

**Listening to Silence, Reading the Unwritten: Articulating the
Voice of the Racial Other in White Male Discourse**

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ABSTRACT**Listening to Silence, Reading the Unwritten: Articulations of the Voice of the Racial Other in White Male Discourse****LAURA L. MOONEY**

This thesis explores literary representations in white male discourse of the voices of the racial Other. Tracing a chronological development from colonial to postcolonial texts, it closely analyzes the wider political and ethical implications of these representations in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Albert Camus' *L'Étranger* and 'L'Hôte', J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* and *Disgrace*, J.M.G. Le Clézio's *Onitsha* and Cormac McCarthy's *No Country for Old Men*. At the core of my research is the question how can white male writers resist the dominance of Eurocentric consciousness and be a witness to the racial Other and articulate his/her voice without recourse to prejudice and stereotyping.

The representation of the Other transitions from the anonymity of slavery in colonial texts to identified and identifiable individuals in postcolonial writings. Through these novels the impact of national Independence, freedom from racial oppression and immigration – all legal expressions of freely articulated voice – can be observed on the traditional colonial power relationship. As a consequence, dominated, silenced voices gradually develop into silent refusals of acquiescence that withhold information. The impact of such resistance is frequently paralleled by a crisis of male identity and the declining stature of the white male protagonists who suffer imprisonment, death, sickness, confusion or defeat, as gestures symbolic of the decline of white patriarchal systems and challenges to accepted concepts of identity, humanity, justice, good and evil. In a globalized world the category of the Other encourages us to think beyond the known and recognize the validity of ideologies that challenge the authority of our own.

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DEDICATED TO

My parents Renee and Lionel Byron who would be so proud of me. And to my granddaughter Charlotte Leilani Grace Chapman so that she will know that anything is possible.

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INTRODUCTION

‘You tell what happened to you, I tell what happened to me,’
she repeats. (*Disgrace*, 99)

J.M. Coetzee’s short, succinctly written novel *Disgrace* was published in 1999 during the tense years that followed the abolition of the last laws supporting apartheid in South Africa in 1991. The climax of this disturbing novel is the brutal attack on David Lurie and his daughter Lucy in their remote farmhouse. She is gang-raped, David is beaten and his hair set alight while the dogs are shot and the house ransacked by three black native South Africans. At a time when social and political structures were struggling to deal with racial tensions, the publication of the novel was regarded as untimely and counterproductive. The rape seemed to perpetuate negative white mythologies of black sexual aggression and degeneracy at a time when South Africa was attempting to ease the deeply divided society through a delicate transitional phase towards a post-apartheid utopia, while the vicious attack on Lucy’s father David seemed to symbolize hatred for white colonial patriarchy and to deliver the black South Africans’ notice of a demand for authority as Africa’s new rightful heirs.

Lucy’s simply articulated but beautifully crafted sentence quoted above conveys a multiplicity of intentions. First, it reveals that she has an independent voice, and no-one can speak on her behalf; consequently, it implies that her perception and interpretation of events and the way she chooses to disclose her evidence are equal in substance to those of her father. Secondly, her statement deftly announces the decline of absolute patriarchal authority since she refuses to allow David to detail his report of events. During the days immediately following her violation, when Lucy should, according to her father, be disclosing details of the rape to the police in order to track down and prosecute the

perpetrators, she chooses to disregard her father's wishes and refuses to listen to his arguments. She recognizes that David's ordering would be different from her own. His authoritarian response is a repeat of past histories that contrasts with her own realization that the rapists represent a new order and that she must assert her own subjectivity in this changing landscape of power. Lucy's seemingly incomprehensible decisions stun her father, leaving him confused and anxious. He cannot understand her obstinacy and fails to comprehend that he cannot speak for her. David perceives only one truth, one version of the events, the version he wishes to recount, but Lucy resists this argument and claims that there is no singular 'reading' of the incident as each victim has a particular experience to relate.

Coetzee's narrative carefully structures this schism between the two characters; the language of Lucy's declaration mirrors this rupture in the father/daughter relationship by the forceful use of the caesura which dramatically emphasizes the two contrasting pronouns "you [...] me." The pause is reflective, yet decisive, reinforcing the idea of difference, while the cadence of the rhythmic structural repetition "you tell [...] I tell" underscores this new equality. This delicately weighted but evenly balanced pronouncement is a statement of her claim for autonomy that Lucy's father eventually recognizes as an indication of change in roles within their relationship. But Lucy has broken free from patriarchal hierarchies only to create a new one: "She has spoken to him as if to a child - a child or an old man." (D. 104)

Lucy's assertion is an important statement articulated at a significant time in South Africa's history. Published after the declaration of democracy in 1996, the novel seems to be an exploration of the changing dialectic between the country's racially divided communities. Although Lucy's demand for independence from her father is emblematic of the claims of South African marginalized groups, she also represents the complexity of the evolving social and racial relations in the country. Her voice articulates the politics of

modernity that uphold concepts of both democracy and equality for all marginalized groups at the expense of patriarchal authority. In fact, Coetzee subtly transitions the voice of this new independence to Petrus, the Xhosa farmhand, who offers Lucy protection from further attack at the hands of other wandering South African natives seeking to claim ownership of the land by various violent means of appropriation. This gesture of assistance marks the transition of undisputed white supremacy to native accountability. The purchase of land from Lucy and his offer of marriage signify his new authority as Petrus assumes ownership of place and declares his freedom. Coetzee thus inscribes a challenging sub-text to his sparse self-reflexive narrative, one that questions the traditional white autonomy that has dominated and ruled South Africa and that advocates the rights of the racially marginalized. He is in fact making a political statement advocating human rights, personal responsibility and the right to a “voice”.

This thesis examines the implications of Coetzee’s assertions and new perspectives and argues that Western white male writers who assume responsibility for articulating the voices of the racially marginalized after witnessing social and political turmoil not only advocate the rights of an independent voice for subordinated peoples but also examine the impact of this new autonomy on the dialectic that underwrites the traditional power relationship between the races. While there is a growing body of criticism that discusses the increasing voices of indigenous writers, publishing in either their native languages or in English, there is a gap in the criticism that examines the literary representation of the emerging voices of the racial Other in patriarchal discourse. This thesis will explore the changing power relation between oppressors and oppressed in both colonial and postcolonial novels in order to trace the gradual recognition of the empowerment of the racial Other and its impact on the traditionally authoritarian Western narratives and how these new voices deconstruct these discursive strategies. Although the function of the Other has attracted less focus from literary critics in recent years, my argument maintains

that in an increasingly globalized world the construct of the Other remains an important literary strategy to express the complexities of literary, political or social differences and their intrinsic power relationships.

If colonialism establishes Eurocentrism with its inherent white mythologies of power, postcolonialism explores the dismantling of European logocentrism and registers as “the notion for transition or a threshold” (Parry 1997: 21), so that the process becomes a reciprocal exchange in ideas and recognition, changing from dialectic to dialogue. Defining postcolonialism can be problematic as there are many conflicting significations that Benita Parry enumerates as “a historical transition, an achieved epoch, a cultural location, a theoretical stance.” (2006: 66) Bill Ashcroft et al. argue that the fundamental processes of postcolonialism are struggle and change, but suggest a more appropriate term would be postcolonization to define the “process in which colonized societies participate over a long period, through different phases and modes of engagement with the colonizing power, *during* and *after* the actual period of direct colonial rule.” (2001: 195) In this thesis, the term ‘postcolonial’ is taken to indicate both the status of communities after independence from colonization and a critical approach to the ideological assumptions that establish the relationship between the center and the peripheries in a binary structure of opposition. In order to address these issues, white male writers representing both the colonial and the postcolonial have been selected for study. For the purposes of this thesis colonial novels by Daniel Defoe, Joseph Conrad, Albert Camus and J.M. Coetzee have been chosen; writing by J.M.G. Le Clézio explores Nigerian society on the verge of Independence whilst narratives by J.M. Coetzee and Cormac McCarthy have been selected to represent the postcolonial situation.

Why is it important to consider how white male writers attempt to articulate the voices of the racially marginalized in their narratives? There are two significant reasons for this study. First, the traditional structures of colonialism have been challenged by dramatic

social and political changes that have affected the world stage, such as the independence of former colonies, increasing globalization, and the transculturation caused by migration and diasporas. These increased mobilities have signified that social relations can no longer be 'fixed' but instead should "emerge through and within these mobile networks." (Hom 2009: 425) Dissolving political and social borders and the juxtaposition of conflicting religions, and gender role changes stimulated by the force of feminism, have all impacted on the role and influence of Western patriarchal systems and destabilized Western assumptions of supremacy articulated by means of an Orientalist representation of the Other as less civilized, backward and inferior. Edward Said's definition of Orientalism refers more to European–Atlantic domination over the Other rather than represent a discourse about the Orient and the Other (1979: 6) and consequently has "less to do with the Orient than it does with "our" world." (12) Linda Alcoff argues that literary representation "is a product of interpretation" (1991: 9) which effectively situates the West as subject in colonial writings, and she questions how white discourse can avoid a form of mastery that "reinforces the oppression of the group spoken for" (7), a point of discussion that is addressed by Coetzee and Le Clézio in their narratives.

The marginalized groups emerging as a result of these global changes demand recognition of difference and for voice, raising questions whether the West can go beyond these "constraints [...] and limitations of thought" (Said 1979: 42) and articulate voices for the marginalized. However, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues against this possibility since "in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak". (1998: 83) In response Benita Parry argues that "Spivak restricts the space in which the colonized can be written back into history." (2004: 40) These arguments center on the fundamental problem facing white writers and their sense of responsibility towards articulating a voice for the racial Other in their narratives and how their representations affect the traditional power relationship between these groups. The issue of who speaks for

whom thus becomes an issue of power. Ashcroft argues that in today's globalized world there is now "an ethical responsibility on us to be open to difference." (2010: 77) By studying novels by both colonial and postcolonial writers this thesis will examine the developments of the depiction of the marginalized in white writing and discuss how, if at all, these writers are able to give space for the subaltern and develop a more positive doctrine.

The second reason for examining the emergence of the marginalized focuses on the consequent destabilization of the white male psyche, his evolving role and declining influence as familiar structures, such as those representing law and order, education, and established ethical values defining justice and humanity, are challenged and even reconceptualized. The selected authors examine these issues in terms of the individual, depicting white male protagonists struggling to come to terms with the epistemic changes that have affected their lives and the worlds in which they are involved. Diana Brydon argues that globalization is not leading to greater homogenization (2010: 106) but is creating epistemic and cultural conflicts that subvert Western authority. These demands lead to increased pressures on once routinely acknowledged definitions of many key terms of political thinking, such as autonomy and democracy (109). Homi Bhabha questions how such anxieties affect the metanarratives fundamental to our culture and asks if we "need to rethink the terms in which we conceive of community, citizenship, nationality, and the ethics of social affiliation." (2004: 250) The blurring of traditional binary systems that polarized the oppressor and the oppressed has led to a matrix of "hybrid nationalities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges." (Hardt and Negri 2001: xii) Bhabha defines hybridity as "a *problematic* of colonial representation [...] that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority." (1994: 159) The articulation of these 'denied' knowledges in the selected texts is a crucial factor in the literary representation of the

empowerment of the marginalized in white discourse and the deconstruction of the West as subject. The impact on these protagonists is dramatic as each man is forced to redefine his values and sense of identity. How does the white male define himself if the Other refuses and the binaries of colonialism are invalidated? Who is the new Other, and, indeed, is this still an appropriate question to consider? What is the role of the writer and is it his responsibility to explore these issues and question the ethical and linguistic structures that have traditionally defined Western writing?

1. White Writing

In order to examine these gradually but insistently evolving transitions of power two novels, *Robinson Crusoe* (1718) by Daniel Defoe and *Heart of Darkness* (1899) by Joseph Conrad, have been chosen to illustrate paradigms of the ‘fixed’ relationships that typify colonial discourse. Although nearly two hundred years separate the dates of publication of these two works, they both share the characteristics of novels written from the metropolitan center at the height of British Imperialist expansion. Edward Said defines Imperialism as

the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; ‘colonialism’, which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory. (1994: 8)

Andrea White argues that “Europeans generally based their claims to rule ‘primitive’ people on the basis of their own superiority, both technical and moral.” (1996: 185) Bhabha defines this process in the following terms: “The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and government.” (1994: 94) In their novels Defoe and Conrad both give literary representation to the undoubted white supremacy by ‘fixing’ native degeneracy through the taboo of cannibalism. Anthropological research seemed to suggest to late nineteenth-century

colonialists that white supremacy was an undisputed consequence of evolutionary theories. Pierre Barrière's discovery of "black blood" in Guyana in 1741 signaled the rise of race based on scientific data and the concept of "race" was born when naturalists asserted that the degeneration of non-Europeans left a mark on heredity. It was, therefore, non-reversible. (Curran 2011) The natives' cannibalism is used to validate European supremacy and privilege; such assumptions of the Other result in stereotyping and prejudice which are inscribed into colonial discourse itself, thus constructing a cultural and political identity for the oppressor. Although colonial discourse assumes the validity of this dialectic, this does not mean that the writers necessarily conform to this argument. For example, in Conrad's novel allusions to imperialist weakness, idiosyncrasy and corruption subvert the apparent superiority of Western civilization in Marlow's story; such references also imply a deliberate critique of the narrative construct itself, by creating a place for disruption in the univocal narrative that Imperialism writes.

Two writers from a French background, Albert Camus and J.M.G. Le Clézio, both acknowledge the problems of displacement. Since Camus writes from the margins in Algiers he was cognizant of the problematics of a complex national identity. Born into the lowest socio-economic group of French-Algerian citizens, his family were cut off not only from the privileged French but also from the poor Arab families among whom they lived, by culture, language and religion. (Carroll 2007: 2) Camus explains the difficulties of relating to an estranged nationality and the problems of identity, living the opposition between "East" and "West" in his daily life. The titles of both his books chosen for study, *L'Étranger* (1942) and the short story 'L'Hôte' (1957) from the collection *L'Exile et le Royaume*, have deliberately ambiguous titles which reflect the paradoxical position in which Camus found himself. Who is the Other in this culturally mixed French colony? The Arab characters are unnamed and silent on the fringes of society and of his writings, yet they can claim legal birthright. The *colon* protagonists are the real outsiders, yet

socially and politically they are the more acceptable community and are more central to his narratives. Camus writes from a position of estrangement, a position that relates to the predicament of many immigrants, even those long settled, as he reaches out to their sense of isolation and displacement, echoing the feeling of not belonging. He compares this sense of cultural and social alienation to those without history, without a past: “tous les hommes nés dans ce pays qui, un par un, essayaient d’apprendre à vivre sans racines et sans foi” (2010: 214). For those Frenchmen living abroad or born in the colonies, France had become a name, a title, a sign with no signified: “La France était une absente dont on se réclamait et qui vous réclamait parfois.” (226) Camus studies these tortuous colonial relationships with their tangled roots trying to determine the process of identity in a society in which the Other is a blurred and ambivalent construct. The novels are set in the Algeria of pre-Independence status and consequently the Algerians are frequently passive participants in the narratives, silent, nameless and sometimes, as in *La Peste* (1947), completely absent from the text. However, Camus is concerned with the interaction between the diverse national groups that people different colonies, seeking to propose a definition of the outsider, the identity of those situated at the margins of society. Through frameworks of law and order, justice and social conformity the novelist explores the problematic of defining self and the Other in an alien environment.

Although postcolonialism is frequently related to the struggle of marginalized groups against the political and administrative systems of a foreign power (Young 2003: 113), such as the Algerian War of Independence, it also includes the postcolonial challenge to resistance by the marginalized groups to authoritarian and inegalitarian institutions such as apartheid in South Africa and racial segregation in the United States. J.M. Coetzee is in a unique position to examine the transition from oppression to public confirmation of marginalized voices as he lived in South Africa both before and after the repeal of apartheid. He feels a responsibility towards the depiction of the marginalized in their

narratives by transcending the burdens of historical reality through the powers of the imagination, thus avoiding what Coetzee describes as a “nameless liberation” (1992: 98). These structures are symbols of the patriarchal systems that represented white myths of privilege and power, therefore confrontation with their authority expresses a critique of the colonial relationship. In this context the work of J.M. Coetzee is particularly significant as his novel *Foe* was published in 1986, before the end of apartheid, and is thus considered colonial, whereas *Disgrace* (1999) was published after its repeal and is discussed with the postcolonial novels. Coetzee is intensely aware of the dichotomy of the South African experience since “the order of his experience as a white [differs] completely from the order of the black experience” (2001: 219). He has an acute sense of philosophical isolation in the new South Africa as he attempts to articulate a voice for the oppressed native whose oppression is symbolized by the grotesquely muted Friday in *Foe*, a reinterpretation of Defoe’s canonical novel that writes back to colonial discourse. These native figures become symbols of resistance to the imperial tradition.

J.M.G. Le Clézio’s novel *Onitsha* (1992) juxtaposes stories of those ethnic groups whose cultural identity has been dislocated by migration and diaspora. Le Clézio’s focus on the colonized Other signifies the social and political repercussions of decolonization. His work represents a reflection of his own multi-cultural background; for example *Onitsha* is set in the Nigerian delta whilst *Désert* (1980) is located partially in the desert of North Africa and partially in Marseille, a city of immigrants that successfully absorbs many disparate groups, thus functioning as a prototype, as a “laboratory for an increasingly heterogeneous Europe.” (Purvis 2007: 86) The marginalized are occasionally foregrounded in Le Clézio’s work and questions how they can inscribe their personal history when their forefathers “ne laissent pas de traces de leur passage, comme s’ils n’étaient que des ombres, des fantômes.” (1980: 321) or have their heritage limited to mysterious facial scarification as in *Onitsha*. Le Clézio also makes a case for isolation and alienation from

traditions, thus addressing many of the concerns that were prevalent in communities preparing for Independence or struggling with postcolonial decentering. He claims a hybrid status as a “citoyen français-mauricien appartenant à la culture occidentale” (Yillah 2008); his wide-ranging travels have made him almost nomadic. In his novels he searches for place and ownership as his peoples wander through the desert on historic grueling marches of self-determination, creating an aura of instability. This destabilization reflects postcolonial fragmentation and greater flexibility in the uncertain global environment.

Cormac McCarthy’s novel *No Country for Old Men* (2005) contrasts differing concepts of justice. This novel does not focus on the social or political upheavals caused by epistemic conflicts but examine the impact of such disruptions in terms of identity and ideological divergence, epitomized by the transgressions across literal and metaphorical boundaries. Border conflicts, illegal immigration and drug trafficking threaten American concepts of law and order. Borders not only act as barriers of exclusion prohibiting illegal peoples and merchandise, but also operate as mechanics of inclusion, as a demarcation of territory and American authority. The U.S.–Mexico border has been established since 1854 but the dynamic of exclusion is constantly changing, notably since the watershed following the terrorist attack of 9/11; terrorism has rewritten the border mentality, creating an ironic conflict between contemporary immigration control and exclusion with the founding principles of a country established on the privileges of immigration and freedom. (Madsen 2011: 547) The frontier is a dominant trope in many of McCarthy’s novels, notably in *The Border Trilogy* in which the long border between the United States and Mexico functions as both a mark of the limits of civilization beyond which lives the dangerous and savage Other, and also as a place where men can challenge ideological frontiers associated with self-perception and awareness: “[t]he world is quite ruthless in selecting between the dream and the reality, even where we will not” (McCarthy 1993: 238), as Sheriff Tom Bell discovers to his cost in *No Country for Old Men* in which crossing the border becomes a

metaphor for the changing values that confront him in his daily attempt to stop the drug trafficking and other criminal movements across the desert spaces that edge the borders. The story relates a bloody “chase and catch”, transgressing the limitations of Bell’s concept of humanity as frequently as the narrative passes through the physical boundaries manned by guards.

Cormac McCarthy represents the postcolonial writer situated at the metropolitan center, the United States. But his vision also encompasses the same themes perceived by the other writers. Although McCarthy cannot claim the same hybridity of nationality as the other authors, he has an acute sense of the dislocation experienced by those estranged within cultures, and employs the American concept of “outlaw” to cross literal and metaphorical boundaries, thus making a statement about both lawlessness and alienation; many of his characters feel the sense of displacement and estrangement that the Grandmother in *All The Pretty Horses* describes as feeling like “an exile in my own country” (McCarthy 1993: 239) Similarly, in an ironic reversal of the roles of the Other and the selfsame, David Lurie, the white male in crisis in *Disgrace*, mimics the position of a subjugated and displaced Other who has lingered in the margins, dispossessed of place and history. He considers himself to be “obscure and growing obscurer.” (167)

2. Definitions of the Other

The ‘Other’ may be defined as the symbolic Other “in whose gaze the subject gains identity.” (Ashcroft et al 2005: 170) Emmanuel Levinas expands this perception by stating that “the encounter with the Other lies at the origin of the separateness of the Self [...] it characterizes human relations at their most basic level.” (Davis 2004: 48) Levinas argues that to produce the identification of the same in I “it is necessary to begin with the concrete relationship between an I and the world” (1969: 37) The Other must remain unknowable outside the self’s knowledge and experience, since “if the same would establish its identity

by simple *opposition to the other*, it would already be part of a totality encompassing the same and the other” (38), since opposition implies that the self and the Other are simply defined in relation to each other and therefore conceived within the same totality. Consequently, a “relation whose terms do not form a totality can hence be produced within the general economy of being only as proceeding from the I to the other, as a *face to face*.” (39) Levinas criticizes Western philosophy as repressing the Other, as a “reduction of the other to the same by interposition of a middle and neutral term that ensures the comprehension of being.” (43) The novelists selected for study challenge the traditional methods of suppression of the other as earmarked by Levinas by attempting to give them a voice, language, the means to produce a new relation in which “[w]e are the same and the other. The conjunction *and* here designates neither addition nor power of one term over the other”. (39)

The question of power is inherent within the concept of the other, keeping the Other as object within colonial discursive strategies. The Martinique activist Franz Fanon also explores this objectification within the context of powerful stereotyping:

I discovered in my blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tom-tom, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave-ships, and above all else, above all: “Sho’ good eatin’.” (1967: 112)

At the basis of all theories is the issue of the power relationship between the Self and Other. As long as the dialectic between Self and Other remains unchanged, the self’s perception of identity remains stable. The impact of epistemic challenges to traditional colonial binary structures of power destabilizes the inherent constructs that inscribe white authority in discourse. The stature of Crusoe as he determinedly cultivates the desert island and the parochial efficiency of Conrad’s station managers, who organize the collection of and then transportation of the ivory downriver, define their inherent superiority in opposition to the firmly established barbarity of the indigenous natives who surround them. This discursive representation produces forms of exclusion symbolized by the silent

marginalized figures of the Arabs in Camus's novels or by the deaf and dumb Oya in *Onitsha*, or by the physically muted natives like Friday in Coetzee's *Foe*.

The novels trace an increasing tension as the balance of colonial power is destabilized; the marginalized gradually assume their voice, both verbal and non-verbal, while the white male protagonists flounder in a sea of uncertainty, indecision and loss of confidence. Disoriented by change and the increasingly powerful voices demanding cultural, social, economic and political equality, these men lose a sense of ideological direction and become both literally and metaphorically "[s]hrouded in the carbon fog" (McCarthy 2007: 117), which, in McCarthy's dark novel *The Road*, symbolizes imperial loss and the decline in patriarchal authority and ideologies which underscored the master narratives of Western literature. The creation of a desolate landscape that functions to reflect the anguish of the postcolonial oppressor in a psychological crisis and the apparent absence of the stereotypical 'Other' is disorientating and confusing for both the protagonists and the reader. It requires a process of reevaluation and reordering of the ethical center.

3. Voices

The writers selected for this study focus on methods of giving voice to alterity not by rewriting roles and assumptions but by bringing an understanding of the Other to white narratives. This relies on not speaking on their behalf, as David tried to do in the passage cited at the beginning of this introduction, but by allowing the indigenous natives the chance to articulate voice, as Lucy insisted. The *New Oxford Dictionary* defines voice as "speech or song", and "the agency by which a particular point of view is expressed or represented [...] the right to express an opinion." It is thus the assertion of self as subject, an articulation that may be made in both verbal and non-verbal forms. Voice expresses identity and asserts individuality or a collective nationality. Communication is not merely the pronouncement of words or the formation of a series of gestures, but is an expression

of a cultural heritage, a life lived and experiences accumulated, which frame aspiration and intent. Lucy's statement of independent will is not merely an expression of desire or opinion but is also a confrontation with the hierarchies of power as she is challenging the patriarchal concept of a single absolute. Her voice thus opens up the narrative to multiple possibilities of voice, an important political statement in a novel written during racial tensions following the repeal of apartheid laws as the racially marginalized South African indigenous natives strive to define their identity.

The assumptions that are written into colonial discourse deprive the marginalized natives of speech since such discourse "conserves the West as Subject." (Spivak 1994: 66) For example, in the novels of Defoe and Conrad the indigenous natives are objectified by firmly depicting them within the master/slave dialectic. Robert J.C. Young points out these narrative strategies indicate "that this is how Orientalist discourse presents them according to its own binarist logic." (2004: 398) They are portrayed from the perspective of the colonizer, either as slave, as in Defoe's novel, or as figures blurred by stereotyping and prejudice in Conrad's work. In order to be given a voice, the marginalized Other must be acknowledged to have subjectivity, a perception that Coetzee discusses in his novel *Foe*. Friday resists the attempts of Mr. Foe and Susan Barton to inscribe his story in a novel, and finally finds his own voice: "Each syllable as it comes out, is caught and filled with water and diffused." (F. 157) His vocalization is not of words but of sounds, resisting the author's attempts to inscribe his thoughts within the narrative. Friday remains excluded, but on his own terms. At this point he steps out of the margins and represents the archetypal postcolonial figure of resistance, a figure who cannot be "read".

The novels transition from a discourse that strategizes the silencing and oppression of the Other to narratives written in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries that are fragmented and discursive and suggest a reordering and refocusing of knowledges and ideologies. Benita Parry argues that while the margins "can readily be shown to

appropriate and redeploy materials from the center, what emerges is that the center is unable to recognize the materials from the periphery as constituting knowledge.” (1997: 15) These texts indicate how some white writers are attempting to listen, as Lucy demanded, and acknowledge the histories, cultures and politics of the Other.

If the writers conclude that they must give autonomy to the subjugated peoples in order to have a voice within the narratives, then they need to re-evaluate Eurocentric philosophical assumptions, such as the definition of humanity itself. By juxtaposing differing concepts of justice, law and order, the white protagonists are compelled to question their basic ideas of humanity and reevaluate their self-representation and legitimizing strategies. This is a common theme within the novels as the authors examine the impact of subaltern resistance and rebellion on traditional social, political, economic and judicial institutions. Sheriff Tom Bell, the long-time upholder of law and order in the Texan border town depicted in *No Country for Old Men*, puzzles over the new type of crimes and extreme violence that are becoming more prevalent, and realizes that the familiar is disappearing quickly; he comprehends there is a new world order based on a new, incomprehensible value system that destabilizes his beliefs and forces him to reconsider, however reluctantly, the values that have determined his conduct. It is not an easy confrontation as Bell registers when he describes how he “tried to think about his life. Then he tried not to.” (N.C. 269) This speech denotes the crux of the white protagonists’ predicament in the novels; their way of thinking must change. The novels present a literary representation of the transition from unquestioned dominance of the Western white male as ethical center to an unstable and yet dynamic juxtaposition of ideas as the authors attempt to translate the newly developing relationships into a viable, organic process, world order and perspective. They are forced to acknowledge the materials from the periphery that Parry, cited above, identifies as unknowable and, consequently, a narrative beset with questions and doubts replaces the fixed order that underlies the archetypal colonial novel

Robinson Crusoe. The feeling that nothing is certain haunts their work; there is a perception of “[t]hings losing shape.” (N.C. 127) However, this thesis questions whether the writers are able to effectively create space for the articulation of these voices and to integrate these new knowledges, or whether they are unable to cross the threshold of change and merely reconfigure earlier forms of domination.

Such revisionism is a fundamental characteristic of postcolonialism whose politics seek “to turn difference from the basis of oppression into one of positive intercultural social diversity.” (Young 2003: 120) Young focuses on the dynamism of postcolonialism as its most significant feature. In contrast, Sam Durrant examines the nature of the relationships between the colonizer and the colonized, describing them as “structured by a tension between the oppressive memory of the past and the liberatory promise of the future.” (2004: 1) Fundamental to these definitions is the idea of a transformational politics; Durrant’s concept of a “liberatory promise” cited above not only captures the postcolonial idea of change that reflects the desires of the emerging subaltern but implies the empowerment of the emerging voices and their histories that destabilize the authority of Western culture. The transformations celebrated by native writers emerging from the peripheries of former colonies are the sources of the deep sense of anxiety troubling the white writers struggling to acknowledge these challenges to accepted Western philosophical assumptions. Destabilizing the authority on which the text is based contests the legitimacy of Western ordering and consequently “provoke[s] and challenge[s] the fundamentally static notion of *identity* that has been the core of cultural thought during the era of imperialism.” (Said 1994: xviii)

Coetzee, Le Clézio and McCarthy struggle to reconcile the traditional “cultural script” (Gates, 1998: xvii) of the native Other, which has been inscribed by historical precedent with the new personae emerging from the chrysalis of colonial subjugation. The rules of engagement with the other have changed and so they must reconfigure self and other since

the marginalized figure can no longer be depicted as “a shadowy presence flitting down the stage now and then” (Coetzee 1988: 5), as an impressionist shape haunting the colonial theater, reflecting colonial desire rather than asserting the subordinates’ needs. David gradually realizes that there is no going back to the old hierarchies: “it is a new world they live in” (D. 117) and so changes must be made. *Disgrace* thus marks a pivotal development in the representation of the marginalized in white male writing. The voices can no longer be suppressed and their resistance to muting and silent acquiescence is increasingly violent. This thesis will take as a starting point these issues of voice, power and identity and argue that as the white male writers depict increasingly strong voices for the marginalized in their narratives so the literary representation of the former dominant personas is compromised, and the concept of the Other needs to be revised. These novelists not only share a concern for the articulation of the marginalized voices, either verbal or non-verbal, but they all consider the fundamental challenges made to accepted Western ideologies and to traditional Eurocentric constructs of the Other. Disturbed by this threat to these master narratives that inform colonial texts, the writers examine and consider different concepts of humanity and question established principles in order to create social, political and ethical structures that would be inclusive of new ideas of the other.

4. Ethics

Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* both function as paradigms for the colonial model as their narratives adhere to traditional structures of linear narrative, dominant narrative voices and clear grand narratives that formulate strong ethical perspectives. *Robinson Crusoe* provides a paradigm for the colonial encounter with the racial other and the establishment of the archetypal master/servant relationship. The castaway imports his culture to the remote island, creating a familiar domesticity within strange and wild surroundings; he structures his disciplined and productive life according

to the strictures of Western religious principles. His native servant/slave Friday is educated to accept the ordering of European civilization and to express himself in English. The clear boundaries of the desert island symbolize the power of colonial hegemony.

Joseph Conrad was writing at the height of British imperialism when the glory of Empire was paramount and the quest for land was the stuff of “[t]he dreams of men.” (H.D. 17) Despite the apparent similarity of the colonial dialectic in his novel to that of Defoe’s in which the degeneracy of Friday is repeated in the barbarity of the savages, Conrad’s perception of the colonizer has shifted to include an ironic commentary on their greed and inhumanity: “They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got.” (H.D. 20) The narrative contrasts the realism of the author’s observation and the impressionist brushstrokes that describe the indigenous natives, implying that the natives are unknown and unknowable. However, this disparity of literary representation reflects the disorienting world of the modernist writer who is destabilizing familiar tropes so that Marlow himself is full of doubts and uncertainties: “I asked myself sometimes what it all meant.” (H.D. 44)

Ethical questions echo through all the novels selected for study as the transitioning power relationships construct different perceptions of the Other and imply a new perception of the self-same. This is the critical confession of the postcolonial European, and creates a crisis of identity for the contemporary writer of Western literature. A novelist needs to seek a position of integrity from which to write. The authority that once validated the assertion “I’m white and christian” (McCarthy 1992: 28) has been undermined since concepts of difference are no longer valid criteria for empowerment, but there is the lingering unanswered question: how can we be open to the Other that is excluded by the society in which we live? Warren Motte argues this very point when he claims that in Le Clézio’s work there is no real center “no fixed, reliable point from which the question of marginality may be adjudicated.” (1997: 692) This thesis will discuss whether this is a

narratorial strategy or if indeed it is symptomatic of the uncertainties of Western unease when threatened by the emerging marginalized voices. Authorial infallibility is open to debate. Like the young son following his father through the post-apocalyptic landscape in McCarthy's *The Road*, constant reassurance is required; challenged by strange voices and treading warily through a world in which the metanarratives have lost their credibility, we need to be reassured that "we're the good guys. Yes." (R: 129)

The authors explore new narrative strategies to create an effective literary representation of these voices, both verbal and non-verbal, including non-linear narratives, displaced chronological sequences, dreamscapes, and polyvocal texts in which parallel narratives are juxtaposed. Such structural modifications indicate how yet another voice within the narrative is also reordered; this is the voice in literary works that M.H. Abrams defines as "authorial presence, a determinate intelligence and moral sensibility, which has invented, ordered, rendered, and expressed all these literary characters and materials in just this way." (1993:156) This thesis argues that the predominantly postmodernist narrative strategies employed by these authors signify their concern with the subversion of white male dominance and they struggle to reorder traditional ideologies and ethical values in order to reconcile with their sense of loss. All these writers attempt to articulate a voice for marginalized groups in their novels, but consequently have to confront moral issues as the ethical centers of the narratives are displaced. First, they need to explore different ways of expressing voice, whether verbal or non-verbal. Secondly, they need to redefine the ethical center of the novel. It is this function that raises the most difficult questions such as whether or not it is ethical for white writers to articulate a voice for the oppressed in their writings. If postcolonial discourse subverts the authority of the grand narratives, which truths will order the ethical structures on which argument and values will be based? Indeed, will there be a grand narrative in these postcolonial novels at all or is this perhaps the fundamental issue that the authors must confront?

Hence, themes of justice and ethics are common to all writers, suggesting that their primary question is the basic but very disturbing “Whose truth?” In an increasingly globalized world, with extensive immigration both legal and illegal, the juxtaposition of different religious and ethnic groups is tense and antagonistic at best. The colonial dialectic cannot be contested. Each one of the novels under consideration in this thesis mixes different racial or ethnic groups, such as *colons* and Algerians, English colonialists and Nigerian natives, French nationals and criminals from Hispanic backgrounds challenging American law and order officials. These disparate groups are brought together in the stories using various narrative strategies such as unexpected encounters, cultural divergence and conflicting conceptions of justice. The questions posed by the writers indicate that they think beyond Western political assumptions of the universal truth in Eurocentrism, but are ready to confront such interpretations. Are they reconciliatory towards these voices? Are they resistant to them? How does this affect their articulation of such voices? Such questions force a reconceptualization of the function of alterity within the postcolonial landscape.

5. Thesis structure

This study will trace these descents from power to loss thematically, focusing on identification of the Other in Part I, and articulation of their voices in Part II. Each part will be divided into two chapters; one will examine the colonial novels and will be in dialogue with the second chapter that will discuss the postcolonial novels selected. The study will examine the effects of the emerging postcolonial Other on Western power hierarchies, exploring whether the result is a cataclysmic “implosion of Western culture under the impact of its inhabitation by other voices, histories and experiences” (Parry 1997: 3), or whether it provides the impetus for a fruitful reevaluation of an aging ideology by incorporating new legitimizing strategies based on the knowledges of cultures of the

erstwhile Other. By means of close textual analysis, this thesis will explore the ways the writers address these questions and how they employ various discursive strategies to create space within the narratives to allow the emergence of these new voices. Such strategies may or may not include recognition of past injustices and elucidate whether they envision either a promising future in which the integrity and autonomy of alterity are acknowledged or a landscape of intellectual, social and political despair. At the heart of this discussion remains the fundamental question of the responsibility of the author to acknowledge these challenges to Eurocentric institutions and their logocentric structures and to explore these tensions in their writings.

By studying the novels in chronological order of publication this thesis will determine the development of the master/slave dialectic that informs the colonial power relationship. This thesis will argue that the clearly defined boundaries of Robinson Crusoe's island which reflect the authority of colonial hegemony, disintegrate into the moral wilderness of *Disgrace* and reach a nadir of despair in the bleak desert landscape in *No Country for Old Men* in which life is compared to "a rockslide, a rough trail leading down." (11) Such a decline from the fruitful abundance of Crusoe's island to the hostile environment acts as metaphor for the decline of empire and the loss of Western cultural authority.

Coetzee observes that it is the responsibility of the writer to be a witness and make account: "When the choice is no longer limited to either looking on in horrified fascination as the blows fall or turning one's eyes away, then the novel can once again take as its province the whole of life" (1986) He feels that as a white writer in the margins that he has an ethical obligation to respond to the injustice of society (Gallagher 1991: 5), inequalities which Coetzee describes in his Jerusalem Prize acceptance speech as "[t]he deformed and stunted relations between human beings that were created under colonialism and exacerbated under what is loosely called apartheid" (Coetzee 1992: 98). The dialogic nature of the novel, as defined by Mikhail Bakhtin, (2011:284) shows how numerous

conflicting voices may coexist in one space; it thus functions as a particularly apt vehicle for exploring the ethical complexities that center on our relationship to Others.

PART I

CHAPTER I

FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND: IDENTIFYING THE COLONIAL 'OTHER'

It happen'd one Day, about Noon going towards my Boat, I was exceedingly surpriz'd with the Print of a Man's naked Foot on the Shore, which was very plain to be seen in the Sand: (R.C. 142)

The unexpected sight interrupts Robinson Crusoe's walk along the beach and he stops in stunned surprise. The discovery of the footprint in the sand is a pivotal moment in the lonely life of the castaway. He is shaken by this tangible evidence of human presence on the isolated desert island that had been his home for over fifteen years. Despite the simplicity of the account, which is almost conversational in tone, the narrative conveys the intense effect the sight of the footprint has on Crusoe's emotions. The impact on his shocked nerves is echoed in the sudden jolt to the smooth rhythm of the prose that is shaken by the impact of the caesura following "Shore" and by the emphatic abruptness of the iambic stress of the monosyllabic phrase "to be seen in the sand". This rupture imitates his broken thought patterns and his confusion as the importance of his observation finally registers and he gradually realizes the significance of this clearly identifiable mark of agency. He is not alone.

The clear imprint in the sand becomes an engraved image in his mind as he struggles to order multiple questions and conjectures that flood his mind as a series of "many wild Ideas" (142) and several "strange unaccountable Whimsies." (142) The familiar reality of the world he has created for himself on the island is tenuous at best, relentlessly threatened by his fear of the unknown and of the unexpected. This constant anxiety is exacerbated by his occasional glimpses of visiting savages and the remains of their grisly rituals. But now their presence has become more conceptualized and he considers some troublesome questions. "Where was the Vessel that brought them? What Marks was there of any other

Footsteps?" (143) The print of a naked foot leaves no identifying marks, no clues to its origins and so Crusoe is free to project all his greatest fears onto an image, creating an imaginary persona. "Sometimes [he] fancy'd it must be the Devil" (143) or "some more dangerous Creature." (143) This literary representation of Crusoe's assumptions of origin and identity illustrates the colonizer's production of the Other as composite of his personal fears for his "own Preservation" (149), confirming Hardt and Negri's argument that "[a]lterity is not given but produced" (2001: 125. Italics in the original) within European discourse. The footprint arouses such deep responses in himself that he wonders aloud at the intensity of his emotions, which leads to a change in his awareness of his own subjectivity. He no longer feels answerable only to God and himself as a solitary individual but considers the possibility of others, of being judged not just by God but by outsiders too. He wonders if the range and depth of his intense fears "would have made any one thought [he] was haunted with an evil Conscience". (146) This is a significant moment in Crusoe's development as he thinks outside his own subjectivity, creating a sense of accountability for his own actions and feelings to a separated Other. Thus, the appearance of the footprint in the sand functions as a metaphor for the intrusion of the unknown Other into the lonely castaway's world.

This literary representation of the origins of the Other in Defoe's narrative is significant in two respects. First, it indicates Crusoe's reaction to a presence outside himself; this separation is an important factor in the definition of the Other since it implies resistance to integration. Elleke Boehmer expands this idea of separation by referencing its signification as "that which is unfamiliar and extraneous to a dominant subjectivity". (1993: 274) Identification goes beyond dialectical opposition. The footprint in the sand symbolizes this separation because the imprint does not fit Crusoe's foot when he tries it for size; he discovers that "[his] Foot [was] not so large by a great deal." (R.C. 146) Since the imprint resists his ownership Crusoe is unable to assimilate it into his own world. Secondly, these

origins establish beyond doubt the superiority of the colonizer by identifying the heathen savages as cannibals and consequently beyond the realm of humanity. The narrative establishes the superior/inferior dialectic that is fundamental to the Western perception of the racial Other. Crusoe's moral superiority is unquestioned and "the emergence of the straight white christian man of property as ethical subject" (Spivak 2003: 176) of the narrative is affirmed.

Defoe's novel, published in 1719, explores the role of the early colonizer, and through the depiction of his role as castaway on an uninhabited island, the author develops the significance of the Other and the complexity of their relationship of resistance and empowerment. Lynn Salkin Sbiroli argues that as an eighteenth-century writer Defoe "is concerned with experience as it is inextricably linked to the creation of an individual subject, master of his destiny." (1995: 107) Colonialism describes the political, social and economic domination of the power relationships that developed during the settlement of new lands and the imposed rule over the indigenous peoples. During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, British imperialism was focused on the control of territories in America, India, Canada and later the West Indies, and the development of trading rights. Colonialism was at this point an act of territorialization, which is reflected in Crusoe's

'conquest' and development of his desert island. In the nineteenth century the economic and political supremacy of Europe became global, and Britain had established itself as the dominant world power by 1815. The remainder of the century was a time of expansion, settlement, and the spread of British culture, politics and economic strategies.

Emmanuel Levinas argues that the first step in identifying the Other is to find out who is speaking and why; it is this desire to know that enables the selfsame to escape subjectivity. (1969: 18) Colin Davis points to the variability of the identity of the Other, so that the naming of the Other in these texts will be as "varied, contradictory and ungraspable as the Other itself." (2000: 14) He suggests that as a starting point the question

that should be considered is: “when we talk about the Other, whose Other do we mean?” (14) The effective literary representation of this concern involves what Linda Alcoff describes as the “rituals of speaking”. (1991: 12) For example, where one speaks from is determined by social location and identity; in the situation where the rituals determine difference between the racial Other and the white male protagonists who control the narrative the dialectics such as inferior/superior, barbaric/civilized are reinforced dramatically. Consequently, if the Other is a product of white discourse, as Hardt and Negri argue, we should consider whether we perpetuate the myths of these constructs by failing to perceive the Other outside the dialectics of colonial discourse and its encoded discursive strategies. It is this issue of equality that is problematic. Frantz Fanon, for example, focuses on the issues of stereotyping and on the European perception of the racial Other in a “fixed concept of the Negro.” (1967: 35) His primary intention is to “help the black man free himself from the arsenal of complexes that has been developed by the colonial environment.” (30) These concerns lead to the most fundamental question in Part I of this thesis: are the binaries of colonialism a ‘fixed’ and static feature of the East/West divide or are they flexible and capable of being deconstructed in order to allow the voices of the oppressed Other to emerge in white male writing? Can the footprints in the sand only be identified in terms of colonial cultural knowledges? How can the Westerners coexist with the Other and still honor the integrity of his Otherness?

This chapter will identify the Other in different colonial contexts as represented by the novels selected for study and not only explore the different relationships with the colonizers but also examine the differences which form the basis of the dialectics upon which they are based, and how mastery of the self enables mastery of the Other. *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, “L’Hôte” and *L’Étranger* by Albert Camus and *Foe*, J.M.Coetzee’s writing back to Defoe’s canonical novel, have been chosen for discussion because the colonial encounter in each narrative is pivotal to the development of the action

of the story and to defining colonial systems. Colonial growth and economic exploitation impact the power relationships in the novels by Defoe and Conrad, while the writings by Camus and Coetzee examine the influence of established colonial systems in Algeria and South Africa respectively. Chapter I will examine the chosen novels in chronological order of publication in order to chart the development of the colonial power relationship between oppressors and oppressed and the ways these changes reflect the issues troubling their respective societies.

Robinson Crusoe

1.1 The Function of the Natives

Ian Watt argues that Robinson Crusoe “is an embodiment of economic individualism” (1987) and the plot “expresses some of the most important tendencies of the life of his time” (67) especially in relation to the rise of industrial capitalism. At the same time, the new Protestant individualism controls his spiritual being (74) and “initiates that aspect of the novel’s treatment of experience that rivals the confessional biography”. (75) While the importance of these developments cannot be disputed since the expression of personal experience typifies Crusoe’s narrative approach to the story and the emphasis on his individuality reinforces his assumptions of authority and mastery that characterize his narrative, the analysis fails to fully explain the relationship between castaway and native. Watt’s close analysis pays little attention to the role of Friday beyond commenting that Crusoe’s social needs are “wholly satisfied by the righteous bestowal or grateful receipt, of benevolent but not undemanding patronage.” (69) I propose that this relationship is essential for confirming Crusoe’s own subjectivity by reflecting back an image of a kind and spiritual colonizer.

Lying flat on his belly, his “Perspective Glass” (R.C. 168) in hand, Robinson Crusoe surveys a group of savages gathered on the beach, with their canoes “haled up upon the

Shore.” (168) Sheltered and out of sight on the top of a hill, he looks down on the encircled men:

I presently found there was no less than nine naked Savages, sitting round a small Fire, they had made, not to warm them; for they had no need of that, the Weather being extreme hot; but as I suppos'd, to dress some of their barbarous Diet, of humane Flesh, which they had brought with them, whether alive or dead I could not know. (168)

This scene is the first description of the natives grouped together in a communal ritual practice. Up to this point, Crusoe has referenced rumors, hearsay, distant glimpses of bodies “quite Black and Stark-naked” (27) or, more disturbingly, evidence of series of trails of “Skulls, Hands, Feet and other Bones of humane Bodies” (152) being left along the shore. He watches from his elevated position on the hill. The short, broken phrases reveal his distressed thoughts which tangle in a confused web of statements and conjectures while he attempts to rationalize the scene before him; the visual description is clearly painted in a series of concrete actions, “sitting”, “made”, “dress”, and precise details, “nine”, “naked”, “small”, “extremely hot”, which enable the reader to view the distant scene through the eyeglass along with Crusoe. But this instrument was rescued from the shipwreck and thus remains a symbol of Western industrialization, scientific discovery and learning. Viewing the savages through the lens of sophisticated engineering acts as metaphor for Crusoe’s restricted perspectives and how his descriptions are constructed within the parameters of European thinking; he rewrites the reality he describes within the constraints imposed by white discourse. Crusoe’s narrative standpoint, both literal and ideological, therefore lacks the vision of the panorama; and his responses are rooted in the fear of the unknown and unfamiliar. Consequently, his discourse becomes ridden with the conjecture and doubt in “I suppos’d”, “whether or”, “not know”, and the emotively charged “Savages”, “barbarous”. These random thought patterns indicate the struggle he has to encode these strangers and their dark rituals into familiar Western models. Interpreting their actions according to the myths he knows of native degeneracy,

Crusoe assumes that their ritual killings and feastings are a form of “Merriment and Sport” (169) and a “cruel bloody Entertainment”. (155) He labels difference in terms of colonial cultural knowledge, an appropriation of meaning that results in the subordination and subjugation of the unknown, inexplicable Other.

Unfamiliarity is problematic; Michel de Montaigne argues that “chacun appelle barbarie ce qui n’est pas de son usage”. (1960: 92) Crusoe observes carefully, but his ignorance of their culture and failure to interpret their barbarous acts means that they become unquestionably Other. This moment encapsulates the predicament of the colonizers when they confront indigenous natives in their undisturbed natural environment during their original encounters and indicates how actions, which are horrific to one society, may be acceptable practice in another. And this is at the crux of the colonial encounter; contact with difference inscribes fear, misunderstanding and a reduction of images into the simple manageable form of prejudice and stereotype. The crisis at the center of the colonial encounter is this juxtaposition of extremes of difference. It does not merely indicate a beginning or a change, but signifies rupture, thus providing a concrete metaphor for the brutality of the epistemic violence that will occur as the result of such cultural and ideological conflicts. Crusoe has to construct a figure of alterity based on absolutes in order to rationalize his fearful responses. He depends upon two characteristics that are fundamental to colonial definitions of savagery that he has visually ascertained to confirm the basis of his own moral and cultural superiority. Thus the persona he created when he encountered the footprint on the beach has morphed into a concrete projection of naked degenerate savages. Difference challenges and undermines confidence so the castaway is forced to validate his own morality and identity through native nakedness and cannibalism. Crusoe attempts to ‘fix’ the dialectics of difference because he cannot control their actions. He can never anticipate with accuracy their arrivals or their rituals; he sleeps fitfully and anxiously, suffering “unquiet, dream[s] always frightful Dreams”. (170)

Crusoe is understandably “terrify’d to the last Degree” (142) by the ever-present danger created by savages, creating a dread that has lasting consequences: his “fear banish’d all [his] religious Hope” (144) and “put an end to all Invention.” (162) Peter Hulme argues that the issue at stake “is not Crusoe’s *initial* fear of the cannibals [...] it is rather his unswerving adherence to this fear despite the evidence that confronts him.” (1986: 194) Hulme cites the evidence given by Friday that his tribe had aided a boatload of white men who “live, they dwell at my Nation” (205) and explains that cannibalism is an act of war and aggression: “they never eat any Men but such as come to fight with them, and are taken in Battle.” (206) The unrelenting fear that Crusoe endures reveals a persistent and immutable association of the indigenous native with barbarity, consistent with Nietzsche’s theory of slave morality that defines fear inspired by evil. (1990: 197) This is a destructive response that destabilizes his emotions, and negates the value of his cultural, ideological, agricultural and engineering achievements. But Crusoe, as narrator, chooses to explore his experiences through this lens of racial and ethnic antipathy and to frame them within the context of fear and prejudice.

The castaway traces the development of his personal intellectual and spiritual growth through two complex areas, those of civilization and religion. The protagonist is depicted struggling to cultivate the island in order to survive. He progresses through experiences as hunter/gatherer, cultivator and farmer, potter and craftsman and finally to the sophistication of engineering. It is not only the threat to personal safety that agitates him, but also the fact of difference. His doubts threaten his internalized image of himself as settler and empire-builder and he forces himself to witness the rituals on the beach as an exercise that helps confirm his own superiority as a product of Western civilization and his successful conversion from the “wicked and hardened Life past” (R.C. 122). Alone and isolated on an erstwhile uninhabited island, Crusoe struggles to confirm his own identity while apprehensive of confronting the metaphorical darkness of the unknown other within,

the inner space in which he discovers that “there was nothing in this Cave more frightful than [him] self.” (163)

He returns to his faith and but questions his authority to play “Judge and Executioner upon these Men as Criminals” (157), thereby acting a god-like figure. Instead he decides on a different outcome, enslavement, the imprisonment of some natives “so as to make them entirely Slaves to me, to do whatever I should direct them.” (185) This intent inscribes a subtext in the discourse, one that objectifies the Other, by referencing the natives as commodities and therefore revealing his refusal to accept their full humanity. The natives therefore are doubly marginalized in Crusoe’s narrative. They are vilified as fearful symbols of evil and at the same time they are regarded as disposable goods, prized chattels of imperialism.

The Christian metanarrative that underlies the discourse defines both Crusoe and Friday. The alliterative “no less than nine naked” savages stresses the fact of undress, a situation that disturbs Crusoe since he associates nudity with disgrace and shame. Crusoe never goes without clothing, despite the heat and his isolation: “Yet I could not go quite naked; no, tho’ I had been inclin’d to it, which I was not, nor could not abide the thoughts of it, tho’ I was all alone” (124) because it is one physical characteristic that differentiates him from barbarity. His Bible readings will have familiarized him with the humiliation of Adam and Eve after they have tasted the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden and of Noah who had fallen asleep in a drunken stupor and lay uncovered:

Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it upon both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father’s nakedness. (Genesis 9 verse 23)

Noah’s two adult sons had too much respect for their father to look on his nudity. It is a powerful statement of ignominy and dishonor, with the added association of loss of Christian grace. This is a significant consideration for the castaway who had disobeyed the

commandment to “Honor thy father and thy mother” and who regarded his shipwreck on the deserted island as punishment for his sins of “Seafaring Wickedness” (R.C. 82) and conduct that was both “wicked and prophane.” (82) At the same time, he realizes his sins as the disobedient son and the error of “[his] wicked and hardened Life past” (122); he goes through a process of confession, absolution and redemption, finally turning to the teachings of the Bible: “[his] Mind being entirely composed by resigning to the Will of God, and throwing [him] self wholly upon the Disposal of his Providence.” (125) He has been saved.

