

Derek Walcott's *Pantomime* as a Postcolonial Critique

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ABSTRACT: The *Pantomime* is a postcolonial critique that is presented by Derek Walcott, who is labeled due to his works as a post-colonialist. His written medium belongs to the standardized language domain, which is under the strain in his own language culture and concepts under a public of the international Standard English. Walcott belongs to the Caribbean Postcolonial authors and critics who have begun to inquire about the English and European colonization and their narratives and to rewrite them based on a history of subversive activity. They have started to rewrite the fictions of the Empire that have been a part of their construction and oppression through the centuries. Therefore, a new dimension of narrative has been established so as to fight back the center. Walcott's play *Pantomime* represents the bitter residue of colonialism. The focus of this study is to shed more light on the ongoing cultural exploitation of the former colonizer.

Key Words: Pantomime, Post-colonialism, Mimicry, Culture, Language.

I. INTRODUCTION

Walcott's *The Pantomime* is spoken by two characters who are different in imitation, race and culture. Both of these main characters in the play had taken the plot to its highest point and made it more interesting. Mimicry is clear and abrogation gives the sense of exploitation in the postcolonial writing of some foreign cultural elements without giving up the local cultures. The postcolonial drama of the *pantomime* by Derek Walcott highlights the sense of self and other as a step for resistance between the two sides: the English have the colonizer upper hand and the Trinidadian as the colonized one. What the native tries to do is to obtain recognition from the other side and that recognition is very important to the establishment of his new character. Jackson, the main character, has religiously split between the English and West Indian ways of life; he attempts to mimic the flourishes of legitimate English between native culture and white society.

II. MIMICRY IN THE PANTOMIME

Derek Walcott's *Pantomime* explored postcolonial issues. Mimicry comes from a Homi K. Bhabha a post-colonialist critic. Bhabha's concept of Mimicry is used to analyze the post-colonial issue of the oppressed culture by using the term colonial ambivalence and mimicry. Frantz Fanon clarified this idea in his book *Black Skin / White Mask* when he depicts it as the people who tried to give their conventional conceptions of selfishness and national identity by imitating their colonial masters [1]. Bhabha writes that imitation is a sign of dual speech in his essay "Mimicry and Men: the Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse" a complicated change, a regulatory or a disciplinary strategy which fits the other to visualize power [2].

A mimicry is also a form of insufficient recalcitrance that cohesively consistent with the prevailing colonial energy policy, intensive surveillance. It presents an immediate challenge both to "normalized" information and to disciplinary forces. Colonial imitation is a desire to see a changed and identifiable individual as a result of an almost similar but not wholly different distinction. The discourse of reproduction has, therefore based on ambivalence; to be successful, Mimicry has to produce distance, its excesses and its difference continuously. Mimicry tends to reflect a distinction that itself has disavowal [3]. Colonial and postcolonial literature typically demonstrated limitations of the language, politics, cultural or even the dress fashion of colonizers in the colonized community. Mimicry has still seen as something shameful, and other men typically ridicule the black man who imitates the white [4]. However, Bhabha mentioned that the imitation is not always a bad thing, often unintentionally subversive [5]. He said that mimicry is a sort of performance that displays all symbolic expressions of force.

Postcolonial authors argue that the people who imitate will use a foreign language to do so to demonstrate hybridity to syncretism. Hybridity is the "effects" of imitation: the hybrid text is the result of an act of reproduction and is not an "official" variant of colonial discourse. The imitators must compose a hybrid text by "annulment" and "appropriation"[6]. Abrogation implies a rejection of a traditional or "true" usage as an aesthetic of imperial categories of cultures and acceptance of the usual and established sense "printed" in that

world, appropriation implies the use of the language to "bear" the responsibility of one's cultural history or colonial culture has transmitted.

