

## **Chapter II**

### **Use of Caribbean Culture and Folklore in the select plays of Derek Walcott**

The chapter analyzes the select plays of Derek Walcott in the context of Caribbean Culture and Folklore. Cultural Studies is one of the significant factors in the mythological studies. Myths and culture are integral and correlated concepts. While studying myth, one should have the knowledge of culture to understand the beliefs, faiths and supernatural traits of the people in the society. The present chapter exclusively focuses on literary presentation of Caribbean culture and folklore in the select plays of Derek Walcott.

Walcott uses Indigenous songs, dance, folktales, myths, rituals and ceremonies to construct some forms of narrative that differ from the dominant convention of Western theatre. He also uses ritual, history, mythology and story-telling to tackle contemporary themes. He employs the carnival element in his plays to bring Caribbeanness. In the Caribbean, carnival has been one of the most well known of the cultural signifiers. Carnival is a colourful and exciting event celebrated all over the Caribbean region. Each island has its distinctive way of celebrating it, and the dates of the carnival are different all over the islands. In various countries, celebrations of carnival are special days and have become the greatest fashionable cultural demonstrations. It is a mixture of fun, party, and theatre, which involves art and folklore. It comes up as a street social gathering, but it is also celebrated in restricted spaces such as clubs. Important to the Caribbean festival arts are the ancient African traditions of parading and moving in circles through villages in costumes and masks. The Trinidad Carnival is an example of secular event which has

influenced the drama of its region. The spirit of protest is apparent in the traditional calypso lyrics and different masquerades, which satirizes white society. Calypso is a style of Afro-Caribbean music, which initiated in the British and French colonial islands of the Caribbean at about the beginning of the 20th century. Over a century ago, calypso further evolved into a way of spreading news around Trinidad. Many islanders considered these songs the most reliable news source. This incorporation of carnival elements is found in most of the Walcott's plays. Folk dance and stick play, as elements of carnival kinetic expressive of Caribbean identity, are common in the dramatic works of Walcott. The Carnival 'mas' – masquerade, including costume and movements – brings into focus the theatrical functions of costume and mask as powerful signifiers not only in themselves but also in union with the body. Walcott has used the linguistic conventions of different carnival speech with dance movements to signal the postcolonial stage. Through these attractive linguistic conventions, Walcott dismantles colonial presentations and hierarchies of an imperial language. Walcott embraces myth and rituals to achieve cultural emancipation and empowerment. He also uses Caribbean musical forms which can function as a celebration of the area's culture and as part of a general strategy to appropriate and indigenize imperial forms of performance.

The Caribbean tone is reflected in his play, *Drums and Colours* with the Caribbean performance mode. The prologue of the play begins with a Carnival band, led by Mano (a popular Trinidadian male nickname) and including Pompey, a calypsonian, who, is a kind of parody of the Classical heroic tradition. The band sets about to hide, playfully, a road march coming down the street, and to change the theme of the march to "War and Rebellion" (HT, 119). The play includes the episodes from

history, from the stories of heroes, which are to be performed by the ordinary people of the Carnival. The performance style indicates the appropriation of the grand historical narrative by the common people's tradition. The Carnival figures return in the end to bring the play to a close. The Carnival group virtually takes over the play for the last two scenes and the epilogue.

In his essay, "*Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism*," Fredric Jameson argues that "All third-world texts are necessarily. . . allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as . . . National allegories" (Jameson 1986, 69). That is, he argues, every text produced by a third-world writer should be seen as centrally concerned with the impoverished condition of the writer's third-world homeland versus the developed first world as shown in *Drums and Colours*. Historical figures like Columbus, Raleigh, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Dessalines, and George William Gordon signify their historical counterparts in the play. Some fictional figures like Quadrado and Bartolome signify historical types, if not specific historical figures. Other characters, like Paco, Anton, Mano, Pompey, Calico, and many others, represent different aspects of West Indians. The stage itself signifies Jamaica, Haiti, Barbados, England, Spain, or the decks of assorted ships.

*Drums and Colours* is a look at the West Indian Federation from outside itself, from the vantage of a well-educated artist, poet and playwright. With the publication of the play, Walcott finds ways to examine the nature and history of the nation. He samples historical incidents from across the West Indies. He threads stories together from the coming of Columbus to the dawn of the new Federation. With scenes set during six or seven generations of West Indian history, and in

locations representing much of the area of the islands as well as the ships and countries responsible for colonialism, the range of times and locations represents all of the recorded history of the area. In addition, this range provides Walcott opportunity to include characters from the many different strains that came to inhabit the island in the wake of the near extinction of the native tribes. Walcott's method of writing the play is considerably more complicated. As the play's producer, Noel Vaz, writes:

Should the piece be a history lesson told in a series of tableaux with commentary—a pageant, in fact, colorful and shifting, but at best a facile invention with real significance? Or might it be conceived as a dramatic text with a linked sequence, a saga told by a poet with concern and insight? After reading scripts by a Trinidadian and two Jamaican authors, we soon realized that to stage scores of little disconnected scenarios, fodder for a dozen possible films, would be unsatisfactory and well-nigh impossible. Finally, in August 1957, the Extra-mural Department commissioned Derek Walcott, poet called. (DC, 1)

The major themes of the play are the exchange of money and the uncertainty of paternity. Both themes serve as clear links from one scene to another and from one era of the action to the next. The most important aspect of the play, the story of the coin Quadrado gives to Paco and the many stories of the miscegenation and mixed race adoptions of the different characters in the play accomplish the weaving together of a new, unprecedented West Indian identity.

In his play, *Ti-Jean and His Brothers*, there is a significant blending of European and classical forms with African-derived West

Indian vernacular performance styles and forms. In the plays, the potential of verse as a dramatic medium is continuously being tested and advanced, to strikingly fresh effect.

The play is an allegorical fable that is at one and the same time a kind of Morality play about the never-ending 'journey of the soul' (DMMOP, 24) between good and evil. The play is a review and comment on the story of the black and more particularly Caribbean person in the Western world, and the possibility of his effecting a radical change in his situation.

The two strands of meaning are integrated in the play. There is the melding of the local and particular with the universal or general, or the African-Caribbean folk tradition with the classical literary tradition, or one mode of the folk expressive tradition with another. The story of the three brothers setting out, one after the other, from their hut in the mist-covered St Lucian mountains to challenge the Devil in order to 'make life' for themselves. This story is a version of the 'structure as universal as the skeleton, the one armature from Br'er Anancy to King Lear [that] kept the same digital rhythm of three movements, three acts, three moral revelations, whether it was the tale of three sons or of three bears' (DMMOP, 24). At the same time, the fact that the Devil's messenger and servant is the Bolom, the term in St Lucian folklore for the aborted foetus of a first pregnancy, is most appropriate to the St Lucian rootedness of the play. The folktales about Ti-Jean, which are part of the eastern Caribbean patois heritage, are adapted to the stage in *Ti-Jean and His Brothers*.

In crafting what he correctly called his 'most West Indian play' up to that time, (Walcott: 1970, 7) Walcott gives it a structure which nicely integrates two folk-performance forms: storytelling and a peculiarly St Lucian piece of street theatre, the 'devil's play', a kind of masquerade,

which used to be performed at Christmastime, and of which Walcott has given a detailed account in *'The White Devil: A Story of Christmas'*. (Walcott: 1966, 20)

Walcott draws from both of these performance traditions from the crick-crack tales of the Eastern Caribbean to enhance the stylization of the play. The stylization is also carried forward by the miming, dance, music and song, all of which have a strong colouring of folk tradition.

The play centres on the life of a widowed mother and her three sons, Gros Jean, Mi-Jean and the youngest, Ti-Jean. Each makes a decision to leave his mother and home to seek his fortune. However, before Gros Jean, the elder brother, begins his quest, they receive a visit from Bolom. Bolom gives a message from its father, the devil. The message establishes the contract between the devil and the three brothers. They will be put to the test, if they do not lose their tempers while performing certain tasks, they will win the battle against the devil. However, if the reverse happens, they will become the devil's victims. Before each son leaves, the mother tries to warn them about the outside world. None of the brothers listens except Ti-Jean, who, unlike his brothers, manages to defeat the devil. In keeping with their contract, the devil must grant Ti-Jean a wish. Ti-Jean wishes for Bolom's release from its imprisoned state, and after Bolom gains his freedom, Ti-Jean, and his newly found brother go into the world together. Walcott creates a familial context. The widowed mother, her three sons and Bolom act as symbols for different members of the community and the devil represents evil, the figure of authority.

The storytelling mode is presented with theatrical quality. It suggests the lamplit doorway of the hut, the surrounding darkness, the storyteller, the children round her knees, the interaction between

storyteller and audience. Walcott recreates this situation in the flesh on stage by having the Frog as the storyteller and the other animals as his immediate audience. In this way he also neatly manages the business of exposition. The animals not only provide the narrative frame for the story, but also participate in its action, whether as a kind of Chorus or as agents of goodness as in *Morality* plays. Their presence helps to evoke the fairy-tale ambience and the mood of the timeless and elemental. The devils' play provides an even more essential frame and dynamic for the action, since the whole play is an elaboration of the idea contained in the devils' chant, that of consuming the brothers (mankind). The play's tripartite structure is announced ritualistically in the chant: 'One, two, three little children' (DMMOP, 89).

The play reveals inner truths that may be discussed in terms of myth. Walcott's use of a frog as narrator creates an initial impression of the folktale with echoes of the African animal fable and, by mentioning Aeschylus, an open invitation to comparisons with Greek choruses. After that, the story itself is a fantasy with characters who are obviously 'stylized' types as animals are in fables. At the deepest level, the deceptively simple tale is about the existence of evil, and man's conduct toward God in a less than perfect universe. The Devil, unable to enjoy his own vices because he cannot feel human passion, challenges three brothers to a test of will-power. Either way the trial goes, the Devil stands to win: if a brother arouses his anger, he will have the satisfaction of feeling passion; if a brother loses his temper first, the Devil gets to eat him. The eldest, Gros Jean, depends exclusively on his strength to overcome the Devil, who appears in the mask of a white plantation owner. When he fails, the second brother, Mi-Jean, attempts to bargain,

using his learning. His defeat leaves the task in the hands of Ti-Jean, who claims neither power nor knowledge.

In the Devil's words, Ti-Jean's strength lies in man-wit or common sense. He has sufficient humility to respect his enemy and a sense of humour that never allows his values to become distorted. As the Devil attempts to make him angry and thus lose the contest, Ti-Jean follows the advice of his aged mother (experience) and of lowly animals (instinct) from whom he learns to respect nature and to use his wits. When the Devil assigns him impossible tasks –counting the leaves in a cane field, tethering on oversexed goat that will not stay tied, singing as his mother dies - Ti-Jean outdoes him by burning the cane and the plantation, by castrating and later eating the goat, and by singing as tears fall from his eyes.

Ti-Jean's tricks and his resilience cause the Devil to laugh, rage, and cry in turn. Thus, Ti-Jean wins the contest, but as a poor loser, the Devil concedes Ti-Jean's prize of one wish only, leaving the door open for future encounters. The beauty of Ti-Jean's humanity is nowhere more evident than when he uses his one wish, not selfishly but by heeding the plea of the Bolom (an unborn foetus) for the gift of life. For the ambiguity in that gift, it is necessary only to recall the mother's words in Scene Three: "have I not given / Birth and death to the dead?"(DMMOP, 134). In spite of the necessary linkage of death with life, the Bolom chooses life with its joy and sorrow, and he claims Ti-Jean as his new brother.

The eldest brother, Gros Jean, is the first to leave his mother's home to seek his fortune. Each brother expresses a similar desire to his mother and chooses a different weapon to help his transition from boyhood to manhood. Gros Jean relies on physical capabilities to survive.

He is proud and shows the behaviours of an egotistic character. As he leaves his mother, he states:

GROS JEAN. Maman, the time obliged to come I was to leave the house, go down the tall forest, come out on the high road, and find what is man work. Is big man I reach now, not no little boy again. Look, feel this arm, but to split trees is nothing. I have an arm of iron and have nothing I afraid.  
(DMMOP, 102)

His death is the consequence of faults in his own character. His crucial faults lie in his extreme pride in his physical capabilities and his emotional insecurities. When he encounters the devil in the guise of a White Planter, he shows his greatest weakness, his feeling of inferiority towards his white employer. This feeling combined with the need to show his physical ability leads to his death. His arm is his weapon. The power that he believes he possesses, prevents him from listening to his mother's recommendations. She instructs him to ask guidance from the animals, to be cautious about the numerous masks of the devil, and, above all, to remain humble by showing respect for God and his creatures.

MOTHER. When you go down the tall forest, Gros Jean,  
Praise God who make all things; ask direction  
Of the bird, and the insects, imitate them;  
But be careful of the hidden nets of the devil,  
Beware of a wise man called Father of the forest,  
The devil can hide in several features,  
A woman, a white gentleman, even a bishop.  
Strength, ca pas tout, there is patience besides;  
There always is something stronger than you.  
If is not man, animal, is God or demon. (DMMOP, 103)

Dismissing her warnings, Gros Jean says, “Maman, I know all that already.” (DMMOP, 103) As soon as he leaves the house, he goes against her recommendations. He curses the animals, is blasphemous, and seeks advice from the first unfamiliar person he meets. He asks the Old Man to direct him to the quickest way to success, and threatens to kill Old Man if he refuses to obey.

GROS JEAN . I have an arm of iron, only money I missing.

OLD MAN. Then I can't advise you.

GROS JEAN. You old and you have experience

So don't be selfish with it.

Or you know what I'll do.

*[Grabs him, hurls him down, axe uplifted]*

Chop you and bury you in the bamboo leaves! (DMMOP, 106-07)

As Gros Jean's mother warned, the devil can take different forms. One of these is the Old Man. Before the Old Man exits, he explains the characteristics of Gros Jean.

OLD MAN. ....*[To the audience]* Ah well, there's wood to cut, fire to light, smoke to wrinkle an old man's eyes, and a shriveling skin to keep warm. There went the spirit of war: an iron arm and a clear explanation, and might is still right, thank God, for God is stronger. (DMMOP, 108)

In order to win the battle against the devil, the brothers must maintain the established contract, the first to get annoyed will lose the game. Each brother must carry out absurd tasks and at the same time control his anger. These tests include counting fields of cane leaves, catching seventy fireflies and tying devil's goat. In the guise of the white plantation owner, the devil utters the terms of the contract. At first, Gros Jean performs all his tasks fairly well. What annoys him is the White

Planter cannot remember his name. Gros Jean's pride in his strength directly relates to his pride in his name. "Gros" describe his power, his bigness and thus his identity but the devil calls him anything but Gros Jean.

GROS JEAN. So in the middle of all that, this man come up to me and say, what's the matter, Joe, he always like he don't know my name, but I is me, Gros jean, the strongest! And if you ain't know my name, you best don't call me nothing...  
(DMMOP, 110)

Gros Jean loses his temper in the battle for his name. The reason for his defeat relates to his extreme pride and his insecurity about his identity. The devil recognizes his weakness and continually challenges his name, the symbol of his strength, or his identity.

Gros Jean demands to be seen as different to other men. He desires to be like the White Planter, and in doing so inherits all his possessions. The devil's mask as the White Planter presents a link to the colonial experience. Gros Jean's attempt to liberate himself from the colonial situation is weakened by his putting all his trust in his 'iron arm'. His dependence on his strength and his feelings of inferiority towards his white employer cause him to remain mentally enslaved. He accepts his submissive position in his dealings with the white Planter. Gros Jean's approach to his family, faith and identity reveals his inability to be a hero. He rebels against his mother's advices, against reminders of an identity he prefers to deny. He no longer wishes to identify with his family. He would rather draw a line between himself and the rest since his intention is not to lead the slaves into a revolt against the White Planter, but rather to try replacing him. Finally, his arrogance acts as a shield to hide his lack of faith in himself. He fails to define and accept his identity. Gros Jean, in

his anger, points to some social and economic injustices experienced by black people based on their race.

In many ways, Mi-Jean follows Gros Jean's example by paying little attention to his mother's advice. As soon as Mi-Jean reaches the forest, he also curses the animals and does not take directions from them. Gros Jean and Mi-Jean differ only in how their arrogance reveals itself. While Gros Jean places all his faith in his iron arm, Mi-Jean relies on his mental ability. However, both of them have similar faults: they are excessively proud and have feelings of insecurity about their identity.

