

## CHAPTER-2

### Towards Artistic and Cultural Confidence : *Dream on Monkey Mountain*

Because it is a systemic negation of the other person and furious determination to deny the other person all other attributes of humanity, colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: 'In reality, who am I'?

- Fanon

I m talking of men who have been skillfully infected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair, abasement.

- Aime Cesaire

Walcott's experiments with folk memories and adaptation of cultural models within local context- crafting truly "West-Indian play"- reached its apogee in *Dream on Monkey Mountain*. First produced in 1969 and recipient of much-coveted Obie Award (in 1971), it marked a watershed in Walcott's dramatic career. It unleashes profound commentary on political and cultural deformation wrought upon by colonialism. In an interview Walcott clarifies the cultural mission of his hero and the generation of the West-Indians, suffering corrosive effects of racism: "Makak and his people he meets... are all working out the meaning of their culture; they are going through upheaval, shaking off concepts that have been imposed on them for centuries" (17). In order to separate West Indian identity out from the one habitually contrived by the Western culture and divesting the identity of all external attribution, it was urgent to liberate the mind from denigration and dehumanization. Caribbean novelists like Lamming and Naipaul were no less preoccupied with the crippling effects of memories of violent travel like Middle Passage, slavery and indentured labour. They wrestled with self-doubt and self-abasing dependency and

continued intense exploration of the impact of history on the West- Indian people. Lamming admitted that the urgent task for the writers in respect to colonialism involves the reparation of a damaged consciousness and subjectivity. They all placed emphasis on the artist's role as cultivator and carrier of cultural dignity. Also they did affirm that the art works can redeem the mass from enthrallment and cultural subjugation. In his essay "Society and the Artist" (1957), Walcott has also enunciated the urge for self-definition: "To see ourselves, not as others see us, but with all the possibilities of the new country we are making" (15). To realize these possibilities Walcott suggested that Caribbean artists should not only wallow in self-pity but should never complain dearth of opportunities and patronage of the state.

West Indian society structured by oppressive institutions of colonialism and slavery has always identified the black with a lack of being; their skin colour and other traits have turned them into a phobic object of extreme vulnerability. In the Post- Independence days when racial polarities were prevalent and widespread, the psychic tug-of-war of Europe and Africa had stunted the cultural growth of the Caribbean people. Imposition of white cultural norms and prevalent dyadic hierarchies left them with a low self-esteem and sense of rootlessness. Walcott in his essay "What the Twilight Says" describes this complexity as "contradiction of being white in mind and black in body" (12). It encouraged among the natives inculcation of Western cultural standards and deep disregard at the same time for local traditions and value systems. But to render the Caribbean experience and assert the cultural identity without craving for Western standards, it was urgent to dismantle Manichean binarism and hierarchization. The damage to the psyche of the average West-Indians was Walcott's unflagging concern. The privileged white subject alienated not only the black body but also the black psyche by the agency and arrogance. In *Black Skin, White Mask*, Fanon examines how mechanism of racism has inculcated inferiority complex or what he terms "epidermalisation" or interiorisation of inferiority in the soul of all colonized people. In the colour- structured society of the Caribbean what was consensually accepted was the unequivocal inferiority of "negro-ness". Naipaul in his *Loss of Eldorado* attributed the value of money and race in the colour-structured and "half-made" societies and to its consensual acceptance of inferiority and debasement of negroness. What was built into their psyche was, in the words of David Dabydeen and Nana Wilson- Tagoe, a "sense of inferiority and self-abasement in his innermost consciousness" (58). Among Walcott's early protagonists, charcoal burner hero, Makak is a study in "an overwhelming awe of everything white" and an

West Indian everyman who has consented to the mechanism of inferiorisation. Wounded by brutal histories of colonialism and racism, the blacks had fallen victim to the neurotic condition—the condition of being awed by everything white. Such awe did not only impair positive sense of the self but forced to regard the self as abjected and contaminated. “The colonial values” as Oliver Kelly observes, “deny the black man not just the individuality but also humanity... he is not allowed to make himself a lack of being to become self-conscious. Rather, he is chained to being, to his body and more particularly to his skin, by colonial values” (39). Walcott’s untiring concern was not merely with the aggressive hold of colonialism on the plantation and infrastructure, but also psychic damage of the average West-Indians and consequently their struggle to escape the prisonhouse of the race and colour. His dramas were committed to the task of emptying the mind of his native countrymen of incapacitating Western values. Like Harris, Walcott’s ostentatious purpose was to illuminate the Caribbean psyche and extend its sensibility in order to overcome psychic violence. Many of his texts forged “new nationalist self-awareness and re-definition” and “explored the psychology of race and colour in the consciousness of black West-Indians almost as an exorcism of deep-seated racial inferiority” (Dabydeen 31). As racial pride and its claim of superiority would have encouraged only cultural parochialism, Walcott’s syncretic texts aimed at articulating cultural alterity, translating legacies into alter/ native cultural space. Walcott’s artistic vision recognized such cultural formations to be more conflictual than consensual, more discontinuous than unisonant. Appropriation of cultural elements, their fusion and transformative potentials could destabilize the nativist discourse. As Joseph Brodsky contends in his essay “The Sound of the Tide”, such cultural reality will prove to be “superior to the confines of class, race or ego” (36) and will decolonize the minds of the natives from colonial cultural imaginary. This early masterpiece underlines how the self can recuperate identity and cultural affiliation that is independent of racist-colonialist project.

In a foreword to the 2008 edition of *Black Skin, White Mask*, Ziauddin Sardar mentions that the ostensible purpose of Fanon’s investigation of the psychology of colonialism is the elimination of “the dynamic of inferiority”. The present chapter seeks to study how Walcott’s play passionately enacts this elimination of inferiority, shakes off psychological colonization, demystify “white”, and “black” values that prevailed in the West Indian society in the 1950s. It charts how the charcoal burner hero, Makak, relinquishing the dream of African chieftainship, is finally released to the “air of liberty” (xii) after reaching his mountain home. From the smashing

of Alcınador café to his return home on the Monkey Mountain is charted a process of how the consciousness is mutated and redemption is made possible from degradation and humiliation. It is commonly observed that Walcott is one of the earliest Anglophone Caribbean writers to have staged the problem of racism, identity and dignity. Challenges of poverty, race and lingering oppressive effects of slavery and colonialism suffuse also the fiction and non-fiction of Jamaica Kincaid and John Rhys. The crux of Kincaid's masterpiece *A Small Place* (1988) is internalisation of colonising culture and resistance to it; it probes the lingering effects of colonialism and slavery on those who descended from the slaves and the once-colonised Caribbean natives. In this masterpiece, Walcott carried forward the task of carrying forward Fanonian insights through the medium of drama. Fanon's seminal work, *Black Skin, White Masks* proves to be a useful intertext for *Dream on Monkey Mountain*. Fanon strongly believed that the pathological conditions in a racist world were directly caused by colonial domination as the individuals suffering atrocities of slavery, indentured servitude and subjugation had become psycho-pathological. Walcott was strongly critical of the cultural condition that had made West-Indians black in body and white in mind- the damaging appropriation of the oppressor's racist values. It manifests the fantasy of the native to occupy two exclusive positions- "to occupy the master's place while keeping his place in the slave's avenging anger" (64-65). With "psychic tug of war" playing on their consciousness, they were more defined than self-defining. Race, ethnicity, religion or economic classes are some of the dominant external categories which not only produced hierarchies but also afflicted them with "inferiority complex". And the racist structure of oppression and domination society not only denied their humanity but identified the black as degraded and irredeemable left them alienated and anxious.

