

CONTRAPUNTAL TEXTURES : 'OTHELLO' AS POSTCOLONIAL  
PALIMPSEST

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MAURICE VINCENT BENNELL

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## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1. A Theoretical Point of Departure</b>	1
<b>2. Contrapuntal Textures: 'Othello' as Postcolonial Palimpsest</b>	11
<b>2.1. <i>The Preparatory 'Voyage Out' of British Imperialism as reflected in Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus and Othello</i></b>	11
2.1.1. The Socio-Political background to Renaissance England	11
2.1.2. Knowledge and Desire as a Site of Power: Colonizing the Mind	13
2.1.3. The Politics of Alterity	21
2.1.4. Religion and the Other	30
<b>2.2. <i>The 'Voyage In' of Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North</i></b>	35
2.2.1. Knowledge and Desire as a Site of Power: Decolonizing the Mind	36
2.2.2. The Politics of Alterity: Dismantling the Binary Master/Slave	42
2.2.3. Religion and the 'other': Tolerance	50
<b>3. Keri Hulme's Novel <i>The Bone People</i> : A Question of Hybridity</b>	54
<b>3.1. <i>The Socio-Political Background of Aotearoa/New Zealand</i></b>	54
<b>3.2. <i>Knowledge and Desire as a Site of Ambivalence and Reciprocation</i></b>	56
<b>3.3. <i>A Politics of Integration</i></b>	63
3.3.1. The Myth of Type Placed Under Erasure	63
3.3.2. Race: A Question of Identity	66
<b>3.4. <i>The Reconciliatory Function of Religion in The Bone People</i></b>	75
<b>4. A Drawing Together of Parts</b>	83
Bibliography	88

## 1. A Theoretical Point of Departure

As 'contrapuntal textures' is the seminal term upon which the entire dissertation will be constructed it is necessary to define exactly what this term means and how it will be applied to the literary texts to be analysed. Apel defines 'counterpoint' in the following way:

The term, derived from 'punctus contra punctum' i.e. 'note against note' or, by extension 'melody against melody' which denotes music consisting of two or more melodic lines that sound simultaneously ... The individual melodies or strands of a contrapuntal composition constitute the horizontal element or its texture, while the intervals occurring between them represent the vertical element. These two elements, distinct yet inseparable, represent a generating or controlling force respectively. (1970:208)

This interplay between the horizontal line (melody) and the vertical blending of sounds (harmony) is similar to that of a woven fabric where the melody functions as the woof and the harmony as the warp. In the postcolonial field Said has borrowed this idea of 'contrapuntal textures' from music, using it as a metaphor to imply "a set of intertwined and overlapping histories," (1993:18) reflected in the 'voyage in' of the colonised, which was aimed at dismantling the cultural and political hegemony of the West's colonising 'voyage out'. In this study I shall try to show how in the postcolonial context

the various themes play off one another ... Yet in the resultant polyphony there is concert and order, an organised interplay that derives from the themes, not from the rigorous melodic line or formal principles outside the work. (Said, 1993:51)

This idea of a text as an overlay of diverse social 'voices', is reflected in Bakhtin's concept of 'heteroglossia' which he defines as

the base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance. It is that which insures the primacy of context over text. At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions - social, historical, meteorological, physiological - that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions; all utterances are heteroglot in that they are functions of a matrix of forces practically impossible to recoup, and therefore impossible to resolve. (Bakhtin 1990:428)

The obvious implication of this is that the meanings of words 'uttered' or written change within their different historical contexts. Applied to the subject matter of this dissertation this would imply that in the literary texts to be analysed there is a constant interplay between the diverse social, political, historical and cultural voices which have shaped postcolonial texts.

This idea of 'contrapuntal textures' will thus serve as a methodological point of departure where the interaction of the three subtexts - knowledge and desire as a site of power, the politics of

alterity, and religion and the 'other' - will be analysed in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello*, Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* and Keri Hulme's *The Bone People*.

To illustrate how these musical 'contrapuntal textures' function metaphorically in a literary text, a brief recourse will be made to Johann Sebastian Bach's 'Fugue No 5 in D Major' from *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier* where the idea of a textual overlay of subtexts is captured in the opening bars. The musical subject, played on its own, is announced by the tenor voice in bars 1 to 2<sup>3</sup>. The subject is then imitated by the alto voice in bars 2 to 4, while a counterpoint based on material taken from the subject is sounded against this imitation of the subject by the tenor voice, as follows:

#### Music Example 1

J.S.Bach 'Fugue No. 5 in D Major' from *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*, book 2, bars 1 - 4



This superimposition of the imitation of the subject upon the counterpoint in bars 2<sup>3</sup> to 4<sup>1</sup> depicts the idea of 'contrapuntal textures', where two horizontal melodic lines overlap, while the resultant moments of vertical sound clusters form the harmonic base on which these melodic lines rest. Thus the horizontal lines which function as the metaphorical colonial voices, and the vertical moments which reflect their metaphorical social resonance, are both inseparable and mutually inclusive.

In a postcolonial context these two voices (i.e. the subject and its counterpoint) will be used as a metaphor for the social overlay of the voices of the coloniser and the colonized, while the resultant harmony generated by these voices will be regarded as the metaphorical society in which the subject is nurtured so as to gain entry into society's symbolic discourse. Thus a study of the use of language and how it is has shaped the coloniser's and colonized's world will be made with reference to the literary works to be analysed.

An attempt will also be made to show how Bach's fugue can be used as a metaphor to illustrate the process of subject construction in the postcolonial context from the theoretical perspectives of Lacan, Fanon, Said and Bhabha.

The idea contained in the Bachian imitation of the subject reflects Lacan's idea of the split-subject where identity is only gained by entrance into the symbolic realm of language, which in this instance is the metaphorical counterpoint. This idea was subsequently taken up by Fanon in his *Black Skin, White Masks*, where in the colonial process white identity is superimposed on the 'black' colonized. While the idea of 'contrapuntal textures' is central to Said's theoretical stance, and is used to depict the interaction of what he terms the West's colonial 'voyage out' and the resultant 'voyage in' of the Third World, from the theoretical perspective of Homi Bhabha the harmonic blending of these divergent voices reflects his idea of hybridity, where culture-as-sign, as an index of identity, undergoes a transformation, absorbing culture signifiers of diverse nations, finally emerging in a hybrid state which in turn assumes a translational significance. This transformation of diverse cultural signs functions in a similar manner to the way in which contemporary postcolonial politicians are attempting to marry diverse cultural signs in the South African 'Reconstruction and Development Programme', in an attempt to create a free and democratic nation with a new identity.

By exploring the metaphor of subject construction in Bach's fugue, an attempt will be made to show how 'Othello' as subject of the West has been created through a gradual process of palimpsestic selection and exclusion over the centuries. In this context I shall attempt to show how 'colour as sign' of culture, race and power has played a major role in the predominantly 'white' West's striving for power and authority, while simultaneously confining the 'black' Third World to the margins of inferiority.

Language, within its historical context, is central to subject formation. In the works to be dealt with I shall suggest that the 'traces' of meaning attached to particular signifiers in language, have, over the centuries, shaped the national collective consciousness. These 'traces', deeply

embedded in the collective consciousness, have in turn shaped the ideological viewpoints of various nations. Nowhere is this better reflected than in the western words 'black' and 'white' which have played so important a role in the attitudes towards the black 'Othello' figure, which has been confined to the margins of alterity through the 'traces' of these words.

In exploring the subtext of 'knowledge and desire as a site of power' I shall try to show how in the West's desire to dominate the Third World, western discourse has achieved these ends by a process of selection and exclusion over the centuries. This process which plays so important a role in shaping identity and ideological differences between the West and Third World, is captured by the positive meanings which have been attached to the word 'white', while negative meanings have been ascribed to the word 'black'. The meanings which have been associated with these words have thus been manipulated by the West in its struggle for power, which, as Young points out, is reflected in Foucault's claims that

discursive practices are characterised by 'a delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge, and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories' ... It is this way that we see how discursive rules are linked to the exercise of power; how the forms of discourse are both constituted by, and ensure the reproduction of, the social system, through forms of selection, exclusion and domination. 'In every society,' Foucault writes, 'the reproduction of discourse is controlled, organised, redistributed, by a certain number of procedure whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its materiality.' (1981:48-9)

A practical example of these processes is captured in the phrase 'the white house', which is the seat of political authority in the United States of America.

This Foucaultian idea of discursive empowerment is developed and supported by Lacan's claim that the subject's conflicting desires and lack are only capable of being expressed through entry into the symbolic realm of language. From a postcolonial perspective the motivating force behind the West as Subject is harboured and nurtured by a western 'unconsciousness', which through the agency of language has been the 'directing force of the psychical apparatus.' (Lemaire, 1977:161) For Lacan the fetish of the imaginary is reflected as a corresponding lack in reality, a lack which

precedes the desire expressed in a signifier ... [and] implies the idea of the lived drama of an irreversible incompleteness ... In a sense, it subsumes all the radical anxiety in man; the anxiety which results from his human

condition. (Lemaire, 1977:162)

In a postcolonial context desire can be seen as functioning as a lack for both the coloniser and the colonized. While for the coloniser this lack is precipitated by his own specular image and thus functions as a strategy for survival of identity, for the colonised the lack is precipitated by the superimposition of the coloniser's signified upon the colonized's signifier.

While this inversion of roles is taken up by Fanon who claims that "It is always in relation to the Other that colonial desire is articulated." (Fanon, 1991:xv), in Bhabha there is a paradigmatic shift where he advocates that to escape these binaries, cultural differences should be read as

existing in-between each other. If they make claims to their radical singularity or separatism, they do so at the peril of their historical destiny to change, transform, solidarize. Claims to identity must never be nominative or normative. (Bhabha, 1992:55)

Finally Spivak warns that the West's desire to speak on behalf of the colonised is "to ignore [the West's] production by the imperialist project." (Spivak, 1988:66) In other words, the West by superimposing its signifieds on the Third World as 'other', silences the voice of the Third World by attempting to speak on its behalf. Thus it would appear that at the very heart of 'white writing' there is a latent desire to empower the white voice and grant it total authority, at the expense of the 'black' voice.

It is not surprising therefore that the Third World has also begun to use the power of the word in its attempt to decolonize the mind, taking cognisance of the fact that in the colonisation process "language was the means of spiritual subjugation." (Ngugi, 1989:9), a process which Foucault anticipates in his observation that

We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point of an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. (Foucault, 1970:50-51)

In the course of the dissertation recourse will be made to a few musical examples, so as to develop the seminal idea of the concept 'contrapuntal textures' contained in the Bach *Fugue in D Major*; these examples will, I hope, illustrate how the postcolonial textures proposed by Said of a colonial 'voyage out' and the resultant 'voyage in' of the colonised function. While the section

dealing with “ ‘Othello’ as a postcolonial palimpsest” illustrates how the preparatory western (northern) ‘voyage out’ is played off against the resultant Sudanese (southern) ‘voyage in’, in Hulme’s novel these diverse ‘voyages’ are drawn together in what might reasonably be termed a ‘contrapuntal novel’. On these grounds reference to music examples will be made to show how as a postcolonial intertext, music is used to reinforce the nascent postcolonial themes in Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*, where trumpet fanfares and funeral dirges are employed to articulate a colonisation of space, while in Hulme’s novel, *The Bone People*, music plays an extremely important thematic function as is reflected in the allusions to First World War songs which are placed under erasure by a deconstructive superimposition of violent war images in an attempt to dismantle the overt violence which has all too often accompanied Western colonisation.

In the discussion of ‘the politics of alterity’ the issues of race and gender will be addressed in the political context of the respective literary texts. While cultural differences can be mutually enriching where cultural integration takes place, these differences are unfortunately most often used to marginalize the ‘other’. This process of racial marginalization is captured by Allen as follows:

In *Mankind Evolving*, Dobzhansky insists on the cultural significance of “race differences,” but condemns any and all attempts to find in the human genetic make-up any justification for racism; there is no gene for a “white” [or “black”] attitude. “The mighty vision of human equality,” he says, “belongs to the realm of ethics and politics, not to that of biology.” (1994:22)

Here Dobzhansky is pointing out that even though biological differences amongst people do exist, racism cannot be defended on the scientific grounds of genetics, as racism is grounded in subjective attitudes. In the postcolonial context it is these subjective attitudes which are exploited by colonisers to marginalize the colonized on racial grounds. Thus Balibar’s observation that “the organisation of nationalism into individual political movements inevitably has racism underlying it,” (1994:37) is not surprising. In the political sphere of Western colonialism colour, as an index of power, has played an important role, as is reflected by the fact that for many years the black voice and the Third World have been deprived of the right to speak, but now have been granted a right to speak under extremely limited conditions. This attempt to silence the subaltern voice is reflected in Spivak’s observation that “in the hollow pronoun [we] lies the aporia of the programme.” (1988:87)



Said refers to the West's colonial expansionist ventures as their 'voyage out' which he describes as

an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted, and finally brought under control.(1993:225)

The West's attempt to bring the Third World 'under control' has entailed both an imposition of western political control where

[t]he status of the Black is decreed by "eternal Act of Parliament," so there is no real opportunity for self-help, upward mobility, or even something better than outright slavery ... (Said, 1993:102)

and the West's colonisation of the colonized's geographical space, as reflected by the West's imperial and political right to re-name cities, village, streets, and rivers.

On these grounds then an attempt will be made to illustrate from the theoretical perspectives of Said, Lacan, Fanon and Bhabha how the reciprocal interaction between colour, as an index of race, and the concept of nation has contributed towards the shaping of individual identity in colonized societies.

For Said colour as an index of the 'white' British imperial 'voyage out' into the 'black' Third World played an important role in the British colonization of both the geographical and cultural space of the colonized. This idea of the colour 'white' as an emblem of imperial might is reflected in Said's observation that the white man

as an idea, a persona, a style of being, seems to have served many Britishers while they were abroad. The actual colour of their skin set them off dramatically and reassuringly from the sea of natives, but for the Britisher who circulated amongst Indians, Africans, or Arabs there was also the certain knowledge that he belonged to, and could draw upon the empirical and spiritual reserves of, a long tradition of executive responsibility towards the coloured races.... Being a White Man, in short, was a very concrete manner of being-in-the-world, a way of taking hold of reality, language, and thought. It made a specific style possible. (1978:226-7)

The radical depersonalisation which occurs in the colonial process is reminiscent of what Lacan terms neurotic 'repression' which in extreme instances degenerates into a form of psychotic 'foreclosure'. The idea is further developed by Fanon who claims that the agony of alterity caused by colour as an index of racial discrimination in the colonial situation has resulted in a schizoid colonized personality where the Negro as a 'black' stereotype has

allowed [himself/herself] to be poisoned by the stereotype that [the coloniser has of him or her], and they live in

fear that their acts will correspond to this stereotype ... We may say that their conduct is perpetually overdetermined from the inside. (Fanon, 1991:115)

The white coloniser, however, is not exempted from a psychopathology. For the pain the coloniser causes the colonized, is counterpointed by the collective 'heart of darkness', which slumbers in the collective unconscious of the white man, where the image of the primordial, biological nature of the Negro produces corresponding fears in the white man, as is pointed out by Fanon as follows:

To suffer from a phobia of Negroes is to be afraid of the biological. For the Negro is only biological. The Negroes are animals. They go about naked. ( 1991:165)

Religion in the postcolonial context has played a major role in the Western civilizing mission which aimed at converting the pagan savages of the Third World to Christianity, as is witnessed by the numerous religious societies listed by Said in *Orientalism* (1978:99-100). Islam was one of the world's most powerful religions, and dominated the world from the seventh century until the famous battle of Lapanto in 1577, a battle which is present in Shakespeare's *Othello*. As Said (1978:104) points out the rivalry and fear caused by Islam in the West is reflected in the rejection of Mohammed, as the 'other', but correspondingly the acceptance of al-Hallaj, a Muslim saint, because he, as a Christ-like figure, was readily absorbed by Christianity.

While Said attempts to establish a contrapuntal web of religious reciprocal influences between the West and the East, Fanon again resorts to a moral dialectic where he claims the 'black' colonized being is epitomized as evil:

The torturer is the black man, Satan is black, one talks of shadows, when one is dirty one is black - whether one is thinking of physical dirtiness or of moral dirtiness. It would be astonishing, if trouble were taken to bring them all together, to see the vast number of expressions that make the black man the equivalent of sin. In Europe, whether concretely or symbolically, the black man stands for the bad side of the character. As long as one cannot understand this fact, one is doomed to talk in circles about the "black problem". Blackness, darkness, shadow, shades, night, the labyrinths of the earth, abysmal depths, blacken someone's reputation; and, on the other side, the bright look of innocence, the white dove of peace, magical, heavenly light. A magnificent blond child - how much peace there is in that phrase, how much joy, and above all how much hope! There is no comparison with a magnificent black child: literally, such a thing is unwonted. Just the same, I shall not go back into the stories of black angels. In Europe, that is to say, in every civilized and civilizing country, the Negro is the symbol of sin. The Archetype of the lowest values is represented by the Negro. (1991:189)

For Bhabha the supernatural is reduced to a social construct where the complicity of the past

and present in history is broken in order to provide a space for revision, imitation and reconstruction. Bhabha(1992:57) illustrates this point of departure by taking an example from Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, where the materialization of the murdered slave daughter Beloved, who has suffered the sentence of history, is given a voice through her apparition, which for Bhabha is necessary, if the narrative of the history of slavery is to be reconstructed. Here then, the reader is given an indeterminate freedom and right to interpret supernatural phenomena from the perspective of his/her national culture. Thus what Bhabha is advocating is a secular tolerance for national and cultural beliefs of both the coloniser and the colonized. Although human beings live in an indeterminate world, it is nevertheless the social environment that determines existence. In his theoretical stance Bhabha thus attempts to superimpose a secular text upon sacred texts in order to avoid a dialectical impasse. He strives to achieve this by taking an indeterminate position in order to escape both the tyranny of linear historical materialism and the subjective dogma of religious discourse, which does to a certain extent free the human being from binary entrapment, while also offering him/her a certain degree of choice in the absence of a transcendental and ahistorical signifier - such as the Godhead figure. The problem here is that even though the human being is not limited to taking sides here, nevertheless s/he cannot transcend the social environment, as the social environment is an imitation of the absent transcendental signifier.

It will be shown in the texts to be discussed how the moral, ethical and religious significeds attached to the signifier 'black' have in the past attempted to undermine the black colonized's moral status by constructing the 'black' identity of the Third World colonized person as evil, morally tarnished and given over to wanton and licentious behaviour, whereas spiritual purity and innocence are attached to the signifier 'white'.

By referring to the various subtexts of Western knowledge, alterity, and religion in the literary works to be analysed, I shall try to suggest some of the ways in which Western discourse, by means of a process of selection and exclusion, has attempted to dominate the Third World. An

attempt will also be made to show how, from the theoretical perspectives of Lacan, Fanon, Said and Bhabha, western discourse has played a major role in shaping the identity of its colonized subjects.

## 2. Contrapuntal Textures: 'Othello' as Postcolonial Palimpsest.

### 2.1. The Preparatory 'Voyage Out' of British Imperialism as reflected in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello*

#### 2.1.1. The Socio-Political Background to Renaissance England

For the Renaissance English person images of Africa comprised a mixture of often distorted facts based on the experiences of sailors on their 'voyage out' to Africa, and the legends passed down from ancient writers such as Herodotus and Pliny. While Roger Bacon writing in the thirteenth century based his geographical knowledge on the Bible and classical philosophers such as Pliny, Herodotus, Isidore and Sallust, his most important contribution to Renaissance scientific discourse was his stress on objective experience. This is reflected in Bacon's criticism of Pliny who had attempted to appropriate the Nile's source, associated with Paradise, into Western geographical space, a strategy which was to anticipate the expropriation of the 'other's' geographical space in the nineteenth century scramble for Africa. Nevertheless Pliny's descriptions of "the fantastic specimens of human and sub-human life in Africa" (Jones, 1965:3) anticipate *Mandeville's Travels*, which was published in England in the fifteenth century, and did much to promote the myth of Africa as a wild, savage and strange place. As Jones points out "many of the commonest notions which were entertained about the continent by Elizabethans can be traced back to this book" (1965:5). Furthermore Mandeville's preoccupation with colour is captured in the following extract from his travels quoted by Jones:

The folk that [wone] live in that country are called Numidians, and they are christened. But they are black of colour; and that they hold a great beauty, and aye the blacker they are the fairer them think them. And they say that and they should paint an angel and a fiend, they would paint the angel black and the fiend white. And if they think them not black enough when they are born, they use certain medicines for to make them black withal. That country is wonder hot, and that makes the folk thereof so black. (Jones, 1965:6)

The note of circumspection reflected in the word 'But' in the first line of the above quotation reflects the subtle sense of amazement and covert white exclusivity that 'even though' they were 'black' they could be 'civilized' Christians. This was the type of 'double dissembling' which Fanon was to refer

to in the twentieth century where the white 'coloniser' was to reject the black 'colonized' even though he wore a white mask. The same blending of fact and fiction is used to depict the exotic and mystic qualities of Egypt with "its deserts, its slave markets, the apples of Paradise, the field where Christ used to play ... [and] the Pyramids." (Jones, 1965:7)

While William Waterman's *The Fardle of Facions* (1555) gave further currency to the growing legends about Africa -

The legend of Prester John, the strange monsters and peoples, the fabulous wealth - prisoners chained with golden fetters in Meroe - the heat, rainlessness, and the large extents of deserts, all these are described afresh for English readers. (Jones, 1965:8) -

Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1589, second edition 1598) attempted to remove "for most ordinary people the last of those superstitious fears of unknown parts which had long stood in the way of overseas trade and colonization." (Jones, 1965:14)

While knowledge of the African coastline was growing, little was known about the interior until the appearance of John Leo's *The History and Description of Africa* (1550), which was translated by John Pory in 1600. This translation, as Jones (1965:21) points out, was most certainly read by Robert Greene and Ben Jonson, but was probably known by many other playwrights such as Shakespeare and Webster.