In the introduction to the *Pantomime*, "It's our Christmas panto," [7] Harry opened his Calypsonian chant and dance. The guy he alluded to in the text is presumably referring both to Crusoe and himself and has thus mimicked Crusoe's history by using it in a new phrase. Harry describes the world of *Robinson Crusoe* by Defoe as well. Immediately, "HARRY: Try calling me Trewe ... JACKSON: Not yet. That will come" [8]. Harry came back to the stage and Friday, named Jackson a black guy in Robinson Crusoe's Creole. Jackson was a Trinitarian and worked for Harry as a waiter, but he did not think Harry's bid should have considered. Therefore, Jackson thought he would not have to play Friday's job because he was already a waiter. Jackson politely ignored Harry's offer. He tried to explain to his master that his customers should cancel the play and restore the guesthouse. "JACKSON Mr. Trewe? (English accent) Mr. Trewe, your scramble eggs is here! are here! (Creole accent) you hear, Mr. Trewe? I here wad your eggs! (English accent)" [9]. The dialogue about English accent, particularly the lines spoken by Jackson, often shows the use of English Creole. Since it has written before English Creole, a type of revocation has proposed the distinction between colonial English and therefore a new identity. Creole English is the Caribbean director, and he uses a polyglossic script for his films.

AS Sanjiv Kumar thinks that Bhabha is concerned with the concept of imitation and ambivalence in V.S. Naipaul's *Bend in the River*. Further, he defines the word 'micro' as a near likeness, in the sense of a person's color, shape and behavior to another person or individual. The body of predators is concealed or masked [10]. In his imitation, the camouflage of an organism jointly refers to a system of war camouflage that, according to the Webster dictionary, includes "disguises of soldiers, boats and guns to conceal them from their enemy, such as using ink, networks or leaves, in designs fusing with the context" [11]. Once, Bhabha claimed that imitation and humans have a significant base in the Lacanian view of an impression as a disguise leading to colonial ambivalence. He finds colonization as in the grass like a serpent that speaks a language that gives mimetic representations and is one of the most elusive and successful colonial power and intelligence methods [12]. "(JACKSON patiently gets out of the boat, elaborately pantomiming lowering his body into shallow water, releasing his hold on the boat, swimming a little distance toward shore,..." [13]. When Jackson tried to imitate Crusoe swam down the shore after a boat snake and Jackson's imitation at that time was so small, Harry was furious. Regardless of the explanation, Harry suddenly chose not to proceed. In the mind of Jackson, his master, Harry undoubtedly envies his beautiful imitation. It signified that Crusoe played the role for Harry, but Jackson took the part of the black, for Harry was a white man and accurately mimicked him. He's been dark, too. Each jealousy of Harry emerged [14]. But an understanding already existed between Harry and Jackson that could undo their imitation. "JACKSON. The hut. That was my idea ..., " [15]. Last Friday, Jackson had an idea to turn from black to white, and so on, to white or black.

III. CARIBBEAN AS CULTURAL IDENTITY IN PANTOMIME

Pantomime by Derek Walcott was written in the late of the 1960s. It addresses the evaluative social patterns seen by West Indians after their independence. *Pantomime* has without doubt one of the most interesting and famous pair characters, Trewe and Jackson, performing Friday and Crusoe, which reveal the complex identity problem of the contemporary Caribbean [16]. This condition raises many questions for readers, such as who is real Crusoe or who is Friday, whether Jackson is a white master's black servant, or whether Jackson is a white servant's black master. This play shows how complex identity crisis intertwine master and slave identity on the Caribbean Islands through Jackson and Trewe. Therefore, it represents the persistent issue of the colonial and slave relationship in reversion, in combination with the white and black tensions and polarities. The real representations of the post-colonial indigenous people have become an identity to be resolved in the post-colonial community concerned which warrants natives or cultural national demands for better or more genuine self-representations [17].

The play, as Gilbert notes, not only reflects the shifting of roles between the colonizer and the colonized; it also attempts to destroy the binary conflicts that arise from imperialism [18]. "A strong family emphasis on education along with a mixed European and African ..., " [19]. It also seeks to challenge euro-centrism, which raises the whole of Europe to the highest level while reducing to the lowest the characteristics identified with indigenous cultures or cultures of African origin. In other words, it also wants to distort, challenge and blur the lines between the colonizer/white and the colonized/black rather than be a play about continually changing roles. *Pantomime* also reveals the spiritual abuse present in the history of Crusoe/Friday [20]. The following words by Jackson describe the slaves' colonial oppression and demonstrate bitterly and sharply the violence and the ties between colonial masters and servants:

"For three hundred years I served you breakfast in ... in my white jack on a white verandah, boss, bwana, effendi, bacra, sahib...in that sun that never set on your empire I was your shadow, I did what you did, bwana, effendi, bacra, sahib... that was my *pantomime*. Every movement you made, your shadow copied ... and you

smiled at me as a child does smile at his shadows helpless obedience, boss, bwana, effendi, bacra, sahib, Mr. Crusoe" [21].

