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Mustapha Matura's Welcome Home Jacko: The Rastafari Movement in The light of Postcolonialism

Mustapha Matura'nın Welcome Home Jacko'su: Sömürgecilik Sonrası Dönemde Rastafaryan Hareketi

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ÖZ

Mustafa Matura sömürgeciliği tecrübe etmiş bir yazar olarak, sömürgecilik sonrası alanda eserler kaleme almış ve eserlerinde sömürgeciliğin bireyler üzerindeki etkilerini yansıtmıştır. Bunlardan biri olan *Welcome Home Jacko*'da sömürgeciliğe karşı direnişin simgesi olan Rastafaryanizmi konu edinmiştir. Bu bağlamda, eserde bireylerin kimliklerini bulma çabalarında karşılaştıkları problemleri, kimlik edinme arayışlarını ve stratejilerini ortaya koymuş ve temelde Avrupa'nın tüm dünyayı temsil ettiği savına da dolaylı olarak karşı çıkmıştır. Çalışmada, Rastafaryanizmi benimsemiş bireylerin sömürgeciliğin izlerini silerek kimlik edinme süreçleri incelenmiştir. Bununla birlikte, kimi karakterlerde halen sömürge döneminden kalan taklitçilik, Avrupa hayranlığı gibi eğilimlerin olduğu gözlenmektedir. Bu çerçevede, sömürgecilik sonrası dönemin bireyler üzerindeki etkilerinin ne derece yok olduğu ve bireylerin sömürgecilik söylemini nasıl alt ettikleri oyundaki karakterler aracılığıyla temel sömürge (ve sonrası) dönemi kavramları ışığında incelenmiştir.

ABSTRACT

Mustapha Matura, who was personally involved in the colonial history, has produced literary works associated with the postcolonial movement. In his pieces, he has shown the effects of colonialism on individuals even though the colonial period is over. In one of those works, *Welcome Home Jacko*, he employs Rastafarianism as a resistance against colonialism. In this context, this paper seeks to show how individuals are keen to create their own identities free from the colonial/European influence although some characters still bear the European ideology of superiority since they tend to perform mimicry. Within this framework, the study aims to reveal whether the postcolonial individual has, indeed, decolonized his/her psyche in consideration of fundamental (post)colonial concepts.

1. Introduction

It is not easy to define postcolonialism. While the hyphenated form post-colonialism chronologically refers to a time span after colonization, the term has been generally used to signify the political, linguistic and cultural experiences of the formerly colonized countries ever since the colonial expansion began. Even though some argue that any literature which opposes colonialism though written in the colonial period is a postcolonial text, postcolonial studies gained pace in the late 19th and early 20th centuries,

and the theoretical discourse has enhanced owing to the contributions of Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Stuart Hall and the academics interested in discussing and excavating the various political, social, cultural effects of colonization all throughout. Boehmer regards postcolonialism as an activist mode which questions and which aims to challenge structural inequalities to bring about social justice (2006: 342).

In the same vein, Trinidad-born Mustapha Matura (1939-2019) sets pen to paper with a view to writing against the

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social injustices stemming from the colonial activities because where he was born had an unfortunate colonial history. After Columbus's discovery in the 15th century, Tobago went under the rule of the British, the French and the Dutch until its final capture by the British. Though settled mostly by the French colonists, Trinidad was also under the Spanish rule until 1797. The islands of Trinidad and Tobago were a single Crown Colony until they collectively proclaimed their independence in 1962. Matura, born and raised under the British rule but moved to the motherland in the year of independence, thus one among the authors of the Commonwealth Literature, drew his material from his first-hand experiences as a West Indian in London in order to demonstrate the sense of dislocation felt by the members of his community. *Welcome Home Jacko* employs Rastafarianism as a resistance against colonialism. In this context, this paper seeks to show how individuals are keen to create their own identities free from the colonial/European influence although some characters still bear the European ideology of superiority since they tend to perform mimicry. Within this framework, the study aims to illustrate if the postcolonial individual has, indeed, decolonized his/her psyche in consideration of fundamental (post)colonial concepts.