For the 'white' Elizabethan the ideal of beauty was "a white skin, blonde hair, red lips and cheeks [while] the African with dark skin came to symbolize the opposite of beauty, [as is reflected] in the literature of the period where 'Moor', 'Ethiop' and 'blackamoor' were used in this way." (Jones, 1965:127) These images manifested themselves in a xenophobia, which, in turn, resulted in Queen Elizabeth's edict of 1601 "for the transportation of 'negra and blackamoors' out of the country, where their increased number was giving cause for alarm." (Jones, 1965:87)

It was against this background that Shakespeare began his dramatic portrayal of Moors. However it must be remembered that Shakespeare lived under monarchical rule, which meant that his freedom of expression was to some extent curtailed, in that to express ideas contrary to the reigning monarch's socio-political outlook could have incurred the monarch's displeasure, and thus

undermined Shakespeare's position as a playwright.

However Shakespeare was able to transcend the possible restrictions which the monarchy may have caused him, as is reflected in *Titus Andronicus*, which deals with a Roman striving for political power, and his final tragi-comedy *The Tempest*, the classical postcolonial text. Indeed throughout his career as a playwright Shakespeare reveals an insightful pre-occupation with the slowly emerging ideals of British expansionism and its desire for political power. Thus in approaching Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (1590) and *Othello* (1604) I shall attempt to show how Shakespeare tried to deconstruct the stereotypical attitudes of his day, by a subtle manipulation of language and dramatic techniques in the areas of knowledge, marginalization and religion. I shall also attempt to show how the two plays function as mirror images of each other, inverting the roles of the following characters: Aaron:Iago, Titus:Othello, and Saturnine:Duke.

It will be shown, within the context of the western civilizing mission, how Shakespeare allows those in a position of political power to manipulate the Christian concept of 'justice' for personal gain. This, in conjunction with the imperial patriarchal attitude of the emerging British coloniser, was to provide a moral validity to the claim that the civilized British coloniser with his superior knowledge knew what was best for the ignorant, pagan colonized subject.

#### 2.1.2. Knowledge and Desire as a Site of Power : Colonizing the Mind

The embryonic concepts of Western socio-political expansionist policies, as a site of desire and power, are reflected in their formative stage in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello*. In *Titus Andronicus* even though Rome, as the centre of European political power, had attacked the Goths, the Goths and Romans, because of their common cultural ties, were able to unite in their condemnation of Aaron, the black Moor, who was then regarded as the 'other'. The seeds of what Said terms the 'geographical imagination' (1978:71) are present in Shakespeare's language in *Titus Andronicus* where Titus describes Rome as

Kind Rome, that hast thus lovingly reserved  
The cordial of mine age to glad my heart! (l.i.165-166)

whereas Tamora presents the forest outside Rome as dark, savage and devoid of any propensity for spiritual growth or rejuvenation:

A barren detested vale you see it is;  
The trees, though summer, yet forlorn and lean,  
Overcome with moss and baleful mistletoe.  
Here never shines the sun, here nothing breeds ... (ll.iii.93-96)

This perhaps suggests how western discourse, in depicting geographical space in Shakespeare's plays, has anticipated the colonial manipulation of the geographical imagination for western political and ideological ends.

In *Titus Andronicus* Shakespeare reflects the political events of his day through a dramatic narrative. While on the one hand Shakespeare reveals an awareness of an emergent colonial polarization by depicting the initial uniting of white Western forces against the South, which was in turn regarded as the 'other', on the other hand he also evokes moments of empathy for the marginalized 'Other' figure, such as Aaron, which points to an initial querying of stereotypes which he further developed in *Othello*.

In *Othello*, written about ten or fifteen years later, the seeds of western colonialism begin to assume a more concrete expression. While from a postcolonial perspective Lavinia's rape and mutilation by Demetrius and Chiron can be viewed as a violation of Roman virginal territory, which anticipates the imperial claim by the West on the virginal territory of the third World, Desdemona's betrayal perpetrated by the devious Iago assumes a far more complex nature. The relationship between Desdemona and Othello is undermined throughout the play by Iago's cold and calculated manipulation of Desdemona's whiteness, which signifies integrity and purity, and Othello's blackness, which Iago equates with dishonesty, evil and the baser instincts of the animal kingdom.

In the opening of the play the audience is confronted with Iago fanning the sentiments of racism in Brabantio by telling him that

Even now, now, very now, an old black ram  
Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, Arise!



Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,  
Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you. (1.i. 85-88)

and that his daughter is being 'covered by a Barbary horse' (1.i.108) and is 'making the beast with two backs' (1.i.112). This evokes the desired racist reaction in Brabantio who claims that Othello must have seduced Desdemona by *black* magic, as it is incomprehensible that Desdemona could have rejected the 'wealthy, curled darlings' (1.ii.67) of Venice for Othello's 'sooty bosom'. (1.i.69) It would thus appear that Brabantio's patriarchal marginalization of Othello on the grounds of colour and moral decadence anticipates the prejudice which was to mark later encounters between the West and the Third World. Thus it would seem that Shakespeare is attempting to deconstruct the dangers of stereotyping by depicting the Venetian men as rich, effeminate and idle, while Othello, as a counterpart of Titus, is presented as a courageous and honourable soldier, which places the myth of the pagan and barbaric South under erasure. While Desdemona may be viewed as representative of the West in general, and Venice - the cultural centre of Christian Renaissance Europe - in particular, her innocence and naivety are exploited by Aaron's alter ego, Iago. Thus the binaric tensions between good and evil are no longer as simple as in *Titus Andronicus*, as Aaron's specular image is now superimposed upon that of the sophisticated Iago. By these means the double-standards of Venetian life are dismantled, while the destruction of the noble Othello by Western intrigues, anticipates the political intrigues of Western colonialism which were to come to fruition in the nineteenth century.

Shakespeare's dramatic discourse clearly reflects how Western knowledge in general, and English knowledge in particular, with its concomitant desire for power, has been constructed. The meanings attached to words such as 'white' and 'black', which are extremely significant from a postcolonial perspective in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello*, have also played an important role in shaping the western social imagination over the centuries, and have also influenced western political and ethical attitudes towards our fellow human beings<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>. This is reflected in the word 'white' which is derived from the following common

On the strength of this it may be argued that in *Titus Andronicus*, Saturnine, as a monarchical figure of authority, clearly aligns the ideas of whiteness with knowledge:

Ascend *fair* queen, Pantheon. Lords, accompany  
Your noble Emperor and his lovely bride,  
Sent by the heavens for Prince Saturnine,  
Whose *wisdom* hath her fortune conquerèd. (1.i.333-336)<sup>2</sup>

In these words Saturnine clearly creates a blank (white) space which is sanctioned by divine authority, as reflected in the words 'Pantheon' and 'heavens'. In this blank space the word 'fair', which incorporates the ideas of whiteness and justice, and functions as an icon of western identity, is superimposed on the word 'wisdom' in a mutually exclusive strategy which, by implication, excludes the black right to white knowledge.

Teutonic roots which have over the centuries contributed to the formation of the West's collective consciousness and social imagination,

Old English *hwit*, Old Teutonic *hwitoz*, formed ultimately on the IE base *kwid* - to be bright, and OHG (*h*)*wiz*, German *wiess* (Simpson & Weiner, 1989:v.20, p.263)

and thus has the right to knowledge embedded in its very roots. In German the idea of whiteness and knowledge have become so integrated that the German words *weise*, meaning wise, and *weisse*, meaning white, have become elided in a translingual strategy where *weisheit* implies wisdom, the white right to knowledge. This Teutonic heritage is echoed in the English word *wisdom* which has the following signifieds attached to it:

- 1.a. Capacity of judging rightly in matters relating to life and conduct; soundness of judgment in the choice of mean and ends; sometimes, less strictly, sound sense, esp. in practical affairs.
- 2.a. Knowledge (esp. of a high and abstruse kind); enlightenment, learning, erudition; in early use often equalled philosophy, science. Also practical knowledge or understanding, expertness in an art.
- b. Kinds of learning, branches of knowledge.
- c. In rendering of Med L. names of substances prepared or used by the alchemists as *lute of wisdom*, *salt of wisdom*.
- 3.a. A wise discourse or teaching. (Simpson & Weiner, 1989:vol. 20, p. 422)

In Shakespeare's plays he often draws on the word 'wit' which is derived from 'wisdom' and 'white', and which Simpson and Weiner define as:

- I. Denoting a faculty (or the person possessing it.)
  1. The seat of consciousness or thought, the mind: sometimes connoting one of its functions, as memory or attention.
- II. Denoting a quality (or the possessor of it).
  - 6.a. Wisdom, good judgement, discretion, prudence. (1989:vol. 20, p.442 -443)

This juxtapositioning of the concepts 'white' and the right to knowledge is reflected by Said's claim that

Being a White Man, in short, was a very concrete manner of being-in-the-world, a way of taking hold of reality, language, and thought. It made a specific style possible. (Said, 1978:227)

<sup>2</sup> The italics in the above extract, and in all subsequent extracts from the two Shakespeare plays,

excludes the black right to white knowledge.

Even though Shakespeare was bound to make Aaron speak the kind of language that he uses in his plays, from a postcolonial perspective it could be argued that by permitting the colonized 'other', such as Aaron, access to knowledge by emulating learned western tropes, Shakespeare could be seen as anticipating Fanon's claim that

[t]o speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of civilization. (1991:17-18)

However by means of an ingenious strategy Shakespeare deconstructs the myth of the ignorant Moor by inverting the roles of Aaron and Iago in an attempt to dismantle the Elizabethan stereotype of the barbarous Moor:

DEMETRIUS

What's here? A scroll, and written round about,

Let's see:

*'Integer vitae, scelerisque purus,*

*Non eget Mauri iaculis, nec arcu.'*

[The man of upright life and free from crime does not need the javelins or bow of the Moor]

CHIRON

O, 'tis a verse in Horace; I know it well;

I read it in the grammar long ago.

AARON

Ay, just; a verse in Horace - right, you have it.

*(Aside)* Now, what a thing it is to be an ass!

Here's no sound jest! The old man hath found their guilt,

And sends them weapons wrapped about with lines

That wound, beyond their feeling, to the quick. (IV.ii.18-28)

In the above extract the white right to knowledge is placed under erasure, for it is Aaron, the Moor, who has the insight to discern the underlying meaning of the quotation from Horace, while the white Goths, Demetrius and Chiron, are unable to do so.

In the following words of Iago

The Moor is of a free and open nature

That thinks men honest that but seem to be so;

And will as tenderly be led by th'nose

As asses are.

I have't! It is engendered! Hell and night

Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light. (I.iii.384-389)

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are my own.

Shakespeare, by allowing his villain to function simultaneously both as a specular image of Aaron, and as an historical embodiment of Machiavellian maliciousness which gives birth to such devious and monstrous schemes which are aimed at exploiting Othello's innocence and ignorance, is able to dismantle the stereotypical image of the devious Moor, while reinscribing the 'Othello' figure as a postcolonial emblem with integrity and a black right to knowledge.

In both plays Shakespeare's exploitation of the hunt and intrigue as metaphors for knowledge anticipates the colonial epistemic violence which was to be inflicted upon the colonized peoples, where knowledge was manipulated and distorted for personal and ideological socio-political ends. The idea of a metaphorical hunt for knowledge, as site power and authority, in *Titus Andronicus*, is reflected by Aaron's observation that

The Emperor's court is like the house of fame,  
The palace full of tongues, of eyes and ears .... (II.i.127-129)

and is reinforced by an intertext of hunting horns and hounds which are superimposed on Aaron's dialogue. Here the Roman court, as the centre of authority and knowledge, anticipates the postcolonial metropole, where cities such as London and Paris were to become the centres of authority over their colonies. The metaphorical hunt can thus be viewed as the imperial designs, reflected in the plotting and scheming of Saturnine, Tamora, Aaron and Iago to gain greater power and wealth.

In Shakespeare's plays women are often depicted as pawns in a political struggle for power, which from a postcolonial perspective is usually associated with the western rape of virgin territory. This is reflected in Linda Woodbridge's observation that

[a]nthropological notions of body and society, of pollution and dangerous margins, emerge often in Shakespeare, but with particular force in *Lucrece*, *Titus*, and *Cymbeline*, where women's bodies are metaphors for societies threatened. All involve Rome, which offered early modern England a potent symbol of invasion that spoke poignantly to England's sense of herself. (1991:329)

The ultimate epistemic violence is reflected in the mutilation of Lavinia, where her tongue, an instrument of speech, is cut out, and her hands, instruments for writing, are amputated by Demetrius and Chiron, after they have raped her. The implication of epistemic violence here thus functions on both a physical and metaphorical level as is reflected by Titus's tragic and embittered

observation:

O, handle not the theme, to talk of hands,  
 Lest we remember still that we have none ...  
 I can interpret all her martyred signs -  
 She says she drinks no other drink but tears,  
 Brewed with her sorrow, mashed upon her cheeks.  
 Speechless complainer, I will learn thy thought;  
 In thy dumb action will I be as perfect  
 As begging hermits in their holy prayers.  
 Thou shalt not sigh, nor hold thy stumps to heaven,  
 Nor wink, nor nod, nor kneel, nor make a sign,  
 But I of these will wrest an alphabet,  
 And by still practice learn to know thy meaning. (III.ii.29-45)

The tragic silencing of Lavinia's voice can be thought of as anticipating the ultimate epistemic violence in the history of colonization. It causes Titus great anguish in that he is unable to find out who was responsible for the mutilation of his daughter. However he is determined that he will gain access to this knowledge even if he has to 'wrest an alphabet' from her signs.

Throughout *Othello* Iago's scheming and intrigue precipitate epistemic violence where innocuous and innocent appearances are distorted and manipulated in a bid to dismantle the union between Othello and Desdemona, and thus destroy Othello. Iago's epistemic violence gradually succeeds in awakening Othello's baser passions which slowly 'blacken' his rational judgement.

Now, by heaven,  
 My blood begins my safer guides to rule,  
 And passion, having my best judgement collied,  
 Assays to lead the way. (II.iii.190-193)

Iago's constant devaluing of black identity by associating it with animal and profane imagery reinforces the Elizabethan myth of the decadent and savage Moor of whom Othello is made to appear such a striking example. In this respect Iago foreshadows the British imperial 'voyage out' where the colonized peoples were deprived of an authentic black voice. In the above extract the use of the colour black ('collied' means blackness) is associated with the more primal and savage passions for the supposed strength of which colonized people were deprived of their right to knowledge.

The juxtapositioning of positive imagery in depicting western space with negative imagery to describe the 'other's' space, can be viewed as a subtle form of criticism by Shakespeare. From a postcolonial perspective this foreshadows Said's claim that Western discourse was to shape the

colonial geographical imagination, where the colonizer's geographical space was to be described by drawing upon positive imagery of civilization and order, whereas the space of the 'other' (i.e. the colonized) was to be depicted in terms of savage and chaotic imagery.

Therefore it is not surprising that in both plays, Rome and Venice, the centres of Western culture and civilization, are described in term of positive imagery, whereas when the audience is taken away from these centres to the wild and savage forest outside Rome in *Titus Andronicus*, and Cyprus in *Othello*, negative imagery is employed.

Throughout *Titus Andronicus* a sporadic use of trumpet flourishes accompanied by drums and colours is made to reinforce the Roman class structure and military might. After the opening trumpet flourish used to announce the entrance of the Emperor and senators, the audience is presented with the following speech by Bassianus:

Keep then this passage to the Capitol,  
And suffer not dishonour to approach  
The imperial seat, to virtue consecrate,  
To justice, continence, and nobility;  
But let desert in pure election shine,  
And, Romans, fight for freedom in your choice. (I.i.12-17)

The imperious tone of this speech, coupled with the Roman political rhetoric aimed at awakening a sense of national identification with Roman space, clearly anticipates the type of discourse which was to be applied to the West's later colonial expansionist enterprises.

In contrast to this powerful opening statement of Roman military might, the audience of *Titus Andronicus* is presented with a pit which is the centre of Aaron's black and savage forest, and which serves as a backdrop to Aaron's treacherous hunt for power. The pit is described by Quintus in these terms:

What subtle hole is this,  
Whose mouth is covered with rude-growing briars...  
A very fatal place it seems to me, (II.iii.198-202)

From an Elizabethan perspective the rape of Lavinia's chastity is "equated with a city or fortress that has been conquered by the enemy" (Woodbridge, 1991:331), which leaves Titus no alternative but to kill his own daughter. The postcolonial implications of this are reflected in

Woodbridge's observation that

[w]e know, as Shakespeare did not, what lay ahead for the island Britain. The besieged virgin of Renaissance imagings would become the thrusting masculine conqueror, threatening the New World with ravishment. As Rome moved from invader stage through Augustan liminal zone to invaded stage, so Britain would move from invaded stage through Jacobean liminal zone to invader stage. Colonization would reveal its brutal face, indistinguishable from invasion ... The British Empire, like the Roman, would thrust deep into the world's virgin territories. (1991:348)

### 2.1.3. The Politics of Alterity

In his discussion of the political unconscious Jameson claims that

only a genuine philosophy of history is capable of respecting the specificity and radical difference of the social and cultural past while disclosing the solidarity of its polemics and passions, its forms, structures, experiences, and struggles, with those of the present day [and that through] ... the political unconscious we are able to explore the multiple paths that lead to the unmasking of cultural artefacts as socially symbolic acts.(1981:18-20)

Against this theoretical background prevailing political and cultural attitudes, as an integral part of history, will be examined in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello*, to show how the use of language, as an index of historically socially symbolic acts, has helped shape the western political unconscious as reflected in the conflicting ideological designs of the potential British colonizers and the British philanthropists. On the one hand the idea of an absolute powerful political force, which was to be reflected in the western imperial colonial missions, is captured in the concepts Emperor/Empire/Imperial, all of which are derived from the Latin word 'Imperium', which implies 'power, mastery, Empire'. On the other hand, there was a corresponding tendency to a devolution of power as reflected in the words Commonweal/Commonwealth which Curtis defines as "the common well being and general prosperity of the community or realm, and it came into conventional usage in the 16th century" (1990 :400) On these grounds I shall endeavour to show how the prevailing ideological, political and cultural Renaissance attitudes in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello*, contributed towards the emergence of a British colonizing class who marginalized the colonial subject on the grounds of race, class and gender.

This preoccupation with absolute as opposed to divided power was, in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to result in the British Empire changing its name to accommodate the composition of its diverse peoples, which is described by Ebenstein as follows:

Between 1867 and 1931 the British colonies of Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand - mostly settled by people of European origin - attained self-government and then independence. The British Empire was thus transformed into the British Commonwealth of Nations ... [Finally] with the admission of Asian peoples to full commonwealth status, an essentially white Commonwealth became predominantly non-white. To express the changed nature of membership, the word "British" was dropped in 1949, and the former British commonwealth became known as the Commonwealth of Nations. (1990:313)

The term Commonwealth has thus clearly been used by the British colonizing class in an act of 'sly civility' (Bhabha:1985) in what Jameson suggests is the masking 'of cultural artefacts as socially symbolic acts', to maintain this class's political, cultural and economic position of power.

The latent imperial and expansionist designs present amongst members of the British colonizing class, are reflected in the evolution of the words common weal/commonweal and commonwealth<sup>3</sup>, which are used twice in *Titus Andronicus*, and as Williams (1983:70) points out are derived from the Latin word *communis* which means 'together under obligation' (*com munis*) as well as 'unity' (*comm unis*). The conflict which is played off between Emperor Saturnine's authority

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<sup>3</sup> To show how language, as a socially symbolic enactment, has reflected the political and ideological role of the British colonizing class in the history of colonialism and imperialism, a brief definition of these words will be given from a historical perspective. Simpson and Weiner define 'common weal' as follows:

OE. *wela, weola* well being, prosperity

1. (Properly two words.) Common well-being; *esp.* the general good, public welfare, property of the community.

1526 *Pilgr. Perf.* 33. The partes of mannes body hath .. theyr offyce ... for the commune wele of the hole body. 1609 *Skene Reg. Maj.* 10 The law is made for the common-well and profite of baith parties. (1989: vol.3, p.573-4)

Thus from the sixteenth century it would appear that the term 'commonweale' was no longer used in a neutral sense, but rather embraced the mutually exclusive concept of Nation and State which had a mutually inclusive common interest. According to Williams these 'common' interests can be used to affirm something shared or to describe something *ordinary* (itself ambivalent, related to *order* as series or sequence, hence *ordinary* - in the usual course of things, but also to *order* as rank, social and military, hence *ordinary* - of an undistinguishable kind); or again, in one kind of use, to describe something *low* or *vulgar* (which has specialized in this sense from a comparable origin, *vulgus*, L - the common people. (1983:71)

The transition of the British Empire (1650-1918) with its striving for absolute political and economic power over its dominions, to the formation of the 'British Commonwealth of Nations' (1918) and finally the 'Commonwealth of Nations' (1949) with overt aims of a devolution of power, reflects the subtle and devious attempt of the British imperial class to maintain a covert legitimacy for the power inherent in the 'British Empire'.



and the proposed liberal concept of a 'Commonweal' evokes Bhabha's theoretical stance of "Sly Civility" which

reveals an agnostic uncertainty contained in the *incompatibility* of empire and nation; it puts *under erasure*, not "on trial", the very discourse of civility within which representative government claims its liberty and empire its ethics.(1985:74)

The social structure of Shakespeare's England which revolved around the division of society into categories of aristocrat, emerging middle class and common man, was a remnant of the feudal system of the Middle Ages. This social division underwent a gradual change as a result of the British 'communal' socio-economic and colonial strategies which precipitated a 'class' structure which Williams (1982:60-69) claims manifested itself in a tripartite form of landowners, capitalists and labourers (wage-earners, proletariat).