Mi-Jean hopes to battle with the knowledge in his book of wisdom. He thinks that he can find the answers to all kinds of questions in this book. His first encounter with the devil, in the mask of the Old Man, shows how easily he falls prey to flattery:

OLD MAN. Who in the heights, in any small hut hidden in the ferns where the trees are always weeping, or any two men are ploughing on a wet day, wrapped in old cloaks, or down in the villages among the smoke and rum. has not heard of Mi-Jean the jurist, and the gift of his tongue, his prowess in argument, Mi-Jean, the avocat, the fisherman, the litigant? (DMMOP, 117-18)

Mi-Jean quickly reveals his intention to become a wealthy captain and a lawyer. He carries symbols of these desires in the book and the net. The book determines what he believes and how he should interpret what he sees. The first example of the importance he gives to the ideas of the book takes place during his first meeting with the Old Man. In order to prove that the Old Man's cow-foot exists, first, he has to find it in the book. However. Mi-jean can do little with the information the book provides. His faith in knowledge of the book continually provokes a

comical effect, since, in many instances, he is unable to interpret the information given to him:

MI-JEAN. This book have every knowledge it have;  
I checking up on man with cow-foot, boss,  
In the section call religion, and tropical superstition.  
Bos ...Bovis... Cow...foot...foot, boss? Boss Foot? Bovis?  
(DMMOP, 119)

It seems, sometimes, Mi-jean fears the power of words of the book. As a result, he decides that perhaps the safest way to accomplish success is not to talk or to read too much. If Gros Jean planned to defend himself with his iron arms, Mi-Jean insists that the best defense is silence. He sings:

MI-JEAN. If you can hear, don't listen!  
If you can see, don't look!?  
If you must talk, be quiet! (DMMOP, 123)

Mi-Jean's encounter with the White Planter proves to be as fatal as that of Gros Jean. The devil in the guise of White Planter quickly recognizes Mi-Jean's weakest point. He holds excessive pride in his power of reason. Like his brother, he dissociates himself from the other workers. The devil attacks what Mi-jean believes defines his identity, his knowledge and his fluency in English language. To break Mi-Jean's self-imposed silence, the devil compares Mi-Jean with the ape, and sarcastically wonders at the progress made in his language skills:

PLANTER. [Embracing *him*] descendant of the ape, how eloquent you have become! How assured in logic! How marvelous in invention! And yet, poor shaving monkey, the

animal in you is still in evidence, that goat... [Goat *sustains its bleating*] (DMMOP, 129-30)

Planter succeeds in his plan. Mi-jean gets angry and curses the devil:

MI-JEAN. Oh, shut you damn mouth, both o'all you! I ain't care who right who wrong! I talking now! What you ever study? I ain't even finish making my points and all two of you interrupting, breach of legal practice! O God, I not vex, I not vex ... (DMMOP, 130)

Before Mi-jean can complete his angry speech, the devil removes his White Planter mask and claims second victim. Mi-Jean's inability to define and recognize himself leads to his defeat. Mi-jean wishes to adopt a colonial attitude in order to accept himself. Mi-Jean's quest, like Gros Jean's, is again fatal. Both of them reflect similar feelings of insecurity and inferiority towards the White Planter, and their approaches are equally self-destructive. Mi-jean hopes that with his colonial accent and holding a symbol of knowledge, the book, nobody will consider him as a simple-minded person.

The third scene of the play depicts the devil's character. In this scene, the devil's physical masks as the Old Man of the forest or the White Planter vanish. Probably because of his alcohol consumption, the face of the devil is finally exposed, and his emotional mask vanishes. Interestingly, the devil's emotional unveiling, exposes problems similar to those that Gros Jean and Mi-jean faced. His masks, like their masks of physical strength and intelligence, hide feeling of deficiency, insecurity and loss. The devil mourns the loss of the power he had as God's 'first lieutenant,' or God's favoured son. Exile from his father's house proves to be the devil's greatest emotional wound. He muses about better time:

DEVIL. [...] Sometimes I wish I couldn't have everything I want He spoiled me, you know, when I was his bright, starry lieutenant gave me every thing I desired. I was God's spoiled son. Result: ingratitude. (DMMOP, 155)

Ti-jean is different from his two elder brothers. Unlike Gros Jean and Mi- Jean, he listens to his mother's advice carefully. He does not have a book of knowledge or an arm of iron to protect himself. His weapons are his faith, respect for his mother, and common-sense ways. His intelligence is one of his greatest assets. The play reinforces the issue of spirituality and faith. Even though, Ti-Jean leaves his mother and loses his brothers, his journey into the outside world and battle against the devil continues. His faith helps him to accept challenges in the face of difficulties. Ti-Jean's victory over the devil represents his most obvious heroic triumph. This battle against the devil tests Ti-Jean's spiritual faith, his faith in his mother, and his belief in himself. Ti-Jean's great victory lies in his ability to accept and not reject his personal history and his race. By kneeling at his mother's feet, Ti-Jean shows his respect for his mother:

MOTHER. [...] The last of my sons, now.  
Kneel down at my feet.  
Instinct be your shield. It is wiser than reason.  
Conscience be your cause  
And plain sense your sword. (DMMOP, 133-34)

The mother is characterized by her God-fearing nature. One notes the number of references to God, which she makes to her son Gross-Jean.

When you go down the tall forest, Gross-Jean  
Praise God who make all thing.....  
There always is something stronger than you

If is not man, animal, is God or demon. (DMMOP, 103)

Ti-jean repeats her dictum in scene III. He says:

That our life is god's own and  
To do whatever we will  
And love god is enough. (DMMOP, 132 -133)

Her words of wisdom and good advice are seen in her grateful response to her youngest son's request for prayer.

Instinct by your shield  
It is wiser than reason,  
Conscience be your cause  
And plain sense your sword. (DMMOP, 133 -134)

As Ti-Jean begins his journey, he sings "Bring Down Goliath." (DMMOP, 134) Like David, he believes that he will defeat an apparently undefeated enemy. Ti- Jean's pursuit of the devil is different from that of his brothers. Ti-Jean believes that "to know evil early, life will be simpler". (DMMOP, 137) This attitude makes him less fearful of meeting the devil. At the same time, he is aware of the devil's powers.

When he meets the Old Man for the first time, he shows that he is wiser than his brothers:

OLD MAN. Tell me boy, is your father living? Or your mother perhaps? You look frail as an orphan.

TI-JEAN. I think nothing dies. My brothers are dead but they live in the memory of my mother.

OLD MAN. You're very young, boy, to be talking so subtly. So you lost two brothers?

TI- JEAN. I said I had brothers, I never said how many. May I see that foot, father? (DMMOP, 139)

Ti-Jean's desire to know evil early makes the devil reveal himself earlier than intended to the third brother. The devil reminds him of their bargain. From the beginning, Ti-Jean effectively beats the devil at his own game. Ti-Jean castrates the devil's goat and avoids the counting of the cane by encouraging the devil's workers to burn it. Inciting the workers to revolt is Ti-Jean's first act as both a liberator and a revolutionary.

Although the devil managed to control his temper when Ti-Jean castrated his goats, this time the devil finally loses his temper and calls Ti-Jean 'a little nowhere nigger'. Ti-Jean demands that the contract be fulfilled. The devil tries to punish Ti-Jean and break his spirit by revealing to him the vision of his mother, 'not asleep but dying'. The devil almost succeeds but with the help of the animals, Ti-Jean manages to sing a song, which summons up more faith. Finally, the devil concedes his failure and grants Ti-Jean a wish. Ti-Jean asks for Bolom's life. In this regard Baugh writes:

The understanding which Ti-Jean expresses in requesting life for Bolom shows that he has successfully completed the quest on which he set out when he left his mother's hut to answer the devil's challenge. His was a quest not only to find and defeat evil, but also, necessarily, to grow up, to achieve his full humanity, to know and be 'what a man is' (Baugh: 2006, 76).

Ti-Jean acts as a spiritual saviour since he is able to defeat evil and at the same time, to grant Bolom, the devil's child, its wish - another

chance at life. Before Ti-Jean gives Bolom the gift of life, he prepares Bolom for the pain that he may suffer:

TI-JEAN. Is life you want, child?

You don't see what is bring?

BOLOM. Yes, yes, Ti-Jean life!

TI-JEAN. Don't blame me when you suffering.

When you lose everything,

And when the time come

To put two cold coins

On your eyes. Sir, can you give him life. (DMMOP, 163)

Despite the painful picture of life that Ti-Jean paints, Bolom still wants life:

BOLOM. Ask him my life!

O God, I want all this

To happen to me! (DMMOP, 163)

The birth of this unborn creature acts as a symbol of hope for those who remain mentally enslaved by falling prey to the effects of colonization like Gros Jean and Mi-jean. Ti-Jean not only wins life for himself but his people as well. Ti-Jean's role as a spiritual quester involves the ultimate mission of winning life for his people, a role that embraces Walcott's own messianic purpose as a writer. Bolom's condition as foetus in the play is symbolic of the unborn, strangled Caribbean man.

The music is as important an aspect of the play's West Indianness as it is of the stylization. The instrumental music is provided by simple instruments from the folk tradition: flute, cuatro, drum and cymbals. The characters are differentiated and stylized by the instrumental motifs

attached to them, for example sad flute music to announce the Mother, martial music on drums, flute and cuatro to mark Gros Jean's exaggerated march and clashing cymbals for the entrances and exits of the devils. *Ti-Jean* is a play with music integral to it, rather than a musical in the Broadway sense. The songs, for the most part, arise naturally out of the action and carry the action forward. Together they constitute a rich repertoire of Caribbean folk song forms. For instance, there is the calypso influence in Mi-Jean's 'Song of Silence' and in the song the Devil sings when he is 'in his cups'. There is the influence of work song and protest song in the 'cane-cutters' song and chorus ('Burn, burn, burn de cane!' (DMMOP, 149)), and of the stick-fighter's battle song in 'I go bring down, bring down Goliath' (DMMOP, 165). Then there is the hymn/gospel tradition of *Ti-Jean's* Thanksgiving song, 'To the door of breath you gave the key' (DMMOP, 162).

The Ananse tradition has travelled to the Caribbean with certain modifications. One of its earliest dramatic manifestations in the formal theatre occurred in Kingston, Jamaica, where the annual pantomime, initiated in 1941, originally centred around the performance of Ananse stories. In more recent times, Derek Walcott has explored the figure of the trickster in theatrical contexts, especially in *Ti-Jean and His Brothers* (1958) which dramatizes a St Lucian folk tale. The play is presented as a children's story, told by a frog and cricket, of a woman's three sons who are set the task of making the devil experience human emotions. Walcott explains how this kind of folktale can be used as a form of 'guerilla resistance' against cultural hegemony, not only because it is firmly grounded in the mythos of the local community but also because it deliberately avoids the values of the imperial centre.

The main focus of the play is on folk culture. Walcott seems to use as his archetype, Ananse stories – tales known to blend entertainment with morality. According to Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins, Ananse tends to attempt to achieve his goals by trickery rather than by hard work. They write that:

Transported and indigenized according to the contingencies of a Caribbean culture historically rooted in slavery, such stories tended to de-emphasize moral lessons and to play up the inherent subversiveness of Ananse as trickster. Derek Walcott explores this figure of the trickster in theatrical contexts, especially in *Ti-Jean and His Brothers* (Gilbert and Tompkins: 1996, 133).

Walcott presents an animal fable in which the forces of good are pitted against those of evil. The text seems to be working mostly at the level of myth. The localizing of that myth ironically subverts its conventional codes by insisting on the cultural specificity of so called ‘universal’ archetypes. Moreover, since the devil also doubles as the white plantation owner, the story of how he is outwitted by Ti-Jean becomes a historically grounded allegory. Within this context, it can be interpreted as a post-colonial narrative of resistance which is all the more effective for its use of a simple story-telling mode. The play’s presentational style, formulaic structure, melodic language, and fairytale characters and its story-tellers (frog and cricket) are thus part of its ‘trick’.

The charm of Walcott’s play is its simplicity, utilizing St. Lucian folklore to give a Caribbean flavor to an old myth. Ti-Jean is based on Christmas black mass dances of Papa Diable and the Bolom. A more hopeful treatment of the spirit child occurs in the play where the Bolom, a

disfigured foetus who represents the Caribbean people under the tyranny of colonialism, is eventually wrested from the clutches of the devil and reborn into full human life. In the play, the female body is once again completely removed from the birthing process. The Bolom is restored to the human world as a result of Ti-Jean's victory over the devil. On a performative level, the incomplete child-figure merely transforms from the spirit state as if birthing itself independently of any mother figure.

The Bolom in the play is an important metaphor. Thieme suggests that the Bolom is in fact "suggestive of multiple allegorical possibilities" (Thieme: 1999, 62). The Bolom is the deformed foetus of a first born child, stolen right before a birth. It is implied that it may have been the white planter Devil who snatches Bolom away from being born and possessing him as his slave. This is indicative of the colonial attempt to steal away and corrupt Caribbean culture before it can be born. Bolom attempts to "... [crawl] up [Ti-Jean's mother's] skirt" (DMMOP, 95) suggesting its efforts to go back into the womb and be born to "live a life marked by pain and suffering as well as joy and contentment," indicative of "Caribbean artistic consciousness ... grasp[ing] the value of ... folk heritage [which is both painful and joyful]" (Thieme: 1999, 62).

A few decades ago, most Caribbean scholars of Caribbean literature observed Caribbean oral traditions as a form of culture relevant only to common people. Derek Walcott acknowledged the broader importance of these traditions and made a folklore, Ti-Jean, the hero of his work. He, as a boy on the island of Saint Lucia, had heard tales about Ti-Jean and his two brothers. The play introduces the folklore figure Ti-Jean and acknowledges the role of folklore in Caribbean culture. He depicts Ti-Jean as a heroic Caribbean figure.

The origin of the play is simultaneously tied to a particular place (St. Lucia) and tradition (African storytelling) and something more primal, antedating the identity of any 'tribe.' Ultimately, the story belongs to a "world peasant mythology" whose "source is Protean and universal."

Walcott has given the Devil two masks: he can appear, as in the folk tale, as Papa Bois, the Old Man of the Woods, or as a white planter. One might take these as the general and historically particular avatars of evil. Though the Devil can take any shape and any complexion, in the St. Lucian context he is the colonizer. The successive encounters of the three brothers, then, may be taken as the story of successive attempts to respond to colonial oppression. The eldest, Gros-Jean, trusting his 'arm of iron' to bring him success, labors mightily for the Planter, only to find that his sole reward is further exploitation. Mi-Jean trusts only his book learning. He might be said to represent the first generation of colonial intellectuals, overeager to prove their equality. Ti-Jean, however, trusts his instincts and succeeds; unlike his brothers, he is not alienated from himself. Ti-Jean responds as a feeling rather than a calculating person, and he knows that neither he nor his own abilities can be self-sufficient. He alone speaks courteously to the animals, and the bird reciprocates by providing necessary help in his victory over the Planter.

The Devil weeps not for himself, but in response to the beauty of Ti- Jean's singing, inspired by grief at the death of his mother. Immediately after the Devil achieves humanity, the Bolom chooses to be born though warned by Ti-Jean "what it bring" (DMMOP, 162). The Bolom has described himself as

a child which was strangled

Who never saw the earth light

Through the hinge of the womb,  
Strangled by a woman  
Who hated my birth,  
Twisted out of shape,  
Deformed past recognition. . . . (DMMOP, 97)

Ti-Jean's mother addresses it as "Child of the Devil" (DMMOP, 94) and asks it "What does your white master / The Devil want from us?" (DMMOP, 98) If it is indeed the Devil's child, and the Devil is, in one of his avatars, a white Planter, one might infer that it is the child of a coerced union between a Planter and a black woman, who has killed it as slave mothers sometimes killed their babies to spare them a life of bondage. More generally, one may read it as an emblem of cultural strangulation and deformation of identity. It is the motif of death in birth, or birth in death, that we have encountered in "Laventille" with its image of the West Indian people "still bound" in "swaddling cerements" (Hamner: 1997, 88).

Although Walcott credits Brecht and Oriental artists, it should be noted that all the elements he came to use are readily available in the West Indian carnival and that he began experimenting with stylised production techniques before his acknowledged encounter with Brecht. *Ti-Jean and His Brothers* has mime, masked characters, and ritualistic overtones. Walcott's use of the theatrical conventions of smoke, mist, and fog is a physical manifestation of his own possession by the forces of history.

The issues raised are both subtle and complex. The theme centres on the characters' methods of resisting the malignant authority in their struggle to survive and change their condition. Theodore Colson finds a parable of mankind's various encounters with the devil, "more

particularly of black man's confrontation with the white devil." Without overly stressing the colour consciousness Colson has good reason for indicating that the brothers and their mother are archetypal and the Bolom is symbolic of "all aborted human potential, in a world of black mothers and white planters." (Colson: 1975, 127)

As per the conviction of Walcott, the most deeply rooted myths to be unearthed in the Caribbean will necessarily turn out to be creolized at the root simply as a consequence of the region's history. In naming the moon, the play aims to enrich the natural object with specifically Caribbean significance. Such an effort goes beyond the appropriation or imitation of folklore. It denotes an aspiration to give one's vision the force of myth and by that to make it available as a resource to the audience, the people of the islands.

Although the play apparently refers to racial, economic and class matters, its central message is spiritual. Woman brings life into the world, and this story indicates that life is a reminder of the Garden of Eden. The interplay between man and nature is illustrated in this relationship with the devil, casting off life and being reborn like the moon or the snake shedding its skin and renewing life. The power of life makes the snake drop its skin, just as the moon sheds its shadows. They are similar symbols. Sometimes the serpent is symbolized as a circle eating its own tail. That's an image of life. Life sheds one generation after another, to be born again.

The underlying story of the play is also structured as a classical play drawing on influences such as Shakespeare. For example, Walcott puns on the name of the Greek dramatist Aeschylus, which is rendered as the frog's sneeze. It is equally clear that the story is a Caribbean play and this aspect proves to be the dominant influence as the play unravels, using

a rich blend of music/song (the choric voices of the four animals), dialect (the use of French Creole), dance and impersonation (papa bois, the planter and the devil). In addition, the Cricket's 'creek-crack' is the Caribbean storyteller's invitation to call-and-response context to establish a dialogue between narrator and audience.

The exploration of Caribbean identity is the central theme of the play. The play explores "the nature of Caribbean cultural identity by fusing together a broad range of cultural intertexts" (Thieme: 1999, 70). Ti-Jean starts a journey, which offers lessons about his personal and collective identity and gets him ready for his heroic tasks. The play centres on the lack of interest and self-hatred that affects Ti-Jean's community. He battles against the devil and his victory allows him to free his people from self-imposed slavery and to bring back hope to his community.

Within the context of exploring Caribbean identity, Walcott examines the nature of historical representation of Caribbean people. For Walcott, writing history is like the creative act of writing plays. The storyteller, like the historian, plays a significant role in recording the experience of the community. Walcott accentuates that Caribbean folktales have recorded some of these experiences. Ti-Jean's trials and triumphs are a metaphor for the quest toward defining the Caribbean identity. The Creole folktale plays a significant role in interpreting Caribbean culture and identity. Ti-Jean is portrayed by Walcott not as a trickster but as a hero. Young Ti-Jean is intelligent, brave and shrewd. He is a trickster yet he is heroic. His heroism manifests itself in his courageous acts that affect personal and collective change. He does not try to survive and work within the established colonial system but explicitly defies the devil. He often wants to help others or to challenge a

figure of authority. Walcott develops Ti-Jean's instinct for independence. Thus, the play is a superb example of the potential of the folktale to inspire and to act as a symbol for, independence and liberation.