Like Chantal, the tiger, the major characters of Walcott's early masterpiece are identified as ugly beasts. If not directly by association, names like Makak, Moustique and Tigre clearly resemble monkey, mouse and tiger. By a racial phantasm, they are forced to occupy the ontological space of timeless "primitive". Their sub-human status is affirmed and this denial is sociogenic, the combinatory, oppressive forces of culture, history and language – overall, the mechanism of power has deprived them of the privilege of subjecthood. Described by racial epithet and subjected to violent interpellation, the protagonist, Makak has forgotten the legal name and is introduced everywhere with derogatory name- Makak, patios for monkey. A dweller in the forest in the Monkey Mountain, he is the obverse of the face of civilization. Patrick Colm

Hogan has supplied an important end note in his essay “Mimeticism, Reactionary Nativism in Derek Walcott’s *Dream on a Monkey Mountain*” to the name Makak. The name, he contends, is very much suggestive of denigration and it undermines African values as well. As among Yoruba communities Monkey was considered sacred and such naming evoked a derogatory image and re-enforced their sub-human status. It did also distort and devalue a culture which considers monkey to be sacred. The idea of naming, imposing identity is very effective for hegemonies; Walcott elucidates this strategic naming in an interview with Rebekah Presson in 1992: “... in adjusting names [...] You have to go through a whole process of becoming a name that you have been given. It’s the process and technique of removing identity and altering identity so you can rule or dominate” (192). Lestrade charges Makak that with two felons as companions, he has turned the cell into “a stinking zoo”. By association with savagery, barbarism, bestiality the blacks felt eager to whiten themselves. The hegemonic power justifies its subjugation, by the mechanism in which as Elleke Bohemer argues: “[T]he Other is cast as corporeal, carnal, untamed, instinctual, raw, and therefore open to mastery, available for use, for husbandry, for numbering, branding, cataloging, description or possession” (269). Producing prejudiced and discriminatory structures of governance, authority recognizes its basis upon its stereotypes- ones that are associated with primitivism, barbarism and degeneracy. Thus a sort of personal or cultural objectification via body is produced. Contrasted to the prisoners, Lestrade bears his own real name; he appears to be a model of propriety, order and civilization. In the early scenes, Lestrade’s constant reminder of the dichotomy between ‘civilization’ and ‘jungle’ underscores how race thinking and colonisation leave a line of hierarchy among human types. The corporal sees this behavior as a trait of human race, and vents his opinion of the origin of the species, with the apes. Tigre and Souris are identified with animal howling, unable to articulate meaning sentence and phrase. The view at the heart of the colonial logic maintains that the black man is determined in advance by history as subhuman and ripe for domination. Their blackness has dehumanized them, impaired their individuality and mobilized the “colonizer’s ambition to civilize or modernize the native” (Bhaba 62). The way Lestrade introduces Makak, it underscores this denial of the blacks of any human status. Thus they appear to be the exemplars of fractured subjectivity, caught between the ‘otherisation’ of the western discourse and own negated traditions. In Prologue, Makak stands before the judge, introduced by Lestrade: “My Lords, as you can see, this is being without a mind, a will, a name, a tribe of its own... I will

spare you the sound of that voice, which have come from the cave of darkness, dripping with horror. These hands are the hands of Essau, the fingers like roots, the arteries are as hard as hand as twine, and the palms are seamed with coal. But the animal, you observe, is tamed and obedient. Walk round the cage. *Marchez! Marchez!*”(9-13.222). A champion of racist-colonialist ideology, he confers animality upon others. The stage- direction underscores further the role of Lestrade as “animal tamer” cracking out his “order”. The stage is re-inscribed as some circus show where animals are unleashed for display and act at the mercy of the ring leaders. Defined as “primitive”, “uncivilized”, Makak responds like automata. The ideological insistence that the dominated are necessarily inferior is driven home. As the chorus notices:

“Everything I say this monkey does do,

I don’t know what to say this monkey won’t do.

I sit down, monkey sit down too,

I don’t know what to say this monkey won’t do”.

(Prologue.10-13.223)

Having lived under soul-killing domination, the colonized has allowed to be turned into a puppet like object; his only re-action is will less submission. Perceived and fixated as the other, they are reduced to mere “objects”. Violence and other forms of coercion reduced the prison inmates to mere colonial mimic and that is how the loss of faith in the self began. Abjected and denigrated, they lose a positive sense of the self. As Fanon has stressed, in *The Black Skin White Mask*, those who are oppressed by the colonial power, stop being an “actional” person and thereby aggrandizes the self-esteem in white man. As William. S. Haney describes, “They are often at the risk of becoming mimics of one or more cultures instead of genuine hybrids capable of rising above prescribed boundaries of re-discovering the self” (112). The cell as the setting of action is undoubtedly a classic example of authoritarianism, governmentality and ideological manipulation. Here, the racist ideology and apparatus of colonialism create hierarchy of values; by turning the colonized into supine and cultureless object, European culture defined itself. The prisoners are identified as small group of subhuman, barbaric and evil creatures. Lestrade’s adulation of the white race and assumption of an attitude whiter than white themselves are evident in the early section of the play. In scene3 his opening blast vents the ideological

programme: "... we who have borne the high torch of justice through tortuous thickets of darkness to illuminate with vision the mind of the primeval peoples, of backbiting tribes!"(1.3 .3-5.256). He vaunts his unfaltering devotion to white law, language and religion and dutiful servant of "Her Majesty's Government" (217). Noticing the behavior of the convicts, like the howling from the cell, he calls them inferior to "ape", a "nigger" who has failed to evolve. Diana Lynn comments, "Ape or 'monkey man' is one of the most crude and hurtful epithets thrust at the black men by white racists or their mimics" (49). He continues to proclaim with inordinate pride: "I am an instrument of the law. Souris, I got the white man work to do" (1, 279) or little later, "Your rights? Listen, nigger! according to this world you have the inalienable rights to life, liberty and three green figs. No more, no less. You can do what you want with your life, you can hardly call this liberty and as for the pursuit of happiness, you can never hear the expression, give a nigger an inch and he'll make a mile?"(1.10-15,279). All his bombasts are balanced against Makak's introvert, almost inarticulate responses. In the Prologue, he is the *de facto* authority to force Makak to drill. He offers protection to all the villagers and promises to wrench them out of frustration. When in Sc-iii, Corporal in wig and gown stands in the spotlight, his rhetoric reveals the guise or the mask of the conqueror: "this is not another easy-going nigger you talking to, but an officer! A servant and the officer of the law! Not the law of the jungle, but something the white man teach you to be thankful for" (13-16. 280). Here in the figure of reforming Corporal is given "a comic turn from the high ideals of the colonizing mission" (Bhabha 122). Law is one of the mechanism of reconstructing the natives, as Bhaba in his "The Other Question" observes, "The objective of the colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate type on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish administration and instruction" (101). The cultural authority of the West embodied through its reformist zeal and sermonising for moral improvement is as absurdly extravagant as the figure of the mimic men remarkably crowding the pages of Kipling, Forster or Naipaul.

Inside the cell, racist identification and devaluation have driven Makak to put on the white mask, hidden in his bag. At the time the play was written, it was a common place among the black children to carry white mask, an ostentatious sign of Fanonian "inferiority complex". To train the village crowd, Moustique also points to this practice, "All I have is this, black faces, white masks"! With racist interpellation Makak has not only lost himself as a subject but identified with racist myth and fantasy. The crisis that induces such mimic action is revealed in a

monologue by Makak. He broods over his complete cultural alienation, how he's been forced to lead a life without wife and family. Full of self-loathing, self-abomination, he reveals:

“is thirty years now, I have looked in no mirror,  
Not a pool of cold water, when I must drink,  
I stir my hands first, to break up my image”.