In *Titus Andronicus* the audience is presented with two opposing views of the signifier 'commonweal', both of which anticipate Western colonization with its accompanying processes of decolonization. In the first use Titus anticipates the right to colonial might:

Tribunes, I thank you; and this suit I make,  
That you create our emperor's oldest son,  
Lord Saturnine, whose virtues will, I hope,  
Reflect on Rome as Titan's rays on earth,  
And ripen justice in this commonweal. (l.i.223-227)

The word 'Titan' evokes images of immense divine power, which Titus hopes will provide a beneficial political 'just cause' for Roman society under Saturnine's divine rule. This idea of a divine absolute power, which was to be later vested in the British Empire, was also used by the British colonising class to provide a justification for their colonial civilizing mission. In the following extract Titus anticipates the birth of the Roman Empire:

And here in sight of Rome to Saturnine,  
King and commander of our commonweal,  
The wide world's emperor, do I consecrate  
My sword, my chariot, and my prisoners,  
Presents well worthy Rome's imperious lord. (l.i.246-250)

This idea of the divine imperial power of the King, in association with the word 'commonwealth', evokes the double bind of the contradiction 'Empire/Commonwealth' of the British colonizing class.

The moment of colonial intrusion correspondingly awakens emotions of aggression against the coloniser. The resentment against the colonizing West in *Titus Andronicus* is reflected in Aaron's opening soliloquy

To wait, said I? - To wanton with this queen,  
This goddess, this Semiramis, this nymph,  
This siren, that will charm Rome's Saturnine,  
And see his shipwrack and his commonweal's. (II.i.20-24)

where the audience is taken into Aaron's confidence.

In *Othello* the union between Othello and Desdemona functions as a metaphor for the political 'commonweal'. However in this instance Shakespeare has inverted the roles played by the black man and the white man which results in a more complex argument. Here Othello, the noble Moor, has taken on the honourable qualities of Titus, and like Titus is extremely concerned about his civil duties and responsibilities, while Iago functions from the space created by the mask of Aaron's specular image which is superimposed on that of the effete and sophisticated Venetian. Shakespeare uses a musical metaphor to illustrate the disintegration of the harmonious marriage of opposites:

[Aside] O, you are well tuned now;  
But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,  
As honest as I am. (II.i.192-194)

By allowing Othello to function as a Lacanian 'mirror' image of Titus Andronicus colour is deconstructed as an icon of racism and a site of socio-political power.

In *Titus Andronicus* the colour white, as an index of European identity, transcends the political violence between the Romans and 'barbaric' Goths, as they are both white. This anticipates the idea of the white 'European' West, which was to become culturally united during the course of its colonial 'voyage out', on the grounds of a common colour

In *Othello*, Othello is initially admired by the Venetians because he has taken on a 'white' identity by becoming a Christian, and in addition he holds an important military position, and as Montano claims 'commands like a full soldier' (II.i.35-36), which enables him to defend and protect the Western Venetian values against the dark-skinned and savage Turkish infidels. This trust in

Othello's military capabilities is reflected by the Duke's telling Othello:

Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you  
Against the general enemy Ottoman ...  
We lacked your counsel and your help tonight. (1.iii.49-52)

From a postcolonial perspective the conventional Elizabethan stereotypical uses of the word 'black' and its derivatives are deconstructed by a 'playing off' of *Othello* against *Titus Andronicus* in an ingenious contrapuntal strategy that anticipates Fanon's use in his *Black Skin, White Masks* of the 'spaltung' (split-subject) process inherent in the mirror stage development of identity. In this deconstructive strategy Iago becomes a specular image of Aaron - a strategy, which enables Shakespeare to reconstruct an authentic 'black' Moor on the site of the stereotypical Moor.

While Shakespeare in *Titus Andronicus* draws heavily on the Elizabethan stereotypical myths of the savage 'black' Moor who is not to be trusted, he simultaneously places these stereotypical attitudes under erasure by revealing to the audience a caring paternal side of Aaron, which refuses to destroy his child born of Tamora, whereas Titus, the 'noble warrior' of 'civilized' Rome, does not hesitate to kill his son Mutius over a minor incident.

The stereotypical myth of the savage and lustful black Moor is enunciated by Lavinia and Bassianus when they meet Tamora in the woods:

LAVINIA  
Under your patience, gentle Empress,  
'Tis thought you have a goodly gift in *horning*,  
And to be doubted that your Moor and you  
Are singled forth to try thy experiments...  
BASSIANUS  
Believe me, Queen, your *swarthy Cimmerian*  
Doth make your honour of his body's hue,  
Spotted, detested, and abominable.  
Why are you sequestered from all your train,  
Dismounted from your *snow-white goodly* steed,  
And wandered hither to an obscure plot,  
Accompanied but with a *barbarous* Moor,  
If *foul desire* had not conducted you? ...  
LAVINIA  
And let her joy her *raven-coloured* love;  
This valley fits the purpose passing well. (II.iii.66-83)

Lavinia and Bassianus deliver scathing attacks on Tamora, who for the Romans is nothing but a base and barbarous Goth. However the derogatory racist remarks aimed at Aaron anticipate the

discursive 'modus operandi' of the Western colonial intrusion, where by a process of selection of negative imagery the West hoped to exclude the black 'other' from the white right to an ontological existence in a strategy aimed at dominating the colonized 'other' by undermining their right to an existence. Lavinia commences the attack by drawing on the myth of the insatiable and lustful Moor with whom Tamora hopes 'to try experiments', while Bassianus refers to her intending union with Aaron as 'foul desire'. Bassianus reinforces the attack by criticising Tamora's desire for the black and barbarous Aaron as a treason to the very ontological purity of her white essence - a union which he claims will besmirch her white image, making it 'detested and abominable'. Thus the moral guilt which is attached to Tamora by her association with Aaron harks back to Marcus's claim that Roman justice demands a 'right of each to his own' (*sum cuique*) (I.i.280), which in turn anticipates the cruel and inhuman colonial 'apartheid' laws of twentieth century South Africa, where the union of black and white persons was regarded as a transgression of both basic human morality and the legal laws of the government. However in line with this attack on black as a base and barbarous hue, Bassianus uses the image of white in a positive way, by associating Tamora's white honour with her 'snow-white' and 'goodly' steed.

The birth of Aaron's son releases a spate of racism from the Nurse who condemns the child in terms of its 'blackness', which, by association, she sees as

A joyless, dismal, black, and sorrowful issue.  
Here is the babe, as loathsome as a toad  
Amongst the fair-faced breeders of our clime;  
The Empress sends it thee, thy stamp, thy seal,  
And bids thee christen it with thy dagger's point. (IV.ii.63-68)

This attack plus the order to kill the child awakens sentiments of compassion in Aaron which, in turn, result in a defence of 'blackness' by Aaron

Zounds, ye whore! Is black so base a hue?  
(*To the baby*)  
Sweet blowse, you are a beauteous blossom, sure. (IV.ii.71-72)

The anger and pain awakened by such racial insults have echoed down through the ages, resulting in the twentieth century in such ideological concepts as Negritude and Black Consciousness, which

have aimed at counteracting the West's debasement of black identity, by restoring an ontological human dignity to the black person. Having gained confidence in his own identity Aaron is able to inveigh against Tamora's sons:

What, what, ye sanguine, shallow-hearted boys,  
Ye white-limed walls, ye alehouse painted signs!  
Coal-black is better than another hue,  
In that it scorns to bear another hue;  
For all the water in the ocean  
Can never turn the swan's black legs to white,  
Although she lave them hourly in the flood. (IV.ii.97-103)

In this extract Aaron challenges the white right to cultural superiority, by pointing out that Demetrius and Chiron, Tamora's white sons, are cowardly and 'shallow-hearted'. He further attempts to bring the validity of their existence into question by pointing out that they are 'white-limed walls' and 'painted signs' which are mere imitations of humanity. He then anticipates Negritude and Black Consciousness, by claiming a black right to a black ontology, where 'black is black', and, unlike the superficial veneer of whiteness, is a permanent natural phenomenon which rejects the idea of a white ontology, as is reflected in the natural phenomenon of the swan's black legs.

The imperial right to might viewed as a divine right and just cause is reflected by Bassianus's patriotic plea to his fellow Romans to

... suffer not dishonour to approach  
The imperial seat, to virtue consecrate,  
To justice, continence, and nobility ... (I.i.13-15)

which is challenged by Aaron on the birth of his son:

I tell you, younglings, not Enceladus,  
With all his threat'ning band of Typhon's brood,  
Nor great Alcides, nor the god of war  
Shall seize this prey out of his father's hands. (IV.ii.93-96)

In *Othello* the covert belief in the absolute superiority of the white races is reflected in the Duke's patronizing attitude towards 'colour' as an index of identity:

If virtue no delighted beauty lack  
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black. (I.iii.285-286)

Although many characters in the play do not react in a prejudiced way towards Othello's appearance, those that do are advocating that the white person should be regarded as the norm by which human appearance should be determined. From such a perspective the Moor's features were regarded as abnormal and aesthetically displeasing.

The white person was thus regarded as the norm by which to determine a human being's appearance. Thus Roderigo in *Othello* is able to refer contemptuously to the Moor as follows

What a full fortune does the *thick-lips* owe  
If he can carry't thus. (I.i.63-64)

Iago on the other hand consistently uses the stereotypical animal imagery associated with the 'traditional' savage and lustful Moor. As Iago's poison slowly begins to work on Othello, so does his use of language degenerate and also become filled with animal imagery. Thus by Iago's subtle manipulation of Othello, Othello gradually becomes a victim of white Venetian decadence which, in turn, causes him to lose control. At the beginning of the play Iago tells the irate Brabantio that

Even now, now, very now, an *old black ram*  
Is *tupping your white ewe*. Arise, arise!  
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,  
Or else the *devil* will make a grandsire of you. (I.i.85-88)

Here Iago juxtaposes racist and agist stereotypes to evoke a hatred of Othello in Brabantio. The signifier 'old' is used deliberately by Iago to emphasize the difference between the 'old' Othello and 'young' Desdemona. It also reinforces the idea of an extensive life experience which is coupled to animal imagery. While on the one hand western culture associates the male species of animals in general, and the ram and goat in particular, with a savage sexual prowess which reinforces a lustful image of the colonized male, on the other hand this 'lustful' image is to a certain extent morally justified by the patriarchal Western vocabulary, which employs positive signifiers to construct the male image, and may thus both justify and condone male violence and immoral behaviour. But when associated with a 'black' identity, these positive associations with Western white male sexual superiority undergo a transformation and take on negative connotations, which associate the base, lustful, savage and immoral qualities of animals with those of the black Moor.

Shakespeare's contrapuntal use of his subtexts in the above extract where a 'white' value system is used to denigrate and marginalize the black person, anticipates a postcolonial insight, where the moral arrogance of the white Venetian male, and the stereotypical images of an animalistic 'black' identity, are both dismantled in a deconstructive strategy.

In the following claim by Iago to Roderigo

If sanctimony  
and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and a  
supersubtle Venetian be not too hard for my wits, and all  
the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her. (I.iii.347-350)

Shakespeare again superimposes the stereotypical lustful qualities of Aaron onto the western veneer of the sophisticated Iago. By doing this he questions the authenticity of Iago's 'black mask' by placing it under erasure, showing the audience that lustfulness should not, especially in this instance, be applied only to the black man.

Shakespeare juxtaposes Othello's claim to royal lineage -

I fetch my life and being  
From men of royal siege; and my demerits  
May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune  
As this that I have reached. (I.ii.20-24) -

upon that of the Elizabethan myths about Africa which he uses to woo Desdemona:

Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances,  
Of moving accidents by flood and field,  
Of hairbreadth scapes i'th'imminent deadly breach,  
Of being taken by the insolent foe  
And sold to slavery, of my own redemption thence  
And portance in my travel's history,  
Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,  
Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven  
It was my hint to speak. Such was my process.  
And of the Cannibals that each other eat,  
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders. These things to hear  
Would Desdemona seriously incline. (I.iii.134-146)

This strategy functions on two levels. Firstly from a pragmatic and dramatic point of view it satisfied the Elizabethan curiosity about the mysterious and exotic distant African lands, and the people of Africa. On a second level, Othello attempts to woo Desdemona by inventing stories of his travels, which are superimposed on the reality of his heritage. Shakespeare once again is able to question

the Elizabethan myths which were to later play so important a role in shaping the geographical imagination in the Western voyage out to Africa.

By means of an intricate deconstructive strategy Shakespeare is able to juxtapose the stereotypical Renaissance myth of the malicious and lustful Moor, as depicted in Aaron, onto Iago, the 'supersubtle Venetian'. The juxtapositioning of the image of the lustful Moor against that of the hypocritical standards of Venetian society, results in the myth of the lustful Moor being placed under erasure, while the double moral standards attached to the Venetian society are brought under censure. By these means Shakespeare is free to reconstruct a new and 'honourable' identity for Othello which, in freeing Othello from the negative qualities attached to the stereotypical image of the 'black' Moor, allows him to elevate Othello above the dubious Western moral standards of Venice.

#### 2.1.4. Religion and the Other

I shall endeavour from a postcolonial perspective to show that the language employed in *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello* gives some indication of the kind of major role that language has played in the religious colonial civilising mission in its 'voyage out', which was aimed at colonizing the spirit by a conversion to Christian values at the expense of indigenous religions. An attempt will also be made to show how, through the positive meanings attached to the word 'white', the West has portrayed itself as morally and spiritually superior to the 'other', while, conversely, the black colonized members of the Third World have been confined to a region of moral and spiritual inferiority.

In both *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello* the white right to spiritual superiority is dismantled by an intricate and complex superimposition of white and black masks. This idea is also used by Salih in *Season of Migration to the North*. However, in Shakespeare's plays the word 'mask' is used to depict the interaction of appearance and reality, as it functions in the stereotypical myths of



Elizabethan identity, as well as in the portrayal of the sacred and the profane. From a postcolonial perspective the name 'Iago' can be viewed as a corruption of the Italian word 'iatus' which means interstitial space. This space, in a postcolonial context, could be viewed as the space in which the opposing myths of the inferior, barbarous, black Moor and the superior, civilised white Venetian are dismantled. Furthermore the words 'white' and 'black' are correspondingly associated with the sacred and the profane respectively, as is witnessed by Othello's disintegration which is marked by an increase in black imagery to mark his moral decline. The idea of a 'black' profanity and 'white' moral purity was used by the western colonizing class to reinforce their colonial civilizing mission.

The overlay of masks in *Titus Andronicus* functions in such a way that the white right to spiritual superiority is dismantled by an intricate strategy whereby Aaron's ironic veneer of white culture is superimposed upon the blank stereotypical Elizabethan myths of the black, savage and profane Moor. This process is inverted in the portrayal of Iago, where he assumes a mask of black identity which functions as a parody of the Elizabethan myths of the black Moor, and which is superimposed upon his supersubtle Venetian white identity. Finally, Iago's white mask of supersubtle Venetian hypocrisy which is brought into conflict with the black royal lineage and integrity of Othello, and which Iago uses as destructive strategy aimed at dismantling the moral validity of Othello's black identity, is placed under erasure.

By these means Shakespeare is able to dismantle the myths of the profane 'black' identity as opposed to the 'white' pure spirituality without giving offence to the socio-political sensitivities of his Elizabethan audience.

The moral dilemma posed by the question of 'just revenge', around which both of Shakespeare's plays revolve, anticipates the moral dilemma which the use of violence in the decolonization process was to pose. In *Titus Andronicus* Marcus claims that the suffering inflicted on Titus is sufficient reason to justify revenge:

O, heavens, can you hear a good man groan,  
And not relent, or not compassion him?  
Marcus, attend him in his ecstasy,  
That hath more scars of sorrow in his heart  
Than foemen's marks upon his battered shield,  
But yet so *just* that he will not revenge.  
Revenge the heavens for old Andronicus! (IV.i.122-128)

Marcus's plea to the heavens to respond to the sufferings of a 'good' man, juxtaposed with the military comparison, which aims at revealing that Titus was a noble soldier who fought valiantly for his fatherland, anticipates the moral justification of Titus's revenge.

The white right to an ethics of justice, as inscribed in the white blank cultural space of the West and furthermore empowered by white writing of the classic canon, is expressed by Marcus in *Titus Andronicus* as follows:

Write thou, good niece, and here display at last  
 What God will have discovered for revenge.  
 Heaven guide thy pen to print thy sorrows plain,  
 That we may know the traitors and the truth!  
*She takes the staff in her mouth, and guides it with her stumps, and writes*  
 O, do ye read, my lord, what she hath writ?  
 TITUS  
 '*Stuprum* - Chiron - Dimetrius.' (IV.i.72-77)

In the above extract Marcus implies that through the divine intercession inscribed in the white sign, retribution for Lavinia's rape and mutilation has been justified.

In *Othello* this process is inverted by Iago who confides to the audience

I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin  
 And let him find it. Trifles light as air  
 Are to the *jealous* confirmations strong  
 As proofs of *Holy Writ*. This may do something.  
 The Moor already changes with my *poisons*:  
 Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons,  
 Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,  
 But with a little act upon the blood,  
 Burn like the mines of sulphur. I did say so.

*Enter Othello.*

Look where he comes! Not poppy nor mandragora,  
 Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,  
 Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep  
 Which thou owedst yesterday. (III.iii.319-331)

From a postcolonial perspective Iago can be seen as addressing the audience in the above extract from the interstices of the white West and the black South. Here, then, the overt moral superiority of the West is questioned by means of the contradictory images contained in the words 'jealous/poison' and 'Holy Writ'. This, in turn, implies that the profane South can only lay claim to a moral and ethical legitimacy by inscribing their religious aspirations in a white blank space, which gains its

absolute authority from the Bible (Holy Writ). The Western double standards reflected on the one hand by the proposed superiority of Venetian society are, on the other hand, questioned by the underlying maliciousness of Iago who wishes to destroy Othello by turning his life into a hell, as suggested in the image of 'mines of sulphur'. By these means the double standards, as manifested in Iago, undermine Western religious legitimacy, while simultaneously opening up a space for the 'other'. Iago's strategy for the undermining of Othello in an attempt to destroy and dominate him, is analogous to the twentieth century postcolonial situation where the Western colonizing class employed similar tactics in their civilizing mission, which is described by Ngugi as follows:

its most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonised, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others. For colonialism this involved two aspects of the same process: the destruction or the deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the coloniser. (1989:16)

In these plays Shakespeare investigates the moral rationale and justification for acts of violence which centre around the violation of Lavinia and Desdemona respectively.

The voices of the Western classical authors, which reverberate throughout *Titus Andronicus*, contribute towards the establishing of Roman (Western) ethical and sacred standards, which are reflected in the question about the ethical use of violence which Titus poses for Saturnine at the final symbolic banquet of revenge:

TITUS  
 Was it well done of rash *Virginus*  
 To slay his daughter with his own right hand,  
 Because she was enforced, stained, and deflowered?  
 SATURNINUS  
 It was, Andronicus.  
 TITUS  
 Your reason, mighty lord?  
 SATURNINUS  
 Because the girl should not survive her shame,  
 And by her presence still renew his sorrows. (V.iii.36-40)

In *Othello* Shakespeare allows the question of violence to turn inwards upon Othello whose 'white mask' of Western identity, through the machinations of Iago, has now been morally tarnished, which leads him to commit suicide. Metaphorically this morally destructive intrusion of the West onto

Othello can be seen as anticipating the moral colonising of the mind and spirit of the Western colonial civilising mission.

## 2.2. The 'Voyage in' of Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North

In the late nineteenth century the Sudan was occupied by the British, and it only achieved its independence in 1956 when Tayeb Salih was 27. In his novella Salih presents the reader with a Bakhtinian overlay of social voices, as reflected by the diverse points of view expressed by the characters in the novella. In the process Salih deliberately blurs his textual canvas by weaving the intimate psychological impressions and motivations of his characters around moments of discordant and surrealistic socio-political duress. The influence of Western modernism with its concomitant rationalism gave rise to the Arabic *Nadha*<sup>4</sup> movement which, in turn, challenged the subjective elements of traditional Arabic culture. In Salih's novel this search for individual and national identity is counterpointed by the alienating conflict between the subjective elements of Arab traditionalism which are 'played off' against' the *Nadha* movement in an attempt to find an authentic Arab voice. This textual blurring of voices stresses the fact that in the postcolonial context of the novel there are no clear-cut answers, and that the reader "is asked to participate in a continuous recreation of *Seasons*." (Amyuni, 1985:11) This point of departure is endorsed by Salih:

Basically, the reader looks for the writer in a work. When the narration begins in the first person, the reader quickly settles down to the view that, here is an autobiography. He comfortably claims no responsibility whatsoever. I created therefore a conflicting world in which nothing is certain, and, formalistically, two voices to force the reader to make up his/her own mind. (Amyuni, 1985:16)

The constant interrogation of the authority and validity of the Narrator's and Mustafa's voices, could be seen to be reflected in the metaphorical interweaving of the voices in Bach's fugue,

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<sup>4</sup> The *Nadha* movement was an Arab intellectual movement which aimed at emulating the objective world of Western modernism, while simultaneously attempting to incorporate the subjective elements of Arab traditionalism. Makdisi describes *Nadha* as "the literary and cultural "renaissance" that took place in the Arab world in the nineteenth century and culminated in the movements of Arab nationalism" (Makdisi, 1992:806).

where the one narrative is played off against the other as is reflected in the following example:

### Music Example No. 2

J.S. Bach 'Fugue No.5 in D Major' from *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*: Bars 14-16



The contrapuntal nature of the novel, as suggested by the above music example,

opens up a new register through which the novel runs, and [where] the intersection of gender, sexuality, violence, male hegemony, and colonialism is a central concern of this work. (Makdisi, 1992: 818)

#### 2.2.1. Knowledge and Desire as a Site of Power: Decolonizing the Mind

In *Season of Migration to the North*, Salih writes back to the Empire in order to dismantle the narrative of colonialism; this he does by challenging the conventional voice of the narrator in Western literature, as a site of knowledge and absolute power, by allowing the voices of his two main narrators, the Narrator and Mustafa, to offer a variety of points of view. By these means Salih achieves a contrapuntal texture in his novella where the narrator's voice is able to move freely around the narrative of colonization, rewriting the narrative of the 'Othello' figure by reinscribing it in a postcolonial palimpsestic narrative.

