The imagination of Africa as homeland in *The Arrivants* by Edward K. Brathwaite and in *The Castaway* by Derek Walcott.

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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS.

MAY, 2011.

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The imagination of Africa as homeland
DECLARATION:

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other award in any other university.

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DEDICATION

To my late wife Mercy Njeri and mother Lucy Gathigia whose support, vision and encouragement energized me to pursue my master degree.
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ABSTRACT

This project is a comparative study that examines the imagination of Africa as homeland by two Caribbean poets, Edward Kamau Brathwaite and Derek Walcott. The study is based on two poetic discourses, these are, *The Arrivants* (1981) by Brathwaite and *The Castaway* (1972) by Walcott.

The project argues that the key theme of Africa’s culture constantly recurs through these poets’ reference to African values and genius. One of the main aims of the study is to critically analyze the imagination of Africa as homeland by the two poets. Their creative imagination illuminates a utopian African state that is romanticized into a mystery.

This imagination of Africa as homeland is a negritudinist point of view in an effort to regenerate the utopian African homeland where nature and human beings lived harmoniously before slavery. The portrayal of the dehumanizing nature of slavery is an attempt to reprove or challenge the myth of savagery associated with Africa culture.

The study applies two theoretical models in analyzing the imagination of Africa as homeland by the two poets. The postcolonial approach guides this study as the two poets struggle to come to terms with recreation and redefining the essence of the black colour in the Caribbean.
Psychoanalysis enables us to venture into the two poets' consciousness and mind. This study intends to reveal how the work of art can aid in giving a clearer understanding of the Caribbean reality through the two poets' imagination of Africa as homeland.
DEFINITION OF TERMS

It is important to give definitions of the key terms used in this study so that we can provide a framework for further understanding. We confine ourselves to usage in literary works while defining these terms.

Afrocentricity: Recreation of African values, genius and history based in the manner of thinking and being black.

Ambivalence: Being in the middle of some place or thing and not associating with any side.

Eurocentric: To be European based especially in way of thinking.

Imagination: The ability to create and recreate pictures in the mind of what something might be like.

Negritudist: The black people or race’s thinking on their liberating power from oppression and racism.

Psychic: The strange powers of the mind which cannot be explained by natural means. Do extra – ordinary things through the mind.
**Psychological disposition:** The way a person’s mind work through natural qualities of a person’s character and power to think, imagine, create and recreate things and ideas.

**Psychosis:** A serious problem in the mind that was caused by the Colonialists to the people that they colonized through oppression and deprivation of basic rights.
BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

As the main aim of this study is to critically examine the way these two poets still look back into the past, the usual experience of most colonial societies is evident. There is a firm transformation from an assimilated and imitated Eurocentric view to a created and reconstructed Afrocentric experience especially in the recreation of African genius and history. Brathwaite, for example, relates how he had gone to England thinking he was a British citizen only to be disillusioned. According to him he found and felt rootless on arrival in England. His eight years stay in Ghana did not bear more either, though, he says that he discovered ‘a culture in which there is a profound relationship of individual and of the spiritual world to the community’ (Kehinde, African studies, vol. No 9.2007:184).

Walcott and Brathwaite are attached to their personal past and personal home, which becomes a centrality of an over-riding importance in answering the big question as to how these two poets have brought out the imagination of Africa as homeland in their poetry. There is a great desire for one to know the main cause of this nostalgic feeling and imagination of Africa as homeland. Edward Bough, in Critical Studies of Caribbean Writers (1978), argued of a sense of home hallucination which he said increased with the actuality of every detail. This looking back becomes an imagination which depicts the meaning of Walcott poetry. The collections of the poems in The Castaway inevitably have been derived from such recollection of imagination. There is a vivid gaze far
beyond the wild, white-lined Atlantic coast with an Africa that was no longer home, which reasons therein, need to be expounded. The question as to how the two poets have brought out the particular personalities and cities in Africa is a self-resolving problem. The imagery of struggle, survival and path finding is hoped to help us see how these poems envision duality of time. These are images of the dark past and the disillusioning present. This hallucination, dream, vision and imagination intermarry with symbolism and myths although artistically, to produce a real, actual concept of 'home', thus, disapproving the myth of savagery associated with Africa culture. It is worth noting that this imaginative quest does not mean that the poets have been living in the past in their poetry but they use the past to inform the present and reshape it. It is an attempt to achieve wholeness out of the fragmented past.

As literature does not emerge from a vacuum, it is therefore necessary to know what circumstances and situations influence the imagination that gives birth to a literary work. With this in mind, the study strove to find out how the two poets, Brathwaite and Walcott, have been influenced by geographical, historical, psychological and philosophical experiences.

It is hoped that the experience of these poets eventually reveals how they have imagined Africa as a homeland. In brief, this study attempts, through comparing these two poets' work - *The Arrivants* by Brathwaite and *The Castaway* by Walcott, to find out how key theme of Africa culture, particular personalities and cities are brought out in reference to African values and genius.
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study aimed at investigating ‘the imagination of Africa as homeland’ by Edward Kamau Brathwaite and Derek Walcott; in *The Arrivants* and *The Castaway*, respectively.

The two poets, Edward Brathwaite and Derek Walcott, exhibit a kind of national consciousness due to psychic wounds inflicted by crisis of identity. This precisely is what gives birth to their creative imagination of Africa as homeland in their poetry. This psychic wound is a central position in the consciousness of these poets which made the study worth of the focus. The question is: How do the two poets through their poetry concur or differ in their imagination of Africa as homeland? Are we able to make meaningful judgments by comparing these two poets’ imagination? The poems are endowed with imaginary recreation and redefining of the black colour and Caribbean experience. The assumption that these two, that is, the imaginary recreation and redefining of the black colour, are constantly used in the two poems, makes this study worth of the focus.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study were to:

a. Investigate how the two poets imagine Africa as a homeland.

b. Examine how the two poets have imagined particular personalities and cities in
African culture.

c. Determine common factors of African values and genius in the work of the two poets and how they are represented.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

a) How do the two poets imagine Africa as homeland?

b) How have the two poets imagined the particular personalities and cities in Africa?

c) What are the imagined common factors of African values and genius in the work of the two poets and how have they been represented?

**RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS**

The study made assumptions that:

a) There is a significant comparison by the two poets’ imagination of Africa as a homeland.

b) Africa as homeland has been romanticized by the two poets in their poetry.

c) There is glorification and edification of black people and their culture as well as an attempt to disprove the myth of savagery associated with African culture.
JUSTIFICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The selection of Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *The Arrivants*, and Derek Walcott, *The Castaway*, for analysis in this study is based on the fact that they consistently resonate with the vital complex issues associated with the Caribbean man. That is, the question of identity, disillusioned past, alienation and rootlessness. This study is not only relevant in enhancing our clearer comprehension of the Caribbean poetry and its history, but also in creatively challenging the myth of inferiority ascribed to African culture. Walcott’s quest for identity, for instance, depicts an underlying urge to unmask a cultural heritage of referring to ancestral lands and personalities which are important aspects in understanding the social complexity of a West Indian artist. This, however, needs to be creatively done due to ambivalences of the poet, as he only imagines Africa while far from it.

The two poets, Brathwaite and Walcott, share pertinent similarities in their history. For instance, they were born in the same year (1930), which makes them share some similar experiences not only as free-born-sons of a people with a history of slavery, but also as poets who echo the hardship and suffering of the past through transcontinental journey of the black man in *The Arrivants* and *The Castaway*. These experiences strongly influence their imagination and action. Brathwaite, for instance, went to Ghana where he worked in the Ministry of Education for seven years (1955-1962). While in West Africa,
he accumulated crucial experience which became the major concern in his poetry. To justify this, he himself has told us something of what that experience meant to him:

Slowly ever so slowly... I was coming to awareness... of cultural wholeness of the place of the individual within the tribe. Slowly, ever so slowly, I came to a sense of identification of myself with these people, my living diviners. I came to connect my history with theirs; the bridge of my mind was linking Atlantic and ancestors, homeland and heartland

*(Timhri, 1970: 30)*

Such illustration depicts the poet’s psychological state in the light of his imagination in his chosen poetry.

Although there have been a few critical studies on Brathwaite and Walcott, much of these have focused on the two writers as historians. Nana Togoe’s Thesis (1984), only compared sections of Brathwaite and Walcott’s contrasting historical vision. Tagoe’s conclusion is that the two poets had similar historical concepts but different conceptions of imagination. This is where my study ventured, to explode this area of silences and expound on this ‘imagination’ by the two poets in their poetry. The imaginative shifts in *The Arrivants* and *The Castaway* are brought about in the most powerful and evocative way in the ‘imagined’ movement of the black man through deserts, coast, to white slaves and finally, across the sea to white new world. There is need to slow the agony of alienation which authentically exists only in imagination in the two poets’ sense of themselves as West Indians. This is because, although they physically grew up in a West Indian society, in their conscious, they journeyed to Africa. This means that Walcott might have never gone to Africa physically, but in his poetry, we cannot rule out he never
Brathwaite physically went to Ghana and it was after returning from Africa that he completed his first book of poetry *Rights of Passage*. Can one actually rule out the part played by the Ghanaian visit in the *Rights of Passage*? We cannot underestimate the social context of such poetry. This is because he reads his own poetry giving an outstanding emphasis of its social context. The fact that he can be heard on Coedman record No. TC1379, proves this.

This study introduces the reader to the vast range of imagination from these two great Caribbean poets. An evaluative survey from the selected text gives an overview of a comparative study of the two poets’ view. In addition to this, the study gives a serious and intensive critical attention to the two oeuvres that have been selected, that is, *The Arrivants* (1981) and *The Castaway* (1972).

This study not only provides a detailed comparative study of the two poets’ imagination of Africa as homeland, but it also provides a challenging and provocative critical review which many will find indispensable. There is need to bring together these poets to show how their imagination of themselves as Caribbean men from African homeland is.

Unfortunately, such serious and intensive critical attention has tended to focus on only a few of the Caribbean writers who mostly write in Prose and Drama. This is why this study is not only important but unique as it explodes the area of silences; that is—poetry. It is for this reason then that this comparative study captivates, challenges and
inspires us all. Mark Mcwatt, commenting on Edward Kamau Brathwaite’s *The Arrivants*, said that it has received less critical attention than most of his other work.

Patrick Ismond in her *Walcott versus Brathwaite* (1971) emphasizes on the controversy between the two poets but her work was historically inclined as it praised Brathwaite’s effort to rehabilitate the spiritual life of the black man as entirely worthwhile, but said little of Walcott. This can be seen in the sum of her critical remarks. My comparative study is not one sided and it tries to keep focus on the two poets equally. The question is: Is it possible to do a comparative study without leaning on one side?

*The Arrivants*, which constitutes one volume of poetry under study, is still the greatest achievement of Brathwaite as a poet according to Dance in *Fifty Caribbean Writers*. He argues that:

> the reader encounters most of the author’s major poetic themes and obsessions and many of the facets of his complex imagination and craft.

(1986:61)

This enhanced my zeal to venture in it and exploit what has not been done. For instance, we have found out that in this trilogy, the poet’s major thematic obsessions and dynamic imagination are incorporated. To justify this, we need not go further than survey the first words of *Rights of Passage*:

> Drum skin whip, lash, masters sun’s cutting edge of heat. (p.4)

Here, not only are we introduced to the black man’s new history but also to the imaginary pain and ‘lash’ subjected to him by harsh cruel sun.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Baugh (1978) in Critical Studies of Caribbean Writers, argues that although each poet is formed by his early experiences and all what he writes may to some measures be traced back to those experiences, Walcott’s past assumes a central over-riding importance and become subject and object of his imaginative quest. However, this does not mean to say that Walcott lives in the past: and even if he begins in nostalgia and regret, his poetry does not leave us there. The focus is beyond the past which is past as it is present meaning, it is informing the present and being informed by it. It is a self-defining of his actual reality.

Brodsky (1988) in New York Review of Books, elevated Walcott above other Caribbean’s poets by arguing that Walcott as ‘a West Indian poet’ or ‘a black poet from the Caribbean’ was above mental and spiritual cowardice’ and thus a regional writer. However, this only brought the controversy of Walcott’s critical appropriation that brings the questioning of his West Indian relevance. This view is aggravated by Walmsley’s (1970) claims in ‘Dimensions of song’, that Brathwaite was championing the cause of the West Indian, while Walcott was indulging his private visions and clinging slavishly to the trappings of a Western literary tradition. It is in this base that this study has given a comparative objective analysis of these two poets’ different views in their imagination and reality.
Dance (1986) in *Fifty Caribbean Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook* holds that Walcott's genius showed itself early and caused him to be regarded as something of a prodigy by his schoolmates at St. Mary's college, a high school for boys in Castries. In his poetry, Walcott shoots satirical barbs against the hypocrisy and cruelty of conventional morality and attitude toward sexuality. This was in an attempt to exploit the imaginative possibilities of his native landscape and forge a West Indian dramatic idiom and identity. Walcott's dream through his character Makak, in his play *Dream on the Monkey Mountain*, is to find a psychic wholeness and becomes, like Ti – Jean, a light for his people. Behind these psychological dispositions of Walcott as a poet lay the base that this study has also ventured into the psychological disposition of the other poet, Brathwaite. Dance also argued that *The Castaway* (1965) can be illustrated by reference to the treatment of the landscape in two ways; first, marking a place loved by the poet's identification and second, as modifying a complicated paradisal vision putting in minds the Caribbean aspects of climate problems with self and society. Walcott, Dance argues, struggles with themes of cultural clash, the search for a liberating idea of history and the fatal neglect of the artist by a philistine society. He is struggling with the psychic problem between the actual and the ideal just like Brathwaite.

Kehinde (2007), in his thesis 'The Trope of Cultural Searching' argues that Edward Kamau Brathwaite uses his poetry as a means of recreating and redefining the essence of his black colour and West Indian experience. He goes on to say that his work is sustained by an impassioned dynamic of objection to the supposition that the black man is an inferior being. In brief, he concludes that Brathwaite's obsession with the
theme of Africa is an attempt at exploding the theme of inferiority that has been ascribed to African culture. It is on this basis that this study espouses the psychological dispositions in this poet’s imagination of African as homeland. The quest for identity is so overwhelming in itself ‘and still remains overwhelming in its undesirable intrusion into the present’ (Ramanus, E.1978:8), giving the urge to venture into psychic dispositions behind this.