Cannibalism, since it is taboo, justifies his moral outrage and his attempts to attack or enslave the natives who disturb his tenuous equilibrium. Taboo is an unwritten code of law that creates restrictions visible in the cultures of even the most primitive savages; it “is a command issued by conscience: any violation of it produces a fearful sense of guilt which follows as a matter of course and of which the origin is unknown.” (Freud 1989: 86) Hence, by establishing difference based on such extreme behaviors, the author easily validates the dialectic native/European, heathen/Christian, black/white, barbaric/civilized, but also ensures that this difference is incontrovertible and remains ‘fixed’. It becomes a standard of colonial difference. Similarly, Crusoe’s conversion and developing relationship with God provide an equally irrefutable justification for subjugation of the Other because Christianity functions as the metanarrative of European culture by providing those “universal explanations whose authority lay outside the narrative itself.” (Ritchie 2010: 7) Christianity orders the ethical concepts essential to the text and, since Crusoe is the narrator, the story and the presentation of the indigenous natives are depicted through his eyes and consequently it is his morality that condemns the barbaric other. The depiction of the savages is constructed by polarizing himself and the savages into Manichean categories of good and evil, a schism emphasized by his emesis after discovering human bones on the

beach, a sight of such “hellish Brutality” (152) that he “vomited with an uncommon Violence.” (152)

Colonial perspectives are justified by these established binary oppositions; Robinson Crusoe is the single voiced, first person narrator of the adventures, which he relates in retrospect, ordering incidents according to his own purpose. His authority is apparently established in the author’s Preface in which Defoe claims authenticity of the account: “The Editor believes the thing to be a just History of Fact; neither is there any Appearance of Fiction in it.” (R.C. xxi) Although this is a fictional account rather than the fact-based narrative claimed by the author, the assertion serves to confirm Crusoe’s power over the text as absolute. This imaginary construct endorses the most serious purpose of the novel, “the Instruction of others by this Example” (R.C. xxi); Defoe projects the work to be a *Bildungsroman*, which signifies a “novel of formation [...in which] the development of the protagonist’s mind and character [...] often through a spiritual crisis-into maturity and the recognition of his or her identity and role in the world.” (Abrams 1993: 132) Crusoe’s world is the difficult environment of the desert island in which he confronts many challenges that force him to reevaluate his own life. It is the supreme egotistical experience as he struggles to understand this world.

Crusoe admits that “we never see the true State of our Condition, till it is illustrated to us by its Contraries.” (R.C. 129) In order to confirm his new morality and humanity Crusoe needs to reach beyond his egoism by sharing his world with another; hence Friday’s arrival at this late point in the narrative. In answer to Levinas’ suggestion to explore what the Other brings to a relationship with the selfsame, (cf.1969: 38) Friday’s function is to confirm Crusoe’s new identity as a white, civilized Christian man of integrity.

1.2 The Function of Friday as Individual Native

Crusoe encounters the young native boy, Friday, whom he observes escaping from the clutches of a group of cannibals preparing the fire for a ritual feast.

I beckon'd him again to come to me, and gave him all the Signs of Encouragement that I could think of, and he came nearer and nearer [...] I smil'd at him [...] and look'd pleasantly, and beckon'd to him to come still nearer; at length he came close to me, and then he kneel'd down again, kiss'd the Ground, and laid his Head upon the Ground, and taking me by the Foot, set my Foot uon his Head: this it seems was in token of swearing to be my Slave for ever: (188)

The description of this first encounter between Crusoe and the badly frightened savage prefigures the traditional colonial hierarchical relationship that will quickly be established between them. The European is the identified “I” of the passage who orders the description and instigates action by making welcoming gestures and facial expressions to encourage the young man’s approach. Crusoe takes for granted that his intentionally friendly overtures and body language will be correctly interpreted as conciliatory by the quivering young native, and likewise he assumes that the native’s submissive response signals a willingness “to be [his] Slave for ever” rather than function as a sign of abject terror. Crusoe’s total dominance of the episode is not only suggested by the series of controlling “beckonings” with which he indicates the native should approach and follow his directives, but also by the first person narratorial voice. There is only one possible version of the encounter and Crusoe’s interpretation is absolute; he evinces what Martin Calder describes as “selective understanding” (2003: 154) He argues that the fact “Friday never fails to understand Crusoe shows that he is given only part of a verbal identity.” (157) This discriminatory ordering by the author emphasizes his superiority and how he is in a powerful position as both narrator and protagonist since his voice creates a link between the patterns of narrative authority and Western patriarchal concepts of supremacy. Western dominance is thus inscribed in the language of the story itself, by situating the European in

a central autonomous position that enables him to order the metanarratives that underlie the narrative.

This singular ‘reading’ of the encounter stresses Crusoe’s magnanimity in contrast to the native’s submissive behavior, culminating in his gestures of total deference until he is prostrate on the ground and places Crusoe’s foot upon his bowed head. Therefore the freedom of agency implied by the presence of the unidentified footprint on the beach is hereby transferred to the European standing before the native. The significance of this moment is heightened by the detailed realism and by the increasing physical debasement of the native as he pays homage to a new master. This master/slave dialectic receives its moral basis in the debt that Friday owes Crusoe, who saved his life by shooting one of the cannibals pursuing him as he escaped from his captors. Crusoe has saved Friday’s life and now he will save his soul; he argues that he “was call’d plainly by Providence to save this poor Creature’s Life.” (187) He is white, Christian and civilized. The native other is black, heathen and a cannibal; the unknown “he” is in a relationship with the identified “I”. Within this context, the encounter symbolizes the colonial ideal, the ideal of Western civilization “saving” the other from degeneracy and functions as a metaphor for the evangelical sub-text in which the dialectic Christian/heathen underlies the binary opposition between European and savage. Friday’s humble behaviors are interpreted as a sign of acquiescence, recognition of Western superiority and its evangelical mission. Unfortunately, Friday’s complicity with colonialism leads to extreme subjugation as he loses his identity, his language, culture, and history.

The true symbol of the British conquest is Robinson Crusoe
[...] He is the true prototype of the British colonist, as Friday
(the trusty savage who arrives on an unlucky day) is the
symbol of the subject races. (Joyce, 1912: 141-142)

James Joyce argues that Crusoe and Friday function as archetypes of the colonial power relationship and yet Joyce’s ironic aside, written in parenthesis, draws attention to native vulnerability. His comment suggests the horror experienced by the captive since “trusty”

and “unlucky” are epithets which hint at exploitation of ignorance and the betrayal of expectations and destinies, considerations absent from Crusoe’s account. Friday’s choices reflect this underlying unexpressed misery of the natives’ situation; he must choose between certain death at the hands of the cannibals who had captured him or absolute slavery in the European’s patriarchal systems of power. Such limited options reveal the absolute desperation of his predicament. There is no escape for him, because there is no real alternative in his choice of destinies. He is the prey whichever way he turns. Daniel E. Ritchie argues that “the book is not structured around subjugation, but around Crusoe’s growing trust in God.” (2010: 17) Such a perspective diminishes the significance of Friday’s role in the novel and privileges Crusoe’s personal and spiritual growth and how “[he] improve’d [him] self.” (R.C. 133) I argue that both Joyce and Ritchie address issues of power, which although justified by different dialectical oppositions, nevertheless form the basis of a common thesis that assumes that the native other is not human. While Joyce considers the absolutism of colonial authority based on the dialectic civilization/barbarity, Ritchie’s analysis encodes a different form of subjugation since privileging accepted European ideologies implies the moral inferiority of a native whose degeneracy has been established by the remains of their cannibalistic feasts scattered across the beach. Both these forms of suppression are fundamental to the colonial authoritarianism which not only pervades social, cultural, ethical and political structures, but also creates an indisputable justification for the supremacy of the European.

Power is rarely based on a simple binary opposition. Michel Foucault defines power not as “a general system of domination exerted by one group over another” (1998a: 92) but as “the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; [...] it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society.” (92-93) Although Foucault claims that there is no “all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations”

(94) he emphasizes the importance of resistance, asserting that there are “a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network.” (95) Thus power is a two-way process. In Defoe’s novel, the relationship between Crusoe and Friday functions to define the humanity and civilization of Crusoe and the resistance provided by Friday’s ignorance of European culture and religion enables the protagonist to validate his own beliefs. The instruction of “this poor Savage” (R.C. 203) clarified many issues of Christian Doctrine. Crusoe admits that “in laying Things open to [Friday], [he] really inform’d and instructed [him] self in many Things, that either [he] did not know, or had not fully consider’d before.” (203) Friday’s autonomy is compromised by the need to fill a vacuum in Crusoe’s life. He is assimilated into the colonizer’s world at the expense of his own.

Having vilified the barbarity of savages and established the fixity of their depravity, the narrative needs to position Friday’s character in order to explain his potential redemption and conversion:

he had all the Sweetness and Softness of an *European* in his Countenance too, especially when he smil’d. His Hair was long and black, not curl’d like Wool; his Forehead very high, and large, and a great Vivacity and sparkling Sharpness in his Eyes. The Colour of his Skin was not quite black, but very tawny; and yet not of an ugly yellow nauseous tawny [...] His Face was round, and plump: his Nose small, not flat like the Negroes, a very good Mouth, thin Lips, and his fine Teeth well set, and white as Ivory. (189-190)

This detailed description is noteworthy for the pleasure with which Crusoe describes his new companion. The sibilance suggests gentleness in his gaze as his eyes caress the young man’s face in fascination. Friday’s demeanor indicates a lively creature, alert and full of inquiry; his features seem hybrid, a mix of European and native without the usual stereotypical ethnic details. By making such assumptions the differences now drawn between Friday and the stereotype underlines the dissimilarity between him and the others

of his race. His thin lips, skin color, small nose and long hair imply that he is not beyond redemption since he is not truly Negroid. Friday is a fallen creature, the first potential convert “to the true Knowledge of Religion” (203) in Crusoe’s new evangelical phase on the island as “an Instrument under Providence.” (203) This religious element remains a significant justification for colonization in Western political and philosophical thought. The subtext in this narrative writes the responsibility of the colonizer for educating the degenerate native, whilst it is the duty of the other to be a compliant and respectful servant.

Although the novel thus appears to offer a paradigm for the colonial encounter and the ensuing relationship between Oppressor and oppressed, Crusoe’s narrative also questions the ethical assumptions of colonial discourse. In his imagination his disgust leads him to consider ways he “might destroy some of those Monsters” (155) but in reality he has second thoughts and he wonders “[w]hat Authority, or Call [he] had, to pretend to be Judge and Executioner upon these Men as Criminals”? (157) and similarly he considers “[w]hat Necessity [he] was in to go and dip [his] Hands in Blood, to attack People, who had neither done, or intended [him] any Wrong?” (214) These considerations reach down into the heart of the problematics of colonial difference. Should the Other be found guilty and punished for transgressing Western ethics while adhering to native custom, when “it is not against their own Consciences reproving”? (158) The colonial dilemma is either to condemn native custom as wholly degenerate and thus in accordance with Western power constructs, or to accept and embrace the difference which might challenge the metanarratives upon which Western ideologies and ethics are founded. Crusoe resolves the issue by killing savages only in self-defense (187) and by educating and converting his slave Friday.

2. Heart of Darkness

2.1 The Function of the Native Other

Joseph Conrad's novel was first published in 1899, after appearing as a three part series in *Blackwoods Magazine*, during a period in which Empires, following the initial stages of conquest and settlement of the nineteenth century, were focused on their economies and international trade. The "many blank spaces" (H.D. 21) on the maps of the world had been colored in and vast areas of land had been settled; the isolation and anonymity of Defoe's island had disappeared and been replaced by organized international trade and economic expansion. Marlow observes on the wall of the company office the "large shining map, marked with all the colors of the rainbow. There was a vast amount of red [...] a deuce lot of blue, a little green, smears of orange" (25) - a beautiful kaleidoscope which indicates the literal division of colonial possessions and symbolizes the ideals of the imperial project which the unnamed narrator describes as "[t]he dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires." (17) This mélange of intertwining colors conceals the harsh realities of colonial expansion and introduces the theme of "the amazing reality of its concealed life" (48) that underlies the story Marlow relates to his companions on the yawl *Nellie* as they wait for the tide to turn.

Like Robinson Crusoe, Marlow tells the story of his adventures in the first person, but whereas for Crusoe this narrative form provides authority and definition, for Marlow this voice expresses hesitation; it is full of doubts and uncertainties, and he wonders about the conviction of his position: "For a time I would feel I belonged still to a world of straightforward facts." (30) The adverb here is rather surprising, since it implies transference from the prosaic to the unreal, to the world of wonder, even of "senseless delusion" (30) so that at times he has "a queer feeling that [he] was an imposter." (29) The supposed historical authenticity of Crusoe's story has been replaced by an implied awareness that Marlow's account cannot be validated. Despite the apparent continued use

of traditional nineteenth-century realism this narrative is destabilized by the epistemological crisis of modernism that threatens previously accepted moral and ideological absolutes.

The unnamed narrator warns the reader that Marlow's narrative is suspect, easily misread and misinterpreted.

The yarns of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut. But Marlow was not typical (if his propensity to spin yarns be excepted), and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of those misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine. (18)

Although sailors “spin” yarns, a metaphor that implies wordy, endless stories, their telling is simple and direct so that their meaning is as easily discovered as the kernel in a cracked nutshell. In contrast, Marlow's tales are “not typical” because the significance of his story shifts from the content to the form and style of the telling itself. His mode of narrative is more metaphorical and less straightforward. The light from “glow” and “halo” which should be brightening and warm, is qualified by the treachery of “haze” and the elusiveness of “spectral” indicating how language may be duplicitous and even unable to express complex ideas. Marlow frequently admits that he “can't explain” (41) or that an idea “is impossible to convey” (50), that he “can't say” (95), or even that his experiences are so “unreal” (46) that “it seems to [him he was] trying to tell you a dream”. (50) Why do Joseph Conrad and the unnamed narrator stress this difference between reality and the imaginative, the ‘fixed’ and the uncertain? Within the context of a narrator whose unreliability is established in the opening pages of the novel, how is the reader able to connect with character, interpret language and hear the voices in *Heart of Darkness* when there is little or no guidance or accurate explanation? Benita Parry argues that although there have been multiple interpretations of Conrad's novel since its publication, those more

recently emphasizing its historical, political and ideological materials, the main focus remains whether Kurtz is “debauched by the polymorphous perversity of an extant prehistoric society.” (2005: 48) Rino Zhuwarara, who writes “The African Response” (2004: 219) to Conrad’s work and discusses at length the racism perceived to be inherent in the novel, agrees that the function of this dark, primitive continent is to represent “an indispensable existential condition of absurdity against which we can measure the monumental distance which Kurtz has had to cover during his fall from the topmost rung of the ladder of civilization.” (231) Chinua Achebe argues that European or American writers “cannot compromise [his] humanity in order [to] explore [their] own ambiguity.” (Phillips and Achebe 2007: 65) This criticism focuses upon the ethical assumptions of superiority on which colonial binaries are defined and the legitimacy of the ensuing archetypal civilized colonizer and barbaric colonized. Frantz Fanon argues that consequently the racial Other is perceived to have “no culture, no civilization, no long historical past.” (1967:34) I argue that by exploring the voices of the racially marginalized in white discourse some measure of dignity and autonomy is restored to the Other and that by close analysis of Conrad’s narrative discursive strategies are discovered that critique colonial superiority.

Marlow’s first glimpse of the natives is like that of Crusoe’s, at a distance so he can grasp a panoramic view of the indigenous people busy in their daily activities.

Now and then a boat from the shore gave one a momentary contact with reality. It was paddled by black fellows. You could see from afar the white of their eyeballs glistening. They shouted, sang; their bodies streamed with perspiration; they had faces like grotesque masks – these chaps; but they had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an immense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast. (30)

Strength, energy and exuberance characterize Marlow’s first description of the indigenous Africans; he marvels at their physical vigor and the vitality of mood and feelings expressed

by the accompanying shouts and songs that reverberate across the waters. The details of their shining bodies, glistening eyes and bold movements suggest a fascination for these men who seem in harmony with their surroundings. The impact of this fleeting vision is such that Marlow describes it as a “contact with reality” (30), a refreshing break from the monotony of the “oily and languid sea, the uniform and somberness of the coast” (30) that has almost cast a spell over the other idle, lethargic passengers on the steamer. This is a defining moment for Marlow as it is his first encounter with the native other; their difference is marked by their physical strength, their communal sense of purpose, but particularly by their apparent shared humanity: “but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity.” (63) However, the apparent realism that characterizes this description of the indigenous other is jarred by an unexpected metaphor; the insistence on their spontaneity and naturalness is compromised by the comparison of their faces to “grotesque masks.” This theatrical imagery suggests that Conrad is not depicting a natural representation but is rather creating what Edward Said describes as “a highly artificial enactment” (1979: 21) of native life that synchronizes with the constructs of European stereotypes. Masks may be either literal or emblematic, but in each case they function as barriers, separating the outer observer from the inner figure, suggesting a duality. With the epithet “grotesque” the masks assume a theatrical function that estranges through an ugly, almost frightening difference that hints at the monstrous as the mark of the colonizer’s definition of difference, that the natives are misshapen and thus not entirely human.

This imagery brings into focus the contentious issue of race that underlies the colonial binaries. We question whether Conrad really represents a colonizer’s view of the Other, a perspective based on horror and fear of degeneracy, or whether this is a stereotype which functions as the conventional literary representation of the racial Other in colonial writings, in what Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan describes as “an unwitting complicity with the very ideology ostensibly challenged by the novella.” (2005: 56) In Conrad’s defense Jennifer

Lipka argues that “the issue of race opens up one area of psychological interpretation of the novel, that being how we relate to the Other.” (2008: 27) Whilst I agree with Lipka’s analysis, I propose that the racial representation that offends Achebe must also be interpreted within the context of the narrative. I argue that the mask imagery links the natives to the leitmotif of “concealed life” (47) that underlies Marlow’s narrative, thus indicating that this characterization is a fiction, an image of the Other as represented in colonial binaries which is as unreliable as Marlow’s narrative.

This figurative language signifies a development in the depiction of the Other, from a figure who functioned to affirm the supremacy of Western civilization in *Robinson Crusoe* to natives who threaten and disturb the absolutes of colonialism. Defoe’s narrative directed the reader’s inclination towards acceptance of Friday by establishing a connection with Western sensibilities. The young native promised Crusoe “he would never eat Man’s Flesh any more.” (R.C. 196) There is a familiarity about him despite his racial differences. In contrast, these “grotesque masks” not only project an image and create a persona, they also form a disguise, hiding the unknown, unrecognizable Other from view, and consequently cannot be reliably interpreted. Marlow, the European outsider, fails to identify the significance of the black prisoner’s bit of “white worsted [tied] round his neck – Why? Where did he get it?” (H.D. 35), and cannot understand the restraint of the malnourished cannibals on his steamer: “Was it superstition, disgust, patience, fear – or some kind of primitive honor?” (71) These questions indicate, firstly, that there are no absolutes in this narrative, unlike the singularity of Defoe’s novel; and secondly, that there is no footprint in the sand around which to formulate an image of the Other. Instead, the metaphor of the mask implies that there is the potential for various others in a world of variable truths.

The duality implicit in the theatrical epithet elucidates the ambivalence underlying the narrative; there is a disjunction between appearance and reality. Marlow stumbles across this realization when he fails to identify the round ornamental knobs on the stakes

surrounding Kurtz's station as the shrunken heads they really are. But what was the victim's crime or their function, for them to be so tortured? "Rebels! What would be the next definition I was to hear? There had been enemies, criminals, workers – and these were rebels." (96) Conrad opens his narrative to the possibility of multiple perceptions and interpretations that questions the type of reality that is being discussed and by whom it is defined. Marlow's quest has become a journey into the unknown, a journey that confronts him with the dark inner Other that Freud's work describes. Conrad's narrative juxtaposes modernist concerns with this repressed side of human nature with the realism of nineteenth-century novels; within the context of the traditional colonial model the ethnocentrism and absolutism are subverted by introducing multifarious interpretations of reality and the nature of humanity which erode the moral and ideological stability of imperialism.

Marlow contrasts this early glimpse of the indigenous natives with those he observes at the Company station where a railway is being constructed. As he walks uphill he observes the tyranny of the chain gang with its line of "six black men [who] advanced in a file, toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads, and the clink kept time with their footsteps." (33) The vitality of the paddlers in their boats has been replaced by an indifference that is inherently expressed by "toiling", "erect", "slow" and "balancing" which suggests a passivity in the enslaved men that shocks Marlow. He changes direction so that his path leads him across the hillside and down towards a grove of "mournful stillness" (34) where, in this dark and gloomy shade, he gradually discerns how:

[b]lack shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees, leaning against the trunks, clinging to the earth, half coming out, half effaced within the dim light, in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment, and despair. (35)

These shadowy forms linger painfully in the imagination as the contours of their postures create blurred impressions of suffering and hopelessness in a darkly outlined diorama.

Once more the vibrancy of the paddling boatmen has dissipated and is now replaced by the despair of these long-held captives; the staccato rhythm of the short phrases conveys an accumulation of their broken bodies and destroyed spirits. These are the products of settlement and colonial exploitation.

The disparity between Marlow's earlier view of native life along the shore and the reality of the ruined bodies littering the grove at the Station illustrates forcefully "the brutal disjunction between the realities of colonization and the ideology of imperialism." (Young 2004: 25) Marlow comments that:

[t]he conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeemed it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea – something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to... (20)

By reducing imperialism and colonialism to their basics, Marlow effectively differentiates between ideology and settlement. The power of idealism is such that it can justify abusive strategies of conquest. But whereas Crusoe was able to rationalize his subjugation of Friday by reason of evangelical and civilizing motivations, the colonizers in these African stations are self-serving. They are "mean and greedy phantoms" (110), ruthless in their ambitions and relentless in their determination to maintain order. They regard the native slaves in the same light as they consider machinery and tools; useful in good working order but easily disposable when not functioning.

I nearly fell into a very narrow ravine, almost no more than a scar in the hillside. I discovered that a lot of imported drainage-pipes for the settlement had been tumbled in there. There wasn't one that was not broken. It was a wanton smash-up. (34)

The detailed realism and its depiction of ruined pipes shattered in the deep chasm in the ground implies the extent of the destruction wrought by the colonizers and the

futility of this engineering project which should enable quick transportation of mined or harvested natural resources through the dark forests of the jungle. They are out of place. Their technology is foreign to this landscape and the disease/accident-ridden epithet “scar” implies the extent of this invasion. The visual impact of the broken pipes in the ravine and the gradual accumulation of a sense of devastation and failure in the images of fragmentation “fell” “tumbled”, “broken” and “smash-up”, suggest the decline of the colonial mission. Conrad’s narrative here introduces elements of fragmentation and ambiguity to imply the broken dreams of imperialism. This is not the world of Robinson Crusoe whose enterprises in the narrative are represented as unquestionably superior to the primitive traditions of the cannibals, but a world of meaningless gestures and ambivalent signs. In Conrad’s Africa the colonists are projected as representing “a flabby, pretending, weak-eyed devil of a rapacious and pitiless folly” (34), whose confrontations with the rigorous demands of colonial expansion expose less an ideology than a greed and laziness symbolized by the unexpected images of “a boiler wallowing in the grass ... [and a] railway truck lying there on its back with its wheels in the air.” (32) This animalization projects an ironic comment on the destruction of the beauty of Africa’s natural world by the ruthless and careless industrialized West; the typical natural behaviors of large mammals that wallow in shallow waters to relax and cool off is juxtaposed with learned human degradations of basking in self-indulgence, self-pity and lack of self-restraint. Rusty discarded machines replace animals; the jungle wilderness is destroyed not just by Western greed, but by implications of Western disregard and respect for the world of the Other.

Chinua Achebe argues that in this novel “the very humanity of black people is called into question” (1990:15) and that “the real question is the dehumanization of Africa and Africans” (11), basing his objections on the depiction of Africa as “the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization.” (3) Tony C. Brown argues that Conrad fails to question this

assumption of Africa as “the constant repetition of Africa as the primal seat of darkness.” (2000: 15) Similarly, Michael Lackey argues that the Africans in the novel are “ontologized as more animal than human, which makes them non-spiritual beings.” (2005: 31) One passage in particular arouses great criticism. Marlow describes the responsibilities he holds as captain of the steamer as they attempt to navigate their way cautiously upriver, concentrating hard since “the snags were thick, the water was treacherous and shallow”. (64) One of his tasks is to guide his native fireman:

And between whiles I had to look after the savage who was fireman. He was an improved specimen; he could fire up a vertical boiler. He was there below me, and, upon my word, to look at him was as edifying as seeing a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat, walking on his hind-legs. A few months of training had done for that really fine chap. (63-64)

Despite the practicalities of the fireman’s work that Marlow is relating, the description unexpectedly enters the world of metaphor, as signaled by the comparative adverb “as” and the distortion implied by parody. Although this image offends and disturbs, it is surely the point of this cartoonish misrepresentation to highlight the ridiculous to the extent that the savages cannot be absorbed into the stereotypical literary representation of the racial Other because they are estranged, alienated and unfamiliar. Does this image reveal that Marlow is contemptuous of the African “who apes white ways and manners” as Inga Clendinnen argues (2007: 4) or is Marlow scornful of the colonial system that places the native in such absurdity? They retain their tribal customs and practices such as the boilerman’s “impromptu charm, made of rags, tied to his arm, and a piece of polished bone, as big as a watch, stuck flatways through his lower lip”. (64) The incongruity of the comparison of a tribal fetish to a Western invention exacerbates their difference. Marlow’s narrative seems to be leading the reader to consider that we have to look beyond the familiar into the mystery of mythologies and the strange to comprehend the humanity of the racial Other, because it is impossible to define within the language of their oppressors.

The apparent realism of Marlow's narrative is constantly subverted by his doubts and conjectures. "Do you see anything? It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream" (50), in which appearance becomes absurd or "incredible". (50) Characters retain the surreal qualities of the dream world. The fireman is compared to a "dog in breeches", the company accountant's immaculate appearance likens him to "a miracle" (36), the Russian who guides Marlow to Kurtz is "like a harlequin" (87) and Kurtz himself appears "long, pale, indistinct, like a vapor exhaled by the earth". (105) Marlow's narrative allows the reader to create one's own realities from the fantastic and ironic images he portrays. "Do you see the story?" he asks. But his fragmented thoughts and questions reveal his uncertainties that gradually impact upon the narrative, indicating how form is more important than the substance of his narrative. There is no fixed interpretation, nor didactic commentary, but an ambivalent narrative that subverts the fixed perspectives of realistic depictions. Crusoe's authority and assumed supremacy that were 'fixed' and morally justifiable according to colonial missionary ideals have been subverted by the powerful combination of the allure and abhorrence of evil, the "fascination of the abomination" (20) which permeates the interaction between the colonists and the indigenous natives. This brings a new complex element in the relationship because the moral center is no longer clearly defined. Is this why so many of the negative epithets predominate in the narrative, such as "inscrutable" (41), "inconceivable" (81), "incomprehensible" (62), "incomplete" (77), "unsound" (101), "unextinguishable" (113), "unostentatious" (82), "unexpressed" (112)? Do these adjectival forms suggest the dichotomy that pervades Marlow's understanding of Africa? This "fascination with the abomination" introduces a new binary opposition into the narrative, a paradox that explains the narrator's dichotomous responses and his sense of ambivalence and alienation that create the incomprehension created by the "haze" (15, 18) and the "trance" (67), the disorientating white fog "more blinding than the night" (67) and

finally by the darkness. Everything appears defamiliarized and becomes “puzzling, striking and disturbing”. (94)

While Conrad assumes Africa represents darkness, it is not representing the darkness of inhumanity; it is, as the masks suggest, that of the darkness of the unknown and the inexplicable. Rather than assuming that the binary oppositions on which Conrad bases his dialectic between Self and Other are inscribed within the traditional colonial discursive strategies of black/white, good/evil, barbaric/civilized or European/African, I argue that these oppositions are subverted by an underlying dialectic between truth and unreality in which the horrors of colonialism oppose the rhetoric of imperialism. The narrative questions the nature of truth by juxtaposing opposite realities; on the one hand, there is the depiction of colonial destruction of the broken, dying bodies and smashed pipes in the shade of the tree, and on the other hand there is colonial bureaucracy represented by the meticulously documented accounts “which were in apple-pie order.” (H.D. 37) Which represents reality, “a white man in new clothes and tan shoes” (54), or the “quarrelsome band of footsore sulky niggers”? (54) I propose that it is the juxtaposition of these two realities that provides a more complex view of colonialism in Africa that shows awareness of the subjective nature of all accounts and that begins to integrate other perspectives, and, crucially, articulates doubts about the ‘absolute truth value’ of a given perspective and position, a truth that is constantly under construction, demonstrating an ideological shift away from the absolutism of an overarching metanarrative that can provide a fundamental ordering to events. Conrad challenges the singularity of European perspectives of the Other. If the shadowy forms of the natives in the grove indicate the ambivalence of this signifier, the shadows suggest not only that there are variable perceptions of the Other in the narrative but that there are also varying literary representations of the Other. Terry Collits argues that if language is shown to be duplicitous the novel “subverts realism’s faith in the ability of narrative to express truth.” (2005: 111) This duplicity

is exemplified by Marlow's assertion that he "can't bear a lie" (49) and yet the narrative finishes with his lie to Kurtz's pale Intended when she asks about his final words. In contrast to Defoe's preface that vouches for the narrative as "Historical Fact" thus affirming its unquestioned truth, Marlow's revelation immediately questions the veracity of his entire narrative.

2.2 The Development of the Duality of the Other

Throughout the novel, the native is portrayed from varying perspectives that, although conflicting, remain within the hierarchies of Western supremacy. Marlow views the racial Other either as victim of the "noble enterprise" (55) of colonialism, bound by the literal chains of slavery and the metaphorical chains of colonial exploitation, or as free men in their natural habitat either hidden in the bushes near the river or deep within the jungle. From Marlow's perspective the natives remain contained by the constraints imposed by their race, whereas Kurtz responds to their Otherness indicated by savagery, vitality and wild "unspeakable rites." (83) From Marlow's point of view, the jungle queen is magnificent, a "wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman." (99) Her stature, accoutrements and bearing recall the wild vitality of the men paddling their boats across the sea. She has a power and sense of personal dignity that is self-empowering; she intimidates the white men who turn to their firearms for reassurance. Kurtz's young Russian companion explains nervously that "[i]f she had offered to come aboard I really think I would have tried to shoot her." (100) Similarly, the pilgrims on Marlow's steamer regard the savages as targets for their sport: "that imbecile crowd down on the deck started their little fun, and I could see nothing more for smoke." (109)

A similar duality is evident throughout the narrative as it explores the ethical values that define humanity, crossing boundaries and challenging stereotypes. Within the context of this novel, restraint is the defining marker between civilization and barbarity. However, Conrad's narrative subverts the traditional colonial binary by introducing the colonizers as

representative of “a flabby, pretending, weak-eyed devil of a rapacious and pitiless folly” (34), and the degenerate Kurtz who is censured for his lack of restraint “in the gratification of his various lusts.” (95) In contrast the only characters who show restraint are the cannibals, supposed symbols of African degeneracy, who are deprived of their usual food source and eat instead “some stuff like half-cooked dough, of a dirty lavender color”. (70) Marlow notices how “something restraining, one of those human secrets that baffle probability, had come into play there.” (70), a simple comment that reveals his recognition of their dignity in hardship and he discovers their subjectivity in the dignity of their imposed starvation. “Was it superstition, disgust, patience, fear – or some kind of primitive honor?” (71)

As Marlow struggles with the colonial denigration of the natives, he begins to sense another Other, that which represents the dark Other within himself and as his quest leads him deeper into the jungle so his voyage leads him further into the darkness of the self which may be identified as the disorienting world of the Freudian Id. Tony C. Brown argues that “the colonial mission is not so much a project of bringing light to benighted savages as it is a process of darkening, thus perverting the West’s image of itself as bearer of light and civilization.” (2000: 17) This commentary refers not only to a criticism of colonialism within the narrative, but also to the gradual distortion of the West’s perception of colonialism as a civilizing and evangelical mission that justifies economic exploitation. As Marlow journeys upriver he becomes increasingly uncertain of his own sense of humanity: the helmsman had proved his value to the expedition since “he had done something, he had steered” (H.D. 84), yet Marlow is increasingly disturbed by the darkness of the jungle which was “so hopeless and so dark, so impenetrable to human thought, so pitiless to human weakness.” (91) The literal journey towards Kurtz becomes a spiritual and psychological quest for Marlow as he seeks to discover how far “[he] should turn out faithful to that ideal conception of one’s own personality every man sets up for himself

secretly.” (Conrad 1997: 172-3) At a moment of epistemological crisis, both the unnamed narrator of Conrad’s short story *The Secret Sharer* and Marlow conceive of the doppelgänger, identifying an Other in the form of a Western “other self” (184) in a journey to the inaccessible. Kurtz symbolizes the horror of “the inconceivable mystery of a soul that knew no restraint, no faith and no fear.” (H.D. 108) He represents those forces of darkness which lurk beneath the European veneer of civilization that Marlow experiences so tenuously.

The depiction of Kurtz is linked thematically to the subjugated indigenous peoples, thus signifying the duality of the Other in this novel. The natives, for example, have faces like “grotesque masks” (30) whilst Kurtz’s “bony head [...] nodded with grotesque jerks” (97). When dying, the natives are reduced to humiliation and loss of dignity: “While [Marlow] stood horror struck, one of these creatures rose to his hands and knees and went off on all-fours to the river to drink.” (36) Later, Marlow witnesses the dying Kurtz making his way through the grass: “He can’t walk – he is crawling on all-fours – I’ve got him.” (105) Just as Conrad subverts the concept of a singular ‘reading’ of his narrative, so he challenges the idea of a single image of the Other. Nothing is certain or easily defined as typified by Kurtz. His name means “short” in German, but “his name was as true as everything else in his life – and death. He looked at least seven feet long.” (97) If Marlow sought out Kurtz to explain “the choice of nightmares” (101) he discovers that there is no single solution to the darkness. Marlow is constrained to follow multiple possibilities, to go down “[p]aths, paths, everywhere; a stamped-in network of paths spreading over the empty land, through the long grass” (39) in an attempt to construct an image from the enigma. This complex ambivalence forms the foundation for Kenneth Graham’s definition of Kurtz as the modern hero. “He is the subverting *étranger*, the man without qualities [...] who overthrows all the impostures and seeming values of the world around him.” (1996: 211) By considering Kurtz as a subversive outsider, Graham imagines an Other whose function is no longer

merely an affirmation of the identity of the European subject in a world of “them” and “us”, but also an exposition of the flaws in the ideology that defines colonialism.

3 *L'Étranger* and 'L'Hôte'

3.1 The Other Within a Multiracial Society

“Ce qu'ils n'aimaient pas en lui, c'était l'Algérien.” (362) This brief sentence appears in Camus's notes and sketches at the end of his unfinished, posthumously published novel *Le Premier Homme* in 1994. “They” are not identified, although Debra Kelly argues that *they* certainly means the 1950s Parisian left-wing intelligentsia opposed to continuing colonization.” (2007a: 194) This attribution implies partisanship, an attempt to assign a political agenda to Camus's work. Since Albert Camus was born in French Algeria of European parents and grew up experiencing directly the tensions of an 'East/West' divide between the indigenous Arabs and the *piets-noirs* who remained citizens of France, but were alienated from the native communities by their right to vote and right to receive French state benefits, he was aware of the deep-rooted antagonisms that divided Algerian society. I argue that since anonymity brings universality, the reference is more powerful if it stands alone without identifying “ils”, thus becoming a commentary on the problems of identity, conflicting nationalities and estrangement within a multicultural community rather than a comment on colonialism's dialectic of Self and Other.

In a diverse society composed of multiple hybrid identities the important question we must ask is how to establish who is Other from among the multifarious ethnic groups that inhabit the French colony, such as the minority white *colons* and the indigenous Arabs. French colonial policy of total assimilation effectively cast Algeria itself as Other during the late 1930's early 1940's “où presque personne en France ne s'intéressait à ce pays, jusqu'à 1958, où tout le monde en parle.” (Camus 2013: 11) How is this blanket silencing of a colony and its eventual emerging voice culminating in the Algerian War of Independence 1954-1962 reflected in Camus's novel *L'Étranger* (1942) and the short story 'L'Hôte' (1957)? The ambivalence inherent in these two titles underlines the issues of belonging and identity that are fundamental to defining the social hierarchies established in

the French colony of Algeria. By identifying his two protagonists Meursault in *L'Étranger* and Daru in 'L'Hôte' as French Algerians of limited financial means, Camus subverts the traditional oppositions between civilized colonizer/barbaric colonized. The Other is no longer the clearly defined indigenous native who inhabits a natural wilderness and is characterized by barbarous and heathen practices, but a member of a disparate community in which the natives are repressed by virtue of their religious and ethnic differences. The ambivalence in the titles suggests that for Camus alterity is intangible and elusive. Levinas describes the Stranger as one "who disturbs the being at home with oneself. But the Stranger also means the free one [...] He is not wholly in my site." (1969: 39) Thus an encounter with the Other preserves the Other as separate and not understood as a reflection of the subject's self. In Camus's writings, Otherness is not consistently identified with the oppressed colonized but, as the titles imply, alterity may be constructed on dialectics differing from the traditional colonial oppositions.

Such questions are fundamental to the discussion of the identification of the Other in Camus's novels since the author himself is writing from a position of discord. Although born in Algeria, David Carroll argues that "the Algerian in Camus" should be regarded as a locus of a problem, and as "an expression of the alterity or hybridity of his conflicted identity, of a division at the very core of the self that constitutes an opening or receptivity to others." (2007: 8) This concept of a "conflicted identity" forms the basis for the author's identification of the Other in his writings, an Other that must be identified from a complex weave of ambiguous representations.

France is represented in both narratives by institutions of power such as the legal system that condemns Meursault to death for the murder of the Arab, and symbolized by "la Légion d'honneur" that is worn by the director of the Home where Meursault's mother died. In 'L'Hôte', written at a later date when Algerian voices were being recognized, France is represented by the institutions of the centralized education system observed

even in remote rural areas of Algeria and by the humane supplies of grain distributed to help people feed their families throughout the drought. All these representations emphasize the centralization of the French colonial system. Paris like London is perceived to be a remote unfamiliar city; the scattering of Parisians in the stories encompasses either figures of authority or very minor players. Like the colonial power epitomized by the “mournful gloom, brooding motionless over the biggest, and the greatest, town on earth” (H.D. 15) in *Heart of Darkness*, Paris is similarly depicted as a locus of ruthless exploitation. Meursault explains to his girlfriend Marie that he does not wish to live in Paris again because “[c]’est sale. Il y a des pigeons et des cours noires. Les gens ont la peau blanche.” (63) He succinctly evokes images of scavengers in a dark, menacing landscape, ready to manipulate the unwary.

Notably, this is the only point in the narrative that Camus references skin color. Since Homi Bhabha argues that “skin, as the key signifier of cultural and racial difference in the stereotype, is the most visible of fetishes” (2004:112), Camus is attempting to distinguish the Other within a different dialectic and an ironic reversal of prejudice relating to the skin fetish. Although he introduces distinguishing facial features in the description of the Arab prisoner in ‘L’Hôte’ he rarely portrays his characters in terms of racial characteristics that typify the racial Other represented in the novels by Defoe, Conrad, Coetzee and Le Clézio. Camus’s outsider is defined by cultural differences and heritage. Concepts of outsider/stranger and guest/host implicate a relationship identified by difference and characterized by tension and exemplifies a society that is not at ease with itself.

This tension is embodied in the structure of *L’Étranger* that is divided into two parts, both of which are narrated in the first person by Meursault, an office clerk, whose simple daily routine is interrupted by news of the death of his mother. The first part of the novel narrates the chain of events ensuing from his mother’s death, the tedious journey to the wake, the heat, his liaison with Marie an old office friend, and his developing friendship

with his neighbor Raymond Sintès who is embroiled in a violent confrontation with his supposedly cheating Arab girlfriend and her brother. Meursault's narrative details the episodes that lead to an encounter on the beach where, under the glaring, harsh sun, Meursault shoots the Arab. Part two deals with Meursault's imprisonment, trial and eventual sentencing to death. The same events that we observed in part one are recounted by various witnesses under examination by the lawyers, but from a different perspective. The events that appeared seemed so straightforward in Meursault's first account now adopt a more menacing overtone as the trial explores his conduct at the funeral rather than examine the details of the murder, forcing the reader to not only question the validity of these differing impressions of his accounts but to also question our own value judgments and opinions.

Where is truth? Does this rather prosaic character really represent "monsieur l'Antéchrist" (91) and is he really guilty of having "un cœur de criminel" as he has been accused? Or is the court so discomfited and threatened by Meursault's practice of a very individual interpretation of integrity that it too becomes guilty of murder in the form of murder by erasure as the Arab's death is eventually ignored and absent from the narrative? Kamel Daoud's novel *Meursault, contre-enquête* (2014) in which the dead Arab's brother writes back to the original novel in an attempt to give back an identity to his brother and claims "[t]out s'est passé sans nous." (74) He asks quite simply, but framed within a universal theme, where is the responsibility of the colonizer towards the colonized, "[q]ue faire d'un homme que vous rencontrez sur une île déserte et qui vous dit qu'il a tué, la vieille, un Vendredi? Rien." (2014: 59) If Meursault's perspective is condemned by society, does this mean that his narrative is suspect and unreliable? By referencing these questions, Camus's novel explores the problem of integrating differing perspectives, cultures and ideologies in multiethnic societies. The trial scene is thus a narrative strategy of explication, rather than a search for knowledge of the criminal Other, Meursault,

seeking to assimilate unorthodox behaviors into its own cultural systems. This is not a process of understanding but a process of absolute control. His silences, his refusal to lie or explain, such as his failure before the judge when he asks “[p]ourquoi? Il faut que vous me le disiez. Pourquoi?” [Meursault se] taisai[t] toujours” (88) are attempts to resist this dominance.

Who is the Other in ‘L’Hôte’: the pied-noir schoolteacher Daru, the Arab prisoner or the Corsican law enforcer Balducci? Who is the Other in *L’Étranger*: the disinterested loner Meursault, the Arabs, or the other marginalized characters that people the narrative? Arguments may be made to support any one of these possibilities. But it is this very potential for multiplicity that differentiates Camus’s concept of the Other from that of the traditional ‘fixed’ colonial dialectic, such as defined by Defoe, and develops the argument made in *Heart of Darkness* in the elusive character of Kurtz that Otherness may not be identified solely by race and ethnic origin.

3.2 The Other in *L’Étranger*

Camus’s depiction of the Algerian world has been criticized for being “Manichean and simplistic” (Maougal 2006:161), since his literary characters represent “the good civilized person on one side, the European [...] and, on the other, the problematic indigene.” (161) Debra Kelly argues the objectification of the colonized is achieved by a “systematic nullification of Arab characters.” (2007: 193) They are typified as “anonymous figures who pass like furtive shadows” (Maougal: 150). To some degree Camus could be rightly accused of denigrating the Arabs in his stories. In *L’Étranger*, for example, their characters are few, often characterized as unnamed workers, dressed in “leurs bleus de chauffe grisseux” (76), a uniform that indicates their work as manual laborers; and they are occasionally depicted as loitering in passive aggressive groups in the streets, “adossés à la devanture du bureau de tabac”. (69) These brief descriptions give a glimpse of another

world of the working class, the unemployed and the despairing nothingness of their daily lives. There is no mythology, cultural reference or frame of reference other than the greasy overalls and the aimless squandering of time in the streets. We have one fleeting insight into their lives when Raymond confesses that his altercation on the tram was with his ex-girlfriend's brother who was engaged in antagonistic posturing, carrying knives and making threatening advances, such as the challenge made to Raymond Sintès to get off the tram and fight. This menacing behavior fulfills our expectations of the violent, dangerous racial/ethnic Other stereotype. When the altercation is later placed within context, the Arab is defending his sister from Raymond's sleazy influence, we comprehend that there are differing perspectives and consequently subverts our confidence in racial stereotyping.

This threat signifies an important function within the narrative since it implies that the different racial groups have diverse concepts of masculinity or even humanity itself. In Defoe's and Conrad's narratives Western masculinity is recognized to be superior, an assumption clearly endorsed by depictions of native degeneracy. The Arab is clearly demanding Sintès to prove his authority. I would argue that this exchange prefigures Meursault's trial in which the author tries to redefine the Other in terms other than race or ethnicity by questioning other areas of difference through which he can indicate Otherness in non-political and non-racial terms, developing the concept of the existentially alienated Other – a philosophical, psychological and social form of Otherness.

An apparently straightforward representation of Algerian society is depicted in *L'Étranger* at the wake for Meursault's mother in a passage that has been surprisingly overlooked by many critics. I propose that this scene is an important demonstration of Camus's perceptions of this multiethnic society. Colonial French institutions are represented by the Parisian warden who claims a voice of authority by explaining that although he too "est entré à l'asile comme indigent" (26) he is different from the other residents because he is defined by his functionary status. Therefore, he can assume that "il

avait des droits.” (26) By emphasizing this exceptionalism, Camus quickly establishes the hierarchical structures within French colonial centralization. Meursault and the elderly residents who attend the wake and remain watchful observers over the casket represent the French Algerians, whilst an Arab nurse remains firmly in the background, her back turned to the group, silent and silenced. Within this simple depiction of a morgue and its mourners the author carefully establishes a diorama of the colonial situation in Algeria. These episodes effectively distort the construct of the center and periphery by introducing the tripartite groupings that complicate the structures of this settler society.

This Arab nurse who attends the coffin of Meursault’s mother introduces a representation of the racial Other in the novel. Jan Rigaud argues that her “triple conditions, as a woman, as a ‘colonisée’, and as an Arab have pushed her to the bottom of society.” (1992: 186) Despite this burden of Otherness she is noticed.

Près de la bière, il y avait une infirmière arabe en sarrau blanc, un foulard de couleur vive sur la tête [...] j’ai vu qu’elle portait sous les yeux un bandeau qui faisait la tour de la tête [...] on ne voyait que la blancheur du bandeau dans son visage. (25)

Although she almost disappears into the background as her white smock blends into the whitewashed walls, she is a very different literary representation of the racial Other from the figure depicted by the ill-defined “black shapes” (H.D. 34) and “black shadows” (35) in *Heart of Darkness* since her representation has substance; she is first defined by her occupation and ethnicity and not by racial subservience. The vividly colored scarf not only symbolizes her religion and her ethnicity, but also subtly conveys the complexity of difference within a multiracial culture in which the racial tension is no longer between the simple diametrically opposed black and white. The contrast between these bright colors and the whiteness of the institution writes a subtext of tension between her individuality and her subjugation as woman, Muslim and Other. Meursault remarks that the nurse’s movements stress her alienation from the group at the wake; she sits “au fond, le dos

tourné.” (27) This body language emphasizes her cultural and religious differences as a Muslim, but the disease that ravages her face signifies her inferiority. She is not whole, therefore her alterity is confirmed. Nevertheless, the narrative subverts this stereotypical depiction of Otherness when Meursault is discomfited by the realization that the elderly folk at the wake are sitting opposite him in a literal representation of a Levinasian confrontation with the face of the Other. “[Meursault a eu] un moment l’impression ridicule qu’ils étaient là pour [le] juger.” (28) Judgment implies the evaluation of a person or an act. Not only does this moment prefigure his trial, but it subtly transposes the role of Other to the narrator himself; he is being appraised by the elderly, thus placing Meursault in an ironic disjunction within his own story. Since the storyteller orders his account from a defined perspective, the characters appear to critique the very ethics on which their representation is based. This reversal reveals a statement about the relationship between the writer and his narrative and the Otherness of writing.

The problematics of Otherness are symbolized by Meursault’s incarceration in prison after his arrest. He recalls how “[l]e jour de [son] arrestation, on [l]’a d’abord enfermé dans une chambre où il y avait déjà plusieurs détenus, la plupart des Arabes.” (92) Their presence confirms the representation that associates Arabs with inferiority and delinquency as a form of latent Orientalism that Edward Said analyses as involving “an already pronounced evaluative judgment” (1979: 207) that represents “an almost unconscious (and certainly untouchable) positivity” (206) that remains in a state of constant “unanimity, stability, and durability”. (206). However, It is the prison cell itself, as a representative of colonial institutions, that has become a symbol of the Otherness that binds them together in opposition to Western power and authority. Their imprisonment symbolizes their disempowerment as a result of colonial bureaucratic strongholds, while their solidarity, helping each other with the making the bedrolls is indicative of a shared humanity; assistance across the racial divide expresses their resistance to colonial authority that

Metropolitan France imposes. The subtext of this passage is therefore an expression of the unstable locus of marginalized identity within Algerian society. There is a constant shifting of perceptions within the narrative since the Arabs are both the criminal, incarcerated Other who signifies the social and institutional outsider and also the representative of an oppressed underclass. Similarly, Raymond Sintès, Meursault's neighbor and companion at the beach, recounts a sordid history of domestic violence in which he beats his Arab girlfriend for her supposed infidelity. He tells Meursault that "[Il] la tapais, mais tendrement pour ainsi dire." (50) He becomes afraid because her brother and his friends follow him in order to seek their own form of justice. There is no fixed Other as portrayed by Defoe. Within this multicultural and racial society the Other is "not a constant or defining feature" (Davis 2000: 71) but a product of differing perspectives. Since the trial focuses on Meursault and not on his crime, his identity and his narrative become emblematic of the fluctuating perception of the outsider situated within a multicultural community.

Fanon argues that the nature of humanity and the affirmation of identity are closely related, "because [colonialism] is a systemized negation of the other [...it] forces the colonized to constantly ask the question: Who am I in reality?" (2004: 182) The trial acts as an exposition of such inquiries as Meursault is asked to defend, not his act of murder, but his conduct at his mother's interment. David Carroll argues in such a line of prosecution "Meursault loses not just his freedom but has his birthright and identity as a French citizen challenged" (32) and even his common humanity. His failure to cry at his mother's wake, his willingness to drink coffee and smoke a cigarette, and his refusal to break down before the crucifix in the examining magistrate's office all contribute to the identification of Meursault as an outsider. Once signified as Other in the narrative, Meursault is increasingly objectified and silenced. He notices how "on avait l'air de traiter cette affaire en dehors de moi" (116), until finally his defense lawyer assume his identity

and adopts the “je” (121) rather than “il” when referring to his client. As prisoner he becomes metaphorically as silenced as the Arabs who are absent from the narrative. They reflect and mirror his Otherness and outsidership.

The events related in the first part of the narrative in the narrative are reiterated later when various witnesses are interrogated within the confines of the courtroom. The reader is placed in a privileged position as observer of the various interpretations of Meursault’s straightforward, unremarkable actions are unfolded in the reflection of the Arab’s murder. Instead of functioning as a locus of justice, the trial becomes a construct of power. Gradually, as the trial unfolds, reactions to Meursault’s narrative betray the antagonism that sends frissons round the silent courtroom. Through this testimony the author reveals how different cultures, societies and individuals can experience the same events but interpret them in varying, even diametrically opposite ways and form conflicting conclusions. Meursault finally realizes a terrible truth:

[il] écoutai[t] et [il] entendai[t] qu’on [le] jugeait intelligent.
Mais [il] ne comprenai[t] pas bien comment les qualités d’un
homme ordinaire pouvaient devenir des charges écrasantes
contre un coupable. (118)

Perspectives, comprehension and evaluations depend not only on individual experiences, heritage and ethics, but also on social position. By exposing Meursault to this trial, I propose that Camus is attempting to explore the problematics of understanding an Otherness that is of an existential and psycho-social nature and that the cultural outsiders function to enforce the outsider theme on a different level. In Defoe’s novel there was never a consideration that the marginalized could possess a different and/or equally valid morality, but Camus has made this very suggestion through the construct of the trial. By relating the same events through the same consciousness, the reader experiences how his/her perceptions are destabilized by the lawyer’s interrogation. I argue that by focusing on Meursault rather than on his crime, the trial functions in the novel as an exploration of

difference. By contrasting various interpretations of the same events the trial gives expression to the function of the Other that Levinas describes as fundamental to Otherness: “It is necessary to have the idea of infinity, the idea of the perfect [...] in order to know one’s imperfection. The idea of the perfect is not an idea but desire; it is the welcoming of the Other.” (1969: 84)

3.3 The Other in ‘L’Hôte’

The short story ‘L’Hôte’, narrated in the more impersonal third person, focuses on an episode involving the schoolteacher Daru, a Corsican gendarme and an unnamed Arab prisoner. Balducci brings the Arab to the schoolhouse for shelter and to ask Daru to accompany him to the prison in Tinguit. At first he resists the gendarme’s instructions but finally agrees to take the prisoner as requested. By giving the prisoner the choice of freedom or prison Daru flaunts police authority and angers the Arab terrorist groups. He discovers he has been branded a traitor and threatened by the terrorists with whom the Arab was in league.

The first line of the narrative describes how Daru notices two men ascending the hill towards his schoolhouse. The second sentence in the narrative reads: “L’un était à cheval, l’autre à pied.” (82) Immediately, a form of hierarchy has been established. A few sentences later we discover the identity of the two men, “le cavalier Balducci, le vieux gendarme [qui...] tenait au bout d’une corde un Arabe qui avançait derrière lui, les mains liées, le front baissé.” (84) Daru observes the humiliation of the Arab, his head bowed in a posture of shame and hardship such that his body language symbolizes his total subjugation. Jill Beer argues that in ‘L’Hôte’ the teacher Daru’s first impression of the Arab prisoner is described “in terms of cultural difference”. (2002: 183) However, I would argue that Daru’s first impression of the Arab prisoner is one of complete racial degradation and colonial domination. Tied to his master/policeman by a rope, he is treated no better

than an animal. In this brief scene Camus establishes the structure of colonial Algeria; the important symbol of French institutions in the figure of Balducci in contrast with the vigilant French Algerian and the objectified and disdained Arab.