By these means Salih is able to capture the tragic plight of Mustafa who, like the Narrator, is trapped between the rational world of the *Nahda* movement with its attempts to emulate Western knowledge, and the subjective world of Arab traditionalism. In the following extract Mustafa's acquisition of Western knowledge, in this instance economics, is played off against 'superstitions of a new sort':

the superstition of industrialization, the superstition of nationalization, the superstition of Arab unity, the

superstition of African unity ... [It was] within the limits of your potentialities. It was within the capacity of a man like Mustafa Sa'eed to play a not inconsiderable role in furthering this if he had not been transformed into a buffoon at the hands of a small group of idiotic Englishmen. (Salih, 1991:59)

In other words the latent potential in Mustafa's Arab psyche is destroyed by both the rational Western voyage out of modernism and the empty promises of an Arabic awakening of the myths of the past.

Later on in the novel the Narrator tells the reader how the colonial intrusion succeeded in devaluing indigenous Arabic culture:

I stood at the door of my grandfather's house in the morning, a vast and ancient door made of harraz, a door that had doubtless been fashioned from the wood of a whole tree. Wad Baseer had made it; Wad Baseer, the village engineer who, though he had not even learnt carpentry at school, had yet made the wheels and rings of the waterwheels, had set bones, had cauterized people and bled with cupping glasses ... Though Wad Baseer is still alive today, he no longer makes such doors as that of my grandfather's house, later generations of villagers having found out about zan wood doors and iron doors which they bring in from Omdurman. (Salih, 1991:70)

Although the Narrator's observations are tinged with a nostalgia for the grand Arabic cultural traditions of the past, there is a realization that man cannot live in isolation and that there are nevertheless also positive advantages to be gained by embracing modern technology.

In the course of the novella Salih draws on stereotypical Western myths of Africa to deconstruct Western discourse. When Mustafa invites Isabella Seymour out to dinner she replies:

"Yes, why not? ... There's nothing to tell from your face you're a cannibal. (Salih, 1991:40)

Salih's ambivalent attitude toward the striving for the 'white right' to knowledge enables him in the following extract to dismantle the idea of London as the centre of knowledge while criticizing both the coloniser and the colonized:

'They said you gained a high certificate - what do you call it? A doctorate?' What do you call it? he says to me. This did not please me for I had reckoned that the ten million inhabitants of the country had all heard of my achievement.

'They say you were remarkable from childhood.'

'Not at all.' Though I spoke thus, I had in those days, if the truth be told, a rather high opinion of myself.

'A doctorate - that's really something.'

Putting on an act of humility, I told him that the matter entailed no more than spending three years delving into the life of an obscure English poet. (Salih, 1991:8-9)

From a Lacanian perspective the striving of the 'white right' to knowledge can be viewed as a striving for cultural survival, which, if accepted by the colonized, results in self-alienation as in the Narrator and Mustafa Sa'eed. However unlike Mustafa, who has "suffered the sentence of history -

subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement" (Bhabha, 1992:47), the Narrator in his naivety is still able to pride himself on the acquisition of his Northern knowledge.

In a masterly stroke Salih, by recourse to a form of 'black' existential nihilism, is able to place the white blank space under erasure while simultaneously inscribing a black right to a legitimate ontological space and epistemology, as is illustrated in the following extract:

Mahjoub said to me in his inebriated voice: 'Do you know what's inside?'  
 'Yes,' I said to him.  
 'What?' he said.  
 'Nothing,' I said, laughing under the influence of the drink. 'Absolutely nothing. This room is a big joke - like life. You imagine it contains a secret and there's nothing there. Absolutely nothing.'  
 'You're drunk,' said Mahjoub. 'This room is filled from floor to ceiling with treasures: gold, jewels, pearls. Do you know who Mustafa Sa'eed is?'  
 I told him that Mustafa Sa'eed was a lie. (Salih, 1991:107)

The promise contained by Mustafa's secret room, which for Mahjoub has the promise of an 'Arabian Nights' secret treasure, is destroyed by the Narrator using 'black' absurd humour to place the western blank space under erasure, but Mahjoub is unable to accept the death of this 'myth':

'You're not only drunk but mad,' said Mahjoub. 'Mustafa Sa'eed is in fact the Prophet El-Kidr, suddenly making his appearance and as suddenly vanishing. The treasures that lie in this room are like those of King Solomon, brought here by genies, and you have the key to the treasure. Open, Sesame, and let's distribute the gold and jewels to the people.' (Salih, 1991:107)

Salih refers to the epistemic violence which the Sudanese have experienced at the hands of the Northerners. In the following extract Mustafa reminiscing about his childhood tells the reader how the British had forced the Sudanese children to attend British schools, which Mustafa willingly attended in his desire to obtain Northern knowledge, but unaware of the price he was to pay for this knowledge:

I was playing with some boys outside our house when along came a man dressed in uniform riding a horse. He came to a stop above us. The other boys ran away and I stayed on, looking at the horse and the man on it. He asked me my name and I told him. "How old are you?" he said. "I don't know," I said. "Do you want to study at a school?" "What's school?" I said to him. "A nice stone building in the middle of a large garden on the banks of the Nile. The bell rings and you go into class with the other pupils - you learn reading and writing and arithmetic." (Salih, 1991:20)

From a postcolonial perspective the man in uniform could be seen as representative of those members of the British civilizing class who were determined to colonize the minds of the Sudanese through the medium of a 'British' education, where the children were taught 'reading, writing and



arithmetic', the standard fare of the British educational system. This imposition of British knowledge onto the Sudanese peoples reflects the most subtle form of colonization, which for Ngugi was far more insidious than the physical occupation of colonized territories:

Berlin of 1884 was effected through the sword and the bullet. But the night of the sword and the bullet was followed by the morning of the chalk and blackboard. The physical violence of the battlefield was followed by the psychological violence of the classroom ... Language was the means of spiritual subjugation. (Ngugi, 1989:9)

Like Lacan and Fanon, Ngugi sees language as an essential and integral part of identity:

The choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people's definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe. (Ngugi, 1989:4)

This is reflected in the tragic fate which awaits the unsuspecting Mustafa where by interaction of the imaginary and symbolic (English) dimensions, he of his own volition will become a displaced persona. This sense of alienation is reflected in Mustafa's statement that

The language, though, which I now heard for the first time is not like the language I had learnt at school. These are living voices and have another ring. My mind was like a keen knife. But the language is not my language; I had learnt to be eloquent in it through perseverance. And the train carried me to Victoria Station and to the world of Jean Morris. (Salih, 1991:28-29)

The poignancy of Mustafa's intimate psychological need is skilfully woven around a Lacanian 'lack' which Mustafa experiences as reflected in the symbolic imagery which takes possession of his mind which is 'like a sharp knife'. Thus the imagery of the 'sharp knife' functions on two mutually inclusive levels: personal deprivation and colonial subjugation, which complement one another.

The ultimate epistemic violence is manifested in Mustafa's secret room which is filled with English books which reflect the extent to which Mustafa's mind had been colonized:

Books on economics, history and literature. Zoology. Geology. Mathematics. Astronomy. The Encyclopedia Britannica. Gibbon. Macaulay. Toynbee. The complete works of Bernard Shaw ... [and the following books written by Mustafa Sa'eed:] *The Economics of Colonialism* ... *Colonialism and Monopoly* ... *The Cross and Gunpowder* ... [and] *The Rape of Africa* ... Not a single Arabic book. A graveyard. A mausoleum. An insane idea. A prison. A huge joke. A treasure chamber. (Salih, 1991:137-8)

Salih opens his novella in a style which evokes the Arabic oral tradition:

It was, gentlemen, after a long absence - seven years to be exact, during which time I was studying in Europe - that I returned to my people. I learnt much and much passed me by - but that's another story. The important thing is that I returned with a great yearning for my people in that small village at the bend of the Nile. For seven years I had longed for them, had dreamed of them, and it was an extraordinary moment when I at last found myself

standing amongst them. They rejoiced at having me back and made a great fuss, and it was not long before I felt as though a piece of ice were melting inside me, as though I were some frozen substance on which the sun had shone - that life warmth of the tribe which I had lost for a time in a land whose 'fishes die of the cold'. (1991:1)

Here the Narrator intimates to the reader that he has become trapped in an epistemological and cultural double bind, where on the one hand his acquisition of Western knowledge has been both beneficial and destructive for him, while on the other hand the quasi Arab oral tradition of the opening sentence evokes a nostalgia for the traditional roots of the Arab Diaspora (*hijra*), which are described by Amyuni as follows:

We all know how heavily loaded is the phenomenon of migration, *hijra*, in the Arab world. Connotations of necessity, scarcity, persecution, suffering and death, besides feelings of alienation and exile come immediately to mind. Geographically, historically, spiritually and intellectually, *hijra* is part and parcel of desert life: the bedouin, the Prophet, the Sufi, the poet, the merchant and the slave are prototypes of migrators-strangers in the ancestral memory of Arab man, succeeded by their modern brothers who have sought higher education, jobs, and fresh experience in the North. Mustafa Sa'eed himself is the son of a merchant of camels from the North whose tribe served as guides to the English invaders of the Sudan, and his mother was a slave from the South (p.54). Later, he was the first Sudanese boy to be sent for higher education to England. He seemed thus destined to be torn between South and North and to suffer forever the «pangs of wanderlust». (1985:20)

The pain caused by this double bind is the 'other' narrative, of the Narrator's and Mustafa's migratory journey North, which forms the central subtext around which the novel is woven. The nostalgia for the grand, exotic and mysterious narratives of the Arab past are evoked by such images as the Narrator's 'great yearning for his people' of whom he constantly 'dreamed', while his reunion is described as 'extraordinary'. Salih weaves the narratives of colonization and decolonization around these intimate yearnings of the Narrator (and Mustafa, who almost functions as an alter ego of the Narrator), as is reflected in his association of the cold rationality of Western modernism with the 'icy' North where the people are like 'icy fishes', while the South is associated with the sensuous warmth of the sun.

In his narrative, which attempts to recreate a genuine Arab cultural space, Salih attempts to reconstruct a valid geographical portrayal of the South, in an attempt to dismantle the negative portrayal of the South by the North. Whereas the North for the Narrator is associated with 'ice ... in a land where fishes die of the cold' (1991:1), the South is viewed in the following positive terms:

I listened intently to the wind: that indeed was a sound well known to me, a sound which in our village possessed a merry whispering - the sound of the wind passing through palm trees is different from when it passes through fields of corn. I heard the cooing of the turtle-dove, and I looked through the window at the palm trees standing in the courtyard of our house and I knew that all was still well with my life. I looked at its strong straight trunk, at its roots that strike down into the ground, at the green branches hanging down loosely over its top, and I experienced a feeling of assurance. I felt not like a storm-swept feather but like that palm tree, a being with a background, with roots, with a purpose. (Salih, 1991:1-2)

Unlike the savage depiction of African rivers in colonial descriptions of Africa, the Nile is, for the

Narrator, an ambivalent river , which can be destructive , but also brings fertility to the Sudanese towns and villages on its banks. The Nile river also functions as a psychological vehicle for the migration north:

And the river, the river but for which there would have been no beginning and no end, flows northwards, pays heed to nothing; a mountain may stand in its way so it turns eastward; it may happen upon a deep depression so it turns westwards, but sooner or later it settles down in its irrevocable journey towards the sea in the north. (Salih, 1991:69)

The idea of land as virginal space which must be penetrated by the colonizer is explored by Salih in his novella on a psychological level. As Matar says,

... it was only after meeting her [Mrs Robinson] that he [Mustafa] began the metaphor of woman as city - a territory to be discovered, penetrated and then deserted. (1985:115)

Salih dismantles the image of the exotic, lascivious Southern woman, by placing the English woman in this role. The first contact Mustafa has with a Western woman is with Mrs Robinson, the headmaster's wife:

At that moment, as I stood on the station platform amidst a welter of sounds and sensations with the woman's arms round my neck, her mouth on my cheek, the smell of her body - a strange, European smell - tickling my nose, her breast touching my chest, I felt - I, a boy of twelve - a vague sexual yearning I had never previously experienced. I felt as though Cairo, that large mountain to which my camel had carried me, was a European woman just like Mrs Robinson, its arms embracing me, its perfumes and the odour of its body filling my nostrils. (Salih, 1991:25)

Mustafa's first meeting with a white Western woman inverts the myth of the savage and lustful black woman of colonial discourse as contained in Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness*, where an African woman is described as follows:

She walked with measured steps, draped in striped and fringed cloths, treading the earth proudly, with a slight jingle and flash of *barbarous* ornaments ... She was *savage* and superb, *wild-eyed* and magnificent; there was something *ominous and stately* in her deliberate progress. (1982:87) [My italics]

In Salih's novella Mrs Robinson, and all the women with whom Mustafa becomes romantically involved in England, become a Western counterpart to the exotic, mysterious and lustful 'other'. Like the sterility of Mustafa's secret room, his bedroom in London is the scene of a primal warfare where the enemy lies deeply embedded in his unconscious:

My bedroom was a graveyard that looked on to a garden; its curtains were pink and had been chosen with great care, the carpeting was of a warm greenness, the bed spacious, with swansdown cushions. There were small electric lights, red, blue, and violet, placed in certain corners; on the walls were large mirrors, so that when I slept with a woman it was as if I slept with a whole harem simultaneously. The room was heavy with the smell of burning sandalwood and incense, and in the bathroom were pungent Eastern perfumes, lotions, unguents,

powders, and pills. My bedroom was like an operating theatre in a hospital. (Salih, 1991:30-31)

Once again Mustafa's tragedy is that he is trapped between the myths of the objective Western world, which is like a 'graveyard' and 'operating table', and the subjective world of sensuous Eastern artefacts. By playing these myths off against one another Salih can be said to be advocating, like Bhabha, that 'freedom's basis' lies in 'the indeterminate'. To identify with either the North or South is to become entrapped in a deterministic world of binary tensions, which, in turn, results in the tragedy of Mustafa's narrative becoming a blank text, an ode to nihilism. In this respect Mustafa's (and the Narrator's) dilemma is summed up by Makdisi as follows:

Mustafa's life story is dedicated to a nonbeing, a being that could not possibly exist; and, indeed, the rest of its pages are entirely empty. To see the world in the way it prescribes would, precisely, require one to be entirely Eastern or entirely Western, entirely black or entirely white. Mustafa's problem - and the narrator's - is that they are neither black nor white, but grey, neither wholly Eastern nor wholly Western, neither completely European nor completely Arab (furthermore given Sudan's situation neither Arab nor entirely African). They are trapped between cultures ... The narrator responds to the trap by trying, unsuccessfully, to wish it away. Having embraced British culture, he tries to abandon it and to reembrace his native culture, the culture of his childhood. Mustafa's response is no more successful. Rather than simply wishing away his experiences, he tries to maintain them, while completely separating them from each other. He does so not by becoming entirely European or entirely Arab, but by becoming *both*, but never at the same time, in the same place or with the same people. (1992:813-814)

### 2.2.2. The Politics of Alterity: Dismantling the binary Master/Slave

Whereas Shakespeare explores the hunt as a political metaphor in *Titus Andronicus*, in *Season of Migration to the North* Salih, by drawing on the psychological dimensions of the Narrator and Mustafa, is able to reflect the political 'voyage out' of British imperialism, while simultaneously writing back to the British Empire (Ashcroft, 1989), expressing the difficulties imposed upon Arabic culture in the process. Thus, rather than explore the binary tensions of the coloniser/colonized from the exterior, Salih by a subtle blending of contrapuntal textures in his novel explores the inner dimensions of the individual caught in the interstices of love/hate as an emotive political metaphor, where he allows the Narrator to confide to the reader that

[t]he world has turned suddenly upside down. Love? Love does not do this. This is hatred. I feel hatred and seek revenge; my adversary is within and I needs must confront him. (Salih, 1991:134)

Here the Narrator is telling us that it is this conflict, generated by the binary emotions love/hate which lie within all human beings, which entraps us when we attempt to enter into the world of absolute values. This dilemma is reflected by the narrator when he realises that he has finally lost Hosna Bint Mahmoud:

I had lost the war because I did not know and did not choose. For a long time I stood in front of the iron door. Now I am on my own: there is no escape, no place of refuge, no safeguard. Outside, my world was a wide one; now it had contracted, had withdrawn upon itself, until I myself had become the world, no world existing outside of me. Where, then, were the roots that struck down into times past? (Salih, 1991:134)

Due to the inner passive acceptance of outer tension, the Narrator feels he is trapped in a deterministic world, where any attempt to make a decision is pointless. But now he realises he was wrong in that one cannot survive in a totally passive world, but should therefore take an active part in the world around one. In other words the enemy within is not only located in British imperialism, but is also an integral part of the inner struggle within both Mustafa and the Narrator.

Despite Mustafa's embracing of Northern political theories, he is never able to use his political knowledge to the advantage of the Sudanese people. Richard, the Englishman who had studied with the narrator, claims that he was unsure of the role Mustafa had played in the English political plotting in the Sudan, but he realised that Mustafa Sa'eed was not a reliable economist:

I read some of the things he wrote about what he called "the economics of colonization". The overriding characteristic of his writings was that his statistics were not to be trusted. He belonged to the Fabian school of economists who hid behind a screen of generalities so as to escape facing up to the facts supported by figures. (Salih, 1991:57-58)

The political and economic irony of Mustafa's politico-economic ineptitude is that it was from the British that he had learnt to 'hide behind a screen of generalities'.

Salih makes judicious use of his Narrator, who at times acts as a political devil's advocate by critically evaluating the Sudanese and their total trust in all African leaders. Mahjoub, according to the Narrator, refuses to believe in any indiscretions on the part of the liberated African leaders:

He [Mahjoub] will not believe the facts about the new rulers of Africa, smooth of face, lupine of mouth, their hands gleaming with rings of precious stones, exuding perfume from their cheeks, in white, blue, black and green suits of fine mohair and expensive silk rippling on their shoulders like the fur of Siamese cats, and with shoes that reflect the light from chandeliers and squeak as they tread on marble. (Salih, 1991:118-119)

Here Salih's ambivalent stance is again evident in his asking the reader whether there is any difference between the British who exploited the Sudan for their own advantage, or the so-called liberators of Africa, who are doing precisely the same.

Salih explores the possibility of resolving cultural differences by grafting the diverse cultural perspectives of his characters upon one another:

:

He [Mustafa] greeted me as usual with great politeness and said, 'Some of the branches of this tree produce lemons, others oranges.'

'What an extraordinary thing!' I said, deliberately speaking in English.

He looked at me in astonishment and said, 'What?' When I repeated the phrase he laughed and said, 'Has your long stay in England made you forget Arabic or do you reckon we've become anglicised?' (Salih, 1991:15)

Here Mustafa, who has suffered the indignities of British socio-political alterity, is distressed by the manner in which the Narrator so easily allows himself to become anglicised. Mustafa tries in vain to warn the Narrator of the dangers of losing one's cultural identity by the analogy of the same tree which is able to bear both orange and lemons. The resultant feelings of alienation which Mustafa had been subjected to induce him to ask the Narrator to look after his sons if he should die and to make sure that they learn to embrace the Sudanese cultural heritage of the Sudanese village in which they grow up, so that they don't have to suffer the same fate as their father:

If they grow up imbued with the air of this village, its smells and colours and history, the faces of its inhabitants and the memories of its floods and harvestings and sowings, then my life will acquire its true perspective as something meaningful alongside many other meanings of deeper significance. (Salih, 1991:66)

By means of an ingenious interweaving of the narratives of the inner lives of the characters around the narratives of colonization and decolonization, Salih is able to examine their reciprocal interaction upon one another from an integrated psycho-socio-political perspective.. Mustafa's relationships with Northern women are an inversion of the normal relationships between the North and South, which function as a supplementary narrative which is able to comment on both the intimate psychological pain of individual characters, as well as the larger socio-political aspects of the colonization/decolonization processes from various points of view. In this sense Salih could be said to be 'writing back' both to the North, and indirectly to the South, in order to dismantle what

Said terms a 'politics of blame' as well as the myth of 'Othello'. This enables Salih, by means of a palimpsestic strategy, to reinscribe the narratives of 'Othello' in the interstices of the North and South in a bid to escape a binary entrapment. This is tacitly implied by the Narrator when he describes Mustafa's seduction of Ann Hammond:

I deceived her, seducing her by telling her that we would marry and that our marriage would be a bridge between north and south, and I turned to ashes the firebrand of curiosity in her green eyes. And yet her father stands up in court and says in a calm voice that he can't be sure. This is justice, the rules of the game, like the laws of combat and neutrality in war. This is cruelty that wears the mask of mercy ...' (Salih, 1991:68)

Mustafa's intimate narrative of alienation is played off against the narrative of Sudanese suffering precipitated by western colonization. The frenetic driving force, which manifests itself in a malicious and cruel destructiveness similar to that in Iago, is responsible for Mustafa's desire to destroy the 'other', as manifest in Northern women in general, and Ann Hammond in particular. The complex interplay of the narratives of colonization and decolonization is reflected in Mustafa's personal and symbolic 'season of migration to the North'. Mustafa's promise contained in the myth of hybridity, as reflected in his and Ann's 'marriage', which was to function as a 'bridge between north and south', is used to invert, and thereby destroy the myth of Oriental intrigue and lustfulness. Salih achieves this by comparing Ann's sensuous sexuality to 'the smell of the rotting leaves in the jungles of Africa [and] the smell of rains in the deserts of Arabia' (1991:142), which enables Mustafa to turn Anne into his slave girl Sausan.