Wakarindi (2006) in *A Study of The Journeying Motif and The Narrative Technique in Edward Kamau Brathwaite’s The Arrivants*, argues that:

> the arrivants have been away in Africa for over three hundred years. Therefore, to imagine that they would be the same people who left African as slaves, was a far – fetched idea. Every human being is susceptible to change, and so were the arrivants. They had undergone not only physical and psychological change... great transformation (59).

This psychological change is partly what triggers this study to reflect the imagination born by this change. However, Wakarindi focused on the Journeying Motif and Narrative Technique in relation to *The Arrivants*. My study ventures on something totally different, the study of imagination of Africa as homeland by the two poets. Wakarindi argued that it was presumptuous an idea for ‘the arrivants’ to imagine that they would naturally fit in Africa. This study has looked into the imagination quest which has not been ventured into.
Warner (1973) in ‘Odomankoma Kyarema Se’, sought not so much to champion the ‘cause’ of Brathwaite as to placing his work within a social and philosophical Caribbean perspective. His argument presents the total vision of Black consciousness and the awakening that the poet strove to create. All these, however, is summarized by the sentiments of Lloyd Brown who said that the debate itself is ‘understandable since there has been a tendency to describe (the two poets) in exclusive terms - Walcott as the Western-oriented craftsman and individualist and Brathwaite as the epic poet and master seer of the black diasporas’ (*West Indian Poetry*, 1978: 139). According to Brown, the two poets are largely similar in their concern and in social and ethnic consciousness. Indeed, a number of other critics treat each of the two poets on his own terms and appreciate the contribution of each towards an understanding of West Indian realities. The question here is, what are the psychic dispositions in the imaginative introspect to understanding the social cultural realities of the West Indian? Gordon Rohlehrs in *Pathfinder* talks of a meticulous exegesis of the poems in *The Arrivants*. He analyzed the social and cultural context of Brathwaite’s poems and said that they are indispensable in giving clarity to a West Indian consciousness and craftsmanship.

The three volumes of poetry that constitute *The Arrivants* are in no doubt Brathwaite’s major achievement as a poet. It is not only here that we encounter most of the poet’s major themes and obsessions but also, many of the facets of his complex imagination and craft. Egudu (1978) argued of the eye that must be seeing, thus, his unique imagination which gives hints to need for a deeper and compressive critical exposition of this ‘imagination’. The issue of ‘Africa’ as a co-text in West Indian
literature has received much attention from various critics and Scholars. Oloruntoba, O.O. (1994) in ‘Literature of the Black Diaspora’, insisted that a literature of transplantation highlighting the struggle for total emancipation and a yearning for a reunion with the roots reign in most of West Indian’s artists. However, what this study is looking at is different from what these other researchers have dwelt on. It addresses ‘the imagination of Africa as homeland’ by Brathwaite and Walcott in their poetry; that is, *The Arrivants* by Brathwaite and *The Castaway*, by Walcott. A focus on their ‘imagination’ in these selected discourses is the main task in this research. The concept of imagination has been sparsely hinted at various critical commentaries on Brathwaite’s, *The Arrivants*, and Walcott’s, *The Castaway*, but they have not been given a deeper and comprehensive critical analysis. Venturing into this area has eventually helped in giving a broader, clearer and comprehensive understanding of the West Indian reality.
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was guided by the strategies of psychoanalysis and postcolonial theories in its explication of ‘imagination of Africa as homeland’ by Edward Brathwaite in *The Arrivants* (1981) and Derek Walcott in *The Castaway* (1972). The psychological disposition and social-historical context of the two poets demand more than one theoretical approach so as to reach an exhaustive finding and thorough conclusion.

Freud (1956-1939) developed psychoanalysis as an interaction between conscious and unconscious element of mind. A close scrutiny of *The Arrivants* and *The Castaway* revealed a recurring notion of unconsciousness. This, in reference to literary criticism is what makes this theoretical approach not only appropriate in my study but also, very relevant.

Freud’s recognition of the notion of unconscious has a big impact on the philosophical and psychological concepts of human beings. It is for this reason and in reference to the disturbing physiological, historical and psychological aspects affecting Brathwaite and Walcott, which make this an appropriate theoretical approach to my research. This theory resonates with the crucial issues transcending the two Caribbean poets in West Indian’s history such as alienation, slavery, identity crisis among other social ills. There is no doubt that these aspects influence the poets, though unconsciously,
to produce the content of the lines in their poems under this study. The unconscious notion is like a mirror in the conscious which appear in *The Arrivants* and in *The Castaway*. This theory further stipulates its ability to interpret disconnected or syncopated structures, which is particularly important while dealing with poetry. Carl Jung (1930) in his essay, *Psychology and Literature* argues that the experience which becomes the material for artistic expression is born in a man’s mind. While as Freud argued that literature is an expression of the author’s unconscious mind, Jung mainly dwelt on ‘primordial experience’ transmitted through the ‘collective unconscious’ and not from the poet’s vision of a ‘poetic mood’ or ‘rich fantasy’. However, both Jung and Freud agreed on the influence of certain psychological disposition shaped by ‘external’ forces from which consciousness has developed. I.A. Richards (1926) explains this experience which fills a poet’s consciousness, in his books, *Science and Poetry*:

> The poet... consciousness as a means of ordering, controlling and consolidating the altered experience of which they are themselves main part... the experience itself, the tide of impulses sweeping through the mind, is the source (151).

This view facilitated our understanding of Freud’s concept of conscious and unconscious structure of the two poets under this study.

Despite being Freud’s close friend up through the 1920s, Jacques (1957) argued of ‘collective unconscious’ separating from Freud. He emphasized a realm of transpersonal imagery preserved and repeated throughout human experience from the human race to individual people, this collective conscious contains ‘archetypes’ or Fundamental patterns and forms of human experience. This view was eventually very
productive as each poet (individual) has a unique stream of conscious thoughts and imagination. This helped in narrowing down the comparative study of my two poets and their views in reference to the two poetic volumes under study.

Frye’s, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) defines archetypal approach to literature. He argued of ‘The function of criticism at the present time’, ‘polemical introduction’. He moved from pre-historic and sacred ‘myth’ to present day ‘irony’. He vehemently endorsed the importance of ‘history’ of literature. This was used to clearly show how Walcott and Brathwaite were influenced by history in writing their poetry. The imaginative concept became part of the complex presentation of the archetypal paradigm due to the influence of ‘development’ of Western literature. Egara Kabaji (2006) wrote an article ‘Why We Should Celebrate Freud’. In this article, he did not only give justifications of a psychoanalytic theoretical approach in literary criticism, but also argued that it gives an artist ability to crave for gratifications of what they lack in real life. This study majors on the imaginative drive behind Walcott’s and Brathwaite’s longing and constant reference to their African past.

In short, the choice of psychoanalytic criticism to Brathwaite’s, *The Arrivants* and Walcott’s, *The Castaway*, made it possible to narrow down on each poet’s imagination and thus, give a clearer idea of their conscious and unconscious being as West Indian people. This, together with the post-colonial approach, has eventually produced an appropriate and most explicate analysis of the topic under scrutiny. The other proponents of Freudian psychoanalysis were Jacques Lacan and Carl Jung. Freudian disciples
include; Ernest Jones, Marie Bonaparte, Frederick Crews, Edmund Wilson and Lionel Trilling.

Postcolonial theoretical approach was propagated by Frantz Fanon, Aime Cesaire, and Edward Said among others. It is a critical approach that deals with a people of country with colonial and slavery history. The choice of this theoretical model as an addition to the psychoanalysis approach in explicating the topic under study ensures that nothing is taken for granted. There is an attempt to explore the possible areas of discovery in the imagination of these two poets. It helped to find out what motivations were behind the poets as they wrote the two oeuvres selected for the discourse. As Kehinde (2007) puts it in his Ph.D. Thesis: ‘West Indian poetry has played a central role not only in the development of postcolonial literature, but also in the articulation of a kind of national consciousness, a rhetorical rehearsal for an emergent nationhood’ (The Journal of Pan Africa studies: 182) as the Caribbean man is occupied with the issue of identity search, so is the Caribbean poet.

Barry (1995) argues that the colonized are thrown off - feet to the periphery by the white Eurocentric norms and practices due to the whites’ elevated status. This makes the colonized feel inferior and inadequate, thus suffering physiologically as well as psychologically. This was well illuminated as it was reiterated from the fact that Brathwaite’s and Walcott’s poetry, under study, thematically signify indices of post-colonial literary discourse. Marrying this with diactorial nature of psychological criticism in relating to the theory of mind or imagination to literary aesthetics, the socio-cultural
context eventually came out from this framework. *The Arrivants*, by Brathwaite, handles issues of slavery, colonialism, alienation, exile and search for identity. These make post-colonial approach at peace with the proceedings. It is like a dream where Sigmund Freud suggested that ‘Dreams do not say things but show things’ (281). It is what Paul Gilroy (1995) refers to as ‘Afrocentricity’. According to Gilroy, Afrocentricity is,

African genius and African values created, recreated, reconstructed and derived from our history and experiences in our best interest (188).

Edward Said (1993) gave a critical survey of culture and imperialism which can lead to an inferiority complex. He goes on to say that this culture and imperialism leads one to projection and this can be seen as disconnected or syncopated structure in the two poetic oeuvres under study. It is in retrospect to this that Homi Bhabha (1994) perceives as mimicry of the ambivalence of those who are ‘masked white black men’ (62). This goes a long way in showing the postcolonial heritage ambivalence of both Brathwaite and Walcott in their poetry. However, the aspect of postcolonial heritage derives the vividness of the imagination which is divorced from syncretism culture. As the meaning of poetry is contextual, the looking back to slavery and colonial history gives an overview of Walcott’s and Brathwaite’s imaginary creation of a ‘utopian’ past which was a kind of a ‘heaven’.

By combining the psychoanalytic and post-colonial approaches in the analysis of Brathwaite’s and Walcott’s *The Arrivants* and *The Castaway* respectively, I believe the
outcome is an explicate analysis of the imaginative nature of these two great Caribbean poets.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This study confines itself to Brathwaite’s trilogy, *The Arrivants*, and Walcott’s book, *The Castaway*. The major area of concentration is on ‘imagination of Africa as homeland’ by the two poets. A thorough and extensive reading of related critical literary commentaries on these two poets’ work was also done to give supplementary information which helped in a clearer understanding of the analysis of the two texts. The major challenge, however, was the availability of published critical work and dissertations on Brathwaite’s, *The Arrivants* and Walcott’s, *The Castaway*.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was based on intensive library research. It involved reading and analysing data from the primary and secondary texts. The primary texts were *The Arrivants* by Edward Kamau Brathwaite and *The Castaway* by Derek Walcott. There was reading and analysis of journals, essays, theses and other critical commentaries on the two poetic oeuvres under study. Internet searches were also done so as to supplement the library research.
Our focus in this chapter is the imagination of Africa as homeland in Brathwaite’s *The Arrivants*. Oluruntoba (1994) in her essay “Literature of the Black Diaspora”, argued that a literature of transplantation is encountered in West Indies; a literature highlighting the struggles for a total emancipation and a longing for a reunion with the roots, ‘a yearning which again in the arts takes the form of the employment of tropes from African cultural founts’ (139). This, perhaps, is what triggered Coulthard (1962) to highlight the theme of race and colour as well as the grand motif of Africa in Caribbean literature in his book *Race and color in Caribbean literature*. Coulthard believes that the impact of psychic wounds have been so profound in the African enslaved and their Caribbean descendants that their consciousness has over centuries been afflicted by the crisis of identity. To be precise, it is this ‘Crisis that basically informs the creative imagination of the average Caribbean artist’ (Kehinde 2007:183). This imagination is an attempt to figure out an imaginary African homeland due to the alienation felt by the Africans in the Caribbean. This becomes a heavy burden in the poet’s mind in an attempt to capture the complexity of his ambivalent society.
Brathwaite's imagination portrays the plight of his black man's mind in the three stages in the trilogy; that is, *Rights of Passage*, *Islands* and *Masks*.

The epigraph in the *Rights of Passage* depicts his movement to Africa as resembling the Israelites' Exodus:

> And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of sin which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after departing out of the land of Egypt.

 (*Exodus*: 16.1)

This Biblical allusion of Israelites, which is an exodus into an African-Caribbean context, signifies a yearning by Brathwaite to identify with his African origin. It is also a transformation in Brathwaite's consciousness of his own identity, creating a nostalgic psychological transition derived from the epigraph's meaning. Here, we experience a sense of imagination in identification of Africa as his roots. He attempts to celebrate realities of African heritage and reconciliation. The rhetorical question in 'New world A-comin' depicts this:

> How long have we traveled down valleys down slopes, silica glinted, stone, dry as water, to the flash, of flame in the forest. O who now will help us, helpless, horseless, leaderless, no hope ...  

(p. 10)
The rhetoric in the above poem captures the reality of the people who seem rootless and
the poet tries to recreate and redefine the essence of their black colour. The psychic
wounds inflicted by this discriminative episode necessitates the poet to create an
imaginary homeland full of hope, peace, rest and a concerned leadership that is helpful.

The trope of Africa in Brathwaite’s poetry is an example of what Gilroy (1995)
refers to as ‘Afrocentricity’. According to Gilroy, ‘Afrocentricity’ is ‘African genius and
African values created, recreated, reconstructed, and derived from our history and
experiences in our best interests’ (188). After asking ‘How long have we traveled
down?’ his imagination of Africa as homeland is mirrored in ‘Prelude’:

Build now
the new
villages, you
must mix spittle
with dirt, dung
to saliva and
sweat: round
mud walls will rise
in the dawn
walled cities
arise
from savanna and
rock river bed:
O kano Bamako
Gao

(p.5)

In this poem, the poet’s imagination of the return to Africa ordeal is universal to all
people of African descent. He is urging the black people to evolve a new image, a mutant
of wholesomeness. This shows an interaction between the poet’s conscious and
unconscious element of the mind as depicted in Sigmund Freud’s theory of
psychoanalysis. The mental pictures of mixing 'spittle with dirt, dung to saliva' creates a vivid image of what the Blacks ought to do. He imagines Africans recreating and reconstructing new villages, new 'round mud walls' and cities - just like the ancient Gao, Bamako and Kano in Africa. There is a unifying factor challenging the builders from the far north, savanna, down west to Kano, across Bamako, then to Gao to join and build. He continues to mirror his African imagination in his consciousness by encouraging builders to build:

So build build
again the new
villages: you
must mix spittle
with dirt, dung
to saliva and
sweat, making
mortar.