Matura pens *Welcome Home Jacko* (1978) to lay bare black man's struggle for (re)discovering his authentic self, and he presents the audience a group of black teenagers who endeavour to stick to their black identity through the Rastafari movement.¹ The importance of Rastafari movement for the black community should be clarified at this point: the origins of the movement goes back to the philosophy of Marcus Garvey, an African black nationalist, who believed that all Africans in the Western world should return to their ancestral homeland since they were all descended from the native Africans and, who, during the 1920s, came up with the idea of uniting all black people spread around the world. Garvey's struggle was anti-colonial in that he always struggled against the ideology and practice of colonialism. Garvey also prophesied the accession of a black king who would be the saviour of the Africans in Africa. When Ras Tafari Makonnen was crowned the new emperor of Ethiopia as Emperor Haile Selassie, the event was perceived as the fulfilment of Garvey's prophecy by the Africans. Indeed, Haile Selassie was more than a political leader; he was the embodiment of Jah - God - on earth, he was the Messiah, the Lion of Lions, or the King of Kings; he was the symbol of freedom for the Africans.

Haile Selassie, just as the intellectuals such as Frederic Douglas, W. E. B du Bois, Booker T. Washington and Marcus Garvey, tried to raise consciousness among the Africans who have been enslaved, exploited, or colonized all over the world by the dominant power. They advocated an investigation of the distinctiveness of the African cultural elements in black American and Caribbean societies (Ashcroft et al., 1998: 27). Even though Jamaican Rastafarians initially looked forward to a literal repatriation to their ancestral homeland via the agency of Haile Selassie, increasingly, their movement turned out to be

figurative: reclamation by Jamaicans of their African ancestry, a heritage systematically denigrated under slavery and in European colonialist ideologies (Ashcroft et al., 1998: 206). Haile Selassie's speech in California in 1968, in which he wishes equality and peace among the citizens of the world regardless of their skin colour, illustrates his stance regarding the issue of (de)colonization:

Until the philosophy which hold one race superior and another inferior is finally and totally discredited and abandoned . . . until the colour of a man's skin is of no more significance than the colour of his eyes; that until the basic human rights are equally guaranteed to all, without regard to race; that until that day, the dream of lasting peace, world citizenship, the rule of international morality will remain but a fleeting illusion to be pursued but never attained. And until the ignoble and unhappy regime that hold our brothers in Angola, in Mozambique, in South Africa, in sub-human bondage, have been toppled, utterly destroyed; until that day the African continent will not know peace. We Africans will fight we find it necessary. (Waters, 1985: 150)

2. *Welcome Home Jacko* as a Postcolonial Drama

Welcome Home Jacko takes place in a youth club in London in which the posters of Africa, Ethiopia and Haile Selassie are hanged on the walls. The club, situated in London yet populated by the African teenagers, functions as the "Third Space" (Bhabha, 1994: 38) for the Rasta boys because they hybridize the metropolitan space at the same time adapting to it within its borders. Bhabha's term describes an area of cultural interaction and mutual intervention in metropolitan urban spaces (Boehmer, 2006: 356) in which the colonized offers its cultural background while feeding on the colonizer's culture. In other words, the Third Space is the sum of such a reciprocal relationship between the two cultures. In the same vein, the youth club, where the presence of a hybrid culture can be observed, becomes a liminal space in which cultural exchange might occur. "The colonized subject may dwell in the liminal space between colonial discourse and the *assumption* of a new 'non-colonial' identity" (Ashcroft et al., 1998: 130, emphasis mine) and the youth club, exempt from social discrimination, enables Rasta boys to revive their pre-colonial self.

ZIPPY. Cha yes is a good place man. Dis is de only place in dis town whey we could come an relax an en get no harassment. We could do we own ting here, an dey en have nobody ter tell we what ter do or asking we what we doing. (Matura, 1992: 273)

In London, the Rasta boys literally feel dislocated because they are moved off their African territory, and having been placed on to a hierarchical chain that ignores their cultural richness in favour of the values imposed by the colonizing culture, they are also metaphorically dislocated. That is, they are in exile, yet they endeavour to resuscitate their homeland in the youth club. The club turns out to be a shelter in which they can feel free from the biased and

¹It should be noted that most Rastafari do not accept the term "Rastafarianism" since they are against the suffix "-ism" as they consider it a part of the Babylonian [European] culture they hate.

unjust imperialist culture. In other words, it enables them to create their own space to survive in an alien environment. On the other hand, it is only an *assumption* that they can return to their non-colonial identity: having been relocated in the Third Space under the surveillance of a white person, the Rasta boys are already situated in a liminal position where it is impossible for them to keep their identities *pure*. Their state at the beginning of the play verifies the aforesaid argument:

*Four black boys (seventeen to twenty-one),
Zippy, Marcus, Dole, and Fret are playing a
football machine.*

...