However Mustafa's relationship with Jean Morris is no longer the passive relationship he had with Anne Hammond. Here both Mustafa and Jean's destinies are inexorably interwoven, in a deterministic and violent manner, while the interweaving of the psychological and political narratives provides the reader with reciprocal commentaries. In certain aspects Jean can be seen as repeating both an emotional lack and desire in Mustafa, which simultaneously highlights the political lack and desire in their relationship:

My bedroom became a theatre of war; my bed a patch of hell. When I grasped her it was like gasping at clouds, like bedding a shooting-star, like mounting the back of a Prussian military march. That bitter smile was continually on her mouth. I would stay awake all night warring with bow and sword and spear and arrows, and in the morning I would see the smile unchanged and would know that once again I had lost the combat. It was as

though I were a slave Shahrayar you buy in the market for a dinar encountering a Scheherazade begging amidst the rubble of a city destroyed by plague. (Salih, 1991:33-34)

This mutual lack and desire is reflected in the presentation of Mustafa's bedroom, which is no longer an 'operating theatre', but rather a 'theatre of war', where the conflicting forces of north and south are locked in ruthless battle. Mustafa's claim that bedding Jean was like "mounting the back of a Prussian military march", can be viewed as Salih writing back to the Empire by means of a psychosexual/political mixed metaphor to dismantle the colonial hold on the Sudan, as well as to offer a rewriting of Sudanese history. The reader can only sympathise with Mustafa's deep and painful frustration which is reflected in the sensuous imagery as depicted by Said in his *Orientalism* (1978), where the West continuously insists on re-inscribing 'Othello' as postcolonial palimpsest into the history of colonialism. Here Mustafa is portrayed as a colonial 'slave' who is subject to the authority of Scheherazade, representative of the myth of Orientalism as embodied by Jean. The overlapping of both Mustafa and Jean's voice reflects the poignancy of these two people, two nations trapped in the binaric grip of a violent relationship from which they are unable to escape.

The narrator is just as guilty of violence by refusing to commit himself to a relationship with Hosna, or to protect her. The Narrator instead of helping Hosna, whom he secretly admires and loves, runs away from his responsibilities, for which he is rebuked by Mahjoub:

Why didn't you marry her? You're only any good when it comes to talking. It was the woman herself who had the impudence to speak her mind. We've lived in an age when we've seen women wooing men ... Schooling and education have made you soft. You're crying like a woman. (Salih, 1991:132-133)

Salih plays the narratives of cultural identity off against the question of colonization and decolonization in his portrayal of Mustafa and the Narrator. Mustafa attempts throughout the novella to warn the Narrator against falling into the same trap into which he had so easily fallen, where through a gradual process he had unconsciously allowed his mind to become colonized. This, in turn, prompts the Narrator to wonder:

Was it likely that what had happened to Mustafa Sa'eed could have happened to me? He said that he was a lie, so was I a lie? ... Thus Mustafa Sa'eed has, against my will, become a part of my world, a thought in my brain, a phantom that does not want to take itself off.(1991:49-50)



The colonization of Sudanese and Arabic culture was achieved through the British education system, where through a Foucaultian process of selection and exclusion it was able to dominate Arabic culture. Salih allows the Narrator to confide in the reader, with an ironic naivety, that

[w]ith a combination of admiration and spite we nicknamed him [Mustafa] "the black Englishman". In our day the English language was the key to the future: no one had a chance without it. (1991:53)

The term "black Englishman" implies a Fanonian double bind where in order to obtain a semblance of political authority Mustafa had to don a mask of whiteness, which was in turn rejected by his fellow Sudanese colleagues. The narrative of Mustafa's personal history is interwoven with that of the colonial history of the Sudan:

His father was from the Ababda, the tribe living between Egypt and the Sudan. It was they who helped Slatin Pasha escape when he was prisoner of the Khalifa El-Ta'aishi, after which they worked as guides for Kitchener's army when he reconquered the Sudan. It was said his mother was a slave from the south, from the tribes of Zandi or Baria - God knows. It was the nobodies who had the best jobs in the days of the English. (Salih, 1991:54)

Salih examines colour as an index of identity by superimposing the intimate and inner emotions of his characters upon the socio-political concerns of colonization/decolonization, in a strategy which enables the two subtexts to complement one another showing how the pain caused by the colonization/decolonization processes has affected the psychological make-up of his characters. As Berkley points out, in this respect Salih is able to draw on personal experiences:

El Tayeb Salih has been emotionally marked by the very traumatic effects of the European colonization of the Arab and African world. He says that "Europe raped Africa, literally speaking, in a very violent fashion." He feels that Europe's comprehension of the African and Arab is full of prejudices. His first impressions of the West during his stay in England have never left him ... According to Raga'a al-Naqqash: 'this African young man, who drank from the water of the Nile, has not forgotten his colour. When he travelled to London and drank from its English waters [the Thames] he did not relish it, rather he remained an African, an Arab and a human being who is faithful to his original roots'. (1981:177-178)

However, despite his personal experiences Salih does not allow them to intrude upon the ambivalent theoretical paradigm of his novella. This is accomplished by the use of the contrapuntal textures of the narrative voices in the novella.

By allowing Mustafa to present himself as a mixture of African and Arab ancestry, Salih anticipates the idea of cultural hybridity, which permeates Keri Hulme's novel *The Bone People*, where ethnic and cultural differences are placed under erasure. When Mustafa attempts to seduce

Isabella Seymour she asks him:

“What race are you?” she asked me. “Are you African or Asian?”

“I’m like Othello - Arab-African,” I said to her.

“Yes,” she said looking into my face. “Your nose is like the nose of Arabs in pictures, but your hair isn’t soft and jet black like that of Arabs.

“Yes, that’s me. My face is Arab like the desert of the Empty Quarter, while my head is African and teems with a mischievous childishness.” (Salih, 1991:38)

In this dialogue Salih plays off the myth of the noble savage against the question of racial identity which, from the interstices of cultural difference, enables him to reinscribe a possibly more sympathetic, credible and authentic Afro-Arab ‘Othello’ figure as a postcolonial palimpsest. The exploitation of the myth of the noble savage is described by Abbas as follows

The credulity of some European women, their yearning for the exotic and their belief that black men are noble savages who have it in their power to give a woman the sexual experience of her life, are all behind Mustafa Sa’eed’s success in destroying Ann Hammond, Sheila Greenwood and Isabella Seymour. (1985:30)

Here Salih, like Dobzhansky (Allen, 1994:221), acknowledges the fact that although there might be genetic differences amongst the various ‘races’ as reflected in Mustafa’s ‘Arabic nose’ and ‘African hair’, cultural differences are essentially a social construct, and hence there can be no such thing as an Arab or African attitude from a biological point of view. In the context of the above extract Salih could be seen as suggesting to the reader, through the irony of the double marginalization where Mustafa’s Arabic heritage, which lies in the desert tradition of the Arabs, is superimposed on that of the African whose head ‘teems with a mischievous childishness’, that these extreme attitudes are both human constructs. By these means Salih is able to question the validity of such binary tensions based on genetic criteria, as is reflected in the final irony of Mustafa’s devaluation of the African attitude, where the marginalized (Mustafa as an Arab) marginalizes yet an ‘other’ (the African).

Salih’s ambivalent treatment of socio-political violence accompanied on the one hand by processes of Northern colonization and Southern decolonization, and on the other hand by a corresponding sympathy for the characters trapped by the binary of North/South, provides him with an opportunity to explore the interstitial spaces generated by these contradictions in order to escape the tyranny of human history. This, in turn, gives Salih a chance to re-inscribe ‘Othello’ in a postcolonial narrative where the human being is offered hope for a better future.

Salih extends the idea of ‘race’ as a social construct to that of gender in his novella, where once again concepts such as race, gender or colour, as an index of genetic identity, have nothing to do with society’s attitudes towards gender. In other words there is no such entity as a white or black gender gene which precipitates cultural differences, as these differences are created by society, as is reflected in the following extract:

'Wad Rayyes, you're mad. You're old in years but you've got no sense. Women are women whether they're in Egypt, the Sudan, Iraq or the land of the Mumbo-Jumbo. The black, the white, and the red - they're all one and the same.' (Salih, 1991:82)

The Arab woman has no rights and is regarded as the personal possession of the Arab male.

In his novella Salih criticises this misuse of woman, where the agony of such inhuman treatment of women is reflected in the forced and disastrous marriage of Hosna to Wad Rayyes. In her study of the 'sexual politics' in the novella Evelyne Accad concludes that:

the oppressed condition of women seems to have nearly as marked an effect on the upbringing of the North African and Arab male, as it does on the women themselves ... The hypocrisy and double standards which result from the social code of color [form] much of the moral element of society. (Amyuni, 1985:13)

In the following extract Salih examines the Fanonian ontological dilemma facing Mustafa where the binary tensions generated by the British overt acceptance and covert rejection of him, entrap him in a 'double dissembling', which results in an identity crisis as regards the authenticity of his identity:

He [Mustafa] built quite a legend of a sort round himself - the handsome black man courted in Bohemian circles. It seems he was a show-piece exhibited by members of the aristocracy who in the twenties and early thirties were affecting liberalism. It was said he was a friend of Lord-this and Lord-that. He was also one of the darlings of the English left ... There's nothing in the whole world worse than leftist economists. Even his academic post - I don't know exactly what it was - I had the impression he got for reasons of this kind. It was as though they wanted to say: Look how tolerant and liberal we are! This African is just like one of us! He has married a daughter of ours, and works with us on an equal footing! If you only knew this sort of European is no less evil than the madmen who believe in the supremacy of the white man in South Africa and in the southern states of America. The same exaggerated emotional energy bears either to the extreme right or to the extreme left. If only he had stuck to academic studies he'd have found real friends of all nationalities, and you'd have heard of him here. (Salih, 1991:58-59)

The irony of the above situation is that by attempting to exploit the British aristocracy, Mustafa is actually allowing himself to be exploited by the British aristocracy who regard Mustafa as an inferior Eastern curiosity on whom they are able to bestow tokens of their liberalism and humanitarianism in a patronizing manner. When finally entrapped by his own machinations Mustafa, through the narrator, confides in the reader that the jury members at his trial were prejudiced:

The jurors, too, were a varied bunch of people ... with nothing in common between them and me; had I asked one of them to rent me a room in his house he would as likely as not refused, and were his daughter to tell him she was going to marry this African, he'd have felt that the world was collapsing under his feet. Yet each one of them in that court would rise above himself for the first time in his life, while I had a sort of feeling of superiority towards them, for the ritual was being held primarily because of me; and I, over and above everything else, am a colonizer, I am the intruder whose fate must be decided. (Salih, 1991:94)

#### 2.2.4. Religion and the Other: Tolerance

By superimposing the narrative of British colonization with its concomitant civilizing mission reinforced by the objective aims of Western modernism, upon the narrative of decolonization with its concomitant narrative of Arab traditionalism which attempts to embrace the subjective, mystical and supernatural, Salih is able to question the legitimacy of these divergent voices. The blending of the real and fantastic evokes the magic realism of the twentieth century South American writers who have used the literary technique of magic realism in an attempt to cast off the influences of colonialism and find an authentic voice. Behind this overlay of divergent voices the reader can discern Salih's voice which, while it condemns the Western colonization of Africa, nevertheless advocates a tolerant attitude to 'other' peoples and rejects violence as a solution to cultural and religious differences. As Berkley points out: "In its essence, El Tayeb Salih's world view is based upon a concept of love and brotherhood implicit in Islamic beliefs. He is anti-war." (1981:177) The Narrator's sense of religious ambivalence is reflected in the following extract:

The war ended in victory for us all: the stones, the trees, the animals, and the iron, while I, lying under this beautiful, compassionate sky, feel that we are all brothers; he who drinks and he who prays and he who steals and he who commits adultery and he who fights and he who kills. The source is the same. No one knows what goes on in the mind of the Divine. Perhaps He doesn't care. Perhaps He is not angry. On a night such as this you feel you are able to rise up to the sky on a rope ladder. This is the land of poetry and the possible - and my daughter is named Hope. We shall pull down and we shall build, and we shall humble the sun itself to our will; and somehow we shall defeat poverty. (Salih, 1991:112-113)

The Narrator's dream of victory is not a victory of the one binary over the 'other' binary. It anticipates Keri Hulme's idea of commensality where all human beings will be able to live as 'brothers' under a 'compassionate sky' - a dream common to both Christianity and Islam. By these means the Narrator attempts to dismantle the idea of 'he who fights and he who kills' as contained in the Western Christian idea of a colonial 'justum bellum' and the idea of divine revenge rewarded contained in the Islamic concept of 'Jihad'.

Over the overt biblical overtones of the following extract Salih weaves a cynical Iago-like subtext which questions the validity and sincerity of the often rather superior and patronizing religious attitudes of certain members of the British Christian civilizing mission. From the contrapuntal textures of this text the claim, that peace can only be achieved if there is a resolution of the binary tensions experienced by all mankind, can be heard emanating from the overlay of voices which blurs an attempt at authorial intrusion:

But until the meek inherit the earth, until the armies are disbanded, the lamb grazes in peace beside the wolf and the child plays water-polo in the river with the crocodile, until that time of happiness and love comes along, I for one shall continue to express myself in this twisted manner. (Salih, 1991:41)

However this sense of love and brotherhood implicit in Islamic belief is violated by Mustafa who uses people, in a similar manner to Iago, for personal gratification and advancement.

The influence of the Northern Christian voyage out augments the dormant conflict in Mustafa's subconscious. On the train to Cairo Mustafa for the first time meets a Christian clergyman; this reinforces Accad's claim that 'the real encounter of Sa'eed is between Islam and a missionary Christianity'. (Accad, 1987:384):

I remember that in the train I sat opposite a man wearing clerical garb and with a large golden cross round his neck. The man smiled at me and spoke in English, in which I answered. I remember well that amazement expressed itself on his face. (Salih, 1991:24)

As Mustafa nears London the cultural conflict lying deep within him is awakened by the Christian clergyman, and expresses itself through his dream of a mosque:

Falling into a short sleep, I dreamt I was praying alone at the Citadel Mosque. It was illuminated with thousands of chandeliers, and the red marble glowed as I prayed alone. When I woke up there was the smell of incense in my nose and I found that the train was approaching London. (Salih, 1991:28)

Incense as an icon of Arabic religion undergoes several metamorphoses during the course of the novel. As Abbas points out,

Mustafa Sa'eed in fact tramples on Afro-Arab culture and its emblems of worship and kingship. Significantly enough, he does this precisely on those occasions when he is supposed to be engaged in his crusade to avenge his honour as an Afro-Arab - in other words when he is busy seducing English women. It is on these occasions that Mustafa Sa'eed succeeds in turning Afro-Arab history into a pimp. This happens in an almost literal sense when he uses incense to make his English women feel «dizzy» (his own word). Incense, as is well known, is one of the most important accessories of worship in the east. The novel in fact invites us to compare and contrast Mustafa Sa'eed's and the grandfather's use of incense. (Abbas, 1985:32-33)

The utter perversion of Arabic religious icons is further reflected in Mustafa's London flat,

where its worldly qualities are used in a secular ritual to ensnare his English women. In the inner sanctum of his flat, the sacred qualities of the Mosque chandeliers and incense degenerate into icons of sensuality and immoral seduction as reflected in the cheap small electric lights, pink curtains and burning sandalwood, all of which are designed to further his secular rituals of seduction. As Abbas points out,

This perversion of the traditional use of incense is, on the symbolic level, the true measure of Mustafa Sa'eed's utter alienation from the Afro-Arab culture which he claims to champion. (1985:33)

The Narrator, like Mustafa, is unable to confront the voice of Islamic religion. When he visits Hosna, with whom he is in love, he does not have the courage to tell her, or even comfort her when he sees the emotional distress of the news that she will have to marry Wad Rayyes, whether she wants to or not.

Note how Salih superimposes texts upon one another in the following extract:

I became aware of her voice in the darkness like the blade of a knife. 'If they force me to marry, I'll kill him and kill myself.'

I thought of several things to say, but presently I heard the muezzin calling for the night prayer: 'God is great. God is great.' So I stood up, and so did she, and I left without saying anything. (Salih, 1991:96)

In this passage Salih's ambivalence is expressed through the four voices which are superimposed upon one another to depict four divergent points of view. Hosna's voice is that of the marginalized woman, who, like the colonized, has had traditional unjust Arabic laws thrust upon her. This in turn precipitates a violent Fanonian reaction, which is echoed by Mustafa's voice which intrudes with the leitmotif 'like a blade of a knife'. The third voice reflects the difference of the Narrator, who is too embarrassed and lacks the courage to do anything, or make a decision. Finally the traditional voice of Islam proclaiming the greatness of God, which is added to the quartet, almost functions as a funeral dirge.

The narrator finds Mustafa's apparent religious dedication and political desires incongruous:

Mustafa Sa'eed used regularly to attend prayers in the mosque. Why did he exaggerate in the way he acted out that comic role? Had he come to this faraway village seeking peace of mind? Perhaps the answer lay in that rectangular room with the green windows. (Salih, 1991:64-5)

The attitude of Islam to Christianity, like that of the Christians to Islam, is ironically riddled with prejudices, as is reflected in the reaction to the Narrator's return home from the North:

Bint Majzoub laughed. 'We were afraid,' she said, 'you'd bring back with you an uncircumcised infidel for a wife.' (Salih, 1991:4)

Finally a note of scepticism is discerned in the contrapuntal overlay of Mustafa's metaphorical voyage to the North upon the Narrator's journey through the traditional Sudanese desert:

The road is endless, without limit, the sun indefatigable. No wonder Mustafa Sa'eed fled to the bitter cold of the North. Isabella Seymour said to him: 'The Christians say their God was crucified that he might bear the burden of their sins. He died, then, in vain, for what they call sin is nothing but the sigh of contentment in embracing you, O pagan god of mine. You are my god, and there is no god but you' ... How strange! How ironic! Just because a man has been created on the Equator some mad people regard him as a slave, others as a god. Where lies the mean? Where the middle way? ... And my grandfather .... Is he above this chaos? I don't know. In any case he has survived despite epidemics, the corruption of those in power, and the cruelty of nature. (Salih, 1991:108)

Despite the blurring of the authorial voice by the contrapuntal overlay of voices expressing divergent points of view, Salih's authorial voice can be discerned emerging from the interstices of Mustafa's and the Narrator's voices which are superimposed upon one another. The Narrator, like most people, cannot endure discomfort, and thus claims he can understand how the intense Southern heat caused Mustafa to seek the icy North. Salih's questioning of the validity of a divine existence is charged with an ironic resonance when he asks if this divine figure is merely a social construct.

### 3. Keri Hulme's *The Bone People* : A Question of Hybridity

#### 3.1. The Socio-political Background of Aotearoa/New Zealand

Aotearoa, first discovered on a Polynesian 'voyage out', precipitated the establishment of a Maori culture which is described by McHenry as follows:

Their traditional history describes their origins in terms of waves of migration beginning about AD 1150 and culminating in the arrival of a "great fleet" in the C14th from Hawaiki, a mythical land usually identified as Tahiti. Although this tradition has largely been discounted by archaeological discoveries, which have dated habitation at least as early as AD 800 and possibly very much earlier, it still provided the basis for traditional Maori social organization. Members of each tribe (*iwi*) recognized a common ancestry (which might be traced through either or both parents) and common allegiance to a chief or chiefs (*ariki*). Traditionally, at the day-to-day level, the most important social groups were the *hapu* (subtribe), the primary landholding group and the one within which marriage was preferred, and the extended family (*whaanau*). (1990:805)

Thus, by the time New Zealand was first "discovered" by Abel Tasman in 1642 and later by Captain James Cook in 1769, a Maori culture had firmly been established as is reflected in the establishment of a distinct Maori language which had deviated from the standard Polynesian language of Tahiti. In *The Bone People* Keri Hulme searches for resolutions to the socio-political conflict between the Maori and the British, as is pointed out by Heim and Zimmerman who claim that in Hulme's novel there is

a focus for the construction of a powerful new social formation, hence relying on some sense of referentiality, and the site of a deconstructive negotiation of existing discursive structures. (1992:108)

The narrative of the political marginalization of the Maori voice, which plays an important role in Hulme's novel, is summarised by Banks (1995:631) who points out that from 1890 to the present day the political struggle in New Zealand has been essentially between the British styled Labour and National Parties, with the Maori being politically marginalized and confined to the House of Representatives which was abolished only in 1950.

An important event which marked the commencement of a British colonial period in New Zealand, was the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, which saw the Maori chiefs ceding sovereignty (*kawanatanha*) to Britain. The subsequent Anglo-Maori battles were centred



around this land issue. For the Maori, as expressed in *The Bone People*, the land was an integral part of their culture and *Mauritanga* ('Maoriness'), and the subsequent British expropriation of their land was culturally unacceptable to them.