Jill Beer argues that an illustration of the welcoming of the Other in Levinasian terms is evident in the schoolteacher Daru's demonstration of hospitality to the Arab prisoner in the short story 'L'Hôte', a gesture that marks "a turning of self outwards, towards exteriority [...] It is a process of identification that unfolds, both of Self and of the Other as Other." (2002:186) This represents a moment in which the Arab becomes subject and represents a significant change in the political climate of the narrative. By the time of publication of 'L'Hôte' in 1957, the balance of the relationship between Arabs and pieds-noirs had changed and the marginalized groups had formed freedom fighters to help in the War for Algerian Independence (1954-1962). The conflicts between the marginalized ethnic minorities and the French nationals of the metropolitan center are represented in this story through the interaction, or its lack, between the main characters - a schoolteacher, a policeman and an Arab prisoner. Their occupations place them in a dialectical opposition of representatives of French institutions of education and law and order against the criminal outsider, creating a dialectic based on stereotypes of good and evil. Dissent is assumed as evidenced by the conversation between the gendarme and Daru who asks the officer if "il est contre nous?" (87) This simple question delineates the two opposing groups, colonial France and the indigenous natives. The Arab is characterized by his dress and more particularly by his features; Daru notices "ses énormes lèvres, pleines, lisses, presque négroïdes." (84) The detailed description of his mouth effectively differentiates him from the pieds-noirs by referencing the negroid features that signify the archetypal Other in literary representation. By including a description of the Arab's facial characteristics the narrative subtly links this prisoner with other oppressed figures from history who suffered slavery and subjugation.

The dialectic is based on a binary opposition between oppressor and oppressed, each fighting for the position of the “host” rather than the “guest” of the title in a country destabilized by growing demand for independence. The ambivalence in the title suggests the predicament of the marginalized struggling to overcome a repressive regime in which they are always Other despite their native origins. It is an issue that J.M. Coetzee also discusses in his novels that were published before the end of apartheid in South Africa. The question to be answered is how the submissive Other can be depicted in white patriarchal discourse which is traditionally hostile to the demands of the marginalized for identity and independence.

The unexpected appearance of two men toiling laboriously through the snow up the steep path to the remote schoolhouse is carefully noted by the primary school teacher Daru, who stands alone at the window, watching their slow progress towards him.

L’instituteur regardait les deux hommes monter vers lui. L’un était à cheval, l’autre à pied. Ils n’avaient pas encore entamé le raidillon abrupt qui menait à l’école, bâtie au flanc d’une colline. Ils peinaient, progressant lentement dans la neige, entre les pierres, sur l’immense étendue du haut plateau désert. (81)

It is a hard trek over a harsh unyielding landscape, which is conveyed by the long vowel sounds and the alliteration of “peinaient”, “progressant”, “pierres” and “plateau” which suggest the heavy, weary plodding of the man and the horse as they labor up the slope. They have travelled a considerable distance under bad conditions and apparently approach the schoolhouse as a refuge against the bad weather. By opening the story with “L’instituteur regardait...” the narrative privileges Daru as a center of consciousness and asserts the authority of Daru’s position through his status as teacher and figurehead within the community. Similarly, the horseman, advantaged by his ridership, represents domination and superiority over the inferiority and shame of the man on foot, whoever he may be. This power dialectic is rapidly established by the strong visual image of the two

men approaching, and by the balanced rhythm of the comparative structure of the sentence, “[l]’un [...] l’autre”, which implies equality but the context denies it. Linguistic tension is a device that Camus uses effectively within this narrative to convey the political and cultural problems that are flaring up in the period before the Algerian War of Independence. Such descriptions as a covering of snow which is both “blanche et sale” (81), a dawn that brings “une lumière sale” (82) and the Arab’s expression which is both “inquiet et rebelle” (85) provide unexpected juxtapositions which suggest the cultural, ethical and humanitarian conflicts that underlie the narrative.

Balducci tenait au bout d’une corde un Arabe qui avançait derrière lui, les mains liées, le front baissé. Le gendarme fit un geste de salutation auquel Daru ne répondit pas, tout entier occupé à regarder l’Arabe vêtu d’une djellaba autrefois bleue, les pieds dans des sandales, mais couverts de chaussettes en grosse laine grège, la tête coiffée d’un chèche étroit et court. (84)

Although Balducci, the policeman, and Daru, the teacher, both represent the institutions and bureaucracy of French colonial rule in Algeria, the teacher’s initial failure to respond to Balducci’s greeting indicates a gulf between their attitudes towards the Arab and consequently a gap between their perceptions and understanding of the civil unrest that is sweeping across the countryside. To the policeman, the Arab is a criminal, typifying the stereotype of the barbaric Other; the rope that binds his hands and degrades his humanity is a symbol of the power of the colonizer over the inferior native, an image reinforced by their seating in the school room in which “Balducci trônait” (85) on a desk while the prisoner “s’était accroupi” by the fire (85). He is less interested in the crime and motive of the criminal act - “[ç]a n’est pas clair” (87) - than in the bureaucratic niceties that must be completed in order to show he has fulfilled his obligations. He is a representative of the state through and through; but Daru is not. He sympathizes with the Arab, treating him as a human being under stress, offering mint tea and dinner, preparing a bed for him to sleep on and sharing the intimacy of sleeping space. At this point the gulf between the attitudes of

the two representatives of French officialdom is made clear. To Balducci, the Arab represents the despicable, criminal objectified Other. In contrast, to Daru who distributes grain to the impoverished Arab families suffering from hunger as a result of the fierce drought that has devastated the countryside, who studies the prisoner's traditional dress and notes the faded blue of his cloak from the overuse of poverty, and who offers him hospitality after a long trek through the snowy terrain, the native begins to represent the Other as subject. (Roberts 2008: 532)

Through these conflicting perceptions of the Arab prisoner the author is able to critique the prevailing French policy regarding its colonies and to express the differences that tear the country apart. On one hand, the rope signifies the power of the French judicial system, its processes of law and order, and at the same time it symbolizes the Arab's inferiority which can only be dealt with by literally and metaphorically binding the native to the French system. The acclaimed ideological justification of the *mission civilisatrice* to "bring the benefits of French culture, religion and language to the unenlightened races of the earth" (Young 2004: 30) is challenged by the obvious perception of the native as object and therefore unworthy of any egalitarian programs. Similarly, the process of assimilation, which demanded the renouncing of indigenous culture and religion, implied and enacted the destruction of native culture, language and institutions. Daru's attempts at hospitality, his desire to set the man free and his initial refusal to accede to Balducci's demands for assistance, suggest that not all functionaries are antagonistic to the oppressed peoples and that, as in *L'Étranger*, there are varying levels of difference and that the construct of the Other is an individual process and cannot be prescribed by institutions and bureaucratic policies, and variable forms of justice.

In this story Camus introduces the trope of an arid hostile landscape that reflects tensions between power, status, responsibility, inferiority and shame. While Robinson Crusoe was able to construct an image of the Other from the footprint in the sand, at this

point in Algerian history the infertile stony ground is a poor source of imaginings and can only provide the realities of everyday poverty. There is no rich harvest from the land; “[o]n ne labourait ici que pour récolter des cailloux”. (90) The unexpected juxtaposition of “récolter des cailloux” indicates the paucity of the acculturation program, its failure to both enrich and to reap rewards in return. This tortuous ground of stones whose only harvest is a barren basket from “les champs de pierre” (87), suggests that this alien environment does not carry any historical resonances from the past from which a white writer can create a reliable construct of the Other. The traces from stumbling over the snow-covered terrain affirm that there is no clearly defined construct of the Other in a society on the verge of a brutal war of independence.

This rough desert terrain, which is in stark contrast to the lush vegetation in *Robinson Crusoe* and *Heart of Darkness*, marks a pivotal moment in the literary representation of the Other since its infertility suggests that colonialism is unwelcome, misguided and unjustified and hence resisted. This hostile landscape motif recurs in the stone terraces of Cruso’s island in Coetzee’s *Foe*, and in the harsh borderlands of Texas and Mexico in McCarthy’s *No Country For Old Men*.

Both *L’Étranger* and ‘L’Hôte’ introduce justice as a defining trope of difference; by resisting the myth of cannibalism as a validation for the colonial impulse, Camus effectively negates the ethical rationale that underwrote the justification for the *mission civilisatrice* and consequently the persona of the Other as native. “Dans ce vaste pays qu’il avait tant aimé, [Daru] était seul.” (99) He is now the outsider, the Other, ostracized by the very communities he had been attempting to help. His actions have been misunderstood by the rebel forces who hold Daru responsible for the imprisonment of their compatriot, failing to understand that Daru, in fact, gave the Arab a choice between freedom and incarceration when he led him out across the plateau. He is accused of treachery.

4. *Foe*

4.1 Identifying the Other

When J.M. Coetzee's novel *Foe* was published in 1986, it was greeted by many hostile reactions that criticized the author's apparent disregard for current events in South Africa, particularly the horrors of apartheid and the violence its oppressive practices engendered. "While the country was burning, quite literally in some places, the logic went, here was one of our most prominent authors writing about the writing of a somewhat pedestrian eighteenth-century novelist" (Marais cited in Wright 2006: 2) There was, at that time, a widely held assumption "that any responsible and principled South African writer, especially during the apartheid years, will have had as a primary concern the historical situation of the country and the suffering of the majority of its people." (Attridge 2006: 64) Coetzee's metafictional treatment of Defoe's novel was regarded as a wasted opportunity to question government policy and to provide a position of integrity from which arguments could develop. This criticism raises many questions about the social and political responsibilities of a writer to protest against the legal, ethical and political constraints of an oppressive autocratic regime in which he is situated. Coetzee himself argues that he does in fact focus on history as an area of contestation and he describes *Foe* as "an interrogation of authority" (1992: 247), which makes his novel political in scope if not in subject. Thus Dominic Head argues that Coetzee regards the novelist's art as "a form of independent resistance" to history (2009: 26), an argument that places him firmly within the context of confrontation and struggle, although not necessarily in the same political and social arenas that concern other South African writers.

Coetzee's assertion that *Foe* challenges authority leads us to consider whose authority he questions and how this controls the representation of the racial Other in the narrative. Why does this contemporary writer choose to write back to a canonical eighteenth-century novel which represents a paradigm of the colonial relationship structured on racial

difference that privileges white Europeans? *Robinson Crusoe* appears to represent the very social, political and ethical issues that underlie the policies of the autocratic South African regime. But the title has been changed and this modification may provide insight into Coetzee's methodology since the name *Foe* signals conflict and antagonism rather than accord or conformity. Whose Foe does the title reference? There are several viable options to consider, such as the struggle between colonizer and colonized, the divergence from colonial to postcolonial narrative, even the novel's relationship to Defoe's novel itself since the name "Foe" serves as patronymic of the author. (Spivak: 2003: 179) When writing back to the familiar story of the castaway who enslaved Friday, Coetzee challenges the assumptions of privilege that dominate Western thought by identifying this ambiguous title with the figure of the writer Foe, suggesting that his narrative represents the adversarial Other.

In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech (2003), in which Coetzee narrates a story about Crusoe and Friday, he examines the potential variations in literary representation of these characters and their relationship. "How are they to be figured, this man and he? As master and slave? As brothers, twin brothers? As comrades in arms? Or as enemies, foes?" (2003) The significance of these considerations lies not in the individual questions themselves but in the act of challenge to the hierarchy within the colonial power relationship since these suggested forms of literary representation range from domination and subjugation through equality to the provocative "enemies, foes". The concepts underlying "foe" imply not only the desire for power inherent in subjectivity and autonomy, or the desire for freedom of thought and of expression, but also embraces the desire for the will or strength to oppose and challenge. *Foe* thus becomes an indicator of subversion as well as independence.

As the change in title from *Robinson Crusoe* to *Foe* suggests, Coetzee's protagonist is effectively displaced from the center of the narrative. Rather than attempt an historical revisionism the author adapts what he describes in his Jerusalem Prize acceptance speech

as a “preoccupation with power and the torsions of power” (1992: 98) in patriarchal discourse to challenge the authority of the narrator in white discourse and the literary representation of the archetypal colonial hero. Two new characters are introduced; the castaway Susan Barton and the writer Foe whom she asks to rewrite her own narrative of life on the desert island, for although her version of the story “gives the truth, it does not give the substance of the truth”. (51) Thus, Coetzee’s *Cruso* is deprived of two of the iconic functions of his counterpart in Defoe’s novel: that of castaway, for *Cruso*’s life on the island is already established before the opening of Susan’s narrative, and that of author/narrator. *Crusoe/Cruso* not only loses his position as narrator to Barton, but he is also denied the power of language and storytelling. He has lost the voice of the creative muse; pragmatism and utilitarianism have replaced inspirational thought. “*Crusoe* had no stories to tell of the life he had lived [...] before the shipwreck”. (34) Not gifted by the practical and philosophical creativity that characterized *Robinson Crusoe*, this castaway is dominated by a form of dogged pragmatism that is expressed in his utilitarian forms of speech and the endless time-consuming construction of useless terraces of stone.

Speech is restricted to basic forms of communication rather than the indulgent “pleasures of conversation” (22) that Susan Barton values. She freely acknowledges the power of discourse when she admits that “what [*Friday*] is to the world is what [the narrator] make[s] of him.” (122) She wonders “[w]hat is the truth of *Friday*?” (121) This question reverberates through the novel; it is a significant, even controversial, consideration particularly when written under the pressure of a totalitarian regime that had only recently modified its laws of censorship. Coetzee indicates that the marginalized have identities and stories that need to be articulated and consequently share the very humanity that the authoritarianism of colonialism and apartheid has denied them. *Friday*’s emergent significance in the story and *Cruso*’s fading importance reflect the increasingly unstable society of contemporary post-colonial South Africa.

Cruso's character is stubborn and opinionated and, despite his "truly kingly figure" (37), he is curiously vulnerable, physically weakened by the fevers that eventually lead to his death. The terraces remain an emblem of Cruso's existence, solidly made and full of promise yet denied productivity by the harsh landscape and his own inflexibility. This island is depicted as a dystopian landscape in which the aridity of the ground acts as metaphor for the paucity of Cruso's creativity such as "the boat he would not build, and the journal he would not keep". (34) In this respect the adventurous, resourceful Crusoe has been transformed into a self-limiting uninventive Cruso who fails to provide the tools for civilizing both the island and their lives, a failure he justifies by means of a simple mantra: "We sleep, we eat, we live. We have no need of tools." (32) Tisha Turk argues that these overlaps and gaps between Defoe's original *Robinson Crusoe* and his other novel *Roxana* and Coetzee's transformative narrative *Foe* give "us access to interpretive possibilities that are located not within any of the individual texts but rather in their interactions." (2011: 298) Thus, the discrepancies between the two texts can be considered as comments on "the conditions of textual production, the ways in which some stories – the stories of women, slaves, savages - are simplified, or suppressed or silenced;" (306) but I propose that this intertextuality subverts the authority of the canonical narrative because the voice of the white male narrator has been replaced. Whereas in *Robinson Crusoe* the relationship between the castaway and the native Other illustrated the missionary ideal of colonialism and created space for the growth and education of Friday, the limited interaction between Cruso and Friday subverts this supposed responsibility by critiquing the restrictive paternalism of both colonialism and the apartheid regime. Such evident shortcomings in European leadership provide an opportunity to question the authority of colonial rule and that of the brutal regime that controls the discourse of government.

From the opening page of the novel, Coetzee seeks to challenge the assumptions of European master codes and thus subvert the power of stereotyping and archetypes. His

narrative constantly thwarts reader expectations; the castaway is no longer Crusoe but a woman named Susan Barton who is rescued not by the European but by the native Friday. This is a significant moment in the novel as it asserts the native's autonomy and implies a certain equality shared by white protagonist and native slave since both are capable of saving lives. After Susan is swept ashore onto the desert island she lies exhausted on the hot sand and struggles to recuperate.

A dark shadow fell upon me, not of a cloud but of a man with a dazzling halo about him. "Castaway," I said with my thick dry tongue. "I am cast away. I am all alone." And I held out my sore hands. (5)

The certainty of the narrative is destabilized by the juxtaposition of the opposites "dark shadow" and "dazzling halo"; the former is full of menace and potential danger, whereas the latter reflects the promise of hope, and the integrity of a savior. By inscribing a single being with these two opposing attributes Coetzee is expressing the complexity of the human individual and negating the traditional colonial dialectic that associates goodness with the evangelical mission of the colonizing West and evil with the native savages. This is "a man", not a stereotype; he is not the anticipated European that familiarity with Defoe's novel would have suggested, but he is the native Friday. Coetzee refuses to objectify him by the racial nomenclature which characterized the Other as cannibals, black slaves or Arabs in the writings by Defoe, Conrad and Camus. This is a significant designation in the identification of the racial Other in Coetzee's text, as he has broken away from the traditional marginalized native presented in the other novels in which the savage is presented as an objectified Other bowing to Crusoe's feet, or crawling on all fours like the dying slaves at the Company's station in *Heart of Darkness*, or squatting by the schoolroom stove as did the Arab prisoner in *L'Hôte*. This native is upright; he is the rescuer, and the one in control. To confirm this new literary representation of the racial Other, Coetzee places Friday standing over the white castaway who is lying supine on the

beach, thus creating a metaphorical shadow across the white mythologies of power. He is “a man” on the same level of humanity as the Europeans, with equally complex characteristics.

The man squatted down beside me. He was black: a Negro with a head of fuzzy wool, naked save for a pair of rough drawers. I lifted myself and studied the flat face, the small dull eyes, the broad nose, the thick lips, the skin not black but a dark grey, dry as if coated with dust. (5-6)

The unprepossessing description portrays the stereotypical broad nose, woolly hair and thick lips of an indigene, yet it is preceded by a repetition of the word “man”. Reference to his “dark grey” skin covered with “dust” differentiates him from the archetypal literary representation of the native and creates an individual. However, the accumulative effect of the adjectives “flat”, “dull”, “thick” and “broad” suggest a dullness of spirit and a lack of engagement, as if he is hiding behind a metaphorical barrier provided by the coat of dust that enables the author to construct a persona that appears closed and unreadable. Friday’s individuality is inscribed but not interpreted. But is this a function of the observer, who is unable to ‘read’ the unfamiliar features, or a function of the native’s Otherness that refuses to allow access to an inner life? An encounter with that which is unknown or is outside experience is an indication of the absence of mastery and consequently of the retention of Otherness. In the case of Friday, such an impenetrable figure anticipates his sullen silent resistance to articulation in the narrative. But if silence, even if imposed by the brutal mutilation of his tongue, defines his alterity, does not Crusoe also become Other when he refuses to narrate his own personal story and so his origins remain unknown? Barton complains that “the stories [Crusoe] told me were so various, and so hard to reconcile one with another, that [Barton] was more and more driven to conclude [...] he no longer knew for sure what was truth, what fancy.” (11/12) This comment reveals how Coetzee’s variations on Defoe’s story have effectively subverted and deconstructed traditional fixed binary structures. Consequently, I argue that as Crusoe’s narrative is absent from the text

and therefore no longer symbolizes integrity, reliability and authority, the representation of Friday is destabilized by the dialectic breakdown between the good/evil, Christian/heathen oppositions that clarified and justified native degeneracy.

By introducing Susan Barton as narrator her voice can express new ideas unfamiliar to patriarchal systems. She shows concerns for Friday's feelings, but more interestingly lets slip her own responses to his predicament: "[h]e was a prisoner, and I, despite myself, his gaoler." (43) Her brief aside reveals unwillingness to enforce his captivity. This sense of guilt lingers in her mind and she wonders at his attitude and "the mystery of [his] submission" (85) to the uncommunicative white man. This questioning and wondering is a significant development as Coetzee is using a female character as mouthpiece for a controversial statement within white writing, namely that the Other may be unwilling, even hostile, to the loss of independence and controlling subjectivity, in other words the enigmatic Other may resist the mastery that is enforced through naming and by the act of literary representation.

4.2 The Narrative as Other

In Coetzee's work the controlling subjectivity of the narrative is no longer that of the European white man but that of a woman, Susan Barton, whose attempt to write the story of life on the desert island is hindered because she lacks confidence both in herself and in their story. "Some people are born storytellers; I, it would seem, am not." (81) She thinks her story is dull and moans how "[they] faced no perils, no ravenous beasts, not even serpents" (81) to enliven their daily routine and consequently she seeks the skill of the novelist Foe to rewrite their account. This request indicates how she is "trapped in the patriarchal house of fiction" (Gallagher 1991:187-8) since she aims to please Foe's ideas of a story. He explains that the "island is not a story in itself. [...] We can bring it to life only by setting it within a larger story." (117) Even in the telling of Barton's own

experiences she is subject to the will of Foe; although she attempts to retain some authority through her sexuality in the form of the “Muse” (139) she is sorely disappointed and remarks disparagingly that the sixpence she is offered to pay for breakfast is “no great payment for a visit from the Muse”. (145) David Attwell succinctly describes the structural matrix in *Foe* as based on “the relations between the institution of letters (Foe), the colonial storyteller seeking authorization through the metropolis (Susan Barton) and the silenced voice of the colonized subject.” (1992: 10) What is most interesting about Attwell’s analysis is the absence of Cruso from this pattern of influence; the heretofore protagonist and hero figure has been displaced and thus silenced by the critic.

Coetzee interrogates authority by confronting the absence that haunts the heart of both colonialism and apartheid. Barton, who was rescued together with Cruso and Friday from the desert island, attempts to explain to the novelist Foe their various intertwining narratives, at the center of which is “the story of Friday, which is properly not a story but a puzzle or hole in the narrative”. (121) This “hole” has an ambiguous function, serving partly as an absence, a story that is closed to the reader, and as an opportunity for poetic inspiration and imaginative story telling. Barton wonders endlessly: “But what shall I write?” (81) - the universal question that underlies the difficulties of articulating our own voices and discovering our individual stories. The subject of Barton’s writing gradually becomes Friday who is not only marginalized by his race and heritage, for he is “a man from the darkest times of barbarism” (94), but who is also alienated by his muteness. He is silenced by an act of extreme brutality, unable to speak and relate his own personal history; his infirmity makes him indecipherable, a representative of the Levinasian unknowable Other and of the political victims that Coetzee had been accused of ignoring.

Levinas argues that representation of the Other is an act of mastery and domination. “In a sense the object of representation is indeed interior to thought: despite its independence it falls under the power of thought”. (1969: 123) Barton herself realizes the power of

discourse to shape and “re-shape [...] day by day in conformity with the desires of others”. (F. 121) She understands how language can defy cultural heritage and create a new persona. This quotation indicates the arbitrariness of the control, which is influenced by the subjectivity of will and thought, and thus defies objective characterization; by creating this space within the narrative the writer indicates his refusal to “speak for” the marginalized Other. When Barton attempts to defend her argument Coetzee returns us to the world of *Robinson Crusoe* and the iconic moment when Crusoe stumbles across the footprint on the beach, a discovery which causes so much fear and distress that it engenders an imaginative construct of a barbarous, cannibalistic Other. In *Foe*, it is not the presence but the absence of a footprint that is significant. Barton explains in her letter to the author Daniel Foe:

As for cannibals, I am not persuaded, despite Cruso’s fears, that there are cannibals in those oceans [...] All I say is: What I saw I wrote. I saw no cannibals; and if they came after nightfall and fled before dawn, they left no footprint behind. (54)

The simplicity of Barton’s language and the accumulation of monosyllabic words accentuate her integrity, while the short phrases imitate the broken pattern of her thoughts as she struggles to rationalize her opinions. She claims objectivity, clarity and a strict adherence to realism of actual observation to justify her contradiction of Cruso’s beliefs. How does this claim influence the concept of alterity in *Foe*? This tension between the original novel and Coetzee’s rewriting not only subverts the ideological basis inscribed in colonial discourse but also suggests the limitations of realism and of factual reporting to articulate the many voices of a society in crisis. I argue that Coetzee’s argument for the ‘hole’ at the center of the narrative may permit the effective emergence of alterity in a text which itself becomes Other as Susan and Foe debate and question the articulation of the narrative of the Other. The ever-present body, defined by its pain and mutilation as in *Friday*, is betrayed by its lack of voice. Similarly, in another novel by Coetzee, *In the Heart of the Country* (1982), the lonely spinster Magda considers her emotional and

spiritual isolation within her family, her community and the black slaves that surround her: “If I am an emblem then I am an emblem. I am incomplete, I am a being with a hole inside me, I signify something, I do not know what, I am dumb.” (Coetzee 1992: 9)

If we retrieve the trope of absence that is central to the stories of both *Magda* (1982: 9) and *Friday* (121) we can distinguish two features. Firstly, the “hole” signifies the ethical refusal of white discourse to articulate the Other and secondly it indicates a symbolic exclusion of the Other that Sam Durrant identifies as bearing witness “to the act of forgetting that underpins apartheid”: (2004: 18) Exclusion in the act of narration thus makes an effective political commentary since omission may convey either the resistance of the marginalized to appropriation by white discourse or reflect their ‘real’ suppression by those in power. Coetzee argues that literature is an effective vehicle for such commentaries and explains that since “[t]he *feel* of writing fiction is one of freedom, of irresponsibility, or better, of responsibility toward something that has not yet emerged” it provides a space where he can play “with possibilities.” (Attwell 1992: 246) By creating a “hole” in the narrative meaning becomes ambivalent, uncertain, but ripe with possible alternatives. By exposing the unreliability of language and literary representation, Coetzee effectively interrogates the authority of official discourse. These multiple meanings subvert the univocal narrative of authoritarian regimes represented by both colonialism and apartheid. Coetzee observes in his essay “Into the Dark Chamber” that “[t]he response of South Africa’s legislators to what disturbs their white electorate is usually to order it out of sight.” (1986) I argue that this silenced native symbolizes the erased voices of the South African Other and his mutilation becomes both a literal and metaphorical statement about the silencing and oppression of the indigenous native Other. It is in this respect that *Friday*’s Otherness may be identified. Consequently he has a more central role in *Foe* than his counterpart in Defoe’s narrative, in which the native’s main function was to act in counterpoint to Crusoe’s characterization as a white, civilized, Christian man of authority.

Benita Parry considers the relevance of Coetzee's work to contemporary socio-political circumstances and ponders the identity of Coetzee's assumed reader: "[b]ut who, in South Africa, does Coetzee's fiction address? And whose attention has been procured?" (1996: 61) Does Parry suggest that Coetzee's literary style distances him from the tragedy of contemporary South Africa and consequently fails to recognize the victims of apartheid in his writing? Parry's concern questions how far literary representation should be a realist intervention, mirroring current or existing politics, such as the struggles in South Africa, rather than an abstract reflection on power and politics. Nélida Piñon argues that as an effective narrative strategy the fable or other allegorical image may provide a more viable form of resistance within a cultural context of racism and subjugation. "Las fábulas son un ejemplo de la falta de libertad del hombre. Se esconde detrás de algún subterfugio para engendrar una verdad mejor aunque difícil." (Tierney-Tello 1996: 45) I argue that such abstraction may provide a textual freedom that realism constrains. Coetzee's narrative is haunted by the "shadow whose lack you feel is there: it is the loss of Friday's tongue." (F.117) This absence functions not only as a metaphor for the censorship that controlled publications in South Africa but also references the problematics of language, meaning and interpretation. "Till we have spoken the unspoken we have not come to the heart of the story." (141) The narrative itself becomes the elusive unknown Other.

However, Derek Attridge warns against "allegorization as a primary mode of interpretation" (2006: 64) and argues that rather than consider Coetzee's apparent lack of political or ethical interest in contemporary events it is more valuable to consider his work "*for itself*, [and] not because it pointed to some truths about the world in general or South Africa in the 1970's in particular." (2006: 71. Italics in the original.) In other words, to consider his novels as representations of the unknown, of the inexplicable Other rather than a statement about contemporary political upheavals. Nadine Gordimer questions whether allegory, "generally regarded as a superior literary form" (1984: 3), is a suitable

literary device for the treatment for the tragic events in South Africa. She argues that it projects “a stately fastidiousness; or a state of shock” (3) which cannot adequately describe the tragedy of contemporary South Africa. It creates remoteness, a distancing as if “projected into another time and plane.” (3) In her review of Coetzee’s earlier novel, *The Life and Times of Michael K* (1983), Gordimer argues that his writing style, particularly the use of allegory, suggests “a kind of opposing desire to hold himself clear of events and their daily, grubby, tragic consequences”. (3) Does allegory imply distancing as Gordimer suggest, or is this metaphorical approach a strategy for a literary representation in an unstructured, “un” form that enables questioning of discursive, political and social authoritarianism? Within these contexts it would appear that Coetzee is confirming the allegorical aspect of his writing, since he comments in his book of essays *Stranger Shores* that Friday “is seen through Crusoe’s eyes alone, and treated with self-congratulatory paternalism” (2002: 21), an assessment that confirms the authoritarian ‘fixed’ perspectives of colonial discourse and the concept of realism being constructed from a single point of view. I argue that allegory in the novel facilitates such subversive intentions but although Attwell argues that *Foe* “is perhaps [Coetzee’s] most allegorical work” (1992: 10), allegory is only one of the multifarious literary strategies in this complex narrative.

These conflicting views of allegory in Coetzee’s writing reflect back on the identification of the Other in *Foe* and in particular the function of the narrative as Other. Dominic Head defines allegory as “a network of deferred meaning”, (29) and in this context Coetzee does appear to invite the reader to read the novel allegorically since he provides several allegorical symbols in the narrative. For example, the loss of Friday’s tongue, the sterility of the dystopian island and its stone terraces, and the mysterious daughter figure may signify respectively censorship and the subjugation of the racial Other, the void at the center of Imperialism and the decline of Empire, and the haunting of the past. Yet Coetzee himself warns against the reading of signs too rigidly. In *Waiting for*

the Barbarians (1980) the Magistrate suffers a crisis of conscience under interrogation and he becomes “aware that [he is] misinterpreting the signs” (164) and that the cries of the dead “like their writings are open to many interpretations.” (123) Barton describes the work of the storyteller as one who must compose episodes and then “tease from them their hidden meanings.” (89) Coetzee offers a commentary on such constructs in a vivid image of Foe sitting at his writing desk. Barton draws a picture of her ideal of the writer in his attic, and the paucity of its furnishings, its dusty floor and the mouse-droppings on the table. These details ground her imaginings in a daily reality whilst her thoughts conjure an image of creative inspiration.

There is a ripple in the window-pane. Moving your head, you can make the ripple travel over the cows grazing in the pasture, over the ploughed land beyond, over the line of poplars, and up into the sky. (50)

In contrast to the shabby surroundings, the view from the window introduces a peaceful pastoral scene; Barton describes lovingly to Foe how she supposes his eye moves slowly over the cows, land and trees up into the sky. But she noticeably refers to his “head” rather than his eye, suggesting it is less the view than the thoughts that it stimulates which are significant in her imaginings of the scene. The brief passage is filled with movement: “ripple”, “moving”, “Travel”, “grazing”, “over” and “up” all suggest a gentle cathartic flow of thoughts and ideas. The window thus becomes a locus for the release of his imagination. But the glass is not entirely clear and does not present a “fixed” view of the scene; the “ripple”, with its delicate syllables and connotations of soothing ebbs and flows, distorts the lines and shapes of the animals suggesting how perspectives change and are variable even from the standpoint of a single individual. Although there is no singular interpretation, each variation is a true representation and thus I propose Coetzee writes of multiple realities, a focus that corresponds to Head’s evaluation that “the novel’s engagement of Defoe serves, partly, to challenge naïve perceptions of realism”. (2009: 31)

These naïve perceptions presuppose that realism has only one defined, ‘fixed’ meaning, a realization we reach when we read later that there is no ripple in the glass (65), that it is only a figment of Barton’s imagination or, possibly, an example of her unreliability as narrator. She draws a comparison between “things as they are and the pictures we have of them in our minds” (65), thus comparing reality and the imagined.

So I return to the original question, “Whose Foe?” or even “Who is Foe?” and can “Foe” be taken as a synonym for the Other? In traditional colonial narratives, the foe as the Other is represented by the indigenous native, the dark unknown Other; but in this novel Friday is introduced as a man on the beach whose face is framed by a halo of sunlight - a perspective that challenges the concept of the Other as literal and metaphorical adversary. He saves Barton’s life. Perhaps the question should be rearranged to ask “Why Foe?” and thus relate back to the writer whom Barton asks to narrate their story. But Foe insists on rearranging Barton’s narrative since he believes that “[t]he island is not a story in itself” (117) and it requires his interpretation to give it “light and shade” (117) and thus enables him to ‘father’ the story for himself. He becomes the foe of Barton’s narrative. Since Foe is writing from the metropolitan center he symbolizes European and colonial discursive practices. Barton, on the other hand, who is marginalized by her gender, objects to such literary practices and insists on the integrity of the writer and the importance of truth. She claims her right to “guide and amend. Above all, to withhold. By such means [she] still endeavor[s] to be father to [her] story.” (123) Barton’s statement refers to a question raised in my Introduction in which I considered whether Edward Said’s *Orientalism* could ever be overcome. Barton’s statement infers a challenge and she produces an offspring, a daughter, who although unknown and unseen is “substantial” in opposition to the daughter that Foe produces for her: “We are all alive, we are all substantial, we are all in the same world.” (152) Rather than produce conflict, the narrative suggests through metaphor that both daughters are real in their different ways. As products of narrators who attempt to ‘father’

the narrative, these different 'daughters' suggest that Coetzee proposes variable truths are possible rather than one dominant authoritarian perspective so that both stories have some validity. He resists endorsing either Barton's or Foe's particular meaning but leaves open the door to possibilities.

PART I

CHAPTER II

IN ROUGH COUNTRY: IDENTIFYING THE POSTCOLONIAL OTHER

“Then one Saturday morning everything changes.”
(*Disgrace*, 6)

David Lurie, the white protagonist of *Disgrace*, published in 1999, is introduced in the opening lines of the novel as a divorced man of fifty-two who has “to his mind, solved the problem of sex rather well.” (1) Casting himself as a latter-day Byronic lover he shows a casual ambivalence towards women, a disregard that later pushes him into a confrontation with the authorities at the University where he lectures. Women and sex are important to him because he defines his masculinity and identity by the power of his sexual magnetism, categorizing himself as “a lover of women and, to a certain extent, a womanizer.” (7) Indulging in recollections of past conquests he reveals a patronizing attitude towards women that is extended to his South African escort, Soraya. “His sentiments are, he is aware, complacent even uxorious.” (2) Underlying his thoughts are indications of a patriarchal assumption of his rights to possession of the Other since both “uxorious” and “womanizer” imply abuse of the female Other’s autonomy. David fantasizes about power and ownership in terms of his egocentric obsessions.

Why does Coetzee open his novel *Disgrace* with this seemingly insignificant affair in which Soraya decides to end David’s regular Thursday afternoon “ninety-minute sessions” (2) after he catches sight of her with her sons in St. George’s Street one weekend? This glimpse into her personal life undermines her professional persona; but it is an insight that fascinates David who is intrigued by her other life. He hires a private detective to trace her, but she firmly rejects his attempts at contact. “I don’t know who you are [...] You are harassing me in my own house. I demand you will never phone me here again, never.” (9-10) Only David can be surprised at her reaction. He has misjudged the business transaction

between man and prostitute for what he believed to be a relationship in which his “affection is reciprocated”. (2) Since David’s desires are frustrated and his demands denied, their exchange reveals a significant shift in the literary representation of the colonial relationship. Soraya’s refusal to comply with his wishes indicates that she has stepped out of the shadows of Otherness and claimed her independence whilst David’s pride is injured because he resents being reduced to “just another client.” (7) His self-esteem has been dealt a heavy blow.

Coetzee explores the dynamics of the new South Africa through this short episode. Soraya, who is black, female, Muslim and a prostitute, is a literary representation of the Other emerging in the new communities of Archbishop Desmond Tutu’s developing “Rainbow Nation” (Jolly 2010: 1) and, as such, her resistance to David’s intrusions indicate that regardless of gender, race, religion and socio-economic status everyone has a right to a voice, whether making a political statement or expressing personal desire. Soraya is trying to live “the promise offered by the post apartheid era” (D. 1) by making certain choices whereas David remains “fixed, set” (2) and is only just beginning to comprehend the implications of the ideology that frames the socio-political changes that have taken place to create “this other, unfamiliar world” (71) which is now South Africa. The sexual metaphor that Coetzee employs to examine the changing relationships in a society in transition serves to deconstruct colonial mythologies of power. In a reversal of the traditional colonial opposition between savage native and civilized European, David is cast in the role of sexual predator, thus challenging the claim that “the fantasy of the black man as rapist is a recurring topos in the discourse of racism”. (Durrant 2004: 102) His unprincipled conduct and his obsession with his sexuality draw sorry parallels with the mythology of the black rapacious Other he is supposed to counteract. The narrative draws subtle attention to this simple reversal of depravity, a transposing of immorality from the Other to the metropolitan center, thus defying accepted stereotypes. David is a flawed

subject and through this depiction Coetzee develops an argument that contradicts the colonial assumptions of ethical superiority that were suggested in *Robinson Crusoe* and *Heart of Darkness* and questioned in *L'Étranger*. The narrator challenges the reader to consider “what should a predator expect when he intrudes into the vixen’s nest, into the home of her cubs?” (10) The hunter/prey imagery is not unexpected but the juxtaposition of “predator” for the one and “vixen” for the Other is disorienting, since there is no well-defined identification of who is the quarry. Neither David nor Soraya is designated blameless, an ethical difference that would normally be clearly inscribed in the binaries of colonial discourse. Everything has changed. There is no longer a firm demarcation between Self and Other, in which the Other functions as the dark unknown.

Coetzee’s tight narrative poses new questions which provoke a fresh way of thinking about the relationship between the selfsame and the Other and at the same time considers new strategies of representation and empowerment. The silenced native Friday in *Foe* has been replaced by a more diverse, resisting Other. If the absolutes of Western power and authority are dismantled here, how does this affect the identification of both the Self and the Other in the postcolonial and post-apartheid landscapes represented in the work of white male authors writing from the metropolitan center? Can they find a way to create references that do not polarize the periphery and the center? Homi Bhabha argues that writers from marginalized communities are motivated to “reach beyond and behind the invidious narratives and center and periphery” (2004: xi) in order to create a literature that develops its own historical presence. I argue that the writers from the metropolitan center need to deconstruct the assumed primacy of the West in order to examine how an increased multiplicity of differences subverts the binaries that dominated colonial power structures. Although Hardt and Negri argue that a rupture with colonialism creates “the field of liberation of the non-white, the non-male and the non-European” (2001: 141), they do not discuss how such liberation affects the relationship between Self and Other, nor do they

explore how the European Self defines its identity if the Other is no longer an absolute. By deconstructing colonial dialectics and stereotypes, can white male postcolonial writers challenge the assumptions of dominance identified by Edward Said in *Orientalism* when he asserts that “[i]t is Europe that articulates the Orient”? (2003: 57) Can writers such as Coetzee, Cormac McCarthy and J.M.G. Le Clézio reach beyond the old forms of power and propose strategies of literary representation that are not structured on the dialectic “them” and “us”?

The questions raised by *Disgrace* form the basis of the discussion in this second chapter that aims to examine the identity of the postcolonial Other in *Onitsha* by the French author J.M.G. Le Clézio, and *No Country for Old Men* by the American writer Cormac McCarthy. These novels, which are situated in Nigeria/Biafra, and in the Texan borderlands, consider the problems of an increasingly globalized world. If “a politics of difference, fluidity and hybridity” (Hardt and Negri 2001: 138) is an integral component of the postcolonial landscape, then the role of the Other has dramatically changed; alterity is no longer a construct of Western thought such as the one produced by Robinson Crusoe when he found the footprint in the sand. In postcolonial narratives, the Other creates his/her own identity and refuses to be silenced. Thus these selected novels do not so much define the *identity* of the postcolonial Other but search for *knowledge* of this Other. The firm outlines of the footprint in the sand that Robinson Crusoe discovered have been scuffed over, leaving only barely discernible traces of “a rough trail”. (McCarthy 2006: 11) These blurred outlines signify an important change in the postcolonial and postmodern globalized world that is constantly being remapped to accommodate diasporic communities, flexible hierarchies, and dissolving boundaries; the primary conceptual categories of race and gender that defined colonial identities need to be revised. Identity becomes a central issue for both colonizer and colonized:

Who is it? Said the boy.
I don't know. Who is anybody? (McCarthy 2007: 49)

The problematics of defining identity without violating its autonomy is signaled by the movement away from direct encounters between the white male protagonist and the Other. Apart from David Lurie in *Disgrace*, the protagonists in the selected postcolonial novels do not engage in a direct encounter with the Other. This creates a haunting rather than figural presence; a metaphor perhaps for recognition by Western writers of their desire to liberate the figure of the Other in their writings. New perspectives are required, such as that recognized by Alan Lawson and Chris Tiffin who argue that difference “is a matter of subordination in colonialism but a matter of identity, voice and empowerment in postcolonialism.” (1994: 230) However, Gayatri Spivak warns against the West’s continued conceptual dominance of the marginalized by referring to the tendency to view “the colonized subaltern *subject* [as] irretrievably heterogeneous”. (1988: 79) The Other “cannot be taken as representative of all countries, nations, cultures and the like that may be invoked as the Other of Europe as Self.” (76)

Difference has always been held to be a limiting opposition. Tzvetan Todorov argues that difference is “immediately translated into terms of superiority and inferiority.” (1984: 42) This is human nature: there is always a suggestion of power simply in the statement that ‘the world’ is different from ‘Self’. Despite our best intentions, as readers and critics we continue to argue and debate from the perspective of familiar Western cognitive patterns; the dialectic of Self and Other forms the basis of the way in which language and power operate in the Western world. Consequently, if the function of difference in postcolonial discourse is redefined to embrace multiplicity it questions the colonial relationship between the Self and the Other, and the ideologies upon which such evaluations are made. After the murder of a fellow policeman Sheriff Lamar in *No Country for Old Men* says to Ed Tom Bell: “I just have the feeling we’re looking at something we really aint even seen before.” (46)

Disgrace

5.1 Identification of the Postcolonial Other

Since 1994, when apartheid was finally abolished and democratic elections were held, South African writers have struggled to come to terms with the construct of a “new” South Africa. (Wright 2006: 5) Dominic Head argues that while those of Coetzee’s novels that were published during the apartheid era “were written to promote a special kind of resistance to the pressures of politics” (2009: 81), his work in the post-apartheid era is less subject to ideological pressures and consequently “Coetzee has been freed up to treat literary and ethical concerns, without viewing these through the prism of colonial violence.” (81) While I would agree with Head’s argument, I would also add that Coetzee still maintains a concern with contemporary politics as evidenced by the way his novel *Disgrace* examines the problems of a society in crisis as it develops a new identity with which to face the world.

In his Jerusalem Prize acceptance speech, Coetzee argues against “the realm of faery” (98) as a suitable medium for the post-apartheid novel and argues for the confrontation with the “crudity of life in South Africa”. (99) As a result, *Disgrace*, his first novel published in the post-apartheid era, is considered to be a work that Laura Wright describes as “arguably his most realistic and political novel.” (2006: 6) *Disgrace* is grounded in the harsh world of the new South Africa, which Lucy affirms as “[t]his place being South Africa” (D. 112), and moves between two contrasting landscapes, the city and the countryside, both of which represent different aspects of the evolving social dynamics in the new race relations defined by government. The University in Cape Town, where David Lurie lectures, was a bastion of imperial ideology teaching Classics, Modern Languages and the English canon, but is now, “as part of the great rationalization” (3), compelled to offer courses such as Communications. In contrast to this erudite atmosphere, the countryside of the Eastern Cape where Lucy lives on a smallholding reveals a more down

to earth environment dominated by the struggle for land ownership, cultivation and a viable income from the sale of produce at the local market. David's visit to the farm brings him into contact with this different frontier. The opposition between these two worlds is cultural and historic, creating a tension between the fundamentals of outdated Imperialism and that of the emerging farmers "of the new breed". (62) Within this tense landscape colonizers and colonized alike struggle to identify their roles.

Since apartheid represents the extreme categorization and repression of the Other, its abolition has a huge impact on the identification of alterity and on the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. South Africa is a society which is devastated by "the simultaneous legacies of colonization, apartheid and global inequity" (Jolly 2010: 2). Although Coetzee does not clearly articulate a position on apartheid (Da Silva 2005: 472) he does examine the ideological changes created by the dissolution of the "deformed and stunted relations between human beings that were created under colonialism and exacerbated under what is loosely called apartheid". (Coetzee 1987: 98) Questioning the nature of humanity is fundamental when the concepts that validated apartheid have been denied. Although many critics such as Rosemary Jolly (2006: 148) and Elleke Boehmer (2006: 141) have associated Coetzee's vision of humanity in relation to animals, and have made arguments that *Disgrace* "proposes animals as the essential third term in the reconciliation of human self and human other" (Boehmer 2006: 141), I argue that in a society in which the absolutes have been destroyed it is productive to examine the nature of humanity through the developing relationship between colonizer and the colonized, because it is the changing dynamics of their interaction that reflects the increasing problems of globalization's impact on the world stage and the fundamental questions posed by the escalating number of uprisings against authoritarian regimes around the world. This interrogation of authority necessitates models for which literary representation can provide prototypes. David Lurie, for example, the protagonist who represents the

metropolitan center in his role as Scholar of the Romantic poets, finds himself increasingly dislocated after his dismissal from the university when he discovers that “he is not himself” (94) but in the margins as “a country recluse” (120), until finally he realizes that his daughter Lucy “closes him out.” (134) He is a long way from the center. Is Coetzee proposing that the white colonizer is now marginalized? If so, where is the new center?

Recognition and acceptance of difference is a key element in the changing social perspectives. Homi Bhabha argues that the ‘right to difference’

does not require the restoration of an original [...] cultural or group identity; nor does it consider equality to be a neutralization of differences in the name of the ‘universality’ of rights where implementation is often subject to ideological and institutional definitions of what it constitutes to be ‘human’ in any specific or cultural context. (1994: xvii)

It is an examination of this very humanity within the context of a community emerging from an authoritarian regime that becomes the focus of this post-apartheid novel. David’s conduct and his assumptions of privilege are challenged first by Soraya, then the University disciplinary committee and subsequently by his daughter Lucy, Bev Shaw, Petrus and various other characters in the novel. Lucy explains to her father that to be a “good person” (216) is to start from the very basics of humanity, without preconceptions, without judgments. “To start at ground level. With nothing. [...] No cards, no weapons, no property, no rights, no dignity” (205); in other words, to start without the position of privilege granted the white male but on a level equal with the Other. It is a significant difference of criteria that Lucy makes since there is no mention of the goodness in a moral context that differentiated the colonizer from the native Other; but more importantly it is David whose humanity, whose goodness, is lacking. Lucy tells him that “[he] should try to be a good person too”. (216) Her admonition indicates that although David provides the center of consciousness that directs the narrative, he does not, ironically, provide the ethical center of the novel. Lucy emphasizes different ways of judging and

reproves her father's patriarchal attitudes: "You shouldn't be so unbending, David. It isn't heroic to be unbending." (66) The traditionally postured "male nobility of spirit" (Eagleton 2003: ix) so vaunted in the imperial canon is censured and found wanting.

If the colonial dialectic is in a state of flux, who can be identified as the Other in this post-apartheid society? Is it the indigenous South Africans emerging from the peripheries? Or is it the women attempting to establish their own careers and independence as embodied by the young student Melanie Isaacs, by David's daughter Lucy, "the sturdy young settler" (61), or by Bev Shaw "a dumpy, bustling little woman" (72) who treats the injured animals of the poor? Or could it even be the discredited white colonial David Lurie who is struggling to accept the new politics? All these characters in the novel are representative of the displaced peoples who are victims of the epistemic violence caused when the "unnatural structures of power that define the South African state" (Coetzee 1987: 97) were dismantled. What is significant here is the literary representation of the diversity of alterity. Otherness is not restricted to the uncivilized indigenous native but can also include those groups defined by gender and class as well as race.

In representing the diverse Other in this novel, Coetzee eschews traditional stereotypes by using synecdoche references to create impressions rather than literal descriptions. Race is never alluded to directly. Unlike Crusoe, Marlow and Daru, David does not focus on typically African features but creates individuals such as Melanie who has "close-cropped hair, wide almost Chinese cheekbones, large, dark eyes". (11) The rapists are "countrymen" (91); one "has a flat, expressionless face and piggish eyes" (92); and another "is handsome, strikingly handsome, with a high forehead, sculpted cheekbones, wide flaring nostrils". (92)

The introduction of Lucy's assistant, Petrus, illustrates the challenges in the perception of the ambiguous Other. He is not merely an employee, but is now her co-proprietor and is "quite a fellow" (62). David notices Petrus for the first time:

A man is standing in the doorway, a tall man in blue overalls and rubber boots and a woolen cap. 'Petrus, come in, meet my father,' says Lucy.

Petrus wipes his boots. They shake hands. A lined, weathered face; shrewd eyes. Forty? Forty-five? (63-4)

The narrator sketches a brief outline of a man, emphasizing his height, thus creating an indication of presence and individuality. His body seems to fill the doorway. Quickly, details are filled in as the narrator notes his workingman's clothes, their color, materials and textures which all give life to the human shape. Here is a hardworking countryman, an impression borne out by the well-worn lines on his weathered face. The narrator moves from the exterior outline to the interior man conjuring a more personal impression of the man in the doorway. His conduct, wiping his shoes and shaking hands, suggests courtesy and respect. A bare outline gradually becomes human, creating an individual. At this point the objective narrative suddenly becomes more personalized and subjective, making evaluations rather than observations and the narrative perspective changes. The voice of the unnamed narrator in the free indirect discourse is replaced by another narrative voice commenting on Petrus's "shrewd eyes" and his age: "Forty? Forty-five?" Here, we see Petrus through the David's eyes as he weighs up the man who assists his daughter on her farm. The contrasting perspectives create instability in the narrative. Although these voices will be studied in depth in Part Two of this thesis it is important to note here how the instability of the narrative contrasts with the authoritarian unquestioned first person singular of Crusoe and Marlow. Modernist concerns with fragmentation and instability underscore the new uncertainties of the colonizer in the new South Africa. It is the presence of the single epithet "shrewd", which is defined in *The New Oxford Dictionary* as "having or showing powers of judgment; astute" that startles and disturbs, since it ascribes discernment, perspicacity, intelligence and thought to Petrus's character.

Petrus represents the new emerging Other who seeks parity not servitude. He stands at the doorway, the locus of transition and change. He enters the farmhouse, not as a slave or

as an inferior, but as a recognized equal who shakes hands in greeting with Lucy's white academic father. Although Derek Attridge argues that "animals are others whom [David] knows he cannot begin to know" (2004: 184), I suggest that it is through the interaction between David and Petrus that the changing dynamics of the new South Africa can be observed. It is the native South African who defines literal and metaphorical boundaries between the people by erecting fences, enclosing his land, introducing his extended family and establishing himself as the new patriarch. The old days in which David could have assumed uncontested authority and "had it out with Petrus" (116) are long gone; instead Petrus is the grounded one and David is left asking the questions. "Do[es] [he] have to change?" (126)

Since the uncontested authority of the Europeans has been challenged David feels "alien" (191), isolated in "a foreign land" (197) not simply because he has lost his job and has been attacked but because the rules of engagement have changed. Basic fundamentals and values have been questioned. His concept of justice differs from that of Lucy who persistently refuses to report the rape to the police; his sense of family differs from Petrus who guards the young rapist Pollux "because [he] has obligations toward him, family obligations." (200) David can make no sense of it all. He feels "[o]n trial for his way of life" (190) and he begins to recognize that Otherness is not just a question of race or gender, but embraces a more psychological aspect, defining the nature of humanity itself. Within himself he acknowledges his potential of turning into "a different darker person altogether." (124) Such an admission indicates that he cannot construct the concept of Otherness as did Crusoe when he saw the footprint in the sand because contemporary reality defies him to do so. It is Lucy, emblem of the new South Africa, who inscribes Otherness. Lucy as smallholder and worker on the land defines agency when she walks across her farmland: "her bare toes grip the red earth, leaving clear prints." (62) She

inscribes her autonomy, thus contesting the projection of the Other as construct of European knowledge.

5.2 Postcolonial Relationships with the Other

If the ethical center of the novel has been destabilized and if the traditional Other has been deconstructed to acknowledge difference and diversity, how do these changes affect the traditional colonial relationship that is based on the binary oppositions that assume the degeneracy of the Other?

He [David] tries to stand up and is forced down again. For a moment his vision clears and he sees, inches from his face, blue overalls and a shoe. The toe of the shoe curls upward; there are blades of grass sticking out from the tread. (96)

Enraged by the brazenness of the three men who were there “waiting for them” (92) and tormented by a primal instinct to protect his daughter Lucy, David Lurie struggles to break free from his attackers but is quickly crushed and left crawling around helplessly on the toilet floor. When his eyes come back into focus he sees only the worn shoe of one of the three black South Africans who have invaded his daughter Lucy’s isolated farmhouse and carried out a ruthless and systematic attack of rape, robbery, and physical abuse which is finished off with the cold-blooded shooting of the caged dogs one by one. The attack is a pivotal moment in the narrative, changing the lives and relationships of the different characters forever. After the attackers have driven off in the stolen car, Lucy appears, exuding “all strength, all purposefulness” (101), while David is shocked and disoriented, unable to read the blank expression on Lucy’s face. He feels emasculated by his failure to prevent the assault. His physical strength and paternal authority have been so effectively undermined that “he is as weak as a baby”. (103) What is his function within the father/daughter relationship? Certainly, he is not in charge; Lucy has assumed that responsibility. She is “[n]ot her father’s little girl, not any longer”. (105) This role reversal

in the aftermath of the attack drives an emotional and psychological wedge between them so it seems that “the two of them are like strangers in the same house”. (124)

The incident is shocking; not merely in its unprovoked violence, but in the way it reveals the extent of the developing tensions and conflicts between hostile social and racial groups. Coetzee illustrates these challenges by referencing the archetypal colonial encounter between Robinson Crusoe and Friday and then inverting their roles.