(1.13-16.226)

It resonates with the words of Fanon's speaker in *Black Skin, White Masks*: “I took myself far off from my own being, very far, making myself an object” (112). He inhabits what Fanon calls the “zones of non-being”; stripped of culture and history, he is embattled with a structure that denies him humanity. With racist appellation he is relegated to perpetual inferiority. Suffering debilitating alienation, he has identified himself as the “abject” of white values. This signals, as Fanon believed, a movement towards disintegration of the psyche. Having failed to confront his own ugliness, Makak ceases to be a man in his own eyes. As Dazial R. Samad observes: “the speech indicates that Makak refuses to confront the nature of his human image not only because he is Black and thinks himself ugly, but also because he cannot confront what he really is- fragmented and eclipsed.” (231). He now shies away even from own image in utter self-disgust. This inability to face the ugliness of corporeality has reduced him into an abominable image. What Makak confesses here to have internalized is described by Fanon as “epidermalisation”, a mere sign of repulsion, a behavior which has a clear “neurotic orientation”. Tethered to his own skin colour, he is the abjected “other”, a split subject. This manner of conceiving own black body makes him what Breslin calls “anti-Narcissus”(150), a gesture that in extremity of self-loathing becomes self-effacement. Also this violent disgust invites comparison with Kristevan concept of “abjection” towards maternal bodies in her feminist analysis of how the child leaves behind the maternal body as ‘abject ‘in order to enter the realm of father-ruled convention and codes. He seeks to propel away the bodily ugliness on the other side of the imaginary, to separate the self from what is threatening to it .To put it in Kristevan terms, “The abject has the only one quality of the object and that is being opposed to I” (1). To construct a self- image, he must expel what is so revolting in him and inhabit a space for his subjectivity, “I expel myself; I split myself within the same motion through which “I” claim to establish myself”

(Kriesteva 3). Elizabeth Grosz has also defined abjection as “a sickness at one’s own body”, at the body beyond “clean” and proper thing, the body of the subject. Makak is so sick of his ugly face that he recoils even from a reflected image of it. His body violates social propriety, disrupts codes of discipline and order. Black body is abjected not through the treatment of the coloniser but by the psyche of the black in order to negotiate with his/ her abjection within the dominant culture. His ugliness is something of a cultural taboo which threatens the integration of self-image and thus severs self from other. The black man’s body is overdetermined by history and culture in such a way that for the black man it is not the body that he wants or recognizes. It immediately brings to our mind the hysteric condition described by Fanon in *Wretched of the Earth*: “In the colonial world, the emotional sensitivity of the world is kept on the surface of the skin like an open sore which flinches from the caustic agent; and the psyche shrinks back, obliterates itself and finds outlet in muscular demonstration which have caused certain very wise man to say that the native is a hysterical type” (56). Here Fanon suggests how the emotions and psychic tensions are converted into somatic symptoms. Somatized hysterical symptoms are vividly articulated by Makak in his long speech where he describes how his blood is quickened after encounter with the beautiful white apparition.

Fanon has insisted that the white values, ideals enter into the very being of the colonized through their skin like foreign bodies to native culture. Having been subject to the mechanism of inferiorization, the colonized eagerly craves recognition and love: “I wish to be acknowledged not as *black* but as *white* ... I marry white culture, white beauty, white whiteness” (Black Skin 45). His desire to possess white woman embodies an urge to be a part of white culture. In so far as the demand for recognition is created by colonial situation, the demand for recognition itself becomes a symptom of the pathology of colonization. Octave Manoni’s *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Decolonization* cites how the indigenous Malagasy of Madagascar, a group of “backward people” whose dependency complex led them to revere the French as colonizer as they once revered their ancestors. As white values and racist ideology have penetrated so deeply into his being Makak has become dependent on the white Muse for acknowledgement and recognition. She reminds him of his royal lineage and seeks to restore him to a position of pride. In a spell of trance he tells; “And, Moustique, she say something I will never forget. She say I should not live so any more, here in the forest, frighten of people because I think I ugly”( 1.13-14, 236). He’s directed shame and disgust towards self. Makak’s words

attest to chronic complex of self-devaluation, as the colonial values have denied him not only individuality but also of humanity. Makak is insistent upon his ugliness to confirm that if there is absolute devaluation of the blackness, there is sublimation of everything white. Makak craves recognition from the moon goddess which can be attributed to a sort of pathological inferiority. As Oliver Kelly succinctly puts it: “The success of colonization of psychic space can be measured by the extent to which the colonized internalize- or become inflicted by- the cruel superego that abjects them and substitutes anger against their oppressors with an obsessive need to gain their approval” (10). He seeks to define himself not only by rejection of what is so repulsive but also by craving white values and white perceptions. The woman who holds him in thrall is “ the loveliest thing” ; her singing sends him to frenzy. As Brian Crow and Chris Banefield observe: “She is his savior, who has brought him identity and strength after life time of hiding away from others because of his sense of inferiority”(38). Recognition from the Whites can only elevate him from the damaging limitations imposed by their race and skin colour. This is also precisely the choice Miss Aggy makes in *Old Story Time*. When she reaches oldhood, she projects this desire onto her son Len who must climb up in his social and cultural position- first through education and hopefully through marriage to a long-haired white girl Margaret. Like Aggy , in Makak’s mind is firmly ingrained perception of self, and a consuming desire to be acknowledged by the white society, a longing to lose themselves in a mist of whiteness. This is the black psychotic hope to be a part of white culture, to desire whiteness as it is most desirable. On stage, released out of the prison cage, he is brought into Bugged with a feeling of incompleteness. Having no emotional reciprocation, Makak has fixation for the white Goddess. Long trapped in the nightmare of his skin colour he desires to break out of the prison; association with white culture has triggered hallucinations. This is precisely the choice Miss Aggy makes in *Old story Time*. As the apparition appears before his eyes, he recalls his dream in exultantly lyrical terms in the Prologue:

“As I reach to this spot

I see this woman singing

And my feet grow roots. I could move no more.

A million silver needles prickle my blood,

Like a rain of small fishes.

The snakes in my hair speak to one another,  
The smoke mouth open, and I behold this woman,  
The loveliest thing I see on this earth,  
Like the moon walking along her own road” . (16-24,227)

This is the way “that the native converts emotions and psychic tensions into somatic symptoms” (Kelly74). Only by his association with the white woman, he can whiten himself and proclaim his manhood. White values have percolated in his soul in a way so as to develop an obsessional neurosis; in looking up to everything “white”, he further admits his own inferiority. Such dream and delirium attest to the mental colonisation that persisted in the West-Indians even in the post- independence days. In the mock court of the prologue Lestrade has already presented Makak as “a being without a mind, a will, a name, a tribe of its own”, a mere mute animal, though “tamed and obedient” (Prologue.9-11.222). By interpellating the black other as “animal” what is denied is to the black man the independent agency and mechanism of self- expression: “Willfully created and spread by the colonizer, this mythical and degrading portrait ends up being accepted and lived with to an extent by the colonized. It thus acquires a certain amount of reality and contributes to the portrait of the colonized” (Memmi 87).