At the commencement of the colonial literary period writers were mainly concerned with the dream of converting the wild New Zealand landscape into the ordered British landscape. This social dream, as Jones points out, has been

a dominant theme of New Zealand literature in English throughout its history, from Sarah Raven's poem about the early Canterbury settlers, their 'utopian visions dreaming' of a Just City where they could live 'as brothers all' and of a Pastoral Paradise where they would 'feed [their] woolly flocks in peace,' to Kerewin Holme's dream of a New Zealand where 'the land is clothed in beauty and the people sing' in Keri Hulme's *The Bone People*. (Jones, 1990:187)

The literary 'voyage in' of Maori writers aimed at dismantling Western domination is a relatively recent phenomenon. As most Maori writers write in English, the only way left open to them to capture an authentic 'Maori' voice, is to appropriate English while simultaneously including Maori words in the text, as is reflected in Hulme's glossing of Maori words in *The Bone People*. In the struggle between Pakeha and Maori writing Arvidson points out that

... the most fundamental difference distinguishing Maori writing from Pakeha was its purposive nature, its usefulness in the service of some cause or causes. The largely anecdotal reminiscences of the early phase of Maori writing up to the early 1970's, variously lyrical celebrations of Maori life or elegiac lamentations for what appeared to be its passing, served, among other purposes, a clearly archival function. Stories and poems became the repositories of experiences and ways of feeling to which access in reality was diminishing. Encompassing that function was the broader intention to communicate, particularly to a Maori readership, how it had been for the older Maori generation, and how the accelerating processes of change had felt in their earlier stages. By the mid 1970s, the instructive or educative function was understood to be of value to all, not only to Maori readers. 'I want to explain to people who we are,' as Patricia Grace told an interviewer, speaking of her own work. I hope the stories show aspects of a way of life that is essentially Maori and they give some insight into what it is to be a Maori'. Some years later, Witi Ihimaera (1982) spoke in similar terms of his own work up to about 1975: 'The basic purpose for writing had been to establish and describe the emotional landscape of the Maori people. The landscapes of the heart.' (1991:117-118)

Against this literary background Hulme has attempted to reclaim Maori culture from the margins of obscurity and inferiority to which it had been relegated by the Pakeha canon.

Ross (1989) gives the following biographical details about Keri Hulme:

She was born in Christchurch, New Zealand, on the 9 March 1947. Her father, a carpenter, was a first generation New Zealander of wholly English descent from Lancashire. He died when Hulme was 11; her mother, who was of Orkney Scots and Kai Tahu descent, supported six children by working as a clerk and credit manager, shop owner and then manager. [The influence of Keri's early childhood days is clearly reflected in *The Bone People*]. Keri spent her childhood between Christchurch, where she went to school,

and Moeraki about two hundred miles to the South, where she spent holidays with her mother's family. (1991:53)

Hulme rejects being associated with the New Zealand Pakeha literary world, and directly confronts the marginalization of Maori culture, defining her literary concern in this way:

I try in some ways to show to the light things that go on in our country that aren't necessarily good, aren't necessarily nice, but are best dealt with if we look at them, and then we can do something about them. (Radio New Zealand interview).

Consequently, *the bone people* is powered by the clash between a kind of unconscious frontier guilt, a shared dream of social equity and the stubborn social fact of the steady assimilation of Maori and Pakeha. (Harding, 1992:137)

### 3.2. Knowledge and Desire as a Site of Ambivalence and Reciprocation

In *The Bone People* Kerewin, Joe and Simon, a fragmented family, function as a metonymy of society. The journeys of these three main characters reflect a desire for a knowledge which will help them overcome the alienation they experience, as well as help them find a solution as to how they may heal the colonial breach which has so violently disrupted their respective lives. As Ash points out, Kerewin

undergoes a literal and symbolic journey and acquires the strength to return to society with the gift of her new knowledge: the paramount importance of bridging human alienation and establishing community. (1989:124)

The spiral, as a central symbol of knowledge in *The Bone People*, "is filled with echoes of literature from all cultures and eras" (Ross, 1991:57). Early in the novel Kerewin ponders upon the significance of the spiral:

On the floor at her feet was an engraved double-spiral, one of the kind that wound your eyes round and round into the centre where surprise you found the beginning of another spiral that led your eyes out again to the nothingness of the outside. Or the somethingness: she had never quite made her mind up as to what a nothingness was. Whatever way you defined it, it seemed to be something.

The spiral made a useful thought-focus, a mandala ...

It was reckoned that the old people found inspiration for the double spirals they carved so skilfully, in uncurling fernfronds: perhaps. But it was an old symbol of rebirth, and the outward-inward nature of things ... (Hulme, 1986:44-45)

Kerewin's net of knowledge encompasses a wide range of cultures. We are told that there was 'just about everything in her library' (Hulme, 1986:15), while Joe finds her book

collection at Moerangi eclectic. But this knowledge, like her tower, becomes a net which initially entraps her.

Strange.

Webs of events that grew together to become a net in life. Life was a thing that grew wild. She supposed there was an overall pattern, a design to it.

She'd never found one.

She thought of the tools she had gathered together, and painstakingly learned to use. Futureprobes, Tarot and I Ching and the wide wispfingers from the stars ... All these to scry and ferret and vex the smokethick future. A broad general knowledge, encompassing bits of history, psychology, ethology, religious theory and practices of many kinds. Her charts of self-knowledge. Her library. The inner thirst for information about everything that had lived or lives on Earth that she'd kept alive long after childhood had ended.

None of them helped make sense of living. (Hulme, 1986:90)

Nevertheless Kerewin hopes that she will eventually

Find the kaik' road  
take the kaika road,  
the glimmering road of the past  
into Te Ao Hou. (Hulme, 1986:91)

It is significant that Kerewin does not seek her resolution in the British past, but rather in a pre-colonial past which embraces Maori culture, as is reflected in her use of Maori terms such as 'kaika', which means in 'Ngai Tahu' dialect 'a home or village', while 'Te Ao Hou' means 'the new world, the shining world' (Hulme, 1986:447), a concept which is encapsulated in the Maori name *Aotearo*, meaning shining land, for New Zealand.

Joe, as a representative of lost Maori cultural knowledge, has as his quest the search for his lost *Mauriora*, which will assist him in reconstructing 'the broken man'. Hulme defines *Mauriora* as

a life principle, thymos of humans; talisman or material symbol of that secret and mysterious principle protecting the mana (power/vitality) of people, birds, land, forests, whatever ... (198:449).

Simon's quest, on the other hand, is to unite Kerewin, Joe and himself into a united family. Here Simon functions as a metonymic symbol of a displaced colonizer who has to go upon a journey of both physical and emotional suffering into the narrative of his historical past to construct a Maori identity.

In *The Bone People* Hulme subverts the authority of English by introducing Maori words, emulating Maori syntactic structures, as well as creating new concepts by joining words

together. In these ways Hulme displays a great sensitivity to and awareness of language in her treatment of post-colonial concerns, which are partly reflected in language:

Hulme confirms her anxiety about the elusiveness of language: "You've ... got all the words there but sometimes it's the spaces between that are conveying the full impact of emotions." This gap seems out of the writer's control, but Hulme recognises it is this gap where the power she desires exists. As the narrator in "Te Kaihau" says "if you split" the word [windeater] a "power leaks out" (273). (Ash, 1989:132)

Thus for Hulme the knowledge of cultural harmony is embedded in the commingling of the English and Maori languages, thereby reinforcing the central theme of her novel which is cultural tolerance, as is reflected in Kerewin's explanation of the etymology of Aikido to Joe

"Do is Japanese for a way. Ai means love, harmony, and ki is the vital spirit. Aikido can mean, the way of martial spiritual harmony, okay?" (Hulme, 1986:199)

Through the contrapuntal use of language, such as the interpolation of interior monologues in the text, and the use of both Maori and English, Hulme is able to explore the cultural spaces, where, through a process of interaction, meaning undergoes a convergence, erasing such binary tensions as coloniser/colonized, and emerging triumphant with a new meaning which gives the reader hope that it is perhaps possible to escape the sentence of history. This results in a type of metaphorical lingual 'spiralling', where there is sameness in difference. In other words Hulme manages to create a type of lingual 'commensality', thus reinforcing the central aims of her novel.

It is thus not surprising that in *The Bone People* Kerewin attempts to dismantle the power to name, claiming it is the signified which is important and not the signifier:

knowing names is nice, but it don't mean much. Knowing this is a whatever she said is neat, but it don't change it. Names aren't much. The things are. (Hulme, 1986:126)

Continuing in this vein, Hulme gives the main characters more than one name. Kerewin is known as Kerewin, Kere, Holmes and the feminist form 'Miz Holmes', all of which reflect a 'range of personal and public personae'. (Dever, 1989:26) Joe's English name is symptomatic of his loss of identity which results in him becoming the 'broken man' before regaining his *Mauritanga*. Conversely, Simon who is the cultural catalyst that unites Joe and Kerewin, is

known by the Maori name 'Himi'. However the name which provides him with cultural security is 'Clare'. As Dever points out,

This denial of rigid or conventional toponymical practice highlights not only the transformation and mutability of meaning, but also the impracticability of assigning exclusively European or Pakeha names and labels to new and different experiences, and the impossibility of actively circumscribing meaning or attaching fixed labels and definitions in an atmosphere of cultural confusion. (1989:26)

I shall endeavour to show how in the following extract the possible cultural meanings of words, in the socio-political context of the characters, are interwoven and played off against one another to deconstruct the binary political tensions, and reinforce the central concept of commensality in Hulme's novel.

"Aue, Mere-mere quite contrary," she tries to laugh.  
Or is it Kere-kere quite contrary ?

She closes the door with a thump! as though that would keep the phantoms of the night outside. (Hulme, 1986:301)

It would appear that Hulme by superimposing the children's English nonsense verse 'Mary, Mary quite contrary' upon the Maori signifier 'Mere-mere', firstly as the Maori cosmogonic myth, and secondly as Maori cultural artefacts, is able to show the reader how these diverse cultural strands interrogate one another, finally blending together in a new and hybrid text, whereby the binary tensions are placed under erasure. On the first level the signifier 'Mere-mere' which refers to Venus the evening star (Hulme, 1986:449), could be seen as evoking the Maori cosmogonic myth of Papa (earth) and Rangi (sky) who were regarded as the archetypal and mythical earth mother and sky father respectively. The Maori, and perhaps Hulme as well, believe that the myth of Papa and Rangi imparts a historical legitimacy to the Maori peoples, a legitimacy which should enable them to find their lost identity. Papa and Rangi were believed to have initially formed an inseparable union symbolic of a 'unity' (i.e. a two-in-oneness in much the same way as the Trinity reflects a unity, wholeness, togetherness or three-in-oneness) until they were separated by their children. In other words Papa and Rangi's togetherness becomes Keri's quest for cultural unity as reflected in the secular 'trinity' as manifest in her tricephalos, where Keri portrays herself, Joe and Simon 'as a whole, as a set' (Hulme, 1986:315).

The Maori text questions the validity of the Western text of Venus, the Roman goddess of love, with its 'contrary' subtexts of the sensuous as opposed to spiritual love. It

is upon this new hybrid symbol that Hulme's idea of a commensality will be built. This hybrid creation is like the phoenix symbol associated with Kerewin's tricephalos, where out of the ashes of the old cultures, a new and vibrant culture will emerge liberating both man and woman, leading them to a 'brave new world'.

The second series of meanings attached to the Maori word, 'Mere-mere', which is similar in pronunciation to the English word 'Mary', reveals an ambivalent signified. On the one hand 'mere', a flat, club-like weapon used in battles by Maori warriors in close combat situations, conveys sentiments of aggression, while the greenstone from which it is made, and which was also used to carve the little statuettes of 'Mauriori', a Maori God, also symbolizes the essence of Maoriness (i.e. Maori culture). The superimposition of the idea of Mary's 'contrariness' inherent in the nonsense verse, parodies the aggressive overtones of the Maori myth and places it under erasure, while the greenstone points towards a cultural tolerance, which again reinforces Hulme's idea of commensality.

In the parodic play on the homophonic signifiers Mere-mere/Mary/Kere, Hulme places difference of identity and culture under erasure by introducing Mary, as a figure of 'non-sense'. This has the effect of undermining and parodying attempts to encapsulate identity in a sign. Here then

culture-as-sign articulates that in-between moment when the rule of language as semiotic system - linguistic difference, the arbitrariness of the sign - turns into a struggle for the historical and ethical *right to signify*. (Bhabha, 1992:49)

Kerewin's net of knowledge draws on a wide and diverse range of intertextual sources ranging from music and painting to numerous literary allusions, which she skilfully interweaves into her text to reinforce her idea of an epistemological commensality. This idea of an epistemological commensality is the central idea contained in the title *The Bone People*, which refers to the Maori cultural knowledge of their ancestors. It is upon this Maori subtext Hulme superimposes such Western knowledge as Kerewin's library where 'there is just about everything' (Hulme, 1986:15). By superimposing these diverse cultural texts upon one another that Hulme is able to question their cultural authority and validity, while simultaneously seeking a resolution in the transformation and hybridity of Western and Maori cultures.

Music, which plays a significant part in the whole issue of commensality, also forms an integral part of Maori epistemology:

The awareness of breathing is a kind of knowledge of life, being connected to the world, and of artistic power. Similarly, singing emotionally establishes a connection between the inner and the outer world, and

makes possible moments of great intimacy between people ... (Heim & Zimmermann, 1992:115)

Thus music for the Maori is a type of catalyst which promotes the integration of knowledge. Hulme exploits this idea when she superimposes Western music upon Maori music. For Kerewin musical eclecticism becomes a means by which she is able to escape the pain of the past and give expression to her frustrations:

He [Joe] listens to the savage tune Kerewin is throttling her guitar into producing, and thinks, I'll talk, but will she listen?  
 It's not blues, it's not rock, it's not folk or imitation electronic, and sure as hell, it's not any Maori music he's heard before.  
 He says at the inner door,  
 "E hoa?"  
 Notes rear and slash at him.  
 "What *are* you playing?"  
 "Shark music," says Kerewin sweetly. "Dirges and laments, coronachs and requiems, all for my fellow sharks."  
 (Hulme, 1996:240 -241)

In her novel Hulme has purposefully drawn on a wide range of intertextual allusions from both Maori and Western knowledge and literature. This intertextual strategy enables her, through a process of literary cross-fertilisation, to create a new and dynamic hybrid *Aotearoa* where the two cultures enrich one another.

Hulme has skilfully interwoven the diverse streams of consciousness of her main characters in such a manner that the Freudian overtones of the rational West commingle with those of the Maori spiritual quest for an authentic Maori knowledge. As a displaced octoroon, Kerewin's interior monologue reflects her desperate search for a sense of community:

Uprooted again. Truly Kerewin te kaihou ... but I seek always for homes. I find, then I lose. And I'm not a traveller at heart, just a casual gypsy wandering out from my base and back. No more, because no base ... and nowhere to go, no-one to trust. No marae for beginning or ending. No family to help and save and save. No-one no-one no-one at all. (Hulme, 1986:411)

In Simon's distraught interior monologue while in hospital, Hulme again confronts the reader with the pain of his displacement, over which Simon, as a pakeha, has no control:

They can't do this to me.  
 And he knew they could. (Hulme, 1986:394)

Finally after having met the Kaumatua, and having regained his *Mauritanga*, Joe realises

But I've done as much as I can with the past.

I know my child was a gift ... I resented his difference, and therefore, I tried to make him as tame and malleable as possible ... Kerewin ... I was trying to make her fit my idea of what a friend, a partner was. I could only see the one way .... whatever she thought she was, bend her to the idea that lovers are, marriage is, the only sanity. (Hulme, 1986:381)

Thus by superimposing these interior monologues upon one another, Hulme has been able to erase the mutual pain of difference and introduce in its place a hope for a new and liberated community.

In the course of her novel Hulme draws on a number of cultural symbols where the narrative of Western culture is played off against the Maori cultural narrative. This commingling of Western and Maori texts results in the emergence of a new and vibrant hybrid text, which reinforces the central theme of hybridity in Hulme's novel.

While from a Western perspective the symbol of the moth which pervades the novel can refer to the cycle of birth, death and rebirth, from a Jungian perspective the moth, especially in the context of a dream, could quite readily be interpreted as a cultural icon reflecting metonymically an aspect of a specific cultural collective consciousness.

Just as from a Western perspective the moth can be associated with a type of spiritual death, so too, from a Maori perspective, is the moth, in general, associated with death. The Kaumatua, the cultural custodian of Maori culture and religious beliefs, tells Joe that to dream of his deceased wife Hana, as a moth, is contrary to the Maori ancestral beliefs as the dead, under no circumstances, may be brought back from death 'by memory, or desire, or love'. (Hulme, 1986:352) However for Joe, under the influence of Western knowledge, the dream of Hana is regarded merely as a Freudian mechanistic displacement of his frustrated desires which has evoked the memory of Hana in his subconscious. In order to place this acculturation process, which Joe has experienced, under erasure the Kaumatua tells Joe that from Maori perspectives we are presented with only three alternatives as regards possible interpretations of death:

- (1) If you go to Te Reinga it is held that you live as you did here. Eventually, you die again. And then the rot sets in. If you get past the spirit-eaters, Tuapiko and Tuwhaitiri, *if* you get past



- them, there is underworld after underworld, each less pleasant than the last. In the end one of all you get a choice. The choice is to become nothing, or to return to earth as a moth. When the moth dies, that's you gone forever - just putting off the evil day, hei?"
- (2) "The second way is to journey along the sea path. You surface once to say goodbye to Ohau, the last of this land you'll ever see, and then go ever westwards till you reach Te Honoiwairua in Irihia. There, there is a judgement, and you're thrust into heaven or hell. I think that idea is cribbed. It doesn't sound quite Maori.
- (3) The third version however, I like, ... it is more sophisticated. Some of us believe that the soul has a choice of which journey to make, to stay with Papa, or to join Rangi. Graveminders used to put a toetoe stalk, a tiri, into the ground at the end of the grave so it pointed to the sky. Then the soul could leave the body, and hang in the sun a while, like a cicada crawled from its larval husk. It would choose which way it wanted to develop, the earthly, or the heavenly, and if it chose Rangi, away into the firmament it would go. (Hulme, 1986:354) [I have numbered the three alternative interpretations of death for the convenience of the reader.]

Thus the Kaumatua's argument presented to Joe leaves him with only one choice, as the first choice, like its Christian counterpart of destruction through sin, leads to a state of total annihilation. Likewise the second alternative, as the Kaumatua points out, reflects the influence of the Christian civilizing mission, where Christian concepts are paraded under the guise of Maori cultural truths. Thus the third proposition is the only alternative left for Joe. This hybrid alternative, based on the Maori creation myth of Rangi and Papa, permits the deceased a choice as to whether to return to Rangi, the sky 'father', or Papa, 'mother' earth. This final alternative, in turn, places the Christian duality of heaven, as a spiritual reward, and hell, as a place of spiritual punishment, under erasure.

### 3.3. A Politics of Integration

By employing Joe, Kerewin and Simon as representatives of Maori, octoroon, and white Pakeha cultures respectively, Hulme is able to depict the history and influence of British colonialism on the local New Zealand population by taking the reader on an ideological journey which moves from the British idea of 'commonwealth' and community to a socio-political commensality, where all social differences are placed under erasure. I shall attempt to show that Said's idea of contrapuntal textures, as 'a set of intertwined and overlapping histories' (1993:18) where 'the various themes play off one another' (1993:51), fails to take into account the full implication of the resonance produced by the interplay between the diverse social, political, historical and cultural voices which have shaped postcolonial narratives. Bhabha, however, resolves this problem by advocating that freedom from Said's

binaric 'voyages in and out' lies in the freedom allowed by the indeterminacy of the interstitial cultural spaces, where room for freedom of cultural exchange and reciprocal cultural enrichment exists. This idea is captured by Ross who states that

Hulme has written a novel that is intended to change New Zealand, to rewrite it into a place where Maori and Pakeha can not only live together but also evolve a distinctive culture that takes in the best of world civilization while retaining its heart in the tradition of the Maori past, in the land and the surrounding sea. This requires a shift in the colonial view of New Zealand as an under-populated sheep pasture on the edge of nowhere to one that sees it as the centre of a new cultural experiment. Yet this shift is just that; it cannot be a wholesale abandonment of all that has gone before. However, the narratives that uphold individualism, imperialism, racism, materialism, sexism, and violence would all preclude the successful achievement of community that is pictured at the novel's conclusion. Those images and stereotypes that insist on rigid differences and all-or-nothing responses are part of both Maori and Pakeha culture. These must be dismantled if what is best in each culture is to survive to form a new community. (Ross, 1991:56)

### 3.3.1. The Myth of Type Placed Under Erasure

In her novel Hulme places the acts of stereotyping under erasure by inverting the roles of victimiser and victim, thus revealing the pain such acts can cause. At one time or another Joe, Kerewin and Simon are all either guilty of stereotyping, or victims of stereotyping by others.

Joe is guilty of stereotyping by trying to make Kerewin conform to his expectations of gender roles, and also by casting Simon, his adopted son, into the model son who would meet his expectations. Conversely Joe is also the victim of British stereotyping where

despite his education and his earlier aspirations, [he] is trapped within the adopted Pakeha stereotype of the ignorant, hard-drinking Maori labourer. (Dever, 1989:26)

Kerewin is also guilty of stereotyping. When she first sees Joe in the bar she thinks,

I'd believe the poor effing fella's short of words. Or thought.  
Or maybe just intellectual energy. (Hulme, 1986:12)

Kerewin's first reaction to Simon's handicap is to classify him as "one of the maimed, the contaminated..." (Hulme, 1986:17) Finally Kerewin expects Simon's father to be

a loud and boisterous Viking type she'd bet, from the child's colouring. Yer rowdy Aryan barbarian, face like a broken crag, tall as a door, and thick all the way through. (Hulme, 1986:28)

However when Kerewin gets to know Joe better she realises that one cannot stereotype people, as it is "very disturbing. You just get someone neatly arranged in a slot that appears to fit them, and they wriggle on their pins and spoil it all." (Hulme, 1986:231) This realization awakens a

sense of empathy in Kerewin for Simon which causes her to go into Taiwhenuawera pretending to be dumb, so that she can experience how Simon must feel.