MARCUS. Wait, wait, wha we a play for?

ZIPPY. Wha him mean?

MARCUS. Coke, make we play fer Coke,
who a lose him have ter buy, wha yer a say?
(Matura, 1992: 239-40)

Supposing that Coke as a Western product represents the imperialist society from which the colonized culture suffers, the Rasta boys' incessant desire to have it also shows their internalization of the colonizer's culture. It is notable that they play a football machine and drink Coke simultaneously claiming their commitment to their African roots. Regarding the youth club and the group's habits there, it is safe to conclude that the youth club shatters the traditional hierarchical binary opposition between the colonizer and the colonized; or, the Rasta boys feeding upon both cultures at the same time create a hybrid identity. Their case poses what Bhabha calls *ambivalence* because while they supposedly cling to their African origin; they also adopt Western habits. There is ambivalence because the colonized subjects are not completely opposed to the colonizer (Ashcroft et al., 1998: 12). Ambivalence is both the merger of and antagonism between the culture of the colonizer and the colonized difficult to be identified as separate entities, and, likewise, the Rasta boys are neither totally resistant to the colonizer's culture nor do they completely embrace it.² That is, they fluctuate between two opposite cultures. Indeed, according to Bhabha, the Rasta boys' situation maintains that a postcolonial identity is jointly shaped by the colonial culture and by the colonized's own culture. What Bhabha calls hybridity "commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization" (Ashcroft et al., 1998: 118). In this sense, the Rasta boys fit in the definition of hybridity as their stance questions the idea of fixed identity and verifies the assumption that hybrid identity is the sum of the encounter of the colonizer's and the colonized's culture in the Third Space, in the space of in-betweenness. Indeed, their welcoming the titular hero Jacko confirms that, despite their alleged commitment to their African roots, they also adopt the European land as home.

Jacko has just been released from prison in which he stays for five years after being accused of rape. Each character hails him as he has just returned home: "All right

everybody, to Jacko, welcome home Jacko" (Matura, 1992: 270). It is interesting that although Jacko is also a member of their community, educated in prison and already removed from his roots, he no longer feels commitment to his African culture:

ZIPPY. Rastafarian is black man ting now we
discover we identity is Rastafarian dats it.

JACKO. I hear bout it in Jamaica long time.
(Matura, 1992: 272)

Suffering from the feeling of displacement in the colonizer's culture, which refers to Bhabhaian unhomeliness, Jacko does not feel at home in his mother culture either. That is why he does not join the Rasta boys. In other words, he is in a literal and metaphorical exile because he is distanced from his ancestral origin. His outfit also demonstrates his disconnection from his origin. While the Rasta boys wear their "genuine Ethiopian robes" (Matura, 1992: 272) sewed from red, yellow and green fabric, Jacko "is wearing a suit and tie" (Matura, 1992: 268). In other words, the play problematizes the concept of home. Where is Jacko's home? Is it the place of birth? Is it the displaced cultural community of the Rasta boys? Is it England in which the black community is re-located? When Jacko is caught between the two juxtaposing cultures and cannot acknowledge either of them as home, he feels a sense of dislocation, unhomeliness. "In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused . . . forcing us upon a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting" (Bhabha, 1994: 9) and Jacko, accordingly, adopts a hybrid identity.

In fact, it is impossible to dwell in a purely black culture while there is such a transcultural interaction going on between different cultures. Nevertheless, "the Rastas sensitized the national consciousness in attitudes towards black and poor" (Waters, 1985: 176) and, together with the decolonization process, they endeavoured to retrieve their indigenous culture with the aim of gaining self-expression. In other words, the Rasta people reject to be deformed replicas of the European culture they abhor but try to reconstitute their identities benefiting from their own cultural heritage. In this sense, it would not be wrong to suggest that the characters in *Welcome Home Jacko* also hold on to their African roots to give a second birth to their identities. After each goal in the football game, for instance, they claim it to be from the hand of the King of Kings emphasizing their devotion to their spiritual leader:

ZIPPY. Me no Jah, me talk ter Jah, him talk
ter me, me an him communicate him a tell me
hit de Ras Clart ball square, me hit it square it
a go in square.

