convinced that it is a true story that has been told to them. However, here Coetzee tries to reveal that there are other possibilities of a story. Barthes stresses the point that no writing is original one. As Coetzee takes *Robinson Crusoe* as his primary text on which his *Foe* is recrafted, Barthes says in his famous essay on the trend of post-modern literature:

. . . ,none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture. Similar to Bouvard and Pecuchet, those eternal copyist, at once sublime and comic and whose profound ridiculousness indicates precisely the truth of writing, the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the once with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any of them. (1324)

In the same process Coetzee finds how in representation one part remains silent or unspoken.

This is the basis on which the image of the subject or the protagonist is constructed:

‘In every story there is a silence, some sight concealed, some world unspoken, I believe. Till we have spoken the unspoken we have not come to the heart of the story. I ask: why was Friday drawn into such deadly peril, given that life on the island was without peril, given that life on the island was without peril, and then saved? . . . We are accustomed to believe that our world was created by God speaking the word; but I ask, may it not rather be that he wrote it, wrote a word so long we have yet to come to the end of it? May it not be that God continually writes the world, the world and all that is in it? (Coetzee *Foe* 141-143)

Absence of the writer (Mr. Foe) is very important in the second part of the novel. It is his absence that makes the protagonist write about her life as a castaway. It is an echo of the theory of “The Death of the Author” as well. A writer should not be present after the creation of a text. He or she should be absent as it happens in *Foe*. For example, in this novel; Susan is a symbolic conscious post-modern reader who converts herself into a writer or a critic. Though she wants to remain true to her story, she herself doubts whether her story which is non-adventurous, non-romantic and with no cannibals is a story at all. Silencing of the voice is repeatedly questioned in the novel. The narrator constantly asks the question who is responsible for cutting off Friday’s

tongue? In her continuous questioning she actually doubts Crusoe: “Have I misjudged Crusoe all this time: was it to punish him for his sins that he cut out Friday’s tongue?”(Coetzee *Foe* 95)

Coetzee doubts the original *Robinson Crusoe* in his metafictional approach. This is the doubt of a conscious post-modern reader who doubts the fixity of meaning in a discourse:

‘ . . . It is as though animalcules of words lie dissolved in your ink-well, ready to be dipped up and flow from the pen and take form on the paper. From down stairs to upstairs, from house to island, from the girl to Friday: it seems necessary only to establish the poles, the here and the there, the now and the then—after the words of themselves do the journeying. I had not guessed it was so easy to be an author.’ (Coetzee *Foe* 93)

She continues her writing as a letter to Mr. Foe. She questions him directly about the honesty in his writing. She is aware of the fact that writing is a difficult job and a writer should be conscious about using proper techniques and words in the proper places in the crafting of a piece of fiction. She knows a writer sometimes has to insert exotic as well as erotic elements in a work of art. Undoubtedly, here arises the eternal confusion of whether art is for art sake or should an art work also concentrate on real life. The conflict is reflected in the novel:

Dear Mr Foe,

‘ . . . I thought it was a sign you had no regard for the truth. I forgot you are a writer who knows above all how many words can be sucked from a cannibal feast, how few from a woman cowering from the wind. It is all a matter of words and the number of words, is it not? (Coetzee *Foe* 94)

Friday is silent as silence becomes a tool for resistance for him. In Susan’s view silence is a way to reject the West. Moreover, the novel criticizes the silencing of Friday’s voice in *Robinson Crusoe*. It seems that Friday’s voice was muted deliberately to give complete space to Crusoe. This is why Coetzee questions the deliberate silencing of Friday through the voice of Susan: “‘In the letters you did not read,’ I said, ‘I told you of my conviction that, if the story seems stupid,

that is only because it so doggedly holds its silence. The shadow whose lack you feel is there: it is the loss of Friday's tongue.'" (Coetzee *Foe* 118). The writer does not answer:

Foe made no reply, and I went on. 'The story of Friday's tongue is a story unable to be told, or unable to be told by me. That is to say, many stories can be told of Friday's tongue, but the true story will not be heard till by art we have found a means of giving voice to Friday. . . listening to the pulse of blood in my ears and to the silence from Friday below, a silence that rose up the stairway like smoke, like a welling of black smoke. Before long I could not breathe. . . (Coetzee *Foe* 118)

In the novel, Susan continues her investigation about Friday's lost tongue. In her further attempts, she tries to find out the truth by sketching three sketches and by showing it to Friday because she thinks that there is still a gap between her and Friday: "Ah Friday!" I said. "Shipwreck is a great leveler, and so is destitution, but we are not level enough yet." (Coetzee *Foe* 70) A sense of desire plays an important role in the relationship between Susan and Friday. She desires to know the secrets of Friday's silence.