The storyteller is a crucial manipulator of different narratives, including historical narrative, in colonial societies. Storytelling, which lies at the root of all dramatic cultures, is a primary strategy in postcolonial drama. Walcott uses a storyteller, in the form of a frog, to frame his tales. The frog tells the story of Ti-Jean to his audience of other forest creatures. Other figures from the folkloric tradition are also included – Ti-Jean's mother, his brothers and the devil. Walcott also uses figures from Saint Lucian folklore such as Bolom (an unborn foetus) and Papa Bois (father of the forest). When postcolonial dramatists wish to depict the uncertain progress towards decolonization, they employ the maternal body with an unborn, stillborn or incomplete child. The play illustrates the spirit child more hopefully where Bolom, a disfigured foetus, who represents the Caribbean people under the oppression, is finally pulled from the clutches of the devil and reborn into full human life. An eventual birth of Bolom suggests, “more optimistically, that a hitherto stifled Caribbean consciousness may come into being with independence” (Thieme: 1999, 1).

Walcott combines two important folkloric elements, the storyteller, and the appearance of human and animal characters in this play. When an animal tale is told with a moral purpose, it becomes a fable. Walcott himself has called *Ti-Jean and His Brothers* a fable. This fabulous feature of the work teaches moral lessons through the experiences of its hero. Ti-Jean symbolizes the restorative effect of accepting plural origins or hybridity.

Walcott wrote *Ti-Jean and His Brothers* in four or five days during his first trip to New York in 1957 when he was 27 years old. The play describes the journey of a young boy to adulthood. Ti-Jean experiences anxiety in a world without familial security. The play creates one of the most prevalent themes explored in Walcott, that of self-imposed exile. The themes of the play include Caribbean identity, historical representation, and the relationship between the writer and his community. Walcott “repeatedly draws attention to indigenous forms of expression as the basis for a syncretic theatre - are the African-influenced dance and music of possession cults, the music of calypso, and the vigorous oral tradition.” (Balme: 1999, 53)

For the first time, he used songs and dances and a narrator in a text. Out of *Ti-Jean and His Brothers*, he knew what he wanted. Walcott’s use of songs - sung by Gros Jean, Mi-Jean and Ti-Jean - adds to the folk quality of the play. This early play served as an experiment in the theatre that Walcott hoped to create and perfect. As Walcott states:

“When one began twenty years ago it was in the faith that one was creating not merely a play, but a theatre, and not merely a theatre but its! Environment.” (DMMOP, 6)

There is no paternal figure in the play. The mother raises Ti-Jean and his Brothers. This absence leads to questions about origin and identity. Even though the devil, Bolom, and Frog, the storyteller, mention that the mother is a widow, Ti-Jean and his brothers never mention this fact. They seem to accept the absence of a father. However, this perceptible acceptance is undermined by the actions of Gros Jean and Mi-jean who look for a paternal replacement in the devil despite his hatred for them. Gros Jean and Mi-jean show great respect for an evil paternal replacement because of their personal insecurities. To Gros Jean and Mi-

jean the devil, in his guise as the White Planter, is a symbol of power and success. However, Ti-Jean looks to God as his image of the father and rejects the devil in his different guises. The absent father directly relates to the hero's search for his identity. The mother's role becomes central to the development of Ti-Jean's heroic ideal.

The play focuses on the feelings of insecurity and self-hatred that prevent the colonized people from truly liberating themselves. He establishes a relationship between the history of colonized people and their identity. Gros Jean's and Mi-Jean's insecurities about their identity defeat them. Mi-jean expresses the contempt he has for his home. He tries to distinguish himself from the rest. Gros Jean and Mi-jean so hate their self-image that they aspire to be like the White Planter. Nevertheless, this self-hatred leads to powerlessness.

Crik-crak is a convention of storytelling particular to the Caribbean in which the storyteller and audience repeat the phrase 'crik-crak' or the storyteller says 'crik' and the audience responds with 'crak,' in order to signal the beginning of a folktale. This emphasizes the orality of the play – it's Frog who is telling this story. This codified way of beginning a story, is familiar throughout the world, particularly on the African continent.

The play, *Malcochon or Six in the Rain* presumably addresses the theological concerns of the limits beyond which man shall not go. It attempts to examine the twin perceptions of sin as 'missing the mark' on the one hand by having a good intention and doing the wrong thing, and alienation, the separation of the sinner from God, community and self, on the other. It suggests that the crux of the dilemma is that sin, whichever perception of it one chooses, causes alienation of the individual,

estrangement from his fellow man and a sense of separation from God, his good self. Hammer, summarizes the play thus:

*Malcochon*, subtitled *The Six in the Rain*, carried an epigraph from Sophocles: “who is the slayer, who the victim? Speak. (DMMOP, 167)

Speaking about the kind of theatre he was trying to achieve in this play, he says that he was trying to fuse conflicting tendencies such as oral, African-derived folk tradition, and the Western literary tradition. There is also a tradition of linguistic display and volubility in West Indian folk expression.

The personhood in the play is enhanced by using home-grown expressive forms combining music, dance, mime and storytelling. As Walcott has said:

The storyteller tradition is still very prevalent in the Caribbean. The chant, the response, and the dance are immediate things to me; they are not anachronistic or literary (CDW, 57).

In *Malcochon*, the contour, the musicians’ dance mime the murder of Regis, the white planter as well as the deluge overflowing the banks of the river, with the musical accompaniment from popular instruments. In developing this feature of the plays, which contributes notably to their stylized, symbolic quality and relative physical immediacy, Walcott draws on congenial folk forms and traditions outside of the mainstream English literary tradition such as Irish drama, Japanese film and Noh theatre, as well as Brecht.

Adapting something both of situation and style from Akira Kurosawa’s 1950 film *Rashomon*, *Malcochon* begins with the Conteur

announcing that he is about to tell the story, already well established in the folk repertoire, of the murder of Regis, a white planter, by 'Chantal the brute', when Chantal was apparently caught stealing wood from Regis' estate. However, a doubt is immediately hinted at when the Conteur says, 'And what I tell them is the truth: / Don't believe all you heard or read / Chantal the tiger cannot dead' (DMMOP, 171). The play becomes a whodunnit: who really killed Regis? It is left far from certain that Chantal did. In addition, the question as to what is truth, and how appearance is easily mistaken for reality, becomes a central theme of the play. These issues are played out when a torrential downpour puts Chantal in a hut along with five other persons who seek shelter from the rain: an old man and his nephew, a husband and wife, all of whom had been working in the vicinity when Regis was killed, as well as a deaf mute, Moumou. Suspicion is also raised in respect of Moumou, whose condition adds mystery to the play and heightens the importance of gesture and mime in its mode of expressing meaning. Chantal is no angel and makes no pretence at being one. On the contrary, he seems to play up to the popular image of himself as a brute and a tiger. At the same time, in appearing to do so with a knowing sense of role-playing, he sees through the system of privilege and exposes it, even if he cynically accepts that he is beyond the pale of redemption from it:

All my life I just do what I want and leave the rest, / The  
responsibility, you follow, to the men who run the world, /  
The priest and the magistrate, the rich man', (DMMOP,  
200). 'But blessed are they that hungry for righteousness'  
sake, as if they catch you stealing one green fig [banana], is  
praedial larceny! (DMMOP, 176).

He knows that if any crime is committed in his neighbourhood, he is likely to be the first suspect:

‘God, what kind of joke you playing on Chantal? Who will believe me? An old thief? A madman’ (DMMOP, 178).

There is an implication that the popular image of him as a terrible threat to civil society is a construct of the popular imagination. He is a scapegoat and becomes in effect a sacrificial lamb, even, as Anthony Boxill demonstrates, a Christ figure. But Chantal is also, in his way, a warrior, the tiger, defying the system, however hopelessly:

‘My true name is Tarzan / And just because I hawked and spat / In the eyes of the magistrate / They give me a year in jail’ (DMMOP, 172).

Using the reputation for terror and violence with which they have invested him, he forces them to confess. When Moumou stabs Chantal in the back, thinking that Chantal was about to harm the others, our feeling for Chantal is articulated, heightened by the Old Man. The others, anxious to get away from any possible association with the murder of Regis, rush to get a ride on a passing truck, only too willing to leave Chantal to die, attended only by the sly Mou- mou. However, the Old Man is moved with pity for Chantal, and when the latter urges him to go with the others, the Old Man says:

‘No, no. Because you are my son. You are my brother. You are not the beast and the madman. No’ (DMMOP, 204).

This is a vindication of Chantal’s humanity, the recognition that he is a man. Even he, an anti-social solitary, can feel compassion for his fellow man, for the impaired Moumou who has fatally stabbed him:

‘What will they do the mongoose? He cannot talk, make explanation, argue right and wrong with the magistrate’ (DMMOP, 203).

The characters introduced by the storyteller, the Conteur, include the old man, Charlemagne and his nephew Sonson; Popo and his wife, Madeline, then the aged woodcutter Chantal is old ugly, and a feared criminal. At the time of the action of the play, Chantel’s exploits have achieved legendary status. Only old Charlemagne recognizes him and reminds Sonson of the stories about his madness. Popo laughs at his physical condition. His levity is cut short by the appearance of a body in the rain-swollen stream nearby. It is the body of the white planter Regis, whom members of the group assume must have been murdered by Chantal.

Taking advantage of their fear, Chantal decides to play a macabre game. Meanwhile, the mad woodcutter decides to pass judgment on those who so readily condemn him. What they do not yet know is that he killed Regis in defending Moumou. He intervened just as the planter would have shot the deaf-mute for having stolen his silverware. Before beginning has an interrogation, Chantal warns that the truth they claim to care about will not be as palatable as they believe. Threatened with the cutlass, Madeleine confesses her adultery. Charlemagne has no undisclosed sin to confess. For years, he has borne the guilt of having committed adultery with his brother’s wife openly. He suffers too because he can no longer endure the hatred of a boy who could be his own son.

Chantal ends his mock trial in acquittal. Ironically at that point, the deaf-mute, whose life he had saved, misinterprets Chantal’s intentions and – believing that he is saving the entire group from a murder – stabs

Chantal in the back. Mortally wounded, sensing Moumou's motivation, Chantal reinforces his point about the deceptive nature of life's appearance. "You see how a man can have a good meaning and do the wrong thing?" In this way layer, by layer, the play's complex meaning unfolds. The slayer who acted to save someone else becomes the victim of the one he saved.

Moumou is also a man without a tongue, who steals Regis' silver spoons and is saved from Regis' murderous wrath by Chantal. 'A dead man for a few silver spoons!' (DMMOP, 179) Regis thus becomes a would-be slayer, a victim of materialism. Moumou, the deaf is as precious as Regis the 'white planter'. Chantal, of course, reminds us of the most exalted victim and for him the victim/slayer opposition is God's son/mankind – God's son is a victim and the slayer is mankind. Mankind, he insists, is a beast, and God is a tolerant God who understands human frailties.

So what God means to say was "Thou should not kill",  
Knowing man will do it anyway, and the magistrate,  
The priest and so on, they did not understand that. (DMMOP,  
179)

Thus Moumou is also a compassionate savior, after all, his act of murder, his turning against a friend is justified by his concern for the welfare of his fellowmen, whom he thinks are in danger. His instructive move towards the weeping wife, who denies Chantal's charge of adultery at first is very touching.

She demands to be 'killed', but her actions do not match this high intention of expurgation; for she seeks no forgiveness, she is fiercely proud, and she taunts her husband, undermining his self-esteem while

daring him to kill her. It is the gift of a cheap bottle of white rum, Malcochon that serves as the catalyst for this marital struggle.

Is you who crazy! Well then leave me alone, or kill me then, kill me. Because a man give me a bottle? But I not standing up in the white rain talk nastiness with you. (DMMOP, 174)

She. calls him ‘coward’, ‘hypocrite’, ‘dog’:

...Just like a dog. In front of me he gives jokes, he can shame his wife in front of strangers. Look at the brave dog that putting his tail between his legs for a flash of lightning...(DMMOP, 188)

Popo the wronged husband thinks he loves his wife, but his love is so possessive, his pride so great that his wife fears his forgiveness more than she fears death, after confession of her adultery she pleads:

Kill me, Chantal! Kill me! He cannot forgive  
I could never look in his face in my whole life again  
I cannot stand the shame of his forgiveness  
Because even his forgiveness is part of his pride  
What am I to him? What he think of me now?  
Don't ask him for mercy, because he will give it  
And boast about it always. Don't turn him into God! (DMMOP, 199)

Poor Madeleine's concept of God is as encompassed as is her husband's concept of love. While she believes in a fearsome and judgmental God, he needs to be genuinely forgiving and humble. He alienates his wife from him by, not accepting that he, like all men, is involved in this fall from grace.

Chantal's dangerous charade, of hearing confessions from his fellow-travelers, has the effect of removing the veil from the characters. Chantal has been moved to unearth the 'truth' because of the insistence of everyone on knowing the truth. He says:

...From the time I here, I hear  
all four of you talking about the truth.  
Well, I will give you the truth and see what  
you can do with it. (DMMOP, 196)

Charlemagne is the only one who stays with the dying Chantal. Yet he appears to be carping and intensive toward his nephew's predicament, while the nephew who appears to be a victim of terrible circumstances, the loss of his parents, is in reality very self-righteous, judgmental and full of hatred, he indicts all women when he says:

They lie! They lie! On their death bed they will lie,  
They have mothers who take their secret to the grave.  
On their birth-bed they lie. My father was right. (DMMOP, 198)

One loses all sympathy with his fate when one realizes the depth of his bitterness and unforgiveness.

The plot of *Malcochon* is once again extremely simple: six fugitives from a storm - a husband and wife, an old man and his 'nephew', a thief and a deaf-mute (or 'Moumou') - shelter together in a disused copra hut in the forest. The husband believes his wife has committed adultery with an overseer; the nephew blames the old man for his father's, the old man's brother's, death, since he has been hanged for murdering his wife after she was unfaithful with the old man. The thief, Chantal, is a figure who has been demonized by society and the nephew recalls,

‘in the old days they used to frighten us as children / About  
Chantal the woodcutter and madman of the forest’  
(DMMOP, 181).

The action is again introduced by a Conteur (or storyteller) and musicians. There is the sense of a well-known tale being retold. Here the received story is that of how ‘Chantal the brute / Took the white planter Regis’ life’ (DMMOP, 171). So there are three separate strands of criminal or ‘sinful’ behaviour coursing through the play, and the six characters coming together in the forest shed seems to suggest an elemental moral reckoning beyond society’s laws. As the old man puts it:

In the life of man, all his darkness, all his sins  
Can meet in one place, in the middle of a forest. Like a  
beast. Yes,  
Like to meet a beast with no name in the track of the  
bamboo. (DMMOP, 180)

In this environment, the pariah Chantal assumes the role of confessor and judge and in a mock trial absolves both the errant wife and the old man of their sins. Interestingly, two critics who provide narrative summaries of the play’s action differ on what has actually happened. Theodore Colson states that it is ‘Moumou who has killed Regis,’ while Robert Hamner takes the view that Chantal ‘killed Regis in defending Moumou’ (Colson: 1975, 72). In fact the issue is left open and this is central to the play’s message. Its Sophoclean epigraph asks ‘Who is the slayer, who the victim?’ (DMMOP, 167) and this is reiterated by Chantal towards the end when he asks, “Who is the murderer, who the dead ...?” (DMMOP, 203).

Living in mixed St. Lucian world and exposed to both colonial and folk cultures, Walcott is aware of the plurality of Caribbean society.

Walcott tries to find expression for the difficulties inherent in Caribbean identity, a key theme that runs throughout his works. Walcott's works are typically postcolonial in that they acknowledge the combination of European and African heritages that have influenced the development of identity in the Caribbean. He presents his vision of Caribbean identity both thematically and linguistically. Walcott's primary focus lies in the questions of history, myths, identity, language and tradition.

Walcott's *Dream on Monkey Mountain* explores the nature of Caribbean cultural identity, Caribbean origins, specifically the region's relationships with Africa and Europe. The story is intensely of Caribbean people and places, as well as the rest of the world. It also represents Makak's search for a home, but it is also about native man being oppressed by colonial rule and the clash of West Indian and English culture. The play is an elegant mixture of island patois and drama in poetry. The play is a dream that exists in the given minds of its principal characters.

Derek Walcott described *Dream on Monkey Mountain* as "an attempt to cohere various elements in West Indian folklore, but . . . also a fantasy based on the hallucination of an old woodcutter who has a vision of returning to Africa." (*Trinidad Guardian*, 23 July 1967, 5) Walcott used folklore to ground the play in the Caribbean. He avoided fruitless nostalgia by layering the 'various elements' of folklore within the experimental dream work of the play. Walcott organizes the folkloric elements within the hallucinations of the play's protagonist, Makak, allowing dreams and madness to create the glue that produces a cohesive Caribbeanness within the play.

The play is Walcott's best known and most performed play. It is first performed in 1967, at the Central Library Theatre in Toronto,

Canada. The play is an elaborate allegory, which concerns racial and cultural identity. Walcott extends his earlier preoccupation with the struggles of Trinidadian peasants. Walcott changes the folk form into a complex, poetic proposal of the psychology of cultural subjugation and the desire for freedom.

The form of the play depends profoundly on ritual and symbolic elements. These factors are dependent on masquerade, music, and mime for their effect. The play opens with a mime in which movement, dance and song are combined to introduce its main themes. The mime gives way to a lament sung by a storyteller and chorus, which introduces the reader to Makak, the play's central character. Therefore, even before the narrative action commences, the drama is located in an oral folk context.