[A]t length [Friday] came close to me, and then he kneel'd down again, kiss'd the Ground, and laid his Head upon the Ground, and taking me by the Foot, set my Foot upon his Head; this it seems was in token of swearing to be my Slave for ever; (R.C. 188)

Physical dominance symbolizes privilege and power in Defoe's novel, but in *Disgrace* the demonstration of strength signifies the transition of power from Eurocentric institutions to the marginalized. David's lowly position on the floor indicates not only his own humiliation but also the decline of Western authority in the post-apartheid landscape. David realizes that the attack is motivated by more than criminality; “his vision clears” both physically and metaphorically as he begins to comprehend that this is an act of retribution in payment for historical injustices rather than a random act of destruction. Although the blue overalls and the worn shoes suggest the men are impoverished workers, the blade of grass caught in the shoe's tread indicates ownership, a claiming of heritage back from the young farmer Lucy and the rights to the privileges and power denied them by the laws of apartheid. The racial Other is no longer depicted by slaves kneeling on the ground, natives crawling on all fours through the jungle, prisoners crouching by a classroom stove or even passive loiterers in the street. These aggressive, determined and independent men are the inheritors of the new South Africa, an autonomous nation-state whose birth is symbolized by the attack on the Eurocentric ideals which had provided political and ideological structures of privilege. In one moment, in a single action, the Luries become the outsiders, the unwanted Other who farm land not rightfully theirs. Such

an act of exclusion calls into question the context in which white supremacy was encouraged and supported, whilst proposing change but not providing an alternative context for the validation of racial integration.

The uncomplicated terse language of the first line, “[h]e tries to stand up and is forced down again”, encapsulates the transfer of power. Written in the rhythm of blank verse, thus referencing David’s literary professorship, the iambic pentameter in which the stresses fall on the key words “tries”, “stand”, “forced” and “again” accentuate the idea of exertion and force implied in this physical fight between attacker and the victim. The language imitates the movement of a see-saw moving up and down in the battle for domination. There can be no compromise; the see-saw has no state of equilibrium unless it is mutually agreed upon. There can be only one winner and one loser. It is no longer a question of difference, but a struggle for power and independence that Coetzee’s prose subtly reinforces by transitioning the voice of David’s movements from the active “tries” to the passive “is forced”. David remains the subject but has lost his autonomy, he is the one acted upon. No longer leader but follower, the post-colonizer is disoriented and lacks signs to facilitate passage through the challenges of this disordered and disordering society. There is no clearly defined footprint in the sand in the postcolonial world vision; the impact of modernist concerns with fragmentation creates a new literary landscape in which the rough terrain of the unknown functions as a metaphor for the psychological and social challenges that faced white protagonists as they sought to redefine their identity in relation to the postcolonial Other.

The new departmental secretary in David Lurie’s university mourns the loss of stability and certainty in the years following the abolition of apartheid:

‘You people had it easier, I mean, whatever the rights and wrongs of the situation, at least you knew where you were.’
 ‘You people?’ he says. ‘What people?’
 ‘I mean your generation. Now people just pick and choose which laws they want to obey. It’s anarchy.’ (8-9)

Change from an oppressive regime through a period of transition to a potential democratic government creates devastating revisions within a community. The secretary is not claiming support for apartheid but is mourning the lack of structure that it established and suggests her sense of loss for the political stability that has been eroded since its abolition in 1994. Anton Leist and Peter Singer support this perspective by arguing that apartheid provided a moral compass which, however violent and discriminatory, added a stable moral center against which to react (2010: 49).

Coetzee uses the poetry of Wordsworth and later Milton to prefigure the social disorder that can occur when society is under threat. Early in *Disgrace*, Lurie, formerly professor of Modern Languages and now adjunct professor of Communications at the recently renamed Cape Technical University, leads his class of students in a discussion of Wordsworth's poem *The Prelude* during the special-field course on the Romantic poets that he is permitted to offer. The students' confused silences as they struggle to comprehend the mystery of the poetry reveal what David describes as their "[p]ost-Christian, posthistorical, postliterate" (32) ignorance. They lack the knowledge and range of references assumed as basic to his own education which was structured on traditional colonial systems. To facilitate their "round of goodnatured guesses" (32) David reads aloud the passage describing Wordsworth's long anticipated first view of Mont Blanc. Instead of joy, the verse expresses disillusionment and sorrow because his idealism and heightened expectations had created a false idea of the mountain peak. The perfection of his mind's eye had been "usurped" (21) by the living image. He feels betrayed by his own self-deceptions. There are no longer any stabilized strategies for creating and projecting an image. The inclusion of the poem is a political statement; Coetzee is using the moment of disillusion to guard against the extremism of idealism. Although David's place has been usurped in the relationship his consciousness, and therefore the metanarratives typical of the imperialist culture, still dominates the narrative.

The rape is eventually perceived to be an act of “mating” (D. 199). By sowing their seed, the rapists subvert the cultural and racial authority of Eurocentrism; the contamination of their seed creates a hybrid, an amalgam of races. Robert J.C. Young describes hybridity as a function that “disturbs order and threatens privilege and power”. (2003: 7) The rape, which imitates the colonial act of acquisition, employs the Western myth of the sexual prowess of the black man. This ironic exploitation of a stereotype exposes the racist structure at the heart of the European unconscious.

In *Disgrace* the postcolonial relationship between Self and Other is inscribed with fresh criteria. Power is in balance and the colonial metanarratives such as Christianity are still in place but the questions are different, not generating a difference in terms of opposition but creating a difference that purports to celebrate diversity as a form of enrichment. However, the acceptance of this disturbed equilibrium reveals that not only is the Other deconstructed to demonstrate multiplicity but also to show how the identity of the white European male is discovered to be flawed, no longer solidly patriarchal but vulnerable and struggling to maintain a questionable authority.

Onitsha

J.M.G. Le Clézio's novel *Onitsha*, published in 1992, relates the story of the Allen family's reunion in Nigeria when twelve-year-old Fintan and his Italian mother Maou sail out to join the long-absent English father and husband Geoffroy Allen who is employed by the United Africa Company in the small town of Onitsha. The novel explores the ensuing adjustments in the family's dynamics against contrasting backdrops of indigenous native village life, the natural wild beauty along the banks of the river Niger and the remote hostile deserts traversed by nomadic tribes. Such a rich variety of landscapes, peoples and their various cultures written in juxtaposition with descriptions of the colonial structures of British Imperialism which dominate Geoffroy's life and work reflect the author's fascination with the differences between native and Western cultures and his preoccupation with the desire to explore what Horace Engdahl describes in Le Clézio's Nobel Prize citation as "a humanity beyond and below the reigning civilization". (2008) It is this characteristic that distinguishes Le Clézio's work.

The inclusion of other civilizations in his narratives, the interest in foreign cultures and a preoccupation with the oppositions between native and Western life are all products of his own nomadic experiences. He asserts that the ideal function of the writer is to "parler pour tous, pour tous les temps" (2008b: 5) His writings therefore are not restricted to one historical era nor to one particular civilization. *Onitsha*, for example, not only narrates the Allen family's experiences in post-war Nigeria but also details Geoffroy's obsession with the history of the last black queen of Meroë in the 4th century B.C. Similarly, his novel *Désert* describes the difficult treks in the winter of 1909-1910 endured by the Tuareg, desert warriors known as "les hommes bleus", who were being driven from their ancestral lands by the invading French forces in a narrative that parallels the story of one of their descendents named Lalla who is struggling for survival in present-day Tangiers and Marseilles.

If such writings indicate, as Engdahl argues, that Le Clézio “transcends the borders of national cultures” (2008) and thus signify that he is a “less typically French writer” (2008), do they also suggest that he is attempting to dismantle the traditional metanarratives that underlie European discourse? Keith Moser argues that Le Clézio’s narratives “challenge the alleged superiority of Western society by posing disconcerting questions and exposing the artificiality and indifference of the modern socio-economic paradigm”. (2011: 724) For example, does he question Western dependency on absolute truths and offer “a far less comforting world-view in which ambivalence reigns supreme and a complete understanding of the universe appears to be unattainable” as Moser argues? (724) Does his attempt to evade the traditional colonial perspectives of Orientalism that Edward Said defines as more “a set of constraints upon and limitations of thought than [...] a positive doctrine” (1979: 42) lead Le Clézio to romanticize and even idealize the indigenous peoples he is trying to individualize? If we accept that the author defends the significance and power of indigenous cultures in his writings we need to explore his narrative strategies for achieving this empowerment of the native within white discourse. What is this writer’s position in the narrative in regards to the natives he describes? How does the author resolve these issues?

The events in *Onitsha* take place between 1948 and 1969, a period of dramatic social and political change during which the British Empire was in decline and the colonies were emerging from the shadows of colonial rule. The adventures of the Allen family are based on the author’s own childhood experiences when his family moved to Africa where his father was working as a bush doctor. In contrast to the other novels previously discussed, the main narrative is not directed through the consciousness of an egocentric, authoritarian white male adult but through that of a young prepubescent boy raised in an all-female household who is embarking on a voyage to be reunited with his absent father, “un homme inconnu” (18) who haunts his thoughts and disturbs his dreams. Thus, the story and its

characters are viewed through the lens of innocence, through the lens of a young boy on the threshold of change who does not have the maturity to situate events and emotions in relation to an intellectual or political agenda but who records events and emotions within the framework of his own limited knowledge and interests.

This narrative strategy brings a freshness and immediacy to the story because Fintan Allen's is an intensely physical world since the tangible is easier for a young person to grasp and describe. Natural events act as symbols of ideological concepts such as the powerful thunderstorm that exploded in the sky one evening not long after his arrival in Nigeria. He is overwhelmed by the power of the rumblings that "ébranlaient le sol" (70), the streaks of vivid lightening that "se multipliaient, jaillissaient entre les nuages" (70) and by the torrential rain that "glissait sur la terre, descendait la colline vers le fleuve. Il n'y avait que cela, l'eau qui tombait, l'eau qui coulait." (71) The violence of the storm is accentuated by the dynamism of the descriptive verbs and by the sibilance of "jaillissaient", "glissait" and "descendait" which imitates the sounds of the torrents flowing over the gardens and rooftops, reaching a climax in the two rhythmic repetitive short sharp phrases in which the deluge of rain effectively engulfs and cleanses the world. The storm is an act of natural purification, a washing away of the corruptive influence of man in a statement of sheer beauty, power and magnificence. This baptismal image is repeated in the novel as the author juxtaposes the native and European worlds within the context of the natural world. When Geoffroy achieves his dream of discovering the secrets of ancient mythology he encounters "Ite Brinyan, le lac de vie" (223) in which he is immersed. "Il pense au baptême, il ne sera plus jamais le même homme." (223) For this father, water takes on a mystical quality; for the son, Fintan, water represents the joy of the natural world. Fintan huddles together with Maou throughout the storm; he is "[t]ransi, grelottant." (70) When the spell is finally broken by the sounds of children running in the garden as "[i]ls criaient le nom de la pluie: Ozoo! Ozoo!..." (71), Fintan eventually dares to leave the

shelter of the veranda and walk tentatively across the sodden grass. “La boue suçait ses pieds. Fintan ôta ses chaussures, il les accrocha autour de son cou par les lacets, comme un sauvage.” (72) In this simple sentence which records a moment of pure boyish pleasure as Fintan removes his heavy school shoes to feel the mud squelching between his toes, the author establishes his definition of “sauvage”, creating a different dialectic from that defined in colonial novels in which nature was associated with the uncivilized and the barbarian.

In contrast to the portrayal of the aggressive cannibal that Robinson Crusoe constructs from the footprint in the sand, this French narrative associates savagery with liberation and the loss of inhibitions. Through Fintan’s eyes ‘sauvage’ means running wild, being free from restrictive conformity and parental authority; it means being in harmony with the natural world which nurtures through the healing power of waters that cleanse and purify. By using the perspective of a naïve young boy, this emotionally connotative noun “sauvage” is effectively defused since references to power, race and status are lost in the delicious pleasures of freedom from the physical and cultural constrictions of “ses grosses chaussures noires et les chaussettes de laine que portent les Anglais”. (79) These belongings are eventually hidden in his closet in a gesture that signifies the author’s refusal to accept the traditional Western perspectives of the native Other. As Monica Spiridon argues, in the Leclézian system of values the marginal “does not have any of the defining attributes of the savage.” (2010: 247).

Fintan is not interested in power hierarchies; he is awakening to the new physical urges burgeoning in his adolescent body and these stirrings influence his perspective of Nigeria and its natives. His increasing awareness and appreciation of local customs parallel the physical changes in his body. His native friend Bony acts as mentor in his sexual explorations and they compare the native’s circumcised penis with Fintan’s own uncircumcised penis and together they spy on the naked village women bathing in the

river. His mother Maou recognizes these influences on her son. “Son visage et son corps s’étaient endurcis, ses pieds étaient devenus larges et forts comme ceux des enfants d’Onitsha.” (175) Fintan’s narrative expresses both wonder and desire, two emotional responses that introduce a new way of looking at the Other. The narrator is no longer “looking through the lens of the ‘master’” (Morrison 2012), a lens defined by authoritarianism and supremacy, but through the eyes of a young boy eager to learn and explore. Therefore the assumptions that underlined colonial power relationships have been effectively subverted by the innocent yearnings of this adolescent boy whose desire for sexual knowledge is aroused by the exoticism and lushness of the new world which surrounds him; he challenges parental limits when he “allait de plus en plus loin, à l’aventure.” (104) His secretive escapes from his father’s house function as a metaphor for the increasing emotional and psychological distancing between Fintan and the British colonialists that dominate the town, the very social group with which Geoffroy is associated.

6.1 Ways of Seeing the Postcolonial Other

In a gesture towards Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* in which the voyage to the center of Africa describes Marlow’s discovery of the unknown Other, Fintan and Maou embark on a voyage to Africa to meet the unknown father; *Onitsha* revisits the archetypal novel by tracing the passage from France to the colonies, from the “eaux sales” of the estuary to the gently flowing Niger River that swirled “avec des sortes de nœuds, des tourbillions, de petits bruits de suction.” (119) The ship sails from the waters contaminated by industry, civilization and corruption to the purity of the natural world. The references to the size, tonnage and shipping line are small technical details which imply that the narrative will be guided by a pragmatic objective voice that is focused on conveying strong visual images. But the sentence finishes on an unexpected note. It is neither the excitement nor the

novelty of the voyage and its exotic destination far from European urbanization that captures Fintan's imagination, instead it is the adored features of his mother's face that draw his attention. He studies the outline of her profile and the texture of her skin from a new perspective. It is an intensely personal response which reveals the awakening in a young boy of twelve that his mother is the female Other, a woman who is "[n]on pas vraiment belle, mais si vivante, si forte". (13) This unexpected insight signals that Fintan is setting out on an actual adventure to the unknown landscapes of Africa whilst undergoing an initiation into the unknown experiences and changes of "la plus grande aventure de la vie, le passage à l'âge adulte". (175)

The abrupt switching of attention away from the dirty waters sweeping the estuary to Fintan's fascination with his mother's face in the same sentence is an odd non-sequitur which jars with the reader's expectations; but this redirection has an important function in the narrative because Fintan's fragmentary subjective viewpoint is integrated into the third- person narrative. We see Maou, through his eyes. We can almost touch her skin so finely does he describe it. "Il y avait un duvet transparent sur sa peau, comme sur un fruit." (13) By introducing this subtle adjustment into the narrative the author has indicated an important development regarding literary representation in this novel. He clearly warns the reader that this is an alternative representation of the traditional colonial quest from the metropolitan center to the peripheries of colonial Africa; Fintan and Maou "s'en allaient, jamais plus rien ne serait comme autrefois." (14) He will define his adult identity through the construction of opposites in which the Other is signified in turn by the father he detests, by his native friend Bony, by the Otherness of Africa itself but especially through the sexuality of the female Other represented by his adored mother and also by the native women represented by Oya, a beautiful young girl whose "seins [...] gonflés comme ceux d'une vraie femme" (107) hint at sexual promise.

Le Clézio explores sexuality to include fecundity, pregnancy and childbirth, as represented by the impregnation of Oya, Marima and Maou in *Onitsha* and Lalla in *Désert*. Since Maou has previously been identified as Other by the colonists when a passenger named Mme. Botrou had called her “l’Africaine!” (26), it is the female Other who is associated with fertility as well as sexuality, as opposed to the restrained respectability of the colonial wives “en robes claires et escarpins parlant de leur problèmes de boys” (83) whose conformity is disparaged by their colorless clothing, respectable shoes and banal small talk. It is here that we may identify ambivalence in Le Clézio’s approach to the Other. By celebrating the natural force of women through their sexuality, the author is also referencing traditional colonial stereotypes in which women are objectified by their sexual attractiveness. Ali Rattansi argues that imperialism portrayed the native woman as “sexually available and erotic [...] a staple of sexual fantasies”. (2007: 47) Similarly, Edward Said describes “a remarkably persistent motif in Western attitudes” to the Other in which the Oriental Otherness suggests “untiring sexuality, unlimited desire, deep generative energies”. (1979: 188) There is a curious ambivalence underscoring Fintan’s narrative that references both the innocence of the young boy and the voyeurism of mature sexual desire in the lustful male, such as Sabine Rodes. Both characters stand together in the shadows of the ship’s hull as they spy on the native Okawho penetrating Oya. “Le bruit de leur respiration emplissait la salle.” (154) But whose breathing is the narrative describing? Is it that of the couple copulating on the floor or that of the man and boy watching breathlessly from the shadows? The air is full of sexual tension and Oya remains identified as the objectified sexual stereotype.

Elle avait un visage d’enfant, très lisse, mais son corps et ses seins étaient ceux d’une femme. [...] Les autres filles et les enfants se moquaient d’elle, ils lui jetaient des petites pierres, des noyaux. Ils avaient peur d’elle. Elle était de nulle part [...] On disait que c’était une prostituée de Lagos, qu’elle avait été en prison. (106)

Her presence creates fear and jealousy because she is an outsider. She is objectified by her Otherness which is translated into promiscuity, a different form of slavery. Her young body becomes a vehicle of desire and she is wanted by many men in Onitsha, including Bony, Sabine Rodes and his servant Okawho who eventually impregnates her. She is disposed of ruthlessly by Rodes who announces to Maou that “elle est la femme d’Okawho, je la lui ai donnée”. (198) Although she is treated as chattel, she remains immensely desirable. “Regardez-la, est-ce qu’elle n’a pas l’air d’une reine ?” (198) The author presents her through a dizzying array of perspectives which embrace the enslaved and yet regal, wanton yet desirable, romanticized yet belittled. Unable to speak and thus define herself she is objectified within the constructs created by male characters who create her body into the figure of a black seductress who is the vehicle of unfulfilled desire, reflecting back on Marlow’s recognition in *Heart of Darkness* of the allure of the dark unknown which he describes as the “fascination of the abomination” (20). Oya symbolizes this ambivalence since “[e]lle avait quelque chose d’à la fois sauvage et innocent” (171) - qualities that attract Maou’s empathy but disturb her native servant Elijah’s equilibrium: “il la regardait comme une sorcière.” (171) Such a response links sexual attraction to the power of magic, witchcraft and the dark arts and recalls the fixed colonial associations of degeneracy with the racial Other. Thus Oya can be treated as both a prostitute and a sexual object by Okawho, Bony and Sabine Rodes who all desire her with varying degrees of success and at the same time she can become distanced by her very desirability that places her in the realm of the unattainable, like a princess. Maou angrily exclaims to Rodes that Oya is just an ordinary young girl: “Laissez-la tranquille, elle n’est pas une reine, ni une folle.” (198)

Such ambivalence creates a vacuum in the novel since there is no central voice which directs the narrative. I argue that this lack of centering not only indicates the absence of “originary sites” (Harrington 2006: 122) from which to write, but also deliberately

undermines colonial power constructs and fragments Western perspectives by creating a kaleidoscope of images and perceptions which construct new ways of seeing the Other. The English colonial outsider Sabine Rodes challenges the type of self-indulgent thinking that constructs an Other based on desire and idealism. “Mais il faut être réaliste, il faut voir les choses comme elles sont et non comme on voudrait qu’elles soient.” (196) But whose reality is he referencing? Le Clézio’s narrative indicates that perception and representation are very individual and that the ‘fixed’ absolutes of reality he appears to be alluding to are in fact as ambiguous and ill-defined as the constructs created by the idealism he has criticized. At the end of the novel Fintan receives a letter informing him of Rodes’ death. “La lettre précisait que, de son vrai nom, il s’appelait Roderick Matthews, et qu’il était officier de l’ordre de l’Empire Britannique.” (289) This unexplained disclosure at the very end of the novel functions to confirm the ambiguity and uncertainty that permeates the narrative but also signifies Rodes as an unknown Other, a Kurtz-like figure who disturbs and antagonizes in order to reveal darker inner desires. But why does Le Clézio end his novel with this revelation, this open-ended conundrum that puzzles the reader and destabilizes the narrative? I argue that the function of Sabine Rodes parallels that of Kurtz in Conrad’s novel since both men reveal the complexity of colonial psychology by exposing the dark underbelly of colonialism which takes the form of the repression and the restraint that affects both colonizer and colonized and thus effectively deconstructs the assumptions on which colonialism is structured. By ending the narrative with this unexpected revelation, the author effectively establishes the ambiguity that Rodes had been trying to explain.

Sabine Rodes exposes the fissures that divide the apparent solidarity of the colonial community, thus subtly undermining the District Officer’s vision constructed on traditional ‘fixed’ perspectives. This officious civil servant “voyait la société coloniale comme un échafaudage rigoureux où chacun devait tenir son rôle.” (166) In contrast, Rodes flaunts

his independence by revealing a heady mix of the traditional and the exotic as exemplified by his house which is “une sorte de château” (110) which filled “une collection d’objets et de masques du Bénin, du Niger, même des Baoulé du Sénégal.” (110) When Rodes lends his vast collection of books and papers on West Africa to Geoffroy he not only helps his research but also unleashes the deep desires that burn within him so that “L’Afrique brûle comme un secret, comme une fièvre.” (99) The fire and fever imagery effectively link the intensity of his obsession with the heat from the fiery African desert and with the fires of sexual desire. By linking desire with Geoffroy’s dreams and historical mysticism, Le Clezio is making an important statement about the colonial way of seeing the Other. No longer framed by the authority and egocentrism that characterized Robinson Crusoe’s perspectives, the postcolonial European is confounded by doubt, desires and ambivalence. Geoffroy indulges his fantasies and strikes out to explore the region in search of the lost civilization but in the end discovers only confusion. He realizes the same self-questioning that eventually haunts David Lurie. “Que suis-je venu chercher? pense Geoffroy, et il ne peut pas trouver de réponse” (222). He eventually comprehends that there is no Eden in Africa, that dreams are wishful and tempting but they do not provide a convincing reality. “Il pense: tout est terminé. Il n’y a pas de paradis.” (225) This is the reality to which Rodes refers, the reality of honesty and a way of seeing that is accountable and responsible, not the reality of District Officer Simpson whose entrenched hollow visions are encapsulated in the depiction of the unfinished swimming pool which is filled “d’eau boueuse.” (253)

Geoffroy’s way of seeing is compromised by his ambivalence to the role of colonizer, a perspective that is exemplified by his function within the narrative. He narrates the second dominant strand to the story forming a dual narratorial structure that immediately indicates his lack of authority. There is no single voice, but a polyvocal text in which the central narrator is a young boy. The white male voice tells a story of the past, of mythologies and mystical histories that is not grounded in the pragmatic reality of Crusoe or Marlow but

reflects the questionings that David Lurie is forced to confront. Geoffroy's narrative is peopled by shadowy figures from mythology who trail across the relentlessly endless desert. He becomes so obsessed "[i]l ne peut pas rêver d'autre rêve." (99) This return to the past functions to inscribe the indigenous natives with a history and some cultural significance. This recognition reflects the author's desire to inscribe the natives with an in-depth reality. The supremacy of the white male that dominated the narratives of *Robinson Crusoe*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Disgrace*, *L'Étranger* and 'L'Hôte' has been deconstructed and the univocal linear narrative has been replaced by a complex structure destabilized by a series of tensions and conflicts to the extent that Katharine Harrington argues that in Le Clézio's work "it is nearly impossible to identify a national or cultural center". (2006: 119) while Robert A. Miller describes this technique as creating "un univers décentré, globalisé et cosmopolite" (2003: 31) - a comment that effectively endorses the author's success in writing for everyone as he claimed in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech.

Dauda Yillah explores the function of these two different ways of seeing the Other and argues that the juxtaposition of these two moments in history "enables [Le Clézio] to place the continent in a wider historical context, contrasting in a double gesture of cultural self-distancing and openness to difference, the ignominies and brutalities of European colonial rule on the one hand and the dignified image of pre-colonial Africa on the other." (2008: 175) Although this argument fails to consider the significance of Fintan's central role in the novel as a developing adolescent and the themes of growth, change and freedom from domination intrinsic to such a motif, it does take into consideration the new perspectives of the Other that are integral to the novel. Yillah argues that such self-distancing not only enables Le Clézio to expose colonial brutality but also facilitates his "attempt as a Westerner to empathize with black African situations." (179) Such empathy is unusual in the depiction of the Other by white male writers and by identifying this attitude in Le Clézio's work Yillah has raised an important point of discussion. The mode of portrayal of

the native Other is a contentious issue in Leclézian criticism. For example, Yillah appreciates his attempts to empathize with the Other whereas Paul Archambault critiques his inclination to “indulge in ‘exoticism’, that is, a tendency to idealize ‘primitive’ cultures at the expense of the technological cultures of the West” (2009: 283) since Le Clézio’s novel is based on a differentiation from European colonialism rather than a political or ethical ideology. Geoffroy’s research results in his glorification of tribal mythologies, and quasi-sexual obsession with the young queen Amanirenas: “Il rêve de son visage, de son corps, de sa magie, de son regard sur un monde où tout commence”. (191-192) His study effectively demonstrates the civilized past of the native population, a history ignored in the other novels since the white male narrators are not concerned with creating a subjectivity for the marginalized Other in their narratives.

In view of these opposing ideas we must ask how do we define “empathy” and question whether an empathetic representation of the native Other is viable in white discourse; would it take the form of a compassionate depiction of the Other within the context of historical dignity or is it an idealized portrayal of the Other that is based merely on sexual or romantic desire? Both these arguments highlight a predicament for the European author trying to represent the Other from a new perspective, which makes us question if it is ethically possible for a European writer to depict the Other. In fact, Frantz Fanon argues that bias is inevitable since our cultural lens is ‘fixed’ and that the Other “has to wear the livery that the white man has sewed for him.” (1967: 34) However, I argue that in spite of the problems of perception that Archambault and Fanon put forward, Le Clézio expresses empathy, an attempt to identify with the Other, not by direct description or commentary, but by inference, contrast and the juxtaposition of multiple voices expressing different points of view and particularly by marginalizing the authoritarian voice of the white European. In counterpoint to these two dominant narrative strands directed through the consciousness of father and son, the author introduces two other significant

perspectives, that of Maou and that of the colonizers established in Onitsha. The traditional colonial view is written in the omniscient, impersonal third person, with occasional interjections from Fintan's perspective. He identifies the "terrible Simpson" (62), whose drunken behavior appalls him. We see the English from afar, noting their dress, their conduct and their traditions but rarely knowing their innermost thoughts and impressions. This distancing creates a vacuum that deliberately prevents the reader from identifying with them, or from comprehending their motives.

The British colonizers are first encountered on the boat sailing out to Africa, an occasion that gestures towards the quest that typifies colonial narratives such as *Heart of Darkness*; but the motifs of adventure, exploration and conquest that characterized Marlow's journey have been replaced by frivolous images of drunken indulgence, seduction and appalling mimicry of native pidgin: "Pickaninny stop along him fellow!" D'autres criaient: "Maïwot! Maïwot!..." (62) Such conduct creates a doubt as to who should be described as degenerate and who is named the civilized. Clearly defined oppositions between the Self and Other have been subverted. British complacency is rudely shattered one morning when the passengers are awakened by the sound of hammering.

Sur le pont, il y avait déjà du monde, des Anglais vêtus de leurs vestes de lin blanc, des dames portant des chapeaux, des voilettes [...] tout le pont avant du *Surabaya* était occupé par les noirs accroupis qui frappaient à coups de marteau les écoutilles, la coque et les membrures pour arracher la rouille.
(41)

The natives are grouped together simply as a generic "les noirs" whilst the European men are distinguished by their white linen, a dress code that not only defines their social status, but also implies the nobility and civilizing mandate of their colonial mission. This color opposition black/white deftly references the Manichean opposition that defined the colonial power relationship. Clothing is frequently described in order to establish

hierarchies, but in this context it also functions as a barrier; the ladies are hatted and veiled, their delicate skin protected from the harsh sun, and their thoughts shielded from the cruel realities before them. Hats and veils hide expressions and reactions so that they remain estranged and emotionless in anticipation of the supportive yet anonymous role they will play in colonial Nigeria. Such details reinforce not only racial and social difference but imply the ethical superiority of the Europeans who are standing on the upper deck overlooking the Africans who are crouched down on the foredeck hammering on the hatches. Like the dispirited Arab prisoner in Camus's short story 'L'Hôte' who is "accroupi" by the stove (87), the natives' denigration is conveyed by this simple lowly position. Crouching defines their humiliation and subtly implies that they are not quite human since they are not standing upright like civilized man. Yet there is an underlying irony in this situation since the natives are beating at the rust eating away at the hull of the ship; this corrosion is a symbol of the decline of Empire and the corruption permeating Western power. Despite the colonizers' best intentions to project authority and their supposed inherent superiority, Le Clézio's narrative undermines these attempts to maintain the established power hierarchy and raises questions concerning European degeneracy and abuse of power.

Alongside this narrative strand is juxtaposed the perspective of Maou; she reacts strongly to these established colonial relationships and gradually comes to represent the opposing viewpoint that challenges white supremacy by championing the natives, befriending their wives and identifying their individuality. Her point of view is articulated simply and effectively, often within the context of colonial brutality. When newly arrived in Africa she visits the fortress of Gorée where she is horrified to witness the slave holding cells: "Maou ressentait le dégoût, la honte". (39) Later on, when the boat continues on its final journey to Onitsha, she sees the natives crouched on the boat in their make-shift camps, she murmurs sympathetically to herself "Pauvres gens". (41) She keeps her

impressions close to her heart until finally at the luncheon at the club she can contain herself no longer when she sees the chain-gang toiling in the endless heat.

Tout d'un coup, Maou se leva, et la voix tremblant de colère, avec son drôle d'accent français et italien quand elle parlait anglais, elle dit :

“Mais il faut leur donner à manger et à boire, regardez ces pauvres gens, ils ont faim et soif !” Elle dit “fellow” comme en pidgin. (85)

Maou's unexpected outburst expresses concern for the humanity of the native criminals who are being employed as forced labor to dig out a swimming pool for the pleasure of the European community. She insists on their sufferings and their feelings, equating their physical needs with those of the group who are enjoying drinks and a delicious lunch in the shade of the veranda. Maou's demand for compassion for the natives' physical distress shows the extent to which she considers them equals. She thus adopts a special role within the novel, as her narrative functions to provide a conscience. Like Lucy Lurie in *Disgrace* Maou questions and challenges the assumptions that inscribe white discourse. She confesses to her husband, Geoffroy, that “[elle le] dérange, [elle] dérange tout le monde ici” (169), and Gerald Simpson, the English District Officer who once flirted with her on the boat, who whispered in her ear and danced with his arm around her waist, is frustrated and angered by her refusal to conform: “Gerald Simpson ne pardonnait pas à Maou son indépendance, son imagination.” (169)

The tensions underlying the relationship between Maou and the colonizers signify the pressures of the developing ideological movements that were crossing the world after the social, political and economic changes stimulated by the aftermath of the Second World War. She not only represents the future, but becomes its guardian as she passes on her deep feelings of shame and anger at colonial misrule to her son Fintan. Her responses are not merely emotional but indicate a newly emerging morality that accepts responsibility for the welfare of the Other and accountability for the legacy of colonialism. She functions as

mouthpiece for the author who, in an interview with Maya Jaggi, questions the validity of Western ethical constructs. “Being European, I’m not sure of the value of my culture as I know what it has done”. (2010) The concept of accountability is central to his writing and he poses a poignant but nonetheless devastating question at the end of the novel when Fintan writes to his much younger sister. He describes his ties to Nigeria/Biafra and wonders about her ways of seeing his beloved country.

Est-ce que pour toi, l’Afrique c’est seulement un nom, une terre comme une autre, un continent dont on parle dans les journaux et dans les livres, un endroit dont on dit le nom parce qu’il y a la guerre? (277)

The juxtaposition of these divergent representations of seeing the African Other embrace the past and the present, the real and the mythological, the dreamlike and the actual and thus suggest a new form of opposition that transcends the simple binaries of black/white, good/evil and civilized/degenerate which may be based on stereotyping and prejudice. The author also avoids oppositions based on absolutes such as those defined by race, gender and ethics, but focuses on those that attempt to define difference less judgmentally.

Le Clézio’s novels examine the challenges confronted by these new ways of looking at and representing the Self and Other and seek to embrace a more global view by reaching across dissolving boundaries of nationality, economics, religion and race. He asks disturbing, even provocative questions which search beyond the desire to identify the Other in the changing landscapes of post-colonial rule. What is the responsibility of the West towards the post-colonial Other? What is the responsibility of the West for the brutalities and legacies of the colonial past and for the bitter conflicts that damage the evolving independence in post-colonial countries? Such questions challenge the fundamentals of colonial discourse since they are based on the recognition of the autonomy and humanity of the post-colonized Other. Although critics such as Archambault (2008) and Moser (2011) consider the effect of nomadism on Le Clézio’s work and also discuss

his ways of representing the Other, there is a limited discussion dealing with European responsibilities to the Other in the postcolonial landscape, a consideration which I would argue is key to understanding this French Mauritian's writing.

6.2 Identifying the Postcolonial Other

The author's nomadic background influences not only the ways of seeing the Other in his writings but also impacts on how the Other is identified since he is aware of potential multifaceted projections of alterity. In fact, Warren Motte argues that personal identity as a whole is "unstable and problematic in *Onitsha*" (2003:19) since "[in] one way or another, then, all of the principal characters in *Onitsha*, are designated as "other" - if to varying degrees - by virtue of the fact that their names fall outside the referential field of French language and culture". (19) Thus, the Europeans themselves are marginalized, not by the absolutes of race or gender, but by their names which, as signifiers of identity and culture, resist placement in the novel since their symbolism is unclear. (19) Maou, Fintan, Geoffroy and Sabine Rodes are designated outside the parameters of colonial acceptability by their unusual names; an estrangement confirmed by their relationships with and advocacy for the indigenous racial Other. In this respect these narrators reflect the position of the author himself who claims a multinational heritage: "I've always felt very much from a mixed culture - mainly English and French, but also Nigerian, Thai, Mexican. Everything's had its influence on me." (Jaggi 2010) Le Clézio thus defines his own alterity by placing himself outside the fields of reference that define nationality and belonging.

So how does this writer who confirms his own diversity identify the Other through his personal multicultural lens? Many of his protagonists reflect his nomadism through their constant journeying, searching for the unknown, while other characters stand in wonder and question their motives. Puzzled, Fintan's aunt Rosa repeatedly asks Maou why she is leaving for Africa. "Qu'est qu'il y a là-bas? Là-bas?" (17) Warren Motte argues that in

Le Clézio's writing the term *là-bas* "is powerfully intertextual, an overdetermined signifier that serves to designate a place defined, for the moment, only by its alterity." (2003: 16) Seeking the elsewhere is fundamental to the author's narratives. Fintan and Maou travel to Nigeria, fascinated by the unfamiliar names that evoke powerful responses. "Onitsha. C'était un nom magique. Un nom aimanté. On ne pouvait pas résister." (52) Geoffroy sails upriver to the sacred site of Aro Chuku searching for elusive signifiers of past diasporas. In *Désert* Lalla flees her beloved desert for the slums of Marseille to find sanctuary from the horrors of an arranged marriage and her historic counterpart Nour struggles in endless diasporas across the desert, as his refugee tribe flees from the advancing French colonizers. Driven by persecution or the desire for self-enrichment these characters journey towards the unknown and within this context place itself becomes a symbol of Otherness and the locus of unfulfilled desire. Onitsha for Maou, for example, represents the intermingling of past romance and dreams for the future as she reunites with her husband. "Là-bas, quand on arriverait à Onitsha, tout serait différent, tout serait facile." (31) The conditional tense not only reveals the idealism of Maou's desires but also underscores their unreality; she is entering the realm of possibilities and renewal but also the realm of disappointment and loss. Each member of the Allen family, Fintan, Maou and Geoffroy, holds a secret, a deep longing which is projected onto the landscape that surrounds them; Levinas defines desire as being "positively attracted by something other not yet possessed or needed". (1969: 19) Thus desire is an expression of the absence of the Other which transcends Self: "this desire is never satisfied, but it seems insatiable, and feeds on itself". (16) Their individual expeditions symbolize their metaphorical and psychological journeys on the road to the unknown that leads to increasing self-awareness, reflecting the intellectual nomadism in which the literal boundaries of place are replaced by metaphorical boundaries of ideas and ideologies, that increasing globalization imposes on the evolving narratives.

This inner form of nomadism, the psychological transition from the singular to multiple, from the fixed to the flexibility of diversity is demonstrated in the episodes relating to the chain-gang and the swimming pool, excavated at the behest of Gerald Simpson for the pleasure of the British. The chained criminals arrive at the house at the same time as the luncheon guests. The British strive to maintain appearances and uphold their traditions and view the world through the lens of their traditions. They watch the slaves stagger across the grounds: “ils devaient marcher du même pas, comme à la parade.” (83) Bound together by the chains around their ankles they parody the British institutional parade, referencing the power and majesty of the colonizer in their own humiliation. Emasculated in this way, they cannot make an individual footprint but are forced to produce an impression on the land, defined, situated and ordered by Gerald Simpson, the District Officer. But in the postcolonial world, the masters cannot control the Other; the natives resist power and an uprising breaks out and ends in a bloody and deadly encounter. The pool is abandoned and left as a symbol of colonial misjudgment, as a reminder of the moment when the soldiers fired pointblank on these slaves even though “ils avaient cessé de menacer” (236) thereby establishing the culpability of the leader who gave the order to fire. Fintan sobs aloud that “[i]ls ont tiré, ils les ont tués, ils ont tiré sur les gens enchaînés, ils sont tombés.” (237) The staccato rhythm of the short sharp phrases and the alliterated “t” sound mimic the gunfire, echoing throughout the narrative. Such vivid language emphasizes the moment of the brutal, unjustified killing, raising questions as to Western definitions of savagery and justice. Who is the barbarian? How do we define savagery and justice? This incident exposes the dichotomy of meaning that the author is exploring in his attempt to explore the fragmented values and perceptions of the globalized world.

In this respect Le Clézio’s work diverges sharply from the literary representation of the colonial paradigm. The security of place has been replaced by the blankness of space. Robinson Crusoe, for example, who was secure in the clearly defined place of his desert

island, was able to construct a well-defined persona of the Other as his references were distinct and unambiguous, defined unequivocally by the taboo of cannibalism. In Le Clézio's world, however, the Other is more ambivalent, since the terms of reference are not well defined. Since the narrative is related from the perspectives of multiple points of view, there is no centering of the concept of the Other. The footprints made freely in Defoe's novel are mere traces in Le Clézio's narrative, constantly swept away by the wind to be replaced by another, in an image of the transitory nature of definition in postcolonialism in which the 'fixed' cedes to the fluid, diverse and variable. The tribes wandering across the desert in search of a safe haven leave behind fragmented trails. "Les pieds nus des femmes et des enfants se posaient sur le sable, laissant une trace légère que le vent effaçait aussitôt." (D. 23-4) The firm sand on Crusoe's beach has been replaced by the rough country in which the nomads flow over "la terre rouge, au fond des crevasses, dans les vallées desséchées". (O. 159) The Other cannot be readily identified within these fragmented shifting landscapes that resist fixed definitions of Self and Other.

The various narrators attempt to identify the native Other from their own individual way of seeing. For Fintan, Bony is a special friend who introduces him to childhood pleasures in the town but also acts as his mentor. For example, his relationship with the native boy Bony is characterized by their youthful activities, skills and interests rather than by racial features. They are presented as typical adolescent boys interested in adventures and physical exploits; he admires Bony because "[il] était capable de courir aussi vite qu'un chien, pieds nus à travers les hautes herbes" (79) and Fintan attempts to emulate this skill. But there are darker interests too; Bony fascinates because he is more worldly wise. "Il savait toutes sortes de jurons et de gros mots en anglais, il avait appris à Fintan ce que c'était que 'cunt' et d'autres choses qu'il ne connaissait pas." (78) Through this adolescent relationship the author thus introduces a new facet to the interracial power struggle. It is the native Bony who leads and teaches Fintan how to adapt to life in Onitsha; Le Clézio's

Bony is the expert and the teacher. “Bony savait tout du fleuve et des alentours [...] Bony connaissait les passages, entre les flaques de boue [...] Bony savait imiter les cris des oiseaux.” (79)

This is not a new approach and is evident in Michel Tournier’s rewriting of the Crusoe story in *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique* in which the native becomes subject. After the explosion in the cave which destroyed Robinson’s carefully established hierarchy and gave Friday his freedom, the colonizer experiences “une métamorphose bouleversante” (2004:191) in which he realizes that roles have changed: “Des années durant, il avait été à la fois le maître et le père de Vendredi. En quelques jours il était devenu son frère”. (191) This transformation becomes a metaphor for the challenge to Western civilization by indigenous cultures which value the power of the natural world. Le Clézio takes imagery from the natural world to inscribe a similar commentary in his narratives. As I argued before, rain and water are tropes of both purity and impurity in his writing. In *Onitsha* and *Étoile errante* naturally forming water cleanses the impurities in a form of baptism or as a process of renewal. Towns and streets in both novels are constantly washed down by torrents from the surrounding mountains or by the heavy rains; pools of cold water are often associated with the power of childbirth and the innocence of childhood where “you could forget everything, the cold water cleansed you to the very core” (E.E. 45). Similarly, Fintan experiences an epiphany when he enters the cold waters of the “l’eau *mbiam*” (181) He feels the water wash away his fatigue and his fears. “Il y avait une paix en lui, comme le poids du sommeil.” (183) In contrast, the waters that form or collect in pools, which desecrate the land or its people, are the waters of death and destruction. The neglected swimming pool where the chained criminals were brutally shot stands as emblem of failed colonialism and Simpson’s disgrace. “Le grand trou de la piscine paraissait une tombe inondée. L’eau était boueuse, couleur de sang.” (253)

Geoffroy's perspective is less straightforward than his son's. A reluctant colonizer, his employment at the wharf implies his complicity with the colonial regime, yet in his dreams he longs for another world in which the indigenous people live freely. His vision is based on historical evidence, and stimulated by the myths surrounding the facial scarification that many carry proudly.

C'est le signe *itsi*. C'est lui que Geoffroy a vu, sur les visages, la première fois qu'il est arrivé à Onitsha. Le signe gravé dans la peau des visages des hommes, comme une écriture sur la pierre [...] Seuls certains d'entre eux portent sur le visage le signe de leur ancêtre Ndri, le signe du soleil. (100-1)

The stone imagery suggests durability and eternity, relating back to the monoliths of Akawanshi that Geoffroy discovered on the shore of the river Cross "dressés dans l'herbe comme des dieux". (219) Such inscriptions emphasize the power of storytelling through the ages from ancestor to descendent, relating time-honored mythologies and histories which are still valued and treasured in the contemporary world. These indigenous people are identified through the scarification which establishes their history and ancestry. The symbols carved on their faces tell the story of a culture strongly related to the natural world, but here the ease of interpretation ends and the author establishes the originality of this culture. There are no Christian references, in fact the signs refer to another god, Ndri, but through these stories and signs the author makes the important point that the metanarratives that inform other cultures are as enriching and valuable as our own. Geoffroy's Other is an historical and mythological construct that defies the colonial stereotyping that typifies the colonizers' view of the racial Other.

No longer one-dimensional the racial Other becomes a viable character who experiences the major transitions of life and is no longer stuck in the mire of the stereotyping, and at the same time he creates a doubt in the reader's perceptions. Many of the characters are outsiders, not belonging to established groups or

conforming to accepted traditions. The Allen family typifies the new Other; Maou, Fintan and later Geoffroy all become outsiders, unwelcome at the club, greeted by “[un] silence glacé” (95) and treated with “un léger dédain”. (86) They are subtly and effectively ostracized. After her outspoken outburst at the club luncheon in defence of the chain gang, Maou feels encircled by a wall of dislike and disdain. “Il y eut un silence stupéfait, pendant une très longue minute, tous les visages des invités tournés vers elle et la regardait”. (85) This wall of hostile faces symbolizes a united response, a resistance to change perspectives of the Other, but more significantly, the exclusion of the non-conformist, the colonizer who refuses. The fences that protected Crusoe from the cannibals, divided Kurtz from the natives, and defined the parameters of Lucy and Petrus’s lands have now encircled the Allens, holding them captive as different and as Other.

No Country for Old Men

(Guard) Who do you think gets to go through this gate into the United States of America?

(Moss) I don't know. American citizens.

(Guard) Some American citizens. (N.C.187)

Cormac McCarthy's novel, which was published in 2005, takes place in the dusty borderlands of Mexico and Texas. This long border creates a clear demarcation between the metropolitan center of the United States and the marginalized Mexicans who had been racially polarized by the policy of "Manifest Destiny" that justified American expansionism during the eighteenth century on the grounds of conversion of the savage Other. Oscar J. Martínez argues that historically troubles along the Mexico/United States border were fostered by this ideology, "which held that God favored the conquest of western lands, [and] helped to justify territorial aggression against Mexico." (2006: 9) Consequently, the history of the frontier is tainted by this confrontational past. Its two major functions to protect and preserve differences of national identity and to ensure homeland security are therefore rooted in the fear of unauthorized entry by figures of alterity. These long winding fences that cross the desert borderlands are symbols of power and control; they define the boundaries of the dominant center and they exclude the racial Other.

Borders and fences form a central motif in the novels selected for study, ranging from Robinson Crusoe's hedge of trees around his hideout and Meursault's prison walls to Lucy Lurie's farmland fence and Simpson's wire fence around the unfinished swimming pool in Onitsha. All are constructed by the white protagonists to exclude unwanted visitors. These localized perimeters protect the sanctuary of their centers; they are strong, firmly erected structures which Kenneth D. Madsen argues create "a distinction between internal stability and external chaos." (2011: 547) Thus they remain symbols of white supremacy symbolizing and endorsing the binary oppositions that characterize colonialism and

reflecting their cultural understanding of Otherness. Whereas the novels previously discussed were situated in the margins of Empire, such as South Africa, Nigeria and Algeria where white settlers had appropriated land and established their culture and politics, the action of this story is situated in the center itself. Cormac McCarthy's barrier is an international frontier with gates that authorize the entry of the racial Other, an experience that signifies the legally defined identity and subjectivity of the individual involved. In this respect the role of barrier in *No Country for Old Men* has changed from those of the colonial structures since it no longer has a strictly exclusionary function but acts as a filter, as is evident in the quotation heading this section.

The authorized entry of the Mexican racial Other into the U.S is an important statement of change in relationships since it signifies a modification in the perspective of the center. The Other is no longer enslaved but empowered to make some choices and assume some subjectivity. How do these changes in place and this decline in objectivity affect the power relationship between the racial Other and the white male protagonist in the novel? The consequence of these developments could incur greater tension because they bring the racial Other into close proximity to the Self or, conversely, the immediacy of contact may ease anxiety through familiarity. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue that this movement of peoples may signify the end of colonial binaries by refusing to acknowledge territorial boundaries. (2001: xiv) This section will examine how the influx of illegal and legal immigrants into Texas affects the function of the borders, and if these barriers are deconstructed by such diasporas as Hardt and Negri suggest, how this influences the opposition between center and Other.

The very actuality of a frontier is confrontational; the encounter between immigrant and border control creates the roles of the superior and the inferior which are complicated by border history and contemporary policies. There may be a tension between white dominance of the past and tenuous white authority in the present. In the mythologies of the

Wild West, for example, borders and frontiers have traditionally represented the limits of civilization and thus act as locus of heroism and domination as the pioneers struggled to establish homesteads and control the wilderness and the indigenous natives. In novels representative of this genre the dominant myth was that of freedom for the European settlers since, as Hardt and Negri argue, “this American terrain was free of the forms of centralization and hierarchy typical of Europe.” (2001: 168) Survival required strength and integrity, qualities which are glorified in the romances of the Wild West in which the hero “could match his skill against an unforgiving country and an even more unforgiving foe.” (McMurtry 2000: 262) This utopian perspective is somewhat tarnished by the fact of Native American exclusion. However, this modern frontier represents a different challenge; the border, which was once a symbol of white invincibility and difference, is now also a gateway for the racial Other and thus creates a space in which a melting pot of races and ethnicities is continually evolving. These contradictory movements of inclusion and exclusion create an ambivalence which brings instability to the narrative because it destabilizes binary opposition based on exclusion.

Since the relationship between Self and Other is reflexive, the strengthening of the one undermines the authority of the other. If figures of alterity manage to enter the metropolitan center how does this affect the role and status of white figures of authority? In *No Country for Old Men* the author explores the ways in which the developing empowerment of the Other creates a crisis in the figures of white protagonists whose authority is gradually eroded or directly challenged. When Sheriff Ed Tom Bell is confronted by evidence of relentless drug running across the border he is forced into a personal crisis brought on by his loss of control. Unable to prevent the killing spree that has destroyed his legacy and reputation, he is regarded by outsiders as just a “redneck sheriff in a hick town in a hick county. In a hick state.” (157) Bell experiences a critical loss of confidence as he reflects inwards and questions not only his life, but also structures

of law and authority and concepts of heroism. Through this character McCarthy explores issues of white masculinity in crisis. Bell admits that “I’ve been forced to look at myself.” (296) Whereas David Lurie also experienced a process of radical self-questioning, J.M. Coetzee maintained a certain distance by using the objective third person as narrative voice. In contrast, Cormac McCarthy allows the reader to enter Bell’s inner consciousness, which controls one of the two narrative strands in the novel in order to witness the fragmentation of Bell’s sense of authority. At the same time the author maintains the authority of white discourse since all the events are seen either through Bell’s eyes or from the perspective of the third person omniscient narrator who controls the second narrative strand.

Why does McCarthy choose to bring the Other into the metropolitan center in this novel, in contrast to his earlier novels, such as *Blood Meridian*, in which the Americans ride into Mexico to fight “a race of degenerates. A mongrel race, little better than niggers”? (34) This change in narrative strategy exposes the increasing vulnerability of American homeland security, an issue at the center of policy since the terrorist attacks of “9/11”. Deborah L. Madsen argues that the “racialist discourse of the [...] subversive alien seems to dominate the post “9/11” world, supporting a powerful regime of nationalistic belonging and ethnic exclusion.” (2010: 215) Vince Brewton also cites the impact of global events on contemporary literature and argues that there is a “cultural equation” (2004: 2) between McCarthy’s work and both contemporary historical events and cultural influences and cites the impact of American involvement in Vietnam and the Gulf War on his early novels. David R. Jarraway continues to examine this correlation between the novels and contemporary events by arguing that since *No Country for Old Men* was published only four years after the terrorist attacks of “9/11” during the aftermath of America’s post-trauma “obsession with security in various of its forms” (2012: 51), the novel “registers a sense of panic about human vulnerability.” (51) This argument brings into focus the

devastating impact of these assaults on the American psyche and on what Judith Butler describes as “first-world complacency”. (2002:181) The country was thus alerted to the insistent voices of the Other who dared to enter the country itself. It is not merely a question of empowerment of alterity, but also an issue of the effect of such increasing agency.

Situating American literature in the postcolonial world is complex since the United States is both settler colony and imperial power, a dichotomy that places it “in a category of its own.” (2004a: 42) A nation built on immigration that welcomes the religious, cultural and political outsiders from around the world, it now functions as the powerful representative of the Western metropolitan center. To some critics such as Elleke Boehmer (2005: 4) the fact of American imperialism places it outside the realm of postcolonialism, yet its very history of immigration implies it has fundamental sympathies for the marginalized and the displaced. Bill Ashcroft et al. argue that American literature offers a new perception of reality that raises “inevitable questions about the relationship between literature and place, between literature and nationality and particularly about the suitability of an inherited literary form.” (2001: 161) The role of the border in McCarthy’s novel embraces these issues of place and nationality. Identity is the concern that underlies Ed Tom Bell’s crisis. He repeats that events have forced him to reflect and evaluate. In contrast to the philandering David Lurie in *Disgrace*, who never really comes to terms with accepting his weaknesses despite his apology, Bell considers long and hard how his career has developed and if authenticity has always underscored his conduct.

The novel relates how Llewelyn Moss, a Vietnam veteran, comes across the scene of a brutal massacre in the remote desert landscape where he has been hunting antelope. Alongside three vehicles standing isolated on the floodplain he discovers the bodies of the Mexicans and piles of brick-sized parcels of drugs. After searching the area for any signs of the continued presence of the attackers, Moss recklessly decides to steal the drug money

he finds near the body of the last man standing. He convinces himself that the risk is mitigated by the opportunities it will open up for him since he feels that his “whole life was sitting there in front of him.” (18) He leaves with the case of money, but later returns to the scene in order to give water to the dying Mexican he found in one of the trucks. While he is stumbling across the darkened terrain the attackers return and set in motion a fast-paced thriller that crosses the desert scrublands into the small towns and cheap motels that occupy the borderlands as Moss is relentlessly pursued by members of a rival drug gang and by two ruthless hit men, Anton Chigurh and Carson Wells. Chigurh rapidly traces Moss’s tracks, easily outwitting Wells in the race to recoup the stolen money and to seek his own form of retribution. He confronts the young veteran in a set-piece western style shoot-out at Eagle Pass. Moss escapes, but knows only too well that Chigurh will be persistent in his pursuit. As Sheriff of the county, Ed Tom Bell leads the local police department’s efforts to identify the coldblooded murderer on the loose and tries, unsuccessfully, to protect Moss and his young wife Carla Jean from the contract placed on their heads. They eventually become two of the many victims whose bodies litter the pages of the novel; Moss is killed, “shot all to pieces” (238), by Mexican hitmen from a rival drug cartel and Carla Jean becomes another one of Anton Chigurh’s many victims. Disillusioned by his failure to apprehend the psychopathic killer and by the increasing violence destroying the communities in the borderlands, Bell retires as Sheriff. Meanwhile Anton Chigurh disappears from the narrative as mysteriously as he entered.