... 
So grant, God
that this house will stand
the four winds
the seasons' alterations
the explorations of the worm.

(p.7)

The statement that 'you must mix spittle with dirt,' is very intimidating as it challenges the reader to think and see as the poet’s thinks and sees. The poet here seems at home and is busy leading others to recreate and redefine their artistic preoccupation in order to achieve wholeness through poetic reconstruction. For Brathwaite, therefore, 'the eye must be free/seeing-an attempt to retrieve his world through his poetic vision' (Dash 1970:122).
In *Masks*, Brathwaite tries to explore the old African culture in its modern living forms in Africa. This is especially seen in the Ashanti region of Ghana where he had gone to fulfill his imagination of an actual ancestral African empire. It is an attempt to get 'balance' as Barry (1995) argued saying that the colonized were thrown off-feet to the periphery by the whites' Eurocentric practices and their elevated social status. This is clearly depicted in the following poem:

\[
\text{Out of this bright sun, this white plaque of heaven, ...}
\]

Kingdoms: Songhai, Mali, Chad, Ghana, Timbuctu, Volta, ...

comes this song.

(p. 90)

There is pilgrimage by Brathwaite in an effort to find his people's historical origins and psychological genealogy which is an invocation to the gods for intervention. It is what Gilroy (1995), referred to as Afrocentricity. Brathwaite is trying to recreate and reconstruct African genius and values. Ancient Kingdoms such as Songhai, Timbuctu and Volta are lamented over due to the way they lay wasted and ruined. The later glory is nothing compared to the old glory. Nevertheless, the poet is imaginatively recreating all these lost glory:

\[
\text{Gong-gongs throw pebbles in the rout-}
\]

(p. 90)
of ripples reach the awakened Zu-
lus: Chaka tastes
the salt blood of the bitter
Congo and all Africa
is one, is whole, nim-
tree shaded in Ghana,
In Chad, Mali,
the shores of the cooling kingdoms.
...White
salt crackles at root lips, bursts like a fist
and beats out this
prayer:

This imagined African homeland created is highly adored by the poet. He says that it ‘is
one’, and it ‘is whole’, not some kind of fragmented countries but very strong kingdoms
and established cities. These kingdoms and cities are throbbing in ‘the routed pools of
silence’. The ‘Gongs-gongs’ in ripples of happiness, coolness, unity and establishment of
this ‘shores of the cooling kingdoms’. The romanticization done here now provokes the
drummer to beat the drum so that the magnificent ripples of cultural-religious aesthetic
can come out. The joy and celebrations of African cities and personalities is evident here.
Phrases such as ‘Congo and all Africa is one’, ‘nimtree shaded in Ghana, in Chad, Mali’.
‘Zulus: Chaka tastes’, ‘Timbuctu, Volta’ among others are idolized in Masks. This use of
traditional African values and genius by Brathwaite shows how fond he is of African
people-among these is the ‘Akan’ of Ghana. His glorification of the imagined land of
Africa, a land flowing with worthy customs, music, dance and great religion is
unfathomable.

Asase Yaa.
You, Mother of Earth,
on whose soil
I have placed my tools
on whose soil
I will hoe

(p. 90)
Brathwaite feels settled to work and venture into the new busy life of his already imagined Africa homeland. The adoration and spiritual invocation given here is his religious tribute to 'Mother of Earth', a libation for fruitfulness to people through the land. This has been psychologically aroused by his consciousness due to the painful memories of the sufferings of the black-race that have made rough, numerous journey as this poem depicts:

E-
gypt
in Af-
rica ...
Sa-
har, Tim-
buctu, Gao
... Congo
and down
that black river
that tides us to hell

These painful memories of transmission of slaves from their adorable African homelands to 'hell' leaves Brathwaite with terrible psychic wounds. His imagination is partly triggered by the urge to recreate the destroyed and devastated cities in Africa. The disjointed state of this poem, 'The Journeys', has an evolitional effect to Brathwaite and it psychologically arouses his sense of imagination. It is this kind of imaginary recreation that is described by Wakarindi (2006) as a 'journeying consciousness'. This 'journeying'
finally takes the poet to what he has created and imagined all through - African homeland.

In ‘The Pathfinders,’ Brathwaite treats African heroes and historical places with awesome prostrate. The identity crisis suffered in the poems in the Rights of Passage and the Masks begin to give a recreated and finally, a settlement for the poet:

Summon now the kings of the forest,
horn of the elephant,
Mournful call of the elephant;

Summon the emirs, kings of the desert,
horses caparisoned, beaten gold bent,
archers and criers, porcupine arrows, bows bent;

recount now the gains and losses:
Agades, Sokoto, El Hassan dead in his tent,
the silk and two brasses, the slow weary tent

of our journeys down slopes, dry river courses;
land of the lion, land of the leopard, elephant country; tall grasses, thick prickly herbs. Blow elephant

(p.102)

Here in ‘Mmenson’, Brathwaite is imagining approaching Africa and he addresses himself to the spirit of the wood and ancestral spirits of the dead heroes of Africa and their amours: ‘El Hassan’, ‘Archers and criers, porcupine arrows, bows bent’. He vividly adores the ‘land of the leopard, elephant country’ and admires ‘tall grasses, thick prickly herbs’ found there. It is amazing that despite the fact that the Blacks have been away from Africa for close to three hundreds years, Brathwaite’s mastery of the traditional speech, prayer and spiritual invocation to nature is unique. This shows that the West
Indian experiences have not wiped out the poet’s ability of recreating and redefining the essence of his black colour. The rituals to ‘Odomankoma’ clearly depicts this:

Funtumi Akore
Tweneboa Akore
Spirit of the Cender
Spirit of the Cender Tree
Tweneboa Kodia

(p.98)

There are various musical instruments in ‘Atumpan’ that are given a religious significance. The capitalization of ‘Akore’, ‘Cender trees’ creates the ‘gods’ ideology whose spirits are being evoked from slumber to awake and welcome the ‘prodigal son’ who is finally coming back home. However, this home, is actually, a new one-imaginary, created by the poet himself.

that he has come from sleep
that he has come from sleep
and is arising
and is arising
like akoko the cock
like akoko the clock who clucks
who crows in the morning
who crows in the morning

we are addressing you
yere kyere wo
...
Listen
Let us succeed

Listen
May we succeed...

(p. 99)

There is a clear indication here that Brathwaite has not only imagined the dirge, incantatory verse, the praise poetry and the lament song but also adapted them. This is
why they appear in this poetic book under study. It also helps by giving the imagination of Africa as homeland, a real geographical and historical feature in a real world. In 'Bosompra' for example, we get these lines:

so crossing the river
and walking the path
we came at last to Kumasi.

... from the path's hopeless dazzles, halts,
Meetings, leaves' sudden
... (p. 136)

The Afrocentricity is achieved here. Brathwaite's search for real identity and actual society has taken him to his thoroughly imagined land of Africa. He is no longer 'who was lost,' no longer 'tossed among strangers,' but have 'today ... returned' home. His yearning for emancipation and reunion with his roots has finally born fruits. He can now fantasize and glorify the cities and heroes he has always edified in his consciousness.

In 'Kumasi' for example, he praises it by using adjectives of quality and words of adoration. He says:

city of gold,
paved with silver,
ivory altars,
tables of horn,

the morning sun of
seven hills
greets you best,

knows you blessd,
To the west
Denkyira dreams,
This romanticization of Kumasi as ‘the thorn bush of love burst on the hill bleeds in the west’ cannot go unnoticed. Brathwaite’s conscious preoccupation with aspects of black in the Diaspora imagined and later recreated shows how he is occupied with Africa as homeland. It is a celebration of realities of African heritage because he has been reconciled with his alienated past.

Many facets of Brathwaite’s complex imagination and craft are embodied in his historical concept. This imagination of ‘homeland’ is like ‘raw’ reality shaped by a sense of historical time reverberating from past events and personalities. The first two poems of *Rights of Passage*, depict this:

```
Drum skin whip
lash, master sun’s
cutting edge of
heat, taut
surfaces of things
I sing
I shout
I groan
I dream
about
```

Here, we are given a kind of imaginative shift and picture toward a historical perspective. This singing, shouting, groaning and ‘I dream about’, romanticize an African homeland which the poet longs to be in. It is a creation of his imagination and the poet cannot be at peace until he accomplishes this vehement desire. The first words of this poem, ‘Dream skin whip lash’, are introductory to the new ‘imagined African homeland’s’ history. The
following part of the same poem illustrates how powerful this imagination of Africa as homeland is to the poet:

rock
elephant-
hided boulders
dragged in now
dry river
beds, death’s
...
Build now
the new
villages, you
must mix spittle
with dirt,
...
mud walls will rise
in the dawn
walled cities

(p.4-5)

The new black man, free from the slave’s lash, cruel sun, ‘own shit’, ‘without hope’, is reborn. The imaginary historical movement is brought about in a creative and powerfully evocative way here. An original slavery journey is depicted where each new suffering echoes the past suffering and hardship. Brathwaite has incrementally gathered the collective memories of the people and reflected them in his poetry. In Masks, there is much concentration of the imagination of Africa as homeland. It is as if the primordial journey across Africa has been re-enacted to establish the ‘imagined homeland’. This is shown by the poet’s keen sense of concern of the rituals, spiritual aspects and geographical pre-dominance of the African people:

Asase ...
You, Mother of Earth,
on whose soil
I have placed my tools
Brathwaite is recreating the 'New World of Black Man' which clearly shows how the poet is imagining Africa as homeland. The culture of the Black man is richly illustrated showing the high value bestowed to them by Brathwaite. There is a spiritual consolation and a historical satisfaction achieved in spite of the blacks' painful history. A sense of new beginning is conveyed in the imagination of Africa as homeland. Images such as 'seed', 'Rain', 'water', 'bird calls', a 'green' and a 'walk in the morning' as illustrated in the poem below depict this new start:

Rain drops
from the trees
in the dawn;
in the morn-
ing, bird
calls, green
opens a crack.
Should you

Shatter the door
and walk
in the morning
fully aware

of the future
to come?
There is no
turning back

(p.91-92)
The rain here, thus, water, symbolizes a notion of hope rejuvenated which is Brathwaite's efforts in seeking a complex, yet satisfying African homeland. 'In the dawn', 'no turning back', and 'shatter the door and walk' are all aspects of the achieved and already realized imagination of Africa as homeland. The poet feels he has reached home after so many years of torture, hardship, torment and searching.

There is a kind of satisfaction derived from this imagination of Africa as homeland by Brathwaite. When we look at 'The Skin', we get an impression of revived ritualistic aspects that are not only spiritually liberating to the poet but also, culturally binding and reviving:

Bless you, four-footed animal, who eats rope, skilled
upon rocks, horned with our sin;
stretch your skin, stretch

it tight on our hope;
we have killed
you to make a thin
voice that will reach

further than hope
further than heaven, that will
reach deep down to our gods where the thin
light cannot leak, where our stretched

hearts cannot leap. Cut the rope
of its throat, skilled
destroyer of goats; its sin,
spilled on the washes gravel, reaches

and spreads to devour us all. So the goat
must be killed
and its skin
stretched.

(p. 94)
The ritual undertaken in this poem clearly indicates that the civilization of the Blacks has been achieved. The imaginary African homeland is finally created and the poet can now undergo the spiritual cleansing to be totally incorporated to the land he had been separated from, for a long time. We see a great sense of new beginning here. There is a mental or imaginative shift towards a historical perspective that has been stipulated in many of these poems all through. Such images are repeated in many poems, such as 'Tana', showing the great magnitude of this achieved hope in a new homeland:

So Nana Tano
if I am going away now
you must help me.
Death,
dump speaking god,
mutters for me;
green hearing eyes see,
Exiled from here
rivers,
I have returned
to you.
Not Chad,
the Niger's blood
or Benin's
burning bronze
can save me now.
You I depend upon:
Onyame's eldest son.
How have I failed
who only needed friends'
quick eyes to share
the terror? 
(p. 152-153)
The poet’s nostalgic remembrance of the ‘bitter edges’, ‘whips of white worlds’ and exile, makes him question the gods why it happened. However, he does not dwell here but goes ahead to give a recollection of the ‘aborted’ journey and the failure of ‘needed friends’, and thus has decided to come back ‘home’. He wishes ‘to share the terror’ and ‘how’ he ‘failed’. The gods may not have prevented the Africans’ ancestors from slavery as they were ‘deaf’ and ‘dumb’ but they have given the ‘returns’ a glimpse of hope in ‘green hearing eyes see’. Finally, just like the image of ‘Akoko the Cock’ ‘who cries in the morning’, a new dawn has come. The spiritual awakening and divine intervention has finally taken place. The imagination of Africa as homeland has awakened the sleeping ‘cock’ to ‘cries’:

Asase Yaa, Earth,  
If I am going away now,  
you must help me.  
Divine Drummer,  

‘Kyerema,  
if time sends me  
walking that dark  
path again, you  

must help me  
if I sleep,  

like akoko the cock  
like akoko the cock  

Who cries  
Who cries in the morning  

Akok bon’opa  
Akoko tua bon  

(p.156-157)
The awakening here implies the achievement of the imagined African homeland. The poet is finally settling there and just as the 'cock' has been aroused from its slumber, so is the poet. We see a new morning full of 'cries' and life, a sense of a new beginning for the West Indians. The repetition here is an indication of the pace of the poet's thoughts or imagination. It emphasizes an awakening from a deep slumber due to alienation and identity crisis of the black man in the Caribbean.