Brydon and Tiffin said that Jackson, as the words indicate that is the once colonized victim. The victimization has epitomized to the fact that they have forced into an environment where they have no right to speak for themselves, according to phallogocentrism, or non-Westerns and the Third World [21]. They follow their masters' ways as they have told like a mist. In this sense, the title of the game is becoming more relevant. As King emphasizes, Jackson and Trewe are actors and actors in Robinson Crusoe's performance and their real lives as master and servant [22]. They even perform the *Pantomime* of themselves in their everyday life. In the colonial period, the colonized persons acknowledged their position without questioning, and they did not differ from the parrots to imitate what their owners said in their attempts to be like their masters. This tradition has also reached this date, as shown in the above speech of Jacksons, during which he talks about the ongoing cycle of imitation, the ambivalent colonial imitation and the master's service [23]. The parrot in *Pantomime* is gaining significance in this case. The parrot here is not only a description of the Robinson Crusoe paradox, but also of the of corrupt a dishonest colonizer who has lost his or her language, culture and ability to act as he or she wishes, and of the imitators who parrot what superior people are saying to them.

It is also possible to see the Caribbean Crusoe, with the aid of the Jacksons edition, who wants to broaden and enforce its African culture on white European Friday. All that recognizes European superiority and African inferiority have then questioned, and a new option for Europeans has given to consider what it feels like inferior.

Accepting Jacksons' request for the original Robinson Crusoe edition, Harry makes a complete complaint: "All right, so its Thursday. He comes across this naked white cannibal called Thursday, you know. And then look at what would happen. He would have to start to ... well, have to, sorry... This cannibal, who is a Christian, would have to start unlearning his Christianity. He would have to be taught ... I mean ... he would have to be taught by this African ... that everything was wrong, that what he was doing ... I mean, for nearly two thousand years ... was wrong. That his civilization, his culture, his whatever, was ... horrible. Was all... wrong. Barbarous, I mean, you know. And Crusoe would then have to teach him things like, you know, about ... Africa, his gods, panama, and so on ... and it would get very, very complicated, and I suppose ultimately it would be very boring, and what we'd have on our hands would be ... would be a play and not a little pantomime ... the whole thing would have to be reversed; white would become black, you know" [24].

Walcott gives voice to the issues of indigenous Western Indians through his works. They can also have taken as examples of the adventurous symbolic journeys to the right direction to a real Western Indian identity. They reflect the cultural problems facing the whole Caribbean world, although their characteristics are mainly African. Thus, the West Indian community can be best described as the Creolized, representing the juxtaposition of various cultures and ethnicities in this historically dysfunctional and fractured condition of the Islands, whose Black people and their place of origin as Africa is no more extended home [25].

IV. LANGUAGE

Language is also a very important point here. In postcolonial discourse, there are three significant categories of using the language: Monoglossic groups are those people who use the native language of English, which typically correspond to the established colonies, but are not standardized or commonly used in speaking. Linguistic peculiarities may be so critical as those in more complex linguistic communities in Monoglossic groups. Diagnostics communities have become a permanent social system, as English has traditionally has adopted as an official language used in trade and in literature such as India, Africa, and the Southern Pacific. Polyglossic or holy dialect cultures have mainly found in the Caribbean were a mix of dialects interweave to create a linguistic continuum that is widely understood [26].