At the beginning of the day we find that soon after he is knocked out of sleep by Moustique, Makak stretches out into a hallucinatory fit and talks under the spell: “I fall in a frenzy every full moon night. I does be possessed”. As a matter-of-fact interruption/ reminder, Moustique advises him to go “mad tomorrow” since it was a “market day” (1. 6-7, 232). In a long speech, he reveals how he has been gripped by the vision of impeccable beauty, how the “loveliest thing” transfixes him. Delirium and dream rule over the larger section of the plot. Her song induces a sense of manliness in him. He kneels before her in a gesture of chivalry. His hyper-aroused state makes him a visionary to such a degree that he felt a god-self in him; his psycho-somatic spell underscores the West Indian’s obsession with whiteness and perfection. Corporal’s comment on Makak’s driven state is very pertinent: “My lords, is this rage for whiteness that drive niggers mad” (7-8, 228). By colonial logic, whiteness is the ultimate ethical good and perfection and therefore, the natives struggle to live up to the ideal of whiteness. In a state of feverish excitement, he only sees the apparition what no other character can. It is the

White Goddess who has loved him and restored him to his ethnic and racial lineage. She's instilled in Makak ancestral pride that he has descended from the family of "African kings". She tells him that he should live no longer alone and since the black man is determined in advance by history, he only craves for what Fanon terms "a white destiny". This split between the body and mind, this consciousness of the black body and desire for the ideal for whiteness defines the problem of colonial identity. As Lestrade suggests: "She is lime, snow, marble, moon light, lilies, cloud foam and bleaching cream, the mother of civilization and confounder of blackness" (2.3.9-11,319). Though endowed with a sense of worth, he is manipulated into "colonial valourization of whiteness and culture". In *Black Skin, White Mask*, Fanon explains this neurotic obsession which amply clarifies the moon-struck state of Makak, "By loving me she proves that I am loved like a white man" (45). Suffering a profound lack of self-esteem and deep psychic uncertainty, Makak effaces his self. All that he craves now are little love and understanding. Since the white man is a measure of all things, black man must define himself in relation to its "Other". It is in such circumstances when his self-esteem has completely evaporated he becomes desperate to "emulate the white man, to become like him and thus hope to be accepted as a man" (Sardar 6). In a classic strategy of Afrocentric counter-discourse, Makak compensates his non-beingness with another identity, equally fabricated or constructed.

In the post-independence years, West-Indian self-consciousness evolved within the wider context of movements like American Black Power, Transatlantic Negritude, and African independence. The discovery of "Africa" was a strong cultural imperative in the historical period of the 1960s. In the West Indian context Laurence Breiner has called Africa and its nostalgic longing as "a second parent-culture, alternative to Europe" (142). The continuity of African cultural heritage was also a creative inspiration for the writers like C.L.R. James, Edward Brathwaite. For these writers, the spiritual and cultural home was Africa, a mother's lap from which Middle Passage had ruptured the Caribbeans. Post-colonial subjectivity is often re-directed away from modernist and nationalist discourses/ paradigms considering them inauthentic and impure by the politics of "return". Radhakrishnan in his essay "Postcoloniality and The Boundaries of Identity" contends: "The very necessity of the 'return' is posited on a prior premise; the realization to be a post-colonial is to live in a state of alienation, alienation from one's true being, history and heritage. The 'return' takes the form of a cure, or remedy, for the present ills of post-coloniality"(755) .When Makak is reminded of the royal African lineage

or promises his cell-mates a return to the promised motherland, Tigre gloats over it: “Ah! Blessed Africa! Whose earth is a starved mother waiting for the kiss of my foot” (1:2. 18-20/289-290). Makak plans with his cell mates a visit back to Africa- the land of “lions”, “birds”, “sound of flutes”. He imaginatively soars beyond his material existence to claim majesty and kingship as he sees himself as “The King of Ashanti, Dahomey, Guinea”. Lestrade also flatteringly addresses him as “Dat, You mange-ridden, habitual felon, the king of Africa”. To counter the vaunting claims of the Europeans, the narrative is dotted with such triumphalist rhetoric. The romanticisation of the idyll of Africa is given a consummate expression by Makak himself: “Back into the boat, a beautiful boat, and soon, after many moons, after many songs, we will see Africa, the golden sand, the rivers where lions come down to drink, lapping at the water with their red tongues, then the villages, the birds, the sound of the flutes” (2.2.9- 13, 291). This diametrically opposed cultural location reflects the growing trend of what P.C. Hogan describes “reactionary nativism” in the post-independence Caribbean. Formidable in opposition to the adversarial politics, Walcott always reminded that uncritical affirmation of one’s own culture was nothing but colonialism in reverse. And this intense longing for African past was not repudiation of whiteness, rather re-affirmation of it. Within few years of the production of this drama, amidst violent Black Power uprisings and swelling demands of cultural nationalism, Walcott became a target of bitter attack. But he persisted in his belief that such paradigms are dissonant for the complex cultural reality for the Caribbean. Political rhetoric of identity- based programmes and essentialist identity are countered by re-imagining the community lives.

In Part1, Sc ii, in a crowded market, Makak appears in the role of shaman, a “Jesus-like healer” healing a sick man and acquires a reputation as a messianic deliverer. Josephus, a villager, a victim of snake bite is healed not by herb or bush medicines but by “putting coals under his body to make him sweat”. He saves the life of Josephus with a home-spun remedy. His healing power is not derived from Africa but burning coal becomes an instrument of his vocation. By opening his haversack, he asks his people to further his cause:

“Further the cause,

Drop what you have in there.

Look! Look! Josephus walking

Next thing he will dance”

(1.2. 14-17.251)

After the fit of miracle has been performed, he assumes a Messianic part proclaiming him as son of the soil, one among god’s chosen race. Makak also exhorts the villager to believe in themselves; thus, the petty and humble coal trader attains a new aura of dignity. After healing is over, he shows promises to be a potential leader of a people. Long condemned to be irredeemably black and inferior, Makak infuses new vigour to the dispirited people as he compares them with the process of the formation of diamond from the intense pressure of coal:

“You are living coals,  
You are trees under pressure,  
You are brilliant diamonds  
In the hand of your God.”

(2. 6-9. 249)

Coal trading was cheapest of all trades in a society in which Makak lived. As Walcott wanted to get past the racial consciousness or the limiting notion of a class identity, what he wants to assert here is that the diamond, one of the most precious gems is formed from the pressure of coals over a great stretch of geological times. This is a very inspiring argument as Makak re- interprets the racial being of his tribe. Through this episode, the berated lives find their voice and indigenous practices are restored into position of dignity. In coming down from Monkey Mountain with good tidings, he replicates the role of the Moses. With two felons- Tigre and Souris by his side, he assumes the role of Savior. The dream episodes enable the transformative roles of Makak. Beyond his quotidian life, material existence, the various layers of Makak’s split personality is explored. As Paula Burnett notes, “When Walcott’s drama enacts such rites as healing, a quasi resurrection, as in *Dream On Monkey Mountain*, a miracle performed by the least respected person of a hierarchical racialised community, it does so as part of a strategy to mark the social deprivation but spiritual strength of a real, historic group” (103). Contrasted to his prophetic role is the impersonation of Moustique – the fake healer. Contrasted to his cheap commercialism is the spiritual guidance of Makak. He exploits his master’s gift for

personal gain and thus reveals narrow political opportunism: “So children of darkness, bring what you can give, make harvest and make sacrifice, bring whatsoever you have, a shilling, a yam, and put here at the mouth of God...”(2.1.21-24, 267).

Walcott knew well that borrowed power and fake healing was a corrupt version of shamanism and hence dangerous. Beside such dangerous ethnocentricism, Walcott was also alert to the menacing rise of sectarian tension. Makak himself points to the rivalry and factionalism that existed among the tribes of his generation after independence: “The tribes! The tribes will wrangle among themselves, splitting, writhing, hissing, like snakes in a pit...devouring their own entrails like a hyena”( 2.2, 3- 4, 305). Ethnic particularism , sectarian nativism, Africans fighting Africans could attain little other than occluding the harmony and peace. Such romantic nativism narrows down the scope of identification by promulgating racist ideology.