The play belongs to the 20th-century genre called dream plays, connected with works by playwrights such as August Strindberg, John Millington Synge and Soyinka. In Derek Walcott's own words,

the play is a dream, one that exists as much in the given minds of its principal characters as in that of its writer, and as such, it is illogical, derivative, and contra-dictory. Its source is metaphor and it is best treated as a physical poem with all the subconscious and deliberate borrowing of poetry.  
(DMMOP, 208)

Therefore, the examination of the nature and function of dreams in the play is crucial to an insightful understanding of the play.

The complexity of the play also compelled critics to offer their own widely different interpretations. Most critics agree that Derek Walcott's *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is a complex play, full of complicated, sometimes contradictory images and metaphors. Because of the text's

richness, the play has attracted numerous interpretations of its many aspects. At the centre of various critics' reading of the play are Makak and the dream journeys he goes on that lead to self-discovery and his self-acceptance. His journey to Africa, inspired by the apparition, and his escape into the forest are both imaginary journeys made in his mind. The dream journeys are symbolic. The archetypal quests rooted in the ethnic history and collective consciousness of Caribbean people.

A number of critics examined the themes of colonization, poverty, and the search for social and personal identity in a world where racial subjugation is absolute, and blackness absolutely devalued. The play depicts the two major themes of racial inferiority and the thwarted potential of a human spirit. Makak is a mythic and microcosmic representation of the lives of West Indians and of the legacy of racial subjugation and poverty.

Makak lives on Monkey Mountain, which is depicted in the prologue as 'volcanic'. A volcano is unpredictable, sleeping violence, submerged energies that will one day demand release. Makak's dream touches the hidden energies and gives them form and substance. Makak repeatedly insists that his dream is not a dream, whereas others characterize it, not only a dream, but a bad dream. The charges that the Corporal addresses against Makak explicitly include incitement to rebellion. Even though Makak himself declares that it is "better to die, fighting like men, than to hide in this forest," (DMMOP, 242) *Dream on Monkey Mountain* does not advocate revolution in the limited political sense. The play expresses central components of Walcott's attitude to the political, racial and psychological problems in his postcolonial world.

The play is set on an unnamed island in the West Indies at an unspecified time, assumed to be contemporary with the time the play was

written. The play's action takes place in several locations, both real and imagined. The most real place is the prison run by Corporal Lestrade, where the play begins and ends. Lestrade furiously defends the English law, but the law is used to abuse a justice when he goes through a perfunctory justification of Makak's readiness to stand trial. Lestrade talks about the importance of the pistol in preserving order. Lestrade longs for someone to challenge the law to dispute him. In Makak's dream, the action goes from his hut on Monkey Mountain to a country road where he heals a sick man and then to the public marketplace before returning to the prison cell. After Makak, and two other black prisoners, Tigre and Souris, escape, they spend time in the forest before going to a most unreal setting where Makak is a king. All of these settings underline Makak's journey from a real existence that is harsh, through self-awareness, and back to a reality in which he functions as a better person.

Makak's situation in prison can be seen as a metaphor for the mental situation brought about by colonialism. Corporal Lestrade brings in Makak. He has just been arrested for being drunk and smashing a local cafe while claiming he was the king of Africa. Tigre and Souris try to challenge the corporal as he does his duty. The Corporal grows irritated and compares them to animals. Corporal Lestrade, who is a mulatto, represents the collusion of certain elements of the black community with the colonizers, although he should be the associate of the other blacks. He mocks three black prisoners:

CORPORAL. Animals, beasts, savages, cannibals, niggers,  
stop turning this place to a stinking zoo! (DMMOP, 216)

The Corporal asks Makak for necessary information, but the prisoner only wants to go home. Lestrade mockingly asks him, "Where is your home? Africa?" The implication is that he has no homeland. It

seems Walcott, through Makak, speaks about racial despair and the sense of complete loss of hope for his race. In *What the Twilight Says*, Walcott links this feeling to being “rootless,” having no connection with a tradition that gives one personal value, of having no home, of being a stranger in a home owned by someone else, by whites (DMMOP, 21). The feeling of rootlessness is reflected through some dialogues:

MAKAK. Let me go home, my Corporal.

SOURIS. Ay. wait, Tigre, the king has spoken.

TIGER. What the king say?

SOURIS. He want to go home.

CORPORAL. Where is your home? Africa? (DMMOP, 218)

Makak reveals that he lives on Monkey Mountain. Though he does not remember his real name, he is from a tired race:

CORPORAL. What is your name?

MAKAK. I forget.

CORPORAL. What-is your race.

MAKAK. I am tired. (DMMOP, 219)

When Makak comes to make his deposition, his cage is flown out of sight and as he tells his vision its subject – white Goddess – appears and then withdraws. This is the dream which has caused him to go crazy and in his madness claim to be “the direct descendant of African kings, a healer of leprosy and the saviour of his race” (DMMOP, 225).

In scene one, Makak is alone on the ground, and the white mask is nearby. His friend Moustique comes to find him, saying it is market day, and they have to get their coal down to town to be sold. As Moustique lights a fire and makes coffee, Makak says that he thinks he’s going mad and asks Moustique how long they’ve known each other. Moustique tells

him, 'Three, four' years. Makak tells skeptical Moustique of his early morning encounter with the white Goddess, which he insists was not a dream. She amazed him by calling out his real name, a name he does not use. The romantic fantasies about an African home of royal lions act as a catalyst, enabling Makak and his people to come home to their human selves. The dream fantasy about revolution involves and confirms a real revolutionizing of self-perception:

MAKAK. Well, well... the things she tell me, you would not believe. She did know my name, my age, where I born, and that it was charcoal I burn and selling for a living. She know how I live alone, with no wife and no friend ...

MOUSTIQUE. No friend

MAKAK. That Makak is not my name. And I tell her my life, and she say that if I want her, she will come and live with me, and I take her in my arms, and I bring her here.

MOUSTIQUE. [*Looking around*] Here? A white woman? Or a *diabliesse*?

MAKAK. [...] And, Moustique, she say something I will never forget. She say I should not live so any more, here in the forest, frighten of people because I think I ugly. She say that I come from the family of lions and kings. (DMMOP, 236)

When Moustique finds a white mask with long, coarse hair in the hut, Makak comes to a decision:

MAKAK. Saddle my horse, if you love me, Moustique, and cut a sharp bamboo for me, and put me on that horse, for Makak will ride to the edge of world, Makak will walk like

he used to in Africa, when his name was lion! (DMMOP, 240)

Like Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, Makak and Moustique leave the place, showing confidence. In act one, scene two, a group of women robed in white runs onstage, dancing and singing. They are followed by men carrying a sick man on a stretcher and by the formally dressed figure, now given the name Basil. Makak cures the apparently sick man by holding a hot coal in one hand and touching the man's head with the other. He tells the peasants that:

MAKAK. [...] Like the cedars of Lebanon, like the plantains of Zion, the hands of God plant me on Monkey Mountain.[...] let my tongue catch fire, let my body, like Moses, be a blazing bush. [...] You are living coals, you are trees under pressure, you are brilliant diamonds In the hands of your God. [...] And believe in me. Faith, faith! Believe in yourselves. (DMMOP, 248-249)

Coal is the metaphor of racial blackness. It is one of the inexpensive commodities in the marketplace. Charcoal burning is the work of those who can get nothing better. Then, the 'pressure,' is oppression. Through self-trust, coal can become 'diamond'. When it seems that his efforts have failed, Makak blames self-hatred and lack of faith:

MAKAK. Let us go on, *compere*. These niggers too tired to believe anything again. (DMMOP, 250)

Makak's words recall his own answer, in the prologue, to Corporal Lestrade's question, "What is your race?": "I am tired." (DMMOP, 219)

Makak also has forgotten his name and has been lost between the false identities of 'Monkey' and 'Lion'.

Makak is overwhelmed by the power he possesses now, but Moustique's attitude is completely mercenary:

MAKAK. You see what I do there? This power, this power I now have.

MOUSTIQUE. I see a sick man with snake bite and a set of damn asses using old-time medicine. I see a road paved with silver. I see the ocean multiplying with shillings. Thank God. That was good, that was good. [*Mimes the healing*] By this powering my hand. By this coal in my hand. You ain't playing you good, nuh. Here, take what you want. (DMMOP, 253-254)

Striking the hat away, Makak tells Moustique that he does not understand because the power he has now is not for profit. Moustique's greed brings disaster. He impersonates Makak, lifts a bowl to his lips and a spider run over his hand. He is shaken because he had accidentally picked up a spider and her eggs, an omen of death, in Makak's hut and had been warned by Basil, figure of death. People discover his imposture and beat him heartlessly to death. Moustique is the first of several characters who appropriate Makak's vision to their own ends - a frequent event in any revolution. Moustique impersonates Makak and uses the language of Afrocentrism to get money from the people in the marketplace. However, his betrayal of the vision is itself betrayed, by Basil's recognition that he is not Makak, which in turn leads the people to reject the false prophet.

Act two, scene one starts in the prison, the Corporal appears with food for the prisoners. He distributes it to Souris and Tigre, asking how Makak has been behaving. Souris and Tigre tell him that Makak has been moaning and mumbling in a confused way all the time. As they ask for more food, saying that it's their right, the Corporal tells them that:

CORPORAL. Your right? Listen, nigger! according to this world you have the inalienable right to life, liberty, and three green figs. No more, maybe less. [...] Don't harass me further. I didn't make the rules. [To MAKAK] Now, you. Come for this plate! (DMMOP, 279)

Makak pleads with the Corporal to release him. He offers money that he has hidden. Being after Makak's money, Souris and Tigre encourage Makak to kill the Corporal. Makak draws a knife and kills the Corporal. The Corporal returns miraculously to life and set off to pursue Makak.

In act two, scene two, Makak, Tigre and Souris arrive in the forest. Moustique explains:

MOSTIQUE. [...] When I was a little boy, living in darkness. I was so afraid, it was as if I was sinking, drowning in a grave, and me and the darkness was the same, and God was like a big white man, a big white man I was afraid of. (DMMOP, 290)

Souris being frightened in the darkness of a forest explains:

SOURIS. [...] And that is what they teach me since I small. To be black like coal, and to dream of milk. To love God, and obey the white man. (DMMOP, 290)

Tigre and Souris are hungry and uneasy. Makak tries to convince them that if they smoke the leaves of a certain plant the peace they find will leave them without hunger. Souris opposes that he wants real food. In the darkness of the forest, Tigre and Souris are afraid. In the moonlight, the Corporal meets Basil and is made to confess his sins:

CORPORAL. [*Flatly, like an accustomed prayer*] All right. Too late have I loved thee, Africa of my mind, [...] I jeered thee because I hated half of myself, my eclipse. But now in the heart of the forest at the foot of Monkey Mountain [...] I kiss your foot, O Monkey Mountain. [*He removes his clothes*] I return to this earth, my mother. [...] now I am myself. [*Rises*] Now I feel better. Now I see a new light. (DMMOP, 299)

Corporal Lestrade, alienated from his black self by his service to the whites, seems for a while, cured of that alienation when the others make him strip naked. Makak tells him, “They reject half of you. We accept all. Rise. Take off your boots.” (DMMOP, 300) Makak welcomes the Corporal back into the life given him at birth. Tigre comes out and scoffs at the Corporal, saying that now he knows what it is like to be a ‘nigger,’ naked, vulnerable, and humiliated, an animal. Makak tries to get Tigre to stop. Makak confesses he is lost and has forgotten the way. He surrenders his dream of Africa and admits that he is lonely, lost, an old man again:

MAKAK. [*Holding out the mask*] I was a king among shadows. Either the shadows were real, and I was no king, or it my own kingliness that created the shadows. Either way, I am lonely, lost, an old man again. No more. [...] We are wrapped in black air. we are black, ourselves shadows in the

firelight of the white man's mind. [...] I an old man, drunk and disorderly, beaten down by a Bible, and tired of looking up to heaven. You believe I am lost now? (DMMOP, 304)

Moustique is brought in. The Corporal accuses him of having betrayed his dream. However Moustique accuses Makak of betraying his dream:

MOUSTIQUE. No, you will be no different. Every man is the same. Now you are really mad. Mad, old man, and blind. Once you loved the moon, now a night will come when, because it white, from your deep hatred you will want it destroyed. (DMMOP, 315)

Makak's apparition, the white Goddess, is brought in. Makak wants to know who she is, but he does not receive any reply. The Corporal insists that she should be beheaded. He urges Makak to behead the apparition of the white Goddess in a powerful passage, which summarizes the injurious effects of European cultural conditioning, and suggests that its power is dependent on the colonized person's own complicity:

CORPORAL. She is the wife of the devil, the white witch. [...] She is lime, snow, marble, moonlight, lilies, cloud, foam and 'bleaching cream, the mother of civilization, and the confounder of blackness. I too have longed for her. She is the colour of the law, religion, paper.... (DMMOP, 319)

The final tone of Makak's experience is acceptance, but the Corporal's tune is still the same. The suggestion is that the coming to term with hybrid origin and identity is an issue of relevance for Caribbean people.

The play ends with Makak's realizing:

MAKAK. [Turning to them] God bless you both. Lord. I have been washed from shore to shore, as a tree in the ocean. The branches of my fingers, the roots of my feet, could grip nothing, but now, God they have found ground. Let me be swallowed up in mist again, and let me be forgotten, so that when the mist open, men can look up, at some small clearing with a hut, with a signal of smoke, and say "Makak lives there. Makak lives where he has always lived, in the dream of his people." Other men will come, other prophets will come, and they will be stoned, and mocked, and betrayed, but now this old hermit is going back home, back to the beginning, to the green beginning of this world. Come, Moustique, we going home. (DMMOP, 326)

Makak's powerful passage explicitly argues against a return to African. For Makak, home is the Caribbean land. It is viewed as a green beginning of this world.

Makak's 'journey' to Africa, inspired by the apparition, and his escape into the forest are both imaginary journeys made only in an old man's drunken and disordered mind and, at the same time, symbolic, archetypal quests rooted in the ethnic history and collective consciousness of Caribbean peoples. The miracle cure on the sick villager, likewise, is to be perceived and understood in a necessarily dual response that embraces both Moustique's and the Corporal's cynical interpretations and Makak's 'truth', that is you all self that is your own enemy', that an oppressed people's renewed self-confidence and faith can indeed work 'miracles'.

This duality and ambivalence focus on Makak's vision of the white woman. At one level, there is the opposition between Makak's certainty that she is real and Moustique's down-to-earth opinion that 'You had a bad dream, or you sleep outside and the dew seize you' (DMMOP, 237). At another, 'poetic' level, there is Makak's early, instinctive answer to his question, 'Tell me please, who are you?', that he will pose repeatedly when she is brought before him at the 'tribunal' - that she is his saviour, who has brought him identity and strength after a lifetime of hiding away from others because of his sense of inferiority:

Sirs, when I hear that voice,  
singing so sweetly,  
I feel my spine straighten,  
My hand grow strong . . . .  
I began to dance,  
With the splendour of a Lion (DMMOP, 229)

On the other hand there is Lestrade's answer, that she is a diablesse, 'the wife of the devil, the white witch' – in more psychological terms the white Other, 'an image of your longing', everything that is desired because believed to be superior and inaccessible. He says:

She is lime, snow, marble, moonlight, lilies, cloud, foam and bleaching cream, the mother of civilization, and the confounder of blackness. I too have longed for her. She is the colour of the law, religion, paper, art... She is the white light that paralysed your mind, that led you into this confusion. It is you who created her, so kill her! (DMMOP, 319)

Walcott's redemptive dramatic affirmation of the humanity and personhood of Caribbean man, and indeed of the black person in the Western world, finds its most acclaimed expression in the play. Here he

focuses on the psychological aspect of the situation. He draws attention upon a lively range of popular Caribbean performance modes, which are seamlessly mixed with contemporary stage technology and theatrical practices from European and other traditions.

Walcott makes the end of the story the beginning of his play. The condition described by Fanon and Sartre is embodied in the play's protagonist, an ageing, illiterate charcoal burner, who lives in almost total isolation, without family or friends, in the rainforest of Monkey Mountain. The charcoal burner's 'real' name is Felix Hobain, but he can hardly remember it, so deeply has he internalized the idea of himself by which everyone else has nicknamed him: Makak, monkey, mimic man. The nickname is the seal of his dehumanization, an instance of the power of discourse to unman him. In a half-facetious parody of the creation myth, the mulatto Corporal of Police mocks him and black people thus:

In the beginning was the ape, and the ape had no name, so God call him man. Now there were various tribes of the ape, it had gorilla, baboon, orang-outang, chimpanzee, the blue-arsed monkey and the marmoset, and God looked at his handiwork, and saw that it was good. For some of the apes had straighten their backbone and start walking upright, but there was one tribe unfortunately that lingered behind and that was the nigger.( DMMOP, 216–17)

Despite the infection of self-contempt, Makak also has his dreams and aspirations, also has his 'angel', and therein lies his madness: 'I suffer from madness. I does see things. Spirits does talk to me. All I have is my dreams and they don't trouble your soul' (DMMOP, 225). But they trouble him. He occasionally falls into a hallucinatory fit. A beautiful white woman appears to him as a fiction of the idealism. He kneels to her

in obeisance, a perverted chivalry: 'Lady in heaven, is your old black warrior, / The king of Ashanti, Dahomey, Guinea' (DMMOP, 228). When she sings sweetly to him, he feels himself acquiring manhood: 'I feel my spine straighten, / My hand grow strong' (DMMOP, 229). Makak is an extreme case of Walcott's own 'generation [that] yearned / for whiteness, for candour, unreturned' (Hamner: 1997, 146). This dream or hallucination is a necessary process in Makak's reconstruction of self.