The *Islands* vividly opens with images of the imagined African homeland. In 'Jah,' common city like Nairobi, animals like elephants, crops like banana, music among others values and genius are adored. It is as if the poet has already visualized what he has been imagining and recreating in mind. There is an outcry by the Africans in the Diaspora due to the psychological torments of slavery. It is intriguing to note that Brathwaite can clearly reflect 'the pale rigging of saxophone' in the transplantation of slaves from Africa. There is a unique correspondence between the Blacks in Africa and their counterparts in the Diaspora as depicted below:

Nairobi's male elephants uncurl
their trumpets to heaven
Toot-Toots takes it up
in Havana
in Harlem

bridges of sound curve
through the pale rigging
of saxophone stops
the ship sails, slips on banana peel water, eating the dark men.

Has the quick drummer nerves
after the stink Sabbath's unleavened
cries in the hot hull? From the top
of the music, slack Bwana
Columbus rides out of the jungle's den.

with my blue note, my cracked note, full flattened fifth, my ten bebop fingers, my black bottom's strut, Panama worksong, my cabin, my hut,
my new frigged-up soul and God's heaven,
heaven, gonna walk all over God's heaven...

I furl
away from the trumpet
my bridge stops in the New York air
elevator speeds me to angels
heaven sways in the reinforced girders;

The Blacks in the Caribbean still envision the same traumatic conditions as the relations of those Africans who lost their loved ones through slavery. This movement of the black men forcefully from their homes and towns is evident here. However, we cannot rule out the adoration given to African values through the clear destabilization of the smooth life in Africa by the colonizers. The poet, here, takes us back to social order and peaceful aspects of African people before they were destabilized. There is influence of the Western religious aspects such as Sabbath. To this, however, the poet says 'the stink Sabbath's' showing how disgusting it was to the blacks. The spiritual alienation is characterized by sarcastic outbursts of a 'slack Bwana Columbus rides out of the jungle den' and 'elevator speeds me to the angels'. It then becomes clear that this foreign religion whose 'heaven sways in the reinforced girders' did not take roots in the Africans. Just as the Columbus left with nothing more than a shipwreck, so is this Western influence. The blacks have been scattered throughout the world and their influence is evident in 'Panama' and 'New York'.
The next poem in *Islands* praises the genius of African narratives. 'Ananse', highlights the praise accorded to various creatures and elevates the art of story telling to adorable heights in Africa:

> with a black snake’s un-winking eye
> thinking thinking through glass
> through quartz

...

> of our language
> black burt of conundrums
> eye corner of ghosts, ancient histories;

> he spines drum-beats, silver skin
> webs of sound
> through the villages;

...

> who spat
> their death into the ground:
> Goave, Port-au-Prince, Half Moon Fort,
> villages,

(p. 165)

The native language is adored here. It is said to be full of 'black burt of conundrums', 'ancient histories', and 'silver skin webs of sound'. It is worth to mention the high value oral narratives hold in an African society, even today. This is then, an apt description of how Brathwaite’s poetry has recreated and reconstructed the ‘destroyed’ image of African values and genius. This is, however, done in a creative way through this poet’s imagination of Africa as a homeland. In the poem ‘Jouvert’, Brathwaite reinforces his argument with use of vivid images of ‘walking’, and ‘making’, something totally new.
This includes 'music', 'flower', 'homes', 'ghettos', gods such as 'Odomankoma', and 'Nyankopon', among other recreations:

... ashes come
and Christ will pray

Christ will pray
to Odomankoma

Nyame God
and Nyankopon...
petals to the music's
... riding
over shattered homes
...
hearing
Waiting

watching
in the lent ...

to black and bitter
ashes in the ... (p.267-270)

This poem is rich in imaginative spiritual achievements. 'Christ will pray to Odomankoma' indicates a reverse of the obvious in manner of worship. The blacks, thus, the Caribbean, will no longer ape the worship of 'foreign' gods. The looking up to whites as superior in almost everything is denounced here. Brathwaite creates, imaginatively, a reverse of what is obvious and common knowledge, from a religious perspective. There is a kind of double-exposure in this poem. Apart from the poet giving us this imagination of Africa as homeland, he has also expounded on the richness of African gods and landscape. The music and haunting historical aspects are juxtapositioned to give an enriching sensitivity to the 'myth' of a Caribbean man in retrospect to Africa reality. The bites of 'sorrow' are replaced by 'flowers' blooming 'along the way'. There is fullness of joy as 'heads raising ...' to 'petals of music'. The emptiness experienced there before is
no longer there as the poet has finally recreated and redefined an imagined Africa homeland.

African’s deities and folk memories are given special place by Brathwaite in his poems. It is no wonder then that some poems suggest names of some African individuals and personalities. Such poems include ‘Veve’:

But on the beach
the fisherman’s net is completed;
the fine webs fell softly,

And so the black eye travels to the brink of vision
but not yet;
hold back the fishnet’s fling of morning; unloose the sugarcane;

Conquerors, helmets, plumes,
unloosened knots
of blood, dried river beds of iron,
rust;

So on this ground,
Write;
within the sound
of this white limestone ve ‘ve’

(p. 263-265)

There is references to known African gods like Ogun and Veve who were gods dealing directly with the people’s needs such as rain and protection. The fishermen relied on the wind’s direction to know when to sail, go fishing and set their nets. The connection between the human and nature in Africa was a matter of life and death. The immediate environment supplied almost all the human requirements. It is no wonder then that Brathwaite elevate carpentry in a unique way. He associates with an uncle who ‘made
chairs, tables, balanced doors’ and smoothened ‘the white wood out’. But there is a lot of
disappointment due to the advantages the whites took of such skilled African labour force
which they misused leading to exploitation. Phrases like ‘rained face, eaten by pox’...
and wood worm’ show this. The poet here demonstrates how the blacks were mercilessly
mishandled by the whites. Any African who was skilled was forced to render services,
without pay, to the colonizers. Their ‘crying for the desert’ is their quest for freedom and
deliverance as shown in Ogun:

My uncle made chairs, tables, balanced doors on, dug out
coffins, smoothing the white wood out

with plane and quick sand paper until
it shone like his short -sighted glasses.

... eyes, slack anxiety averted lips, flat
rained face, eaten by pox, ravaged by rat

and wood worm, dry cistern mouth, cracked
gullet crying for the desert, the heavy black

enduring jaw; last pain, lost iron;
emerging woodwork image of his anger.

(p. 242-243)

In ‘Ancestors’, we get to capture the expertise of African hunting skills. The poet
praises them in retrospect to his grandfather’s background who was of African origin.
There is a clear adoration of the ancestor’s achievements whose greatness has no
comparison. Although ‘now he is dead’, Brathwaite laments over the Western destructive
nature towards Africans heroes and achievements. Statement like ‘His mad Alsatians
killed it’ depicts this:

Every Friday morning my grandfather
left his form of canefields, chickens, cows, and rattled in his trap down to the harbour town to sell his meat. He was a butcher.
Six-foot-three and very neat: high collar, winged, a grey cravat, a waistcoat, watch-chain just above the belt, thin narrow-bottomed trousers, and the shoes his wife would polish every night. He drove the trap himself: slap of the leather reins...

Now he is dead: The meat shop burned, his property divided. A doctor bought the horse. His mad Alsatians killed it...

(p.239)

The poet is in the actual sense mad at the selfishness of the Westernization which brought about the ‘burning’, dividing and buying of property which there before, was owned collectively.

In ‘Negus’, Westernization has made people to become egocentric. The communal ownership of land and property no longer exist. The poet feels that ‘it is not enough’ just for the Blacks to gain independence and be free from ‘the whips, principalities and powers’. He feels the need to recreate the old beauty of African values and genius. He wishes that the Blacks would churn from the egocentric being and stop the exploitative and destructive vices adapted from the west:

It
... it is not
it is not enough
it is not enough to be free
of the red white and blue
of the drag, of the dragon
... of the whips, principalities and powers
where is your kingdom of the Word?

(p.222)

It is not enough, according to Brathwaite, just 'to be free of red white and blue of the
drag'. What of the other vices of capitalism and selfishness? In 'Legba', Brathwaite
laments once again, of the exploitative nature of Western world. He blames the Whites of
the miseries the Blacks are going through. He argues that after being taken to war in
Burma, no compensation or wages that was given to the fighters leading to poverty and
'pot-bellied, knobble-kneed' black children:

Today god came to church
like a lame old man on a crutch.

He had fought in the last war
and has ribbons to show for

it; knows Burma, Malaya and has been
to Singapore; gets a small pension
to their ball-
bearing ankles;

... And black black black
the black birds clack
in the shak shak tree

... the jack
bird sings, dream-
ing of jewels, eyes,

(p.174-175)

The communal voice, the voice of the tribe, in the above poems represents some aspects
of the Blackman’s consciousness in Brathwaite’s imagination of Africa as homeland. In
spite of cruel history and floundering, the recreated spiritual heritage gives the Caribbean
people some hope and satisfaction. It is worth to note the symbolism of black birds and
their dreams in retrospect to Afrocentricity. The black birds are the happy Black people singing of joy because of their realized dreams and the beauty of the imagined homeland.

As it is seen in the poem ‘Tom’, although nostalgic painful memories of home are suppressed, the Blacks in the Diaspora have learnt to accept that ‘the paths...’ they ‘shall never remember again’. They thus ‘sing nothing now’, ‘remember nothing now’, and ‘suffer nothing to remind ... now of ... lost children’. But Brathwaite is optimistic that his children will not face the same fate like him because he has recreated and redefined an imaginary homeland for them to live in. An aspect of ‘nothing’ is vivid in this poem. Is the past so painful and the ‘paths’ so rough that the poet wish not to remember them? The painful history forces him to wish to have nothing of such future. No wonder he swore not to let his children undergo the pain of alienation, ambivalence and identity crises, he himself, underwent:

let my children
rise
in the path
of the morning
up and go forth
on the road
of the morning
run through the fields
in the sun
of the morning,
see the rainbow
of Heaven;
God’s curved
mourning
calling.

(p. 14)
In his mind, Brathwaite poses a challenge to Tom’s children not to struggle to understand how their fathers had submitted to the whites and were ruled. He imagines a kind of heirship and proper guidance in Africa’s past which is vividly missing here.

Brathwaite represents a folk presence in his imagination of Africa as homeland. He brings out an imaginary person who acts like a voice that exemplifies folk culture and belief. In ‘The Dust’ for example, he represents a group of women: Miss Maisie, Miss Olive, and Miss Maud, who discuss the things that govern their lives’ achievements:

Evening’ Miss
Evvy, Miss
Maisie, Miss
Maud. Olive,

How you? How
you, Eveie, chile?
You tek dat Miraculous Bush
Fuh de trouble you tell me about?

Hush!
Doan keep so much noise
in de white people shop!

Then all uh kin say
an’ uh say it agen:
we got to thank God
fuh small mercies.

Miss Evvy, uh wants

Write two
Cake o’ soap an’ half
pung-a flour in Olive black balance
Book fuh me, Maisle muh daer.
An’ O live-

(p.62-63)
This is a considerable imaginative achievement of Brathwaite as he imagined Africa as homeland and tries to recreate how life would be for these maidens. We see a vivid repository of African memory in the ‘new world’ the poet has ‘created’. The cruel history has not floundered the persona in the poems given. Just as in ‘Legba’ where there is struggle to feed the ‘pot-bellied, knobble-kneed sticks’ children, ‘The Cracked Mother’ from Islands, has several forms and guises. She is imagined to be capable of many things and being more than one ‘being’ or thing at a go. This ability is an imagination of ‘an ideal mother’ capable of everything in life. The utopian state where she lives is romanticized by Brathwaite.

I cried. But on the seas
three nuns appeared
black specks stalked the horizon of my fear
Santa Marias with black silk sails.

Were this the swift ships sent from harbour?
Was this the fleet my pride unfurled?
Pirates in smiling ships, they’d rob the world I ruled
and not a trick I brought would bribe their cruel slaughter
for still the black silk walked towards me on the water.

I cried. And had not thought till then
that there was such a bright salvation in a tear;
my mother had not told me only faith
could sail a sea of glass and fear.

Have faith to face, Caonoba,
the tree-green seas rolled down;
one doubt will smash the garden,
shatter the convex lawn,
drown the three nuns of fear.

(p.180)

‘The Cracked Mother’ takes us back to many of Brathwaite’s poems from The Arrivants where his imagination of Africa as homeland is vividly explored. The archetype mark of the black man is aggressively removed creating a romanticized homeland. There is the
ironic view of religion as an oppressive apparatus meant to exploit the Blacks. The imagery of a mother reborn after almost three hundreds years of slavery and alienation seems to soothe the psychic wounds implanted by slavery. There is a rebirth of the mother, ‘the homeland’ ‘a bright salvation’ as fresh water beginning to flow like a benediction in her worn watercourses to the sea. There is a renewal or rebirth of the historical cycle of the black man through the rebirth of the mother herself. The aspect of ‘the tree-green seas rolled down’, and ‘Have faith to face’, give us a lot of hope for an imaginary rebirth of a new home. It will soon begin to flow again as in the old good times. The last stanza of the ‘Cracked Mother’ vividly expresses this recreation of a new homeland whose map need to be ‘drafted’:

    treaty, how will new maps be drafted?
    Who will suggest a new tentative frontier?
    How will the sky dawn now?

(p. 184)

These three rhetorical questions give the idyllic nature like the archetypal innocent child questioning the obvious from the mother. Brathwaite is obviously relieving some powerful imaginative shifts to the imaginary African homeland. He is ‘smashing the balance, breaking the scale’ so that he can spur ‘conquering tide and hill’. The imagination of Africa as homeland is a vision too great for the poet to behold. He wonders how the ‘new maps’ will ‘be drafted’, who will take the initiative of suggesting ‘a new tentative frontier’ and finally, ‘how will the sky dawn …?’ Brathwaite has successfully rehabilitated the social-cultural and spiritual life of the black man as wholly worthwhile through his imagination of Africa as homeland. This has gone beyond just giving mere historical processes to exploding the inevitable ideological and hypnotic
psychic wounds inflicted by identity crisis. African origin and culture are rapidly expounded to a new course full of strong evocations that give birth to a new homeland. Brathwaite has made what looks like deliberate replacement of familiar Western literary symbols with obscure African ones. Images such as ‘black snake’s,’ ‘silver skin’, ‘green turtles’, ‘old men’s ghosts’, ‘rainfall of soot’, ‘nodding skulls’, ‘lobster-pot’; depict this replacement.