MARCUS. Dat goal was scored by de Lion
of Judea, de warrior of Redemption ter Ras
Clart, no me should have me dub. (Matura,
1992: 240-1)

Besides, from the jukebox - though a European invention - they listen to reggae, a form of music advocating "for recognition, identity, respect, love, [and] justice" (Davis et al., 1982: 151), which is indicative of the resistance against the colonizer's culture. Bob Marley states the importance of reggae as an expression of the suffering of the blacks:

² I disregard ambivalence from the point of view of the colonizer because there is no textual support.

Like all folk music, it is essentially commentary; but what is unique about this commentary is that it reflects in every thought, in every musical pulse, something to do with survival and accommodation. The children of the diaspora struggle for a place in society to this day. Worse, they struggle for their identities, mislaid as the slave ships made their way to the New World through the Middle Passage. Therefore, their commentaries must deal with these realities. (Davis et al., 1982: 11)

The subject of reggae is about the ideas of equality and righteousness. It defends equality for all; it points to the cruelty of slavery; it calls for fight for survival in the diaspora. Marley emphasizes the identity struggle of the blacks enslaved by the white. He and his followers make use of reggae to give voice to their experiences. In this sense, reggae creates a counter-discourse for them as it serves as an instrument for their resistance against the colonizers. The Rasta boys, likewise, appropriate the jukebox to their own end to express themselves as opposed to the discourse produced by the colonizers. Nourished by the black's own history, "such art [reggae] does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present" (Bhabha, 1994: 9).

Just like reggae and the appropriation of the jukebox, abrogation helps the Rasta boys establish counter-discourse. If abrogation refers to the rejection by postcolonial writers of "correct" or "standard" English (Ashcroft et al., 1998: 2), this is exactly what Matura achieves in *Welcome Home Jacko* all throughout. Abrogation operates as a counter-attack to the colonialist's language which initially imprisons the colonized. In this context, much as the Rasta boys seem to lack the means to resist neo-colonialism (as they drink coke and are keen on football), they indeed exploit the colonizer's language to answer back. They liberate themselves by means of the colonizer's language since they employ it against itself. The Rasta boys still speak English but they use it subversively; they deviate from its grammatical and syntactical rules. They appropriate the language to fulfil their purposes in opposition to the confinement in the language of the colonizer. They use the master's language as a tool for liberation against the master. Below is an example of the distorted use of language:

ZIPPY. Ras Clart me a beat yer.

MARCUS. Bet what you a miss ter Ras Clart, you a hit one ball you a call dat beat.

ZIPPY. Aright, make we play one more game, Dole yer ready?

DOLE. Me no want te play no mor Man, him a make ter much Ras Clart noise make we play some Dominoes (Matura, 1992: 239)

After the colonizer's intervention into the African territory, most of the African languages died out because they were held captive and were not allowed to speak their mother tongues. For this reason, the members of the Rasta

movement reject English regarding it an imposed colonial language, and they find a solution to the problem by creating a modified linguistic system. Thus, theirs is a confrontational language in an effort to refuse the colonial imposition. In doing so, the Rasta boys introduce language peculiar to them in the metropolitan language while emphasizing its distinctiveness from the latter. Edward Kamau Brathwaite defines the above-exemplified form of Caribbean English as the nation language, which is heavily influenced by and the consequence of the Afro-Caribbean cultural experience:

It is an English which is not the standard, imported, educated English, but that of the submerged, surrealist experience and sensibility, which has always been there and which is now increasingly coming to the surface and influencing the perception of contemporary Caribbean people. (1984: 311)

The Rasta boys of *Welcome Home Jacko* try to assert their presence by appropriating the colonial language yet they also fit in the definition of the subaltern as the one unable to speak for him/herself. The Rasta boys, being unemployed, the lowest in position and holding the least power in the London society, can also be included in the subaltern category. At this point, one should put forward the famous question: Can the subaltern speak? According to Spivak, devoid of the verbal means and disallowed by the dominant discourse, the answer should be in the negative. The Rasta boys, on the other hand, manage to speak by turning their body into a text to retrieve their voice. They use body as a site for inscription. In this sense, their unique hairstyle, -dreadlocks- which stands for their loyalty to their African roots and to their ancestral heritage, becomes functional:

ZIPPY. Cha all a we a Rasta an all Rasta man believe in him dread locks.