She smiled at questions in pubs, and wrote down answers. She went into shops and bought things by listing them or pointing. She had quite a time getting a bus ticket back to Whangaroa. It was infuriating. Everyone she met talked more loudly than normal, as though the volume would penetrate the barrier of her silence. Many people stared and whispered to each other behind their hands. And some, kind in manner, simplified their speech and repeated key words, as though she were dumb as well as mute. (Hulme, 1986:108)

The discovery of an empathetic understanding of one another's differences is one of the prerequisites for those who wish to join in the commensality which Hulme advocates as a solution to the violence and hatred which permeate the modern world.

Simon is also the victim of cruel and malicious stereotyping. When Kerewin, Joe and Simon go to the local pub the barman automatically assumes because Simon is dumb, he is also retarded:

"I wouldn't call him shy," says Joe. "He can't talk though."  
 "O hell," the man is blushing as though he should have known about it, "jeez, I really put my foot in it, didn't I?"  
 "I'm sorry, " he says loudly, then drops his voice to whisperlevel. "Is he ahhh backward? He don't look it."  
 (Hulme, 1986:244)

In her novel Hulme attempts to deconstruct the patronizing British colonial attitudes of the past which regarded the Maori as decadent savages waiting to be saved through British enlightenment, as reflected in Sir George Grey's observations:

That their traditions are puerile is true; that the religious faith of the races who trust in them is absurd is a melancholy fact ... I believe that the ignorance which has prevailed regarding the mythological systems of barbarous or semi-barbarous races has too generally led to their being considered far grander and more reasonable than they really were. (1922:xiii)

In order to challenge the stereotypical images of the Maori as savage cannibals Hulme superimposes Joe's stereotype of cannibals, whom he had always imagined as 'little wizened people with pointy teeth' (Hulme, 1986:335) on the grand narrative of Maori history and bravery as told by Joe's grandmother:

Midges in the tea ... he scoops them out frowning ... what was that childhood horror? Ah yes, Kohua-ora, meaning "Cooked alive in an earthenoven." Refers, the book has said, to an ancient event near Papatoetoe. He stumbled across the reference in one of the useful books his grandmother gave him, and it brought him nightmares for months ... Had it been deliberate, the slow cooking of a hated rival? Or someone laid in a hole, who though thought dead, was still alive and showed it? She told him what a noble fighter the old

Maori was, and the school texts repeated it whenever they mentioned the Maori at all ... God, what lies we get taught. Exemplify the honourable incidents, and conceal the children who got the chop, the women and old men stampeded over cliffs, the bloody endless feuding ... yet the gallantry according to the code was there, the wit in the face of inevitable death ... besides, he grins to himself, as a race, we *like* fighting. We're not too far from the old people, Kerewin and me ... but Kohuaora? Thinking about old horrors somehow lessens the impact of the new ones. (1986:335)

Here then Hulme superimposes the 'new horrors' of the British civilizing mission, as reflected in the pain it caused the indigenous Maori and the school books which 'told lies', upon the 'old horrors' of Maori acts of cannibalism in order to place the stereotype of the savage Maori under erasure. Hulme ironically claims that the strategy of 'thinking about the old horrors [cannibalism] lessens the impact of the new ones' [colonization].

### 3.3.2. Race : A Question of Identity

Whereas the West tends to see itself as the cultural 'white' norm by which the standards of the 'other' are able to be determined, this process is reversed by the Maori's vision of themselves. The Polynesian word 'Maori' has no colour implications, and as such was not directly influenced by British colonialism. Herbert Williams defines the word 'Maori' as "normal, usual, ordinary ..." (1985:179). Here then the signifier 'Maori', as a 'Maori' construct, is free of the usual negative signifieds which were usually attached to the signifiers 'black' and 'Moor' by the colonizing West. From the Maori perspective the Maori see themselves as having an authentic right to knowledge as is indicated by the following signifiers attached to the signified 'Maori':

- 1.a. Clear, intelligible.                      5 Rapanui **Maori**, lucid, etc.
- 2.ad. Clearly, explicitly.
3. v.t. Observe, take notice (perhaps only used to call attention to a fact). (Williams, 1985:179)

It is thus not surprising that with the arrival of the British colonizers in New Zealand, these two divergent epistemological systems were to contribute to the socio-political conflict which arose between the British and the Maori.

Nevertheless the idea that the indigenous Maori peoples were 'of the same kind', as in the

above definition, has a subtle form of alterity embedded in it, as it implies that the British colonisers, or any other Western intruders, were not of the same kind, and thus foreigners to New Zealand who had no basic rights. On these grounds then these British colonizers were cast into the role of the 'other'. In her novel Hulme tries to break down these mutually exclusive sentiments of alterity harboured by both the British and the Maori, in an attempt to have all New Zealanders become one large family who would be able to bury their differences and join in the celebration of a cultural commensality.

As the idea of 'contrapuntal textures' in a postcolonial context is central to the dissertation I shall attempt to show how the fusion of the Western and indigenous Maori cultures is suggested by the Bachian musical metaphor, where the fugal 'stretto maestrale', with its drawing together and superimposition of the horizontal melodic lines will be taken to function as a metaphor for the diverse cultures in Hulme's novel, while the blending together of the vertical moments of harmony point to the possibility of a new and dynamic social resonance. These resultant harmonic moments are similar to what Bhabha refers to as the indeterminate interstitial spaces, where diverse cultures meet, crossing their respective borders in a translational strategy. The 'subject' in the musical example below will be used as a musical metaphor for cultural identity as announced by the various voices, as follows:

CHARACTERS IN NOVEL	REPRESENTED BY	METAPHORICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF FUGAL VOICES
Kerewin	Soprano voice	Octoroon
Simon	Alto voice	Pakeha / West
Joe	Tenor voice	Marginalized Maori
Kaumatua	Bass voice	Custodian of Mauriora
Commensality	Harmony	Socio-political harmony

## Music Example No. 3

'Stretto Maestrale' from 'Fugue No 5 in D Major' from *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier* by J.S.

Bach

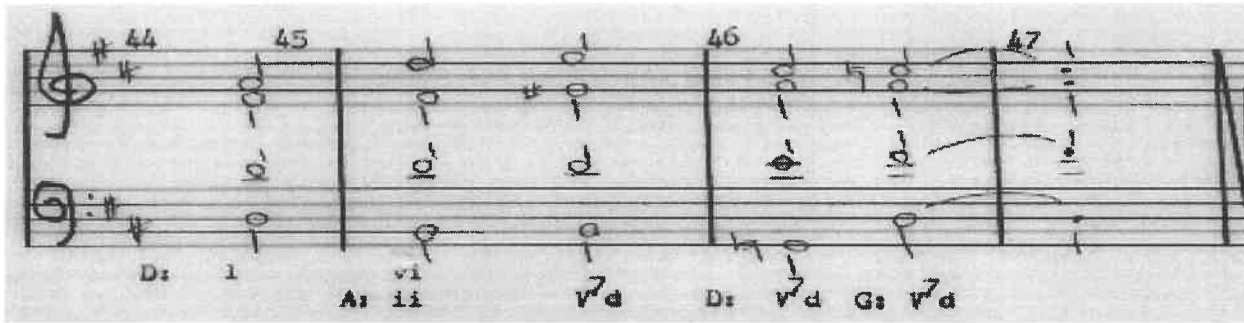


Bach allows the various fugal voices which enunciate (in sound) the subject to interweave horizontally. The subject, which is announced by the soprano voice at bar 44<sup>3</sup>, could be seen as representing the octoroon voice of Kerewin. It is answered three notes later and a third lower by the alto voice which could be seen as representing the Pakeha/Western voice of Simon. The subject is then announced three notes later and a third lower by the tenor voice, which could be seen as representing the displaced Maori voice of Joe, and is finally answered by the bass voice which again could be seen as representing the voice of the Kaumatua, who is the custodian of Maori culture.

The vertical blending of the notes of the subject derived from the horizontal interplay of the fugal voices, provides the listener with vertical tonal clusters of sound, which from a musical perspective are referred to as harmony. These harmonic moments, in turn, can be regarded as functioning as a metaphor for the social resonances, which are produced by the blending of the diverse cultural voices in the narrative of Hulme's text. The harmonic sub-text

sounds as follows:

#### Music Example No. 4



The musical process which I have illustrated above is similar to Bhabha's idea of a reciprocal interaction between cultural elements, which cross their respective cultural borders, resulting in a mutually inclusive enrichment of those cultural elements, which, in turn, take on a new significance. In this instance then Joe and the Kaumatua's voices reflect Maori culture, while Simon's voice reflects Pakeha culture and Kerewin represents an integration of Maori and Pakeha culture.

It must be stressed that this Bachian music example is used merely as a metaphorical example to illustrate how diverse cultural voices can be accommodated from a musical perspective. It is not suggested that Bach was in any way attempting to offer a theoretical paradigm for twentieth century postcolonial problems. If a detailed musical analysis was to be included, a work such as Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* would be far better suited to the task, as one of its central themes is the racial conflict between 'white' Americans and 'brown' Puerto Ricans, who claim that "everything's all right in America, if you are all white in America." (Bernstein, 1985) [Music example no. 5, Cassette tape] However in a dissertation of this length the inclusion of such a musical analysis would not be possible.

The result of the intertwining and overlapping of western and Maori cultures, as in the Bachian music example, is also represented by Kerewin's tricephalos, a sculpture of the heads of Kerewin, Joe and Simon, which functions as the main symbol of hybridity in the novel. It is

out of the fusion of the diverse identities of these three characters that a new cultural significance and hope arises, which is reflected by Joe who points out that "she saw us as a whole, as a set." (Hulme, 1986:315) The tricephalos thus symbolises the death of the old discriminatory ways, and the emergence of a new and challenging hybrid nation, as is reflected by Harding:

For Hulme's trinity are sure to be actively involved in reconstructing attitudes by projecting desired alternative social futures that are freed from the mistakes and false imperatives of a colonial past and a patriarchal social order. As such, they are likely to experiment with the transforming power of new models of collective self-understanding via the creation of positive and empowering social myths that will challenge unjust practices and damaging social structures, and facilitate the creation of a revised and self-interrogating post-colonial value system. (Harding, 1992:152)

The pain of Western alterity manifests itself in overt racism sporadically throughout the novel. While she is at Dukes pub Kerewin's criticism of the British war songs being sung evokes an angry response from two Australians:

"Sheeit," she hears herself say to Joe, "Why do they want to go on singing those sorta songs all the time? War Songs?" her voice booming out ...  
Blondie turns and sneers at her,  
"What's wrong with war songs, tit? What do you ignorant young grab-arses know that's better? Yahhh," turning to his companion, "they get round with bloody Mahries and behave worse than they do ...  
She says icily,  
"Pig ignorant *old* Australian *bastards* should get back where they belong. To their dead-hearted, deadbeat offal-catering country. Not parasitise here, littering up Godzone." (Hulme, 1986:293)

The Kaumatua confides to Joe that once when he went into town his difference caused people to laugh at him:

people laughed behind their hands at my stilted speech, and stared at my face. "Keerist, what an antique," said one. (Hulme, 1986:336)

When Piri comes to visit Simon in hospital he resents the fact that he and Lynne are not allowed to adopt Simon because they are Maori and poor:

"I still don't see why they won't let us have him ..."  
"Because we haven't got much money and we're Maori and we're not *really* relations and we got four kids already and another one on the way .... ahh Lynnie, don't cry, I didn't mean it like that," Piri trying his consoling best. (Hulme, 1986:393)

By a skilful interweaving and superimposition of the destinies of the main characters Hulme is able to place the negative aspects of racial and cultural alterity under erasure. It is only by going on a journey of self discovery that the three main characters are able to attain the



fusion depicted by Kerewin's tricephalos, which symbolises a cultural 'triumvirate' which is able to both confront and integrate the differences of their cultural diversity, as in the music example.

In her introduction of the main characters of her novel, Hulme clearly outlines the potential for creative change, as symbolised by the spiral symbol which unites each character. The reader is first presented with Simon, 'the singer' (1986:3), who, as a catalyst, succeeds in uniting Joe, Kerewin and himself as a family. Hulme brings together the Western and Maori meanings of the word 'singer' to reinforce the idea that in cultural difference there is also sameness. From the Western perspective the word 'singer' is associated with the sensitive and thinking poet/artist who is endowed with a gift of intuitive insight, while from the Maori perspective the word 'singer', which is associated with breathing, also has great cultural significance. In the novel music is the binding force which "emotionally establishes a connection between the inner and the outer world, and makes possible moments of great intimacy between people." (Heim and Zimmerman 1992:115) These 'moments of great intimacy between people' are captured in Hulme's opening description of Simon:

He is the singer.  
The people passing smile and shake their heads.  
He holds a hand out to them.  
They open their hands like flowers, shyly.  
He smiles with them. (Hulme, 1986:3)

On the other hand the reader's first impression of Joe is that deep within his subconscious there is an awareness of the potential for creative change that is awakened by Kerewin. Conversely Kerewin presents a new type of woman - a woman who challenges the boundaries of the gender stereotype, as is reflected in Hulme's description of Kerewin's 'muscle feet' and whistling 'softly as she walks'. However despite her vast knowledge she is a prisoner of the Tower which she has built. Thus as separate entities Joe, Kerewin and Simon do not make sense. Simon's claim that it is only when they are united as a family that they will make sense reinforces Hulme's central theme of commensality where 'together, all together, they are

instruments of change.' (Hulme, 1986:4)

Joe grew up in a changing New Zealand, where, due to British colonization, Maori culture and identity were regarded as inferior. It is thus not surprising that the Anglicisation of Joe's grandfather caused him much pain:

He was highly respected and that, an elder too, but of the church, not of the people. He avoided the marae ... I think he was ashamed, secretly ashamed, of my Nana and her Maoriness. But oowee, was the old lady strongwilled! What she wanted, she got, me or anything else ... but the old man, I think he took it out on me for being like her, for being dark, and speaking Maori first, all sorts of things ... he always seemed fair about it, at least, he always gave me a reason, but he was hard on me. And my Nana wasn't one for letting kids take it easy. (Hulme, 1986:227)

For Hulme, one of the greatest human faults is the denial of one's cultural roots as is reflected in her description of Joe's grandfather, who was 'widely respected', not by his fellow Maoris, but by the members of the Christian community. Furthermore, his grandfather's conversion to Christianity was accompanied by a growing contempt for elements of Maori culture such as the *marae*<sup>5</sup>, his dark skin colour and the Maori language.

Joe's dislike of English, the language of the conqueror, is reflected in the narrative of the Kaumatua, Joe's cultural and spiritual mentor, who tells Joe of the cultural domination and subsequent marginalization the Maori suffered at the hands of the British:

I was ten years old, a smart child. I'd been brought up to speak English. I even thought in English. I still can ... they spoke Maori on the farm sometimes, but they were no longer Maori. They were husks, aping the European manners and customs. Maori on the outside, with none of the heart left. (Hulme, 1986:359)

In this sense there was a cultural bond between Joe and the Kaumatua, as Joe had never felt comfortable speaking English, as is reflected by his sporadic use of Maori throughout the novel to express himself.

Joe, trapped between Western and Maori cultures, is truly a 'broken man'. It is only through the predestined meeting with the Kaumatua, a Maori shaman, that he is able to recover his cultural identity. The Kaumatua thus functions as a metonymic symbol of *Mauritanga*, Maori politics and culture. The Kaumatua's claim that the land of *Aotearoa* is a sacred

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<sup>5</sup> Hulme defines the Maori word *marae* as "a place for gathering, to learn, to mourn, teach, welcome and rejoice" (1986:448).

possession for the Maori evokes memories of the Treaty of Waitangi which the Maori chiefs had signed in ignorance, ceding the sovereignty of New Zealand to Queen Victoria in 1840. Here the voice of the Kaumatua can clearly be heard calling down through the ages for the restitution of Maori land rights:

People pass away, but not the land. It remains forever ... I am tied irrevocably to this land. (Hulme, 1986:336)

It is only when Joe is finally able to come to terms with his past that his creative spirit and Maori identity are freed from the colonial shackles of the past, and he is able to "pray and play and carve again." (Hulme, 1986: 382)

Kerewin is by nature a *kaiha*', which in her collection of short stories *Te kaihau* Hulme defines as follows:

I came across the term as a gift, if you like, a sort of found gift. For instance, you break up a perfectly respectable word, happily married in all its component parts: you know it means several things, like a loafer or a braggart. Or a woman who takes part in certain rites. Or it can mean the acquisition of property without return being made, as well as a spell that is cast to punish somebody behaving in such an unmannerly fashion. That's when it's a whole unbroken word, but if you split it, a power leaks out and becomes a woman trying to make sense of her self and her living and her world.  
Which all goes to show the charming naivety of us humans.  
Sense of a world indeed! (Hulme, 1987:237)

This is an apt description of Kerewin as when the reader first meets her she is either drinking in a pub or wandering aimlessly around the beach next to her Tower. After Joe has been sent to jail for beating Simon, Kerewin burns down her Tower and again becomes a wanderer searching for her true 'self'. This search for self is described by Merata Mita who observes that

There are huge rifts between Kerewin's Maori world, Pakeha world, and herself. Mostly they have become internalised schisms of the soul and psyche which she manifests externally and physically in her mode of existence - separate, anti-social, asexual, and firmly entrenched on the island which is herself. (Dever, 1989:28)

Despite her dominant Western heritage Kerewin claims that by 'heart, spirit and inclination, I feel all Maori'. (Hulme, 1986:62) Thus, like Joe, Kerewin must also go upon a painful journey of discovery before she is able to find an inner peace and reconciliation with the outside world.

Kerewin's search for self at times takes on the form of a grotesque Fanonian nightmare as is reflected in her obsessive mirror phobia that 'One day. I'd look into the mirror and somebody

else would be looking back out of my face'. (Hulme, 1986:75)

The Western 'voyage out' is captured by the superimposition of First World War songs upon Kerewin's stream of consciousness, which is interpolated between the strains of the song's lyrics. The words 'Farewell Piccadilly!' take on a new significance reflected in Kerewin's contrapuntal stream of consciousness which condemns the senseless destruction and carnage of war where

the godly scarlet crump of new born bomb craters resounds above the gleeful whistling bullets whee! and the gurgling of cheery throttlings going on and on ... (Hulme, 1986:292)

The words of 'Goodbye Leicester Square' for Kerewin correspondingly conjure up a picture of violence and mutilation reflected in the sounds of war:

a tuneful chrrkchrrkkk of thumb-blocked throats serving as a discreet melodic line below the sshpluck! of impact and the Ur! of pained surprise ... ahh, rustling crumpling figures blending folding fugueing (hands spreadfingered clutching Why?? delicate belly entrails flopping softly o he he he!) a resonant yet subtle percussion ... (Hulme, 1986:292)

This war scene which conjures up the sounds of battle, and which is ironically juxtaposed upon the maniacal laughter at the disembowelment of soldiers, can also be viewed as an indictment of colonial violence.

The corresponding dismantling of colonial violence centres around Kerewin's and Simon's mutual love of music. Simon, 'the singer' (1986:3), like Kerewin has an intuitive, aesthetic, and artistic sensitivity which enables him to hear the sounds of nature in his "music hitches" (Hulme, 1986:102). Thus, both Kerewin and Simon are able to reject the inhibiting yoke of Western technique and erudition. This mutual love and understanding of music inspires Kerewin to create 'Simon's Mead Reel', a song dedicated to Simon.

Music, like painting, is an important means through which Kerewin is able to regain an inner peace after her battle with the symbolic moths of death. For she declares that playing her guitar has given her back music, "music to match the images of my mind, to draw them out and make a realm of exultant leaping joy." (Hulme, 1986:421) Furthermore she is able to return to her painting and attempt to make new overtures towards reconciliation with her family.

### 3.4. The Reconciliatory function of Religion in *The Bone People*.

As religion, and its related fields of folklore, legend, and mythology, are the cultural phenomena upon which Hulme draws so as to place cultural differences, as portrayed in her novel, under erasure, it is essential that this area be critically examined from the perspective of British and Maori culture.

Religion in *The Bone People* comprises a textual interplay of socio-political secular narratives which deal with postcolonial concerns, and the sacred narratives of the Western Christian 'voyage out' and Maori cosmogonic and eschatological myths. These respective narratives, in turn, form a hybrid text where the diverse textual strands are played off against one another

, simultaneously reinforcing and questioning the right to socio-political and divine authority in a mutually inclusive strategy.

In her novel Hulme challenges a solely secular approach by questioning the validity of the binary tensions inherent in a linear historical progression from past to present. Hulme achieves this by weaving the past, present and future into a complex double temporal and ahistorical spiral, which comprises the postcolonial narratives of socio-political oppression and sacred ahistorical Maori myths. This enables Hulme, like Bhabha, to create an interstitial space for revision, imitation and reconstruction of the British and Maori silenced voices. By reconstructing the narratives of the past, Hulme attempts to reveal the pain suffered by the British immigrants such as Kerewin's grandmother. The memories of the British 'voyage out' are evoked in the nostalgia and pain of Kerewin's interior monologue which is superimposed on the narrative of her great great grandmother's voyage out as well as through the British civilizing mission which endeavoured to undermine the validity of Maori mythology.

The mill had belonged to a great great grandmother, who brought it all the way from the Hebrides a hundred years ago. When she parted, in violence and tears, from her family, she made a special expedition

Call it by its right name, o my soul  
to gain the coffee-mill.

By thievery and stealth in the dead of night, I acquired thee ...

She ran her hand lightly over the little machine, and talked loud nonsense to cover her pain. (Hulme, 1986:24-25)

In reaction to this British colonial intrusion Hulme resurrects the voice of the Maori past in the person of the Kaumatua, the guardian of *Maoritanga*, who is thus able to dismantle these secular myths about the savage and pagan Maori. To achieve these ends Hulme draws on the technique of magic realism

[by] mixing of the fantastic with the all too grimly real ... [however,] Hulme does not deal with national politics, wars and revolutions. Instead, she concentrates on the, no less bloody and violent, politics of everyday life: relations between the sexes, between races, between parent and child. (Webby, 1985:20) .