In his seminal essay “What the Twilight Says” Walcott has expressed abiding distrust of revenge: “the West-Indian mind historically hung over, exhausted, prefers to take its revenge in nostalgia, to narrow its eyelids in a schizophrenic day dream of an Eden that existed before its exile” (18). Once the tribe has assumed the control of power they will plunge into factionalism and relentlessly pursue uncompromising “revenge”. Walcott’s mastery of parody is corroborated in trial scene, set up with Makak in royal robe and enthroned. As Tejumala sums up the episode: “History is dragged out from the deepest recesses and accused of having trumpeted blackness underfoot” (107). Ethics of revenge reaches its apex in this trial episode; it is in fantasy that the lust for “black” revenge indicts all those celebrated in the European history. Corporal claims the justice to be “hawk-swift” and “impetuous”. Basil reads out the catalogue of white offenders which includes- Shakespeare, Marlowe, Dante, Galileo, Copernicus, Aristotle and Plato- prominent among the upholders of white values. The list includes navigators, explorers and naval commanders who paved the ways for colonizers and empire-builders. As Lestrade eloquently states the rationale of the mock-trial: “Their crime, whatever their plea, whatever extenuation of circumstances, whether of genius or geography, is, that they are indubitably, with the possible exception of Alexander Dumas, Sr. and Jr., and Alexis, I think it is Pushkin, White” (2.3.11-15.312). They all are sentenced to gallows for being only “indubitably white”, formidable promulgators of power structure. Reactionary nativists upheld recrimination as the way in which power structure might be subverted. Makak’s fantasy is counter-balanced by the absurd trial

conceived in fantasy; the two being the outcomes of internalized racism. Lestrade who has already changed sides already, voices the effectivity of tribal laws and system of justice: “history is without pardon, justice hawk-swift, but mercy everlasting. We have prisoners and traitors, and they must be judged swiftly” (2. 3. 5- 6. 311). In attempt to assert difference from the colonizer’s influence, the colonised replicates the role of the colonizer. When Moustique, who is accused of selling the dream of freedom, is brought to the stand, he comments on the judgment of the tribes: “is this what you wanted when you left Monkey Mountain? Power or love? ... oh I remember you, in those days long ago, you had something there [ touching his breast], but here all that gone. All this blood, all this killing, all this revenge, (2.3, 14-21.314-315). The strong Manichean division informs the scene and offers an excoriating critique of adversarial politics. Walcott’s narrative was in complete disagreement with and resistant to ideological and historical functioning of such binaries. Cultural particularism had to be overcome through an eclectic performative art. Africanism as cultural practice/ performance only roused his ire as utterly futile and barren. By accepting the reactionary Nativism as alternative to racist ideology will never help overcome the Manicheanism. He asks in “What the Twilight Says”: “If one went in search of the African experience, carrying the luggage of a few phrases and a crude map, where would it end”? (87).

The politics of repudiation of “whiteness” reaches the point of what is identified as Apotheosis; it is the firmest of all decisive actions that in Sc.3, Part ii, Lestrade goads Makak to eliminate the vision of white Muse: “If you want peace, if you want to discover your beautiful blackness, nigger, chop off her head!” (10-11.319). If she is beheaded, he will be divested of the constraints of the Western value, obsession of many West-Indian blacks- an obsession for whiteness. In this act, he proclaims to be “free” at last; his psychic space is cleared of what Fanon calls “arsenal of complexes”, propelling new self-awareness. If the myth of whiteness is unmade and its deception exposed, cultural freedom might be affirmed. His exalted claim of being “free” has been subject to political allegorisation. In America the scene was lauded by the Black Power enthusiast when the movement was at its height and articulated lust for black revenge. But such reviews were never favoured by the playwright. In an interview with J. P. White, Walcott offers a further explanation: “What he does is that he sheds an image of himself that has been degraded. When he thought he was Black, he did what he thought the black man should do. Both errors. So that the moment of cutting off the head is not a moment of beheading

a white woman. It is a matter of saying there is some act, some final illusion to be shed. And it is only a metaphorical anyway it's only a dream" (166). As it seems, American audience may have taken the violence too eagerly, too literally as straightforward act of reprisal. And the playwright was at pains to remind at the beginning of his *A Note on Production* that the play is only a dream. Alienation and anger, as firmly believed to be negative could only be eliminated by a symbolic act. To find in the killing an affirmation of violent revolutionary politics in a manner of Dessalines is to miss the whole point of psychic emancipation – a prior condition for the revolutionary consciousness to be born. Critics like Hogan felt in the act of execution an agreement with Fanon's claim of violence as "cleansing force" or cathartic. Fanon strongly argued that only through violence could colonized societies throw off their oppressors and their colonially constructed identities. As Fanon set forth his view, violence is only possible form of communication in the forces of colonialism. The act of beheading and disrobing himself of royal robe index how he can claim self-knowledge: "He is a man, his independent self, free to begin anew" (Hamner 52). Instead of leading life as 'black man', he finds the freedom in living as 'man' Getting rid of awe-inducing vision of whiteness and by overcoming race-inflicted identity, the narrative repudiates black-white essentialised cultural politics which results in what Thieme calls "the dominant discourse's main supporting pillar, Manichaeism, becomes obsolete" (Thieme 11). This is the enabling moment of history as myth; a moment when the traditions may be reinvented. Freed from the prison, his consciousness is reformed to proclaim his true belonging to be Monkey Mountain home.

Stressing its symbolic and allegorical aspects, reviewers and commentators have very different observations on the scene. J.Theime in his study *Derek Walcott* has interpreted the act of Makak as exorcising the stranglehold of European heritage and Afrocentric link before the narrative slides toward "post-colonial consciousness" (76). Walcott always believed that psychic liberation a true enabler to the condition of post-coloniality. The act of killing is described by Daizal. R. Samad as symbolic of "polarized and static romanticized vision of his ancestral past" (242). Both the studies proffer the idea of identity as static, overdetermined. As Lestrade whips up frenzied Makak's passion for violent retribution Makak's final blow may have been direct inspiration of racist propaganda: "She is the white light that paralysed your mind that led you into this confusion. It is you who created her, so kill her! Kill her! The law has spoken" (2.3.19-20.319). Walcott knew well that denunciation of "whiteness" is as reactionary as objectivisation

of the “black”. Though in 1967 when the play was first produced, the consequences of revolutionary politics was not so obvious as it erupted in the early 70s. Stressing on the symbolic aspect of the scene, Makak exonerates from what Robert. E.Fox notes, “The bondage of kingship as well as that of the dream and all externally-imposed definitions of selfhood” (209). Progressive violence not only thwarts domination and oppression but as Sartre believed in his famous introduction to *Wretched of the Earth*; it is an expression of “self-creation”. Colonialism, Fanon argued in *Wretched of the Earth*, “is violence in its natural state, and will only yield when confronted with greater violence” (48). It acts as momentum to cure the pathologies of colonialism. Unburdened by heritage or tradition, Makak rounds up his journey for finding his lost identity and original name. The very foundation of oppositional politics (in terms of race, colour) has been shaken up and no longer gripped under delusion, Makak emerges as New World man. He’s overcome colonially determined labels and left behind the dependence for self-recognition. Throughout the play, the semantic stability of the categories like “black” and “white” are problematised and various racially defined stereotypes have been dismantled. It alters, as Tejumola observes, “the terrain of production of discourse and the relations subordinated to it” (108). In Earl Lovelace’s complex allegorical play, *Jestina’s Calypso*, Jestina emerges as denier of internalization of self- defeating identity ascribed to her. She sounds self-convinced despite her black, ugly face: “long after the echo of your laughter dies, I shall be walking still, striding still, with my head up against the winds of the world, battling to become myself” (25). With all the racial tensions within and without played out, Walcott’s hero also discovers a new self-identity. His dream is a possibility, possibility of the new identity what Lloyd Brown calls “the existential beginning of a new black self-definition” (201). Such possibility of “green beginnings” is enunciated in Lamming’s novels like *Water with Berries or Natives of My Person* as they explore individual rebellion in resisting the tyranny of history. With such beginning will liberation be possible from any intrinsic racial identity and their hierarchization. And it will call into question the validity of radical politics. Dream sequences that swing between the poles of Africanness and Englishness- each a state of mind, equally constructed only reify colonial Manichaeism discourse/agenda and racial classification. Thus, Walcott’s theatre aesthetics has taken to task despotism of monoculture and political economy of identity.