Oh, Friday, how can I make you understand the cravings felt by those of us who live in a world of speech to have our questions answered! It is like our desire, when we kiss someone, to feel the lips like our desire, to feel the lips we kiss respond to us. . . . I say that the desire for answering speech is like the desire for the embrace of, the embrace by, another being. (Coetzee *Foe* 79-80)

Most of the time it is one sided as Susan confirms. Neither Friday nor Crusoe desired her: ". . . Why did you not desire me, neither you nor your master? . . . Do tall women who rise up out of the sea dismay you?" (Coetzee *Foe* 85) The question whether Friday loves the woman is an important issue in the novel. It seems that the narrator had a kind of weakness towards Friday. It is not only that he is silenced but he has also been 'unmanned'. The issue is focused on by the narrator: "Whether the lost tongue might stand not only for itself but for a more atrocious mutilation; whether by a dump slave I was to understand a slave unmanned" (Coetzee *Foe* 119). This gives a sudden realization to Susan: ". . . I was so confounded that I gaped without shame at

what had hitherto been veiled from me. For though I had seen Friday naked before, it had been only from a distance: on our island we had observed the decencies as far as we could, Friday not least of us” (Coetzee *Foe* 119). Instead of his silence he remains an African and he protects his identity of being an African: “In the dance nothing was still and yet everything was still. The whirling robe was a scarlet bell settled upon Friday’s shoulders and enclosing him; Friday was the dark pillar at its centre. What had been hidden from me was revealed. I saw; or I should say, my eyes were to open to what was present to them” (Coetzee *Foe* 119). Friday remains African at his core as a result he does not have any desire to learn what Susan intends to teach him. Whether, the West or Daniel Defoe can label Friday as a cannibal or as a slave Friday remains what he is:

So now I knew that all the time I had stood there playing to Friday’s dancing, thinking he and I made a consort, he had been insensible of me. And indeed, when I stepped forward in some pique and grasped at him to halt the infernal spinning, he seemed to feel my touch no more than if it had been a fly’s; . . . and his soul more in Africa than in Newington. Tears came to my eyes, . . . and bitterly I began to recognize that it might not be mere dullness that kept him shut up in himself, not the accident of the loss of his tongue, nor even an incapacity to distinguishing speech from babbling, but a disdain for intercourse with me. Watching him whirling in his dance, I had to hold back an urge to strike him and tear the wig and robes away and thus rudely teach him he was not alone in this earth. (Coetzee *Foe* 98)

Finally, Susan or a conscious reader realizes that Friday has always been an African soul and will never be a part of Crusoe’s world: “. . . And in that same instant I understood why Friday had danced all day in your house: It was to remove himself, or his spirit from Newington and England, and from me too. For was it to be wondered at that found life with me as burdensome as I found life with him?” (Coetzee *Foe* 94)

Now another important question that emerges in the novel is whether Susan really desires Friday. Or, why does she want to communicate with Friday? Or it is just her desire of to teach

Friday and make him a ‘civilized’ human being. In the novel, she has always used the symbol of love making. Jenny Sharpe in her essay named “Figure of Colonial Resistance” says:

Arguing against the fixity of essentialist signification that Said’s study of Orientalism suggests, Bhabha proposes a mixed economy of not only power and domination but also desire and pleasure. He describes mimicry as a trope of partial presence that masks a threatening racial difference only to reveal the excesses and slippages of colonial power and knowledge. ‘The menace of mimicry,’ he explains, ‘is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority’ (Bhabha 1984b:129). The movement between fixity of signification and its division, what he calls the ‘ambivalence’ of colonial discourse, demonstrates that colonial authority is never total or complete. And it is this absence of a closure that allows for native intervention. (101)

Susan strives to know Friday’s inner being. This can be connected with the essence of desire and pleasure. This is also an indication that though Susan is a female voice still she is a voice from the West as a result she is not also devoid of having desire of possessing Friday’s knowledge.