On the mythical level, Hulme presents us with an overlay of Western and Maori myths which she skilfully intertwines in an attempt to present the reader with a hybrid mythology which takes on a new and dynamic dimension offering the reader hope for the future. The advent of the Christian missionaries in the early nineteenth century resulted in a rapid spread of Christianity which undermined indigenous Maori traditional beliefs. A most pernicious example of the culturally patronizing attitude of the British is contained in the following observation made by Sir George Grey:

It must further be borne in mind that the native races who believed in these traditions or superstitions are in no way deficient in intellect, and in no respect incapable of receiving the truths of Christianity; on the contrary, they readily embrace its doctrines and submit to its rules; in our schools they stand a fair comparison with Europe, and, when instructed in Christian truths, blush at their own former ignorance and superstitions, and look back with shame and loathing upon their previous state of wickedness and credulity; and yet for a great part of their lives have they, and for thousands of years before they were born have their forefathers, implicitly submitted themselves to those very superstitions, and followed those cruel and barbarous rites. (1922:xiv)

In her novel Hulme is able to transcend the culturally inhibiting historicity of such colonial 'voyages out', as is reflected in her readiness to still draw on Christian elements which she weaves around the Maori mystical narratives.

Hulme weaves the narratives in her novel around a 'trinity' of secular/sacred characters, which enables her to superimpose the socio-political narratives of their historic past on their

respective Western and Maori sacred narratives. The fusion of western and Maori religious beliefs is reflected in the transformation which the Christian Holy Family undergoes. Joe becomes a mixture of Maori messiah, 'the broken man' (who is to be the saviour of *Mauriora*, the essence of Maori culture) and the Father, Joseph. Kerewin becomes the virgin mother, symbolic mother of a new nation as reflected in the building of a new marae and a new home upon the ashes of the Tower; while Simon, who suffers the passion of Christ, becomes the Saviour in the transformation process.

The description of Simon in the following extract evokes a biblical and mystical genesis , which is played off against the intimated beginnings of the Western colonial voyage out into an unknown and alien world:

IN THE BEGINNING, it was darkness, and more fear, and a howling wind across the sea. (Hulme, 1986:5)

Here the phrase 'in the beginning' functions on both secular and sacred levels. From a secular perspective it parodies the opening phrases of the Book of Genesis, thus placing it under erasure. This phrase freed from its biblical connotations refers to the uncertainty and feelings of alienation which the early colonisers, of whom Simon functions as a metonym, must have felt when leaving their own country and culture. However, by reintroducing the biblical connotation of this opening phrase, Hulme revives the significance of the sacred trace which had been placed under erasure. By these means Hulme is able to escape binary and monocultural entrapment to arrive at a hybrid text where the cultural exchanges make the reader aware of the fact that the pain and suffering inherent in the colonization process was not one sided, in that both the coloniser and the colonized have suffered the pain of the Western Diaspora, and that both have been caught up in the double temporal spiral of historical materialism with its socio-political binary tensions, which, in Hulme's novel, seek a resolution through the ahistorical myths of the eternal return as captured in mythical allusions to Papa, Rangi and Mauri .

In the course of the novel Hulme intertwines the religious icons and myths of the West and of *Aotearoa* in her depiction of Simon. On one of Simon's visits to Kerewin he notices a metal crucifix hanging in her Tower. Ironically Simon, a Pakeha saved by Joe, is only able to identify with the crucifix on a secular level. Simon who has learnt to keep his innermost thoughts and feelings to himself is able to identify with the averted face of Christ. Furthermore, though he is used to both physical violence and emotional pain, Simon is unable to understand why

the metal man's fingers aren't curled tight against the pain. They stretch out, open and loose, still as prongs. He shivers.  
Why does she keep a dead man nailed on the wall? (Hulme, 1986:141)

On a secular level Simon is unable to understand how the figure has been able to transcend the intense pain inflicted upon him as reflected in the relaxed, 'open and loose' hands, nor can he understand the significance of hanging a dead man on a wall - an action which he finds macabre. As a result Simon is only able to identify with the crucifix on a pragmatic level. Here, then, Hulme juxtaposes the secular and mystical "Passion" in a strategy that questions and integrates the secular, physical pain of those who have suffered the pain and sentence of history, with the mystical dimension of Christ's "Passion", much in the way that the playwright Peter Nichols explores the dimensions of the word "Passion" in his *Passion Play*.

However later on in the novel Hulme evokes a re-enactment of the Maori cosmogonic myth where Maui, a Maori hero, "used his grandmother's jaw bone to fish out their country [Aotearoa] from the depths of the ocean." (Higham, 1981:35), and in the process got a fish-hook caught in his thumb. Hulme by superimposing this mythical Maori narrative on the narratives of Simon's secular 'voyage out' and his mystical 'Passion', reawakens the supernatural traces which had been lying dormant in him. When Kerewin takes Joe and Simon fishing at Moerangi, she attempts to encourage Simon by calling him a 'neopiscator' (Hulme, 1986:211). This name, meaning 'new-fisher', evokes a biblical image of a new Peter, who is no



longer the stereotypical 'fisher of men' as reflected in the British civilizing mission, but a new hybrid man who comprises a mixture of Maori and Pakeha cultures, and is thus able to practise cultural tolerance and reconciliation.

Joe's narrative genesis reflects both secular and sacred tensions which threaten the harmony of his marriage to Hana. Thus the idea of marital 'harmony' in the novel functions as a metaphor for cultural hybridity, and is used by Hulme to reinforce her central theme of cultural commensality. This threat to Joe's marriage is diverted by the arrival of Simon who made them 'whole and sound together' (1986:6), but ends with Hana's death. Joe is also a victim of the British colonial civilising mission and must thus go on a journey of self discovery to find his spiritual and cultural identity.

While Joe was studying to become a priest at a Catholic seminary, he met Hana, a Ratana, whom he married. However, despite his early religious dedication, Joe

dropped religious observance when his wife died. "I tasted both vocations enough to know they weren't for me." He laughs bitterly. "I'm a typical hori after all, made to work on the chain, or be a factory hand, not to try for high places." (Hulme, 1986:229-230)

On a secular level Joe is clearly thus marginalized by the British secular evolution myth of Darwin which states that 'primitive' peoples, such as the Maori, should be given jobs only requiring manual labour, while those positions requiring insight and intellectual abilities should be reserved for the superior British intellect.

Joe's quest for his identity ends when, as a 'broken man', he meets the Kaumatua, who has been guarding the *Mario* stone which symbolises the cultural and spiritual essence of Maoriness. The Kaumatua has been guarding this stone in order to preserve Maori spirituality and culture, while waiting for Joe's predestined arrival:

I guard a stone that was brought on one of the great canoes. I guard the canoe itself. I guard the little god that came with the canoe. The god broods over the mauriora, for that is what the stone is home to, but the mauri is distinct and great beyond the little god ... the canoe rots under them both ... aie, he is a little god, no-one worships him any longer. But he hasn't died yet. He has his hunger and his memories and his care to keep him tenuously alive. If you decide to go, he will be all there is left as a watcher, as a guardian" ...

[Joe thinks to himself] Sweet Jesus Christ alive! You'd better humour him Ngakau, but he's mad! Watching for sixty years over a canoe. A mauriora! a little god! Doesn't he know the museums are full

of them.

But like an unseen current, there's a darker thought -

Maybe a priestly canoe? A live god? A live mauriora? (Hulme, 1986:363)

The Kaumatua's reconstruction of the lost Maori heritage for Joe's benefit, again functions on both the secular and sacred levels. From a secular perspective it depicts the actual Polynesian Diaspora, while placing the religious connotation attached to the *Mauriora* under erasure. On a sacred level, the Kaumatua awakens the sacred heritage which is an integral part of Maori life, and which binds the Maori people to the 'shining land' (*Aotearoa*).

The Kaumatua's reference to the advent of the great canoe (Great Fleet) which brought both Maori and the sacred stone (Mauri) to *Aotearoa*, conjures up the grand narrative of the Polynesian Diaspora from Haiwaiki, which modern archaeologists claim to be Tahiti. These early Polynesian inhabitants did not have a national identity, but rather identified themselves with the canoe in which their original ancestor (i.e. one of the bone people) came to *Aotearoa*. This Polynesian voyage out is an integral part of Hulme's narrative illustrated in the detail that the 'Tainui' family - Marama, Ben, Luce, Piri and Wherahiki - despite Western influences are able to trace their heritage back to the 'Taini' canoe which was a part of the 'Great Fleet'. (Higham, 1981:6)

Joe's incredulous attitude to the fact that the Kaumatua has spent sixty years guarding this stone, in conjunction with the phrase the 'museums are full of them', further devalues the claim to any spiritual dimension by associating them with the vulgar consumerism and mass production of Western capitalism.

By these means Hulme has been able to critique Western materialism, which has indirectly resulted in a Maori process of spiritual acculturation where 'no-one worships him [Mauri] any longer' (Hulme, 1986:363). Nevertheless, Hulme confides to the reader that Mauri is not yet completely dead, so there is still time to reconstruct the Maori past and thus resuscitate Mauri. On these grounds Hulme is able to end the extract on a hopeful note by

conjuring up a 'dark current' of Maori spirituality which leaves the reader wondering whether such spiritual and sacred phenomena might indeed exist. The phrase 'dark current' further places the idea of the exclusivity of the white superior Pakeha light of Christian salvation under erasure, thus granting an authentic spiritual voice to the 'dark skinned' Maori.

Finally Hulme superimposes the Christian idea of the 'last supper' upon the last meal the Kaumatua and Joe take together. The Kaumatua's final invitation to Joe to have 'a last good meal together' (1986:371) evokes memories of Christ's 'last supper' before his passion and crucifixion. It also anticipates the final feast of commensality where most of the novel's characters find both a secular and spiritual communion in their unity. While Christ entrusts his spiritual heritage to his disciples, the Kaumatua gives Joe the task of providing the Maori with a spiritual regeneration.

Kerewin, as the central character, artist and alter ego of Keri Hulme, is initially trapped in a world of secular rationality, and to find her freedom must go upon a journey, like Joe and Simon, in quest of spiritual and creative freedom.

Kerewin's rebirth, as an artist and human being, lies in her journey from the secular rationalism and materialism of the West to the intuitive and subjective experience of the creative self, as embedded in an overlay of Western and Maori spirituality and culture. Hulme's introduction to Kerewin tells the reader that despite her physical strength and superior rational abilities, Kerewin is a prisoner in the Tower which she had built, where even her 'brainy nails' (1986:7) are unable to free her. However this secular emphasis is countered by the 'spiral' motif of Kerewin's spiral stairway in her Tower, which functions as a symbolic metonym of the intuitive, spiritual and creative life force which, in turn, contributes to the central motif of commensality in the novel.

As a creative artist Kerewin enjoys using hybrid symbols in her works of art which decorate her Tower. The Easter candle which she uses in her bedroom

... is rooted in a massive pottery base she made three years ago: the base is decorated with spirals that wind and flow together, like eddies of smoke, eddies of water.

Spirals make more sense than crosses, joys more than sorrows ...

She sits down on the bed edge, watching the flickering candle flame.

A writhing fire, dancing on this candle ... twisting to an inward wind, then spiring up orange and smoking... (Hulme, 1986:273)

The spiral, which is the central symbol of freedom, change and togetherness in the novel, is used by Hulme who explores all its intertextual resonance in order to question the validity of any form of religious discrimination and persecution. On a secular level the spiral in Hulme's narrative represents the social change which brings about eventual freedom, peace and unity to the characters of the novel. On a sacred level, the idea of change and rebirth contained in Hulme's spiral symbolism echoes Yeats' claim that

civilizations move in spirals ('gyres') of about 2000 years, usually inaugurated by the [union of a divine figure] and a woman, [such as] Mary. (De Vries, 1974:230)

Such an interpretation would then view Kerewin as the virginal Mary figure, while Joe could be viewed as the divinely appointed father figure. By juxtaposing the symbol of the spiral with the Easter Candle Hulme questions and challenges the validity of the differences attached to religious dogmas. For Kerewin the cross symbolises sorrow and persecution which she rejects on pragmatic grounds in favour of the more positive state of human happiness and joy. The flame of the Easter Candle anticipates the Phoenix symbol of Kerewin's tricephalos where out of the ashes of the past, a new and vibrant community of people will be born. Kerewin's tolerant approach to religion is also reflected in her 'Book of Godhead' which 'contains an eclectic range of religious writing' (1986:329), and her final conclusion is that 'numero deus impare gaudet' (1986:436) While the Latin phrase literally translated means, 'God rejoices in the uneven number', a freer translation could be 'God rejoices in difference'.

#### 4. A Drawing Together of the Parts

From my analyses of *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello* it is apparent that Shakespeare's portrayal of the emergent western 'voyage out' and concomitant 'voyage in' foreshadows the critical insights which were to emerge in such twentieth century postcolonial literary works as Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* and Keri Hulme's *The Bone People*. These authors, through the contrapuntal textures of their respective novels, were able to re-write the narrative of the marginalized 'Othello' figure from the fractured temporal interstices of a textual overlay of diverse narratives. This strategy, which provides the possibility of a new palimpsestic text and a liberated 'Othello' figure, offers the reader an altogether more hopeful picture.

While on the one hand Shakespeare presents the audience with the nascent mercantile ambitions and stirrings of the Western 'voyage out', which were to gather momentum over the next three centuries, on the other hand he portrays, by means of complex deconstructive strategies, a resultant 'voyage in' where the voices of his marginalized characters are permitted a limited opportunity to 'write back' to the existent socio-political powers. This initial 'writing back', which could be seen as anticipating the protest literature of the twentieth century colonized countries, was rather a cathartic gesture, as the nature of Renaissance society would not have tolerated any militant attempts which aimed at dismantling their power structures.

In a deconstructive strategy which anticipates twentieth century postcolonial approaches to literature, Shakespeare, by addressing his audience from the 'iato' of the confluence of black and white identities, is able play off Aaron's 'white mask' of black identity against that of Iago's Venetian 'supersubtle' white hypocrisy. By these means the roles of identity, power and language in human relationships are questioned.

In Salih's novel the quest for knowledge comprises a complex overlay of divergent voices from both Arab and Western migratory perspectives. The Arab migratory narrative of the journey North reflects the conflict between the Arab nostalgia for traditional subjective knowledge and the corresponding *Nahda* movement which conversely strives to attain an authentic and objective modern Arab voice. The traditional/*Nahda* contradictions of the Arab narrative awakened by the North are in turn played off against the counternarratives of the Western journey South with its concomitant objective epistemology of modernity, which, in turn, questions the validity of the Arab epistemological system based on the binary of the traditional/modern.

In Hulme's novel, *The Bone People*, the contrapuntal overlay of narrative voices functions as a Bakhtinian heteroglossia where the 'epistemological' voices enunciated by her characters are skilfully woven around such socio-political concerns as culture, race, nationalism, colonization and decolonization. By superimposing these diverse voices upon one another Hulme is able to question the validity and authority of the cultural right and monopoly of both Western and Maori epistemological production, while simultaneously examining the social resonance which the potential integration of these diverse cultural voices has to offer. In this respect Hulme adopts a similar theoretical stance to that of Bhabha in whose theory of hybridity epistemological differences can be viewed as "existing in-between each other" (1991:55). The resultant blurring of these diverse voices, created by the contrapuntal overlay of these voices, places any legitimate claim to a nominative or normative epistemological identity under erasure, which, in turn, enables Hulme to escape binary entrapment.

I have tried to show that whereas Shakespeare portrays the marginalization of Aaron and Othello on the grounds of colour and race, which foreshadows the later British colonial 'voyage out', Salih in a postcolonial strategy writes back to the British Empire in order to dismantle the idea of racial and ethnic identity based on colour, race, class or gender. However, in *The Bone People* Hulme integrates the socio-political differences created by culture, colour, race and ethnic differences to create a hybrid 'commensality', where differences are both questioned and accommodated.

In his treatment of the politics of alterity Shakespeare deconstructs the black/white binary, which was to mark the later western colonial ventures, by inverting the roles of Aaron and Iago, thus placing the question of colour under erasure. In this respect Shakespeare anticipates a postcolonial insight by critically questioning the validity of Western discourse, which was to use 'colour' as a site of cultural and ethnic struggle, and was to attach positive significance to the signifier 'white', while confining the signifier 'black' to the margins of inferiority. This process of marginalization on the grounds of colour, which was associated with race and ethnicity, was to become an integral part of the British colonizing class strategy, which, in turn, was to give rise to the ideologies of British imperialism and commonwealth in its scramble for Africa.

In his novel Salih ingeniously weaves a number of divergent narratives around the questions of race and nationalism, all of which are reflected in the crisis of identity which face his characters, as well as the ensuing psychological pain it precipitates. This search for a stable identity, amidst a blurring of the often conflicting points of view offered by the various

characters, occurs in a fractured temporal framework where the pain of historical events caused by colonization and decolonization intrudes upon the narratives of the various characters. This overlay of divergent voices questions the authority and validity of the socio-political power and right to marginalize, as well as dismantling the idea of colour as an index of cultural identity. This creates a space for a reinscription of the 'Othello' figure as a postcolonial palimpsest. As Makdisi points out:

*Season of Migration* does not merely reinvent the present, it opens up new possibilities for the future. The process of cultural production not only shapes perception but constitutes a lived systems of beliefs, values and realities. Artists like Salih, in struggling to create a new culture, are at the same time, however gradually, creating a new way of seeing and feeling reality. In rewriting imperialism, Arab modernism, including *Season of Migration*, necessarily looks away not only from the premodern but beyond imperialism and towards some alternative future that it is in the process of inventing. If, in other words, European modernism can be seen as the narration of imperialism from a European perspective, *Season of Migration* and other works of Arab modernism emerge as counternarrations of the thoroughly intertwined histories of imperialism and modernization from a non-European perspective, a "writing back" to Europe. (1992:819-820)

In her novel *The Bone People* Hulme weaves the histories of colonization and decolonization around the narratives of her three main characters, Kerewin, Joe and Simon, in a bid to achieve a socio-political 'commensality' as is reflected in the tricephalos statue which is made by Kerewin. By playing these diverse voices off against one another, Hulme is able to place the myth of the stereotype under erasure and challenge the historical voices of such patronizing imperial political figures as Sir George Grey who played so important a role in the British colonial 'voyage out'. Conversely Hulme uses the Kaumatua, a Maori shaman, who is the custodian of the *Mauritanga* (the essence of Maoriness), to help Joe regain his Maori identity.

Shakespeare implicitly questions the validity of the colonial civilizing mission, which superimposes its value system onto members of what we in the twentieth century have called the 'Third World', while simultaneously devaluing their moral and ethical systems.

In his novel Salih superimposes the religious narratives of the Western Christian 'voyage out' upon the fractured sacred Arabic narratives which simultaneously strive to embrace both the rituals of the sacred and traditional and subjective cultural past and the Arabic *Nahda* movement, which aims at achieving a far more objective modern Arabic voice. This overlay and blurring of the divergent voices in Salih's novel challenges the authority of the Western and Arab sacred and secular voices, and would seem to indicate, as Bhabha (1992) suggests, that freedom's basis indeed does lie in the indeterminate interstices of the cultural tensions generated by the binary North/South. Such a stance creates the possibility of reinscribing an authentic 'Othello' figure as a postcolonial palimpsest. By these means Salih attempts to

dismantle the religious intolerance of the past colonial civilizing mission and that of the concomitant coloniser's 'voyage in', by advocating a more tolerant attitude based on a mutual cultural respect for both Christianity and Islam.

In *The Bone People* Hulme draws on both the sacred myths and symbols of the Western and Christian civilizing mission and the Maori sacred symbols and cosmogonic myths, which take on a new significance as they cross the socio-religious boundaries of the West and the indigenous Maori culture of New Zealand. By these means Hulme is able to question both the conventional secular and sacred significance of the myths and symbols. These secular and sacred functions are woven together around religious concerns as symbolised by Kerewin's tricephalos, where through the integration of the diverse parts, Joe, Kerewin and Simon are able to find their authentic socio-religious identities. While Joe is able to find his authentic Maori identity through the Kaumatua, Kerewin is able to make sense out of her life through the creation of a secular and sacred space, as is reflected in the new *marae* which she builds and which provide her with a symbolic new home.

In this dissertation I have tried to show how the musical metaphor of 'contrapuntal textures' has enabled 'Othello', from a literary perspective, to be led out of 'the heart of darkness' as reflected by Shakespeare's portrayal of the marginalization of Aaron and Othello which foreshadowed the Western colonial 'voyage out', through the postcoloniality of Salih's novel where through the contrapuntal overlay of unreliable narrators Salih is able to question the validity and authenticity of the Western 'Othello' figure. Finally in Hulme's novel *The Bone People* the reader is led into a "brightly lit and noisy HYBRID STATE" (McClintock 1992:291) where there is a "[s]udden flare and splash of light. The crack of fireworks ... It's music and singing and talk talk talk." (Hulme, 1986:441) The joy of commensality at the family reunion is captured in Hulme's symphonic ode to hybridity where in the resultant polyphony there is concert and order:

A wave of flat and heavy music drowns the homemade plunk and whine and chorus. Stereo blaring, ingots of sound beating the ears, people stirring fukthisracket, louder louder LOUDER and someone bawls out and somebody else switches it off ...

Noise and riot, peace and quiet, all is music in this sphere. (Hulme, 1986:442-3)

Thus in *The Bone people* Hulme has presented the reader with a challenging way of resolving the conflicting binary opposition of the Western 'voyage out' and the resultant attempts by the colonized to resuscitate their cultural voice, by intertwining the diverse cultures of Kerewin, Joe and Simon, which, in turn, has enabled her to portray New Zealand as a new, vibrant and potentially harmonious nation where the fusion of differences is reflected in the



corresponding transformation of the cultural sign as reflected in the areas of knowledge, culture and religion.

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