Walcott, like many of his contemporaries, was pre occupied with search for ‘home’ and never ceased to exorcise the “demon of alienation and homelessness”. (Samad, 228)

“We left

Somewhere a life we never found,

Customs and gods that are not born again,

Some crib, some grill of light

Changed shut on us in a bondage, and withheld

Us from that world below us and beyond,

And in its swaddling cerements we’re still bound”.

*(The Castaway, 35)*

Amidst exile, displacement and xenocide, down the centuries “home” has been a problematic for the Caribbeans. Since the disappearance of indigenous population in the 15th century, the islands were populated by those who flocked, forcibly and voluntarily, here from Africa, Asia or Europe; in Braithwaitean phrase all are “Arrivants” here : “the most significant feature of West Indian life and imagination since Emancipation has been its sense of rootlessness, of not belonging to the landscape” (Tejumola 94). For all its extra-regional population, undergoing geo-cultural dispersion, homelessness and severance from the ancestral homeland have been an inalienable cultural condition. Makak describes his people “like a twisted forest, like trees without names, a forest with no roots” (1:2, 16-19248). Violently torn from distant home of Africa, they desired to locate them in Europe or America- the cultural, artistic or intellectual metropolitan centre. They looked to Africa for a reaffirmation of their identity, and as a means of dealing with their persistent sense of exile and displacement. The impulse for escape into better opportunities propelled the West-Indians to look for home in two very different, distant places. In the words of Rajeev S. Pathke, “The sense of displacement found expression in a compulsion to set off in a real and symbolic journeying, in a constant and restless search for home that might appease displacement” (89).

But Walcott vehemently confronted this popular perception of home as spatially far-off. By his own admission, all his artistic endeavours engage with “adamic” naming of the Caribbean

as 'home'. This wrestling to articulate 'home' has engaged several Walcott's contemporaries artists, like Harris or Glissant. Conditioned to dispersal and fragmentation, the West-Indian man tries to reassemble the fragments of his cultural past. In his noble lecture, Walcott himself tells us: "This gathering of the broken pieces is the care and pain of the Antilles. Antillean art is the restoration of our shattered histories, our shards of vocabulary" (54). The meandering and convoluted plot of *Dream on Monkey Mountain* charts a return- journey to mountain "home" as its hero Makak who after a night in the prison-cell returns home at Monkey Mountain with the day-break. As Daizal. R. Samad observes, "In *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, the central character Makak attempts to re-discover the discontinuous links between the multiplicities of archetypes that reside in the oceanic layers of West-Indian culture" (18). Having redeemed himself from oppressive conditions through visions and hallucinations, he appears ready to return to home; both in literal and metaphorical sense in the Epilogue. After dream-tossed, vision- ridden night in the prison cell, he walks back home. It appears that his home is "isolated from political repression, a space seemingly outside the influence of the larger society. By returning to the animated milieu of Monkey Mountain home, he will resume his humble trade of charcoal selling. As also in his poetic masterpiece, *Prodigal*, the Caribbean home becomes a place of final rest; though here all wanderings and errantry are mental rather than physical. Towards the end, Makak has described himself as mere drifter- one swept by sea-waves, uprooted and unmoored "washed form shore to shore". Here he can claim that he has found himself to be in a tangible space or physical location:

Makak: "The branches of my fingers, the roots of my feet, could grip nothing, but now, god, they have found ground."

(Epilogue. 5-7.326)

Chorus with the refrain 'I going home' rounds up the action and what remains only is the movement of walking back to Monkey Mountain for Makak and Moustique where they left from at the outset of the action.

A quest motif underlies the circuitous, "contradictory" plot in *Dream on a Monkey Mountain*. Having undergone utterly degraded life and after all the turmoil of soul, the home to which he returns is a hallowed ground. Notwithstanding his unchanged material position, he

proclaims “Makak lives there, Makak lives where he has always lived, in the dreams of his people” (Epilogue. 11-12, 326); he has attained to the status of upholder of the causes of his community. It is the visionary spells through which he has become a prophet of his community. It is not the vision and delirium of a deranged mind, merely. In the Epilogue, once more, he is asked by the Corporal whom he confidently answers :

Corporal: What is your name?

Makak: Hobain... My name is Felix Hobain.

(5-6. 321)

He has shed the pejorative title, name of abuse, Makak. By re-claiming his name Felix, meaning “happy” he also liberates himself from the degrading name “Monkey”. This recovery is described by Breslin as a decisive transformation here in the level of consciousness: “The main sign of his freedom is that, for the first time in the play, he remembers his real name- neither the derisive “Makak” nor the secret name given by the apparition, but simply “Felix Hobain” (153). Walcott was always aware of forced and artificial re-naming which needed to be cast aside before one can proclaim his/ her personhood. Or the imposed name must be exploded before the lost identity is reclaimed. He was reduced to sub-human status by the imposed name and its association with bestiality. But recovery of original name confirms the re- installation of human identity; “The name, beginning as stigmata spell, turns into a panoply, a disguise, a protection to finally become the flag and emblem of a rebuilt community” (Loichot, 12). In a more decisive gesture, he now rejects the white mask he used to carry in his bag. It’s a sign of regaining self-definition and growing self-consciousness. Both the illusions of White Goddess and African kingship are cast off as things of past and he first can claim the cultural mulatto in himself. When he leaves behind the prison, he is no longer monkey like individual but a human being. As a true West-Indian, he now asserts where his genuine roots are. He has stepped forward towards self-realization and eventual self-identity by overcoming the mechanism of abuse and dehumanization. His closing speech with the tropes of root/ route emanates a new cultural energy: “Lord, I have been washed from shore to shore, as a tree in the ocean. The branches of my fingers, the roots of my feet, could grip nothing, but now, God they have found ground” (Epilogue, 326). Deep in the heart of the forest, Makak recovers his humanity; he has fully reconciled to the fact of being one of Afro- Caribbean ancestry. In Walcott’s plays,

understanding of self and finding rightful place in the society have been a major thematic base for creating a foundation of a new individual West-Indian identity. In mind and body he has reconciled to the reality of cultural and racial origins. The Sunday morning is the morning to awaken from what Edward Baugh has called “dark night of the soul, his harrowing of hell” (85). To resume the charcoal burner’s life, he must return to Monkey Mountain- to his profession at the lowest rung of society. In an interview with the New Yorker in 1971: “You forget Makak is a charcoal burner, he has to face a reality too. He has to come down to the market every Saturday to make a living” (18).

Despite Walcott’s exhortation to the contrary, Makak’s homecoming and claim of freedom have been opened up to an array of political, religious interpretations. Apparently, the episode can be studied as an affirmation of life of dignified simplicity, without shame or sentimentality despite all material deprivation. Makak is West Indian Everyman, as he himself claims, still living in the dream of his own people. By outdoing the demons of subjugation, he has assumed, what Crow and Banefield observe, “mythic dimension accorded to certain characters in folktales and folklore” (40). It may be inferred here that Makak has arrived into independent consciousness and overcome the “bewitching” of cultures. This emergence as folkloric hero, this native West-Indian experience liberates Makak and here Makak appears as Breslin has called, “a solitary avatar of Walcott’s Caribbean Adam”(154). He not only found his home but also his dignity and confidence or what Soyinka calls his “cultural certitude”. To put in James Baldwin’s memorable words: “This past, this endless struggle to achieve and reveal and confirm a human identity, human authority, yet contains for all its horror, something very beautiful” (84). From the earliest days of his artistic career, Walcott was aware of the need to produce counter narratives of self- definition not in order to denigrate the Europeans but to re-create and re-present the Afro-Caribbean histories that will enable them to see themselves anew. This becomes a journey into the self, to arrive at the consciousness which illuminates the root cause of alienation. He has delved deep into himself to discover his innate contradictions and complexes. His journey has carried him from the illusory past to the solid materiality of the present. Like him Lestrade attains self-discovery and self-knowledge :

“I was what I am, but now I am myself...my feet grip like roots” (2.2.299)

Moustique's advice "Go back, go back to Monkey mountain, Go back" comes full circle with the refrain of the Chorus:

"I going home, I going home

I going home, I going home

I going home, I going home

To me father's kingdom"

(17-20.326).