Braithwaite’s imagination of Africa is depicted early in his poetry when he writes:

It will be a long long time before we see
this land again, these trees
again, drifting inland with the sound
of surf, smoke rising

It will be a long long time before we see
these farms again, soft wet slow green
again: Aburl, Akwamu,
mist rising

(p.11)

There is a longing to be back to the beautiful romanticized land of Africa where the West Indians Black Diaspora has been taken from. The poet artistically gives the idea that, ‘it will be a long long time before …’ they ‘see this land again, these trees again’, indicating a possibility of ever coming back. He longs for the time he will see ‘farms again, soft wet slow green… mist rising’ again. He goes on to contrast African aesthetics and hospitality with the new world of slavery, aloofness, pretence and an unfeeling attitude: ‘Watch new these hard men, cold… cold men’:

Watch now these cold men, bold
as the water banging the bow in a sudden will tide,
indifferent, it seems, to the battle

of wind in the water;
for our blood, mixed
soon with their passion in sport,

In indifference, in anger,
will create new soils, new souls, new
Ancestors; will flow like this tide fixed

... with the wind and the water
the flesh and flies, the whips and the fixed
fear of the pain in this chained and welcoming port-

(p.11)

The poet indicates a state of complacency and implies acceptance by Africans’
descendants in the Caribbean that they cannot be what they used to be before slavery. He
says that in ‘indifference’ and ‘in anger’ he ‘will create new soils, new souls, and new
ancestors’. Although he is longing to be back to see the beauty left behind, he is sure that
everything will be knew. The imagination of Africa as homeland—‘the pride of ancestors;
will flow like this tide fixed to the star by which this ship floats to new worlds, new
waters’. In ‘Tom’, there is a symbolic rebirth of Brathwaite’s painful memories of home:

for we who have achieved nothing
work
who have not built
dream
who have forgotten all
dance
and dare to remember

the paths we shall never remember
Again: Atumpan talking and the harvest branch-
es, all the tribes of Ashanti dreaming the dream
of Tutu, Anokye and Golden Stool, built
in heaven for our nation by the work
of lightning and brilliant adze: and now nothing

(p.13)
It is a dream that pains and confuses the mind because it is difficult to wipe out and forget one's homeland. But in imagination, one gets a window through which he can let go such emotions. The fantasy in the dream-land looks real and authentic and the poet here ventures into this world of unquestionable happenings and revelation. Due to mixed races, they get children that are 'coloured'. Their beauty and the coloured skin is turned to an imagery; a metaphor of rainball. This shows the magnitude of the imagination by Brathwaite. It is clear here that there be peaceful co-existence among people of different races as it is ordained by God. This gives the poet great hope that triggers him to write:

Let my children
rise
in the path
of the morning
up and go forth
on the road
of the morning
run through the fields
in the sun
of the morning,
see the rainbow
of heaven;
God's curved
mourning
calling.

(p.14)

Why are the moon, the stars, and the heaven mourning? Where are the 'children' rising from? Which is the 'path of morning?' and why morning not noon or evening? There is a lot of implied imagery here. The hope of the children lies in the return and the settling down of 'the arrivants'. The morning symbolizes a new beginning but at the same time, an alienation from home. The idea of 'path', 'road' and 'go forth' emphasizes the movement to the already imagined homeland. The gods are yearning for the return of
their children, may be to worship and offer libations, and for ritual adoration. It cannot happen in foreign lands but only at home and, in this case, the imagined homeland. There is an assurance and great concern about the future of African children in the Caribbean. That is why the poet prays:

Let me suffer
nothing
to remind me now
of my lost children
but let them
rise
O man
O god
O dawning;

(p.13-14)

The ‘man’ (white) is the cause of the children’s suffering. Thus, Brathwaite involves a god, who has finally brought a dawning. The invocation of an African deity as the last hope is a sign of affirmation of African values and genius. Western values are rejected as they have only bred alienation and oppression. The poet’s yearning is a psychological transition and a kind of ‘mind cleansing’ for rebirth into the mutant that will fit in the imagined African homeland.

Brathwaite, as a poet, is a lover of music. In ‘Wings of Dove’, for example, his imagination of Africa as homeland is pronounced in Rastafarians:

And I
Rastafar-I
in Babylon’s boom
town, crazed by the moon
and the peace of this chalice, I
prophet and singer, scourge
of the gutter, guardian
Trench Town, the Dungle and Young’s
Town, rise and walk through the now silent
...
Rise rise
locks-
man, solo-
man wise
man, rise
...
dem, stop
dem, kill
dem an’go
back back
to the black
man lan’
back back
to Af-
rica.
...
(p.42-44)

It is important to note how the music of the Blacks gives rhythm, mood and meaning to Brathwaite’s poems. There is a regular beckon for the Blacks to ‘Rise rise’, ‘stop dem, kill dem’ and ‘go back back to the black man lan’... Africa’. This message fills the poem with aesthetics as the Rastafarians urge the Black communities to use ‘dem wings ...’ and ‘watch dem fly’. The Rastafarianism has much of the Blacks religious concepts in it. They want the Africans to sing and use the songs to air what they want. The songs will become ‘dem wings’ and the flying here implies the passing of the message. It therefore challenges the Blacks in the Diaspora to make haste to return to Africa and ‘soar dem high’ to ‘Clear in the glory of the Lord’. The return to Africa ordeal is so real in this poem that one cannot rule out its implication to Brathwaite as a person. His going back to Ghana, where he worked in the Ministry of Education for seven years (1955-1962), gave him a great achievement and fulfillment of this dream and yearning. He also gathered
vital experience which reverberates in many of the poems in *The Arrivants*. His own telling of what that experience meant to him is astounding:

slowly, ever so slowly ... I was coming to an awareness ... of cultural wholeness, of the place of the individual within the tribe. Slowly, ever so slowly, I came to a sense of identification of myself with these people, my living diviners. I came to connect my history with theirs, the bridge of my mind was linking Atlantic and ancestor, homeland and heartland.


The poem ‘Calypso’ is giving a more than a ‘transatlantic’ arc of concern in linking African roots and the Caribbean identity. Brathwaite interests in jazz music seem to provide him with basis for an aesthetic in *The Arrivants*. There are much Omnipresence of Black Musical forms in Brathwaite’s poetry such as ‘Calypso’:

Steel drum steel drum
hit the hot calypso dancing
hot rum hot rum
who goin’ stop this bacchanalling?

For we glance the banjo
dance the limbo
grow our crops by maljo

have loose morals
gather corals
father our neighbour’s quarrels

(p.49)

This obsession with ideologies of African even in music is an attempt at praising the superiority of African culture in order to put to an end to the myth of inferiority associated with it. All this aims at the creation of a new identity within the new world context. It is the imagination of Africa as homeland by Brathwaite. There are plenty of
allusions to African mythology in songs such as in ‘The Twist’, ‘The Gong-Gong’, ‘Atumpan’, and in tales like ‘Ananse’ where lies the lost ‘roots’ of the black Diaspora.

In the Akan proverb in the *Masks*, Brathwaite adores his African origin.

Only the fool points at his Origins with his left hand. (p. 88)

This proverb, followed by the long enchantment of the West Indian’s dream of returning to Africa, is thoroughly expounded by the poet. Actually, the trope of Africa in Brathwaite’s poetry is an Afrocentric approach to rewriting the themes of Africa which include: slavery, colonialism, alienations, exile and search for identity of both the society and literature. This is why as the proverb says, ‘only a fool points at his origins with his left hand’. The poet is hallowing his African origin by quoting the proverb. The right hand is a hand that is strong, able and it rules. There is a recreation of African values which are reconstructed from the ‘forgotten’ history to bring to life the imagination of Africa as homeland. There are some negritudist undertones as the blacks try to affirm their blackness and adoration of their cultural heritage. However, while other Negritude writers overly romanticized Africa’s beauty, Brathwaite’s imagination is within bounds of reality. It streams out of a consciousness of optimism that the ‘pathfinders’ have finally found a rest; ‘a homeland’.

Brathwaite crowns his imagination on poems such as ‘Axum’, ‘Timbuctu’, ‘Volta’, ‘Chad’, ‘Mmerson’, and ‘Ougadougou’. It is important to mention how the poet is preoccupied with the folk memories of African cities as the very names of these poems
suggest. These cities are highly adored and their unique values emphasized. For example, we get these words in ‘Volta’:

My Lord, all this time since we left
Walata, you have led these people. Are you not
tired?
... But still you won’t rest
you won’t give up. Can’t we
stop here? Have we
not traveled enough?

The young men murmur, El
Hassan; the women
long for a market
where they can chatter and laugh.

I know, I know.
Don’t you think that I too know
these things? want these things?
long for these soft things?

(p.107)

Brathwaite’s wanting ‘these things’ and longing ‘for these soft things’ clearly depicts the reality of his Negritudist imagination. He yearns ‘for a market where they can chatter and laugh’, and for a home where they can sleep, ‘lively areas where they may drum and dance’. All these longings are as justifiable since before they were uprooted from their original home, such ‘things’ were a reality. But has he actually found them? Has he achieved them? The answer is easily found in the following verses from the ‘Volta’:

But I have not found them yet.
I have not found them yet.
Here the land is dry, the bush
brown. No sweet water flows.

So must we march
all the time?
Walk in this thirsty sun
all the time?
There is a land, south
of here, where it is richer.
I have heard tales told
of the mouths of great rivers.

that smiles; of forests

(p.108)

Brathwaite’s historical imagination, as shown in the above poem, may have been informed by his experience of living in Ghana as mentioned earlier. Even after returning to the Caribbean, the images of African’s richness in various values and cultural aspects cannot go unadored. It is like emancipation from colonialism and a reunion with the roots of the Black Diaspora. It also indicates the multi-cultural nature of the West Indian reality. The relics and the lost cities in ‘Timbuctu’ only resonates the poet’s unsettled state of mind due to the disastrous past. His imagination of Africa as homeland here makes him strain to ‘return again’ and ‘blaze … time’. However, he is still determined to conquer as illustrated by these lines from ‘Chad’:

in his dark restless haste;
searching for hope; seeking
his fate
far from the shores
of this lake

(p.105)

Here, common factors of African values and genius are brought ablaze. There is ‘haste’ to search for a remedy to destroyed relics and lost cities mentioned in ‘Timbuctu’. It is worth noting that Brathwaite’s imagination of Africa as homeland will not end until the poet achieves what he has always been yearning for. The imagery of a river flowing in
'Volta' depicts this stream of consciousness that will rest only when the river reaches its destiny - the sea: ‘as if a river were flowing’; ‘soft and always south from here’.

Finally, the imagination of Africa as homeland by Brathwaite as we have already explained seems to be a reflection of the Blacks in the Caribbean trying to realize their roots. It is an indication that there is a new Black world or homeland for the Africans in the Caribbean. Brathwaite has told us something to this effect in an interview with Erika Slivovitz, where he said;

...I got the sense that I have not yet left Africa,
...it strengthened my notion of Africa as an extension into the Caribbean.

(Slivovitz 1991:1-2)

The poet’s imagination and actual travel to his ancestral world seems ‘an attempt to go into the memory and history of his people’ as Wakarindi puts it. In the last part of his trilogy, Islands the presence of African deities, genius, values and folk memories from the use of the known names of some particular personalities and cities suggest this. There is a rich mythology of the Caribbean man and his African Identity. Some individual poems such as ‘Ogum’, ‘Legba’, ‘Negus’, ‘Veve’, and ‘Ancestors’ suggest an African infusion to the Caribbean reality. A continuous possibility of a new beginning and a new hope has been over emphasized. The poet has finally envisioned a spiritual and social regeneration for the Caribbean man and society. His imagination has brought home a sense of new beginning conveyed in an image of dawn in poems such as ‘Home’, enjoying ‘home fires burnin’, and ‘shatter the door and walk in the morning’ in ‘Epilogue’ (p85); in Rights of Passage. The ‘birds calls’, ‘rain’, ‘a green’ opening; at the
end of *Masks*, where there is a vivid picture of 'Akoko the cock, 'who cries in the morning' (p.157); and finally, the last poem of *Islands; 'J'ouvert*', which ends up with the idea of 'walking' and 'making' of 'some-thing torn and new' (p.270). So, the imagination of Africa as homeland by Brathwaite has been brought out vividly in the trilogy.
CHAPTER THREE

IMAGINATION OF HOMELAND BY DEREK WALCOTT IN THE CASTAWAY

Our main concentration in this chapter is the imagination of Africa as homeland by Derek Walcott in his poetry; *The Castaway*. Walcott's personal past and personal home assume a central and over-riding importance to his imaginative quest. His poetry begins in nostalgia and regret but as we progress in critically analyzing it, it takes us far beyond the imagined African homeland. This is clearly depicted in *Another life* (1973) where he looks back across the gulf of years in an attempt to redefine what he lost when he was growing up. Much of his dreams and imagination appears in his play, *Dream on monkey Mountain and other plays* (1967) where his main character, Makak, struggles painfully to consciously redeem the Black colonial psychosis. The psychic wounds inflicted by colonialism are overcome by the Corporal's outburst: 'rage for whiteness that does drive niggers mad' (p.228). This is the identity which Walcott is exploiting in his zeal and imaginative quest in order to recreate a West Indian poetic Idiom.

Joseph Brodsky, whose appreciation of Walcott's work featured in the *New York Review of Books* (1983), praised Walcott's poetic language thus: 'a great poet of the English language is a black man' (p.39). There is duality of time as the imagery of struggles; survival and imagination pierce through these poems. The concept of the imagination of Africa as homeland is brought about through actual and literal
hallucination via dream of mythical 'home'. Walcott's image of St Lucia is his identification with that place. The sea with a searing tropical sun depicts an enduring survival journey for the 'Castaway'. But where were they cast away from?

Past thirty now I know
To love the self is dread
Of being swallowed by the blue
Of heaven overhead
Or rougher blue below.
Some lesion of the brain

(p. 54)

A sense of hallucination due to identity crisis is dedicated in this poem. It is difficult 'to love the self' and the torture is great that it pains even 'the brain'. This is a memory transmitted into artistic values of the land the Castaways were from, Africa, but only in imagination or dream. African ideologies, values and genius are vehemently transfixed in the imagery of histo-geographical features mention in the poem 'The Voyage Up River':

And the scaled cayman heave its hulk and flash
To halve their limbs in the original place?