GAIL. Yes, the hair.

ZIPPY. Dat not him hair, dat him dread locks. (Matura, 1992: 260)

Similarly, the Rastas have a distinctive diet: they only eat *I-tal*, a saltless vegetarian food, which is almost natural as it does not contain any chemicals or preservatives. *I-tal* is prepared as pure as possible without the effects of the European industrial technology. Besides, the Rastas wear traditional robes "us[ing] de colours of Ethiopia, de red, de gold an de green" (Matura, 1992: 280). The colours represent and reinforce their devotion to the African roots: red symbolizes bloodshed for freedom in the history of the Rastas; gold is indicative of the wealth of homeland, and green stands for the flora of Ethiopia. To put it differently, the Rasta boys implement their peculiar way of life to oppose the homogenizing effects of the dominant culture. Due to the desire to return to their indigenous state, they try to recover their pre-colonial cultural practices as much as possible. They make use of cultural essentialism to resist the (neo)colonial power. It is debatable how far such a return is possible yet, indeed, Spivak also touches upon the need to embrace cultural essentialism in the struggle for liberation from the impacts of colonial and neo-colonial oppression. As she remarks: "I think we have to choose again strategically, not universal discourse but essentialist discourse" (qtd: Ashcroft et al., 1998: 79).

On the other hand, the youth club in which the Rasta boys claim their commitment to their origin is still governed by a white European woman whose name is Sandy. The Western thought has established a binary system for the construction of reality, and colonial imperialism has made use of this binary logic to hierarchize the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. In this colonial discourse based on a binary system, Eurocentric view regards itself superior to the rest of the world and qualifies itself as being civilized, refined, advanced, good, beautiful, and human while perpetuating the representation of the natives/the blacks with the following characteristics: “primitive, retarded, evil, ugly, bestial, weak, inferior, unintelligent.” For the Western mind, the natives are unable to control and govern themselves; therefore, they are in dire need of an external force to take care of them. This fundamental binary is crucial for a European mind “to civilize” the “uncivilized”; and, thus, being black or native is synonymous with being the colonized. That is how Marcus verbalizes the European oppression: “Cha, yer right, all a believe in money an greed an oppression, all yer [the whites] oppress people” (Matura, 1992: 249). There is a similar hierarchical organization in the youth club as well. Sandy as a white European represents the English government and the Eurocentric worldview. She manages the youth club where the Rasta boys are kept busy in order to keep them under control, and although they seem to be free, they are under constant surveillance.

Sandy is in the position of power and is responsible for the boys. She, for example, locks the fridge where there is Coke and she holds the keys:

SANDY. What’s all the fuss about? I told you I was on the phone. It wouldn’t of killed you to wait a minute, just for a few cokes, which are only going to rot your guts anyway. I told you.

MARCUS. We like Coke.

...

DOLE. Yer coulda fling down dem keys.

SANDY. You know that’s not allowed, I’m responsible for them.

DOLE. Cha. (Matura, 1992: 247)

The fact that they struggle to keep their African culture alive turns out to be more meaningful as it promotes solidarity among people of the same origin.

Interestingly enough, the play also provides a substitute for Sandy. It is Gail who is a black, attractive, twenty-to-twenty-five-year-old-girl (Matura, 1992: 258). Although Gail is a black person and belongs to the same community with the Rasta boys, she speaks proper English, she does not know anything about Rastafarianism, and she is hired to control the black people. In other words, she embodies the white (wo)man or the figures of authority within the society. Gail fits in the definition of mimicry: she is a mimic woman because “mimicry repeats rather than represents” (Bhabha, 1994: 88). By the same token, Gail seems to be an authentic English woman yet she can only become a bad replica because being exactly the same is impossible. Even though she has an English passport, it

does not change the fact that she is still a black person of Jamaican origin:

GAIL. Yes, I’m a bit late, I couldn’t find the place. . . Thank you, it looks nice.

...

ZIPPY. Yea, you a come ter work?

GAIL. I hope so, it’s up to Sandy if she likes me.

...