All the wanderings and imaginary journeys lead back to West-India home; it counterpoints the "departure syndrome" of the West-Indian intellectuals and artists' search for acknowledgement and recognition. It dates back to the time of wind-rush generation writers like Naipaul who tore away from the place of birth or origin after disillusionment with living on the periphery of black colonial culture. At a critical juncture of the history of the region, Walcott's play articulated a new Caribbean ethos. Monkey Mountain is not a mere physical 'home' but a space of cultural in-placeness. As they walk back home, the memory of both the sun of Empire and African moon begin to fade away. No longer tethered to the past and repudiating other alternative homes, Makak's homeward journey is much more complex than the home advocated by the political nationalists. As Daizal. R. Samad observes: "For Walcott, home is the Caribbean, fragmented but potent. We live there and strangely the Caribbean lives in a manifestly splintered presence within the oceanic layers of our psyche: a presence which will arise in us and address us in rainbow ways which we may not always comprehend, but which we must always put to creative use as we attempt to grapple with tortured existence" (21). In the first scene, Makak was woken up by Moustique for daily chores of selling coal. It is here that Makak must return to, not to some "Edenic" zone of ancestors but a familiar location, marked by small clearing with a hut and small signal of smoke. We are told Makak is going "back to the beginning, to the green beginning of the world" ( Epilogue,326).Critics have read into this episode various symbolic meanings, despite Walcott's very personal interpretation of the ending as a mere return of a coal trader to the choir of daily trade, a commonplace return. Makak has not only recovered home and name in the Epilogue, when Lestrade asks him Makak replies that he now believes in God. Though his is not the Catholic god of those who introduced Catholicism to the island, nor any

African deity which has been re-introduced to replace the Catholic God. Now he can clearly spell out his name or religion: "... Yes, Oui. Hobain. Sur morne Macaque, charbonier, I does burn and sell coals..." (12-13.322) No longer a king, prophet or shamanic healer, he has returned to his original identity of a down- to-earth, poor charcoal seller. But in a way this reclamation of the self opens up the exhilarating possibility of a New World man. It is quite obvious that, paradoxically, the ending of the narrative is rather a beginning. Cultural independence beyond mimicry or derivativeness may have been an aesthetic goal by the side of waves of de-colonisation. Contrasted to the mutation of consciousness that takes place in Makak is contrasted another kind of transformation in the character of Lestrade, a real "straddler" between two cultural locations. At the end of the plot, he appears in a new guise; almost in a *volte face*, he claims to be a champion of the tribal leadership of Makak and black leadership: "You had a rough night, friend. But is a first offence. Now, what is this? [holds up the mask] Everybody round here have one. Why you must keep it, cut it, talk to it?" (Epilogue, 10-13/323). Unlike Makak, his is not a transformation of consciousness but a side- taking which also underscores political opportunism. His racial or cultural identification is motivated by cheap self-interest, positional advantage. Patricia Ismond puts it very succinctly: "The externals change but ethic remains the same: he looks to black code to regulate an order obliterating all native contradictions" (257). At a time of volatile political situation in the 70s such "nativism" was surging up and Walcott knew such categories to be mere constructs that reify exclusionary politics.

Throughout his career, Walcott endeavoured to un-construct the myth of white superiority and black inferiority. Like Makak, a Caribbean artist is Adamic man in need of naming the objects and enunciating the cultural vision of his people. Makak in his final speech, describes himself only as an "old hermit" very different from prophets: "Other men will come, other prophets will come and they will be stoned, and mocked, and betrayed, but now this old hermit is going back home, back to the green beginning of this world."(12- 15,326). Makak has never lost his spiritual inclinations even from his grassroot experience. Focusing on these visionary experiences, William. S. Heany has called the 'home' here to be "literal and anagogic" (97). Though full of redeeming potential, he renounces the role of prophet and visionary. The ending, as Paul Breslin has also noted, leaves open the question whether he has lost his heroic size in resumption of his old trade. But re- grounding himself on the native soil embody a kind of

New World heroism, heroism of unaccommodated man which also paves the way for assertion of culturally deprived Caribbeans. It is the heroism of Walcottian “nobody”. In absence of “king”, “tribal chief” as model of story, his humble charcoal burner is re-coded as dignified fictional “hero”. As Walcott asserts in his essay “Meanings”: “This was a degraded man, but he had some elemental force in him that is still terrifying; in another society he would have been a warrior” (49). By dramatizing the healing performance and winning a place in the mind of the people, Makak has definitely outgrown the external and imposed standards and rediscovered his roots’. Old perceptions and beliefs give way to powerful influence of hybrid reality and Makak’s story issues out a challenge to disrupted and devalued self. Walcott’s home is not nostalgic romance for a concrete, ancestral space but something re-invented and redefined as he knew, “the West-Indian mind historically hung over, exhausted, prefers to take its revenge in nostalgia, to narrow its eyelids in a schizophrenia daydream of an Eden that existed before its exile” ( 18) . The definitive closure as it is commonly assumed does not leave us without some ambiguity. In returning to Mountain “home”, Makak will return to the old, hierarchized society of material deprivation, the same place where he “lived like a wild beast in hiding. Without child, without wife” (226). If he’s found the “ground”, then he must have overcome “big, big loneliness” (318). If there is “edenic promise”, his fresh beginning is only a “hermit” like withdrawal and it will not matter if he is forgotten “like a mist”. And it may be affirmative of Walcott’s unwavering faith that there existed a space outside, a world apart from the twin pulls of Africa and Europe and there lay the hope of fresh beginnings. It may be suggestive of finding one’s “voice” as he is no longer near-mute, subdued figure of the Prologue, or can claim to belong after encounter turbulence outside, futile searches. In an interview Walcott has clarified the point further: “I say, he goes back to his mountain. It belongs to him. He has another name and now he can say it... I’m talking about the sense of ownership that allows him to feel that when he walks on that road, it belongs to him” (167).

### **A Dramaturgic Venture:**

Walcott from the beginning was an accomplished craftsman and this play marks an advance in Walcott’s dramaturgy. In *Caribbean Discourse*, Glissant had already observed,

“experiment is for us [in the Caribbean] the only alternative; the organization of a process of representation that allows the community to reflect, to criticize, and to take shape” (209). *Dream on Monkey Mountain* appears to be that much-needed experimental alternative, a stage-product that encompasses the folk lives in myth, hopes and dream. Here, his stagecraft has left behind realism of some earlier St. Lucian plays for experimenting with expressionistic technique- more syncretic, self-reflexive, belonging to multiple levels. By parting with conventional modes here he sought to bring his native audience to a new experience of drama. Walcott’s instructive note on Production involves the audiences and actors alike in the performance structured in a complex and illogical way: “The play is a dream, one that exists as much in the given minds of principal characters as in that of its writer, and as such, it is illogical, derivative, and contradictory. Its source is metaphor and it is best treated as a physical poem with all the subconscious borrowings of poetry. Its style should be spare, essential as the details of a dream”. Walcott has himself stressed that the play is a scripted dream. Much of its narrative is a dramatized subconscious. In this intricately structured text, the contrary impulses of the subconscious can best be explored in dream devices. Psychological complexity and the rich symbolic design make the play a divided structure. The axis of the plot is dream; visions, delirium and hallucinations carry forward its non-linear narrative and their locus is in disordered and deranged psyche of the old charcoal seller. Makak’s fragmented personality and de-ranged psyche is the locus of action. In lieu of well- made structure or causative line it fuses prose, poetry, reality and fantasy, sanity and madness. By a creative fusion of disparate artistic traditions, by crafting into “Coherent deformation” (in Allan Weiss’s vocabulary), it appears as formless as the plays of Buchner or Strindberg. Private areas of experience, inner idea or vision shatter the facticity of the world and linearity of the plot design. Like any expressionistic drama, most of the episodes issue out of the mind of the dreamer. Though Walcott here adds the visions and dreams not of his protagonist alone but of the other characters that inhabit the dream atmosphere. In the Prologue, Makak relates his mental state before the Corporal: “Sir, I does catch fits. I fall in frenzy every full-moon night. I does be possessed” (3-4. 226). His words provoke the judges into laughter and while Corporal seeks to claim his notice by mention of charges, he gets rapt in his speech. The apparition, like Banquo’s ghost, appears before him and to none else as the Corporal mentions that he cannot see anything. The dream has implicated the entire community rather than remaining as individual derangement/delerium. As Lloyd Brown points out: “[O]ur revolutionary dreams are not a form of escape. They are also, paradoxically, psycho-existential affirmation of