On that vague expedition did their souls
Spawn, vaporous as butterflies, in resurrection,

Or the small terrors multiply like tadpoles
Below a mangrove root or a headstone?

Stillborn in death, their memory is not ours,
In whom the spasm of birth

Gendered Oblivion. To chart empty savannahs,
Rivers, even with a guide, conceives an earth

Without us, without gods: Guiana or Guinea,
An aboriginal fear, lie Orinoco

Disgorging from a mouth brown with tobacco
Deaths that cannot discolour the great sea.

(p. 50)
Walcott’s countryside is described vividly here in retrospect, to the African’s past village setting and gods ‘Guiana or Guinea’. The ‘tide -race’ demonstrates movement by turbulent sea from ‘original place’. This sense of imagination increases with the actuality of every detail. The memory of the past, the actual and the literal, has transformed itself and become a vision. This is seen more clearly in the following poem ‘Crusoe’s Journal’:

For the hermetic skill, that from earth’s clays
shapes something without use,
and separate from itself, lives somewhere else,
sharing with every beach
a longing for those gulls that cloud the cays
with raw, mimetic cries,
never surrenders wholly for it knows
it needs another’s praise
like hoar, half-cracked Ben Gunn, until it cries
at last, ‘O happy desert!’
and learns again the self-creating peace
of islands. So from this house
that faces nothing but the sea, his journals
assumes a household use,
We learn to shape from them, where nothing was
the language of a race,
and since the intellect demands its mask
that sun-cracked, bearded face
provides us with the wish to dramatize
ourselves at nature’s cost,
...

(p. 52-53)

The ‘we’ in the poem fantasize romantic memories of the past of which, they cannot run away from. They have tried to settle ‘at plature’s cost’, to no avail. It is clear that the more they try not to think, imagine or remember the past, the more ‘all of us yearn for those fantasies.’ There is an attempt to recreate and redefine the Castaway to a new people. To ‘second Adam’, to ‘natural object, pure’ and take them back ‘to
boyhood'. This going back to ancestral memories is what the poet unconsciously trends on in *The Castaway*:

O love, we die alone!
I am borne by the bell
Backward to boyhood
To the grey wood
Spire, harvest and marigold,
To those whom a cruel
Just God could gather
To His blue breast, His beard
A folding cloud,
As He gathered my father.
Irresolute and proud,
I can never go back.

I have lost sight of hell,
Of heaven, of human will,
My skill

The blood of Crusoe’s slave
Black little girls in pink
Organdy, crinolines,
Walk in their air of glory
Beside a breaking wave;
Below their feet the surf
Hisses like tambourines.

At dusk when they return

Transfiguring tongue can bless.

(p. 56-57)

Unlike Brathwaite who longs to be reconciled with his roots, Walcott’s views are different. He is ‘irresolute and proud’ to ‘never go back’. The question is: go back to where? Is it not to Africa’s ancestral world where ‘Art is profane and pagan?’ where ‘the brood of Crusoe’s slave, Black little girls in pink’ came from? To a place full of ‘Hisses like tambourines?’ Clearly, although Walcott contrasts Brathwaite’s views, his
imagination leads him to a fantasy that ‘At dusk when they return’, there will be a ‘transfiguring’ tongue which will bless. The blessing here brings out an element of change that is inevitable, a change of language ‘Beside a breaking wave’, is evident here. But what is being blessed? It is the transformation of those who have encountered the whites and as they return, those left behind cannot fail to notice the change in dressing, manner of speech and general behaviour. They need some cleansing and rituals to be done to them so that they can be properly accepted back to Africa. Where are the ‘black little girls in pink’ being taken? Is not to serve their White masters in conjugal matters?

Walcott’s pursuit of the historical theme through phrases such as: ‘may the mind/catch fire till it clears’ and ‘its mould of clay at last’, indicate his craving for a historical redefining of the West Indian man. There is a metaphor of tradition and colonialism in his urge to recreate a new ‘Adam’ due to ‘fertility’ of the land and its ‘newness’. A spasm of imaginative ignition is seen here whereby Walcott’s internal psychic wounds give him a boast in his imagination of Africa as homeland. He draws parallels that reconstruct into an image of a harmonious vision of homeland. His once predominant past still lingers in his present state in ‘lamp fall’:

But there’s an old fish, a monster
Of primal fiction that drives barreling
Undersea, too old to make a splash,
To which I’m hooked!
Through daydream, through nightmare trolling
Me so deep that no lights flash
There but the plankton’s drifting, phosphorescent stars.

I see with its aged eyes,
Its dead green, glaucous gaze,
And I’m elsewhere, far as
I shall ever be from you whom I behold now
Dear family, dear friends, by this still glow,
The lantern’s ring that the sea’s
Never extinguished.
Your voices curl in the shell of my ear.

We see Walcott’s adoration of African customs and mythical values which he himself does not want to associate with. His ‘day dream’ and ‘nightmare’ are ‘so deep that no lights flash’ can penetrate. Such is the ‘ignorance’ of Walcott to his African roots. It is ironical that despite all these, he can still ‘see with-aged eyes’. He also acknowledges that he is ‘hooked’ to this past and he is ‘elsewhere, far’. It is through such isolated instances that we bring the poet’s accumulated imagination of Africa as homeland. His alienated state is depicted from this state of his mind. ‘Friends’, ‘family’ and ‘voices curl’ are still near him and he cannot forget them however much he tries. Psychologically, the poet cannot have peace as he is ‘hooked’ to the past. He must, therefore, ‘behold’ newness through imagination to have some rest.

Walcott is frustrated by the church which he sees as having forced the people to a meek resignation to their destitution and misery. He agonizes about this in his poems. Walcott’s immediate grandmothers were predominately of African origin and poor while his grandfathers were white and rich. This brings his ambivalent state in reference to the imagination of Africa as homeland. He tends to incline to his rich white grandfathers rather than to the poor black grandmothers. In Another life, West Indian’s history of servitude is indicated when Walcott says, ‘I had entered the house of literature as a houseboy, I filched as the slum child state’ (p.77).
The poems of nature in his poetry indicate the folkloric form of African animal tales and fables, fantasy, spiritual rituals and other folks imagination. Like Brathwaite, Walcott is concerned with a recreation of a new world. He knows that to be at peace with history, he needs to trace his ancestral whereabouts. There is some psychological pain which results in psychic wounds which are common to West Indians. This is found in poems such as 'The Flock' and 'A village life'. He says; 'it revolves upon its centuries' through the 'migrating birds' and to the 'change of language, climate, customs, light', to a changed 'sense of season':

The style, tension of motion and the dark, 
inflexible direction of the world 
as it revolves upon its centuries 
with change of language, climate, customs, light, 
with our own prepossession day by day 
year after year with images of flight, 
survive our condemnation and sun's exultant larks.

(p. 14-15)

There is a fable showing the struggle in nature here just as he brings in his plays *The Sea at Dauphin* (1954) and Malcochon or *Six in the rain* (1959). We see a constant never-ending struggle with evil in order to redefine the history of the Black man of the Diaspora. There are always two contrasting sides; cold and hot, light and dark, glaciers and draughts and the urge to survive in such conditions are inevitable. The Blacks need to find their identity and their roots as free human beings. That is why Walcott has to work through 'tension of motion and the dark,' to redefine what the Black Diaspora has been searching for 'year after year with images of flight'. This, to Walcott, becomes an imagination of African homeland.
It is quite interesting how pre-independence version of the old colonial Black dispossession is brought out in neocolonialism. There is 'some new filaments of blood'. The 'Old jaw, gibbering', 'dried like silk', and 'where imagination sent', are all mixed images of the past and the imagined homeland:

... it dried like silk,
Leisurely, altered to lead.
The belly, leprous, silver, bulged
Like a cold chance for the blade.
Suddenly it shuddered in immense
doubt, but the old jaw, gibbering, divulged
nothing but some new filaments
of blood. For every bloody stroke
with which a frenzied fisherman struck
its head my young son shook his head.
Could I have called out not to look
Simply at the one world we shared?
Dead, and examined in detail,
a tarpon's bulk grows beautiful.

... Can such complexity of shape,
such bulk, terror and fury fit
in a design so innocent,
that through opaque, phantasmal mist,
moving, but motionlessly, it
sails where imagination sent?

(p. 22-23)

There are a lot of paradoxical statements in the poem, 'ARPON'. The images drawn contradict each other, elevating the difficulty of duality of reality and imagination.

'Moving, but motionlessly', 'opaque, phantasmal mist'. We see Walcott trying to recreate the blacks, the poor and the despairing people through 'sails' of imagination.

There is a repetition of 'green...' image which has become a glimpse of hope to the hopeless. The poet cannot remember much due to 'widening amnesia' and the returning back 'to darkness', illustrated in 'The Swamp'. The dead things need to be
resurrected slowly for they are needed. 'limb, tongue and sinew into a knot' because of
the imagination journey shown by 'the road Ahead':

It begins nothing. Limbo of cracker convicts, Negroes.
Its black mood
Each sunset takes a shear of life's blood.

... Conceals within it's clutch the moss backed toad.
Toadstools, the potent ginger-lily,
Petals of blood,

The speckled vulva of the tiger-orchid;
Outlandish phalloi
Haunting the travellers of its one road.

Deep, deeper than sleep
Like death,
Too rich in its decrescence, too close of breath

(p.11-12)

To understand Walcott's work, especially his imagination of Africa as homeland, it is important we look at some of his own comments. Looking back at the trying spiritual journey of his life in the theatre, Walcott asks: 'What to do then? Where to turn? And How to be true?' Then he answers his own questions by way of an image, he says; 'only in image' Critical Studies of Caribbean Writers (1978). We see to what extent Walcott's ideas are amplified in theatre, essays and poetry.

In Another life, the sense of hallucination and imagination is vividly brought out:

... he was repaying the island an ancestral land debt. It was as if they had arrived at a view of their own bodies walking up the crests, their bodies tilted slightly forward, a few survivors. It was not a vision but a memory, though its detail was
reduced, as in dreams and in art... was only
this reduced image of real actors on a real,
windy grass ridge.

(Another life, 38)

Walcott’s here assumes a powerful imaginative quest of the past. Although it is more of a
reflection to ‘repaying the island an ancestral land debt’, which is this ancestral past? It
is of what origin? Which ‘other’ life is the poet talking about? It is quite clear that he
refers to the life the ancestors lived before they were transported to the West Indies
through slavery. These past thoughts flood the poet’s mind filling his memories with
imaginative quest to unpuzzle this literal vision. This puzzle makes him ‘homesick’, due
to the fright of the ‘grey city’ life which he is not used to. He is contesting with the
‘puzzle’ of the black, ‘Behind’ his ‘back’. He feels like ‘a frightened cat’ and as if he
were ‘dead’. His being here, ‘New York’, gives him a feeling of ‘an iron cell’, he needs
get out from. However, he can only manage this by imaginatively liberating himself
through poetry. We get phrases such as; ‘image rattled’ to ‘freight’ ‘human soul’,
showing how disgusting his present state is compared to the past he can only imagine—
Africa:

I was a frightened cat in that grey city.
I floated, a cat’s shadow, through the black wool
sweaters, leotards and parkas of the fire-haired,
snow-shouldered Greenwich village madchen,
homesick, my desire
crawled across snow
like smoke, for its lost fire.

... I cannot imagine you dead.

... Your image rattled on the subway glass
is my own death-mask in an overcoat;
under New York, the subterranean freight
of human souls, locked in an iron cell,  
station to station cowed with swaying calm,  
thunders to its end, each in its private hell,

(p.16-17)

The ‘terror’ which ‘eats the nerves’ calls for a revolution to free all the captives. The poet’s only consolation is through his mind. He can redefine what freedom he wants and where he would like to go in order to attain this freedom. The souls need to be liberated here and the only way is through the imaginary homeland.

In the poem ‘Goats and Monkey’, the following epigraph depicts the poet’s inseparable concern of the Black’s race influence to the Whites regardless of the Whites’ prejudice of the power of the Blacks. It shows that despite the Whites believing that they are superior to the blacks, nature through children and sexuality knows no boundaries of complexion. The blacks have affairs with the whites and the whites masters go with the black girls. The question is; who is fooling who? The Whites or the Blacks?:

... even now, an old black ram  
is tupping your white ewe.  
Othello

The Owl’s torches gutter. Chaos clouds the globe.  
Shriek, augury! His earthen bulk  
buries her bosom in its slow eclipse.  
His smoky hand has charred  
That marble throat. Bent to her lips,  
he is Africa, a vast, sidling shadow  
that halves your world with doubt.  
‘Put out the light’, and God’s light is put out.

...  
Virgin and ape, maid and malevolent Moor,  
their immoral coupling still halves our world.  
He is sacrificial beast, bellowing, goaded,
a black bull snarled in ribbons of its blood.
And yet, whatever fury girded
on that saffron-sunset turban, moon-shaped sword

The reality of the ‘Blacks’ power is contrasting the images of the black man’s character. Nevertheless, the black man ‘torches’ everything he touches or come across. His strength is likened to ‘a black bull’ whose ‘fury’ cannot be ‘girded’. He is just too strong for his white counterparts. We see the poet here being forced to re-live in a world of the Blacks as he narrates the effect of his various encounters. He ends up accepting and confessing that those ‘monstrous’ ‘black’ actually ‘gave me suck’. His ‘vile to the touch’ would not change the faith that what he detests, gave birth to him and brought him up. The poem ‘The Prince’, depicts this:

Genders of furies, crouching, slavery beasts
those paps that gave me suck! His dragonish scales
are velvet-sheathed, even at those feasts
of coiling tongues. Lust has not soured
that milky stomach. Something more than love
my father lacked which God will not approve:

a savage, sundering sword, vile to the touch
breeding fidelity by its debauch.
Calm, she reclines on her maternal couch,
knitting revenge and lechery in my head.
I ease the sword, and, like her victim, quaking,
I, in my father, stalk my father’s dread.