7.1 Identifying the Postcolonial Other

Early in the novel Sheriff Ed Tom Bell and his deputies are called to investigate a series of vicious killings that have taken place in the Texas borderlands which they patrol. He is a pragmatic, deliberate lawman as indicated by the plodding rhythm of his monosyllabic

name. He is rooted in the earth, grounded in the securities of daily routines and habits. The men discover a strangled colleague motionless in a pool of blood, an unidentified body dumped in the boot of a car and the bullet-riddled bodies of a group of Mexican drug runners lying in the desert scrublands. Deputy Torbert expresses the horror they all feel in response to these distressing murders:

Who the hell are these people? he said.
 [Bell:] I dont know. I used to say they were the same ones we've always had to deal with. Same ones my granddaddy had to deal with. Back then they was rustlin cattle. Now they're runnin dope. But I dont know as that's true no more. I'm like you. I aint sure we've seen these people before. Their kind. I dont know what to do about em even. If you killed em all they'd have to build a annex on to hell. (79)

Torbert's question is not just a quest for knowledge or even a reactive rhetorical statement but is a deeply felt expression of doubt and confusion. He really wants to know what sort of world has created such murderers and developed their callous disregard for life. These questions form the core of the author's examination of Otherness in the novel and help structure his evolving literary representation of the postcolonial racial Other. Therefore the focus is not so much on the identification of the Other but on a search for understanding of the emerging figures of alterity and their place in an increasingly globalized world. In the previous novels the white protagonist labeled the Other through race, gender, religion or ethnicity, but deputy Torbert's puzzled rhetoric indicates a recognition that there is a new form of menacing Otherness.

At a loss to explain such brutality he seeks knowledge of the perpetrators in his attempt to come to terms with events. His emphatic use of "the hell" betrays his confusion. Despite his experience as law enforcer he is disturbed by the work of these warring drug cartels and their minions. Bell's discomfiture is indicated by the tensions in his language. He compares the past "back then" with the present "now", and within this context he contrasts

change “I used to” and “no more” with stability “same” and “always”; but most significantly he expresses uncertainties: “I don’t know”, “if”, “but” and “I aint sure”. These tensions reveal his growing unease and imply his feelings of bewilderment as he struggles to determine how to confront these crimes. Even in death, the racial Other has its impact and creates a confusion so that the only certainty Bell can recognize is difference, which he labels in terms of “them people” and “us”.

This initial encounter is significant in several respects. First, difference is emphasized by death, which emphatically confirms the difference between the Mexicans and lawmen who are defined by the invariables of race and ethnicity and separated by the complications wrought by illegal entry and criminal activities. Although the Mexicans are dead they still remain problematic since they resist interrogation. Secondly, the uncertainties and tensions that characterize the lawmen’s reactions indicate that there is no ‘fixed’ perspective from which to evaluate difference. They have lost their bearings. “It’s a mess, aint it Sheriff?” comments deputy Wendell. Bell replies “[i]f it aint it’ll do till a mess gets here.” (77) This response introduces the idea that the white protagonist is neither omniscient nor all-powerful as implied in traditional patriarchal discourse which is dominated by a single authoritarian narrator. The Sheriff’s confusion, and the implied potential for a myriad of explanations, finds its echo in the narrative structure of the book that eschews the traditional single omniscient narrator in favor of two different narrators.

These two strands do not relate the same events but act in counterpoint to each other so that the storyline recounted by the third person acts as catalyst for Bell’s reflections. For example, after Chigurh kills members of a different cartel in a shootout in Eagle Pass, “[h]e shoved the pistol in his belt and looked back up the street once more” (122) the narrative switches to Bell’s interior monologue that begins: “*We come here from Georgia. Our family did. Horse and wagon. I pretty much know that for a fact.*” (123) There seems to be a wide disjunction between the two narratives marked by the differences in print and

in subject. In one, Chigurh is in complete control, as revealed by the simple language and attention to detail in his movements. In contrast, Bell's monologue is less an account and more a revelation of thoughts which attempt to process an understanding of the present through recollection of the past. His apprehension is indicated by short, incomplete phrases and constant affirmation of the veracity of his memories. The tensions in the narrative emphasize the crisis that is exposing his innermost doubts. Bell's inability to build a construct of the Other from the bloody mess that confronts him is contrasted with the retention of the Manichean opposition to identify and define the racial Other lying dead on the floor. Bell's only statement of confidence is his belief that they would all go to "a annex on to hell". (79) McCarthy's narrative therefore retains some of the colonial binaries to identify the racial Other but subverts the absolutism of these oppositions to explore the gradual deconstruction of the balance within the power relationship. There is no firm outline to explain the pattern of events. Instead, in order to seek knowledge of the racial Other, the lawmen will have to follow clues. Despite his badge of office and authority within the community, the narratorial structure undermines the sheriff's perceptions of order and control and takes the shaky option of following a "rough trail leading down." (11)

Partly constrained by the location of the story in these borderlands, Cormac McCarthy focuses on the Mexicans as the racial Other rather than reference Native Americans and African Americans. His narrative ignores these archetypal figures of American racial alterity that usually people literary representation, although the indigenous peoples are fully represented in McCarthy's earlier novels. Apart from one very brief reference to a group of "injun[s]" (270) who shot down and killed one of Bell's ancestors, these two ethnic groups are absent from the narrative in *No Country for Old Men*. Why have they been omitted from the novel which, in the light of Deputy Torbert's question, examines the search for knowledge of the racial Other? Deborah L. Madsen differentiates between

various types of racial Other. She identifies the Native Americans and the African Americans as peoples who “retain a subject position that is in a complex and problematic tension with the demands of the emergent multicultural settler nation.” (2010: 208) This is an important distinction as Madsen cites the Native Americans as examples of these peoples who “constitute the very first threateningly unassimilated group [...] in U.S. history.” (208) Although resident in the country these racial groups remain foreign, in the sense of being different and unknown, through ideological links to their separate cultures. The Mexicans, however, belong to the category that Madsen describes as “the diasporic citizen of doubtful loyalties” (207), who crosses and re-crosses the borders and thus remains part of the “here/there” binary. It is this movement across borders that is important in the identification of the racial Other in the novel because it denotes the invasion of place, the entry of the marginalized from the peripheries into the center.

Hence, the role of the Mexican racial Other may not immediately be recognized as crucial in McCarthy’s narrative. Lydia R. Cooper argues that “the novel’s central conflict is not the actual chase - Moss with the money, Chigurh after Moss, Bell after Chigurh - but rather Bell’s encounter with the soul-less ‘prophet of destruction’” (2009: 49) represented by the elusive Chigurh. As protagonists in conflict they remain the focus of much critical examination since, as Steven Frye argues, Chigurh dominates the narrative of the primary plot while the interwoven monologues reveal “the interior world of Bell’s consciousness”. (2009b: 17) Similarly Kenneth Lincoln argues that the novel is “an old morality tale in a new context” (2009: 144) that pits “the pure evil of Chigurh” (146) against “Ed Tom Bell the good sheriff” (144); but he also argues for the importance of the role played by Moss who represents “everyman caught in the crosshairs of hell.” (143) In consequence, the Mexican racial Other is excluded from much of their analyses, remaining in the background and swept into the margins of the novel. Lincoln dismisses these Hispanic figures of alterity when he lists the minor characters as “murderers, clerks, war vet, cops,

wives, hit man, hired killer, uncle” (142) and fails to list their specific roles as street sweeper (117), chambermaids (247) and as a group of dope smoking joyriding, nineteen year old Mexicans who crash into Chigurh’s truck. (287) By omitting the racial identity of characters within this group of minor players, Lincoln reduces the confrontations within the novel to straightforward oppositions between good and evil and ignores the problems that race and ethnic difference bring to concepts of national, cultural and political identity in a globalized world. Their omission from critical discussion indicates the problematics of reading and interpretation. If criticism is still constrained by the perceptions integral to white discourse how can the literary representation of the racial Other be fully acknowledged and evaluated?

As displaced citizens, they play a significant role in the storyline. The brutal encounter in the desert which resulted in their summary execution provides the initial scenario that leads to the desperate chase and pursuit that race across the novel’s pages. But it is one simple request in Spanish, “[a]gua, cuate” (14) from a dying Mexican that sets the train of events in motion. This plea haunts Llewelyn Moss who decides to return to the desert to give him water to quench his thirst. However, he discovers this dying man has been shot and that his own life is now in danger and he must now be on the run. Moss’s return to the desert to give aid to the dying man reveals an unexpected respect for the humanity of the racial Other, an attitude that is also revealed in the response of Ed Tom Bell when he encounters the bloated bodies:

These sumbitches are bloody as hogs, Wendell said.
 Bell glanced at him.
 Yeah, Wendell said. I guess you ought to be careful
 about cussin the dead.
 I would say at the least there probably aint no luck
 in it.
 It’s just a bunch of Mexican drugrunners.
 They were. They aint now. (73)

This is the gruesome evidence of a drug deal that has gone badly wrong and of lives

wasted in violent, illegal activities. The “hog” metaphor is degrading in its analogy with a castrated animal that is reared only for slaughter. Is this the value placed on their exploited lives? The comparison indicates a sense of inevitability that the Mexicans are victims of their own ethnicity. Wendell portrays them as brutish and degenerate, thus creating an objectified Other whose inferiority is similar to the baseness depicted in the figures of the enchained savages in *Heart of Darkness* and in the chain-gang in *Onitsha*. There is no dignity in their depiction and no compassion in their portrayal since they exist as rotting dead bodies left on the ground or as fearful victims who have soiled themselves and remain seated in the truck surrounded by the “[s]mell of blood and fecal matter.” (14) In contrast to this vivid metaphor that implies the Mexicans as victims as well as criminals, there is a return to stereotypes. Wendell describes them as “just a bunch” of Mexicans; this emphatic “just” demeans their humanity and places them firmly in the endless stream of unwanted illegal immigrants; but his language also inscribes his own identity. His dialect and colorful local expressions suggest a local unsophisticated man familiar with the discovery of bodies from failed attempts to cross the borders.

While Wendell focuses on the degeneracy of the drug dealers and their carriers, Bell intimates the importance of respect and compassion for life lost by referencing the mythologies surrounding the dead, whoever they might be. Whatever they were in life, he says, “they aint now.” His remonstrative glance towards his colleague expresses this difference in attitude towards the bodies. Although drug runners they deserve respect. This tension between the men’s attitudes towards the dead bodies illustrates the dichotomy facing those dealing with law, order and justice along the frontier between Mexico and the United States. Should these men, involved in the most despicable of trades, be regarded solely as objectified stereotyped figures of alterity or should they be treated as individuals?

Bell’s conduct opens new perspectives and possibilities. His glance dismantles the construct of the colonial Other as it suggests he views figures of alterity as subject. His

perspective is complicated; in his eyes the binaries of race may be uncontested but they are blurred by respect for humanity. Yet at the same time he recognizes that their product is harmful and destructive. He frames his considerations through the lens of Christian ethics since he reckons that “if you were Satan and you were settin around tryin to think up something that would just bring the human race to its knees what you would probably come up with is narcotics.” (218) This opposition reveals that through the eyes of the white male protagonist the racial Other is tainted by his dealing with anti-Christian narcotics, an impact that still remains a viable validation for exclusion even though Bell has tempered this perspective with hints of recognition of the humanity of alterity. Remarkably, although McCarthy explores these oppositions they are still cast in terms of Christian concepts of good and evil. A similar framework is also very evident in his subsequent novel *The Road* in which a father and son journey across a post-apocalyptic landscape in which all ethical and moral parameters have been crossed by many of the disturbing wanderers they encounter. The father and son following the road in their attempt to reach the coast and possible salvation from the horrors they are enduring constantly need reassurance that when all the signs have disappeared they can still maintain their values:

Are we still the good guys? [the boy] said.
 Yes. We're still the good guys. [said the father]
 And we always will be.
 Yes. We always will be.
 Okay. (R.77)

The author still maintains this opposition to define difference between Self and Other. Wendell and Bell are clearly the “good guys” in terms of Christian concepts of good and evil, since they are established representatives of American law and order; conversely, the Mexicans are cast as the villainous Other through their dealings with narcotics, in league with the devil as Bell’s imagery suggests. The effect of the drug trade is widespread, reaching all strata of contemporary society. Bell bemoans this fact in a conversation with a

fellow Sheriff from Maverick County:

Bell: Dope.

Sheriff: They sell that shit to schoolkids.

Bell: It's worse than that.

Sheriff: How's that?

Bell: Schoolkids buy it. (N.C. 194)

Why are the Mexicans portrayed as such degenerates? Why are the majority of the Hispanics in the novel connected to the drug trade? By introducing the drugs and their insidious impact on all aspects of American society including its youth, McCarthy uses an effective image to convey the incursion of figures of alterity into contemporary society. In his portrayal of the increasing empowerment of the racial Other and the corresponding growth of vulnerability in the white male, the infiltration is an indication of their far-reaching impact; but it also represents what Bill Ashcroft describes as “[t]he rhizomic interplay of travelling subjects *within* as well as between nations” (2010: 79), in his argument that “the nation has become a near-absent structure.” (72) Although the borders are leaky, and the Mexicans are gradually spreading through society McCarthy’s novel argues that nation and race are still fundamentals that inscribe difference, in which case the Mexican functions as a familiar stereotype. Can we deconstruct this figure? First we need to examine the drug trade and consider whether the Mexicans are the exploiters or the exploited. Ed Tom Bell points out that to have a successful trade there must be a clientele; he indicates this point in response to a question about the drug trade posed by an uncompromising young female reporter: “Sheriff how come you to let crime get so out of hand in your county?” (304) He explains that it is a question of supply and demand: “I told her that you cant have a dope business without dopers. A lot of em are well dressed and holdin down good jobs too, I said. You might even know some yourself.” (304) No section of society is free from corruption.

Secondly we need to examine the role of violence within the novel and register whether violence is restricted to Mexicans or embraces all of society. In his Border trilogy and in

Blood Meridian, for example, peoples on both sides of the frontier are depicted as depraved, violent and corrupt. This gesture, argues Steven Frye: “questions and dismantles the values that define the frontier hero.” (2009: 73) In *Blood Meridian* the Americans receive a directive from the Texas government to kill Native Americans for which they will be paid “a hundred dollars a head for scalps.” (B.M. 79) Frye argues that such violence and depravity cross the racial divide and as such function to challenge any belief “that human perfectibility is in any way remotely attainable.” (77) However, Cormac McCarthy himself argues in an interview with Richard B. Woodward that:

[t]here’s no such thing as life without bloodshed [...] I think the notion that the species can be improved in some way, that everyone could live in harmony, is a really dangerous idea. [...] Your desire that it be that way will enslave you and make your life vacuous. (1992)

In the author’s view of the world violence acts as a metaphor for change and that unrealistic expectations of calm are unhealthy. Reading through the narrative of *No Country for Old Men* it is evident that both Bell and Moss have killed either in World War II or in Vietnam where “they’d all done things [...] that they’d just as soon left over there.” (294) They have a shared guilt. Finally, these protagonists fail to live up to accepted ethical ideals. Bell feels shame at receiving a medal and for being regarded a war hero. Rather than face certain death he admits he “cut and run.” (276) Although he made this confession to his major he was forced to receive the military commendation. Bell explains that he guesses “they had to make it look good. [...] Losin the position.” (276) Placed together these stories present a different picture of white patriarchy, revealing failed dreams, shame and deception. These are flawed characters whose failings blur the opposition between good and evil. If the center is imperfect why should the racial Other be held so contemptuously?

Bell’s tension betrays his increasing anxieties and fear of failing to grasp the developing perspectives that are changing contemporary society. Is this, as Jay Ellis argues, merely an

expression of “the bitterness of an old man’s jeremiad: the good old days of riding and justice are gone, and violence seems a thing of youth.”? (2006: 85) Jarraway argues against the argument of Ellis’s regretful jeremiad by maintaining that the novel “transcends the mere wistfulness of an attenuated nostalgia.” (2012: 51) Bell’s words express a more fundamental sorrow that reaches beyond the feelings of an individual to include those of a society in crisis, shaken by evidence of its own apparent recidivism and tortured by the suspicion that Otherness is an unconscious desire for power at any price. He explains that he has been “asked to stand for somethin that I dont have the same belief in it I once did.” (296) And it is this admission that defines Bell as an emblem of a society in turmoil. Despite his nostalgic tendencies which encourage him to “hear about the old timers. Never missed a chance to do so” (64), we should agree with his assertion that he is “not a man of an older time as they say [he is. He’s] a man of this time” (279), obsessed with doubt, filled with anxiety and destabilized by the emerging, aggressive figures of alterity who demand empowerment.

Since Bell’s character is fragmented by his anxieties and loss of respect, we should identify a different racial figure of alterity who can provide a persona that links in with the increasingly unstable perspectives offered by the white protagonists. Cormac McCarthy employs an interesting narrative strategy to depict a figure of alterity who cannot be rigorously constrained by white discourse. He introduces the character of Anton Chigurh whom he presents in two opposing ways. In the main narrative related by the omniscient third person, he is a named person with a defined presence. The reader learns that he is incredibly fit (198), athletic (5), “the ultimate bad-ass” (153), methodical in his preparations (103) and different: “Blue eyes. Serene. Dark hair. Something about him faintly exotic.” (113) But particularly noticeable is his impassiveness, because he appears distant, because his “thoughts seemed elsewhere.” (112) Even though he is named and described, Chigurh remains elusively intangible. In contrast, the Sheriff’s narrative strand

indicates that the law enforcer knows him only as a man of action, creating a discrepancy of perception since the consequences of his actions are horribly observable whilst the perpetrator remains invisible. Bell has no footprint in the sand around which to construct an identity for Chigurh. He struggles to create an image for his nemesis: "I think he's a man" (282) but later admits that Chigurh is so enigmatic that he "is pretty much a ghost" (299), a metaphor that not only inscribes his alienation from society but inscribes how he refuses to be appropriated by language. Cooper argues that Bell's metaphor shows that "Chigurh's ability to shift, to be 'ghost-like', derives from his lack of essential identity or configuration" (2009: 51) However, I would argue that the metaphor is more a reflection of Bell's perception of Chigurh; he is unable to define or describe him and this "ghost" metaphor expresses this very elusiveness.

"Who the hell are you? [pause] My name is Anton Chigurh." (251) Even his own name is of indeterminate origin and deliberately ambiguous; it offers no clues as to his character or to his background. In fact, most descriptions of him just add to his intangibility. One witness cannot be sure if Chigurh is Mexican, but he was "kindly dark complected is all". (291) Moss noticed unusual details, that, for example, he brought "an odd smell in the air. Like some foreign cologne. A medicinal edge to it." (111) There is a curious mix in this description which links the "foreign", that is the strange and unfamiliar, with the "medicinal", which suggests the clinical, the smell of drugs when cleaning the wounds of combat.

Such juxtaposed descriptions, while ostensibly intending to give information, simply serve to estrange the character even further. His intangibility is sometimes compounded by several mistakes in criticism in this respect; for example Pat Tyrer and Pat Nickell claim that Chigurh "wears no Western apparel" (91) yet Llewelyn Moss notes that he wears "[p]ressed jeans" (111) and "an expensive pair of ostrichskin boots". (111) This is a significant oversight on the part of the critics since it is the very ambiguity of Chigurh's

identity and ethnicity that make him such a threatening emblem of an undefined alterity. Similarly, both Joan Mellen (2008: 24) and Robert Jarrett (2009: 68) argue that Chigurh honed his military skills in Vietnam, yet there is no direct evidence in the novel to support this claim. His evident marksmanship, medical knowledge and tactical skills indicate military training but it is not linked to Vietnam, a connection that would tie him to some form of American residency. We do not have that much precise information about him, which is the source not only of his mystery but also of his power and, consequently, an indication of the increasing loss of control of white masculinity as he refuses to be defined by description.

The literary representation of this figure of alterity has developed to a point which Young describes as reaching “beyond the scope of mastery and beyond the scope of knowledge.” (2004b: 44) One of the witnesses to the crash between Chigurh’s truck and the young group of Mexican joyriders was a schoolboy whom Chigurh had paid off to not “know what he looked like.” (291) He is subsequently interviewed by Sheriff Ed Tom Bell who is anxious to have a solid description of his elusive adversary.

He didnt look like anybody. I mean there wasnt nothin unusual lookin about him. But he didnt look like anybody you’d want to mess with. When he said something you damned sure listened. (292)

The boy’s statement is vague and non-committal except when describing the threatening attitude Chigurh expressed in his speech and body language. It is a negative statement since the speaker describes only how the killer did *not* look. Chigurh remains an ambiguous and intangible figure, representing both any man and everyman. But then we must consider that the description is unreliable; the boy’s silence has been bought and his complicity confirmed through fear of repercussions from the frightening killer. What we really learn from the boy’s testimony is that this figure of alterity eludes stereotyping.

It is not so much physical appearance as power that defines this Other, and that suggests that new metaphors are required to inscribe his reality. Is the figure of alterity “losing shape” as Bell suggests or is it retaining force since the “shape is drawn. No line can be erased” (259) as Chigurh maintains? The tensions between the two men create an underlying ambiguity so we must ask again, who is Chigurh? If he defies labels and contests description, how else may he be identified and represented in the narrative? What do these tensions reveal about the changing dynamics of the traditional colonial power relationship? Has the equilibrium of the see-saw subtext in Coetzee’s discourse (D. 96) that tottered dangerously when David Lurie is forced down back on the floor by one of the attackers, been unbalanced forever?

What is the image of evil that the law enforcers have constructed in *No Country for Old Men*? In its literal form it is the racial Other, the Mexican, but in figurative representation it is the absence that signifies Otherness. Understanding absence signifies the knowledge that it is present, and the feeling of its power that is so forceful and ultimately so enigmatic and so impossible to manage.

Tyrer and Nickell argue that Chigurh “appears archetypal in his menace” (2009: 91) to the degree that his “character personifies fear itself, that danger that cannot be denied. Chigurh is the undefinable “what’s coming.” (91) In this respect, Chigurh retains the ability to create the aura of dread that has been a fundamental characteristic of the racial Other, but it is his aptitude to remain unknown that is crucial. Both Tyrer and Nickell identify Chigurh’s aura rather than his appearance as the key to his character, an abstract quality not present in the depictions of the racial Other in the novels previously discussed. It is a key development in the depiction of the Other as aura is sensed and experienced individually and restricted by language. But who portrays him best? Are we mistaken to try to describe the Other? Should white writers attempt an impression rather than a picture?

Have we all been doing as Bell suspects when he wonders if “we are all of us looking through the wrong end of the glass.”? (283)

7.2 Relationships with the Postcolonial Other

The function of borders, so central to McCarthy’s novel, raises important issues with regards to the relationship between the Self and Other since immigration, both legal and illegal, seems to question the postcolonial perspectives based on the margins and the metropolitan center. Ania Loomba raises issues of the continuing relevance of these dynamics by asking if transnational networks break with narratives of colonization and anti-colonialism (2005b: 213), and voices concerns that we need to think past margins and cores, especially in view of globalization. Martínez argues that both the United States and Mexico should reevaluate their perceptions of border function since the “massive movement of people and product across the border [...] make clear that the sharp division implied by the line of demarcation does not mirror reality” (2006: 150) and that the borderlands should be regarded “as a zone of ‘overlapping territoriality’”. (151) Does this changing perspective of the function of borders include difference and hybridity, ambivalence and ambiguity? This section will examine how far these perspectives regarding relationships across the border are reflected in *No Country for Old Men*.

Late in the novel, after Ed Tom Bell has decided to retire from the force from frustration at his failure to stem the tide of drugs and crime in his county, he thinks back over his reasons for joining:

I’ve thought about why it was I wanted to be a lawman. There was always some part of me that wanted to be in charge. Pretty much insisted on it. Wanted people to listen to what I had to say. But there was a part of me too that just wanted to pull everybody back in the boat. (295)

Bell’s speech is constructed on the discourse of power. He is a lawman, a symbol of Western authority and justice. He even states earlier in the narrative that he has “pretty

much the same authority as God.” (64) Within the metropolitan center he represents the archetypal figure of power based on the Western concepts of morality which are underwritten by Christian meta-narratives. Thus, he is inscribed with an undisputed authority, assumptions which are indicated by the egocentrism of the repetitive pronoun “I”. It is a frank admission for control and “to be in charge” as expressed in the verbs “want” and “insist”. In this respect his thoughts convey those ideals of the center which are based on the binaries of superiority and inferiority that Tzvetan Todorov identified as essential to the concept of Otherness since “the two elementary figures of the experience of alterity are both grounded in egocentrism.” (1984: 42). However, there is an important caveat that distinguishes Bell from the traditional center of power. He expresses a desire to “pull everybody back”, to protect and save others; this brief rejection of egocentrism accentuates the difference between power through control and power through aid.

Consequently, the racial Other is depicted in the narrative from the perspective of the center. Poverty is always threatening; both the street cleaner and the Spanish-speaking maid take money in return for helping the protagonists evade the law. (165) The Mexicans are variously criminals or migrant workers, providing an underclass such that Bell claims that supposedly coyotes “wont eat a Mexican.” (75) Even a hardened ruthless scavenger in the natural world who depends on prey for food will not lower itself to eat the flesh of a Mexican. This simple myth encapsulates the disparaging light in which the racial Other is held and underlines the cultural and racial differences that need to be discounted and minimized if the binary margin/core is to be eradicated.

Does the author really advocate the degeneracy of the racial Other or is it part of a narrative strategy to redefine the postcolonial relationship? McCarthy provides a possible paradigm for such relationships when he refers back to the past and pre-history. Llewelyn Moss is out hunting antelope in the desert:

[Moss] hiked on along the ridge with his thumb hooked in the shoulderstrap of the rifle [...] The rocks there were

etched with pictographs perhaps a thousand years old. The men who drew them hunters like himself. Of them there was no other trace. (11)

The role of the hunter/hunted is a leitmotif in the novel, both in terms of the storyline and in relation to the crime genre that characterizes the narrative. The pictograph records the story of hunters, scavenging for food in the fight for survival, as Moss himself is hunting for antelope. As he walks across the desert he discovers this sign from pre-history, one that prefigures his own fated role as prey. This historical context removes the violence from the individual instance and refers to the universal. Consequently Moss's chase and the hunt for the killers become a metaphor for the struggle for life. This does not diminish the impact and cruelty of the violence. In the previously discussed novels the violent encounter functioned as metaphor for change. In McCarthy's novel the encounter does not have the same function; in fact, it is the absence of the encounter that creates the power of the Other. McCarthy's focus on violence inherent in the hunter/prey opposition indicates his belief that man is a dichotomous being capable, for example, of both good and evil. This is a significant deconstruction of the literary representation of the figure of the white man of authority who was held to be singularly representative of good. Even Ed Tom Bell, the hero of the novel, is gradually revealed to be a flawed character who did something that he "was ashamed of to the point where [he] never would tell nobody." (272)

The climax of this motif occurs at a moment of doubt, when Ed Tom Bell intuitively feels that there is "[s]omething wrong." (242) He has been following Chigurh's movements and has traced him to the cheap motel. The Sheriff follows his instincts and returns to the motel room and discovers signs of the murderer's presence, but fails to find him. Bell is faced with a choice. Either he stays in the room and waits it out until he is sure Chigurh is no longer waiting in the parking lot, or he opens the motel door and leaves himself open to being picked off by the sharpshooter. "You don't know for sure he's out there" (244), he mumbles and then stops. "Yes you do." (244) He waits, "then he opened

the door and walked out.” (244) At the moment of going through the doorway Bell transitions from being an indifferent sheriff to tough adversary. His failed encounter has led the Sheriff to discover his own truths that he can put his life on the line even though he has been outsmarted by the Other, a gesture that signifies loss of control and power. He tells his fellow cops that he thinks “we have been outgeneraled.” (245)

Through his dealings with the Other, Bell realizes a sobering truth, that it is “easy to fool yourself. Tell yourself what you want to hear.” (248) His observation references how we create our own realities, the private worlds which we control and organize. It is the construct of self-empowerment defined by personal choice. But it is based on self-deception, suggesting that if self-image is constructed on misleading dreams of power, so too have the corresponding constructs of alterity.

But in this novel, the Other is not restricted by the literal chains of slavery but confined within the metaphorical chains of profiling and prejudice as observed in the ways of identifying the racial Other in the narrative. Bell’s comment indicates such associations are undermined by fear that the balance of the power relationship is changing and as the racial Other becomes more insistent and aggressive so the center becomes more susceptible to change. This preoccupation with white male vulnerability is indicated in the title of the novel *No Country for Old Men* that is taken from W.B. Yeats’ poem *Sailing to Byzantium* (1928) in which man is described as aging into “a paltry thing, A tattered coat upon a stick”. The vivid imagery is startling in its depiction of the problems of aging, in which authority is reduced to a small meager figure. It is a sad evocation of a flawed, fragile man and his loss. For Bell it is the loss of authority and respect. In *Disgrace* J.M. Coetzee employs the same poem to illustrate a similar crisis facing the postcolonial subject in South Africa when he describes how David Lurie’s disintegrating egotism was mirrored in his fading sexual charisma. “[David] sighs. The young in one another’s arms, heedless, engrossed in the sensual music. No country, this, for old men. [...] Regret: a regrettable

note on which to go out.” (190) For David it is the loss of his masculinity and sexuality. In both narratives the central white protagonist is a middle-aged man, past the prime of his life and confronting issues of age and loss. Yet the novels suggest that this is a metaphor for the decline of white male status and authority in society. Both McCarthy and Coetzee evoke this poem to bring a powerful subtext to their narratives which reference the transience of human life and the endurance of its spirit and to underline the deconstruction of white male supremacy by clothing its decline in a human image of inevitable aging. While Steven Frye agrees that McCarthy works to emphasize Bell’s preoccupation with “a fading life and its ultimate meaning in a violent world” (2009b: 15), he also argues that the novel explores “the particular role of art in portraying with integrity the complex realities of human beings living and struggling in the world.” (20) This is a new image for the white male protagonist.

How does this portrayal of the vulnerable Self affect the literary representation of the intricate relationship with the postcolonial Other? Despite McCarthy’s narrative strategies, depiction of the racial Other is still tenuous. They remain partly in the shadows and firmly in the stereotyped figures that peopled the previous novels. They remain apart, typified by the “them” and “us” separation, living in different worlds. Sheriff Bell recounts, for example, the details of a visit he made to a jail where the Mexican prisoner was on death row:

and he said: what did you bring me? And [Bell] said [he] didn’t bring him nothing and he said well he thought [Bell] must have brung him something. Some candy or something. Said he figured [Bell] was sweet on him. (297)

The Sheriff is stunned by the prisoner’s reaction who has assumed a sexual rather than objective interest. This is a comment on the Mexican’s world and his twisted mind, yet it also indicates a mythology woven by the marginalized around the persona of the white man. There cannot be any compassion, only an ulterior motive in some form of

exploitation. From his perspective there is only the relationship of the corrupting dominant who abuses power. He explains the reason for his visit: “[Bell] just wanted him to know that [he] done the best [he] could for him and that [he] was sorry because [Bell] didn’t think he done it.” (297) The Mexican roars with laughter in response to the Sheriff’s proclaimed conscience and sense of responsibility and quickly dissolves his delusions. “Where do they find somebody like you? Have they got you in diapers yet? I shot that son of a bitch right between the eyes.” (297) This confrontation indicates the wide gulf between their understandings of each other. There is none. They both assume innocence; the innocence of the mistried criminal, and the innocence of the deluded fool. And it is this particular point that is the crux of the crisis that has haunted Bell’s monologue. It is not so much his own mistakes, although they trouble his conscience, but it is the lack of respect in which he is held that destroys his faith in his ability to be a good Sheriff. He acknowledges that “for [him] the worst of it is knowin that probably the only reason [he’s] even still alive is that they have no respect for [him].” (217) Control is essential and power is addictive but ultimately respect leads to regard and to self-esteem, both of which he has lost: “defeat. It was being beaten. More bitter to him than death.” (306) Pragmatically, he resolves to move forward. He admonishes himself by saying “[he] need[s] to get over that, he said. And then he started his truck.” (306) Although he feels out-manuevered, Bell ultimately comprehends, like David Lurie, that “perhaps that is a good point to start from again.” (D. 203) And as much as Bell was unable to configure an identity for Chigurh he now has to realize that his own identity is constantly changing and evolving. Bell’s final reflections suggest that the literary representation of the Other is in a state of transition in which the power balance is upturned to reveal endless possibilities of control and possibilities which in the end help subvert the power of the ruling binary structures. McCarthy’s narrative has a nostalgic even apocalyptic dimension which anticipates fragmentation and loss. This is not an encouraging vision.

PART II

VOICES OF THE COLONIAL 'OTHER'

“You have not been listening to me.”
(*Disgrace*, 161)

Part I of this thesis explores the literary representation of the racial Other in the writings of selected white male writers by tracing the development and changes that take place as reflected through the lens of colonial or postcolonial perspectives. The function of the racial Other in colonial narratives is traditionally structured on Manichean binary systems to express differences of superiority and inferiority. Defoe, Conrad, and Camus all employ the first person narratives of white male protagonists to question this difference. This narrative voice indicates a desire for mastery and domination within white discourse since the natives remain marginalized figures with voices subdued by the context of the narrative perspective. However, in postcolonial societies such as newly independent Nigeria, post-apartheid South Africa and the immigrant-based settler society that creates the United States, Otherness forms a structure of conflict in communities that are struggling to define an identity which embraces indigenous cultures and history and new assumptions of knowledge that are not organized within the structure of European cultural hegemony. These inclusions challenge the established racial power relationships. For example, the recently disempowered/fired white university professor David Lurie in *Disgrace* and the newly retired/defeated white Sheriff Ed Tom Bell in *No Country for Old Men* confront the emerging racial Other, such as those represented by Archbishop Desmond Tutu's Rainbow Nation in post-apartheid South Africa or by the Mexican drug runners infiltrating the Texan border, in violent encounters that undermine their authority and status.

Robert J.C. Young (2003: 61) argues that the United States, for example, a settler nation based on immigration and therefore suffering from an absence of traditional links

to land, requires a strong figure of alterity to coalesce its different national groups. He lists multiple identities for these figures but the point of discussion is less their variety/diversity and more the fact of their continued existence to provide a functional and threatening Other. Neil Smith argues that after “9/11” all the “old enemies were converted into terrorists” (2003: 263), an effective construct that includes religious, ethnic and moral differences strengthened by the idea of an inherent menace to domestic security. David Harvey argues that a combination of the American emerging desire for international power supported by active nationalism “cannot be accomplished without resort to racism”. (2005:197) Thus, there is a tension between the political construct of the menacing racial Other which bonds together disparate social groups to create a cohesive national voice, and the deconstruction of the subjugated racial Other whose identity is generated from the abuses of slavery and the problems of illegal immigration.

Within the framework/context of these variable functions and constructs of the Other, how do the authors address the problem of articulating a voice for the marginalized? What exactly does ‘giving voice’ mean? Is it restricted to discourse or may it be interpreted to include other means of expression? Wayne Booth argues that voice is not restricted to the spoken word and can be expressed in diverse ways since “[in] a sense, every speech, every gesture narrates.” (1983: 152) Mikhail Bakhtin analyses the processes of conversation between individuals and argues for the complexity of speech and its variables of meaning and implies voice is more than a sound; it also expresses the desire composed of multiple impressions:

all transcription systems - including the speaking voice in a living utterance - are inadequate to the multiplicity of the meanings they seek to convey. My voice gives the illusion of unity to what I say; I am, in fact, constantly expressing a plenitude of meanings, some intended, others of which I am unaware. (2011,1981: xx)

Bakhtin's theory suggests the importance of implied meaning, voiceless thoughts and unknown inferences that portray voice through the gaps and the silences. Is this a possible avenue for the voices of the marginalized to be depicted in white discourse since those voices emerging from the interstices would resist patriarchal domination? And conversely, how would an increasingly powerful voice from the margins impact, if at all, on the voice of the white male narrator?

In colonial writings such representations are not limited to speech but may vary from Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* 'giving voice' to the native Friday in the form of a few sentences uttered in "broken *English*" (204) to the silent expressions of intent such as "the gleam of eyes" (H.D. 35) in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. In contrast, in those narratives situated in emerging postcolonial communities the act of 'giving voice' may adopt wider political implications such as the rights to freedom of speech and education and the right to vote. Albert Camus, J.M. Coetzee, J.M.G. Le Clézio and Cormac McCarthy base their exploration of voice in wider terms of representation of expression that include language, silence, gesture and body language. Since they are identifiable as violent, aggressive and/or degenerate by the protagonists, the underlying concepts of good and evil, justice, law and order are structured on the Christian-European metanarrative and its mythologies. Consequently, the power relationships between the dominant Western figure and the inferior racial Other, although destabilized, are still based upon differences between the core and the margins and on the Western value systems determined by the perceptions of the white male narrators. Underlying these value assumptions is the subtext that the readers are positioned as white/European, which implies reader complicity; this expectation of reader collusion suggests that the power relationship is so immutable that the reader may never glimpse the world from the point of view of the Other and that the protagonists may never listen to/for the voices of the Other. How do the modifications

to the balance of the power relationship affect the literary representation of the voices of the Other?

These considerations lead to the important reflection on the stance of the European towards figures of alterity and whether there are repeated motifs and symbols employed by these different authors. There are several points of discussion as each writer adopts an individual perspective. Coetzee expresses a concern with language and the underlying problems of signs, signifiers and the signified; his academic protagonist David Lurie, for example, observes that English as used by the Xhosa countryman Petrus seems “tired, friable, eaten from the inside as if by termites.” (D. 129) Similarly Le Clézio focuses on language, but he turns his attention to the language of the Other that has been silenced or ignored by the colonizers. In his Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech he forcefully indicates that all the people of the world have their own language and each one “est ce même ensemble logique, complexe, architecture, analytique, qui permet d’exprimer le monde – capable de dire la science ou d’inventer les mythes.” (2008:7) And Camus argues that it is the responsibility of the writer to support the quest for truth and liberty, which he describes as “le refus de mentir sur ce que l’on sait et la résistance à l’oppression.” (1957) Underlying these individual objectives is a common resolution, the representation of the humanity and integrity of the subject, an intention that corresponds to Kwame Anthony Appiah’s argument that in the shaping of identity there should be a distinction between individuality and stereotyping, a difference between “treating people equally on the one hand, and treating them as if they were the same on the other” (2000: 45), thus they should be endowed with “[d]ignity and autonomy”. (45) How far are these white writers able to represent an individual voice for the Other which represents these qualities? Do they attempt to achieve and fulfil Appiah’s criteria?

If indeed writers from both the center and the margins share a similar concern for the dignity of the individual, do they share a common perspective and understanding of this

universal concept? One fundamental difference is the desire of the West to remain as subject, whereas the ex-colonial authors writing from the margins of Empire seek to break free from “the persistent constitution of Other as the Self’s shadow” (Spivak 1988: 75) in order to release “the torrential vomit of pent-up sound” (Rushdie 1995: 423) that silencing has repressed and to finally position the Other as subject. Salman Rushdie’s novel *Midnight’s Children* (1981) reclaims the “lost origins” (Spivak 1988: 82) that have been submerged in colonial rule and determines the rightful place of the individual in an historical, political and social context. The protagonist Saleem, who was born at the moment of India’s Independence, has grown up in a country trying to assert its national identity in the afterglow/aftermath of independence. He declares that:

I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have been seen done, of every done-to-me. I am everyone everything whose being-in-the-world affected was affected by mine. I am anything that happens after I’ve gone which would not have happened if I had not come. (383)

This is a new projection of racial individuality because Rushdie is proclaiming not only the subjectivity of the marginalized but also their significance on the world stage. His subtext is the recognition of the autonomy of the marginalized. The literal and metaphorical fences that mark racial and ethnic differences must be broken down. Barriers are an important motif in the novels selected for study. Fences and walls all figure as tropes of exclusion and authority; they signify established standpoints, which are unyielding in the face of change. When crossed, damaged or broken the impact signifies the violence of epistemic difference of the Self and the Other when in conflict and the deconstruction of ‘fixed’ meanings in language as the marginalized voices are gradually empowered.

Frantz Fanon expands this contextual analysis by arguing that to “speak a language is to take on a world, a culture” (1967: 38); language acquires a new depth in its reference to different metanarratives that could deconstruct the dominant ideas that pervade the old

story and discover “fresh starts, new chapters, clean pages”. (Coetzee 2004: 26) Spivak hesitates before this argument that the voice of the subaltern can be articulated within white discourse since she poses the challenging question whether “only the margin can speak for the margin?” (2003: 171)

However, I argue that there is another fundamental issue to be considered in the literary representation of the voices of the racial Other, which considers whether the privileged have a moral responsibility to speak for those less privileged, a responsibility that Linda Alcoff argues is “incurred by the very fact of [their] privilege”. (1991: 8) However, since speaking for the Other can still be a form of mastery because their voices are inscribed within white discourse and subject to the world of associations and power structures identified by Fanon’s “take on a world”, we should reformulate the question to include a responsibility to listen to the voices; listening is a retreat from a position of privilege because it cedes the power of subject to the voice being articulated. We need to ascertain how accessible these colonizers are to the racial Other; whether they are stuck in their ivory towers like David Lurie in *Disgrace*, who is resistant to the voices that surround him, or whether they have retreated from confrontation like Sheriff Ed Tom Bell who chooses to retire from his job rather than confront the insistent ugly voices of the aggressive racial Other. What happens when these emerging voices confront those of the dominant? The colonizer needs to listen and the marginalized needs to speak. The defensive reactions of David Lurie and Ed Tom Bell indicate a loss of colonial entitlement and supremacy; this shift signals the destabilization and deconstruction of the power constructs of the West. Do such epistemic challenges indicate a search for a new legitimacy that will be the foundation for the emerging normative scripts of postcolonial societies?

This study begins with an exploration of these issues in *Robinson Crusoe*, which introduces Friday as a silenced, enslaved native rescued from the degeneracy of indigenous peoples, and examines whether he remains objectified in this way or if he succeeds in

emerging from the margins. Does the novel construct a paradigm for the articulation of colonial voices? And if we acknowledge that Crusoe's white colonial discourse can construct hierarchies of power within narratives, can we not consider that it also introduces by implication and inference the subjugated voice either willingly or unknowingly into the narrative?

8. *Robinson Crusoe*

I perceived the Savage who I knock'd down was not kill'd [...] so I pointed to him [...] upon this [the runaway] spoke some Words to me, and though I could not understand them, yet I thought they were pleasant to hear, for they were the first sound of a Man's Voice, that I had heard, *my own excepted*, for above Twenty Five Years. But there was no time for such Reflections now [...] (*Robinson Crusoe*, 188)

Early one morning Robinson Crusoe is startled by the sight of five canoes hauled onto the beach on his side of the island. He hurriedly climbs to a secluded spot on a nearby hill and observes a group of cannibals dragging "two miserable Wretches" (186) from their boat to begin preparations for their ritual feasting. While watching the ceremonial dancing, Crusoe notices one of the two victims suddenly break free and run across the sands in a bid for freedom. Despite feeling "dreadfully frightened" (186) when he realizes the desperate runner is fast approaching his hiding place, he takes up his guns and runs down to the beach to help the savage escape from the captors who are relentlessly following him. Crusoe shoots and kills one of the pursuers and then indicates to the runaway savage that he is in danger of being attacked by another native who is recovering from a blow to the head. In response to this warning, Crusoe records that the young savage speaks "some Words" to him. And with this simple phrase he registers the moment when his life on the island changes forever, the moment when a potential "Servant, and perhaps Companion or Assistant" (187) enters his world. Whereas the footprint in the sand registered the absence of an unknown threatening Other, defined by associations with cannibalism and degeneracy, this

fugitive has broken away literally and metaphorically from these barbaric native practices and thus signals he is a potentially different Other who can be educated and converted.

How does Robinson Crusoe describe this chance, life-changing encounter, the impact of which is so immediate and forceful? It is the moment when he realizes he is no longer alone, and that fate may have provided him with the aide that he has longed for, yet his account is controlled, ordered and based on a series of events rather than a description of his emotional responses. It is through this very orderly report that Crusoe establishes his authority and supremacy. His first person narrative voice dominates subject, mood and voice; he controls the action “I pointed”, the tactics “I perceived”, and the use of language “I could not understand”. Despite this moment of crisis when both castaway and native are under threat of attack, his story concentrates on establishing the roles of the characters, the dominance of the white man and the subservience of the native runaway. And yet there is an underlying uncertainty in his discourse that may indicate a suppressed internal confusion and excitement that is both exciting and troubling to Crusoe. This insecurity is suggested by tensions in the passage, notably between the mechanics of speech itself, “pointed”, “spoke”, “hear”, “sound” and “voice”, and the powerful abstracts that reference the processes of comprehension, “perceive”, “understand”, “thought” and “reflections”, that explain, codify and produce language. What is Crusoe’s subject in this passage? There is an underlying ambivalence that contrasts desire with fear. Is he considering a fight for a freedom generated by the figure of a degenerate racial Other? Or is this an expression of a desire for companionship at any price since both characters share a common vulnerability, the estrangement from the familiarity of family and homeland? Or is the passage about language itself as both a means of communication and a method of control?

It seems incomprehensible that Crusoe should turn his attention away so unexpectedly from this dramatic moment, especially as he has previously been very open about his

deeply felt emotions that at various times had stimulated “innumerable fluttering Thoughts” (142) or had made him “pensive, and sad” (153) as he endured a “Life of Anxiety, Fear and Care”. (181) Although he has frequently bemoaned an enforced loneliness on the island and longed for and even dreamt of having a servant (183), he quickly returns to the immediacy of the dangerous situation in which he finds himself. His pragmatic nature demands survival tactics to be considered first as he clearly states there is “no time for such Reflections” (188) and thus it appears that the violence of the physical action acts as metaphor for the intensity of the trauma he experiences when his lonely, silent world is invaded by the racial Other. His oscillating moods, which range from great pleasure at hearing a voice to a deep-seated fear of defeat and capture, indicate the enormity of the challenges ahead as he battles to control his emotions and to maintain his authority as protagonist. In terms of the narrative, Crusoe must order the story and complete the outcome of the encounter by defeating the natives in pursuit of the runaway; and in terms of characterization and relationships, the protagonist needs to maintain his dominance by choosing when to permit the entrance of this native figure into his restricted world so that he can control the impact of this barbaric inferior Other in the narrative. He achieves this through language by depicting the native solely from the colonizer’s point of view and, as an inevitable consequence of this limited narratorial perspective, by exterior observation and commentary.

This strategy may lead to a deliberate ambiguity when Crusoe chooses to speak for Friday by reporting or summing up his speech as “some Words.” (188) Although this expression indicates that Crusoe recognizes that the native speaks a language and not merely utters a series of sounds or noises, this terse subjugation of the native’s speech reveals how Crusoe regulates the articulation of the voice of the Other. There are two important factors in this silencing. First, it objectifies the native; the first person narrator will control the native’s voice, an intention Crusoe makes clear when he writes that he

wishes to “make [Friday] speak, and understand [Crusoe] when [he] spake.” (194) Friday’s language is thus displaced within the hierarchy of discourse and the native is forced to echo the voice and language of the dominant white man who never allows the reader to enter into the native’s mind; we do not learn directly from Friday how he thinks or feels or how he interprets gestures or even his opinions of Robinson Crusoe himself.

Secondly, the act of silencing the Other affirms Crusoe’s dominance in the relationship and confirms his escape from the paranoia that has haunted him since his discovery of the footprint in the sand, a release that enables him to approach the savage with confidence. This literary strategy of muting Friday’s voice effectively allows the narrator to control the native’s speech. Silencing, by means of reported speech or by non-inclusion of discourse gives total control to the narrator. For example, after Crusoe has fashioned clothes for the naked man he observes that Friday “was mighty well pleas’d to see himself almost as well cloath’d as his Master”. (192) This choice of incident is significant. It is not just a reported exchange of dialogue, but the affirmation of Friday’s submission to Western superiority and authority and marks the beginning of the process of his acculturation. Notably, the depiction of the native’s willingness to conform to his master’s wishes indicates Crusoe’s rather than Friday’s desire for this new submissive Other to be Westernized. The reported speech allows no hesitation or refusal on Friday’s behalf. He is too indebted to Crusoe to disobey him. Friday’s acquiescence leads Crusoe to praise him as the most “faithful, loving, sincere Servant”. (192)

However, Martin Calder argues that as Friday is now “almost as well cloath’d” he is still marked by his Otherness because he never will be English like Crusoe. (2003: 173) Calder proposes that this slight difference between the ‘natural’ represented by Crusoe and the ‘naturalized’ signified by Friday is subversive “because it marks a space which is not and cannot be colonized, and which effectively mocks the colonial endeavor.” (173) Within this context, Friday’s “broken” English therefore suggests both subservience and

the possibility of his dissent, an ambivalence that menaces Crusoe's authority and creates the potential for Friday's agency as indicated later in the novel when the native rediscovers his cultural identity and "dances" with the bear.

Soon after Friday's escape from his captors, the two men have their first encounter.

I smil'd at him, and look'd pleasantly, and beckon'd him to come still nearer; at length he came close to me, and then he kneel'd down again, kiss'd the Ground, and laid his Head upon the Ground. (188)

This description is structured on different representations of subservience. The colonizer uses the egotistical "I" to create an ethical and cultural center for the story. His narratorial voice dominates whilst the savage just responds in a series of silent actions. Crusoe's non-verbal communications imply power and authority in "beckon'd" and the inherent control of the confident dominant in "smil'd" and "look'd pleasantly". In contrast, Friday's actions convey submission and fear in "kneel'd down again", "kiss'd the Ground" and "laid his Head upon the Ground". The repeated actions and the hard consonant sounds create a jolting rhythm that reflects his uneasy constant genuflecting and create a strong visual image of his bowing, bobbing head. Thus Friday enters Crusoe's world as a submissive figure, anxious to save his own life even at the expense of his independence. His choice of options is limited: death or submission. The timing of his entry into the story and the body language he exhibits confirm his role as supporting actor in Crusoe's personal quest for identity and affirmation of his emotional and spiritual growth during his exile on the island. In his desire to confirm his transformation Crusoe makes paternalistic gentle gestures which create a bond between himself and the young native. Friday becomes attached to his master; his "[a]ffections were ty'd to [Crusoe], like those of a Child to a father" (193) restoring Crusoe to the father/son relationship he had rejected when disobeying "even the Command of [his] Father". (15) To be absolved from his guilt at his previous "Wickedness" (106) Crusoe will become savior and teacher. He cherishes the

absolute belief that he “was plainly call’d by Providence to save this poor Creature’s Life”. (187) And finally, he introduces himself as “*Master*” (190), a title that emphasizes his role in this newly established power hierarchy, whereas the identity of the indigenous native falls into a vacuum since Crusoe ignores the language and culture of the native’s land.

It is at this point that Crusoe fails to shed his inherent cultural arrogance because he does not attempt to learn Friday’s language. The white colonizer insists on speaking English, even though we later learn that a Spaniard castaway, who was captured alongside Friday’s father and discovered lying bound hand and foot on the beach waiting to be killed and eaten, “spoke the Language of the *Savages* pretty well” (223). Crusoe’s egoism does not allow him to consider being taught language by the native, since he cannot be perceived to be in a place of inferiority to the savage. It is his island, his narrative and therefore his story. He is writing from a position of privilege. By entering this ‘fixed’, firmly established and well-ordered world, the function of the savage has to defer to the powerful hegemony of white discourse.

This encounter between fugitive and his savior thus marks a significant turning point in the novel. Robinson Crusoe’s solitary phase is complete. In practical terms, he has progressed through stages of development from hunter-gatherer, to farmer, craftsman, and economist. Intellectually, he has studied the Bible and wrestled with many theological questions but he is now in a position that requires another/ an Other to confirm his spiritual and personal growth. Enter the young fugitive, whose desperate situation makes him appropriate for Crusoe’s needs. Friday has abandoned his race and culture and willingly acknowledges the colonizer as his master. His suitability as a possible convert is indicated by his appearance, as discussed in Chapter I, which had “all the Sweetness and Softness of the *European* in his Countenance”. (189) These characteristics indicate that he can be saved and brought to “the true Knowledge of Religion, and of the Christian Doctrine” (203), which structures the ethical center of the novel. First, the fugitive must be taught to

speak English. Crusoe notes that “in a little Time [he] began to speak to [Friday], and teach [him] to speak to [Crusoe]”. (190) And here the narrative adopts an interesting twist as it traces the development of language and human speech through Friday’s education in a progression of development that parallels the colonizer’s own spiritual and cultural growth. Friday progresses through different stages of speech from the incomprehensible “words”, to “broken Words” (201), to speaking “fluently, though in broken *English*”, to forming questions (201) and finally to relating the story of the bear (271). As he learns we gain glimpses of a possible individuality which is evidenced by the fact that Crusoe teaches his new manservant “to say, YES, and NO, and to know the Meaning of them”. (190) But possibility does not always lead to autonomy and the narrator keeps Friday firmly under control.