In the night journey of his dream, another version of the mythological quest, Makak retraces the Middle Passage and acts out the wish-fulfilment of being a king of African kings. For he must work through and work off this romantic nostalgia in order to free himself. When Makak awakens out of his dream, it is Sunday morning. He has lived through his dark night of the soul, his harrowing of hell. He remembers his name, Felix Hobain, he knows himself. He is released from prison and the prison of his psychosis, and he returns contented to Monkey Mountain:

Lord, I have been washed from shore to shore, as a tree in the ocean. The branches of my fingers, the roots of my feet, could grip nothing, but now, God, they have found ground. Let me be swallowed up in mist again, and let me be forgotten, so that when the mist open, men can look up, at some small clearing with a hut, with a small signal of smoke, and say 'Makak lives there, Makak lives where he has always lived, in the dream of his people. (DMMOP, 326)

Corporal Lestrade, for example, is not the type of the symbolic mulatto. He is also a version of the petty colonial middleman who is seduced and brainwashed by the system, and then used to perpetuate the system by helping to keep the masses in check. This type also appears in

other Anglophone Caribbean works as the estate overseer or the slave driver, or the schoolteacher. But the characterization of Lestrade has complexity. He is a variant of Makak. He has a cynical understanding of the system which he accepts and serves. This understanding suggests that he too is capable of transformation. In the end, having lived through and served Makak's dream, he can release Makak from jail with what sounds like sad compassion. His final line, unoriginal though it may be in part, carries not only a sense of chastened self-realization, but also a capacity to respond, without cynicism, to Nature's signals of self-renewal: 'Here is a prison. Our life is a prison. Look, is the sun' (DMMOP, 325).

*Dream on Monkey Mountain* forces its audience to consider the reality of the colonized differs considerably from that of the colonizer, and that is, in large part, the cause of the mental disorder and dissociation often attributed to many natives. Middlemen like Corporal Lestrade have different conceptions of reality from both groups.

Lestrade does not recognize his own madness in either part I or part II of the play though they mirror each other in his zeal and his language. In the mock court of the play's prologue, Lestrade presents Makak to the "lords" as "a being without a mind, a will, a name, a tribe of its own" (DMMOP, 222). He does not allow Makak to speak - in order to "spare [the court] the sound of that voice, which have come from a cave of darkness"—and continues to describe Makak's personality:

These hands are the hands of Esau, the fingers are like roots, the arteries are as hard as twine and the palms are steamed with coal. But the animal, you observe, is tamed and obedient. (DMMOP, 222)

This profile resembles Lestrade's future portrayal of himself in the forests of Monkey Mountain. When he confronts Basil, Lestrade finds

that he too has no mind, no race, no voice. After divesting himself of his colonial uniform and presumably his colonial post, he announces:

Now I see a new light. I sing the glories of Makak! The glories of my race! What race? I have no race! Come! Come, all you splendours of imagination. Let me sing of darkness now! My hands. My hands are heavy. My feet . . . [he rises, crouched] My feet grip like roots. The arteries are like rope. [He howls] Was that my voice? My voice. O God, I have become what I mocked. I always was, I always was. Makak! Makak! forgive me, old father. (DMMOP, 299–300)

Here Lestrade retrogresses to become an ape, very much like the monkey he makes of Makak earlier. And at the close of this later scene, he further identifies himself with his previous description of Makak when he comes to the realization: “I have no ambition of my own. I have no animal’s name. I simply work” (DMMOP, 307). Thus, Lestrade, in the end, has no mind, no will, no name, and no tribe to lay claim to.

Makak himself refers to the Apparition as “God who once speak to me in the form of a woman on Monkey Mountain” (DMMOP, 226). Only moments after Lestrade has reported Makak’s claim, during the previous night’s drunken outburst, “that with the camera of [his] eye [he] had taken a photograph of God and all that [he] could see was blackness” (DMMOP, 225).

Walcott notes that the character of Basil emerged out of “a death figure from Haitian mythology,” (Walcott, *Meaning*, 47) Baron Samedi, an aspect of Ghede the death-god, an important Petro loa in Vodoun ceremonies. As Theodore Colson observes, there are also numerous parallels between Makak and Christ. (Colson: 1973, 75) But along with these devine overtones, there are obvious links to Trinidadian Carnival.

‘Monkey See, Monkey Do’ is a stock Carnival character, and both Moustique (DMMOP, 239–40) and Lestrade (DMMOP, 323) assume that the Apparition’s mask, left behind with Makak, is indeed for Carnival use. The mask is also a symbol of racial self-alienation. Moustique, when caught impersonating Makak, holds up the mask and says “All I have is this, black faces, white masks,” (DMMOP, 239–40) a clear allusion to Fanon’s title.

Immediately after the tender reconciliation, Moustique sings satirical, calypso-like song: “Is the stupidest thing I ever see / Two jackasses and one donkey,” he sings, but he concludes with the more melancholy reflection that “A man not a man without misery” (DMMOP, 242). As the first scene ends, “[t]he dancer, doing the *burroquite*, or donkey dance, circles the stage and turns the disc of the sun to moonlight. The lights dim briefly, just long enough to establish a change of mood” (DMMOP, 242).

The healing scene that establishes Makak as a folk hero occurs through Moustique’s initiative. A sick man, bitten by a snake, is being carried to the hospital. As someone explains that “they putting coals under his body to make him sweat,” (DMMOP, 246) hoping to get the poison out of his system, Moustique pricks up his ears and offers to summon Makak, who “know all the herbs, plants, bush,” (DMMOP, 246) in return for something to eat. He envelops Makak in a charismatic aura, proclaiming that “[h]e have this power and this glory” (DMMOP, 246) and addressing him, on his arrival, as “Master” (DMMOP, 247). And at first, it may seem as if Makak will insist on his own authority: “Let all who want this man to heal, kneel down. I ask you. Kneel!” (DMMOP, 247).

Although Moustique has presented his ‘Master’ as an expert in bush medicine, it is not through herbs that Makak undertakes his healing, but through burning coals, as if linking the lowly commodity he lives by to his prophetic vocation. He asks “a woman to put a coal in this hand, a living coal. A soul in my hand” (DMMOP, 248). By asking the woman to entrust a ‘soul’ to his hand, Makak solicits faith in his powers, but in receiving the coal from a woman, he ritually repeats his reception of his vision from the goddess. As if to confirm his dependence on her, he waits for the full moon to rise before beginning his incantations. Makak does not claim his powers from Africa; on the contrary, he introduces himself as rooted in divine authority on the soil of his home:

Like the cedars of Lebanon,  
like the plantains of Zion,  
the hand of God plant me  
on Monkey Mountain. (DMMOP, 248)

In this healing scene, Makak’s actions manifest the supernatural power associated with mystical states when he revives Josephus, the victim of a snake bite, by holding live coals in his hand over the victim’s forehead. This power seems to associate Makak with shamanism and the African witch doctor, but during the healing he also includes the European tradition by invoking Moses. He not only successfully tells Josephus to sweat in order to break his fever but also encourages him to “believe in me. Faith, faith! Believe in yourselves.” (DMMOP, 248-249) As Paula Burnett notes,

When Walcott’s drama enacts such rites as a healing, a quasi resurrection, as in *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, a miracle performed by the least respected person of a hierarchical racialized community, it does so as part of its strategy to

mark the social deprivation but spiritual strength of a real, historic group(Burnett: 2001, 103).

Through rituals such as this Walcott suggests that any change in the material world depends on a transformation of the self, like that experienced by Makak and, to a lesser extent, by the other characters.

In the marketplace, a singer, a vendor, and a dancer begin to enact, with a chant in creole, the story of Makak's descent from the mountain. This street play within a play suggests the grounding of Walcott's own drama in such spontaneous folk Theatre. In the midst of this spontaneous performance, Moustique enters, disguised as Makak, wearing the black hat taken from Basil in the previous scene. The hat joins Moustique with Basil, the death god. Moustique's fraudulent mimicry is killing Makak's vision.

It is the collective imagination of the people that created the myth of Makak, their communal memory that will preserve it. The symbols associated with the Apparition—roots, branches, mist—reappear, with subtle transformations. When he heard the Apparition's singing, Makak's feet "grow roots" (DMMOP, 227), but he did not yet claim at that point to have found ground. Only in the faith-healing scene, where he claims to have been planted like "the cedars of Lebanon" (DMMOP, 248) on Monkey Mountain, but the triumph of that occasion initiates its corruption, as first Moustique, then Tigre, and then Lestrade try to turn Makak's intuitive powers to their own advantage.

The dream or nightmare serves as a spiritual cleansing for Makak. The signal of his reformed consciousness is that in the end he not only smartly names himself but also rejects the white mask found in his bag. From being a slave to whiteness and then to an imaginary Africa, he is

now his real West Indian self, a cultural mulatto, without any illusions. He says:

“Lord, I have been washed from shore to shore, as a tree in the ocean. The branches of my fingers, the roots of my feet, could grip nothing, but now, God, they have found ground.”  
(DMMOP, 326)

Even the elements celebrate this rebirth. The sun appears in all its bright glory as Makak is freed from prison, the symbolic prison of mental enslavement.

Robert Fox emphasizes the mythological aspect of Walcott’s drama, arguing that *Dream* goes beyond redeeming the downtrodden to dramatize “the disparities between a consciousness that is creative and metaphoric, and one that is straightforward and imprisoning” (Fox: 1993, 204). Makak’s dream, which is collective and universalized according to Fox, liberates Makak by allowing him to outgrow and discard external values and thereby rediscover his personal roots. Walcott says:

Makak and the people he meets in the play are all working out the meaning of their culture; they are going through an upheaval (Baer: 1996, 17).

In this part-fable and myth play, to the accompaniment of music, dance and drums, the audience joins Makak in his struggle for freedom and manhood. The tripartite structure, with the dream-action divided into two shares, each containing three scenes, and enclosed by prologue and epilogue, is deliberately aligned with the form of the true folk tale, which for Walcott had a structure as universal. It kept the same digital rhythm of three movements, three acts, three moral doctrines. The primary setting,

with its spider webs over the dark tower of the mountain, and the bars of the jail-house, portrays life as a prison

The characters such as Makak, Tigre and Moustique are traditional symbolic animals and Voodoo figure, Basil (Baron Samedi), who also survive on other levels, with Makak not only being an wicked and broken-down old charcoal-burner, but also a crucified Christ flanked by two criminals, whose 'resurrection' takes place at dawn on a Sunday, marked by singing from the Church of Revelation. The performance begins and ends with the drawing of a circle which is both a literal marking out of the playing area, a metaphor for the revolving treadmill of history, and a magic circle. The psychological influence is strengthened by the intended naivety, and the use of rhythm in dance and choral singing, while the appeal to the unconscious is explicit in ritualized action and the whole dream context.

Walcott identifies oral, African-derived folk tradition and Western literary tradition in his play, *The Joker of Seville*. There is also a tradition of linguistic display and volubility in West Indian folk expression which is found in some of the speeches of *The Joker of Seville*. The play represents a major foray by Walcott into the form of the musical. It is the adaptation of Tirso de Molina's *El Burlador de Sevilla*. The action is to be carried by an excited variety of Caribbean, primarily folk, largely Trinidadian music, memorably scored by Galt MacDermot. In his 'Note' to the play, Walcott says that 'Trinidadian music and its public character' easily represented 'the wit, panache, the swift or boisterous e'lan of [Tirso's] period' ( JSB, 3-4), and that the cultural reality of Spanish Trinidad was ready ground for the adaptation.

Performance, role-playing, with the self-reflexive delight of it, is itself a distinctive part of the play. From the very beginning of the play,

the cemetery, with the statue of Gonzalo, is on stage, a reminder of the death and revenge which will come to life, so to speak, at the end, as agent of Juan's punishment. Walcott's Joker carnivalizes Tirso's *El Burlador de Sevilla*, even though in the end Juan is to be punished as in the original.

When the play opens, we are in a temporary arena in a field outside a Trinidad village. The arena may be assumed as a bull ring or a cockpit or most directly as a *gayelle*, the Trinidadian name for the arena in which the once-popular but proscribed Trinidadian martial folk art of stick-fighting was practised. All of these activities involve contests, jousting, sport, but deadly sport. Don Juan's sexual adventuring is being presented as game, role-playing, and joke. Both 'cockfight' and 'stick-fight' carry sexual connotations, and a 'stick-man' is not only a man trained in stick-fighting, but also in Trinidadian slang, a man of great sexual prowess. Male sexual prowess is much lauded in Caribbean folk tradition and is a favourite subject for the word-play of calypso. Into the *gayelle* comes the village elder, Rafael, leading a troupe of villagers. It is All Soul's Eve, and they have come to perform their annual re-enactment of the legend of Don Juan. In effect, the villagers are about to become a Carnival band 'playing a Don Juan mas'. So the music, the singing, the dancing, the movement will generate themselves easily out of this naturally theatrical situation.

The necessary use of mask and disguise in Juan's playing of his tricks and in the working out of the resolution, the presence of a statue that will come alive, of characters that die and return as apparitions, all of this lends itself to the Carnival mode. The Carnival spirit may also be felt in the way in which Walcott revises Tirso's moral lesson to produce his own meaning. Walcott's Juan is more complex person. He is something

of a hero with a mission for change. It is a modern mission, that of liberating the minds of women and the mind of society itself, with its structures of a patriarchal theology and moral code, a patriarchy with which women conspired in their own repression under the banner of a chivalric code that idealized them.

After his 'macho' assertion that he will not be dissuaded from seducing Ana, he sings: 'Oh, little red bird, / In your cage of ribs, tremble, / tremble and wait, and he will come now. / The sky has no gate, the open air is your temple, / every heart has the right / to its freedom' (JSB, 68).

We are left with the ambivalence in the Ace of Death's question as to whether 'Juan gone down to Hell / or up to Heaven' (JSB, 150). Perhaps the answer is 'neither'. It would seem that Walcott's argument seeks to break out of the prison of conventional moral-theological imperatives and, as Rafael sums up the action's meaning, to see Juan's life as one principle or force in the never-ending cycle of death and rebirth in nature: 'we lit his ritual death and ritual / resurrection on All Souls' Eve' (JSB, 150).

The incorporation of carnival elements into a play necessarily impacts upon its form. The play is an adaptation - or rather a reworking - of Tirso de Molina's *El Burlador de Sevilla*, the seventeenth-century Spanish play about Don Juan. In framing his version of the story with a prologue that 'resurrects' Juan as a champion stickman, Walcott seizes upon the legendary Spaniard as an apt figure through which to present the picaroon sexual exploits of his Caribbean counterpart, the jamet folk hero.

This prologue sets the action in the stick fighting arena and begins with a procession of villagers carrying candles, a scene that is reminiscent of canboulay in the late 1800s. When Rafael and his troupe of actors,

dancers and singers stage a stick fight before introducing the play proper, their accompanying calypso with its refrain of 'sans humanite' enhances the festival atmosphere. Dressed as the Jack, the Queen of Hearts, and the Ace of Death, these figures, along with Juan as the Joker, would be familiar to Caribbean audiences as carnival mas'. That Rafael and his troupe periodically draw attention to their roles as actors reminds us of the artifice of the performance, a manoeuvre which, like Walcott's call for the play to be staged in the round, is also in keeping with the conventions of Carnival.

At the end of each act, in particular, the narrative action is brought back to Trinidad, to the gayelle of the jamets, to the theatre space where the audience participates in the collective recreation of the story. The final scene shows Juan's body borne off by stick fighters in a celebratory ritual designed to affirm his immortality. Through the re-enactment of Juan's deeds, the actors have ensured that this joker cheats death and gains freedom. Thus, the seasonal renewal central to Carnival is complete.

Within this frame, Walcott uses a number of other carnival tropes. Calinda rhythms are evident not only in the numerous duels but also in the shout-and-response pattern of the songs that punctuate the action. Musically, the play borrows heavily from calypso. Its verse steeped in the satire. Walcott's joker stands as a critique of the social mores upheld by the jamets' colonial masters.

The burlesque style of the play, foregrounded through techniques such as mimicry and metatheatre, continually subverts any censure of its subject. The emphasis is given on the transformative functions of masquerade which strengthens the carnival theme through disguise that Juan is able to stage the sexual conquests. It threatens to disrupt the moral

order of his society. Despite his misogyny, in the carnival context he emerges as a 'force and an amoral principle' (Juneja: 1992, 258) more than a fully realised character. He is, in many respects, the spirit of the flamboyant and rebellious jamaican culture rekindled through performance. Juan meets his death at the hand of Rafael, rather than that of his enemy, as in Tirso's text. As John Thieme notes, the 'bacchanal of the skeleton' performed by the actor troupe (with Rafael masquerading as death) 'provides a Trinidadian version of the play's carpe diem theme, which appears to be based on the devil bands of Carnival' (Thieme: 1984:69). In combination, these carnival elements creolise the Spanish source text on a number of levels, reworking Eurocentric forms to produce a distinctively West Indian play and turning an imported moral lesson into a celebration of local culture and history.

Music is similarly integral to contemporary theatre practice in the Caribbean. Like the Creole and Patois languages of the area, many Caribbean musical forms owe their distinctiveness to the processes of cultural syncretism. Treating the Caribbean as an integrated musical region, Kenneth Bilby proposes that its characteristic forms/styles can be understood as part of an 'African-European musical spectrum' (Bilby: 1985, 184) which is analogous to the 'linguistic continuum' outlined by Alleyne and other theorists of creolisation. This model suggests that musicians frequently use a range of styles—even within a single work—sometimes stressing African derived components such as a syncopated drum-beat and at other times using European metre and rhythm. Bilby calls this juxtaposition of forms 'polymusicality', arguing that 'it is possible to encounter virtually back to back the buoyant strains of string bands and the complex drumming of possession cults, the call-and-response of field gangs and the layered harmony of a Bach chorale'

(Bilby: 1985, 202–3). Many Caribbean plays show evidence of such polymusicality, which can function as a celebration of the region's culture and as part of an overall strategy to appropriate and indigenise imperial forms of theatre. Walcott's *The Joker of Seville*, also uses calypso, gospel, blues, and parang music in its counter-discursive reworking of the Don Juan myth.