Derek Walcott is a Caribbean playwright, and thus his works use the flexible spectrum vocabulary. This continuum vocabulary has focused on Creoles, which is also called the "continuum of the Creole." In a dialectical continuum with a Creole base, the Caribbean author works. His written media is part of the standardized language domain, which has a responsibility to its linguistic culture and welcomes the general population of the international Standard English [27]. Because the Caribbean consists of several islands and each island has its Creole, and since it is postcolonial, the English Creole is also distanced from one island to the other. Similarly, Walcott uses in his play Trinidadian-English Creole.

Language maintains the imperial hegemony [28]. In certain parts, it has portrayed as the imitation of English accent, but it has shown that the features of the two different cultures have used when speaking English. Throughout his voice, he blends the Caribbean and English pronunciation, suggesting that he is a hybrid person. His attempt to talk like Trewe reveals his identity crisis, his fragmented character, which encourages him to behave like the leader. At the other hand, remaining true to the Caribbean community it shows him that he is a Caribbean guy, regardless of the errors he makes in English. That he has tried to sound like Trewe, a white person in his speech and talk like a black Englishman [29], illustrates the fact that Jackson has a quest or tries to

find ways of being accepted and acknowledged as a subject of distinction by his so-called master, Trewe. This is evoking Bhabha's concept of mimicry: the desire of a Reformed, identifiable Other [30]. Jackson shows this difference in his imitation and cannot be entirely successful. He misuses English grammar, and Jackson himself will detect its hybridized essence in the following speech:

"Mr. Trewe? (English accent) Mr. Trewe, your scramble eggs is here! Are here! (Creole accent) You hear Mr. Trewe? I have wad your eggs! (English accent) Are you in there? (To himself) And when his eggs get cold, is I to catch... What the hell I doing? That aunt go great them. It go make them more cold. Well, he must be leap off the ledge. At long last. Well, if he aunt dead, he could call" [31].

In fact, Walcott's *Pantomime* repeats what his former master had told him: "Heinegger" [32] the name of the previous German owner of the hotel in Trewe. He repeated continuously what he has said, quote Gilbert, as language tends to be an authoritarian colonial weapon [33]. It can have argued from what Gilbert says that language is an instrument by which the colonizer achieves his goal of imprisoning the settled in his / her hands. The colonized person is just like a marionette or toy with language that works according to the requirements of the colonizer. Thus, as the parrot continuously disrupts Jackson's speech by "HARRY (imitating parrot) Heinegger, Heinegger. (In his own voice) Correct?...JACKSON Wait, wait!.." [34]. It's justifiable for Jackson to be upset about the parrot who doesn't value him and to say language is ideas, Mr. Trewe. This is my fifth report. "I am marking them down. Language is ideas, Mr. Trewe. And I think that this pre- colonial parrot have the wrong idea" [35]. This pre-colonial parrot has the wrong idea that a parrot may have prejudiced the way a child has exploited by education. Taking into account what Jackson says, the once colonized individual, in this case, the parakeet itself, can be argued that he has brainwashed to exalt his master and to treat the servant/indigenous man with bigotry and hate, angering Jackson when he discovers it through his parrot intrusion. "HARRY The war's over, Jackson! And how can a bloody parrot be prejudiced?... JACKSON. The same damn way they corrupt a child" [36]. This indicates that the indigenous peoples of the West Indies have been poisoned with racism that is pumped into their blood.

V. CONCLUSION

The Caribbean consists of several islands, and everyone has its own Creole, English Creole is also sometimes different in post-colonial literature from one island to another. The Trinidadian- English Creole fits Walcott's works especially his play *The Pantomime*. Such grammatically incorrect sentences in Jackson's imitate speech support what Bhabha says about imitation: the discourse of mimicry has founded upon the ambivalence; to be successful the impression needs to produce constantly its slip, its excess, its difference. Thus, Jackson, the imitator, can be recognized almost as the same, but not wholly. Culture is particular, British and refers to Harry and the Trinidadian people or blacks refer to Jackson. Moreover, through post-colonial literature, Mimicry has stolen some foreign cultural elements without sacrificing local cultures. Colonialism is setting, exploiting or developing resources and occupied land. As a result, significant numbers of colonized people have forced into slavery or the workers' regime. The external dimension plays a vital role in this literary work because it starts with its primary actor; the author himself.

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