If language constructs identity and subjectivity, Friday has been stripped of both. He regains a new persona that is constructed in a process akin to a rebirth, a ceremony that is represented both symbolically, when he is clothed in Western apparel, and literally, when he is renamed. He is called Friday; “the day [Crusoe] sav’d his Life; [he] call’d him so for the Memory of the Time” (190). Thus the native loses his name, his culture, and his freedom. Peter Hulme argues that by naming Friday “Crusoe underlines to him that his previous life has been forfeited.” (1986: 206) This erasure of identity, or act of epistemic violence, represents a denial of the subjectivity of the Other. And here we discover a fundamental tension in the novel, the disparity between the construct of the Other that the castaway created from the footprint on the beach with the reality of the barbarous Other who can be represented by both the amiable, agreeable Friday and the cannibals feasting round the fire. This discrepancy gradually erodes Crusoe’s authority as narrator and ethical center; the authority of the first-person narrator is slowly perceived to be an expression of colonial egocentricity.

In this context Friday's situation provides the paradigm of the voiceless Other in white discourse that Spivak identifies when she argues that the subaltern has no voice in patriarchal discourse. (1988: 83) Although this argument was published in 1988 it still remains one of the most fundamental issues to be addressed in the articulation of marginalized voices in colonial narratives. Has Defoe deliberately erased Friday's background? Does the reborn native symbolize the ideal colonized subject whose voice will be subsumed in the cacophony of the imperialist conversation? Or does Friday remain the voiceless, alienated Other that Spivak describes? Initially, Friday has no voice, the implication being that the native tongue is deemed unimportant. And herein can be found the crux of the dilemma fundamental to white patriarchal discourse. Should the voice of the racial Other be articulated or should it be silenced and ignored? Can such voices be heard? Does the depiction of silent figures suggest that a voice has been muted by prejudice and denigration and, if so, how can the voice of the Other be expressed objectively within white discourse without reverting to stereotypes and discrimination? Edward Said questions whether this is even possible:

How can one study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or a non-repressive and non-manipulative perspective? But then one would have to rethink the whole complex problem of knowledge and power. (1979: 24)

Said introduces issues of narrative prejudice and discrimination that paints a grim picture of impossibility in terms of a viable articulation of the marginalized voice in white writing. Perception, comprehension and reflection, the very processes identified by Crusoe when describing his thoughts when he heard a man's voice for the first time after his extensive period of solitude, all influence the inscription of the voice of the Other. We see in Defoe's novel that, after Friday emerges from the shadowy margins inhabited by the cannibals, his speech is not directly reported but summed up as "some Words". (188) He is silenced but not silent. Perhaps this offers a potential strategy for narrators of privilege as it indicates

numerous ways to inscribe a marginalized voice without compromising status.

Gradually, as Friday proves his loyalty, his speech is introduced into the narrative. His verbal exchanges are occasionally written as dialogue in play form:

Friday, My Nation beat much, for all that.

Master, How beat; if your Nation beat them, how came you to be taken?

Friday, They more many than my Nation in the Place where me was; they take one, two, three, and me; my Nation over beat them in the yonder Place, where me no was; there my Nation take one, two, great Thousand. (197)

This a-grammatical language spoken by Friday adequately conveys information about the battle between his nation and another one and even addresses complex concepts such as size, numbers and comparatives, countables and uncountables and differences in place. Although the language is much simplified the conversation's content show that it is not a true reflection of his intelligence. Remarkably, his linguistic skills never improve over a period of time so, despite the intelligence of his questions, he remains subjugated by his inferior language. The mistakes remain the same throughout the novel; curiously the mistakes he makes are those made by Crusoe's young boy companion *Xury* whom he had met when imprisoned by the Moor early in his ship-sailing days. The boy insists on protecting Crusoe by fetching water from the dangerous shore where they have landed. *If wild Mans come, they eat me, you go wey.* (23) These linguistic similarities suggest that the narrator uses this language to convey racial and cultural inferiority, a strategy that allows Friday to have a voice in direct speech yet still remain in his subservient position. This is a significant strategy as direct speech allows the reader more freedom in interpreting the native's language in comparison to the totally dominated reported speech.

It is essential for Friday to have direct conversations with his master as one of his functions in the novel is to question his interpretation of the Bible and so lead Crusoe to a deeper spirituality while at the same time keeping his inferior position. Martin Calder

argues that in the initial stages of their encounter “there is a flaw in the logic which governs the lingual encounter between Crusoe and Friday [...] Crusoe understands Friday on some occasions, and not on other occasions. Friday, by contrast, always understands Crusoe.” (2003: 153) Notably in the fight for survival on the beach, Friday instinctively comprehends Crusoe’s gestures. Friday’s ready comprehension suggests greater intuition and intelligence than indicated by the paucity of his linguistic development and in this regard the native’s voice is heard clearly through the narrative, not limited to language, but through implied intellect.

[My Savage] runs to his Enemy, and at one blow cut off his Head [...] when he had done this, he comes laughing to me in Sign of Triumph, and brought me the Sword again, and with abundance of Gestures which I did not understand, laid it down with the Head of the Savage, that he had kill’d just before me. (188)

During the struggle on the beach Crusoe arms Friday with the wooden sword he has made. By gifting the sword he is asserting colonial practice and authority. Consequently, all Friday’s actions after the decapitation “comes”, “brought”, “laid it down” move in the direction of the white man who remains the power center of the narrative. In a gesture to the feudal ethos of deference and homage to the ideal conception of perfect manhood in European literary representation, Friday ceremoniously lays the head at Crusoe’s feet. By constructing this scene within the parameters of traditional literary structures, the narrator, in an act of egotistical affirmation, lauds his own principles of honor, nobility and integrity.

Crusoe’s perspective is based on Western knowledge and thus he can only interpret signs and gestures within the confines of his own limited education and experience. Friday is excluded from the context which Ania Loomba describes as the moment when the “sign or words need a community with shared assumptions to confer them with meaning.” (2005: 35) And yet it is the absence of this very commonality that permits the reader to

glimpse aspects of Friday's previous life and indigenous culture. He is physically strong and brave, able to decapitate a man in "one blow", with an ease of execution that implies well-honed practice. His actions suggest that he respects age, authority and seniority. He is evidently familiar with laws of combat and respectfully honors his chief/master with signs of homage that indicate a familiar tribal ritual. And underlying the passage is the basic assumption implied by his laughing manner that to be enslaved by Crusoe is preferable to recourse to native tribalism.

Friday possesses a joy and energy that transcend the restraints of his more formal conduct. There is a short unexpected phrase when the narrator describes how "he comes laughing to me". This is the first sound of Friday's voice that is described in the novel, as perhaps a sign of friendship and pleasure, or even relief at escape from his adversaries. But there is ambivalence inherent in this sound. Laughter is an instinctive unrestricted expression of emotion, a characteristic that suggests that Friday's spirit has not been contained although his life has been. Is the gift of the decapitated head a sign of rupture with his past and acceptance of English culture? Is it a token of thanks for saving his life or is the symbolism of the gift trivialized by the laughter that accompanies the gesture? Is this a subversive voice of laughter that exposes the absurdities of the unfamiliar that we cannot decipher? The ambivalence of this laughter embraces both complicity and mockery and consequently this "*double vision*" represents what Bhabha identifies as the "menace" that disrupts the authority of colonial discourse. (2004: 126) The resonance of these laughs reverberates only momentarily because there is a clear transition from noise to silence, from the sound of "laughing" to the frustrated silence of his gestures. The absence of interpretation leaves a gap in the narrative, signaling the presence of the unfamiliar Other which Crusoe cannot, or refuses, to inscribe in his narrative. This refusal indicates a narrative strategy that encodes dominance in his writing by excluding the voice of the Other. And we as readers are complicit with this stifling of the native voice since we

comprehend what Friday fails to realize, that his joy at retrieving the head of his adversary is in contrast to the tragic reality that now surrounds him; his acquiescence and willing subservience has enslaved him. The laughter reflects the horror of the native's position. Rescued from one form of captivity to be released into another, his laughter reverberates through history, subverting his colonial innocence and Crusoe's colonizing missionary zeal.

Yet this laughter, which is heard again towards the end of the novel when Friday dances in the trees with the bear, may function as the crucial impulse for his voice, that the intuitive and natural are Friday's greatest gifts of expression. Michel Tournier's rewriting of *Robinson Crusoe* suggests that laughter, an instinctive, unconscious response, is a sign of autonomy:

Alors [Vendredi] rit, il éclate d'un rire redoutable, un rire qui démasque et confond le sérieux menteur dont se parent le gouverneur et son île administrée. Robinson hait ces explosions juvéniles qui sapent son ordre et minent son autorité [...] (2004: 149)

The native Vendredi becomes an independent and spiritual being who is eventually able to teach Robinson how to break away from the rigors of Western civilization. Robinson describes quite forcefully how this laughter undermines his authority and threatens the stability of the colonial, an observation Crusoe fails to consider. The ambivalent, even subversive motif in Defoe's novel becomes a positive signifier of voice in the French novel.

Individual desire, the white man's yearning for companionship on the one hand and the fugitive's appeal for life on the other thus characterize their encounter. These are two men in need, isolated by hostile circumstances and both in fear for their lives. These emotional needs place them within a context in which communication is possible. The native will approach a white stranger in order to save his life, whilst the colonizer will justify his assistance to this racial Other through his desire for dialogue and to give spiritual guidance. He can adopt the role of the missionary and convert the savage whilst at the same time

developing and strengthening his own Christian beliefs. Such reasoning is important to consider since their relationship, even though based on binaries such as superior/inferior and Christian/heathen, will contradict their individual mythologies, superstitions and fears. Daniel E. Ritchie's argument that "the enduring appeal of *Robinson Crusoe* is the profound unity between the story of Defoe's hero and the theological knowledge Crusoe attains" (2010: 11) is evidenced in the evolving relationship between Crusoe and Friday. Theirs is an encounter that involves more than just the confrontation between the civilized and the savage but for Crusoe it becomes an issue of power and his need to have an inferior on whom he can reinforce his sense of identity.

Crusoe expresses no ethical responsibility to articulate Friday's voice. His ethical responsibility is to God and to Friday's spiritual education:

I found it was not so easie to imprint right Notions in his Mind about the Devil, as it was about the Being of a God [...] and the poor Creature puzzl'd me once in such a manner, by a Question merely natural and innocent [...] *But*, says he again, *if God much strong, much might as the Devil, why God no kill the Devil, so make him no more do wicked?* (201)

At the center of this discussion is the conflict between good and evil that draws upon the familiar story of the fall from Grace in the Garden of Eden and the consequent punishment of sin imposed on mankind. There are many parallel binary oppositions to be drawn from this passage: God/devil, good/evil, European/native, civilized/uncivilized, colonizer/colonized. These oppositions are complex and seem beyond Friday's understanding of the crucial opposition that structures Christianity. His intellect, although logical and clear, fails to comprehend the significance of choice in the Christian ethical systems. It is a complicated argument based on symbolic figures and abstract ideas that Friday attempts to interpret and understand literally. God and the devil become real figures to him. It is through this argument that Defoe explores the difference between superiority and inferiority of these two men. Crusoe is teacher and must now explain and re-explain whilst

developing his own deeper understanding of the Bible; he needs to not only describe the figurative meaning but also introduce the complexities of choice, responsibility and accountability. Does this conversation demean the status of the native by implying a lack of intellectual sophistication? The conversation questions whether or not the myths that substantiate Christian beliefs are valid. While these issues are raised to reveal how Crusoe deepened his faith there is an underlying implication that Friday's questions challenge the rationale that justifies colonialism since there is a new binary opposition that has been introduced in this passage that subverts the prevailing tropes of power. Friday is "natural and innocent", even childlike, while Crusoe becomes "puzzl'd" and finds his task "not so easie". These epithets indicate an alteration in their relationship. They imply that Friday has more in common with the 'noble savage' than the indigenous barbarians who periodically visit the island and that Crusoe is faulted in his authoritarian façade; he is not comfortable in this role of absolute supremacy. Friday's voice is thus shown to be effective as a potentially subversive force, challenging authority and exposing the deceptions that underlie colonialism. This conflict is symbolized by their struggle between the literal and the abstract in Christian mythology that may represent the tensions between colonial idealism and the reality of its brutality. And perhaps through this discussion that confronts the literal and the symbolic in religious ethics Defoe himself is exploring strategies to express a symbol for the native voice within the restrictions of realist fiction in which the native is representative of the uncivilized savage Other.

This passage could be marked as the moment of Friday's emergence from the margins since he questions Christian authority, but Spivak cites the incident where Friday dances with the bear in the trees as a true example of agency. The major difference between these two episodes, which effectively indicates the validity of Spivak's choice, is the difference in context. The religious discussion remains within colonial parameters of the subject;

in contrast, the episode with the bear is instigated by Friday and he remains subject throughout, controlling the incident and its outcome.

Having been rescued from the desert island Robinson Crusoe returns to England accompanied by Friday. Crusoe sets his affairs in order and then undertakes some journeys through Europe. After a trip to Lisbon, the pair, accompanied by other travellers and a guide, decides to cross the snow-covered Pyrenees to reach home. During the bitterly cold journey they are attacked by a ferocious pack of wolves and then encounter a bear, “a vast monstrous One it was, the biggest by far that [Crusoe] ever saw.” (270) Friday moves forward rapidly and announces that he will “make [them] good laugh” (271) by baiting and then enticing the bear up a tree, along the branches and by jumping up and down to make the animal “dance” and finally shoot the bear “dead as a Stone.” (273) Throughout the incident, Crusoe’s narrative follows Friday’s lead because “[they] could not imagine what would be the End of it, and where the Jest would be at last.” (272) His uneasiness recalls an earlier uncertainty that troubled Crusoe when Friday was confused by religious symbols of good and evil and thus its reappearance alerts the reader to another development in their relationship. Friday is the dominant figure, assuredly controlling the responses of the wild animal in this unexpected diversion.

Then the Rogue turn’d about, to see if we did not laugh, and when he saw we were pleas’d by our Looks, he falls about laughing himself very loud: *so we kill Bear in my Country,* says *Friday*: so you kill them, says I, Why you have no Guns: *No,* says he, *no Gun, but shoot, great much long Arrow.* (273)

In his account of this unusual sequence of events, Crusoe calls Friday a “rogue”, a designation with several meanings including unprincipled, mischievous, inferior or stray depending on the context, but all of which could describe Friday as he appears as a degenerate native, mischievous tease, inferior savage and isolated from his family and indigenous community. The effect is to estrange the character of Friday by endowing him

with multiple possible identities rather than allow him to remain a ‘fixed’ construct described in colonial discourse. By opening up these potentials within the narrative the space created allows Friday to seize agency and autonomy and articulate his own voice. He appropriates a European weapon for the re-enactment of a native custom. Spivak argues that by killing the bear in the ear Friday

has reinscribed his savagery. This is an amusement available to natives. He makes his masters his spectators and replaces the arrow with a gun. He is on his way out of the margin. (2003: 187)

From Spivak’s perspective there are two essential criteria for the articulation of the native’s agency and voice, which she identifies as the return to native customs, which indicates a restoration of the past and cultural history, and the objectification of the colonial subject, which destabilizes the traditional power relationship. Defoe’s novel thus explores the traditional colonial relationships within white discourse and presents the reader with a literary representation of the paradigm of a colonial encounter between archetypes that signify the colonial Self and the racial Other. However, the narrative suggests that relationships between colonizer and colonized cannot remain static and that individuality can destabilize the binary structures on which they are based and allow the emergence of a voice, however faint, of the emerging racial Other.

Friday’s initial appearance in the narrative is so tightly constrained that his persona is perceived only through Crusoe’s eyes. Throughout the novel we can observe how his speech develops from muted silence, reported speech and finally the direct dialogue in broken English. In each stage the narrator, Robinson Crusoe, controls his voice. They develop a relationship determined by Crusoe’s genial authority and Friday’s willing acquiescence to this submissive position. And this structure provides a basic paradigm against which the increasingly insistent voices of the marginalized are measured as they seek to be heard. Friday appears to have achieved an autonomous voice when he plays his

tricks on the bear in the tree. He is apparently on his way “out of the margins” as Spivak argues. However, despite this display Friday remains firmly within Crusoe’s domination. He seeks permission to please and entertain: “*O Master! You give me te Leave! Me shakee te Hand with [the bear]: Me make you good laugh.*” (271) Daniel Defoe’s literary representation of the voice of the racial Other remains firmly within the power constraints of white discourse. Friday speaks but not freely as he remains indebted to the master who saved his life. Can the voice of the marginalized emerge from such control? Can the voice challenge?

9. Heart of Darkness

At the beginning of the novella, we learn that after a brief interview at the Company's offices and a cursory and rather bizarre medical examination during which the doctor warns him that in Africa "the changes take place inside, you know" (27), Charlie Marlow travels aboard a French steamer to take up his new appointment in the colonies. Towards the end of this long voyage, as the ship steams past the endless coastline, he stands on deck absorbing these first impressions of the unnamed continent that represents Africa.

I watched the coast. Watching a coast as it slips by the ship is like thinking about an enigma. There it is before you – smiling, frowning, inviting, grand, mean, insipid, or savage, and always mute with an air of whispering, Come and find out. This one was almost featureless, as if still in the making, with an aspect of monotonous grimness. (29)

Marlow observes the distant panorama unfolding before him; but the shoreline, although forming a clearly visible border along the horizon, is strangely elusive as it "slips by". The coast seems "featureless", almost unformed, without any hooks of familiarity on which to establish some sort of rapport, suggesting that this is a place whose strangeness refuses to be deciphered. The unexpected comparison between the concrete geographical coast and the abstract "enigma", and between the passive "watching" and the active "thinking" identifies the paradox at the heart of Marlow's representation of Africa. His unexpected metaphor suggests that this is a very subjective, unreliable narrative in which there can be no single valid interpretation directed by an omniscient narrative voice. In fact, throughout the telling of his story he repeatedly challenges the veracity of his account by referring to his impression that everything seemed "unreal" (46) and "unnatural, like a state of trance" (67). Such comments not only subvert the authority of the narrative but also destabilize the reliability of his vision because its truth cannot be verified. Moreover, he suggests that since the coastline is at once inscrutable and "almost featureless", and also changeable "as if still in the making", its reality cannot be described fully and directly.

As Marlow's slow voyage up-river gradually brings him nearer to his long anticipated encounter with the elusive Kurtz, he admits his intense disappointment when he learns that this maverick may be already dead and so he may have lost the opportunity for "the inestimable privilege of listening to the gifted Kurtz". (80) The intensity of his reaction infers that his quest is less the man himself and more the voice since, as Marlow later recounts admiringly, he has heard that this is "a remarkable man. He had something to say." (113) Marlow bursts out with a tirade that echoes his frustrations.

A voice. [Kurtz] was very little more than a voice. And I heard – him – it – this voice – other voices – all of them were so little more than voices – and the memory of that time itself lingers around me impalpable, like a dying vibration of one immense jabber, silly, atrocious, sordid, savage, or simply mean, without any kind of sense. Voices, voices... (80)

His recollections are caught up in the memory of the variety of voices that assailed him on his journey, producing a collective sound composed of incoherent chatter, an "ominous murmur" (85), shrieks, grunts, complaints, gossip and colonial rhetoric. He searches for the right words, confusing pronouns and nouns, changing singulars and plurals, pausing, juxtaposing broken phrases with long complex sentences until he reaches a crescendo of disparate voices. Although they are all reduced to a "dying vibration" of fading sounds, they haunt him and the force of his focus remains on the problematic of the power of voice. Sounds echo in the memory, but meaning becomes less coherent, and the voices lack substance until they become unreliable. What is a voice? He considers how Kurtz, for example, speaks with the eloquence of "a gifted creature" (79) yet his voice remains untrustworthy, representing "the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating stream of light, or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness." (79) This self-reflexive text examines voice and the difficulties of meaning in discourse. Of fundamental concern are the function of language and the problems of representation in a narrative that Marlow clearly describes as unstable. His broken speech patterns,

accentuated by the plethora of dashes in punctuation, convey a mind searching for clarity of expression and meaning. Consequently, even his own narrative subverts the assumption in realism that language demonstrates the undisputed truth. Despite arguing that a man must prove himself by meeting “truth with his own true stuff – with his own inborn strength” (63) and that “[he] hate[s], detest[s], and can’t bear a lie” (49), he later admits to telling a deliberate falsehood to Kurtz’s fiancée, the pale Intended, about his final words. How can we now trust the reliability of his discourse if he challenges the veracity and authority of his own voice by exposing the ambiguities of his own intent?

Bearing in mind that story-telling and voice are the focus of the narratives of both Marlow and the unnamed narrator whose account frames that of Marlow, it is surprising that more critical attention has not been paid to the voices of the indigenous natives in the novel. Abdul R. JanMohamed, for example, argues their role is unremarkable because the “Africans are an incidental part, and not the main objects of representation.” (1985: 71) Terry Collits argues that in view of Conrad’s limited capacity to know the natives, their voices would necessarily be incomplete and “no longer be ‘realized’ in the language of their oppressors, but henceforth merely glimpsed fleetingly”. (2005: 123) Consequently their voices are frequently muted. Whilst I agree that they do not have a role in the foreground of the novel their impact is fundamental to the narrative; consequently, there is a tension between the impact of the role played by the Africans and their apparent limited representation. If the implied reader were the European, as JanMohamed argues (19863), that would suggest that the novel is structured on the traditional binary opposition between the superior dominant European and the inferior degenerate African. But Conrad establishes early in the novel that this narrative is unstable and ambiguous. Can this modernist approach to discourse deconstruct such traditional assumptions of power so that the brief, incomplete sightings of the Africans can be recognized as producing vivid and cohesive commentaries? Albert Camus examines a similar perspective in his novel

L'Étranger when his protagonist Meursault is locked into solitary confinement after having been found guilty of murder. His view of the world is restricted to a narrow window through which “[il] voi[t] le ciel et [il] ne voi[t] que lui.” (1958: 125) Both texts warn against the restricted perspectives of the first person narrator. In his narration of the story of *Lord Jim* Marlow struggles to explain the value of fragmented representations.

The views [Jim] let [Marlow] have of himself were like those glimpses through the shifting rents in a thick fog – bits of vivid and vanishing detail, giving no connected idea of the general aspect of the country. They fed one’s curiosity without satisfying it; they were no good for purposes of orientation. (Conrad 2007: 60)

Fleeting glimpses represent a narrative strategy in which the natives avoid representation appropriated by white discourse. Thus Marlow’s brief insights into Jim’s character and the momentary views of the natives dancing on the riverbank create vignettes viewed from an ill-defined perspective; these fragmented details “were no good for orientation” because they portray only sufficient information to create a conceptual scrapbook composed of changeable images. It is this very uncertainty that stimulates attraction to this unknown Other and suggests a new form of engagement. Marlow identifies this complexity as fundamental to the colonial experience; he is conscious of the “fascination of the abomination [...] the powerless disgust, the surrender” (20) that characterizes his ambivalence to the strange and the unknown. The gorgeously exotic African princess who appears on the riverbank symbolizes this irresistible lure; she is at once “savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent”. (99) The juxtaposition of the oxymoronic epithets conveys both the dichotomy of the emotions she aroused and the ambiguous role of the natives within the narrative.

This duality that underlies the response to one of the basic questions within the novel that Peter Edgerly Firchow identifies: “What is it that makes human beings human?” (2000: 120) If we agree that this is a fundamental issue, then the role of the natives is

immeasurable in its power as the yardstick of comparison. Rino Zhuwarara argues, however, that this binary opposition necessitates the vilification of the Africans who are distorted in order to represent the antithesis of the Europeans. He argues that the focus of the novel is “what became of the character and fate of the so-called superior race the moment it left the shores of a supposedly ‘civilized’ Western world and came face to face with the dark people of an alien culture and environment.” (2004: 225) How does Conrad reconcile these differences? Is Kurtz’s degeneration the result of his familiarity with the Africans, or is it the consequence of a flawed character who has no restraint?

In view of this significant role in the novel, it is rather unexpected that individual native voices are rarely reported in direct speech in *Heart of Darkness*. A similar conundrum can be observed in Camus’s novel and short stories in which the Arabs have little or no dialogue and in J.M. Coetzee’s *Foe* in which Friday has been deliberately silenced by the physical mutilation of his tongue. Such silencing of the Other suggests that in colonial hierarchies the racial Other cannot be trusted to narrate his own history, or, more tellingly, that the narrator assumes that the natives have no story to tell; their voices are erased before they can exert their subjectivity. The problem is articulated succinctly in *Foe*. If, in white discourse, the racial Other “has no command of words and therefore no defense against being re-shaped day by day in conformity with the desires of others” (Coetzee 1987: 121) then native identity is completely controlled by the narrator. Marlow struggles to subvert this domination by various strategies that emphasize the unreliability of language and the problems of the restricted view of the narrator. There are only two occasions of native dialogue in *Heart of Darkness*; first, when the headman of the crew on Marlow’s steamer requests the bodies of their dead adversaries in order that his men might eat, and secondly, when the insolent native boy announces Kurtz’s death. Why does Marlow dramatize these two moments by giving a literal voice to the natives? Both refer to

issues of survival, either physical or psychological, and both reference interdependence between the natives and the Europeans who dominate them.

The most significant interchange takes place on Marlow's steamer when it is surrounded by a fog so dense that further progress up the river is impossible. This fog symbolizes moral confusion and disorientation, preparing the reader for the reversal of the values held in the traditional binaries. Greatly troubled by their vulnerable position, the colonials aboard fear attack by the natives hidden in the forests. Equally concerned, but absorbed by different interests, the native crew discusses the situation between themselves:

Several exchanged short, grunting phrases, which seemed to settle the matter to their satisfaction. Their headman [...] stood near me. "Aha!" I said, just for good fellowship's sake. "Catch 'im," he snapped, with a bloodshot widening of his eyes and a flash of sharp teeth – "catch 'im. Give 'im to us." "To you, eh?" I asked; "what would you do with them?" "Eat 'im!" he said, curtly, and, leaning his elbow on the rail, looked out into the fog in a dignified and profoundly pensive attitude. (69)

These natives appear at first to be stereotypes, cannibals with "bloodshot eyes" and with flashing teeth, who are juxtaposed with the extraordinary unknown Other who maintains dignity and profundity. The harsh repetitive words, and the short, sharp syllables of "short grunting", "catch 'im" and "eat 'im" seem to reflect the diction of their native tongue as well as convey a mood of irritation and frustration. They are hungry; these are the victims of an insensitive colonial system that pays them in pieces of brass wire to be exchanged for goods at non-existent villages. Their bodies were so atrophied by hunger that their "skins were no longer glossy and their muscles no longer hard." (70) Unnamed and unidentified the natives make a decision that affects Marlow and his understanding of humanity. They show restraint in the face of immeasurable hardship. Despite their cannibalistic practices we feel empathy for their predicament and the painful "devilry of lingering starvation". (71)

The clipped tones of the headman and the quiet collective discussion by the crew express a demeanor of control, in vivid contrast to the over-excitement of the highly charged “pilgrims” who later prepare their guns for shooting practice on the natives crowded on the river banks. Marlow observes bitterly how “that imbecile crowd down on the deck started their little fun, and [he] could see nothing more for smoke” (109), as if shooting game for sport. Whether they shoot at the natives in fear or in sport, their conduct is critically judged by the incongruous depiction of “a little fat man, with sandy hair and red whiskers [...] and pink pyjamas tucked into his socks.” (68) He is a pathetic specimen in contrast to the stature of the native queen.

Similarly, the godlike Kurtz goes beyond all restraints. Firchow argues that “by attempting to become more than human, Kurtz succeeded only in being less than human.” (2000: 120) Where then is the ethical center of the novel? Is it represented by Marlow who admits to telling lies to Kurtz? Intended or by Kurtz who betrays his humanity and responsibilities? Or perhaps the ethical center may be found in those natives whose inaudible voices express restraint? Despite their hunger they refuse to disobey orders or contravene the colonial code of ethics. What is troubling in this novel is the fact that despite the traditional binary oppositions that structure the narrative, there is no clear delineation between good and evil characters. In addition, the differences between black and white imagery are clearly disturbed by the associations of white with the piles of bones and ivory that introduce themes of death and greed.

The second incidence of direct speech occurs at the end of the narrative after Marlow has finally encountered Kurtz.

Suddenly, the manager’s boy put his insolent black head in the doorway, and said in a tone of scathing contempt –
 “Mistah Kurtz – he dead.”
 All the pilgrims rushed out to see. I remained, and went on with my dinner. (112)

This young African who is employed by the manager reveals his disdain for his masters in his disrespectful attitude; a spoilt creature, his role is abhorrent and yet Conrad allows him to pronounce the words the Europeans dread to hear - that Kurtz is dead. By enabling him to make the announcement, Conrad makes Kurtz's death belong to the Africans. At this point Marlow loses control of his narrative; he is side-lined by the drama, and left uselessly at the table, exposed by the boy's contemptuous tone that ridicules traditional European attempts to grasp power in Africa. Kurtz becomes their fetish and godlike figure, an empowerment of their nativism that cannot now be absolved by European niceties. Against the backdrop of these significant functions, the fleeting glimpses of the natives must be weighed in context.

But suddenly, as we struggled round a bend, there would be a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass-roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling, under the droop of a heavy and motionless foliage. [...] It was unearthly, and the men were – No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it – this suspicion of their not being human. (63)

Marlow depicts a lively visual image full of vigorous dancing against the background of the "heavy and motionless foliage". These Africans exhibit the exhilaration of freedom and autonomy in their motions. Their activities are not frozen on the page by precise, realistically rendered details, but projected by the energetic swirl of impressionist images that convey mood rather than tell a story. Actions such as "whirl", "swaying" and "rolling", and their accompanying sounds such as "clapping", "stamping" and "burst of yells" suggest the intensity of the moment. Is this a stereotypical depiction of "prehistoric man" (62) typified by "eyes rolling"? Or does the narrative attempt to situate the natives as a communal group by briefly indicating their homes and their ceremonies? Many of the descriptions are underwritten by similar ambiguities, but such inconclusive passages permit the indigenous natives to break free from the constraints of white discourse by

partial impressionistic rather than concretely defined representation. Marlow's own narrative explains how such voices can be accessed in his discourse.

He warns the reader that true understanding can be found in the difference between appearance and "the world of straightforward facts" (30) and the reality in which "the inner truth is hidden". (60) Interpretations are individualized because each person creates their "own reality – for yourself, not for others – what no other man can ever know. They can only see the mere show, and never can tell what it really means." (52) Marlow complicates his narrative by stepping away from the role of omniscient narrator, and declines to function as the moral center. He explains that he is a construct of the very mythologies that dominate his account when he reveals how his doting aunt procured his overseas appointment by describing him as "an exceptional and gifted creature". (28) Similarly, he indicates that he is part of these fictions when he gestures towards Jules Verne's novel by exclaiming that he felt "about to set off for the center of the earth" (29) rather than the center of the continent.

As he stands on the deck, struggling to grasp the reality of the panorama that confronts him, the narrative transitions from the specifics of realism into a world of conjecture and doubt, a development in which his discourse loses its aura of authority and becomes hesitant, full of comparative expressions such as "like", "an air of", "as if" "with an aspect of" and "almost". He is unsure how to articulate these impressions and engage a language that becomes increasingly slippery and unreliable. Collits explores this fundamental paradox of linguistic representation by arguing that it "underlines the tricky nature of language itself that conceals as it apparently reveals, that denotes presence while signifying absence, that signals meaning while lacking it." (2005: 332) If Marlow constantly reiterates the difficulties of expressing truth in narrative, how can he attempt to find a voice for the Other if he finds his own voice so elusive and contradictory? By describing his own experiences in figurative terms, does that imply that his depiction of the Other

must also rely on allegories of myth, including stereotyping, rather than aim for detailed realistic description? The archetypal figure of the savage cedes to two complementary representations, that of the stereotypical construct of the hitherto non-colonized savage who inhabits the jungle and the contrasting portrayal of those natives who are some “of the reclaimed, the product of the new forces at work”. (33) Thus, the passage that describes Marlow’s first encounter with Africa at once defines the variable parameters of his increasingly problematical perspectives and anticipates one of Marlow’s “inconclusive experiences”. (21) This conundrum continues to arouse unsettling questions that confront the fundamental issue whether the voice of the privileged can articulate the voices from the margins without recreating European hegemony “by historicizing and narrating its strangeness.” (Said 1994: 198)

If the straightforward realism in the descriptions of Robinson Crusoe’s island have been replaced by figurative expressions that not only introduce the mystery of the continent but also his uncertain narrative voice as he struggles to define this new world without recourse to the hegemonic hierarchies in white discourse, Marlow’s telling of the tale needs to introduce strategies in which his unreliable narrative can portray the native voices. And into this ambivalence Marlow introduces the voice of the unknown Other for the first time, as an enigmatic “air of whispering” that is not even expressed as speech but is a voice heard nonetheless. It is the silent alluring voice of the unconscious that haunts as “the whisper of a voice” (121) rather than as a series of recognizable sounds or discernible language. The tensions evident between the decisive “mute” and the tentative sounds of a whisper combine to create an ambiguous and beguiling impression that subverts reality, thus suggesting the narrative fails to articulate “voice” but expresses the fundamentals of desire, and reveals “the mystery, its greatness” (48) and thus recognizes “a reality that lies beyond its own epistemologically constrained field of vision” (2005: 50) to which Benita Parry alludes.

One narrative strategy that effectively conveys an implied readiness to hear the voices of the racial Other is referenced in the emotional link established in Crusoe's narrative when he compares Friday's appearance to that of the European. Since empathy responds to individualization through familiarity, the unknown racial Other needs to be familiarized through intimate detailing which is evident when Marlow encounters "the grove of death" (38) shortly after his arrival at the Company station, some two hundred miles up the big river from the sea. He wanders through the enclave, passing the chain gang, and down to the shade of some trees. He is shocked by the "black shadows" (35) he perceives lying listlessly in the dim light. The passage is remarkable for the contrast between the silence that pervades the grove and the intense expression of Marlow's racing thoughts.

Then, glancing down, [Marlow] saw a face near [his] hand. The black bones reclined at full length with one shoulder against the tree, and slowly the eyelids rose and the sunken eyes looked up at [him], enormous and vacant, a kind of blind, white flicker in the depths of the orbs, which died out slowly. [...] He had tied a bit of white worsted round his neck – Why? Where did he get it? Was it a badge – an ornament – a charm – a propitiatory act? Was there any idea at all connected with it? (35)

The passage opens with a realist description of the severely emaciated body of one of the dying slaves that is "reclined at full length" against the tree; "reclined" plays cruelly with our expectations as it implies laziness and thus conjures up images of the stereotypical idle racial Other, only to be destroyed by the context of brutal cruelty. The native is in a position of utter exhaustion and despair; dying not reclining. But the incongruity of the "black bones" juxtaposed with "reclined" conveys a damning commentary on the ruthlessness of colonial exploitation because it exacerbates the force of the truth it is attempting to conceal. Gradually the passage reveals the pain suffered by the dying men; "bones", "sunken", "vacant" and "blind" combine to express the emptiness of their lives drained by slavery in a silent mockery of the missionary justification for colonialism. There is a terrible sense of pervading loss of dignity and humanity as the men have been

exploited until they become mere “bundles of acute angles”. (35) What is this flicker that Marlow notices in the recumbent man’s eye? Marlow jettisons the stereotypical depictions of eye rolling and eyeball glistening and he begins to focus more closely on the eyes of the dying man as the details become increasingly concentrated on the “eyelids” that shield and protect the eye to the “eyes” and finally to the “orbs” in which flickers the dying light of life. The narrative draws us into an intimate portrait of death that effectively engages our sympathies with the unnamed man’s vulnerability.

This is a new development in the relationship between the Self and the Other. In comparison, Robinson Crusoe evidenced little or no interest in Friday’s background; he tried to erase the young man’s longings by refusing to discuss the past, even evincing pure jealousy when he believes the native yearns for his home and family. In contrast, since the white piece of worsted individualizes this one slave, our empathy is aroused and we search for the same answers that Marlow seeks. He views the native as a man, as an individual with thoughts and aspirations; but is this cloth the emblem of individuality, of tribal affiliation or of personal choice and deep reasoning? Conversely, could it represent ownership and subjugation? Does this piece of fabric represent a voice or does it signify the suppression of an enslaved man? The ambiguity inherent in Marlow’s narrative renders our suppositions rather inconclusive, except for one major point. Marlow selected this incident from his memory and chose to paint this picture of these suffering people and in this sense, whether silenced or vocal, they have a presence within the narrative. Someone notices, and someone responds to the suffering.

By introducing such characteristics the reader’s empathy is aroused when the native dies because he has been made human. He is not merely a figure but an individual with a story. Edward Said argues “[as] a creature of his time, Conrad could not grant the natives their freedom, despite his severe critique of the imperialism that enslaved them”. (1994: 34) Therefore Marlow is reduced to introducing narrative strategies such as this form of

individualization to endow the natives with distinctiveness if the autonomy and dignity that Appiah identifies as essential for the depiction of individuals cannot be incorporated into the narrative.

Marlow's empathy is triggered by a feeling of guilt that creates a sense of responsibility towards their terrible plight: "After all, [he] also was a part of the great cause of these high and just proceedings." (33) Does this sense of guilt influence his depiction of the savages within the narrative? The insistent, ever-present drums (39, 62, 104) that reverberate throughout the narrative possibly function as a different form of voice, as the dark inner voice of the unknown racial Other whose agonies are heard as a voice in the European conscience. The drums are heard in the background as Marlow journeys further and further up the river towards Kurtz. They are a familiar sound with an indefinable purpose. "Whether it meant war, peace, or prayer we could not tell." (62) Through the beating drums he indicates a voice that haunts his conscience as he suspects that they may share "as profound a meaning as the sound of bells in a Christian country." (39) Marlow's deliberate ambiguity resists a 'fixed' interpretation and therefore the voices remain strengthened by their very obscurity. JanMohamed argues that the mixed representation of the natives rejects the traditional idea of the drums as emblems of bloodthirsty intentions (1985: 71), empowering these symbolic voices by reversing the hierarchy of expectations. By using leitmotifs and references to their cultural background in detailed descriptions of appearance Conrad effectively avoids the rhetoric of imperialism and "the unbounded power of eloquence – of words – of burning noble words" (H.D. 83).

Jerry Wasserman argues that language "is a metaphor or a function of civilization [...] an important psychological element of the imperialist conquest" (1987: 103) that brings order out of chaos by naming. If we regard language as the defining characteristic of civilization, how do we maintain the binary opposition between the civilized and the barbarian if Marlow condenses all speech to this incoherence of "one immense jabber"

(80)? Indeed, Marlow's final point may be that language and the truths it expresses change and develop constantly because the novel is being drawn towards a new relationship with the represented world, a new positioning that Mikhail Bakhtin names as "the spontaneity of the inconclusive present". (2011: 270) Thus, Marlow's complex narrative is constantly changing as he weaves together stories, fairy tales, and histories and interchanges narrative voices within the framework provided by the unnamed narrator. The narrative frames stories within stories. Where is the truth of the story in its retelling? Whose voice do we hear? And then suddenly Marlow hears an extraordinary voice from the jungle.

A cry, a very loud cry, as of infinite desolation, soared slowly in the opaque air. A complaining clamor, modulated in savage discords, filled our ears. (68)

The power of this description of the lone voice heard through the mists hanging over the river resides in the long, leisurely extended vowel that create a strong image so intense the cry becomes almost visual; it rises like a bird from the fog, then we are brought down to earth again by the hard consonants. The unexpected juxtaposition of "infinite desolation" and "soared" creates a tension within the narrative, illustrating Marlow's failure to interpret the mood of the unknown voice; he can express only conjecture because the "opaque" mists exclude him from knowing whether this is an expression of pain, war, fear or joy, because he cannot see/comprehend the reality that surrounds him. But he does respond to the deep emotion expressed and as such the cry becomes a metaphor for the unwritten inner truth of Africa, the reality of "its concealed life." (48)

In Conrad's novel the reader is absorbed by an unstable discourse that cannot fully define or describe, in which the enigmatic becomes subject: "it is impossible to convey the life – sensation of any given epoch of one's existence, - which makes its truth, its meaning – its subtle and penetrating essence". (50) And we recall the comments made by the unnamed colleague whose narrative frames Marlow's discourse which describe the truth in Marlow's stories as being present like "a haze [...] one of those misty halos" (18). In other

words, the real voices of the unknown Other will not be articulated solely as an “excessive shrieking” (68) or a “tumultuous and mournful uproar” (68), but as the inaudible voices that are implicit in Marlow’s commentary. Giving voice to the Other involves speech, silence and the spaces in between such as those created by whispers, in a theme developed by Coetzee in *Foe* in which he claims “this is not a place of words” (157) which suggests that these writers cannot represent the voices of the Other, only their presence, because we may not yet be ready to listen to them. The absence of articulated speech, lack of names and secondary roles within Conrad’s story lead Collits to argue that the indigenous natives are at once “misrepresented and underrepresented” (2005: 99); and lead Chinua Achebe to accuse the text of a complete “dehumanization of Africa and Africans”. (1975: 12) More pertinently, Benita Parry argues that these natives are “flagrantly disarticulated.” (2005: 41) However, these criticisms fail to open up the voices of the natives but merely silence them more completely because they concentrate on their muteness and refuse to listen. We need instead to search for the mute whispers that haunt and destabilize the narrative.

10. *L'Étranger* and 'L'Hôte'

Le rôle de l'écrivain [...] ne se sépare pas de devoirs difficiles. Par définition, il ne peut se mettre aujourd'hui au service de ceux qui font l'histoire: il est au service de ceux qui la subissent. (Camus's Banquet Speech: 1957)

In his banquet speech for the Nobel Prize for Literature awarded in 1957, Albert Camus positions the role of the writer within a political context. Referencing the mid-twentieth-century aftermath of two world wars, when Algeria was in crisis and the threat of global nuclear destruction created a nihilistic atmosphere, he argues for writers to give voice to the oppressed and persecuted victims of the globalized post-war chaos that he has witnessed. He bemoans a war-torn landscape in which “se mêlent les révolutions déçues, les techniques devenues folles, les dieux morts et les idéologies exténuées”. (1957) In response to this devastation he proposes that writers have a dual responsibility: “le service de la vérité et celui de la liberté” (1957), a statement that suggests that Camus's novels express strongly articulated voices of the marginalized and oppressed indigenous peoples struggling for Algerian independence.

However, David Carroll argues that although Camus's writings are not without political or historical interest, his Algeria is a construct, “an idea or fiction of a community that was never actualized in history”, and represents “a place rooted as much in his dreams, and nightmares, as a lived experience.” (1997: 518) Emily Apter argues that Camus's portrayal of his country's political and social crises is not specific but merely the presentation of “colonial unease in a metaphysically abstract worldscape”. (1997: 503) She supports this argument by claiming that the Arabs in his work are represented as “alternately mime and geste stick figures holding up the scenery”. (503) Edward Said also argues that Camus's Arabs are not fully developed characters but ciphers that remain unnamed and without a history. (1994: 212) Similarly, Jan Rigaud comments how the Arab community in

L'Étranger “is only felt through nondescript and marginal references”. (1992: 185) More recently, Aicha Kassoul Maougal develops this argument that the “Arabs are missing” (2006: 150) from the narratives by stating that “the land itself was much more of a presence, and a much more articulate one. Algeria was represented as an ‘Eden’, an almost unpopulated one”. (150) She reiterates Apter’s argument by asserting that it is “more like a virtual Algeria. It is a myth, rising out of the abyss” of the nostalgia for an almost traceless society. (150) Why does Camus’s writing give this impression of an abstract, mythical world? Is this a narrative strategy that allows the writer more freedom of expression and the opportunity to be unrestricted by expectation and prejudices when expressing colonial sympathies? Or does it imply a more idealistic vision or even an exclusionary attitude based on racism?

In the face of such cohesive critical assessment on the virtual exclusion of the Arabs from Camus’s novels it is hard to reconcile such commentaries with the author’s own declared definition of the responsibility of the writer towards the oppressed. Conversely, it is hard fully to agree with these criticisms with regards to *L'Étranger* and the short story ‘L’Hôte’, although there is an apparent distancing from contemporary political turmoil of Algerian demands for independence in these two narratives. We should ask with Michel Grimaud why Camus chose an Arab as victim of Meursault’s crime rather than another kind of outcast. (1992: 172) Are the Arabs representatives of individual experiences or are these unnamed figures mere ciphers of a more complex argument that examines a multicultural society struggling with the impact of a prolonged highly centralized colonial government? I argue that despite the ostensible marginalization of the Arabs in these two texts these groups play a pivotal role in the narratives since their encounters with French Algerians initiate the action whilst the violence signifies change in the colonial power hierarchy. These confrontational demands for a voice lead to the deconstruction of the typical colonial hero from dominant figure to social outcast as represented in the figures of

the condemned Meursault and the threatened schoolteacher Daru who become outsiders in their respective communities. The apparent disjunction in Camus's writing between limited Arab representation and their increasing function as catalysts for the development of the story in both *L'Étranger* and 'L'Hôte' reflects their changing role within the French colony and illustrates the growing legitimacy of their emerging voices within a complex Algerian society composed of indigenous Arabs, white Algerian settlers and the French colonial bourgeoisie from the mainland. Identification of the "outsider" becomes increasingly complex and difficult to define whilst the interchangeable "guest/host" challenges the authority and hospitality of the inhabitants of Algeria, by actively questioning who belongs.

Both *L'Étranger* and 'L'Hôte' share similar narrative structures, consisting of encounters with the racial Other, a challenge from the Other, transition, and changes to established power relationships which result in the demise of the French Algerian protagonists, Meursault and Daru. The two narratives open with a scene in which their everyday routine is disturbed by an unexpected event, namely the death of Meursault's mother in the former and the arrival of an Arab prisoner at Daru's schoolhouse in the latter short story. These intrusions into the equilibrium of their lives introduce two important motifs that haunt Camus's narratives, the loss of heritage experienced by "tous les hommes nés dans ce pays qui, un par un, essayaient d'apprendre à vivre sans racines et sans foi" (Camus 2010: 214) and, through Daru's confrontation with Arab rebels, the questions of loyalty and belonging that trouble settlers and immigrants. The death of the mother symbolizes Meursault's loss of heritage. His refusal to view her body, thereby indicating his alienation from accepted colonial etiquette, signifies this loss of connection and highlights the predicament of the colonial outsider. Where does Meursault belong? To this country where the insufferable heat and glaring sun will later dominate his reactions? Or to the group represented by these elderly residents who are encased by colonial rituals and

institutional politics? His underlying sense of alienation is symbolized by his distancing from the Sunday crowds passing by on his street below the balcony where he stands apart, on the verge of society. Although he is ostensibly “[p]armi eux” (41), exchanging comments and waves with different passers-by, he remains an outsider.

How does this French Algerian writer define “belonging”? He writes in *Chroniques algériennes* that the European Algerians have the birthright to residence in Algeria. “Actuellement, les Arabes ne forment pas à eux seuls toute l’Algérie. [...] Les Français d’Algérie sont, eux aussi, et au sens fort du terme, des indigènes.” (2013: 202) It is on this recognition that Algeria “offre l’exemple rarissime de populations différentes imbriquées sur la même territoire” (207) and the key issue of establishing “des communautés aux personnalités différentes” (207) that Camus based his objections to the Algerian War and explained his failure to support the Arabs in their quest for independence even though he defended their image abroad. They do not compose “une foule anonyme et misérable, où l’Occidental ne voit rien à respecter ni à défendre. Il s’agit au contraire d’un peuple de grandes traditions” (95). I propose that Camus explores these different interethnic relationships in *L’Étranger* and ‘L’Hôte’ by examining how these two intrusive events, the death of the mother and the confrontation with the Arab prisoner, disturb their lives to the degree that the issues of belonging and origins, intrinsic to Camus’s argument against Algerian Independence, become so central that we are forced to reconsider basic differences that identify Otherness and to consider the question how these various perspectives of alterity influence the articulation of the voices of the Other. Indeed, perhaps the most significant question to ask is whether the murdered Arab, the victim, has a louder voice than his compatriots who fade into the background, disappearing from the beach, or walking across the desert to a prison in Tinguit.

Difference polarizes those with a voice, those with an effective voice from those silent observers on the fringe of society, estranged by their age, gender or ethnicity. Do they

hover in silent judgment, these characters who are marginalized by their exclusion from the action and silenced by our inability to ‘read’ their thoughts? Watching implies an attentive observation. For example when Meursault’s mother lived with him “[elle] passait son temps à [le] suivre des yeux en silence.” (23) At the wake, he has the impression that one of the elderly men “qui, le menton sur le dos de ses mains agrippées à sa canne, [le] regardait fixement” (29). In the streets Meursault notices a group of Arabs “regardaient en silence” (69) as he walks along the streets of Algiers with Raymond and Marie. During the trial he notices a strange robot-like woman who “[le] regardait avec intensité” (105) and a young journalist whose clear eyes “[l]’examinait attentivement, sans rien exprimer qui fût définissable.” (104) Do these watchful, silent bystanders express the muffled voices of the silent majority?

In the short story ‘L’Hôte’, the prisoner is given a short dialogic exchange with the schoolmaster Daru in which the Arab clearly defines his understanding of belonging.

Dis!
 L’instituteur le regarda.
 Le gendarme revient demain?
 Je ne sais pas.
 Tu viens avec nous?
 Je ne sais pas. Pourquoi?
 [...]
 Viens avec nous, dit-il. (93)

This short, direct interchange is structured like a game of chess as each man manoeuvres for position, but its order is destabilized because ultimately the Arab refuses to play by the rules of engagement and finally challenges his reluctant warden. As Daru parries the questions by refusing to answer them directly, the Arab gradually assumes dominance in the conversation. The strength of the inviting yet imperative “viens” contrasts starkly with the uncertain even puzzled reply “[j]e ne sais pas”. To whom does “nous” refer? Two alternatives present themselves: either the “nous” refers to the prisoner and Balducci if they leave in the morning for the local prison at Tinguit or it refers to the rebel groups

gathering in the region. Since the deliberate ambiguity of “nous” remains unresolved, this dialogue retains a troubling subtext that has been often analysed by critics. (Davis: 2003)

The Arab’s enigmatic question disturbs Daru’s sense of belonging and he is made to doubt the roots he felt he had established. “Dans ce vaste pays qu’il avait tant aimé, il était seul.” (99) Where does he belong? Daru gradually realizes that despite the authority of his position as schoolteacher he remains fundamentally excluded from the colonizers represented by Balducci’s authority and from the Arab community where he distributes grain. His feelings of isolation remain unresolved at the end of the story as the Arab voices increasingly disturb his emotions.

Salman Rushdie, who also writes from the margins, describes this inner tension as a form of self-alienation, as “my two othernesses, my double unbelonging.” (1994: 141)

Rushdie identifies the issue of roots, homeland and belonging as fundamental to inscribing Otherness, a characterization difficult to ascertain in multicultural societies. In both *Robinson Crusoe* and *Heart of Darkness*, roots and their origins were clearly defined by grounding the history and heritage of the colonizer in their opening pages. The footprint in the sand signified ownership and belonging. But in the multiethnic community that is French Algeria such roots are not easily determined and the characters struggle to find a separate identity; as a consequence the traditional colonial quest becomes less an exploration of the unknown and more the disentangling of “ces racines obscures et emmêlées qui [les] rattachaient à cette terre splendide et effrayante” (Camus 1994: 303); “emmêler” means “mêler ensemble, mettre en désordre” (D.F.C.), which suggests that instead of inscribing origin and heritage, these roots confuse and perplex in a hostile environment. J.M. Coetzee confronts similar issues of identity and belonging in *Disgrace*, in which his protagonist David Lurie struggles to come to terms with post-apartheid South Africa and his fragile place in a transitioning world. Although both Meursault and Daru feel loyalty to Algeria, as indicated by Daru’s care for his students’

families throughout the lengthy drought and by Meursault's refusal to move to Paris and get promotion, their sense of belonging is tenuous and insecure.

The unobtrusive nurse at the wake sits with her back to the group of mourners in a gesture of self-exclusion; Meursault can "read" only the movement of her arms. "[Il] ne voyai[t] pas ce qu'elle faisait. Mais au mouvement de ses bras, [il] pouvai[t] croire qu'elle tricotait." (27) Meursault is unable to define or interpret her gestures. The uncertainty and doubt underlying "je pouvais croire" indicate supposition and conjecture, thus defying the fixed "singular" reading of traditional colonial discourse and indicating the increasing ambivalence that underlies Camus's literary interpretation of the colonial Other. Nothing is definite or explicit but the ill-defined gesture maintains a certain menace. Is this knitting a sign of homely domesticity? Or is it a reference to the famed "tricoteuses" seated at the French Revolutionary guillotine who watched the heads of the aristocracy roll? Conrad employs a similar image of these fateful figures of destiny in the form of the unearthly knitters in Belgium who greeted Marlow at the central offices before embarking on his journey to Africa in *Heart of Darkness*. Writing in 1942, Camus thus conveys by reference to this iconic image an unerring presentiment of the violent struggle in the future War of Algerian Independence of 1954-1962. He gives the marginalized voice the powerful historical context of the French Revolution, by equating the emergence of two oppressed peoples and therefore giving legitimacy to their demands for freedom and emancipation. Although both the nurse and the Arab prisoner are introduced as silent, unobtrusive or shamed characters they each project a distinct persona in their respective narratives through which are heard the beginnings of a voice, not as speech, but in the form of body language and symbolic gestures that may be interpreted as indications of their voice as well as their social and political emergence within Algerian society.

Camus's terse discursive style is thus deceptively simple. Colin Davis argues that Camus's writing reveals "an enigmatic core which resists any easy conceptualization."