Don Juan appears in the ironic role of 'liberator' of women and one who 'honors' them.

My faith? the faith of all women.

Woman's religion is love.

They will resurrect me again.

Imprisoned by laws, everyone

Idealizes a liberator

lying next to lover or husband, (JSB, 141-142)

Through disguise and trickery he seduces four women. His first seduction, that of Tisbea, Walcott places in a fishing village across the Atlantic in the Caribbean, his third seduction is of Ana, Don Gonzalo's daughter. This he carries out in her father's house, disguised as her chosen lover, the Marquis de Mota. This results in a duel where Don Gonzalo dies in defending his daughter's honor. This final conquest, the most distasteful, takes place on Aminta's wedding day, she is tricked into believing that her brand-new husband has given her up in Don Jaun's favor. In the end, Don Juan is killed as Ana avenges her father's death.

Don Juan's obsessive behavior in honoring women with dishonor, constitutes man's obedient to subconscious impulses. Both the desire to defy prohibitions such as those imposed in Eden, and the desire to return to the womb. This obsession needs to be replaced by a conscious decision to change the nature of the relationship between men and women from

one of power and violence to one of mutual love and respect. But make no mistake about it, this play, which takes place near a cemetery, and the action of which would have the audience seated ‘as in rural bullfight, cockfight, or stick fight’, is no joke – it is unmistakably a play about sex as violence and the perpetuation of violence against women by macho men who refuse to acknowledge woman’s complexity. Thus, Don Juan represents everyman who vicariously partakes of the myth of the female rape-complex that is a woman wishes to be raped. This powerlessness of women and their denial of choice are reflected in the play. If a woman has no control over what happens to her body, she is totally helpless. Ana, one of Don Juan’s victims, says:

I just stood

There, soiled and speechless with its seed. (JSB, 112)

This play glorifies ‘phallogocentric privilege’, and is a slap in the face of women since a woman is more than anatomical sex.

In a Caribbean context it has been acknowledged that many women enjoy and applaud when male calypsonians sing not only calypsos that are critical of women, but also those that treat the subject of violence against women as justifiable. Gender relationships are still relationships of power, naked power, and are totally tied up with women’s economic power. The ‘woman as property’ mindset still exists, despite women’s social, educational and economic development. Don Juan is considered as everyman’s after ego. Octavio’s disturbing dream supports this view.

There is a garden. In its hush

a woman sprawls to greet the snake,

its adzehead muzzling her bush.

My cold sweat turns to scales just like

the thing I would abhor. I change

into the serpent, too, sometimes,  
and it's my body and not Juan's  
that wraps her. God, she groans, she seems  
to worship her seducer!  
Mixed in the muck of that dream  
I cannot call my motives pure. (JSB, 131)

This archetypal dream is littered with images of the fall of man. Adam's fall from grace is attributed to Eve. She sprawls to greet the snake. The burden of Adam's fall rests on Eve's shoulders, she seems to worship her seducer. In other words, she is responsible for her rape. This theory of original sin has always conveniently given man the right to be irresponsible. Eve is a convenient scapegoat.

Don Juan disturbs the moral order, and this leads to chaos since the irresponsibility of his behavior and the need to device allow him to operate in an immature, pre-rational and instinctive manner. This anarchic behavior is the stuff of which dreams are made. It does not lend itself to productive authentic existence.

Juan embodies an irrational force – the spirit within him which urges him to obey subconscious impulses and to defy prohibitions such as those imposed by Eden and society. He is, as existential, post-Adamic man, outside the pale of institutional values. The terms of his quest, indeed of his very existence, require that he uses every trick in his arsenal to outmaneuver each man and conquer each female he encounters. Juan himself recognizes this instinctual force:

I serve one principle! That of  
The generation earth whose laws  
Compel the loping lion to move  
Towards the fallow lioness,

Who in this second embodies  
His buckling stagger! I  
Fought for that freedom delivered  
After Eden. If I defy  
Your principle because I served  
Nature, that was chivalry  
Less unnatural than your own. (JSB, 138)

Derek Walcott's play opens with the chorus, which includes the minor characters, also found in Tirso's play. But, in addition, the chorus includes "a ship's crew, wedding guests, nuns, courtiers, ladies, slaves, fishergirls, musicians, whores, stickfighters, dancers" (prologue). These characters may best be described as 'supporting' rather than minor for they are all active in the interpretation of their roles, which are clearly related to the production of a play with a mostly Caribbean ambiance. In fact, they reflect significant groups in a Caribbean society. Walcott was commissioned by Britain's Royal Shakespeare Company to adapt Tirso's play in 1973. John Thieme quotes Walcott on the genesis of *The Joker of Seville*:

I did not want to produce a play purely for the Shakespeare Company or English actors and audiences. I wanted to write a play that could also be produced in the West Indies. So what I have done is put Don Juan, or The Joker of Seville, in a West Indian setting ... (Thieme: 1999, 105)

Derek Walcott's 'caribbeanization' of this Spanish Golden Age play is an interesting study in technique. First of all, the playwright carefully incorporates remarkable elements of the region's culture and history: environment, language, music, dance and folk traditions. Walcott ensures that what he does is precisely what Kristeva describes as a

“transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another” (Kristeva: 1986, 111). The elements of the Spanish Golden Age text with the various cultural elements brought from that society have been moved into a different sign system that of the Caribbean.

The play opens ‘on a Caribbean estate’, and is clearly intended to be performed in a specific way because of the detailed stage directions which Walcott includes: “[t]he audience should sit on wooden bleachers close to the action, as in a rural bullfight, cockfight, or stickfight” (prologue). These guidelines or stage directions, set the tone for the beginning of a folk Theatre, which incorporates elements of traditional Caribbean folk life.

Evidence of Caribbean English-based Creole, which is the language of the people, exists in the song of the slaves as they sail across the Atlantic: “Hey, hey, hey! / Is the U.S.A. / Once we get dere / we gonna be O.K!” (JSB, 33). The use of Creole is one of the features of adaptation in the work that brings the Caribbean to the front.

This is again evident when Tisbea first meets Don Juan on the shore. She moves from her expressive metaphorical language, which proves that she is educated and widely read, to the Creole utterance of a bashful girl. When she is asked her name, she responds: “Me? Oh, I ent nobody, sir. Tisbea. A poor fishergirl.” (JSB, 39) Later in the same scene, as the fishergirls sing of Tisbea’s seduction, Caribbean Creole again covers: “Tisbea went and bathe, / a swordfish take she maid.” (JSB, 43) The swordfish here should not be interpreted as a natural fish, especially given the fact that this image was used colloquially some decades ago to refer to a ‘Don Juan’ type individual, no doubt because of the phallic image this particular species of fish provokes. The swordfish image is also appropriate as the shipwrecked Don Juan literally comes ‘out of the

sea' to seduce Tisbea. Patricia Ismond, in describing the language of *The Joker of Seville*, points out that:

the 'high,' dignified style of the original classic is being brought closer to and modulated by the earthy style of popular West Indian expression. The popular intersects with the grand style to remind the latter in its own coinage (Ismond: 1993, 263).

Walcott makes necessary structural changes that are closely associated

with the ways in which he elaborates the themes and sub-themes that are related to the history of Caribbean societies in regard to victory, colonization and independence.

What Walcott employs here is a fundamental part of his ideology regarding language in postcolonial Theatre. In *What the Twilight Says*, he describes language as a weapon that the post-colonial subject uses to deliver himself "from servitude" (DMMOP, 15). He argues that "the only way to re-create this language was to share in the torture of its articulation. This did not mean the jettisoning of "culture" but, by the writer's making creative use of his schizophrenia, an eclectic fusion of the old and the new" (DMMOP,16).

Characterization is an essential element used to highlight the themes of the play. Walcott takes his characters beyond the development of these themes on a personal level and sheds light on how these are linked to the wider society and its concerns. An examination of the roles of Don Juan, Isabella, Ana, Tisbea and Aminta allows a better appreciation of this amplification.

Isabella is deceived into thinking that Don Juan is Octavio because of his disguise. We are told that Octavio gives his cloak to Don Juan who pretends to be a poor beggar woman: "... May my cloak's / arm husband you through this cold night" (JSB, 12). When the matter is made known to the King, Isabella's attempts to defend her actions fall on deaf ears. As the King sentences her to a year's penance in a convent, she maintains her silence before patriarchal authority:

A woman, yes! That was my wrong,  
born to this privilege of debasement,  
ordered to keep a civil tongue  
locked in its civil ivory casement.  
When you are pious, she's a wife,  
and, when appropriate, a whore.  
Now that you've simplified my life  
to silence, I will speak no more. (JSB, 19)

Walcott's Isabella sheds light on the way in which women are regarded in that male-dominated society. When we meet Isabella later, after her year in the convent, she is a different person, one who is 'liberated.' She owes this liberation she says, to Don Juan, who "taught us choice. / He, the great Joker of Seville, / whose mischief is simply a boy's / has made us women, that is all" (JSB, 114). Walcott's Isabella does not seek vengeance. She has gained insight into Don Juan's character and realizes that in many ways his victims share the same character traits that he does. She says to Ana:

... he's shown the lot of us  
is that our lust for propriety  
as wives is just as lecherous  
as his ... He set us free! (JSB, 117)

Isabella thus moves from being the stereotypical Golden Age lady who conforms to societal pressure, to one who now recognizes the hypocrisy of the society in which she lives. She knows what kind of person she is and is comfortable with herself. She has matured and has grown psychologically. Thieme argues that in *Isabella*, Don Juan has gained a convert to his philosophy. Isabella's characterization, therefore, reinforces Walcott's critique of a society that is stuck in the past in its treatment of women. Walcott's *Isabella* reveals that a society that values marriage at all cost forces women to engage in some of the same practices as philandering men like Don Juan in their attempts to secure husbands. In Caribbean societies where propriety by women particularly about the opposite sex is highly valued, Isabella's voicing of her independence in this play is indeed a revolutionary move. By declaring her liberation from these restrictive patriarchal practices that deny women their voices, Isabella points to an opening up of Caribbean society to a point where women see patriarchy's shortcomings for what they are and are willing to move beyond these to secure their own independence.

The character of Ana is much more active in Walcott's work. Don Juan also seduces Ana. To make matters worse, he also kills her father. The fact that Don Juan seduces her and kills her father means that she must then seek vengeance. In a conversation with Isabella, she refers to Don Juan as a 'serpent ... [who] struck [her] father' (JSB, 114) and speaks of her hatred for him and her wish that he pays for what he has done:

... With my last breath  
I'll pray for justice, and for both  
of you, until he pays that debt. (JSB, 114)

Ana's role in Walcott's play emphasizes the theme of vengeance and justice for wrongs committed. Even though, these are the themes that are crucial to Tirso's work, by having a different character convey them Walcott emphasizes the active role played by women in Caribbean societies. Ana actively contributes to her own downfall by arranging a meeting with the Marquis de la Mota, quite unknown to her father. This results in her seduction by Don Juan. Her character is much more developed in Walcott's play, not just because she emphasizes more overtly the themes of vengeance and justice, but also because she is an active participant in all the action.

Walcott makes it quite clear that what Tisbea hopes for in her relationship with Don Juan is marriage. After giving herself to him she says, "And, sir, all that you're looking for / I hope I'll give like a good wife" (JSB, 48). She helps to emphasize Don Juan's belief that women seek marriage as a "weapon ... to lambaste [their] ravaged honor" (JSB, 48). Where in Tirso's play Tisbea and all the other women are more passive and are seduced by Don Juan. In Walcott's work they make it clear that they must conform to the societal norms, one of which is marriage in cases of lost honor. Marriage to all intents and purposes seems to be used as a remedy to rectify the consequences of their desire.

There is an added dimension to the role played by Walcott's Tisbea. She is the innocent girl of the 'New World' who is seduced by the worldly-wise trickster from the Old World. Don Juan speaks of bringing "the old gospel to the New World" (JSB, 41). Tisbea is ravaged and left dejected and abandoned to her own destructive devices. Walcott seems here to be drawing a parallel with what occurred in Europe and the New World where rich, virgin territory was exploited and abandoned. In caribbeanizing the play, Walcott includes social and historical

considerations, which played a vital role in shaping the character of the region's inhabitants.

Don Juan also flatters and deceives Aminta, though he does not have to use as much persuasion to seduce her. Aminta, who is about to be married to Batricio, seems quite happy that she is "still / a bride, but more: a royal one" (JSB, 88). Aminta's materialism and her pragmatism are further highlighted, when she meets with Isabella and Ana at the palace. Through her conversations with these two ladies, she realizes that Don Juan has tricked her. She says to Don Pedro: "I'm not leaving here without / at least a duke. I spent money to get here" (JSB, 118).

Aminta is therefore portrayed as the peasant who seeks upward social mobility, through marriage to a nobleman. She helps to reinforce Don Juan's point that the hypocrisy and materialism of the society transcend all social classes. He expresses his view of the country folk in this way:

"Simple country folk ... / but give them a chance, and they'll  
juck / your eyes out, just like the bourgeois. / This is no  
different from the court" (JSB, 91).

The character of Don Juan is immortal in the macho ethic that is still prevalent in many societies. He is also made immortal through his being portrayed as a force that criticizes the wrongs in the society. As mentioned at the outset, Walcott introduces many new characters in his play. Two such characters whose roles are directly related to the amplification of themes in this work are Jack and Rafael. As a member of Rafael's troupe, Jack is a young, cross-dressing singer. His first direct encounter with Don Juan comes in act I scene VII. Don Juan requests a song from Jack. However, in requesting the song he also refers to Jack as "that catamite there [who] tucks his soft candle through his thighs / and

simpers like an Infanta!” (JSB, 53). No doubt it is because of Don Juan’s open criticism of Jack’s sexuality that “[h]e’ll never sing again,” as he commits suicide (JSB, 129). Jack himself recalls: “Boy, girl, girl, boy. They called me Jack. / I was both in that other life, / till, in the square that day, your look / divided me, deep as this knife” (JSB, 143). Jack’s inclusion in the play is a critique of the bigotry in West Indian societies toward homosexuals. This adds to the crimes of which Juan is guilty. For in Walcott’s play it is not only Don Gonzalo that he kills. He is responsible for the deaths of Jack, Anfriso and Batricio. Such bloodguilt, along with his numerous other crimes, indeed makes it impossible for Don Juan to escape Divine Justice. Hence, through characters like Jack, Don Juan is seen not just like a rake that seduces women for the fun of it, but also as a destructive force within the society.

Rafael’s role is that of ‘an old actor’ who is the village elder. He has a troupe that includes the Ace of Death, the Queen of Hearts, the Joker and the boy named Jack. It is of interest that Rafael, at the beginning of the play is dressed in “a costume resembling the statue’s” (prologue), that is, the statue of Don Gonzalo. It is Rafael’s incantation, which brings Don Juan back to life. Rafael is also present at certain crucial times in the play. For instance, it is Rafael, with a ‘street crowd, and stickfighters’ who witnesses the duel between Don Juan and Don Gonzalo, which results in the death of the latter (JSB, 85). As Gonzalo’s body is borne away, Rafael and his troupe sing: “O Lord, let resurrection come from this stickfight! / ... We cannot believe that death is champion” (JSB, 86).

Rafael also appears in the concluding act of the play. Both he and Octavio seek vengeance on Don Juan: Octavio, because of Juan’s seduction of Isabella, and Rafael, because it is Juan’s attitude which

causes his troupe member, Jack, to commit suicide. Don Octavio, therefore, presses Rafael into service in his quest for vengeance. Rafael, dressed as the statue, is to play the role for which he is dressed, thus deceiving Don Juan into believing that it is really the dead Don Gonzalo with whom he is dining. Then, as Octavio says to Rafael, "... you just unnerve him. / I'll end it ..." (JSB, 131). However, the prophecy in the song of the Ace of Death seems to be fulfilled when, instead of Rafael, the statue itself turns up to dine with Don Juan and seeks its own vengeance by "pull[ing] him down to hell" (JSB, 148). But, Don Juan may yet reappear. According to the song sung later by the Ace of Death, "... if there's resurrection, Death is the Joker" (JSB, 150). Death does seem to be the Joker here, for Rafael and Don Octavio are both cheated out of their desire to have a hand in Don Juan's death. Also, the tables are reversed when Don Juan finds himself in the position of the *burlado* (the one who is laughed at). When confronted by the statue, he thinks that it is the costumed Rafael and pleads, "All right, Rafael. The joke is done ... / Let go!" (JSB, 145). However, his avenger is not whom he thinks it is, just as he often is not the person expected in the bedrooms of various women. Rafael concludes by expressing a thought similar to that expressed by Isabella in act II scene II:

How silent all his women were!  
Custom gave us the natural art  
to sing in couplets and depart.  
And custom gave us our roles  
of those who danced before us ... (JSB, 150)

On several counts, Walcott blends the past with the present and old with new worlds in this play. He is an adept assimilator. He has experience in bringing together threads of diverse cultures. He lives in a

social context that is remarkably similar to that of Don Juan's Spain. In fact, in *The Middle Passage*, V. S. Naipaul draws vivid parallels between places in the West Indies today and Spain in the 1500's:

Slavery, the mixed population, the absence of national pride and the closed colonial system have to a remarkable degree re-created the attitudes of the Spanish picaresque world. This was an ugly world, a jungle, where the picaresque hero starved unless he stole, was beaten almost to death when found out, and had therefore to get in his blows first whenever possible; where the weak were humiliated; where the powerful never appeared and were beyond reach; where no one was allowed any dignity and everyone had to impose himself. . . . (Naipaul: 1962, 73)

Tisbea in the pride of her beauty disdains all suitors of her own social level, and is thus susceptible to the approach of a gentleman. Aminta allows herself to be won over by Juan's argument that the love of the heart transcends a marriage vows. After long contemplation, Isabella comes to see her loss of maidenly innocence in a ray of light remarkably similar to the human freedom purchased by disobedience in Eden. Speaking to Ana and Aminta, she explains how chastity, self-denial, and conformity to the dictates of propriety are denials of life and freedom:

. . . He had taught us choice,  
he, the great Joker of Seville,  
whose mischief is simply a boy's  
has made us women, that is all.  
Listen Ana, don't you see  
that what he's shown the lot of us  
is that our lust for propriety

as wives, Is just as lecherous  
as his? Our protestations  
all marketable chastity?  
Such tireless dedication's  
almost holy! He set us free  
Ana, he taught us choice! (JSB, 114)

Such hard-earned detachment assuages the grief of Isabella, Ana, and to some extent Aminta, but it does not help Tisbea, who rashly commits suicide when Juan dashes her hopes of upward mobility through marriage. When Juan first comes upon Tisbea, in what he takes to be an uncorrupted, virgin land, he mistakenly thinks that a pre-Fall Eden. His reaction is bitter when she speaks of marriage, and he is bent on love.