ZIPPY. Whey you from?

GAIL. London.

ZIPPY. But yer people black.

GAIL. Yes. (Matura, 1992: 259-60)

Gail is -or has chosen to be- assimilated in the European culture, and even though she is not of European origin, she refuses to hold on to her native background and accepts London as the motherland. In colonial discourse, subjects might be interpellated by the ideology of the maternal and nurturing function of the colonizing power (Ashcroft et al., 1998: 171) and Gail, one of those subjects, considers England her *mother country* or *home*. Having already internalized the hierarchy between the East and the West, it is probable that she regards her native country inferior to England what Fanon coins as “the arsenal of complexes” (1967: 30), and to get rid of the sense of marginalization, she prefers to cling to the colonial culture. When asked where she is from, Gail reflects the shame she feels concerning her own culture (as she is conditioned to see it worthless by colonial discourse) because only when she conforms to the white man’s rule can she find a place in the English society. Thus, she does not resist colonial subjugation and believes in the European superiority. The colonial discourse, which is based on the assumption of the superiority of the colonizer culture in terms of history, art, language, and social conventions, operates on Gail. “Chas, yes really you a one English black woman, you a not one a we” (Matura, 1992: 280). Gail is a *successful* colonial subject in that she tries to imitate the colonizer culture in dress, speech, tastes and manners while alienated from her own. Indeed, she is a blurred copy of the white man “almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha, 1994: 86).

GAIL. And you’re a Rasta man?

ZIPPY. Cha all a we a Rasta an all Rasta man believe in him dread locks.

GAIL. Yes, the hair.

ZIPPY. Dat not him hair, dat him dread locks.

...

GAIL. I’m sorry. (*She takes out a cigarette*) Would you like a cigarette?

MARCUS. Me no smoke tobacco, me smoke ganja, Rasta man he smoke no tobacco. (Matura, 1992: 260-6)

Gail privileges the colonial language over the local; she is distanced from the folk culture absorbing that of the European. There is a reason behind it: “the significance and enforced dominance of the imperial language into which colonial subjects are inducted may give them a clear sense of power being located in the colonizer” (Ashcroft et al., 1998: 171). It is clear that Gail is a figure of mimicry reproducing the assumptions, cultural values and habits of the colonizer. Bhabha states that “mimicry, is thus the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which ‘appropriates’ the Other as it visualizes power” (1994: 86), and thus, by mimicking the white man, Gail acquires power. She fulfils the demands of the colonizer culture and she is recruited for controlling the Rasta boys. She becomes a substitute for Sandy; she is ready to *play the white* in the club. While the club is a metaphor for the exclusion of the Rasta boys from the society, Gail’s employment to keep an eye on them is suggestive of her inclusion in the Western society owing to her mimicry.

The following dialogue proves how Gail embodies mimicry and how far she is estranged from her own culture while demonstrating Zippy’s protest against the European culture which constitutes a *fake* reality through colonial discourse:

GAIL. Would you like to go to Africa?

ZIPPY. Sure all a we want go dey some day.

GAIL. Good, well maybe we could go on a trip to see some exhibits from Africa.

ZIPPY. Where?

GAIL. In London, there’s always something going on concerning Africa, you’d be surprised.

ZIPPY. But dat not Africa, dat a white man ting, dem a hypocrite, dem not genuine Africa, is Africa we want ter see, we want ter see real lion not dem circus ting.

GAIL. I see, but it would give you some idea, of what life is really like in Africa.

ZIPPY. Cha, but not Africa, we want ter know we in Africa dats what we want ter know, you a see.

...

GAIL. No, I thought maybe we could visit a Safari Park, and see the animals they have. Lions and tigers.