self, a Black selfhood. However overly idealistic his revolutionary cause may be, and despite the romanticism of his 'royal' African heritage, Makak affirms his human identity precisely because the capacity to dream has survived within him" (59). Hence, the focus must be shifted from Makak's hallucination and delirium to the dream of the community. There is no doubting that the plot, seeks to articulate selfhood for the community, long held under the thrall of colonial rule. As Francophone writer Glissant stressed, "individual delirium and collective theatricalization, as forms of cultural resistance are the first 'catalysts' of this consciousness" (195). Makak's dream utterances and gestures embody the emerging consciousness that leaves behind the baggage of history completely forever.

A quick overview of the plot will enable us to understand why Walcott stated the play structurally to be "illogical, derivative". The two parts consist of three scenes, each, locked by Prologue and Epilogue. Though Walcott has denied such structuration/ division and describes the entire play as a "dream". Most of the actions take place in jail cell where Lestrade is keeping surveillance on Makak and his two fellow felons, Souris and Tigre. Sometimes the cage vanishes out of sight, to add the stage design to be part of surrealistic theatre. The three scenes of the first act focus on Makak's vision of white beauty and the next three scenes shift to the pursuit of dream and kingship in Africa and his treatment of a sick man. The contradictory dream world extends in the part2 as Makak escapes to Monkey Mountain after murdering the corporal with his cell-mates and subsequent jailbreak. The series of fantasy reaches the climax in an elaborate and mock trial for indicting the crimes of the 'Whites' against the civilization. The Epilogue returns again to the cell and with the daybreak as the night is over, Makak gets ready to walk back home. Walcott's reminder about the structure of the whole play blurs the line between the "realistic" plane and "surreal" situations; it straddles between workday world and the dream world, the world of matter-of-factness and insanity. Being a non-linear narrative, it is markedly different for the psycho-expressionistic treatment of O'Neill's play *Emperor Jones*. The opening and ending are marked off from the 6 scenes of breathless suspense. unconscious or collective memory erupts as the hero runs through jungle and unnervingly encounters spectre or spirit. Jones's visions and hallucination are entirely his own and plunge him in a complete isolation from his community ; he is not only enmeshed with not only in his individual past but also ancestral past. While Jones' is a personal tragedy, Walcott's play is rooted in the fractured psyche of the native West-Indian community. As when Lestrade accuses the resurrected Moustique of betrayal, Lestrade says, "You have betrayed our dream" (314).Some of the

characters jeer at the vision of Makak and offer own comments on it. It is Moustique who has sought to exploit the visionary gift of his comrade in his impersonation and spurious performance of a prophetic healer. He also knocks Makak down from his dreamy state, reminding him of the market day and their trade responsibilities. By pitting reason, practicality against madness, Walcott denies the plot any structural cohesiveness. To liberate drama from the straitjacket of convention, it abandons order, clarity and the disjointed scenes capture the truth hidden in the recess of mind. Each dream episode is not technical novelty but a part of his quest for independent identity. Almost in a carnivalesque reversal, the poor charcoal seller appears in royal robe. Thus dream becomes an agency for imaginative reversal. Robert. E. Fox illustrates the episode through historical facts, citing from Naipaul's *The Loss of Eldorado*. Naipaul mentions a widely popular cultural practice among the slave society in the nocturnal ceremonies and revelries in which slaves play-acted as kings and queens. And in their masquerade, they would mock and jeer at their masters. This revelry allowed them to topple down the hierarchy of master- slave. It was a palliative against the bitter, oppressive realities. By allowing Makak a royal title in fantasy, Walcott opened up possibilities of reclaiming identity and offers alternative to the bounded space of realities of lived experiences. As Makak confesses his madness in a pleading manner: "All I have is dreams and they don't trouble your soul" (225). In the Apotheosis scene, the fantasy trial suggests an alternative to crude, physicality of racial reprisal. Very significantly, the act of beheading is rather "symbolic"/ metaphoric and such act could cleanse the oppressive mentality and thereby redeem the down-trodden. It is what also enables Makak's return from the realities of everyday world. Here, Walcott's surrealistic renderings become purgative of the revenge-politics and racial tussle. Walcott never ceased to lash out at the process of identity formation grounded on Black Power politics.

Stylistically, in using dream structure Canadian playwright, Thomson Highway's significant play *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* resembles Walcott's masterpiece. In both of them what is required is heavily physical form of acting to be embodied through a trickster figure. Walcott's famous contemporary, Wilson Harris, also in his masterpiece *The Palace of Peacock* deploys the narrative strategy which blurs the dividing line between historical and mythic strata. It wrenches the readers free from the gravity of history and prepare for a psychic journey. Here, also, Walcott accomplishes novelty in allowing a novel stage experience for his audience. The absence of narrative linearity owes much to its affinity with the poetic texture. Walcott had always stressed the proximity of the poem and drama and he defined drama as a

form of enacted verse. In his note, Walcott lays stress on the role of the “unconscious” in structuring a play that negotiates between lyrically inspired moment and prosaic, official rhetoric or continuous veering between realistic and poetic realms. The play is a series of dream within dream, play within play and justifies its “contradictory”, illogical nature. It is a dream that transforms Makak and Walcott’s artistic vision. Walcott was always sceptic of teleological history as the linearity of the narrative perpetuates the hegemony of the colonial culture. His hero, Makak in his recital of dreams overcomes the dictum of history and the limits of racism lift him to the plane of sublime realization:

“And this old man walking, as ugly as sin

In a confusion of vapour,

Till I feel I was God self, walking through the cloud”

(5-7,-227).

It is undeniable that the entire dramatic corpus of Walcott has seldom allowed such poetic treatment of his native material. Readers have faced some degree of difficulty in reading this play. Its complex design can be attributed to the combination of “modern drama of consciousness of the modern western dream play with the convention of West Indian folk story, the world of Frantz Fanon with the firelit face of the storyteller in the village compound”(Brian Crow with Chris Banefield 40). As they stress the interpretative difficulty of the narrative, Breslin also denies its allegorical significance. As he comments: “That unforgettably powerful registration of divided consciousness, rather than a narrative of liberation, may be the greatest achievement of this play” (131). If the Epilogue finds the hero speaking for himself, proclaiming his “difference”, the play still compels our attention by refusing to escape the “divisions between sanity and madness, reality and dream” (Baker 16). Veering between alternate realms, the plot leaves the audience in the precarious position between dream and reality, rather by leaving behind an impression of liberatory narrative. Walcott’s rich dramaturgy espouses how he resisted uncritical adaptation and restored the eclecticism at its very best. On the levels of both theme and craft, the Manichean frontiers of both Afrocentric and Eurocentric discourses are dismantled and thereby it offers up more effective forms of resistance.