A Wife! You calculating bitch  
God you beasts must love your cages!  
Marry a man Tisbea; I am a  
force, a principle, the rest  
are husbands, fathers, sons, I'm none  
of these. At that she shields her breast  
in shame. . . .  
I'm going back on the next ship.  
Old World, New World. They're all one.  
Dammit! I hate a wasted trip.  
Catalinion! Catalinion! (JSB, 48)

Behind Juan's back, his slave Catalinion has already articulated the plight that is symbolized by Tisbea's European pretensions. Discussing the meaning of freedom with two West Indians he has befriended, Catalinion points out the fatal delusion under which colonial subjects

operate. With the opportunity to begin a new life, they have settled for the borrowed role of 'free Spaniards.' Catalinion warns:

You're watching the rape of the New World, but you're  
too close to notice. . . .  
. . . You have a chance to remake  
things instead you accept them. That's disgraceful. (JSB, 6)

In his wake, Juan leaves many disappointed expectations and sometimes death, as with Tisbea and Ana's father Don Gonzalo, but one result of his trickery is the revelation of truth. Catalinion, Isabella, and through them the audience, come to a deeper understanding of Juan and their own humanity. This is their privilege and their reward - a reward, not for Juan Tenorio. One of the early songs in the drama carries the choral refrain "sans humanite." Therein lies Juan's tragic fate. As Juan remarks more than once, he is a principle, a force larger than life, therefore, like Ti-Jean's white planter-devil he cannot experience love, and he admits that he has no heart. His eternal siege on maidenhood and authority is fruitless for him though others benefit along the way. To compound the fatal irony, Juan the arch-liberator is himself a prisoner, trapped in the irreverent role he has always played. When the vengeful statue of Don Gonzalo summons him to hell, he is ready to go:

You see here a man born empty,  
with a heart as heavy as yours;  
there's no hell you could offer me,  
sir, that's equal to its horrors. (JSB, 144-145)

Yet as Juan's corpse is borne off by a stickfighter chorus to an insistent Calypso rhythm, death itself assumes a joker's role: "If there is resurrection, death is a joker, / sans humanité!" (JSB, 150). Juan's reward is to become immortal as a dream image.

When Don Gonzalo, the father of his third victim, attacks him, he disclaims even the most rudimentary kind of identity, the will to live: “Lives! You want mine! Nothing! A leaf / whirled in generations of leaves!” (JSB, 84). He does defend himself, and kill his assailant, but his defense is only a mirror-image of the attack. When Gonzalo comes back from the dead to take him to hell, Don Juan welcomes him:

You see here a man born empty,  
with a heart as heavy as yours;  
there’s no Hell you could offer me,  
sir, that’s equal to its horrors.

The joke, finally, is on the Joker. (JSB, 144-45)

As in the case of Don Juan himself, this characterization, or non characterization, accumulates meaning as the play proceeds. After he abandons Tisbea, she drowns herself. In the last scene, her ghost appears to him:

I am nobody; Tisbea, sir,  
forgotten as the face that looks  
long at itself in quiet water,  
water forgets. I am condemned  
to mirrors now that multiply  
my useless beauty to no end. (JSB, 143)

Like Don Juan himself, Tisbea is now a mere image, a being without internality. She can multiply herself in mirrors but will never bear children.

*The Joker of Seville* suggests the new beginning on the cultural level through its enthusiastic celebration of Trinidadian music, dance, and sports like stick-fighting, and articulates it on the personal level through

Isabella, who has been doubly victimized, once by Don Juan and once by a society that locks her up in a convent for losing her virginity to him:

My agony had made life new  
and endless as the unhindered  
sky when it is a seamless blue. (JSB, 113)

One might question whether Isabella's skies will remain so cloudless, just as one might wonder whether a whole society can find a new beginning in the experience of genocide and slavery. Walcott himself describes as simple the faith with which he began his work in theatre, that "If there was nothing, there was everything to be made" (DMMOP, 4).

Walcott's play *O Babylon!* is first produced by the Trinidad Theatre Workshop in March 1976 which shows Walcott setting his sights more and more determinedly on Broadway and the musical. The play tells a sad story of class injustice in the postcolonial Caribbean. The play shows a betrayal of the ordinary people in the name of development in collusion with foreign 'big business'. The scene is Jamaica in the mid-1960s and specifically a shanty settlement of squatters on 'captured' land near to Kingston harbour.

The principal character of the play is Rufus, who is a man of anger. He is a walking bomb. To touch him, it is a danger. His head is like a grenade. His body is a clenched fist. His nerves are like electric wire. Sufferer transforms him for the Rastafarian faith. This transformation is indicated by Aaron/ Rufus thus:

Then you opened the book, Sufferer,  
to Samuel and to me;  
and I bathed in the book.

I lie and cooled my wrath  
in the pasture and the brook.  
I turned to a man of peace,  
my head stay cool as stone,  
my fingers like palm trees,  
my life was a temple,  
my nerves like flowering leaves...(JSB,186)

Samuel, like Rufus, also converts himself for the Rastafarian faith. They both spread the message of the coming of Ras, the Emperor Haile Selassie, Lion of Judah. They also plan of his welcome. They organize the greeting march for the emperor. Samuel says:

Zion exact.

Me and Aaron carry the news of his coming,  
And the plans of his welcome to all those blue hills,  
to Gordon Town, Newcastle, Castleton,Pinnacle,  
till my feet can repeat all Jamaica by heart,  
and the higher I climb was the cleaner my soul. (JSB, 205)

This Rufus' initiation into the faith as Brother Aaron allows Walcott to expound some of the basic tenets and history of the Rastafarian movement. Rufus exchanges his weapon, the razor, for the woodcarver's chisel and begins to work on a carving of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Aaron says:

The chisel can't lose!

I beg you take care of it. But, from the time  
I-and-I start carving, you grow jealous of I work  
like it was a woman. That chisel was blest,  
it was changed like I change. But I suppose  
you jealous of that, too. You best find it, yah! (JSB, 207)

Aaron doesn't like revival hymn at his place. He thinks this hymn singing is a trap and a part of the Babylonian plot to keep them in spiritual chains. He also hates the white colour of skin. He thinks that white colour is of devils. He becomes angry with Priscilla, his common-law wife for hymn singing and her colour complexion. He warns her thus:

I warn you not to sing revival hymn in this place!  
And in front of my temple! I try to teach you  
that that hymn singing is a trap, is part  
of the Babylonian plot to keep we in chains,  
in spiritual chains. You stubborn red bitch!  
You refuse fe understand. And you know why?  
You have the wrong blood in you. You can't shed  
The whiteness of the devil. (JSB, 208)

Priscilla feels that though Aaron converted for Rastafarian faith, he has certain roots of a criminal nature which are very much evidence in his behavior. She wishes him to be true Rufus than converted Aaron for the real sense because he treats her gentler as a criminal than now. Priscilla describes his nature thus:

Lord, me wish you was Rufus for true! 'Cause  
God knows you treat me gentler as a criminal  
than now, when you "good"! You don't love God.  
You is vex with Him, so you raging with me.  
Me hate you, me hate your dyam Emporer!  
Him is a man, not a God. You leave me starving,  
then you come home with this? ( JSB, 209)

According to Aaron, Ras is the Emperor Haile Selassie, Lion of Judah. He does not allow anybody to blaspheme him. He scolds on Priscilla for loosing his chisel. He uses harsh words. He has the terrible

sense of temper. Sometimes he tries to control his anger and becomes a kind.

Aaron is arrested on the charge of sedition and arson. He is brought in the court. Those who are having criminal past are rejected to see Zion. Though Aaron converted himself to the Rastafarian faith, some roots of a criminal past are still existed in him. These roots are also witnessed in his wrath upon Priscilla. Sergeant Barker presents him in the court. He says:

Sedition and arson.

We have a woman witness to prove you was seen  
loitering around them warehouses last night.

You use this chisel to pick them locks

Like a burglar gemmy. The fire set from inside.

We know your methods from long, long time.

(To crowd)

You all take him among you and he do you this.

How you could change Rufus? It would take a miracle.

Me know you'd a' return to that fiery temper

like a dry drunk to his waters. Rage is your spirit.

Come home, the boys missing you. You identify this? (JSB, 241)

The apocalyptic dream of the destruction of 'Babylon' is twinned with a belief in the return to Africa, to the Promised Land of Ethiopia. The Rastafarian beliefs and lifestyle in themselves represent a bold change from the mores of the wider society.

The plot develops around two contending imminent developments. The first is the arrival of the Emperor Haile Selassie, whom the Rastafarians regard as God, on a state visit to the island. The second is the eviction of the Brethren and other residents of the settlement, the land having been acquired by foreign investors for the erection of a luxury

hotel. Ironically, the ‘developers’ operate under the name of the New Zion Construction Company. The New Zion Company prefers these squatters to move into their own business. They are foreign-based. They don’t want a bad press. But for the last six months bulldozers have been poised to demolish this place. Now, with Selassie coming, Dewes hopes that they’ll go. Over there’ll be the marina, the shopping arcade, the mini-golf links, the tennis courts, the Babylon Lounge, a first-class discotheque with the best local talent money can buy.

Dewes becomes sick and tired of these Brethren. He says that they just float around, rootless, without any law. They refuse to conform every gesture of progress is called Babylonian and is stubbornly resisted, in the extreme. Their leaders are two of Kingston’s most renowned criminals, Rufus Johnson and Samuel Hart. They don’t believe in money. They interpret God’s word to their convenience. They babble on about Babylon, they lie on the Lion of Judah, and the Abyssinia they want is an abyss of sloth.

Magistrate hears all the witnesses for the prosecution. He looks the record of Rufus/ Aaron. He has faithful number of previous convictions. He has committed crimes such as assault, three armed robberies, drug trafficking, sedition and arson.

Aaron tries to change himself, but the Babylon never believes him and his brother Ras Samuel. He thanks, Mr. Goldstein deep for his efforts and for bringing once in life. He acts as per the prophecy and instruction of Sufferer. The prophecy is:

The kings of the earth, when they see her burning,  
shall cry woe to Babylon! That mighty city! (JSB, 252)

Aaron acts as per this prophecy. Now he thinks that this is a sin. At last he confesses his guilt of committing the crime of arson. He says:

Who can say, sar?

[...]

Sufferer, I sorry.

Priscilla, me went walking late last night,  
thinking how our conversion was of no use.

I was rage at what them do, Samuel.

I wept that I name was not among the chosen,

And me burn down the New Zion Construction Company. (JSB,  
253)

The Brethren excitedly expect the Emperor's visit to facilitate or even ensure their glorious return to Africa. At the same time, there is the question of how to resist the forces of divisive, destructive assault on the settlement and their further deprivation. In both matters, the unscrupulous, self-serving politician plays a crucial, cynical hand. Deacon Doxy, a politician gets there once every year. He seems to be very busy man. He plays the important role in calling upon Emperor Selassie to bring Rastafarians to the holy land of Ethiopia. He says:

Today I'm a sad and a happy man. Listen.

As you all know, Emperor Selassie,

Lion of Judah and King of Kings,

the Living Jah, is coming next week.

In parliament through my special pleading,

and because I hold your interest at heart,

he's agreed to accept a quota of Rastafari

into Holy Ethiopia, after his return!

(Cheering)

Now, your own prophet here, Mr. Percival Jones,  
Submitted a list which I hold in my hand. (JSB, 220)

According to Deacon Doxy, the quota to Ethiopia is three hundred souls. Twenty souls from here will be selected. No man over sixty or with a criminal past is allowed to go there. He says:

You're costing the company thousands of dollars,  
don't stand in the way of your country's progress.  
There could be violence. Don't you understand?

(Music)

(Sings)

We little nations, we  
Live in the shadow of  
the towers of Babylon, we  
have no power, we're  
a flower in the shadow of  
a mighty banyan tree,  
we who were pastoral  
are ruled by machines ... (JSB, 222)

The plot is so managed that Aaron, angered at being excluded, because of his criminal record, from the three hundred to be chosen for the return, reverts to violence and sets fire to the warehouses of the New Zion Construction Company. The exploitative neo-colonial interests of the capitalists win out. Aaron is jailed for three months. The settlement is destroyed, and the Brethren sadly dispersed. There is a glimmer of renewal when Aaron and his common-law wife, Priscilla, decide to go to Pinnacle, a mountain-top retreat and headquarters of the movement, 'to build again' (JSB, 271).

The Rastafarians in the play provide a compelling theatrical experience, with their colourful costumes, their distinctive rituals and mythology, their own distinctive Jamaican-African based music, and the strong Rastafarian influence on Jamaican popular music of the second half of the twentieth century. There is no dearth of action, some of it explosive, as in the opening scene of the ‘drive-by’ shooting of Rufus by the Dreadlocks on their motorcycles or the later ‘war dance’. There is also some of the Rastafarian rhetoric portending Jah’s destruction of Babylon.

It is unlikely that any real-life Rastafarian, let alone a leader, however economically deprived, would construct himself as ‘Sufferer.’ Rude Bwoy, the brash, rising pop star from the community, is essentially a contrivance to direct sympathy towards the Rastafarians. The fact that the protagonist is an ex-criminal recently converted leaves him, for the convenience of the plot, too susceptible to relapse. The oppressors of the Rastafarians, represented by Deacon Doxy (the politician), Dewes (the town planner) and Mrs Powers (Chairwoman of the Rastafarian Rehabilitation Committee) are crass caricatures of prejudice and materialistic values.

There is a problem, too, in imagining Walcott who is so committed to a locally rooted, West Indian identity, and who wrote so sharply, in ‘*What the Twilight Says*’, about what he saw as futile nostalgia for an ‘African pastoral’, now imagining himself into this aspect of the Rastafarian agenda. Early in the play, Aaron, in the process of his conversion, sings an eloquent song describing his dream-vision of black horsemen, ‘the Knights of Bornu’:

I stood on the sand, I saw  
Black horsemen galloping toward me.

They were all white like the waves  
And turbanned too, like the breakers,  
their flags thinning away into spume;  
white, white were their snorting horses.  
I saw them. It was no dream.  
They rode through me,  
they came from my home,  
as fresh as the waves and older than the sea. (JSB, 166)

Rider and breaker, one cry!  
I have seen them at a ceremony  
of lances, white-robed knights,  
I forget the names of our tribes ...  
They are coming! I trembled,  
To claim their brothers,  
To bring them home,  
Thundering round the edge  
of the headland, exploding from sight!  
Spears shoot on the edge  
of the wave every moonlit night-  
The horsemen will keep their pledge,  
the Knights of Bornu. (JSB, 167)

Walcott reproduces this song, lyrical and yet epic in its reach, as a separate poem in its own right in *Sea Grapes*, entitling it '*The Dream*.'

The play ends with Aaron and the Brethren chanting themselves into '[t]heir vision of [a] glorious Zion', perhaps more hope than expectation: 'Zion a' come someday' (JSB, 275).

Rastafarianism is a Black-nationalist religious movement, founded in Jamaica. It declares that the late emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, is the returned messiah, Jesus Christ that God is Black, and that like the children of Israel, all people of African origin in Jamaica and throughout the Americas, live in imposed exile. Repatriation to the ancestral home will bring redemption and freedom from the system of White oppression, which Rastafari identify as “Babylon”. The Chorus of the play sings:

Only Jah, Jah, Jah,  
Only Jah can make  
Jamaica, Jamaica;  
Then Babylon will break. (JSB, 188)

Rastafarianism in a popular imagination is associated with Jamaica, reggae music, dreadlocks, and the smoking of ganja. These internationally recognized features, however, are only the most publicized and sometimes misunderstood and misrepresented aspects of a set of deeply held spiritual beliefs and attitudes. Rastafarianism is a religion that emerged in Jamaica during the 1930s and that took its inspiration from the Old Testament of the Bible. It was the Black Nationalist teachings of the Jamaican-born Marcus Garvey (1887–1940) that gave biblical prophecies a powerful and emotive appeal. Garvey’s pan-Africanist message galvanized the social and political aspirations of the impoverished working-class African peoples of the island during the 1920s and 1930s through his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Garvey believed that integrating black people into white society was useless and that instead they should focus on restoring their dignity by abandoning the white man’s world and returning to Africa. He said:

“If Europe is for Europeans, then Africa is for the black people of the world,” (Bilby: 1982, 33-34)

Today, there are over one million Rastafarians worldwide, mainly still of Afro-Caribbean descent. There are several essential features and tenets of Rastafarianism, and like all aspects of the religion, language and biblical references play a vital role.