MARCUS. Me do’ want ter see no Sarfari Park, Sarfari is a white man ting dat a fer white people, in dem car to visit. (Matura, 1992: 261-4)

Zippy does not want to see the exhibition because he is of the opinion that the re-presentation cannot reflect *genuine* Africa. His objection echoes Said’s assertion that the Europeans *made* the Orient: “the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West” (2003: 5). The Western hegemony constructs the concept of Orientalism which is largely based on representation rather

than truth. The “oriental” has served a looking-glass for the Western man; it has been the invention of the West through which they can identify themselves in positive terms. It has been “the western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the orient” (Said, 2003: 3). The Europeans came up with the idea of Eurocentrism, which is allegedly the standard desired culture, when qualifying the others. The Western assumption that the indigenous cultures are less sophisticated, less civilized than their Western counterparts resulted in what is called othering since it divides the world between two polar opposites *us* and *them*. As Sandy comments upon the Rasta boys yet extendible to all non-western colonized people, “he’s an animal that’s what he is that’s how he’s been made, that’s how he’s been treated” (Matura, 1992: 290). In this binary opposition, the others -the savages- are always regarded inferior or, if not savage, they are considered to have primitive beauty, and therefore, seen as the exotic other. In our case, it is presumable that Gail and the white people accept that Africa possesses exotic beauty; thus, they exhibit its natural lifestyle in an artificial setting. Gail also mentions lions (Haile Selassie is known as the Lion of Lions; therefore, the caged animals become metonymic for the captivated African culture) and tigers. The animals are caged and tamed in the zoos. They are controlled and separated from their natural environment for the purposes of exhibition. This is what the white people have done to the blacks. They are deracinated on the pretext of education because they have always been thought to be unable to take care of themselves. It also turns out to be one of the reasons why the English government establishes youth clubs: they are fenced off from the society and *caged* in the club so as not to harm/contaminate the Western culture.

SANDY. . . . Did you think you were coming to a kindergarten? These boys are all vicious, not as bad as Marcus, but, that’s why they’re here, that’s why society pays us, to keep them away from good clean society, out of trouble, out of prison. (Matura, 1992: 290)

Sandy makes it clear why Zippy -as the spokesperson for the dispossessed- says, “[w]ell it a come ter Britain now, we call it Babylon da is Britain” (Matura, 1992: 271). Babylon is a Rastafarian term used to refer to the European political power that has been degrading the black people for centuries.

3. Conclusion

The Rastafari people claim that the blacks were oppressed physically through slavery in the past during the colonial period and they are still exposed to maltreatment due to cultural exploitation, poverty, lack of education and inequality by the white man in the neo-colonial era. This is the reason why the Rasta boys qualify the Europeans and the European culture as *hypocrite* throughout the play. It seems that they regard the anti-colonial struggle as *Manichean*, as a binary conflict of *us* against *them*. Much as it is still within the Western metaphysics, they use it subversively against itself developing the idea of Afrocentrism contrary to Eurocentrism. The Rasta boys reject conforming to the European culture. Since they want

to reclaim their indigenous one, they try to revive their local languages - or at least distort the imposed one as in the case of *Welcome Home Jacko* - and cultural practices through the Rastafari movement. Their aim is to distinguish themselves, to create a unique image so as to be different from the whites. "Rastafarian is black man ting now we discover we identity is Rastafarian dats it" (Matura, 1992: 271). Theirs is a cry for recognition; that is why they listen to reggae, they wear traditional robes, and they have dreadlocks. In other words, in the midst of *civilization* they would like to return to their African roots. Although they have ambivalent feelings towards the host culture, they still reject mimicry and assimilation because they do not believe in the centuries-old lie that they are inferior to the white man, that their culture is not as rich as that of his.

The youth club functions as a liminal space where they have been provided, to a certain extent, the chance to revive their culture. On the other hand, they are still under control by the colonial culture. In this sense, although the youth club turns out to be a shelter in which they feel free from the biased and unjust imperialist culture, it does not eradicate their sense of displacement and unhomeliness as they are under constant surveillance by the authority figures.

The Rasta boys are not in the powerful position just as Sandy or Gail but they do not experience arsenal of complexes as Gail does. Though it is difficult to shatter the prejudiced Orientalist worldview against the blacks, they are content with their life because, by appropriating the language, embracing the Rasta movement and rejecting the colonialist discourse as much as they can, they act out against the colonizer's imperialist system. What they only want is equality and righteousness.

A song by Bob Marley meaningfully entitled "War" epitomizes the concern of the colonized:

Until the philosophy which hold one race
superior
And another
Inferior
Is finally
And permanently
Discredited
And abandoned -
Everywhere is war -
Me say war.

That until there no longer
First class and second class citizens of any
nation
Until the colour of a man's skin
Is of no more significance than the colour of
his eyes -
Me say war.

That until the basic human rights
Are equally guaranteed to all,
Without regard to race - dis a war.

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