In earlier discourse of Orientalism, the concept of cannibalism has been established so vividly that it cannot be eliminated easily from a reader’s mind. As a result, Susan is in a dilemma that in her unconscious mind she still tends to believe that Friday could be a cannibal who can eat the dead child:

Who was the child but I, in another life?. . . My thought ran to Friday, I could not stop them, it was an effect of the hunger. Had I not been there to restrain him, would he in his hunger have eaten the babe? I told myself I did him wrong to think of him as a cannibal or worse, a devourer of the dead. But *Crusoe had planted the seed in my mind*, and now I could not look on Friday’s lips without calling to mind what meat must once have passed them. (Coetzee *Foe* 106) [My Italics]

She imagines Friday as a cannibal who could eat her at any time and as a result she could not sleep. It resembles Fanon’s psychological explanation in the chapter named “The Negro and Psychology” in his book *Black Skin White Masks*:



In the magazines the Wolf, the Devil, the Evil Spirit, the Bad Man, the savage are always symbolized by Negroes or Indians; since there is always identification with the victor, the little Negro, quite as easily as the little white boy, becomes an explorer, and adventurer, a missionary “who faces the danger being eaten by the wicked Negroes. (113)

Representing a Negro is an old trend that ultimately shapes the psychology of the modern readers who are expected to believe that the Negro is a cannibal. Very soon Coetzee gives his readers a hint that the concept is actually gained by books such as Pakenham’s *Travels in Abyssinia* (1737). It is important to understand that Susan’s knowledge has actually derived from such kind of discourse that makes her doubt about Friday though she never have experienced any prove of Friday’s brutality that can prove him as a cannibal: “. . . though glad to be relieved of so heavy a book, I was sorry too, for I had no time to read in it and learn more of Africa, and so be of great assistance to Friday in regaining his homeland” (Coetzee *Foe* 107).

Rejection is an important element of resistance as *Foe* shows. The rejection is directed to the original text of *Robinson Crusoe* because it challenging its narrative. Coetzee says that Crusoe’s voice was actually a voice from the West:

‘You err most tellingly in failing to distinguish between my silence and the silences of a being such as Friday. *Friday has no command of words and therefore no defense against being re-shaped day by day on conformity with the desires of others.* I say he is a cannibal and he becomes a cannibal; I say he is a laundryman and he becomes a laundryman. What is the truth of Friday? You will respond: he is neither cannibal nor laundryman, these are mere names, they do not touch his essence, he is a substantial body, he is himself, Friday is Friday. But that is not so. No matter what he is to himself (is he anything to himself?-how can he tell us?), what us to the world is what I make of him. Therefore the silence of Friday is a helpless silence. . . . Whereas the silence I keep regarding Bahia and other matters is chosen and purposeful: it is my own silence. (Coetzee *Foe* 121-22) [My Italics]

Friday is shaped by the intentions of Daniel Defoe who has the authority over language and as a result has shaped Friday’s voice. Discourse is not a single voice but a collection of voices crafted

over the period of time as Foucault explains in *Archeology of Knowledge* (1969). Susan is the anti-voice of Crusoe. She intends to amend what had once been established:

‘I am not, do you see, one of those thieves or highwaymen of yours who gabble a confession and are then whipped off to Tyburn and eternal silence, leaving you to make of their stories whatever you fancy. It is still in my power to guide and amend. Above all, to withhold. By such means do I still endeavor to be father to my story.’ (Coetzee *Foe* 123)

In the original *Robinson Crusoe* both feminine and African voices were ignored. In that particular novel most of time Friday was also treated as substantial body. He was treated as a body without a specific identity. He was used as a vehicle for the West for establishing their supremacy. His identity was not only distorted but also shaped as a non-identity who does not have any dignity: ““substantial body” is an identity without dignity and self-respect: “. . . I could return in every respect to the life of a substantial body, the life you recommended. But such a life is abject. It is the life of a thing. A whore used by men is used as a fore the substantial body” (Coetzee *Foe* 126). This substantial body is Susan as well as Friday. The identity of Friday has been used by western discourse as a substantial body or a whore who served his master. In this way, Coetzee is not only pointing to *Robinson Crusoe* but also to colonial discourse as a whole.

