

## PREFACE

Though his dramatic corpus is considerably voluminous, the scholarly appraisal and critical reception of Walcott's poetry have outweighed his dramas. It was not until 1990s that his dramas began to elicit extensive reviews and critical expositions. By that time Walcott's dramatic fame had reached the Broadway- a four-decade long dramatic career, and his manifold theatrical contributions were now gaining prominence from relative obscurity. Reading his plays, I felt that they are informed by an impulse of articulating alter/ "natives" in the thematic, structural and performative terms- in what may be called, in Harris's terms, "new architecture of cultures". (105). Instead of chronologically reading them or doing neat generic division, I would rather attempt to read how the legacies get translated to his artistic vision. Infused by transcultural energy, how they resist construal of Caribbean identity by colonialist and nativist discourses.

Chapter-1 of the present study discusses the three short St. Lucian plays which assert the indigeneous theatrical style and imaginatively places the marginal locus at the centre of his work. It outlines the portrayal of the wretched and degraded lives which is illuminated by the vision of solidarity and rare zeal to assert selfhood beyond ethical restraints and dogmas. Thus they become subjects by "renouncing the type of individuality that was imposed on us over several centuries" (Foucault quoted in Guattari,76)

Chapter 2 is concerned with Walcott's masterpiece, the signpost of his brilliant career- *Dream on Monkey Mountain*. It carries forward Walcott's quest for artistic and cultural freedom to overcome the mechanism of inferiorization and static framework of identification within the prominent socio- historical and politico- economic context. It also surveys experimental dramaturgy , the dream structure and how its "illogical and contradictory" structure makes it straddle the alternate realms to disrupt a neat ending or assertive position.

Chapter-3 investigates Walcott's two major rewrites of Homer and Defoe- how literary transposition and their transmutation infuse creole energy. As counter- performances, *Pantomime* and *Odyssey- A Stage Version* evoke proliferation of differences and deliberately step across the boundary of language and race to open up possibilities of alter/native dramatic art.

Chapter- 4 ,instead of looking at particular text, discusses the art of forging an ( “other”) language negotiating the ends of creole spectrum- overlap of englishes, French Creole and Standard English throughout his dramatic *oeuvre*. Walcott’s hybrid register dissolved the false dichotomy between particular and universal language and also resisting the hegemony of metropolitan language.

Ch- 5 looks at two late plays, *Remembrance* and *The Last Carnival*- how their politically fraught narratives become Walcott’s response to the challenges of nation-making in the post-independence days. Set in volatile times, they attempt to articulate self-transformation and self-definition of the Caribbeans. Community as expression of shared culture and identity is problematised in these two plays.