Other linguistic characteristics of the faith include the expression ‘I and I’ used instead of ‘we’ or ‘you and I,’ which represents the concept of the oneness of two people and the presence of God and his love for everyone. Aaron says:

I-and-I shall be poor,  
but, in I-and-I pride,  
I-and-I rich with more  
revelation inside  
than who by the law  
of Babylon abide,  
O Babylon! (JSB, 224)

The majority of Rastas are highly visible owing to their matted hair, or dreadlocks, which they hold to be sacred. They sometimes cover their hair under woolen caps colored red, gold, and green (representing blood, gold, and land). The holiness of their locks is expressed thus by Chorus of the play:

My locks are holy,  
they were anointed  
in the everlasting name of Ras.(JSB, 185)

They regard the herb ganja as a special gift of God first found on the grave of King Solomon and smoke it as part of their sacred ritual discussion, using a hookah, or ‘chalice.’ Ganja smoking is an important part of Rastafarianism for many and may have been influenced by the cannabis-smoking mystics of India. Rastas consider that it helps

meditation and that its use is sanctioned in the Bible where they identify it with the term 'herb' in Genesis 3:18: "Thou shalt eat the herb of the field"; and in Exodus 10:12: "Eat every herb of the land." Some features of Rasta belief have been accepted in Western societies as part of the faith. Ganja smoking is not recognized and remains as illegal for Rastas as for everyone else. At the beginning of the play there is the reference to Ganja smoking when Dolly says:

Me'd just finish jivin',  
Came fe smoke a five, when  
I catch Rude Bwoy face  
By my cigarette flame.  
Then I saw four gunmen  
shout: "where's the ganja, Rudy?"  
Rude Bwoy screamed: "God, help me!"  
That's when Rufus came. (JSB, 160)

Dreadlocks also are a feature of the faithful though not universal. Rastas find biblical support for this hairstyle in Leviticus 21:15: "They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard..." However, dreadlocks also serve to emphasize the distinctive kinky hair of Africans in contrast to the straight hair of Caucasians and so make a powerful visual statement of difference. The holiness of locks is reflected through the song of Rastafari:

My locks are holy,  
they were anointed  
in the everlasting name of Ras,  
strong as the lowly  
vines, like the pointed  
spears of the armies of the grass.

This vow I've taken  
of separation,  
no razor shall come 'pon this head ...(JSB, 169)

Rastafarianism's sacred colors are red (for the blood of martyrs), green (for Zion's abundant vegetation) and gold (for the wealth of Africa). Along with these emblematic colors, the Rasta symbol of the lion stands for the male principle and Haile Selassie in his manifestation as Jah (the Lion of Judah). Sufferer hopes that Aaron will turn razor into a chisel to carve. The true rasta is given the cap with three sacred colours of Holy Ethiopia. Here Sufferer orders to give the cap to Aaron as he converts himself for the Rastafarian faith. He teaches him what these colours say:

That razor shall be turned to a chisel, so  
follow your true calling, which is to carve.  
Give him the chisel, and the cap with three colours  
of Holy Ethiopia; anoint his stubble  
like the beard of Ras Asron, which is now his name;  
and in the name of the twelve tribes,  
I-and-I make this vow, that when we see Zion,  
this man, once a criminal, shall stand by I side,  
first the oil embalms his locks,  
by the prophecy of Ezekiel5... (JSB, 168&169)

#### RASTAFARI

Green for the pastures of Africa,  
yellow for the gold of that country,  
red for the church triumphant,  
red for the church triumphant! (JSB, 169)

Out of that crisis came a study by a team of a university scholar and an unofficial government mission to examine the possibility of migrations to several African countries. Both activities contributed to a more positive evaluation of the Rastafari. A state visit by Emperor Haile Selassie himself in 1966 also served to enhance the legitimacy of the movement. Sufferer suggests Mrs. Small to dance when Emperor or Jah come to Jamaica. Rude Bwoy also want to celebrate his welcoming. He composes a welcome song of this eve. He visualizes his welcoming thus:

To me that emblem of Marcus Garvey  
Is a personal message to Rude Bwoy Dawson:  
Be a Big Black Reggae Star. Then them respect you.  
Hold on, Brethren. I have a vision!

(Music)

(Sings)

I see the banners and the drums  
And the Brethren waving palms,  
Babies in their mothers' arms,  
In the ghettos and the slums,  
When the lickle Emperor comes  
to we country,  
to we country.  
Se-la-ssie a' come,  
Se-la-ssie a' come. (JSB,182)

By the end of the 1960s, nearly all the major famous artists were Dreadlocks, and by 1975, the majority of urban youths and a rising section of the middle classes were either followers or sympathizers. During this period, reggae artists became, through their recordings and tours, the main preachers of the Rastafari movement in other sections of

the Caribbean and Europe, especially the United Kingdom, where the cult provided the descendants of immigrants from the Caribbean with a sense of Black identity.

Rastafarians avoid involvement in local politics, although since the mid-1960s there have been isolated examples of individual Rastafarians who have attempted to enlist a Rastafari vote in Jamaica, the better, so they argue, to bring about repatriation. On a number of Caribbean islands, however, Rastafarians have recognized with political movements against the founded political order. Rastafarians are proud of the tradition of resistance that has served the rise and spread of their movement. In their view, resistance is the continuation of struggles against slavery. One of the founders, Leonard Howell, was imprisoned for preaching sedition; others were imprisoned for defiance of colonial authority.

Rastafarians avoid eating salt, pork, and processed foods, a practice called *ital*, and many exclude all meats and fish from their diet. In the reasoning, small groups gather to take part in casual discussions of matters of faith, and the ceremonial smoking of the sacred herb. Participants sit in a circle, uncover their heads, pray before the chalice is lit and passed in a clockwise direction. The *binghi* is a celebration of a liturgical event that lasts several days. It involves reasoning by day and drumming, music, feasting, singing, ganja smoking and dancing by night. *Binghis* are held to commemorate the coronation of Haile Selassie, Ethiopian Christmas, Haile Selassie's birthday, and Haile Selassie's state visit to Jamaica. Special events in the Rasta calendar include 6 January - Haile Selassie's ceremonial birthday, 21 April - the anniversary of Selassie's 1966 visit to Jamaica, 23 July - Haile Selassie's actual birthday, 17 August - Marcus Garvey's birthday, and 2 November - the coronation of Haile Selassie as emperor of Ethiopia.

Today, Rastafarianism is not a highly organized religion though most belong to the so-called House of Dreads (Nyabinghi) and are divided into two main groups—the Bobos and the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Increasingly, Rastafarianism is moving away from its original form and becoming secularized. Women are playing a more vocal role and arguing against the faith's original male-dominated ethos. Rasta colors are now a fashion statement rather than a symbolic code of belief, and dreadlocks similarly no longer identify only a true believer.

The play represents the doctrine of Ethiopianism. Closely related to the folk religious ethos but often articulated in more secular and intellectual terms is the tradition of Ethiopianism widely subscribed to in the African diaspora. In the broadest sense, Ethiopianism manifested itself in the practice of people in the African diaspora of identifying themselves with Ethiopia, which was sometimes thought of as interchangeable with Africa. Black churches, secret societies, and mutual aids societies often included Ethiopia in their names to express such identification. Part of this identification grew out of the recognition of Ethiopia as an ancient, highly developed civilization that was forged by Africans. Ethiopianism thus posited a future restoration of Ethiopia and a future liberation of all those identified with it.

The young radical Rastas were also responsible for the development of an in-group dialect called 'dread talk,' 'Rasta talk,' or 'I-ance.' Dread talk emerged spontaneously in 'reasoning' sessions, dialogical conversations undertaken in conjunction with ganja smoking. During these sessions, Rastas explore their understanding of self and the world around them. Dread talk became a means of distinguishing followers from those who used the oppressive language of Babylon and the popular dialect that showed they had no consciousness of their self-

worth. The Jamaican scholar Velma Pollard identifies three processes at work in dread talk. The first constitutes an assignment of new meanings to well-known words. For example, ‘chant’ takes on the meaning ‘to discuss,’ mainly religious issues; ‘sight’ (siit) comes to mean ‘I agree or understand what is said’; and ‘sound’ (sounz) means ‘words or powerful truths.’ In the second process, Rastas reject certain syllables in words and replace them with syllables they deem more appropriate to the meaning of the words. In this case, the new sounds of the words carry the weight of their meanings. Thus, the word ‘understand’ becomes ‘overstan,’ ‘oppress’ becomes ‘downpress,’ and ‘dedicate’ becomes ‘livicate.’ The third process involves the removal of the initial syllable of a word and replacing it with the letter I. In this process, ‘elected’ become ‘ilected’, ‘brethren’ becomes ‘idren,’ and ‘natural’ or ‘vital’ become ‘ital.’(Pollard: 1994, 3-10) These processes not only indicate the emerging Rastafarian consciousness but constitute a rejection of standard English as corrupt in its very linguistic forms. Rude Bwoy states the nature of the Rasta language thus:

Shh! Not so loud, Melanie. Now follow I.

I say “ follow I” because in Rasta language

There is no accusative case. Dem feel no guilty.

You dig I Melanie? (JSB, 216)

Ital is dread talk for ‘natural’ and ‘vital’ and can even be understood as ‘organic.’ For the radical Rastas, this meant a commitment to a diet (or ‘livet’) of natural foods. Drawing on the Levitical laws of the ancient Israelites, they abandon the eating of pork, shellfish, fishes without scales, and other food proscribed in those laws. Processed foods, especially those in cans, were also rejected as ‘deaders’. The use of refined salt was also forbidden. Some went so far as to become strict

vegetarians, eating only grains, fruits, ground provisions, and vegetables. These all beliefs and customs of Rastafarians are expressed in the dialogue of Sufferer:

That is I-and-I vision of the Great Return,  
Which Jah sent to you. For tongues of fire  
can dance on the hair of the least unknown,  
and that crooked man who Babylon bend  
Jah shall make straight. You shall not eat salt,  
the flesh of the sow, and the sow's litter  
shall to you be obscene; the woman, your sister,  
shall always obey you. You shall believe  
that the Emperor Selessie, Jah Rastafari,  
Lion of Judah and King of Kings, is the one God. (JSB, 167)

Their conviction was that health and vitality were ensured through natural living. This led to the belief in 'everliving life' – that is, the belief that an ital lifestyle, including the use of healing herbs, would ensure that Rastas would live forever.

HYBF and I-gelic House made Rastafari into a virtual cult of a black male redemption that banished women to the margins of the movement. Women were not allowed to join circles of men as they shared in the 'chalice' and could not participate in the accompanying 'reasoning.' Elaborating a patriarchy, these brethren elevated themselves to the status of 'kingmen,' and their women were placed in the subordinate status of queens or dawtas (daughters), who could come to the consciousness of Rastafari only through the sponsorships of their kings. Women were considered not only weak, like the first biblical woman, Eve, but also polluting, particularly during menstruation. For this reason, some Rastas had only minimal dealing with women, in general -

not even allowing them to prepare food and certainly not dealing with them during their menstrual periods. Some became the ultimate ascetics by adopting a celibate lifestyle.

The term 'Babylon' was introduced to designate the oppressive state of affairs in Jamaica in particular and the West, in general. Jamaica was regarded as Babylon because Africans were taken from their ancestral homeland and deposited there against their will and because its social institutions were built on the exploitation of the masses of Afro-Jamaicans even as they were excluded from whatever bounty the society had to offer. Thus, their situation had parallels to the conditions of the ancient Israelites during their exile in Babylonia. The word 'babylan' (Babylon) came to designate the oppressors and their frontline agents, the police. Dolly thinks that Rastafarians are the victims of Babylonian. They are trapped by the system. Dolly criticizes the Babylonian manner of interpreting Bible as per their convenience:

Rasta smarter than me.  
Dem hah want work, so dem call work "Babylon."  
Dem twist up de Bible to dem convenience  
Like was jackass-rope. Ganja illegal,  
But fe dem, dear, is Genesis: "The Tree Of Life,  
For the healing of nations: "Me sorry you and Rufus  
Have fe hide behind that smokescreen.  
And Samuel, him all night? (JSB,195)

Aaron thinks that Babylonians are full of corruption and greed for money. He also thinks that Mammon is the root in a Babylon. Mammon is a mythical figure used here which stand for the personification of riches and greed in the form of a false god. He says:

It don't go so, Reverend. No. Is:  
(sings)  
An eye for an eye,  
And a tooth for a tooth,  
a lie for a lie,  
till it sound like truth,  
but I-and-I know that Mammon is the root  
in a- Babylon! (JSB, 223)

The character of Elijah also states the typical manner of Babylonians. He rejects the progress and project of Babylonian because Mr. Mammon is their architect. They do not have self respect in themselves. He says:

I-and-I shall reject  
Progress and project  
as long as Mr. Mammon is them architect.  
Every man for himself  
with no self-respect  
is a-Babylon! (JSB, 224)

The general societal reaction to these militants or Rastafarians was profoundly negative. Their unkempt hair, their ragged clothes and their unintelligible speech were all evidence of mental deterioration in the eyes of many. They were considered by some to be lunatics. Their disregard for the laws against ganja cultivation and use and their constant revolt against the government were considered indicative of their criminal disposition, and criminality came to be considered an essential trait of Rastafari among many members of society. This very manner of criminality and rootlessness of Rastafarians is well described by Dewes thus:

In one minute. You'll see why.  
Sir, I'm sick and tired of these Brethren, sir!  
They just float around, rootless,  
Without any law. They refuse to conform;  
every gesture of progress is called Babylonian  
and is stubbornly resisted, in the extreme. (JSB, 246)

Myth and history have gone hand in hand in Walcott's dramatic works. Walcott was already developing his own style with the mythic folk play. In his plays, he exploited the tradition of mythic folk play. As his career has progressed, he has never entirely abandoned the history play. His most recent play, *The Ghost Dance*, integrates the two dimensions of history and myth to an unprecedented degree. Walcott has gone beyond Brecht in understanding the role of myth in society and its radical potential in art.

*The Ghost Dance* commemorates a decisively tragic chapter in the history of the Native American, when Sitting Bull, the Sioux chief, sought to gather the tribes against the final campaign of the United States government to defeat them and take their land. Sitting Bull's ambition was condemned. He was assassinated by members of his own tribe acting as government police. Soon after that his followers were massacred at Wounded Knee creek, and the tribes dispersed onto reservations. Sitting Bull had sought to assemble the tribes around the messianic Ghost Dance movement. This religious movement rested on a belief that the white man would disappear after a violent upheaval of nature and that the dead Native American ancestors would return to restore the dying traditions. The centerpiece of the movement was the ritual of the Ghost Dance itself. The followers also believed in the magical power of a bullet-proof 'ghost shirt'.

These events are only indirectly the subject-matter of the play's action. The protagonist is a white woman, Catherine Weldon, an historical figure, and the action concerns her attempt to help Sitting Bull and the Native Americans at a time when Sitting Bull had come to reject her friendship. The final rift came when Catherine sought to divert Sitting Bull from encouraging the Ghost Dance movement towards confrontation with the US army. She thought, correctly, that the army, frightened by the apparent madness of the Dance, and the amalgamation of the tribes, would only hasten to put them down once and for all.

Walcott is drawn to the dispossessed of the United States in order that he may restore their stories. His play *The Ghost Dance* is based on historical events of the frontier and through these events Walcott addresses the circumstances of those people whose history was rendered disposable by the expanding United States during the nineteenth century. With a brief snap-shot of the play, Walcott re-imagines the frontier narrative from his own Caribbean perspective.

*The Ghost Dance* is set in the Dakotas and considers the plight of the Lakota Indians in general and, specifically, the final days of Sitting Bull. The history that Walcott exposes in the play has been subject to much needed revision by historians of the period. Popular culture in the form of books, and later, film and television, perpetuated the myth of the plucky immigrant fighting valiantly against savages to create civilisation, so that not only did the population of the United States believe it, but the rest of the world did too.

Not until the publication of *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1970) was any serious revision encouraged by the mainstream that the American Indians as an indigenous race of people had a right to live where they were born or where they had conquered. (Brown: 1970) In the

book, Dee Brown, unusually for the time, tells the story of the 'opening of the west' from the point of view of the native American population, ending with the Massacre at Wounded Knee where, in a state of panic, the United States Army unleashed hysterical gunfire on, for the most part, unarmed Indians including women and children. However, the period of westward expansion was a tough and challenging time for the invading settlers as well as the indigenous people. In *The Ghost Dance*, by deepening and complicating the relationships between the fictional manifestations of the real characters, Walcott attempts an alternative perspective of the divergent historiographies and the people involved.

The similarities with Caribbean slaves integrating remnants of West African Obeah with the Christianity of their captors cannot have been lost on Walcott. The Indians had appropriated, for their own use, the Christian story, and in the midst of impending disaster were able to muster sufficient faith in themselves, in the form of spiritual endeavor, to attempt a resistance of white men's dominion.

In spite of Sitting Bull's arrest and death, Walcott concludes the play on a note of magical optimism. The Indians appear on their stage horses, galloping through the scrim towards the audience, who believe they are witnessing the promised resurrection, allowing for the possibility that Wovoka was right all along and the Ghost Dance had worked its magic.

In *The Ghost Dance*, by creating a forum for the characters' real and fictional selves to speak, Walcott has suffused the received historical narrative with invented possibilities. Walcott's telling of the stories surrounding Sitting Bull's death, without recourse to judgement, examines the events neither as simply white men's heroics in the face of unremitting hardships, nor as the history of the American Indians'

genocide. The reader is directed not to a precise conclusion, but rather is exposed to Walcott's ambivalent version of frontier history.

Thus, Walcott in all the select plays tries to depict the Caribbean culture and folklore in the light of ritual practices, magic, beliefs, faith in God, mode of performance of the play, the various elements of Calypso and Carnival festival and African storytelling tradition which is still evident in the region.