(2007: 14) I argue that his writing not only contrasts differing, even opposing, concepts such as the title *L'Envers and L'Endroit* that Davis cites as an example, but also combines uneasy oppositions in his narratives such as the tensions between the concrete and the intangible. Meursault's description of the wake is provided with a sturdy framework of the observable and pragmatic. His narrative enumerates specific details and events such as arrival and departures of different characters, the placing of chairs and the provision of coffee, but more particularly he focuses on details of bodily functions such as hacking morning coughs, sobs, the sounds of sucking toothless gums, the glare of the too-bright lights and back pain. In this way he draws a clear picture of the physical discomfort of the wake. But at the same time, this narrative is sprinkled with expressions of his uncertainty and doubt such as "je ne sais pas" (25), "je crois" (27), "j'ai fini par deviner" (29) and "j'avais même l'impression". (29) The contrast between these two variances in Meursault's observations and sensations create an underlying tension in the narrative that suggest his estrangement from the ritual in which he is participating. This feeling of alienation is expressed more directly when he observes notices that the elderly residents take their place around the coffin so that "ils étaient tous assis en face de [lui]" (28), giving him "l'impression ridicule qu'ils étaient là pour [le] juger." (28) He becomes an outsider within his own narrative. This new positioning of the white narrator destabilizes the authority and dominance of his voice and emphasizes the importance within the narrative of the changing perceptions of Otherness and the increasing deconstruction of "singular" readings of the text.

Perspectives become progressively complex within this novel, thus constantly destabilizing the opposition between center and periphery, as evidenced by Meursault's increasing estrangement within his own narrative and the growing resistance of the marginalized to his perspective of their condition. The Arab nurse, for example, is an indistinct figure. It is easy to ignore her identity and forget her voice when her back is

turned, but when she turns towards us her face is covered by a white bandage: “[o]n ne voyait que la blancheur du bandage dans son visage.” (25) She thus appears mummified and muzzled, as voiceless as the woman in the coffin. But herein lies the paradox of the narrative. On the one hand, the white bandage hides the nurse’s face so that we cannot see her cancer-ravaged face. It is an issue of colonial unwillingness or inability to acknowledge the face of the Other; we see only indistinguishable faces, without features in our ignorance and fear of the horror of Otherness, as represented by the cancer. We muffle native voices before even hearing them. On the other hand, her bandage is an emblem of her refusal to be dominated by white discourse. While her face is hidden she cannot be “read”. The bandage functions as a protective barrier so that she resists domination and appropriation by the narrative and refuses to be transformed into a stereotype, what Trinh T. Minh-ha describes as “figures that belong to a definite image-repertoire”. (1989:54)

The Arab prisoner shows a similar reluctance to be inscribed within white male discourse. His body language expresses the mixed emotions of anger and fear that he refuses to articulate when Daru confronts him.

- Pourquoi tu l’as tué? [...]
 L’Arabe détourna son regard.
 [...]
 Tu as peur?
 [L’Arabe] se raidit, en détournant les yeux. (92-93)

Daru’s interrogation focuses on the Arab’s motivation and his emotional response to his captivity. His questions are abrupt and to the point; this directness is in contrast to the prisoner’s body language that constantly reacts with twists, turns and a stiffening of his torso. He is uncomfortable and uneasy and his refusal to make eye contact has an ambiguous twist; either he is the stereotypical “shifty-eyed” native or he is refusing to be appropriated by the narrative. However, in this exchange there is an important development in the relationship with the racial Other since Daru attempts to engage the

native and gives him the opportunity to explain his crime. Although Daru's tone is inquisitive, almost intrusive, he is met with resistance because the Arab refuses to answer and thus be judged by the Euro-Algerian. Does Daru pay him attention as man to man or is his line of questioning more an attempt to deny the Arab's agency within a construct of power? Even this empathetic teacher has limitations. Later in the story when Daru has given the Arab a choice of destinations the bewildered prisoner turns to him and speaks urgently. "‘Écoute’, dit-il. Daru secoua la tête: ‘Non, tais-toi. Maintenant je te laisse.’" (98) The alliteration of the hard consonants and the predominance of the monosyllables create a definitive mood of stubborn refusal to attend to the prisoner. The native voice is unwelcome here, possibly because Daru dreads being drawn further into a conflict that he fears. But the encounter remains uneasy in his mind. This apprehension is indicative of the forthcoming changes in his life.

Ironically, those voices that wish to be heard are denied articulation. At Meursault's trial for example, his friends gather as witnesses to give evidence in his defense. But one by one, they are denied a hearing or asked to be brief or they stumble over their stunted linguistic skills endlessly repeating like Céleste "c'est un malheur. Un malheur, tout le monde sait ce que c'est. [...] c'est un malheur." (110) Such representations differentiate between the sophisticated language of the center and the poorer less well-educated figures from the margins. This linguistic differentiation is a narrative strategy used by Coetzee in *Disgrace* in which the scholarly David Lurie's discourse is contrasted with the a-grammatical English spoken by the native Petrus.

Jill Beer argues that for "Camus, encounter with the Other constitutes neither a call to arms nor to openness: it is a silent struggle, a perpetual and persistent choice to respond, to be challenged, to be changed." (2002: 192) The challenge in *L'Étranger* is more direct and more menacing than the prisoner's enigmatic invitation to Daru. Raymond Sintès, Meursault's rather shady neighbor, becomes embroiled in a dispute with the brother of

his much-maligned Arab girlfriend. After one particularly unpleasant incident of abuse, the Arab and his friends seek out Sintès for retribution. Raymond recounts the ensuing exchange to his new friend Meursault.

L'autre, il m'a dit: "Descends du tram si tu es un homme." Je lui ai dit: "Allez, reste tranquille." Il m'a dit que je n'étais pas un homme. Alors je suis descendu et je lui ai dit: "Assez, ça vaut mieux, ou je vais te mûrir. Il m'a répondu: "De quoi?" Alors je lui en ai donné un." (48)

We learn from Raymond's colloquialisms that he is streetwise, tough and anxious to impress his new friend, thus his version of events, despite the reported speech of the Arab, is couched in machismo arrogance. He reports the verbal exchange and the fight that follows quite calmly, reporting the threats as spoken. "Descends du tram si tu es un homme". The Arab's insult strikes at the very roots of his masculine identity. This threatening and challenging "si" reverberates through the narrative and demands that Sintès prove himself by stepping down from the tram, a symbol of Western domination and technology. This is an important moment of transition in the colonial power relationship as the Other challenges the very masculinity and authority of the European, and strips him of the accouterments of supremacy. His words sting and Raymond reacts accordingly, seeking to avenge the insult. It is a power play between two different cultures, that of the assumptions of bloated colonial privilege on the one hand and the ferocious "sens de l'honneur chez les Algériens" (Camus 2010: 326) on the other. This confrontation exposes fundamental instability of the ethical center at the core of the narrative. Who represents this center? Is it the unsavory, volatile Raymond, or the working-class Arab who attempts to defend his sister's honor? The threats to European manhood, the violent encounter, Meursault's indifference, all present a picture of colonial traditions in flux, challenged and subverted by Arab demand for justice through revenge.

The Arab characters have reached such powerful positions of influence in the narrative partly through the destabilization of the privileged voice of colonial discourse and partly

through its challenges to white ethical assumptions. There are key instances of change in the traditional colonial power relationship in both stories that anticipate the transition of power and authority from the white settlers to the indigenous South African Petrus who leads the new post-apartheid community into the future in J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*.

After Meursault's arrest for killing the Arab on the beach, he is imprisoned and is placed in a cell already occupied by some Arabs. Their reaction to his arrival in the cell epitomizes their changing role in the colony.

Ils ont ri en me voyant. Puis ils m'ont demandé ce que j'avais fait. J'ai dit que j'avais tué un Arabe et ils sont restés silencieux. Mais un moment après, le soir est tombé. Ils m'ont expliqué comment il fallait arranger la natte où je devais coucher. En roulant une des extrémités, on pouvait en faire un traversin. (92-93)

Once acquainted, these prisoners shun Meursault when they discover he has murdered one of their kind; he becomes their outsider, an alien to their race. Finally, when night falls and hope of release has gone for the day, the differing groups come together and the Arabs show Meursault how to prepare for the night. They are united in their attempts to defy the system; Jan Rigaud argues "for a moment at least, a sense of solidarity, a relationship between the two communities has been effected." (1992: 190) Rigaud argues further that "by remaining silent, the Arabs have proven to Meursault that they have understood him, for, after all, both ethnic groups have been the victims of colonialism" (1992: 190) But I propose the implications of this encounter reach beyond these analyses. This passage offers one of the few representations of the Arab's voice in the novel and thus indicates recognition of their rightful agency. The voice is not indicated by speech but by the sound of laughter, a subversive voice that expresses mockery, disdain and disbelief at the sight of a French Algerian joining their criminal ranks. Meursault is clearly the outsider within the prisoners and yet he is absorbed into the group. It is a critical episode in the narrative as it signifies Meursault's vulnerability and humiliation whilst the Arabs become subjects,

offering assistance and the companionship known to those who endure hardship together. They introduce him to his new world.

Attempts to reach out and thus blur the boundaries between the Self and Other are also evident in Daru's response to the prisoner. He is so embarrassed by Balducci's humiliation of the Arab that he refuses to adhere to the policeman's rigorous treatment of the hand-bound Arab prisoner and treats him with kindness and respect. He offers him some mint tea.

Quand il tendit le verre de thé au prisonnier, Daru hésita devant ses mains liées. "On peut le délier, peut-être. - Sûr, dit Balducci. [...] Il fit mine de se lever. Mais Daru, posant le verre sur le sol, s'était agenouillé près de l'Arabe. (85)

By kneeling on the ground to unite the ropes the teacher associates himself with the Arab in an almost Christ-like gesture of humility and compassion. Through this instinctive movement Daru associates himself with the indigenous locals rather than supporting the colonial establishment represented by Balducci. Daru offers hospitality and release from the humiliation of the ropes. This is a pivotal encounter in the storyline as Daru's gesture is not only an indication of liberation but also a confirmation of the racial Other as an individual. This prisoner may be an Arab criminal, but he is also a man with needs and emotions and is treated with kindness by Daru.

After Balducci's departure, the two men share a meal that the schoolteacher prepares. The Arab poses a direct question to Daru. "Pourquoi tu manges avec moi?" (92) This simple question is unexpected in its ordinariness and yet its horrifying implications take our breath away. Does the prisoner have such low esteem in his contemporary society that Daru's companionship at the table is so extraordinary? This simple query suggests the deep divide that they have crossed; they have dismantled the hierarchy that Balducci rigorously maintained and through their interchange they introduce the possibility of a new structure to the relationship between Self and Other. But this simple dialogue conceals an important

change. The Arabs are gradually emerging from their often silent and silenced characterization within the narrative whilst Daru's position as mediator between the French establishment and the natives is gradually eroded. He returns home after giving the prisoner a choice of destiny and discovers some writing on the blackboard in the schoolroom where earlier he had offered the prisoner hospitality.

There is a terrible threat scrawled on the blackboard. "Tu as livré notre frère. Tu paieras." (99) Like Meursault he has been judged and found guilty. The power of the Arabs at this point is extraordinary; they have totally reversed the power structures and enforced their own law whilst the French Algerian has become enslaved by the threats that confine him. By teaching French geography he is cooperating with the French colonial mission statement of assimilation. "Les manuels étaient toujours ceux qui étaient en usage dans la métropole." (Camus 2010: 162) Their subject matter was so extraordinary that the children considered them "mythiques" or "l'exotisme même" (162) rather than realist or educational. It implies that Algerian-related subjects are not sufficiently significant to be incorporated in the curriculum. Thus in the geography lesson, we see "[s]ur le tableau noir les quatre fleuves de France, dessinés avec quatre craies de couleurs différentes, coulaient vers leur estuaire". (81) Michel Grimaud argues that writing this inscription on the map creates "a strong symbolic statement of what the rebellion is all about: France versus the Arabs." (1992: 179) Certainly, as Apter argues, the threat indicates how Camus's idealization of "a Euro-African subject whose cultural attachments allow him to forget the *Realpolitik* of colonial power imbalance, shatters in the context of the Algerian War." (1997: 508) Despite their interaction, there remains a gulf between the ethnic groups that is signified in the writings by the gradual deconstruction of the French Algerian protagonist's status in contrast to the increasing empowerment of the Arab voice. This fundamental difference is encapsulated in the drawing on the chalkboard, since the four brightly colored

rivers of France added to the map are a cruel reminder of the difference in productivity and wealth between the powerful center and the impoverished margins.

Although Daru has proven his empathy for the Arabs, through his work as teacher, hospitality to the prisoner and his caring distribution of grain to the starving families suffering from the prolonged drought in the region, his loyalty is now being challenged. The settler experiences a new sense of vulnerability: “sans savoir pourquoi, il se sentait étrangement vide et vulnérable.” (96) His sense of unease and psychological stress is conveyed by a repeated motif of nameless sounds, threateningly close, moving and encircling around the building. While Daru dozes “il lui sembla entendre, du fond de son sommeil, des pas furtifs autour de l'école.” (95) Similarly, when leaving the schoolhouse and the symbolic protection of French institutions and colonialism, “il lui sembla entendre un léger bruit derrière lui.” (97) The language becomes more speculative; he remains uncertain, full of doubt.

However, the ghostly footsteps around the schoolhouse introduce a new and powerful trope in the narrative, the image of the unseen presence that signifies conscience, memory, inheritance and the collective unconscious. It represents the unarticulated voice of the subjugated Other; a presence that signifies an absence. Daru becomes uneasy and unsure when he thinks he hears “un léger bruit derrière lui”. (97) Camus employs a similar symbol for this trope of the collective memory in *L'Étranger* when Marie visits Meursault for the only time and he notices when he enters the noisy visitors' room, that he is surrounded by families who are shouting to be heard across the distance between visitors and the prisoners. But the Arab families do not shout. “Malgré le tumulte, ils parvenaient à s'entendre en parlant très bas. Leur murmure sourd, parti de plus bas, formait comme une basse continue aux conversations”. (94) The low murmurings create a backdrop to the vociferous white Algerians, thus representing the continuity of their history and culture despite the violent interruption created by colonial rule. Although Camus uses whispering

voices and silent footsteps to convey the presence of the colonized, the concept of an unexpressed or unreleased traumatic experience underlies his narrative. Similarly the constant drumming in *Heart of Darkness* and the terrible cry of sorrow represent the pains of a dying civilization seeking freedom. Such images permeate the writings of white male writers such as J.M.G. Le Clézio in whose novel *Onitsha* the drums roll every evening and the history of past civilizations haunts the Englishman Geoffroy Allen. The constantly rolling Mexican septic tank truck that traverses each American landscape in Cormac McCarthy's screenplay of *The Counsellor* reminds us of the underhand transactions and dangerous subterfuges that take place daily across the U.S.A. border creating a form of visible haunting. Debra Kelly argues that spectres and ghosts function as a politics of memory (2007: 218), while Davis argues that ghosts and spectres can represent a trauma that has not yet been worked through. (2005: 9) The power of the collective memory is vividly represented by dreams, flashbacks, crude paintings and mysterious videotapes in Michel Haneke's movie *Caché* (2005) in which the white male protagonist is haunted by memories of his guilt-ridden past in which he lied to rid his family of the young Algerian boy they intended to adopt. These recurring images, often in forms representative of the repressed cultures, such as the drums, form a trope of the invisible Other trying to articulate presence as well as voice, albeit non-verbal, without succumbing to nostalgia. Such forms of voice, the silent articulation of presence through dreams and other tropes, cannot be dominated. It remains an intangible, highly individual product of the imagination, fear or guilt and creates a powerful impact through the individuality of the dreamer/protagonist/rebel/ victim.

By choosing Arabs as central pivots to the development of his two stories Camus draws in the marginalised groups into the center from the periphery. This approach leads to criticism of his failure to actively support the Arabs in their demands for independence because of his "misplaced political allegiances" (Apter 1997: 501) and certainly explains

the criticism that the Algeria he describes appears mythical (Maougal 2006: 150) rather than real. But despite these analyses I propose that these two stories present a vision of Camus's Algeria and the varying dynamics between the different ethnic groups. Whose voices remain at the end of each narrative? We hear Meursault's inner voice as he recalls his mother and thus returns to his heritage; while Daru is overwhelmed by the threat that echoes through the narrative, the final cry of the marginalised colonised who seek vengeance. "Tu paieras." (99) By giving the prisoner the choice between freedom or imprisonment, he has effectively given the Arab the strongest voice of all, that of personal autonomy. Whilst the dead Arab on the beach, "[qui] n'a ni nom, ni visage, ni paroles" (Daoud: 63), is ignored but not forgotten because of his pivotal role within Meursault's narrative. Perhaps, his unspoken and unwritten voice does linger despite Daoud's protestations; because unheard and unread it cannot be erased.

11. *Foe*

‘There I lay sprawled on the hot sand, my head filled with the orange blaze of the sun, my petticoat (which was all I had escaped with) baking dry upon me, tired, grateful, like all the saved.

‘A dark shadow fell upon me, not of a cloud but of a man with a dazzling halo about him.’ (5)

Coetzee’s novella opens with the description of an encounter on a desert island beach between a white woman and a black native. She identifies herself as Susan Barton, a castaway who, although relieved to be safe, is exhausted, badly sunburnt and dressed only in her wet petticoats; her evident defenselessness is enhanced by the inherent sexuality of her long hair that has been floating around her in the water “like a flower of the sea, like an anemone, like a jellyfish of the kind you see in the waters of Brazil”. (5) This last metaphor is so unexpected that it jolts our senses as the visual picture transitions from the sensual image of her hair to the almost transparent delicacy of the sea-creature’s tentacles that mixes grace with menace. The comparison warns of exoticism and danger, creating a strange mixture of vulnerability and potency.

The native man is “naked save for a pair of rough drawers.” (5/6) His strength is suggested by the dominance of his position as he leans over her supine body, in a pose suggesting the male predator. Barton, who narrates the story in the first person, is now on edge as she records her feelings of fear when he “reached out and with the back of his hand touched [her] arm.” (6) She immediately suspects that he is “trying [her] flesh” (6) as one tests meat for consumption, and consequently dreads that she has come to “an island of cannibals.” (6) What is the meaning of his touch? Is it a preamble to some sort of attack, or merely a sign of gentle reassurance? At this point the narrative appears to be writing back to the familiar colonial mythologies of the degenerate native based on the unholy desires of the cannibal and on those that fuel the legends of the sexual prowess of the black male who both rapes and pleasures white women. Together these two powerful myths long justified

the suppression of the racial Other and established the ‘fixed’ binaries of black heathen/white Christian. But our expectations of the continuation of this mythology as subtext are frustrated by the inconsistency in the representation of this particular native because his dark body is framed by “a dazzling halo”. (5) The underlying ambivalence suggested by the conjunction of “halo” with the native produces a new perspective on the racial Other in this story. He does not threaten or abuse Barton but merely motions to the thirsty woman to follow him up a path into the hilly interior of the island. As she follows him her foot is pricked by a thorn so badly she can barely hobble for the pain, so he offers assistance by supporting her half on his back, a position she describes as a “strange backwards embrace.” (6) There is a familiarity in this close encounter of their different bodies that has a dramatic impact on the narrative because it inscribes a troubling intimacy to the coda of their encounter that challenges the taboo of interracial relationships in contemporary South Africa.

Thus, the opening pages of *Foe* contest the taboos and mythologies of power that have determined the race relations created by colonial expansionism. The original encounter between Robinson Crusoe and Friday, as described in Defoe’s novel, empowered the colonizer’s quest, justified his supremacy and validated the colonial mission statement which upheld the European’s moral duty and responsibility to convert the heathen Other. In Coetzee’s novel these familiar roles played out in the iconic encounter between the colonizer and the colonized have been reimagined to include these two victims of oppression Susan Barton and Friday, one marginalized by gender and the other by race. What is the significance of this difference? First Cruso’s absence from the episode indicates the displacement of the authoritarian colonial subject, and secondly it prefigures the decline of the voice of the European oppressor within the narrative. Cruso’s voice has been virtually erased. Coetzee’s narrative places the authoritarian role of the colonial hero in jeopardy. Since the opening encounter challenges the assumptions that typify white

mythologies of native degeneracy it implies that other familiar stereotypes will no longer function effectively in such subversive writing.

When *Foe* was first published in 1986 many commentators expressed dismay at Coetzee's failure to comment explicitly on apartheid, and his preference for a more esoteric discussion of Friday's silence and the "relationship between authorship and its creation". (Attwell 2008: 235) Coetzee comments that his books "have been too indirect in their approach, too rarefied, to be considered a threat to the order." (1992: 298) However, it is evident in many of Coetzee's writings, in both his novels and his essays, that he has a significant concern with the power of discourse and its use as a weapon of control through rhetoric, propaganda and censorship. In *Giving Offense: Essays on Censorship* (1996) he comments on the power of naming and the "impotence of which being-named is the sign." (2) In *White Writing*, a collection of essays on the culture of letters in South Africa published in 1988, he argues that language is an issue in African representation since English has "echoes of a very different natural world" (1988: 8) and cannot fully express the ideas of the contemporary landscape. He argues even more explicitly in *Disgrace* that English in South Africa has lost its relevance for the emerging voices because "the language has stiffened" (117) not developed with the times so it seems "arthritic, bygone." (117) If discourse "joins power and knowledge together" (Ashcroft et al 2005: 72) then Coetzee's observations are particularly pertinent with the reference made to authors concerning their increasingly frequent reflections on the dislocation between discourse and subject.

Albert Camus reveals similar concerns about the influence of colonial discourse on the identity of the colonized. For example, in *Le Premier Homme*, published posthumously in 1994, when he describes studying French texts in school in colonial Algeria he comments that: "Les manuels étaient toujours ceux qui étaient en usage dans la métropole" (2010: 162) and were thus "mythiques" (162), in the form of improvised fiction, or embodying

“l'exotisme même" (162), containing a sense of unreality because they bore no relation to the young Algerians' childhood experiences. This was a powerful form of control through language as it created in these students a sense of estrangement from both the center and the peripheries. His sense of identity was thus compromised. I argue that Coetzee, attentive to the problematics of finding a suitable language for the emerging voices of the Other in contemporary South Africa, juxtaposes the voices of the old establishment as represented by Foe and Crusoe with the emergent new voice of Susan Barton to explore means of articulating the voice of the silent/silenced racial Other in white writing. The subtext of this discussion is the “interrogation of authority” (1992: 247) of the power of language as employed by an autocratic regime and the deconstruction of its patriarchal discursive strategies to permit the space for the autonomous voice of the Other. Therefore, the novel's opening scene on the beach is crucial for marking out Coetzee's parameters of engagement with white discourse. It challenges white mythologies of the predatory savage, deconstructs the colonial encounter, displaces the colonial hero and, above all, contests absolutism of patriarchy by exposing the complexity of humanity; after all, Barton is both “flower” and “jellyfish”.

The basic structure of the novel disorders the narrative coherence demanded in white discourse. If the storyline adhered to the traditional order imposed by authoritarian voices it would follow the pattern the writer Foe attempts to impose on Barton's narrative. He describes this linear structure as being based on “loss, then quest, then recovery; beginning, then middle, then end.” (117) However, *Foe* does not follow a cohesive structure based on cause and effect. Instead, it is divided into four distinct parts. The first three retell the narrative from the perspective of Barton's first person voice, and focus on the telling and retelling of Barton's sojourn on the desert island with the gloomy Crusoe and his slave Friday. The first chapter is a straightforward account of the basic story. The second, composed in epistolary form, addresses her questions about her narrative to the

writer Foe, since Barton is “full of doubt. Nothing is left to [her] but doubt. [She is] doubt itself.” (133) She struggles against his recasting of her script into dominant modes of representation and resists his attempts to “father” (123) her story. Barton has a story to tell, and at its center is an absence or loss of the truth that pertains to the untold story of Cruso’s muted slave Friday. She refuses to fabricate a story for him because she reasons, “the only tongue that can tell Friday’s secret is the tongue he has lost!” (67) The third section reveals the discussion between the traditional Foe, an established man of letters, and Barton, the female challenging outsider, who both desire to impose their will on the narrative. This struggle for power over the text is a theme prevalent in resistance writing and is described by Mary Beth Tierney-Tello as the moment when “writing is cast less as a product and more as a process, as a form of struggle, as a transformative terrain.” (1996: 14)

In this respect the structure follows the model identified by Laura Wright who argues that “Coetzee writes dialogically in the Bakhtinian sense, as one who refuses to claim the narrative position of the monologic insider, the textual presence that has access to contested areas of truth”. (2006: 99) Mikhail Bakhtin defines a novel as “a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized.” (2011: 262) Bakhtin’s “diversity” destabilizes the singularity demanded by authoritarian narratives by juxtaposing different/differing voices. If the univocal narrative in Defoe’s novel has been deconstructed and Cruso’s role has been displaced as central character within *Foe*, who will adopt the voice of authority within Coetzee’s narrative? I argue that Coetzee adopts a strong position against patriarchal narrative by subverting those structures which create coherence in the text. We discover in the fourth section an unidentified narrative voice that revisits certain parts of the story with variations and repetitions, such as those targeting Barton’s opening sentence: “With a sigh making barely a splash/With a sigh, with barely a splash”. (153) These discursive strategies create an unstable narrative in which an unknown voice leads the

reader not to a definite resolution but into a dark hole, a literal manifestation of the abstract “hole” in Barton’s narrative that symbolizes the paradox at the center of Coetzee’s novel: the articulation of the voice of the silent/silenced Other.

In *Foe* the author questions whether deconstruction of colonial power constructs can naturally result in the emergence of the voices of the marginalized Other. If we reexamine the opening scene we notice that it is structured around a series of signs and gestures that may or may not be correctly interpreted because of their ambivalence within the context, unlike the “easily understood” signs Crusoe imagined he made to the approaching Friday. (Defoe 2001: 187) The significations of Friday’s touch and of the spear at his side are easily misinterpreted, particularly within the context of an unreliable narrative in which a reader may easily turn to stereotypes to provide a reassuring certainty of analysis. Consequently, if we take into account the proposition that the narrative of *Foe* presupposes that its intertext *Robinson Crusoe* does not yet exist, as Gayatri Spivak argues the reader should do, then it is evident that “*Foe* is annulled, for now Barton will not reach Cruso’s island” (2003: 193) and we “must deny all that has come before in the book”. (193) The power of Coetzee’s transformative text is in the significance of the differences Spivak’s comments recognize. The erasure of Barton’s voice in Defoe’s novel and its replacement by that of the archetypal colonial hero, Crusoe, and the introduction of stereotypes, such as the cannibals, create a defined absolutism. Even Barton anticipates these changes. She admits to Foe: ““Better had there been only Cruso and Friday”, you will murmur to yourself: “Better without the woman.”” (71/72)

It is in the form of the absolutism underlying the dialectic between master/slave, Christian/heathen, civilized/barbarian that Coetzee makes his most pertinent commentary on the censorship and the silencing of the voices of the Other in authoritarian societies. This unquestioned, irrefutable difference, justified in colonial narratives by native cannibalism, is reversed in Coetzee’s novel, and finds a new basis in Friday’s indisputable

silence, an opposition no longer based on ethical difference. Whether silent by choice, “as an epic gesture of defiance” (2006: 11/12), as Lewis MacLeod argues, or silenced by physical mutilation, in a narrative of deconstructed heroes and discredited mythologies it is the one absolute that remains incontrovertible.

Is the story of Friday’s silence a story of failure and weakness or is it a story of empowerment? Although the enigmatic origins of his mutilation remain unsolved, his silence is constant in an affirmation of his alterity because it resists their attempts to construct a persona for him. Unlike Robinson Crusoe’s attempts to create the construct of the cannibals from the footprint in the sand and unlike the lawyers at Meursault’s trial in *L’Étranger* who fabricate the image of the outsider from the accused’s taciturn personality, neither Barton nor Foe can construct an identity for Friday. As Cruso comments: “How will we ever know the truth?” (23) The racial outsider signifies the essence of the Other who is unknown and unknowable. Ironically, it is his very silence and mystery that creates him as a subject within their discourse as they wonder how writers from the center can articulate the voice of the Other? Foe attempts to dominate the story by maintaining it is his responsibility as a man of letters to speak for Friday. He argues: “We must make Friday’s silence speak” (142), whereas Barton seeks a truth that is unobtainable by developing the power of her empathetic imagination: “It is for us to open Friday’s mouth and hear what it holds”. (142) Their polarized attitudes illustrate the difference between writing *over* and writing *for* the native voice. In Foe’s case, he claims the writer’s responsibility is to seek out and extract the voice of the Other. He suggests that Friday is passive in this process and “[t]o us he leaves the task of descending into that eye” (141), the eye representing the core of the story. He thus introduces an element of coercion that is also evident in *Disgrace* when David Lurie attempts to make the native farm assistant admit to foreknowledge of the rape: “[t]hat is why he continues to nag Petrus.” (D. 118) Both Foe and Lurie consider the articulation of the native voice to be a construct of that

voice, putting words into the native's mouth, rather than an expression of its individuality. Barton, in contrast, returns to the metaphor of the mouth that speaks, rather than retain the "eye" which looks and watches but is unable to articulate the images it sees. She believes that we need to listen for either "silence, perhaps, or a roar". (142)

In the end both Foe and Barton fail to articulate a voice for the racial Other. Is this conclusion an endorsement of Gayatri Spivak's argument that Friday represents "the unemphatic agent of withholding in the text" who will not "yield his voice" and thus "resists epistemic capture by Cruso, Susan Barton, Foe, and even the reader"? (1999: 68) I argue that the deconstruction of narrative strategies of white discourse by challenging mythologies and stereotypes, and by introducing ambiguities, ambivalence and mimicry into the narrative, destabilizes the authority of the text and makes a space, or "a puzzle" (121), which permits the emergence of a possible voice without imposing the epistemic violence Spivak dreads.

This is a major issue in the retrieval of the native voice and is referenced by both Coetzee and Camus in their literary representations of colonies in flux, those on the verge of independence from autocratic regimes. Coetzee argues that the language of the dominant cannot express the truth of South Africa because it "carries echoes of a very different natural world". (1988: 8) In their studies of the signifiers and signified of language both authors employ a similar metaphor of the landscape to denote the intrinsic estrangement of the colonizers from the land of occupation. Coetzee states that the "[l]andscape remains alien, impenetrable, until a language is found in which to win it, speak it, represent it" (1988: 8) and asks if "there is a language in which people of European identity, or if not of European identity than of a highly problematical South Africa-colonial identity can speak to Africa and be spoken to by Africa?" (1988: 7/8) In Camus's short story 'L'Hôte', for example, the drawing of the four major rivers of France on the board encodes power hierarchies since it not only denigrates the importance

of Algerian culture and heritage as a taught subject but also signifies the economic dependence of the arid, impoverished colony.

Writers from the West can situate the Other as subject of their narratives but it is questionable whether or not they can give the Other true autonomy. How far can we relate Friday's silence and the problematics of giving voice to the Other with the difficulties of a white writer giving voice to the emerging oppressed racial Other in contemporary South Africa and the problems of expressing these voices in a language that is not European rhetoric encoded with Western constructs of colonial power? Benita Parry argues "despite the fictions' disruption of colonialist modes, the social authority on which their rhetoric relies and which they exert, is grounded in the cognitive systems of the West." (1996: 39) Similarly, Dominic Head argues that Coetzee's novels "re-inscribe oppression in the very act of resisting it, because of the tradition from which they cannot extricate themselves." (2009: 111) How can Coetzee, or any white male writer, give voice to the marginalized without the significations of the West structuring meaning? How can voices of the Other be expressed without being encoded with the significations of Eurocentrism? Does this create a form of epistemic violence on the speech of the Other? Does attempting to speak for racial Others imply another type of arrogance, one that Linda Alcoff questions as "vain, unethical and politically illegitimate"? (1991: 6) Coetzee provides a striking image of these issues.

But the man seated at the table was not Foe. It was Friday, with Foe's robes on his back and Foe's wig, filthy as a bird's nest, on his head. In his hand, poised over Foe's papers, he held a quill with a drop of black ink glistening at its tip.
(151)

The narrative presents the stereotypical portrait of the archetypal man of letters at his desk. Enrobed and bewigged, Friday assumes the position of writer. At first reading we assume he is the puppet of Foe's ventriloquist's act, copying/repeating in imitation of Foe's writing; however the degrading imagery of the wig "filthy as a bird's nest" alerts us

otherwise. Unlike Defoe's Friday, whom Crusoe clothed in dress imitative of his own in a gesture that signifies contempt for the native's cultural identity, this Friday does not become assimilated through imitation of the white man. His mimicry/mockery of the writer presents a different narrative, because the wig, although a traditional symbol of age, seniority, wealth and justice that represent the hierarchies of the establishment at the heart of the metropolitan center, becomes a sign of corruption and even decay. The epithet "filthy" not only signifies Foe's careless self-respect but also implies the immorality at the heart of the very institutions he signifies; this parody exaggerates difference through this subversive commentary on supposed authority. Homi Bhabha defines colonial mimicry as "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*". (2004: 122. Italics in the original) He argues that mimicry is "the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualizes power." (122) By adopting Foe's stance, Friday warns that white writers cannot represent the voice of the Other within the constraints of colonial discourse and that African writers should adopt their own discursive strategies. His representation thus comprises "resemblance and menace." (123) The power of this mimicry is in its ambivalence. The drop of "glistening" black ink left hanging at the tip of the pen signifies desire, the European desire for control through imitation and assimilation and the subaltern desire for autonomy through resistance. By leaving the drop of ink suspended above the papers, there is no resolution, just the opportunity for possibilities to either "foul" (F. 151) the papers or leave them "no worse". (151)

This mimicry of the dominant in a new subversive form is repeated in the scenes in which Barton attempts to teach Friday to write. In an attempt to give Friday a 'voice' as a means of expression other than speech, music or dance, she tries to teach the slave his letters. It is a lengthy process of drawing and naming an object, writing and tracing the names, and then finally for him to copy the letters she has written on the "child's slate".

(145) Not only does Foe belittle Friday by providing him with the child's slate for his lesson, implying he is not a complete adult but a simple-minded, innocent child, but Barton also demeans the native by inscribing her signing system as a means of registering his world. Friday attempts to inscribe the writing in his own terms, but the letters of the alphabet become "open eyes, each set upon a human foot: row upon row of eyes upon feet: walking eyes." (147) He has appropriated Western symbols, but defiantly resists what Bhabha describes as "the narcissistic demand of colonial authority" (126) to replicate absolutely and thus destroy difference. In this respect, Friday's actions imply both his own refusal to comply with colonial demands and the realization that colonial authority "undermines itself by not being able to replicate its own self perfectly." (Loomba: 2005: 149)

Early in the novel, the author distinguishes the increasing development of two very different attitudes towards voice and language, one encapsulating the old traditional perception of voice as a means of domination, and the other communicating a new approach to language as a doorway to the liberation of expression. Shortly after Barton's arrival she is shocked to discover that Friday understands "firewood" but not "wood" (21), even though they are similar-sounding words. She openly challenges Cruso's attitude towards Friday and questions why the enslaved native has only an extremely limited vocabulary and little or no conceptual comprehension of the language that has been introduced. She thus forces the white protagonist to explain and justify his methodology.

"How many words of English does Friday know?" [Barton] asked.

"As many as he needs," replied Cruso. "This is not England, we have no need of a great stock of words."

"[...] Yet would it not have lightened your solitude had Friday been master of English?" (21-22)

Cruso is strictly utilitarian in his attitudes towards language; it is based on a vertical structure of giving and receiving orders, therefore Friday has no need to comprehend the complexities of English. No answer is anticipated, nor is it required. Cruso's discourse is

littered with economic references such as “needs”, “need” and “stock” which compare language to a commodity that is to be shared on a basis of supply and demand. Encoded within this language usage is the implication of native servitude, even ignorance, a supposition reinforced by the reference to England, the center of Imperialism. From the colonizer’s perspective, language is a means of absolute control. There is no sense of responsibility towards the Other as an individual; agency is withheld by means of restricting language usage. From this perception of the native voice Crusoe establishes himself as an emblem of a dying colonialism.

In contrast, Barton, as a female is not associated with the power strategies of patriarchal discourse since she is marginalized by her gender and can therefore, as Parry argues, provide a more nuanced view of colonial relationships and avoid the usual “them and us” distinctions. (2006: 75) Barton proposes that language creates dialogue; it is an instrument of reciprocity which permits the exchange of ideas and provides the means to “lighten” solitude and enrich the mind. Crucially she juxtaposes “mastery” with Friday’s name. This is a significant development in the literary representation of the Other since Friday has been transformed from a figure in the background to whose life she would have given “as little thought as I would have a dog’s or any other dumb beast’s” (32) to the subject of the conversation. She asserts Friday’s right to autonomy and this advocacy for his voice is an important element of postcolonial representation because Barton represents a new voice in the narrative of colonial/postcolonial/post-apartheid discourse, one that speaks for the oppressed marginalized voices and not against them.

She is an emblem of change, a role signaled by the story of her adventures before arriving on the island. Her account of the sailors’ mutiny, the vicious murder of the captain and her brutal expulsion from on board the ship that was sailing back to England provides a model of rebellion and disorder throughout the novel and introduces the theme of the challenge to authority early in the story. By telling this tale she establishes a paradigm of

resistance and rebellion in the narrative. Unwilling to accept the status quo, accepted stereotypes and social paradigms, she confronts Cruso's established hierarchies and unproductive activities. Barton's role is to comment on the perception of the colonial castaway hero as depicted in white writing by examining questions of agency and autonomy. She remarks that after "years of unquestioned and solitary mastery, [Cruso] sees his realm invaded and has his tasks set upon him by a woman." (25) Ironically, she subverts his supremacy by reinscribing symbols of patriarchal dominance in her own speech; "unquestioned", "mastery" and "realm" all express the insidious grasp of colonial power over language, social hierarchies and land. However, there is an interesting subtext to her observation. She remarks how she has "invaded" their space. Invasion implies control, autonomy and subversion, and thus she is asserting her emergence on the postcolonial landscape.

Barton is fully aware of the power of language to dominate and inscribe identity or loss. She argues that the marginalized should have an individual voice and not be controlled as a ventriloquist's doll "speaking words you have prepared for them" (133), and thus "subject [...] to my will" (60) and thereby achieving complete mastery through the creation of a persona that "is to the world what I make of him." (122) Barton provides the "new" voices that are emerging from the wreckage of the colonial world; she expresses an opposite theory to the function of language which should not be a restrictive tool but a means to educate the Other, in other words to be a liberating force. By means of this pervasive ambivalence Coetzee subverts the rigidly fixed posture and attitudes of the autocrat. He opens the narrative to multiple voices.

Many critics have discussed the subject of Friday's silence and its symbolic function in the novel. Marco Caracciolo argues that one of the keys to understanding why "one of the unfathomable mysteries of the novel is Friday's silence" (96) is to examine the identity of the first-person narrator in the last chapter because the "cutting of [Friday's] tongue stands

for the mutilation readers suffer whenever they engage with a work of fiction [...] since they must follow the author's instructions for the reconstruction of the fictional world." (2012: 96) In contrast, Lewis MacLeod focuses on the pragmatics of Friday's silence and questions many critics' assumptions that he is "the subject of some kind of radical mutilation" and proposes that "it's possible to suppose that Friday possesses a tongue and to read Friday's silence as a voluntary act" of absolute resistance. (2006: 97) Consequently Friday's loss of speech is emblematic of a trope of loss/absence, which reverberates throughout the narrative. At the center is the mutilation of Friday's tongue, a barbarity that horrifies and sickens Barton. The real and the metaphorical "hole" becomes an important motif within Barton's narrative. It is first introduced in Cruso's story of Friday's mutilation.

Friday opened his mouth. "Look," said Cruso. I looked, but saw nothing in the dark save the glint of teeth white as ivory. [...] "Do you see?" he said. "It is too dark," said I. [...] "He has no tongue," he said. "That is why he does not speak. They cut out his tongue." (22/23)

Reeling from the horror of the story of Friday's mutilation, Barton asks how will they "ever know the truth?" (23) This question resonates throughout this increasingly unstable narrative. MacLeod argues that Friday is silent through choice and bases his argument on the fact that Barton merely accepts Cruso's word for the mutilation and never seeks verification; "Cruso said so and Susan believed." (2006: 8) However, I argue that within the context of the novel this darkness is not merely a literal void obscuring evidence of the disfigurement but functions as a metaphor for the horrors of colonialism itself. By obeying Cruso's command and looking into the native's mouth, Barton stands on the precipice of the colonial world and peers into the abyss of the past and the atrocities symbolized by the darkness which is alleviated only by the "teeth white as ivory". "Ivory" evokes the sound of the insidious whisper that permeates Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and represents the brutal exploitation of the African continent by the European colonial powers. Its

contrasting darkness expresses the dark unknown within their hearts and only hints at the metaphorical darkness of their desires that Kurtz recognizes as “The horror! The horror!” (1995: 112) But Friday is doubly estranged from this colonial power of desire. The implied loss of his tongue and phallus, since neither is proved nor disproved (F. 119), signals his emasculation. He is not quite whole in colonial terms, a justification for his continued oppression and silence. Within this colonial context, the character of Friday has no voice. Within the postcolonial world symbolized by Barton’s growing advocacy for Friday’s empowerment, the native should possess a voice and not communicate “only in gestures. In gestures and actions.” (108)

Ironically, Barton’s interest in Friday has been piqued by his story so, one day, when she sees him launch a log out onto the water and straddle it and scatter “handfuls of white flakes” (31) she immediately returns to her stereotypical image of the native and assumes that “he had been making an offering to the god of the waves [...] or performing some other such superstitious observance.” (31) To her surprise she discovers he had strewn white petals over the water. “This casting of petals was the first sign [she] had that a spirit or soul [...] stirred beneath that dull and unpleasing exterior.” (32) Foe attempts to explain this incident as a metaphor for the exploration and articulation of Friday’s voice, that the dark, cold, seaweed-strewn water that hides the mythological “*kraken*” (140) symbolizes the deep unknown Other. He adds that in every story “there is a silence, some sight concealed, some word unspoken, I believe. Till we have spoken the unspoken we have not come to the heart of the story.” (141) At this point in the narrative the darkness assumes its own ambivalence. The black hole in Friday’s mouth represents the loss, guilt, pain and absolute mastery of the colonial experience. But in Foe’s vision, the darkness assumes the Otherness that represents the poetic imagination. The darkness and void that MacLeod argues represents a failure to confirm mutilation is not a negative source in Coetzee’s writing. In his essay “*Into the Dark Chamber*” (1986) Coetzee also combines these two

distinct representations through the extreme image of the torture chamber; “it is just that tension toward the dark room that [the novelist] cannot enter that makes that room the source of all his imagining - the womb of art.” (1986) Both Barton and Foe assume it is their responsibility to articulate Friday’s voice. Despite the fact that both characters take an imperative tone that indicates his voice will only be the result of their mastery, their approaches uphold a subtle difference. Barton will confront Friday’s resistance to speech but not control the speech itself. In contrast Foe desires to “make Friday’s silence speak”. The force of the compelling “make” denotes power not liberation. This conflict raises the issue why concentrate on the past and on European discourse rather than confront the future and the diversity of voices representing the new South Africa.

This I argue is the function of the unknown narrative voice in part four of the novel. It is both familiar and unfamiliar since it is unidentified and mysterious, yet repeats variations of different chapters/episodes/moments we already know, such as the dark staircase leading to Foe’s study, the confusing identification of the bodies, the white petals and the monstrous “*kraken*” to create what Caracciolo describes as a “dreamlike situation riddled with contradictions and indeterminacies”. (91) I propose that by entering this other form of reality we discover a world which exemplifies the disoriented and disorientating circumstances that Coetzee has been describing throughout the novel. In such an indeterminate landscape that mixes fiction and truth, speech and silence, the marginalized and the dominant together, the reader perceives a space for the emerging voices that cannot be dominated. I argue that Coetzee’s refusal to give voice to the Other in this novel is the ultimate refusal of embracing patriarchal systems in the narrative. By giving voice the author encourages complicity with the reader to encode ideological and social violence in the language of the marginalized.

His mouth opens. From inside him comes a slow stream, without breath, without interruption. It flows up through his body and out upon me; it passes through the cabin, through

the wreck; washing the cliffs and shores of the island, it runs northward and southward to the ends of the earth. (157)

Does Friday's silence create a negative space in the narrative? Or does it force us to consider other possibilities of speech? Barton herself advises Foe that it is their responsibility to listen for Friday's "voice" and "hear what it holds: silence, perhaps or a roar, like the roar of a sea shell held to the ear." (142) This statement is notable for the references to sound rather than speech and to the close attention that must be paid to the sounds issuing forth. The links between absolute voicelessness, the darkness of the unknown and indeterminate narrative reaches an apogee in the final part of the novel when the unidentified narrator sinks down into the deep dreamlike expanse of the sunken ship into a new world.

CHAPTER IV

VOICES OF THE POSTCOLONIAL 'OTHER'

Then one day there emerges from the dark another voice, one he has not heard before, has not counted on hearing. (D. 186)

12. *Disgrace*

“It is a new world they live in, [David] and Lucy and Petrus. Petrus knows it, and he knows it, and Petrus knows that he knows it.” (117) A singular mix of flippancy and seriousness is evident in David Lurie’s commentary on the new inter-racial connections evolving in South Africa. The rhythm of the repetitive phrases recalls the familiar patterns of childhood chants, but the simplicity of the mantra is subverted by a glimmer of treachery in the implication that knowledge is power and that each character is in a position to play one against the other in a game of strategy and influence. Despite the chain of connections, this is a statement of division, of a people divided by knowledge rather than unified by a common pursuit. In a world of complex social transformations, everyone is competing for a voice of influence.

Disgrace was published in 1999, some five years after apartheid in South Africa came to its official termination when black South Africans had the opportunity to express a real political voice in the all-race elections held on April 27, 1994. This landmark election signified not only the end of a ruthless subjugation which had been characterized by a process that J.N.K. Mugambi identified as “racism, colonial domination and ideological branding” (cited in Gathogo 2007: 328) but also denoted the beginning of the black people’s awakening “to their value as human beings”. (336) Elleke Boehmer argues that the main issue in coming to terms with such a history of terror and subjection, for both perpetrator and victim, is the process of “reconciliation, its dilemmas and compromises, what it is to come to terms *both* with past horrors *and* with a transformed society.” (2002: 343) More precisely, she questions whether there could be closure on this painful past and

at the same time allow the construction of meaningful relationships between the former oppressors and oppressed, and if so, on what basis could such relationships be constructed. In order to achieve some measure of social coalescence, established discourses of power based on privilege and racial difference became increasingly inappropriate as public attention turned to matters of reconciliation and moral responsibility and away from historically conditioned responses.

There are several new voices waiting to be heard in Coetzee's novel, embracing all-racial characters from both urban and rural communities and exposing the polarization of expectations in this emerging society. All these voices are accentuated by the passions of their conflicting needs of circumstance, such as the angry demands for retribution and justice in contrast to the inflexible voice of entitlement and authority. How can all these voices be represented objectively in white discourse that is itself inscribed with demands for authority and privilege? In *Foe* Coetzee argued that the important factor in the articulation of the voice of the racial Other was to be heard, that is to be expressed in such a way that the language of the white narrators could not violate the purity of the articulated voice of the Other. Such respect signals recognition of the autonomy of the unknowable Other.

Closer I press, listening for other sounds: the chirp of sparrows, the thud of a mattock, the call of a voice.

From [Friday's] mouth, without a breath, issue the sounds of the island. (*Foe*: 154)

There are two critical developments in the narration of the native voice in this passage. First, the emphasis is on listening; the unidentified listener stays waiting for the sounds to be expressed. Secondly, the native voice is articulated within its own cultural paradigms represented by the island because the narrator has made a cultural shift in order to hear the voice of the Other. But in *Disgrace*, written at a time when South African society was in a state of turmoil, Coetzee chooses a different, more contentious narrative strategy to

articulate multiple voices in a narrative directed through the consciousness of a white academic whose focus is on the linguistic complexities of white discourse, and whose mind is formulated by the rigors of a classical English education in an apparent contradiction of the argument established in *Foe*. I propose that the author has selected this narrative structure in order to illustrate the limitations and constraints of European ideologies and cultures on the articulation of the native voice and how resistance to the emergence of these voices must not only be overcome but, in order for real transformations to take place in society, the paradigms of power that inscribe white privilege and power should be reconfigured to embrace equality and freedom of individual rights for the voice of the Other.

Such tensions in inter-racial relationships and uncertainties experienced by Lurie himself have been well documented and discussed by critics who have identified conflicts between reconciliation and responsibility (Nagy 2004: 709), reconciliation and compromise (Boehmer 2002: 343), desire and responsibility (Marais 2000: 174) friendship, hospitality and unjust power structures (Lopez 2010: 923), grace and disgrace (Van Wyk Smith 2014: 14) and the contrasts between the empathetic imagination and the harsh visualization of authority figures. (Beard 2007: 60) This list is remarkable for the continuity of focus between responsibility and empathy on the one hand and an unbending authoritarianism on the other. And yet, despite this context of racial tensions and the related issues of reparations and reconciliations which create the backdrop to Coetzee's novel, the critics focus their attention on the fall and rehabilitation of the white protagonist David Lurie and make only passing reference, if at all, to Petrus. Despite acknowledging the ethical complications of a society transforming from autocracy to democracy that is attempting to create an homogenous society from one that has been racially divided, criticism largely ignores the black South Africans depicted in the novel. I argue that to omit an analysis of the role of Petrus in the narrative is a misreading of the text's

examination of the evolving discourses of power and I propose that Coetzee suggests the need for paradigm shifts in our social, cultural and political attitudes from racism to equality so that the white population can learn to come to terms with the racial Other by recognizing difference in terms of diversity rather than menace and acknowledge difference in terms of identity rather than degeneracy, thus permitting the emergence of the native voice. By ignoring the role of Petrus critics are effectively silencing his voice and demeaning the symbolic function of the racial Other in the restructuring of the 'new' South Africa.

In this respect I argue that Petrus has been neglected, even silenced by the lack of attention paid to his role in the novel. He has been variously described as a "sinister character" (Barnard: 391) who "schemes to ensure that his line will not only survive but dominate" (389), and "a shadowy creature" (Van Wyk Smith: 30) who shows a "self-serving complicity". (Nagy: 723) Such imagery of evil and menace associates the native South African with the stereotype of the savage colonial racial Other depicted in Defoe, Conrad and Camus's 'L'Hôte'. Is Coetzee really suggesting that the newly liberated black South Africans should still be identified in terms of the old stereotypes that have recourse to paradigms of power and privilege? Or is Coetzee perhaps exposing the restrictive, biased voice inherent in white discourse that limited black voices in the past? I propose that the use of Lurie's consciousness through which to channel the narrative enables the author to create a powerful narrative in which the narrator may stand in ironic disjunction to the reader. Furthermore, I argue that these critical readings of Petrus are the result of taking at face value the subjective narrative voice articulated through the consciousness of David Lurie whose misconceptions dominate the narrative.

These two men, symbols of the two very diverse racial groups that are struggling for definition and identity, are brought face to face in Lucy's farmhouse. These two literary representations of the polarized opposites in South African society, the white academic

who epitomizes the discredited metropolitan center and the black laborer who represents the emerging black South African voices, come together in an unexpected encounter. After Lucy's brief introduction, the two men "shake hands." (64) This simple everyday greeting becomes, within this context, a gesture that defies history. A handshake is emblematic of their new roles in this transformed South African society and implies social equality, respect and a burgeoning regard for the autonomy of the Other. This key moment signals a change in the hierarchal interracial relationship typified in authoritarian racist regimes because Petrus becomes a rounded character with a name, a family background and a character reference. The depiction of the racial Other has progressed from a shadowy form in the background, a slave or an impoverished anonymous Arab on a beach to an individual. As *Disgrace* was written during the aftermath of apartheid and its resultant problems, it is surprising that critics have not commented on the significance of this gesture. The rules of engagement have changed, and the old paradigms of power based on race and privilege, which would have kept Petrus out of the house, are no longer acceptable. What is there to say to each other? Labels are the solution. "'You look after the dogs,' [Lurie] says, to break the silence. 'I look after the dogs and I work in the garden. Yes.'" (64) This very brief exchange establishes rank and difference. Such brevity, while giving Petrus a voice, also denies him individuality, because he merely confirms his position on the farm as employee. However, the emphatic "yes" reveals a suspicion of intent, implying a latent determination and strength of character that has not been revealed.

This apparent cordiality should imply a confident future for developing inter-racial relationships and the rapid empowerment of the emerging voices of the racial Other and thus society needs to adapt and effectively illustrates Said's argument for developing "new and different ways of conceiving life and relationships." (1983: 17.) Such changes are suggested in the following interaction when Lurie wakes up to discover Petrus seated beside him on a couch with a bottle of beer watching football on a Saturday afternoon

creating a supposedly archetypal male bonding experience. Petrus is an enthusiastic supporter of his team, the Bushbucks. “‘He is good! He is good!’ says Petrus. ‘He is a good goalkeeper. They must keep him.’” (75) His statement is expressed in simply constructed sentences and a basic, repetitive vocabulary. This speech contrasts directly with Lurie’s more sophisticated language and through this comparison the narrator establishes their difference in status, education and importance. It is an indirect strategy that encodes Lurie’s supposed dominance and prefigures their later maneuverings for power after the rape, when Lurie wonders “[w]hat game is Petrus playing?” (137) This repeated game metaphor effectively demonstrates the deconstruction of their potential male friendship.