Walcott’s imagination of Africa is full of racial prejudice. It is clear in the above two poems that Walcott craves for whiteness. He seems to praise and adore the whites while at the same time despising and annihilating the Blacks Diaspora. It is like in his play, *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, where Walcott’s yearning for whiteness is elevated.
Through his main character Makak, he lays the alluring ghost of the white Goddess. Moustique arguing with Makak says this; ‘Which White lady? You is nothing. You black, ugly, poor, so you worse than nothing. You like me. Small, ugly…’ (p.137). His social background mirrors the historical background of the West Indian as mixed blood: Black and White, poor and rich, thus bringing the issue of race and ambivalence. To clarify this from *The Castaway*, we need not to go further than in ‘The Prince’ and ‘Goats and Monkey.’ The images captured in phrases such as ‘owl’s torches gutter’, ‘His smoky hand’, ‘virgin and ape’, ‘maid and malevolent moor’, ‘His dragonish scales’ and ‘a savage’; illustrate the poet’s hatred and resentment for the Black Diaspora. It is no wonder then that he imagines them capable of the worst. He adores an image of St Lucia which he identifies with in retrospect to his ancestral African homeland. The force of the imagination of St Lucia is overwhelming, deducing imagery of path finding, struggle and survival. But is Walcott critical to his ‘blackness’ all through? The answer is no. A closer look at his other character Corporal, in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* depicts this. Toward the end of this play, Corporal embraces his ‘blackness’ and does some tidings by releasing the blacks that are suffering, showing his acceptance of his own race and people.

One would like to question Walcott’s vulgarity in this poem and the answer would be - it is an escape from his mixed blood state; a running away from the psychic wounds inflicted on him by the crisis of identity. His past is painful and the memories in his poetry depict a desire to run away from whatever may remind him of that past. He wants to forget it and thus, the use of such images as ‘virgin and ape’, and ‘speckled
vulva'. The lingering memories bring some sense of hallucination to Walcott which he cannot run away from. The economic status of his birth island St Lucia may have influenced Walcott's poetry. There is deliberate effort to run away from its underdeveloped condition, its poverty and inevitable parochialism. The despair and frustration caused by his childhood memories gives us the meaning of such poems as 'The Prince', 'Goats and Monkeys' and 'The wedding of an Actress'. His escape to religion becomes a mask to hide his painful feelings:

We too are actors, who behold
This ceremony; we hold
Our breath, defying dissolution,
Faith, we were told, like art,
Feeds on illusion.

Through the illusion of another life,
I can observe this custom like a ghost,
Watching the incense snaking overhead
Dissolving like the wafer laid
In wine along the tongue,
Hearing their promise buried in this vault,
Their lines drowned in the surges of a song.
Yet whether faith or custom matters most,
In each the private tragedy is lost.
Faith is as virginal as every bride,
Custom the church from which I am divorced
Because of pride, because of grievous pride.

(p.31)

To Walcott, this imagination of Africa as homeland is 'the illusion of another life'. He feels that it is 'like a ghost' which has become a 'grievous pride' to him. The social stratification of the island where Walcott belonged really influenced Walcott's social status and racial identity. Belonging to the brown bourgeoisie, he hoped to be elevated to the 'whiteness' he always yearned for. Walcott seems to be sedulously cultivating accents of English poets from the outside but there is a vibrant urge within him which motivated
his imagination of Africa as homeland. There is conflict within his imagination psyche and the reality of Western and African values he is living within. He sees this as an ‘illusion’ refusing to get out of his mind. It is for this reason that he expresses his true feelings in ‘another life’. There is so much westernization within him that he cannot capture a clear glimpse of Africa beauty. The poems of nature and tales of fantasy full of adventure depict his observation. He underwent cultural clashes due to conflict of tribal religion of the blackness and whiteness reared on British imperial history. All these claims are endowed in the poem ‘Laventville’:

The middle passage never guessed its end.
This is the height poverty
for the desperate and black;
...

shared. The salt blood knew it well,
you, me, Samuel’s daughter, Samuel,
and those ancestor clamped below its grate.

And climbing steeply past the wild gutters, it shrilled
in the blood, for those who suffered, who were killed,
...
customs and gods that are not born again,
some crib, some grill of light
clanged shut on us in bondage, and withheld

us from that world below us and beyond,
and in its swaddling cerements we’re still bound.

(p. 33-35)

Some African values and genius such as ‘tropical afternoons’, rituals of birth and death, sacred ‘groove’, customs and gods are brought out here. However, the poet needs redemption ‘from that world below’ and ‘beyond’. He imagines Africa as full of ‘horrors’, ‘poverty’ and ‘apish habits’, which he does not want to be associated with. At the same time, he is mad at ‘those I deeply loved’, of their ‘apish habits’ and ‘their excess
fear'. The poet's imagination is darkened by the poor and desperate state of his own 'rachitic bones', his 'alien earth,' his being a child '...from habitual wombs', and 'the unalterable groove of grinding poverty'.

With no 'visible history', the imagination of Africa as homeland is not an easy task for Walcott. He says in 'The Almond Trees' that 'there's nothing there' meaning, Africa:

There's nothing here
this early;
cold sand
cold churning ocean, the Atlantic,
no visible history,

... foam-haired, salt-grizzled fisherman,
his mongrel growling, whirling on the stick
he pitches him; its spinning rays
'no visible history'
until their lengthened shapes amaze the sun.

by noon,
this further shore of Africa is strewn
with the forked limbs of girls toasting flesh
in scarves, sunglasses, Pompeian bikinis,
brown daphnes, laurels, they'll all have
like their originals, their sacred grove,
this frieze
of twisted, coppery, sea-almond trees.

(p.36)

There is desperation that African history has been stripped away. African values have been eroded by western 'values'. This has seen several vices such as prostitution thrive in Africa. Walcott stresses on 'forked limbs of girls toasting flesh' to please their colonial masters. Such atrocities were unheard of in traditional Africa as they were a taboo. There
is a competition in mode of dressing in an effort to please the oppressors. Phrases like ‘Pompeian bikinis’ depicts this. The strong moral and ethical concept that held Africans together has been lost. The original names of things and places had been ‘stripped’ and replaced with ‘Greek or Roman tags’. Even ‘their sacred grove’ which is reverend have been destroyed. The only thing remaining is ‘sunglasses’ showing the alienated state of the original African homeland. On the same note, in the ‘veranda’ Walcott’s laments of his ‘grandfather’s ghost!’ The fable about a never ending struggle dominates Caribbean Folklore. As in his play about Makak, a charcoal burner form monkey mountain, there is a painful struggle towards a true creative and self-consciousness. This however, is only achieved by redeeming the Black colonial psychosis through imagination of Africa as homeland. It is a purgatorial dream as he has to struggle with the whiteness overwhelming his heart. This may not be what the poet wants nevertheless, he must do it to find psychic wholeness and redeem his people:

A ghost steps from you, my grandfather’s ghost!
Uprooted from some rainy English shire,
you sought your Roman

End in suicide fire.
Your mixed son gathered your charred, blackened bones,
in a child’s coffin

And buried than himself on a storage coast.
Sire,
why do I raise you up? Because

... Whatever love you suffered makes amends
within them, father
I climb the stair

And stretch a darkening hand to greet those friends
who share with you the last inheritance
Walcott too, has to earn painfully an identity with where he was ‘uprooted from’. Even if it is through ‘End in suicide by fire’, he plans to gather his father’s ‘blackened bones’. The flattering ghost of his father is buried ‘on a strange coast,’ but he will ‘raise…up’, the ‘genealogical roof tree’. After ‘sea-crossing’, he cannot forget the past and has to ‘stretch a darkening hand to greet those friends’ he wishes not to associate with for being black. Whether on ‘earth’ or in ‘shrine’, the ancestral spirit of the dead rekindles some painful psychic memories that Walcott cannot ignore. It is ‘grey, ghostly loungers at veranda ends’. The poet, as the persona, must develop the image of a folk hero that will portray a large sweep of Black’s and West Indian’s history and reality. He imagines a redeemed Black colonial consciousness, ‘whatever love you suffered makes amends’ and creates an imagined self-wholesomeness, ‘I climb the stairs’.

Walcott’s reconnection with the past is vividly brought out in the poem ‘Crusoe’s Journal’. Here, his looking back becomes an imagination of the African homeland which he wants ‘nothing indeed to do with’. He has said something intriguing about the imagination of Africa as homeland:

I looked now upon the world as a thing remote, which I had nothing to do with, no expectation from, and, indeed no desires about. In a word, I had nothing indeed to do with it, nor was ever like to have; so I thought it looked as we may perhaps look upon it hereafter, viz., as a place I had lived in but was come out of it; and well might I say, as Father Abraham to Dives, ‘Between me and thee is a great gulf fixed.’

(p.51)
The poet’s references to ‘savages’ shows his apt dislike to be associated with his past. His mention of ‘green, chunning forest’ however, and ‘a green world’, disputes this. How can he hate a past he so clearly adores? He explains how the missionaries had taken word to savages’ and ‘converted cannibals’. But at the same time in ‘The Voyage Up River’, wonders how they can survive ‘without gods: Guiana or Guinea’. He confesses that ‘Boys will be boys’, regardless who ‘instruct’ them. Walcott’s statues of his ‘forgotten’ past, as seen in tube ‘Statues’, makes him imagine his ancestors as ghost greeting ‘each other’s ghost’:

Then turn to read
Around another statue, civic-sized,
Bare, balding head,
Of some archaic, muscular aphorist
Laurelled, toga unkempt,
His forked hand raised like a diviner’s rod,
His face creased with the wise
Exhaustion of a god.
Their eyes
Withhold amusement, mine, contempt.

Boys will be boys.
Who can instruct them where true honour lies?
Instinct or choice,
War’s furious, dandiacal discipline.
We, who have known

... On them, your fatherly, exhausted air
Is lost,
As sightless as the god’s prophetic stare.
Across that gulf each greets the other’s ghost.

(p.40-41)

Why is Walcott seeing them as ghosts? We get a feeling that his cultural adaptation is alive and his reliving the past fills the present with ‘nightmares’. Is he then living in a
mask? Or is it that craving for whiteness that makes him disregard the past? Does he have inner uncertainties and contradictions which explain his attitude? These questions explain Walcott’s psychic wounds which get redemption through his poetic uproar. There are moments of triumph over the struggle achieved on the brink of despair, through such rejections in his poems. He is simply identifying with a loved place, Africa.

*The Castaway* can be described as treating Walcott’s simple identification with a loved place. He goes on to modify and contradict this imagined place with a complicated paradisal image of Caribbean climatic and landscape problems. He uses metaphors full of bleak and unromantic episodes of self and society. Just as Ngugi Wa Thiong’o in his novel *Petals Of Blood* uses the power of metaphor, Walcott’s Negroes’ imagery comes early in ‘The Swamp’. He also uses the same metaphor ‘petals of Blood’, but here, it vividly illustrate the fear and uncertainty of the ‘Negroes’ and ‘its black mood’. The haunted ‘travellers of its one road’ describe the reason why this ‘petal’ is outstandingly unique. It is deep, ‘deeper than sleep/like death’. The poet here is exploiting the Black’s liberating idea which is his imagination of Africa as homeland. This is creatively done in retrospect to the history of the West Indies. It is an imagination that comes ‘with change of language, climate, customs, light, with ... own prepossession day by day’. This is captured in ‘The Flock’ where Walcott is recreating the destroyed and degraded ancestral lands:

The style, tension of motion and the dark, inflexible direction of the world as it revolves upon its centuries
with change of Language, climate, custom, light, with our own prepossession day by day year after year with images of flight, survive our condemnation and the sun’s exultant larks.

(p.14-15)

Finally, Walcott in *The Castaway* has vividly imagined Africa as homeland. There is a longing by the Castaways’ to flee from the Island that has made them suffer to an imagined Africa homeland where there is peace and comfort. There is an aspiration to be identified with a loved place, Africa. This is the imagined African homeland which becomes ‘the paradisal vision’ due to inhospitable and problematic aspects of Caribbean climate and topography. *The Castaway*, therefore, depicts Walcott’s love for the Island which is his quest and concern to liberate ‘the black, the despairing’ and ‘the poor’ (p.33). This text also reflects Walcott’s deep sense of West Indian history. He has finally envisioned a social-spiritual rebirth for the Caribbean man and society. In ‘The Castaway’, we can hear a rebuilding; ‘if I listen I can hear the polyp build’, ‘cracking a sea-louse’, and his ‘begins nothing. Limbo of cracker convicts, Negroes’ in ‘The Swamp’. So, to Walcott, ‘The Second Adam since the fall’ has been recreated and a new world redefined as shown in ‘Crusoe’s Islands’. The West Indian is seen, like a shipwrecked and thus, the need to run to Africa with hope rejuvenated. However, this is the imagined African homeland.
CHAPTER FOUR

A COMPERATIVE STUDY OF THE TWO POETS IMAGINATION.

This chapter will give a comparative study of the two poets’ imagination of Africa as Homeland. To begin with it is necessary that we mention that in Brathwaite’s poetry, there is a communal voice speaking unlike in Walcott’s poetry where individual or private voices dominate. Brathwaite speaks with a voice of the Black Man’s consciousness. This explain why, as we have seen in the previous chapters, his trilogy is archetypal. This is clearly depicted in the poem ‘Tom’ where he struggles to influence cruel history of whites’ domination by advising his ‘children’ to think of the new world he has created through his imagination of Africa as homeland:

Let my children
rise
in the path
of the path
of the morning
up and go ...
and I
timid Tom
father
founder
flounderer...
so I who have created...
...So I who have created
hoping my children’s eyes
will learn

(p. 14 -16)
Brathwaite has an appeal to the children of the Blacks in the Diaspora to try and see the whole historical picture of why their fathers, ‘Tom’, submitted to the Whites. He, unlike Walcott, laments to see Tom’s children fleeing to cities – where they will be influenced by the White man’s vices. He wants the survival of the Blacks’ cultural consciousness to remain uncontaminated.

Walcott’s poetry on the other hand is seen to be more Western oriented. His poems are filled with images of admiration of the Whites’ achievement, which to him is like a ‘rage for whiteness that does drive niggers mad’ (p. 228). He has a dream of redeeming the Blacks from the Black colonial psychosis. However, this does not come out clearly in his poetry as it does in his play. Makak, his main character in *Dream on Monkey Mountain and Other Plays*, is struggling with psychological sense of self in an attempt to redeem the Blacks from the devastating colonial psychosis. As Edward Said (1993) argued in his critical survey of culture and imperialism, the inferiority complex which leads to projection has to be handled. Walcott’s Afrocentricism is seen through Makak’s purgatorial dream that makes him overcome the temptation to revenge. Makak is searching for psychic wholeness to redeem himself from the whites’ colonial dominance unlike Braithwaite’s communal voice to all the Blacks in the Diaspora.