Coetzee in his metafictional approach empowers both muted African voices as well as feminine voices. He reminds his readers about the story of the muse who was female and is always an inspiration for writers. She is the one who begets creativity:

‘Do you know the story of the Muse, Mr. Foe? The Muse is a woman, a goddess, who visits poets in the night and begets stories upon them. . . . When I wrote my memoir for you, and saw how like the island it was, under my pen, dull and vacant and without life, I wished that there were such a being as a man-Muse, a youthful god who visited authoresses in the night and made their pens flow. But now I know better. The muse is both goddess and begetter. I was intended not to be the mother of my story, but to beget it. It is not I who am the intended, but you. (Coetzee *Foe* 126)

As Barthes also describes about a creator of a story: “The author is thought to *nourishing* the book, which is to say that he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child” (1324). The whole novel is narrated from a woman’s point of view. She is the sole narrator of the narrative. And through her voice Coetzee raises the question of silencing. An important contrast in my paper is that in this final chapter the novel I picked is actually described from a white narrator and its setting is also not in Africa. However, I have picked it because it has actually focused on the issue of silencing a Negro slave. It is also important that the narrator is actually condemning Defoe for the silencing of Friday. Finally, Coetzee discloses the reason for silencing Friday. Friday is silenced because he can be used by his master as he wished to: “. . . We deplore the barbarism of whoever maimed him, yet have we, his later masters, not reason to be secretly grateful? For as long as he is dumb we can tell ourselves his desires are dark to us, and continue to use him as we wish” (Coetzee *Foe* 148).

Moreover, as Helen Tiffin in “Post-colonial Literature and Counter-discourse” mentions Coetzee’s *Foe* as a novel that has taken Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* as a primary text. She says that Coetzee’s rewriting is a “canonical counter-discourse”. Coetzee in this novel is not only using metafictional techniques to untie established discourses of Europe about the Other but also indicates deliberate silencing of the voice of the Other:

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. . . Decolonisation is a process, not arrival; it invokes an ongoing dialectic between hegemonic centrist systems and peripheral subversion of them; between Europe or British discourses and their post-colonial dismantling . . . , it has been the project of post-colonial writing to interrogate European discourses and discursive strategies from a privileged position within (and between) two worlds; to investigate the means by which Europe imposed and maintained its codes in the colonial domination of so much of the rest of the world. (Tiffin 99)

Thus the rereading and rewriting of European historical and fictional records are vital. Writers like Coetzee deconstruct colonial text to initiate a counter-discourse:

But the particular counter-discursive post-colonial field with which I want to engage here is what I'll call canonical counter-discourse. . .

Understandably, then, it has become the project of post-colonial literatures to investigate the European textual capture and containment of colonial and post-colonial space and to intervene in that originally and continuing containment. . . Just as Jean Rhys writes back to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, . . . and J. M. Coetzee in *Foe* (and indeed throughout his works) write back to Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. . . . Selvon and Coetzee take up the complex discursive field surrounding Robinson Crusoe and unlock these apparent closures. (Tiffin 100-101)

Thus she finally concludes her essay by saying: “. . . and J. M. Coetzee in *Foe* (and indeed throughout his works) write(s) back to Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*” (Tiffin 101).

Finally, we can conclude by saying that it is not only Friday who is used as a metonymy of Other world, but also Crusoe who is a castaway is as well a metonymy for West in Coetzee's *Foe*. In this novel, Coetzee deconstructed Crusoe as well as Daniel Defoe who was reincarnated by Coetzee in *Foe* as Mr. Foe by possessing a counter-discourse of canonical colonial writings. In a post-modern era of hybridity where it is very difficult to draw a line between a subject and object for a particular character of a fiction; Coetzee raises the question of the validity of a fiction by dismantling its crafting process in his metafictional novel. In *Disgrace* he shows that situation can change or alter the position of subject and object. In his further approach, he shows that a position of self and other is conditional and constructed by and through a discourse. However, a discourse or a language cannot be questioned for that, rather as Barthes explains, it should be deconstructed and challenged by its reader to initiate an era of post-modernity where discourse should be challenged by a counter-discourse.

## CONCLUSION

If we consider the progress of history in the way of Hegelian dialectic, we will see it resembles the structural process in the history of representation discussed in this thesis. V. S. Naipaul could not break the structure of the colonial trend of representation as a result his narratives can be considered as a thesis of the Hegelian dialectical process. He represents Africa from an Orientalist point of view in post-colonial writings. As a result, his narrative process is viewed as the thesis in this paper in my first chapter. In the Hegelian dialectic apparatus, Chinua Achebe challenges the previous Orientalist structure by re-representing African identity in post-colonial writing. He breaks the structure of earlier discourse as a result he is viewed as an antithesis of Naipaul's representational writing. Finally, as history develops according to Hegelian dialectical process J. M. Coetzee synthesized the way of representation by renouncing view of representations that puts the author in the centre. He deconstructs the discourse itself and opens a horizon of unlimited possibilities in the meaning of the discourse that ultimately turns the history of representation to a totally new direction.

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