Whereas Walcott’s imagination resonates between Caribbean and the Western worlds, Brathwaite’s imagination is between Caribbean and Africa. This can be seen by the numerous images in Walcott’s poetry between South (Caribbean) and North (Western) countries. Such images are captured in ‘The Castaway’:
If I listen I can hear the polyp build,
The silence thwanged by two waves of the sea.
Cracking a sea – house, I make thunder split...
That green wine bottle's gospel choked with sands,
Labeled, a wrecked ship,
Clenched sea wood nailed and white as a man's hand.

(p. 9-10)

Walcott, here, struggles with an ever ending guest for home and the summer glance
preoccupies him in the Caribbean's beauty and warmth. However, his mind quickly shifts
to the North where the more developed nations are as captured in 'A village life':

All that winter I haunted
your house on Hudson street, a tiring friend,
...Your image rattled on the subway glass
is my own death – mask in an overcoat;
under New York, the subterranean freight

(p. 16 – 17).

It is worthy noting that Walcott has written a book, *Midsummer* (1984) while
living in New England which explains the power behind his imagination shifts. It is no
wonder then that unlike Brathwaite, Walcott is said to possess English Language more
deply than most of the English men. He has even given individual poems names with
Western affiliations such as 'A map of Europe', 'Nights in the Gardens of Port of Spain'
and 'lines in New England'. Although part of Spain and part of New England are places
in West Indies, their mention show us how 'possessed' Walcott is with the Western
ideologies. It is no wonder then that Brodsky, while referring to Walcott, said: 'the great
poet of the English language is a black man' (p. 39).

On the other hand, Braithwaite is possessed with recreation of Africa genius and
values. His individual poems have names of African cities and personalities. These
include: ‘Ogun’, ‘Legba’, ‘Negus’, ‘Veve’ and ‘Ancestors’. This helps in keeping Brathwaite focused between his historical transition from Africa to Caribbean and the imagination shifts to the created African homeland. All these show the poet’s efforts to rehabilitate the social and spiritual life of the black man. His poem entitled ‘Naming’ explains the importance of a ‘word’ because it is only when a tree is named that it ‘gives’ its ‘fruit’ and ‘issues its juices’. There is an attempt to take the Blacks in the Diaspora to the traditional ritual on the importance of naming to Africa, which gives the Caribbean new hope of a new beginning:

The tree must be named
This gives it fruit
issue its juices.
The moon must be named.
This renders love
madness
There is a gladness
in the leaves
when the rain stops
...
Lifting from Africa
It is the desert’s gift

(p.218)

Just like Walcott acknowledges the uniqueness of ‘a virginal’ land, Braithwaite gives life to this act of naming. This revives the zeal for newness of things recreated just like the ancient Adam who was given the power to name things. Brathwaite admonishes the Caribbean to liberate himself using ‘a word’ which later would become a god and walk among them in order to help them. In ‘Veve’, he says that ‘the word becomes again a god and walks among us’ (p. 266).
There is however, a great coincidence in the two poets’ zealous attempt to liberate the Black historical concepts. The first two poems of each poet under study depict how these poets craft the complex imagination of the Black man’s consciousness or struggle. Braithwaite, in the first two poems of \textit{Rights of passage} depicts in an extremely evocative way, how the Black man moved across deserts to the Western coast where he was ferried, chained as a slave by the Whites towards the ‘new worlds’:

\begin{quote}
How long have we
traveled down
valleys down
slopes, silica
...
to the star by which this ship floats
to new words, new waters, new
harbours, the pride of our ancestors mixed
with the wind and the water
the flesh and the flies, the whips...
fear of pain in this chained and welcoming port.
\end{quote}

\textbf{(p.10-11)}

Walcott’s first two poems also depict this suffering and histo-trascontinental journey of the Black man to slavery. The poets coincide in cyclic process of the Blacks in the Diaspora. These provoke the poets, in different ways, to regenerate through the recreation of an imagined Africa homeland where ‘African genius and African values’ are ‘created, recreated, reconstructed and derived…’ (p. 188). This is Afrocentricity as Gilroy (1995) argued. The theoretical approach here counteracts the psychic wounds and sufferings brought by the Eurocentric practices of the Whites to the Blacks. Here, Walcott, just like Braithwaite, is creatively recreating a ‘utopian’ Africa, which is a kind of heaven because there will be fullness of peace and joy to all the castaways:
In ‘The Swamp’ the Blacks go back ‘to darkness’ to find their roots. The quest for ‘home’ drives them to ‘go back’ regardless of the risk ahead. They want to get back to where they were looted from: Africa:

... too close of breath,
Backward to darkness, go black
with widening amnesia, take the edge
of nothing to them slowly, merge
limb, tongue and sinew into a knot like chaos, like the road
Ahead.

Indeed, in terms of imagination of a new dawn, a new hope and a beginning, the two poets agree. The social and spiritual regeneration of the West Indians is possible in spite of their agonizing historical experiences.

Walcott, just like Brathwaite, has used music in his imagination. Through Calypso, as a language, he yearns for an identity of self. His personal past and history produces some psychological trauma in search for a satisfying identity. Braithwaite has used Rastafarianism to show the cry of the Blacks due to alienation and oppression and thus, a need for liberation. Through it, he has echoed his beliefs that the black people in the Diaspora will one day return to the homeland – Africa. The suffering, discrimination, oppression, injustices and other historical and social ills are strongly condemned in Rastafarianism. They are the subject and the theme in the songs and music. In ‘Tizzic’,

(p. 10)

(p. 12)
for example, he echoes the painful feelings of the Blacks due to the discriminative aspects of the Whites who feel superior over the other races. He writes:

... like it ringin' a bell to tell
what we half-acre mean:
what it mean to a man to squeeze dirt
...
for he was a slave
To drums, to flutes, brave
...
the limbo, calypso – season camp,
these he loved best of all; the road – march tramp

(p.250-262)

There is a lot of violation of the Blacks in the Diaspora and the poet seems to tell the Blacks in the Diaspora to know that a new era and new Africa has come. There is need to stop the killings, violence, corruption, among other social ills they are subjecting each other to. Other poems such as in ‘Beginning’ and ‘Work Song and Blues’ depict this call.

Both Brathwaite and Walcott share same imagination and dreams from their boyhood. Their religious reconstructions in their poems depict the urge to recreate a new ‘mother land’ free from oppression and materialistic exploitation. Walcott’s imaginative ability showed early while at St. Lucia and St. Mary’s college where he studied and grew up. Brathwaite’s imaginative ability also showed up early like the archetypal innocent child found in Blake’s poetry; ‘Song of Innocence’. Having such common aspirations, the social conflicts they went through during their childhood provoke the imagination of a land fairer than where they grew up; in a new Africa. It becomes like a dream to them where the antagonists must overcome all temptations and become a light for their people (Black race). It is a peaceful revolution through poetry calling all the Blacks in the
Diaspora to get out of their own despair and join in the building. In ‘Anvil’, Brathwaite calls for repair of the broken walls:

Under the burnt out green
...
Fence, low wall of careful stones marking the square yard...
So unlived in: yard, fence and cabin.

(p.248)

In ‘Veranda’, Walcott is ready to return and shake hands with his grandfather’s ancestors. He is ready to ‘stretch a darkening hand to greet those friends’ who shared the inheritance of his ‘father’. The sarcastic statements here cannot go unnoticed, who are those who shared ‘last inheritance of earth’, ‘our Shrine and pardoner’, meaning god? Definitely, they are the Whites, the oppressors and colonizers:

... Whatever love you suffered makes amends within them, father.
I climb the stair
And stretch a darkening hand to greet those friends who share with you the last inheritance of earth, our shrine and pardoner, grey, ghostly loungers at veranda ends.

(p.39)

The bitterness of the Blacks towards mistreatment by the Whites is highlighted while white egocentricity is criticized in the above poem. It is worth noting that there was communal ownership of material wealth before the Whites ‘infected’ the Blacks with individualism and capitalism. Walcott desires the ‘father’s’ old times and Brathwaite share the same sentiments towards the egocentric nature adapted from the Whites. He says this in ‘Ancestors’:
Now he is dead. The meat shop burned, his property divided. A doctor bought the horse. His mid Alsatians killed it. The wooden trap was chipped and chopped by friends and neighbours and used to stop

... Only his hat is left. I 'borrowed' it.

... All that I can remember of his wife,

... All that I have of her is voices:

(p.239-240)

Who are these 'friend, and neighbours' who seem to have taken all that the 'Ancestors' had? They are the Whites, the colonizers whose destructive nature is emphasized in undertones in the above poem. This happening, together with the sinister motives of the Whites, bring the two poets to an 'agreement' through their imaginative guest to liberate the Blacks' psychosis. This however, can only be done figuratively through mental reaction and redefining. This imagination becomes a rehabilitation of the social, spiritual and economic life of the Black man as entirely worthwhile. There is, therefore, a new Africa; imaginary homeland created by both Brathwaite and Walcott in their individual poems.
Our focus in this chapter is to give a conclusive assessment of whether the objectives of the study have been achieved and make recommendations for further study. As has already been said, the question as to what are the imagined common factors of African values and genius in poems by the two poets and how they have been represented is largely answered by what Brown himself said in *West Indian Poetry* (1978, p.139). He argued that the two poets are similar in their concern for social and ethnic consciousness of West Indian relatives where they are from.

This however, does not mean that their contribution towards an understanding of West Indian realities is the same. Walcott, due to his Western inclinations and his desire to become like the Whites, seems to be praising the White’s economic achievement and development at the expense of African values. He is intrigued by Western ideologies and images such as: ‘gilded rim beer can’s, ‘Canaletto Lake’, ‘The lights’, and is forced to pray ‘that his Kingdom come’ to ‘the far city’ as he adores the glance in ‘A Map of Europe’ (p.42). He continues to admire the ‘sea’s phosphorescence’, ‘Whorehouse: crossing Park Street’, ‘braziers of melon’ and blinding ‘headlamps’ in ‘Nights in Gardens of Port of Spain’ (p.43). He goes on to represent the mesmerizing things he saw in ‘Lines
in New England’ (p.48) such as: ‘Sulphurous sheets, the white, treacherous hands’
gripping of a statue and a ‘civilization’ that was like a dream to him.

Walcott’s imagination of Africa is tainted by his racial prejudice. A yearning for
whiteness makes him despise African values and genius. In his poems ‘The Prince’ and
‘Goats and monkey’, images such as ‘Virgin and Ape’, ‘maid and malevolent moor’,
‘owl’s torches gutter’ and ‘dragonish scales’ show his disgust to the Blacks. He imagines
the Blacks capable of all evil things one can think of. This constantly contradicts with
Brathwaite who seems to adore various factors of African values and genius. He presents
Africa as an adorable land with plenteous beautiful sights and sceneries. This is depicted
in the glorious images he uses to describe African values. He also uses some African
personalities and cities by ascribing them, names of individual poems. All these show
that Brathwaite is trying to resuscitate the Black Diaspora and get them out of
Westernization into a new breed of Black people. However, Walcott seems to see the
light through his character Corporal towards the end of his play, *Dream on Monkey
Mountain*. Corporal, one of his characters, acknowledges his race and colour and accept
his ancestral relations showing that one cannot run away from his origin. In this play,
Walcott seems to agree with Brathwaite in accepting their common root. Corporal’s
abusive statements to the blacks resemble Walcott’s harshness and western inclination.
However, he comes round just in time and embraces his identity. He stops the abuses
such as; ‘Nigger, Cannibals, Savages! Stop turning this place into a stinking zoo’. (p.
323- 324), and begins seeing Tigre and other blacks as normal human beings.
We have already seen how these two poets imagined Africa as homeland. This imagination became a recreation and redefining of the Black in the Diaspora in general and the Caribbean man in particular. Through mention of particular personalities and cities in Africa, the poets have shown to what heights they do adore African values and genius. The presentation of these values and genius has been vivid through personalization of some poems’ titles to make vivid and real the images described. There have been deliberate efforts by the poets to make real their imagination of Africa as homeland.

The poets’ attempt to redeem the Black man in the Diaspora and the Caribbean man in particular has been achieved through their negritudist approach towards realization of a new Caribbean man whose roots are in Africa.

Through these two poets’ imaginative shifts, there have been great achievements in the attempt to disprove the myth of savagery associated with African culture. Through the guidance of psychoanalysis and post-colonial theatrical strategies, the psychological status of the ‘Arrivants’ and the ‘Castaways’ have been undividedly ventured into. This is due to the colonial mind which is deeply implanted in the Caribbean man. We have seen a deliberate recreation though Afrocentricism to redefine the already dehumanized Caribbean man. Through this reconstruction, a new Black man is born through the word in the poems just like the ‘Naming’ suggested. We also feel that through the imagination of Africa as homeland by these two poets, there has been enormous glorification and
edification of the Black person in the Diaspora. This has resulted in romanticization of this African homeland. However, I would suggest some further research on these two poets’ views on Africa as homeland. I would also suggest the use of any other theoretical approach as I believe that such, would shed more light about the imaginative shifts of these two great Caribbean poets in their poetry.

Nevertheless, it would be imperative for us to acknowledge the argument of Rushdie (1992) in *Imaginary Homeland* about looking back to the past:

> ... But the photograph tells me to invert this idea; it reminds me that it’s my present that is foreign, and that the past is home, alberla lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time... But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge - which gives rise to profound uncertainties - that our physical alienation ... will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands...of the mind.

(p. 9 -10)

The above analysis is a result of the reality of physical discontinuity of the poets whose work we have been discussing. Applying Brenton’s question to the specific case of Indian writers in England but writing about India, Rushdie asked: ‘Can they do no more than describe, from a distance, the world that they have left. Or does the distance open any other doors?’ (p.13). In my view, the distance opens another door, that is the door of ‘imagination’. It is this ‘door’ that we have used and seen how effective it allowed the two poets to imagine Africa as homeland. Through this imagination, we have been able to understand how poetry as a form of art can be used not only to recreate a people but also to redefine them.
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