Through differences of discourse Lurie attempts to maintain his position of privilege in the narrative, especially when he becomes aware that relationships need redefining. At their first meeting, Lurie was labeled as Lucy’s father while Petrus was named by his work around Lucy’s property. Maria Lopez argues that there is “a deep preoccupation in this novel with the question of how to transform old relationships of oppression and inequality into new bonds of hospitality and friendship: will we dare to invite to our home those we have always regarded as intrusive visitors?” (2010: 930) In this respect Lucy’s role is crucial, since her courage to break with established patterns of behavior brings together the old racial antagonists. Her refusal to pursue the rapists in an extraordinary act of self-sacrifice, is an attempt at healing the historical wounds of colonial rape. However, the characters must be willing to adopt these new relationships and Lurie struggles to resist the changes around him. Lurie considers how to define Petrus’s standing within the smallholding:

though Petrus is paid a wage, Petrus is no longer, strictly speaking, hired help. It is hard to say what Petrus is, strictly speaking. The word that seems to serve best, however, is *neighbor*. (116)

By reconsidering the native's role on the farm, the narrator is effectively deconstructing his emergence from the indignities of racial discrimination and resituating him within the old hierarchies of privilege and power. The emphatic repetition of the phrase "strictly speaking" indicates Lurie's outmoded ways of thinking; the harsh firm consonants and their rhythmic emphasis suggest a fixed unyielding belief in the established rigid patterns of old South Africa. He is anxious to retain the social structures in which everyone knew his/her place, as demonstrated by the derogatory tone of the alliterated "h" in "hired help". And the sibilant "s" of "strictly speaking" reveals an insistent desire to control through language, no ambiguity but clear definitions. Change is disturbing because addressing Petrus as neighbor crosses social boundaries, demands reciprocity, and creates expectations of friendship or respect Lurie is still unwilling to give. This attention to vocabulary reveals his need to dominate through language in order to resist the developing roles that Jayne Poyner designates as the "new masculinities engendered in the novel." (2010: 187) Eventually, their roles are reversed and this former professor becomes the "hired hand" and Petrus is the new landowner. Lurie observes drily that he likes the "historical piquancy" (77) of being the employee rather than the employer.

Julius Mutugi Gathogo argues that after the end of apartheid in South Africa there was a need for "a shift of paradigm from liberation to reconstruction". (2007: 327) It means the end to a 'fixed' authoritarian perspective and the development of new ways of looking at existing patterns of relationships such as employer/employee. In contrast to this need for compromise and fluidity Coetzee selects a stubborn academic as his narrative focus. David Lurie describes himself as the archetypal colonial figure: "His temperament is not going to change, he is too old for that." (2) This indicates his resistance to change. "Follow your temperament [...] It is a rule." (2) Such admissions of rigid inflexibility do not augur well for his adaption to the social and cultural transformations in his world.

The contradiction between the demands of the narrative and his stubborn character creates a tension that runs through the novel; this fundamental aporia often results in his resistance to articulation of the voices of the racial Other. He indulges in the free expression of his passions and instincts, assuming his entitlements and he fails to comprehend the demand for acknowledgement of guilt. “Confessions, apologies: why this thirst for abasement?” (56) This comment is all revealing of his failure to grasp the implications of the changes in society and how the metanarratives that guided his ideologies, lifestyles and academic pursuits are now inappropriate to the times. We need to consider whether the novel reinforces the European textual power (Parry 1996: 40) that Lurie symbolizes and whether it maintains the control that Edward Said describes as a “patriarchal stranglehold over signifying systems” (1994: 215) rather than celebrating the emergence of new ways of looking and expression that would require a cultural shift to support them. Dominic Head argues that Coetzee’s novels “re-inscribe oppression in the very act of resisting it, because of the tradition from which they cannot extricate themselves.” (2009: 111) Similarly, Frantz Fanon argues that there is a fundamental problem of racial alienation inscribed within the “arsenal complexes” (1967: 30) intrinsic to white patriarchal discourse which “assumes a culture” (17) and “possesses the world” (18) expressed and implied by its signifiers. The reader is thus encouraged to question the ethical intention of the narrative voice to reach beyond such systems in order to express a voice for the Other.

Lurie struggles to find a voice in this new social hierarchy as he witnesses the gradual deconstructions of the structures that created his world. His modern languages courses are withdrawn, his publications sink without trace and his sexual needs are satisfied by visits to a prostitute. He is an ambivalent narrator figure, “out of place” (4), indifferent to his work and obsessed by his student Melanie’s beauty to the degree that “nothing will stop him” (25) as he forces intercourse. “Not rape, not quite that” (25). The statement is notable

for the qualified description as “rape”. For a man who teaches literature and language, this finely tuned vocabulary is indicative of his acknowledged abuse of Melanie, but more significantly it indicates his lack of sensibility for her and his manipulation of discourse to justify his desires. He merely silences her voice, so there is no protest, no explanation given; he describes how in the heat of his passion, “[she] does not resist. All she does is avert herself: avert her lips, avert her eyes.” (25)

In this scene Coetzee examines the mechanisms of power that Albert Memmi describes as the dynamics of an authoritarianism that chains the subjugated “into an implacable dependence, molded their respective characters and dictated their conduct.” (1991: ix) David Lurie takes advantage of his position of authority and indulges his sense of entitlement, which he has already made very clear to her. “[A] woman’s beauty does not belong to her alone [...] She has a duty to share it.” (16) Does Melanie inadvertently encourage Lurie as Adriaan van Heerden suggests? “I think we have to assume that [Lurie] would not have pursued the affair if she had sent clear rather than ambiguous signals.” (2010: 63) Or do we agree with Lucy Graham that “disappointingly, the majority of reviewers of *Disgrace* collude with Lurie, glossing his interaction with Melanie as a seduction, rather than a rape”? (2011: 13) I argue that in this scene the author is proposing a new paradigm of power by juxtaposing force with passive resistance. Melanie “averts” herself; we see similar reactions from Petrus who “chooses not to answer this question” (119) posed by Lurie when trying to establish Petrus’s role, if any, in the planning of the attack, and also from Lucy who “wriggles loose” (97) from his embrace or stands as “stiff as a pole, yielding nothing.” (99) I propose that van Heerden has misread the significance of Melanie’s behavior. There are no absolutes of conduct, “no massive binary divisions” (Foucault: 1998: 96) and “no single locus of great Refusal”. (95-96) Foucault argues that power and resistance produce:

cleavages in a society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals

themselves, cutting them up and remolding them, marking off irreducible regions in them, in their bodies and minds. (96)

Melanie's apparent passivity is one form of a possible "plurality of resistances" (96). Her reaction to Lurie indulges his sense of privilege and he "thrusts himself upon her." (24) By describing this scene, Coetzee is effectively drawing attention to reader response. There is no one right answer or interpretation but a myriad of possibilities that reflect the complex moral problems faced by a society undergoing fundamental transformations of power. An unresolved reader response is part of a pattern in the novel that continues to demonstrate how our responses to abuse are determined by our individual moral sympathies and cultural influences that may be dependent on other paradigms of culture. It is not just a question of law but also a more fundamental issue of ethics, involving justice, morality and the equality of the individual.

These emerging voices demanded that the deep racial schisms created by the brutalities of apartheid had to be addressed in order to transform old racial hierarchies into a more homogenous society. Figuratively speaking, the black South Africans were standing on the threshold of a different role in a future that would help shape the 'new' South Africa. Like Petrus in *Disgrace*, Lucy Lurie's Xhosa employee, the newly enfranchised black South Africans were metaphorically "standing in the doorway" (D. 63) waiting to be invited in to the Western-dominated world and to be included in the decision-making processes, expecting to transition into a more stable society characterized by liberation and egalitarianism.

I argued in Part One that this doorway functions as a locus of change and transition, consequently I propose that the image of "[a] man standing in the doorway" (63) functions as emblem for this new South African society. The unnamed and unexpected figure remains standing at the door like a blank canvas. How do we 'read' this new character? There are few clues apart from his workman's clothing and "a lined, weathered face" (64)

that signify that he is a man of the land and is entitled to the sense of belonging that such association brings him. But we know little else. Is he friend, a figure of deference who stands politely at the door as a loyal worker dressed in overalls and rubber boots awaiting instructions from his employer, or is he foe, an emblem of menace of future retribution for years of racial oppression? Gone are the 'fixed' perceptions that defined authoritarianism and instead we are introduced to an ambivalent figure who destabilizes the absolutes that characterized the discourse of oppressive regimes.

The increasing imbalance in the traditional inter-racial balance of power in this post-apartheid world threatens the tenuous and difficult relationship shared by Lurie, the disgraced white academic seeking refuge on his daughter's farm, and Petrus, the Xhosa assistant who helps Lucy Lurie establish her farm holding. Throughout the novel we see a new pattern of power dynamics evolving. Edward Said argues that such revisions of ideological influence such as anti-apartheid resistance do not necessitate the replacement "of one set of authorities or dogmas with another, nor of substituting one center for another. It was always a matter of [...] showing what had always been, though indiscernibly, a part of it [...] but which had been either denied or derogated." (2000: 381) We can observe this development as the black South African and his family become more entrenched and secure on the land and emerge as the patriarchal center of their rural society in defiance to white settlers. Lucy's vicious gang rape functions as an explosive demonstration of the confrontation between two cultures, between two patriarchs and between two paradigms of power. Lurie is reduced to a mere cipher during the assault, describing himself as "a figure from a cartoon" (95) with the metaphor's subtext of degradation and loss of dignity underlining his abjection. Rita Barnard argues that "adjustments that the novel's white characters are forced to make are registered in terms of linguistic competence or failure in the multilingual environment of post-apartheid South Africa." (2003: 211) She proposes that this episode indicates how new relationships

“require a new lexicon.” (212) However, not only does his Western education fail to save him but it also exposes him to the reality of his estrangement in South Africa; language may lose its meaning because of the need to find a new way of looking that is free from Eurocentric assumptions of privilege. He is stripped down to basic primal instincts as his speech disintegrates into “hurling shapeless bellows that have no words behind them, only fear.” (96) The old paradigms are useless, out of date. He can no longer denigrate the Other through white discourse.

This controversial episode similarly gives rise to an ambivalent response to Lurie’s narrative, which again is characterized by a silent resistance. Mike Marais comments on the complexity of reader reactions to incidents of violence. He argues that violence encourages two distinct responses, sympathy with the victim and estrangement, even horror, towards the perpetrator. However, our reactions are not so simply orchestrated in *Disgrace*. Marais argues “[b]ecause history speaks through the rapists when they rape Lucy, the reader is ethically required to sympathize with them.” (2011: 203) These three countrymen represent a people seeking to repossess their homeland and who seek retribution for a brutal past. This rape is an expression of their voice, a physical action that speaks because their own voices are silenced within the narrative. The attack is not described; the narrative draws a veil of silence over it because Lucy refuses to discuss it, to the degree that she refuses to mention it to the police or the media. Thus, white discourse refuses to give voice to the black perpetrators in public or in private. There is only “the story she has elected to tell.” (108) Consequently, “[i]t will dawn on [the rapists] that over the body of the woman silence is being drawn like a blanket.” (110) By refusing to speak about the crime Lucy also claims her independence and the right to tell her own story and be free from patriarchal influence. She makes quite clear that she will write her own narrative and tells Lurie: “You tell what happened to you, I tell what happened to me.”

(99) Although this thesis is focused on the emerging voices of the racial Other it is important to note Lucy's demand for silence in resistance to her father's authority.

For Homi Bhabha the concept of resistance is:

not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention, nor is it the simple negation or exclusion of the 'content' of another culture, as a difference once perceived. It is the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference and reimplicate them within the deferential relations of colonial power – hierarchy, normalization, marginalization and so forth. (2004: 157-8)

Coetzee explores the resistance of the voices of the Other to the control exercised on them by white discourse and to the imposition of Western metanarratives that have framed cultural and ideological parameters by deconstructing the structures of power that have facilitated this patriarchal hierarchy. His daughter Lucy warns him that white male influence is subject to criticism and is no longer accepted without question. While discussing the rapists' motives she tells her father that there are different perspectives, not just one way of looking, not just *his* way of looking that is acceptable. "Perhaps that is how they look at it: perhaps that is how I should look at it too." (158)

Lurie finds himself increasingly estranged and he begins to feel displaced by change; it is "all very unlike Africa". (151) His once familiar world begins to feel "like a foreign land" (197), creating such a strong response of unease and disconnection that his very identity is in crisis. As argued in Part One of this thesis, Lurie is identified with Otherness through his feelings of estrangement. Sensing that he is "the unwanted visitor" (168) and a "figure from the margins of history" (167) he is outraged to be displaced as "an outsider." (141) He is lost. (190) And this is exactly the subject of his narrative, how Lurie's sense of displacement forces him to learn new ways of looking at the familiar and reconfiguring ways of interpreting relationships and responsibilities and leave behind his nostalgia for "the old days". (116)

This is a new approach, questioning the influence of the white narrative voice whose confidence and authority was quietly assumed in novels previously discussed. Lurie's egotistical attitudes reveal the lack of a sympathetic imagination that Margot Beard (2007) and Mike Marais identifies as essential for developing "the capacity to empathize with the other." (Marais 2006: 75) Marais argues that in order to do this the imagination "must enable the self to abandon its point of view in culture and, in so doing, construct for it a position that is precisely not a position, one that would therefore allow the self to be within the world while viewing it from nowhere within it." (81) In other words Lurie needs to be able to free himself from the cultural assumptions and egotistical entitlements that restrict his view of the world if he is to be regarded as a reliable narrator. Is it possible to construct a morality that can embrace both European and African cultures rather than divide them?

We witness a morally discredited white protagonist seeking to exert authority on the narrative by attempting to silence or muffle the increasingly insistent voices of the racial Other. "He wouldn't mind hearing Petrus's story one day." (D.117) But not now, not under these terms: "preferably not reduced to English. More and more he is convinced that English is an unfit medium for the truth of South Africa." (117) By registering the linguistic shortcomings of white discourse and the restrictions imposed by Eurocentric assumptions to adequately express a voice for the African Other, Lurie silences a people by resisting their desires for a voice. How should Lurie construct a persona for Petrus? He now faces a "blank page" (121) on which to write his narrative. On which criteria should he base his descriptions, as the racial Other or as his daughter's assistant whom she describes as "[q]uite a fellow"? (62) A change would necessitate a commitment to a point of view for which he would hold some accountability. "He has, if the truth be told, been putting it off for months: the moment when he must face the blank page, strike the first note, see what he is worth." (121) The unwritten text becomes Other, "blank", therefore undecipherable; he is face to face with the Other. But it is through his interaction with this

Other that he will discover his own “worth”, be judged by an unknown unidentified reader. And this struggle epitomizes the conflicts facing the white population as they come to terms with the new egalitarian regime and the necessary changes in ideologies that are enforced, but above all, it leads to the grim realization that like Petrus, many black citizens have “a vision of the future in which people like Lucy [and David] have no place.” (118)

In contrast, Petrus represents the upwardly mobile, newly liberated oppressed who are no longer dependent on white authoritarian regimes to determine their futures and but are free to enjoy their fundamental human rights which had previously been denied. This Xhosa native exploits opportunities for landownership by taking advantage of the Land Reform (Labor Tenants) Act of 1996 that enables him to expand his property. Possession of land becomes an expression of his increasingly powerful voice. Similarly Maria Lopez comments on the power of land repossession and argues that the brutal attack on the white settlers “most explicitly highlights the end of white privilege over land.” (2010: 927) Petrus rapidly develops his land, erects wire fences as boundary markers, lays pipes across Lucy’s property and builds a new home that is so situated on an eminence east of Lucy’s farmhouse that her father wonders if it “must cast a long shadow.” (197) In Lurie’s imagination, Petrus’s actions, while typical of usual farming procedures, have an underlying menace. The pipes, a phallic symbol of male dominance, constructed across her land imply a violated intimacy, while the casting of the shadow implies a future threat to Lucy’s independence and symbolizes Petrus’s increasing empowerment and his silent encroaching influence over the young white woman living at the farmhouse. We question whether the implication of the insidious shadow is a valid premonition of Petrus’s evil grasping intent to destroy her future, or whether the metaphor is an example of racial prejudice expressed in a fear for the loss of white safety and dominance in the changing community. Or is the shadow a metaphor for the writing back to the enslaved shadows of the dying men in the valley of death described in *Heart of Darkness*, thus representing the

guilt of a white population that so brutally oppressed the racial Other? The shadow illustrates the dark uncertainties and fears of an ethically and socially displaced white man and suggests the increasing psychological power of the Other to resist dominance and create doubt. As a result of Lurie's fixations, Petrus becomes an ambiguous figure in the narrative, a man of "[h]onest toil and honest cunning" (117), and his voice is increasingly inscribed with implied commentaries of disapproval or misunderstanding within the narrative.

The tensions between the two men are based on a direct power play for control and the assertion of their cultural heritage and eventually come to define the evolving definition of patriarchy, the ultimate expression of voice in race relations although challenged by the female voices articulated effectively by Lucy and Bev Shaw. The patriarchal system that dominated the old South Africa still defines Lurie's values; he is in a position of privilege. As a white academic, he holds a position of authority and influence. He is arrogant, egocentric and self-indulgent, smugly recounting "he has, to his mind, solved the problem of sex rather well." (1) It is the phrase "to his mind" that is key. The novel is focused through his consciousness and so we see the world through his self-indulgent eyes. Accused of sexual abuse, he refuses to apologize. When asked why he approached Melanie he expresses his feelings of entitlement; his case "rests on the rights of desire". (89) Even his family recognizes his nonchalant morality. Lucy calls him "[m]ad, bad, and dangerous to know." (77) A fallen patriarch who is stunned to have his concept of patriarchal authority discredited and threatened first by his daughter Lucy's determination to eschew his advice and emotional support; he regretfully notes that she is "the one who makes the decisions." (198) Secondly, Petrus, the Xhosa farm assistant, closes him out since he has no need to offer any explanations for his conduct. He "has the right to come and go as he wishes; he has exercised that right; he is entitled to his silence" (116)

In contrast, Petrus's understanding of patriarchy is based on very different concepts. He is a man "of patience, energy, resilience." (117) He bears the marks of a laborer; he "is a good workman, it is an education to watch him." (137) A man whose hands show "deep, rough cracks." (138) He gives a measured response to Lurie's accusations, carefully following the rituals of tamping down the tobacco in the bowl and sucking on the unlit pipe. (119) He is provider for, protector of his extended family, insisting on his family responsibilities. He will take care of Pollux, the youngest rapist because he "is [his] family, [his] people." (201) Although strong-willed, often evasive and arrogant he is less egocentric than Lurie and embraces his extended family acting as protector, provider and mediator.

Earlier in the narrative, Lurie's authority wanes and he transitions from patriarch to a fallen figure, an outsider. He comprehends this loss when he returns to Petrus's party after the fight. He sees a guest waving a chain with a medal. "Medals. Chieftains, for the use of. Shipped all over the old Empire". (135) The man is carefully situated within the context of colonial power and global influence. He claims native autonomy through the medal of Empire. This ironic juxtaposition provides the context for his speech.

The man is speaking, orating in rounded periods that rise and fall. He has no idea what the man is saying, but every now and then there is a pause and a murmur of agreement from his audience, among whom, young and old, a mood of quiet satisfaction seems to reign. (135)

Rita Barnard argues that this speech given as centerpiece to Petrus's celebration of the Land Transfer "sets up a tension between the antiquated symbolic language of Empire and the language of the black man's oration." (2011: 387) However, I argue that the tensions go deeper than Barnard's observation. In an ironic twist that elucidates the demand for cultural shifts, the oration mimics the rhetoric of imperialism. Empowered by medals, insignia of office, the wheel has come full circle as these symbols of power now signify the disempowerment of past regimes. This is the purest expression of the voice of the racial

Other as we are forced to notice its cadences, not its meaning. We listen through the narrative to its music and see its power over the listeners grouped around. Their anonymity here is a signal of their power, of their unknowability as Other; whereas under colonialism and apartheid their anonymity was a sign of domination. Lurie acknowledges this new autonomy in a symbolic gesture towards the white cap of bandages that to him symbolize difference, but can also signify defeat or submission. At this moment Coetzee introduces a significant element into the postcolonial inter-racial relationship, the taste of defeat that is depicted in Le Clézio's *Onitsha* by Geoffroy's illness and ultimate death and in McCarthy's *No Country for Old Men* by Sheriff Ed Tom Bell's resignation.

This transition from dominance to defeat is indicated in a different interpretation of patriarchy and creates an underlying battle of wills. Lurie constantly attempts to control Petrus's speech through the use of language and by attempting to dominate his opinions. Coetzee explores the resistance of the voice of the racial Other to the control exerted by the rigid manipulation and imposition of paradigms of power that determine image as well as status. "In the old days one could have had it out with Petrus" (116), but now it is a matter of unspoken accusations and coercive argument. "It is the closest he has come to accusing Petrus. But why not?" (139) The result is a bitter confrontation in which Lurie accuses Petrus of lying about Pollux, the youngest of the three rapists. Petrus had originally claimed not to know him and yet he turns out to be his brother-in-law. Lurie makes his accusations in vain.

'You told me you did not know him. You lied to me.'
 Petrus sets his pipe between his stained teeth and sucks vigorously. Then he removes the pipe and gives a wide smile. 'I lie,' he says. 'I lie to you.' He sucks again. 'For why must I lie to you?'
 'Don't ask me, ask yourself, Petrus. Why do you lie?'
 (201)

This hostile discussion marks a pivotal point in the narrative. Lurie openly accuses Petrus of deceit, who in return is calmly evasive. He refuses to answer. But in this episode it is his

body language that most vividly articulates power, not their debate even though it questions whose truth and whose way of looking are the most viable. Petrus adopts the stereotypical stance of the authoritarian colonial figure, smiling with pipe in hand. Lurie cannot dominate this figure who represents the power of the racial Other. He attempts to speak for Petrus, denying him voice in a blatant refusal to admit that there is an interiority within the native that he cannot know or dominate. Even though he is met with resistance and the accusation “why?” he struggles to admit that he cannot understand.

Lurie’s failure to dominate the persona of the racial Other brings together new forms of resistance and metaphors of loss in ironic juxtaposition to his control of the narrative. His fading influence is indicated by transferring metaphors of ghosts and haunting from the perpetrators of the crime, “the ghosts of Lucy’s violators” (111), to himself. He becomes “the ghost of himself” (160) reduced to “haunting” (177) his old office at the University where he symbolically carries away the remains of his academic career in a box. And he begins at last to listen to voices, not to control them. His opera reveals the power of art, the power of the creative imagination, and as he recasts Byron and Teresa into old age he notices that it is not “the erotic that is calling to him after all, nor the elegiac, but the comic.” (184) He understands that it is not the illusions of sexual magnetism that define him but the reality of being a grandfather. But his development is not total, as his encounter with the young prostitute testifies; but neither is Petrus a wholly admirable patriarch. Both men are vulnerable to their intrinsic qualities as patriarchal figures. Lurie still relishes the concept of dominance and privilege while Petrus is blind to family disturbances. If these two men signify the “new masculinities” (2010: 186) that Jayne Poyner identifies then they articulate very human voices, full of frailties and desires, seeking autonomy and space in a confusing world of transitions and transformations. In this respect I argue that the novel not only symbolizes South Africa but expresses the conflicts of relationships and hierarchies in any changing society. For this reason I propose that

the young dog that Lurie decides to offer up at the end of the novel functions as avatar, or scapegoat, of his reconciliation not necessarily with the racial Other but with himself. He gives up his prejudices and seeks a new way of looking in the newly structured paradigms of power.

13. *Onitsha*

In his address presented to the Nobel foundation on 7th December 2008, Le Clézio reflects on the act of writing by opening his speech with the fundamental but still thought-provoking question: “Pourquoi écrit-on?” (1) He acknowledges that there is no simple answer but a myriad of responses: “J’imagine que chacun a sa réponse à cette simple question.” (1) He follows this introduction by explaining that his own reason for writing is to explore the power of language to create a vision of a world in which he bears witness to difference. The writer “se veut témoin.” (4) What kind of world does Le Clézio perceive and how does he incorporate such a vision into his writings and in particular into the narrative of *Onitsha*? His own multi-cultural background enables him to express empathy towards differences between people and their cultures, an attitude that is manifest in the inclusivity of his writing that embraces everyone “quel que soit son sexe, sa langue ou sa religion.” (11) Everyone is welcome to the table of knowledge.

There is very little criticism available on Le Clézio’s work, much of which is lukewarm in its evaluation. Paul J. Archambault, for example, concludes that the author’s “essential values are disarming in their simplicity” (2009: 296), and Warren Motte proposes that Le Clézio’s principal virtue is his ability to construct “a deeply evocative, seductive ‘elsewhere’ to which we travel on the virtual journey of his fiction.” (2003: 16) However, more recently Alexia Vassilatos argues that although Le Clézio resists “any ideological affiliation” and therefore remains “non-*engagé*” (2013: 62) he is in fact “not impervious to the burning questions of our times”. (62) These criticisms seem to identify a fundamental simplicity in the narratives, suggesting that bearing witness as a writer risks being categorized as an uncommitted observer whose perceptions are less pertinent than those who are more politically engaged.

I argue that Le Clézio’s deceptively simple narrative, which is based on a series of events and experiences rather than a complicated plot of suspense and resolution,

challenges the power hierarchies inherent in colonial relationships by focusing on his underlying belief in the importance of being responsive to the lives of other people, an awareness that Marcel Proust describes as enabling us “to emerge from ourselves, to know what another person sees of a universe which is not the same as our own”. (2000: 254) Such consciousness enables us to appreciate diversity and understand difference and, more importantly, to see the Other as a human being with individual motives and feelings. Le Clézio’s vision encompasses a people on the verge of independence; the tenuous security of their lives is situated within the context of a history of violent change, ranging from the diasporas of its ancient past, through the brutalities of colonialism to the more contemporary horrors of the Biafran War. The author juxtaposes different voices and perceptions arising from the opposition between everyday realities and native mythologies in order to create an historical awareness and depth that individualizes his literary representation of the racial Other.

One narrative strand is directed through the consciousness of the twelve-year-old boy Fintan Allen, and the other is guided through the consciousness of his father Geoffroy. In Fintan’s narrative the world is perceived as an unfolding panorama, oftentimes unexplained and different, which he apprehends “in sensory terms.” (Vassilatos: 64) Fintan “guettait les éclairs [...] regardait le ciel [...] pouvait surveiller toute l’étendue du fleuve”. (69) In contrast, Geoffroy’s strand is controlled by his deeply personal quest for knowledge of African mythology and by his longing to escape from the harsh realities of colonialism. For him Africa “brûle comme un secret, comme une fièvre.” (99) He is obsessed by the story of the last Queen of the ancient civilization of Meroë and how she led her people across the desert to establish a new city, thus linking Egypt and Africa. These two juxtaposed strands provide contrasting approaches to narrative voice; Fintan’s bears witness whilst Geoffroy’s details an obsession with a dream, yet each one is committed to discovering the truth of Africa. Their individual quests reveal ways of

articulating the voice of the marginalized oppressed Other whilst exploring different ways of looking.

Le Clézio writes in his Nobel address that all voices, however diverse, must be heard and that literature is a primary vehicle for their expression:

Aujourd'hui, au lendemain de la décolonisation, la littérature est un des moyens pour les hommes et les femmes de notre temps d'exprimer leur identité, de revendiquer leur droit à la parole, et d'être entendus dans leur diversité. Sans leur voix, sans leur appel, nous vivons dans un monde silencieux. (7)

How does the author adapt this ideal of the right to speech into his own discourse and enable his native characters the opportunity to express their identities through the articulation of a voice unencumbered by Western power strategies and to resist what Edward Said identifies as “the sheer egoistic powers of the European consciousness at [the] center”? (1979: 158) How can a white writer be a witness to the racial Other and articulate his/her voice without recourse to prejudice and stereotyping? This question is a significant development in the author's examination of the literary representation of the voice of the natives in *Onitsha* because it deals with some of the fundamental questions troubling racial representation in white discourse. Le Clézio's attempts to reach beyond prejudices and stereotypes to express empathy for the Other without indulging in the excesses of exoticism, a criticism implicit in the epithets used by critics such as “disarming” (Archambault) and “seductive” (Motte) noted earlier.

I argue that if *Onitsha* is read within the context of his Nobel speech we perceive that this apparently straightforward narrative is based on a complex series of oppositions that attempts to deconstruct the ‘fixed’ perceptions of European literary representation of the racial Other by challenging the preconceptions inherent in white discourse, notably its latent assumptions of superiority and how these encoded traditions subvert the articulation of the native voice. Although there is an inherent criticism of colonialism in the narrative, this is not a political novel but rather, as Dauda Yillah argues, a “celebratory vision of

difference” (2008: 174) in which “the nature and quality of the cross-cultural vision it elaborates are shaped by the workings of features peculiar to the book, in this case the fictional viewpoints and the system of fictional characters.” (182) Whilst Yillah effectively argues that the novel addresses problems of literary representation of indigenous people and their culture by adopting a multi-faceted approach, he does not discuss the articulation of the native voice in the literary representation of cultural difference. The encounter with the voice of the racial Other is an essential element of the expression of identity, particularly in an increasingly globalized world in which crossing boundaries and cultural displacement in the form of diasporas and migration are common features of the contemporary global landscape.

Le Clézio’s novel attempts to cross these boundaries of difference by locating his native characters within settings that gesture towards the familiar in order to attract the reader but which still retain the element of Otherness that both distances and intrigues. For example, routines of domesticity create a recognizable background yet there remains an aura of estrangement; the food, such as the ubiquitous “*foufou*”, is named but not described and thus creates a space in our understanding. Similarly, the communal washing of laundry and bathing in the river creates an atmosphere of convivial native female unity but it remains an unfamiliar experience for Europeans. Although these are minor details they retain and develop the sense of something intangible that is just beyond our grasp as readers.

Similarly, the author introduces pidgin into his narrative, which is a linguistic expression of hybridity that mixes the known and unknown, to create an unfamiliar language that is “used as a medium of communication between groups who have no other language in common.” (Ashcroft et al. 2005: 176) Ngūgĩ wa Thiong’o argues that although Nigerian pidgin is based on the language of the dominant it owes its identity “to the syntax and rhythms of African languages.” (1994: 447-8) However, Bill Ashcroft et al. also identify a political undertone in which social and economic hierarchies are inscribed since

pidgin's role "in most literature [...] is both to install class difference and to signify its presence." (2001: 75) In this regard the first articulation of pidgin in the novel conforms to type and defines both class and race when it is introduced in the description of an incident that takes place during the voyage out to Onitsha, undertaken by Fintan and his mother Maou in order to be reunited with the long-absent father/husband Geoffroy Allen in Nigeria. The District Officer Gerald Simpson indulges in the mimicry of native pidgin during the festivities celebrating Mme. Rally's birthday party:

D'autres Anglais sont arrivés. Ils se sont amusés à contrefaire des voix de noirs, à dire des blagues en pidgin. M. Simpson montrait le piano:
 "Big black fellow box spouse white man fight him, he cry too mus!"(61)

The cruel mimicry and the raucous laughter that echoes "comme un aboiement" (62) do not simply function as an example of Simpson's wit, or even the arrogance of the colonials sailing out to their posts in Africa in the comfort of their first-class accommodations. By treating the natives with disdain, by mocking their language within their earshot, Simpson and his sycophants are effectively and deliberately silencing native voices. The joke, or rather the trick, has a more menacing function; mimicry assumes the voice of another and in this sense acts as a form of ventriloquism. Simpson speaks for the degraded Other who has no real voice. It is perhaps for this reason that there are few examples of native speakers using pidgin in the narrative. Hence, Simpson efficiently establishes the hierarchy of authority he will endorse at Onitsha. This is not a language to respect, even though pidgin has developed as a language of communication between the races.

Pidgin thus becomes a signifier of difference rather than a means of communication between the diverse groups. Bony, Fintan's native childhood friend, for example, speaks a smattering of languages mixing pidgin with a variety of English expletives, and "un peu de français" which consists mainly of a few set stereotypical phrases such as "ça va chef"

language of boys sharing the intimate experiences of their youth, absorbing influences, gathering snatched phrases and combining them together with their own growing worldliness. “Fintan avait rapidement appris à parler le même langage.” (78) However, the few expressions that Bony articulates in pidgin are spoken in anger. For example, when Fintan unwittingly disturbs what he views as Bony’s inexplicable physical entwining with the mute woman Oya, Bony angrily pushes Fintan away. “Sa voix était basse, étouffée par la colère. ‘Pissop fool, you gughe!’” (107) The harsh consonants accentuate his fury. In this circumstance, pidgin is used to denote and exaggerate difference; Bony’s deep voice and breathless anger denote the frustrations of a boy who is sexually mature whilst the strange-sounding words of pidgin emphasize his estrangement from the less mature boy’s incomprehension of sexual exploration and contact.

Pidgin is again used to communicate difference rather than understanding later in the novel, in the coda that describes Fintan’s return to England and his struggles to fit in to the hierarchical social groups. In a joyous, spontaneous bursting forth he repeats the language of his beloved Onitsha, using “ces mots qui sautaient, qui dansaient dans la bouche.” (268) He bursts out in pidgin: “Il disait, *He don go naw naw, he tok say*, il disait *Di book bilong mi.*” (268) Fintan is punished for using this speech and causing an outbreak of laughter, as if he were deliberately disturbing the peace in class. In this situation pidgin is used ironically to denote the lack of communication and emphasize difference and incomprehension, even intolerance, of the Other. By restricting pidgin mainly to European usage in the narrative, Le Clézio quietly destabilizes this hybridized mode of dominance. Edouard Glissant argues that pidgin is not the natives’ language of choice but “a concession made by the Other for his own purposes in dealing with our world. We have seized this concession to use it for our own purposes [...] but having seized it does not make it into a means of self-expression.” (1989: 166-7) In other words, their voices remain silent, as indicated by the limited articulation of native speech in pidgin in the narrative.

Within the colonial system established at the English Club in Onitsha, where strict adherence to the mantra “[c]hacun à son rang” (166) was expected, language defines both identity and origin but also labels and excludes. For example, Maou, Fintan’s Italian mother, recalls an incident that took place there soon after their arrival in Onitsha when she calls out to her son in her native language. Immediately, Mme. Rally, the wife of the Resident, approaches and asks: “Excusez-moi, quelle *sorte* de langue parlez-vous?” (178) Her question and its demeaning phraseology of the accentuated “quelle *sorte*” immediately situates Maou as an outsider rather than a non-conformist who has stepped outside the code that establishes socio-economic status in a strictly hierarchical community. Her question denotes the importance attached to the linguistic hegemony dictated by colonial structures, and thus exemplifies the European egotism identified by Said and its refusal to acknowledge the voices of the Other.

Such attitudes are evident in the first depiction of the native voice in *Onitsha*. One evening, as the ship *Surabaya* slowly crosses the sea to another port, the evening bell rings and the black workers, who have been hammering the rust off the sides of the boat in order to pay their passage from port to port, cease working. They are exhausted and covered in sweat. Above the clamor of food preparation and voices, a lone voice is heard.

Une voix, juste avec des “ah” et des “eya-oh”, pas vraiment triste, pas vraiment une plainte, la voix légère d’un homme assis le dos contre un ballot, vêtu de haillons tachés, son visage strié de cicatrices profondes sur le front et sur les joues. (44)

Fintan’s narrative quickly sketches the portrait of a man with a heavily scarred face, dressed only in stained shabby rags, leaning against a container in a posture of great fatigue. His lone voice wafts over the crowded deck. By noting these details Fintan distinguishes the natives as individuals rather than massed in “an anonymous collectivity” (1991: 85) that Albert Memmi so disparagingly identifies as the stereotypical colonial perception as evidenced by the conduct of the group of English colonizers. After one

glance at the group of natives encamped on the lower deck, the colonizers turn away since “[i]ls n’y pensaient plus.” (43) In contrast, Fintan is mesmerized. At this point we should pause and consider how the voices of both Simpson and the singer are represented in Fintan’s narrative, and whether their individual portrayals are influenced by prejudices of antipathy and empathy. Does Simpson represent the archetypal colonial bully who indulges his egotistical desires for power and attention at all costs? Conversely, does the lone singer signify the archetypal romanticized laborer glorified by his poverty and supposed simplicity? Both could be described as stereotypes but it is the fundamental empathy towards the singer that draws our attention, revealing how far our responses are guided by narratorial intent.

Fintan listens intently to his chant composed of a series of unconnected syllables, unexplained and therefore meaningless to him. Although he does not understand its mood, he senses the song’s powerful emotion that is complex and indefinable in its apparent ambivalence; it is “pas vraiment triste, pas vraiment une plainte”. Since the narrator refuses to either appropriate the singer’s language or define his emotions his song remains exclusively Other, outside the realm of our experience. This is a significant development in the literary representation of the empowering native voice in white discourse; the rhythmic repetition of “pas vraiment” broken by the caesura slows the narrative as if imitating Fintan’s struggle to capture the elusiveness of this unknown language and its soft voice. Thus his narrative is unable, or unwilling, to appropriate the song by employing stereotypical broken English and consequently relinquishes control over the articulation of the native voice.

I argue that the narrative celebrates difference in the literary representation of the voices of the racial Other not only through speech, but through gesture, signs and a silence that represents not only the resistance of the unspoken, but more particularly the mystery of “the withheld”. The “withheld” may be defined as information or explanation of a voice,

thought, action or event that occurs but which is left unexplained, creating a space within the narrative. Meaning is mysterious because it is suppressed or hidden by ambiguity.

Confrontation with the unexplained, the unsaid and the undefined represents a major theme within the narrative that is introduced early in the description of the voyage to Africa. The month-long sea-passage is an adventure for mother and son as they sail towards the unknown continent and the distant, unfamiliar Englishman who is waiting to greet them, the “elsewhere” identified by Motte. They enter a world of change in which they become increasingly aware of the complexity of experience, which combines the excitement and attraction of the new adventure with mourning the loss of the familiar and the fear of the unknown. Fintan struggles to reconcile the two.

Alors Fintan pouvait se souvenir. Les choses passées n'avaient pas disparu. Elles étaient tapies dans l'ombre, il suffisait de bien faire attention, de bien écouter, et elles étaient là. (O: 23)

In this passage Le Clézio presents his vision of the literary representation of the world in which the past is inextricably manifest in the present, in terms of memories and the subconscious Otherness that echoes in our minds, creating images of a different reality, “un autre monde” (173) in which “the mystery does not descend to the represented world, but rather hides and palpitates behind it.” (Leal 1995: 123) There are clues hidden in contemporary life in Onitsha such as native scarification that is indicated by cheeks and foreheads “incisés de marques violettes” (112) and the ruins of the ancient oracle Aro Chuku that reference lost or undiscovered mythologies and histories, suggesting evidence of voices waiting to be heard. The novel offers an invitation to discover the truth of Africa by reading these signs and symbols embedded in the shade of everyday life, in the form of an incomplete memory, an unexplained carving or an unknown language. Each is characterized by something “withheld”, a mystery to resolve which entices the reader to seek knowledge of the Other. Le Clézio writes back to a similar summons expressed in *Heart of Darkness* in which Marlow introduces the enigmatic Other as a presence “always

mute with an air of whispering, Come and find out.” (H.D: 29) Such voices destabilize the narrative since their very nature renders them outside the sphere of mastery, creating the loss of an ethical or ideological center.

This “air of whispering”, which represents the implied rather than the spoken voice, becomes a significant motif within the narrative and creates a strong bond between the two narrators and Africa. For example, as the boat nears the African coastline, Fintan becomes increasingly intrigued by the strange names he hears called out across the ship’s dining-room tables and lounges, such as Dakar and Gorée (35), Freetown, Monrovia, Takoradi and Cotonou. (40) “L’Afrique résonnait de ces noms que Fintan répétait à voix basse, une litanie, comme si en les disant il pouvait saisir leur secret.” (35) These discordant syllables are by turns soothing and harsh, creating confusing sounds that speak of an indefinable difference. By reciting these strange names he masters the complexity that is conveyed by the tension between the reverberation of “résonnait” and the silence conveyed by an enigmatic “secret”. In contrast, Geoffroy hears the voices in dreams and visualizations of the long trek across the desert that are so powerful that he becomes as one with the mythological characters. “Tout à coup, Geoffroy ressent un vertige. Il sait pourquoi il est venu ici, dans cette ville, sur ce fleuve. Comme si toujours le secret devait le brûler.” (103) Overarching these two narratives is the mysteriously secret voice of the oracle at Aro Chuku that reverberates throughout the novel as “le cœur qui n’a pas cessé de battre.” (204) The resilience of the oracle to survive the devastation of the British attack in 1901 that was under orders to “détruire Aro Chuku” (203) and to remain untouched by the destructions of the civil war is emblematic of the indomitable spirit of the native voice.

By insisting on the secrecy of the unspoken Le Clézio attempts to reduce the power of his authorial voice within the narrative because, as Michel Foucault argues, the author takes the privileged position of “a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses.” (1998: 221) In this respect, Le Clézio adopts thematic

strands to link characters, images and emotions to form a complex network that creates a silent or even empty space for voices. At the same time, silence is a form of empowerment.

Foucault argues:

Silence itself [...] is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies. There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say. [...] There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses. (1998; 27)

With respect to the native voices, silence is a form of both disempowerment and liberation. One basic narrative strategy to withhold information is to omit the articulation of the native voice. On the one hand there is very little direct speech in the novel, an exclusion that is an indicator of narratorial dominance, especially since Geoffroy's dreamlike sequences are purely descriptive; his protagonists, the powerful Queens of Meroë, have no direct speech. On the other hand, Geoffroy's dreams provide the explanatory background to the mysterious scarification that puzzled him when he first arrived in Onitsha. At first he had failed to understand the significance of "[l]e signe gravé dans la peau des visages des hommes, comme une écriture sur la pierre." (100) The stone metaphor emphasizes the durability and timelessness of heritage as illustrated by the continued practice of etching scars on the faces of their descendants. His more esoteric narrative enriches the status of the native, by challenging the pervasive binary of Western civilization/native barbarity. The mythological story and the facial scars all seek verification when Okawho, the black servant, leads Geoffroy to the oracle at Aro Chuku. At the center of the expedition is the discovery that "[s]ur la terre, près du tronc, il y a un autel primitive: des jarres cassés, desalebasses, une pierre noire." (224) This seemingly random pile of objects speaks of emotions and intentions beyond their exteriority. Since nothing is explained or defined,

their randomness speaks more of their mystery than their meaning and so, rather like Geoffroy, we are disappointed and continue to search the text for “d’autres indices.” (224)

In contrast, Fintan’s experiences are mainly filtered through sense perception and observation of the immediate which he expresses vividly in his narrative as he records “une odeur forte, âcre, qui faisait tousser” (36) when they disembark at Dakar, the resonance of the thunder during the rainy season, the power of the swollen river and the sensation of smell, taste and touch as he explores Onitsha. Fintan is in awe of Bony’s knowledge as he is guided through the mysteries of his new life in Africa and awakened to his burgeoning sexuality. This is more than a democratic exchange of ideas as Bony becomes Fintan’s mentor, teaching him about the mysteries and mythologies of the natural world. In their relationship, as viewed through the eyes of a twelve-year-old boy, speech is essential for communication. His recollections are very straightforward and so to him, it is Bony’s direct, passionate expressions that are so appealing. For example, when Geoffroy shoots dead a falcon that has been troubling the hens, Bony is incandescent with anger at this travesty; he shouts “Him god!” (80) Similarly, when he discovers Fintan destroying the termite chimneys he screams angrily: “you ravin’ mad, you crazy! [...] C’est dieu!” (81) Despite using the stereotypical broken English his words are remarkable for their very untraditional forceful criticisms of the meddling Europeans. Are these two incidents metaphors for the colonial destruction of the indigenous African world or are they metaphors for colonial resistance?

Despite Bony’s pragmatism and willingness to involve Fintan in his world he sometimes becomes enigmatic and distant, as if he standing on a pedestal that embodies a heroic figure of the sort seen through the admiring eyes of a younger boy such as Fintan. However, his silence retains an ambiguity that implies both Fintan’s admiration and Bony’s own desire to remain apart as a signal of reluctance to be fully drawn into the European web that the English boy symbolizes. This unpredictable aloofness puzzles and

hurts Fintan. At times this close friend becomes inscrutable and behaves in an inexplicable fashion: “Bony n’était plus venu” (81) to their usual meeting place, or perhaps he expresses “un regard étrange” (121) or even makes “des gestes étranges”. (183) The repetition of the epithet “étrange” sites the two occasions firmly in the realm of the unexplainable, the words are left hanging in the narrative because there is no attempt to clarify them. Bony is never fully explained because his greater experience and worldliness are outside the reach of Fintan’s knowledge. Why, for example, does Bony speak in English during moments of emotional stress or significance? When he takes Fintan on their final adventure together, he describes their destination in vague terms.

“Là-bas. On dormira là-bas cette nuit.” Il parlait en anglais,
pas en pidgin.
“Qu’est-ce qu’il y a là-bas?”
Bony avait un visage brillant, impénétrable. (181)

The repetition of “là-bas” recalls Motte’s ‘elsewhere’ that he identifies as a characteristic of Le Clézio’s narrative; in this context Bony plans to lead Fintan and reader into a mysterious location of Otherness. Bony’s refusal to elucidate and thus include Fintan in his plan is reflected in his impenetrable expression. This impassable barrier protecting emotional response from the gaze of the Europeans forms a leitmotif within the narrative. Maou also views the natives as “ce peuple au regard impénétrable”. (168) Both of these examples indicate a native refusal to be ‘read’, to be known and understood. It becomes a gesture of power and independence, because their silence also preserves their Otherness.

The impact of the “withheld” is powerful because the silence created in the narrative suggests an alternative reality to which the reader is not invited. Although we seek knowledge of the Other, Otherness is retained by remaining unknown. Geoffroy tries to engage the indigenous natives in their native language, but this approach is resisted and thus the figures remain:

toujours silencieux, non pas hautains, mais absents, disparaissant vite à la file indienne [...] se perdant dans les hautes herbes jaunies par la sécheresse. Eux, les Umondri, les Ndinze, les “ancêtres”, les “initiés”. (100)

Although Geoffroy can identify these people by their tribes, and can recognize their status by their facial scarification, they remain Other. Despite his attempt to communicate in “quelques mots d’ibo, des phrases en yoruba, en pidgin” (100) they stay silent. They are elusive to the extent that their mysteriousness is accumulated in figurative images of physical and metaphorical absence. In Le Clézio’s narrative we can perceive a space that is vocal in its absence of a voice. Neither the narrative nor the reader fills this void.

In this sense, it is evident that the most powerful voices for the racial Other in this narrative are expressed less in direct dialogue but rather in the voice that palpitates behind the text, hidden, waiting to be heard. In its most tangible form, these silent voices are expressed by the hammering of the workers on the boat sailing to Onitsha. They reverberate “comme une musique, comme un secret langage, comme s’ils racontaient l’histoire des naufrages sur la côte des Krous.” (44) Their sounds are replaced by the drumming, “le roulement infatigable des tambours” (94) which creates “un autre musique”. (95) Gradually the motif takes momentum, embracing “le tintement des anneaux” (84) that enchain the convicts’ ankles, one to another until the sounds of the endless thunder and the non-verbal language of the indigenous natives combine with the throbbing heartbeats of the empathetic Allen family. As they run to the moon festival Maou and Fintan feel, in a climatic integration of metaphors, how “le cœur battant au rythme des tambours.” (214) The fever of the African experience links them with the throbbing drums and thunder.

I argue that the narrative articulates the voice of the racially marginalized Other by developing the resistant unspoken voices that withhold information. At the center of these inexplicably silent voices is the figure of Oya the mute native outsider of unknown origins. Her literal silence is reflected in the absence of clear signs by which to identify or label

her. “On disait [...] on disait [...]” (106); these rumors perpetuate her Otherness as she remains unknown and “un peu à l’écart” (105) from the indigenous people who live in the town of Onitsha. She is a construct of the imaginations, rumor mills and fantasies of the local populace. Her physical appearance suggests the ambivalence that surrounds her: “Elle avait un visage d’enfant [...] mais son corps et ses seins étaient ceux d’une femme.” (106) The paradox underlying this physical description references the ambiguity that questions her true identity. Is she “une prostituée de Lagos” (106) or “une pauvre fille [...] dont tout le monde profite”? (198) She thus retains her Otherness, feared and disliked by the women. Is she agent or victim? The question is never resolved within the narrative. Is her sexual encounter with Okawho the black servant consensual or rape? The narrative is deliberately evasive because Fintan, who witnesses the scene, does not understand the intense emotions of sexual climax. Oya’s ambivalent persona feeds both extremes as “son visage de déesse” (155) represents power, yet she also conveys images of fantasy because she looks “comme une sorcière.” (171) The only signs that can be ‘read’ are the “collier de cauris autour du cou” and her “crucifix autour du cou” (106) which categorize her as both “sauvage et innocent”. (171) In this respect she becomes emblematic of the voice of Africa, complex, ambiguously silent but reverberating strongly throughout the narratives. She is exotic in the sense of the marvelously different, similar to the figure of the African queen in *Heart of Darkness*. Whereas Conrad’s female warrior speaks in confidence with the powerful and enigmatic Kurtz, Oya is isolated by her muteness and estranged from her community by her simple missionary dress, a symbol of European influence.

Despite these ambiguities that are never fully explored, she remains a strong presence in the narrative, even projecting the future with her new baby and asserting her independence and empowerment. As Oya leaves Onitsha with her husband Okawho and baby, “Oya se déshabille”, removing the missionary dress she has always worn in a gesture that indicates her rejection of European influence and a return to the purity of her native heritage. She

“est debout à la proue, son fils serré contre sa hanche, sa main gauche tient la longue perche posée sur l'étrave. Okawho appuie sur la pagaie, ils entrent dans le rideau de pluie.” (O. 242) The curtain of rain hides her destination and her future and effectively brings the narrative to a halt; white discourse can no longer describe either Oya or her new-found family.

Through the characters of the women who people Fintan's narrative, le Clézio examines more instinctive ways of communicating that by-pass spoken language. Maou takes an interest in the outcast native mute Oya, who in return teaches her how to communicate by signing: “Oya avait montré à Maou toutes sortes de geste, pour dire la joie, la peur, pour interroger.” (172) Through the European Oya is able to articulate a voice, but it is a deeply personal voice pertaining to emotions and vulnerabilities. She also spends time with Marima, the young wife of the Allen's servant Elijah, who teaches Maou how to speak her native language, introducing such words as “*Ulo*, la maison. *Mmiri*, de l'eau. *Umu*, les enfants. *Aja*, chien.” (170) They are all practical words dealing with the daily tasks of female life, linking them through their common chores to the degree that Maou changes: “elle était devenue quelqu'un d'autre”. (169) The women reach across the boundaries of silence and difference, awakening Maou to the mysteries of simple experiences and teaching her to view “le monde tel qu'il était.” (173) Is this a very idealized world that Le Clézio is projecting, glamorizing the simple natural life at the expense of the curriculum that Fintan studies or in defiance of colonial economic exploitation? This group of three women creates a private utopia based on friendship and empathy. However, it is not language that links them so closely, it is the hidden bonds of intuition that instinctively unite these women in a secret fellowship and understanding as they experience the natural transformations of pregnancy. Intuitively Marima guesses Maou is pregnant, by listening to the private, still inner voice symbolized by the praying mantis.

Comment Marima avait-elle deviné ? Dans le jardin, Marima avait interrogé la mante religieuse qui sait tout sur le sexe des enfants qui vont naître. La mante avait replié ses pinces sur sa poitrine: "C'est une fille", avait conclu Marima. (259)

The two women, one native and one European, are united under the auspices of the symbolic "hands" of the praying mantis. These unspoken communications are so intense that Maou feels a new world open up to her, giving her the freedom to express herself and reopen her innermost thoughts to her poetry. "Elle avait même recommencé à écrire des poèmes sur son cahier." (209) She is forever aligned with the natives rather than the Europeans.

This affiliation reaches its climax at "la fête de l'igname" (210) and the "jeu de la lune" (210) ceremony to which Marima invites Maou and Fintan. It is an evening in which all the imagery of thunder, drums and heartbeats come to a climax, creating a crescendo of music and sounds as the reader witnesses "silhouettes des danseurs au milieu des feux". (216) The narrator paints a series of puzzling images around these silhouettes that become "deux oiseaux fantastiques" (216), "oiseaux grotesques" (217) and "oiseaux fabuleux" (217) - descriptions that verge on the fantastic, another literary representation of Otherness, as both reader and Maou hesitate before such creatures. There is a crisis of identity and reality as these 'birds' take flight on poles and the noise crescendos with shouts and drums. But nothing is quite as it seems; metaphors of the hidden such as "masqué" (216), the incomprehensible such as "étranges" (216) together with the possible/improbable appearance suggested by "sembler", "sentir", "comme" and "une sorte de", create an almost nightmarish world of such intensity that Maou "était au cœur même de ce roulement mystérieux qu'elle entendait depuis son arrivée à Onitsha." (217)

The climactic blending of imagery suggests that Maou has been integrated into the native mythological world. But as she walks away she asks an unexpected question: "Est-ce qu'ils sont morts ?" (218) There is no answer and the festival, its significance and the culture are left unexplained. "Marima ne répondit pas." (218) The reader remains as

puzzled as Maou. This is a disturbing moment in the narrative, as so many questions remain unanswered, disempowering both Fintan the narrator and the reader. Marima keeps her secret by withholding clues, refusing to interpret the “*jeu de la lune*” and thus resisting the request to fill the silence. This is an important moment in the narrative because it indicates how Le Clézio argues for the integrity and independence of a native voice that is unadulterated by the cultural lens of the European by refusing to end the silence.

These voices hidden in the cultural celebrations have been passed down through the centuries and provide an enriching context for the depiction of present-day native peoples. If we pay attention, as Fintan discovers, we will read their stories in the evidence remaining from their cultures, such as the carving on their faces that recall their creation myths, and the basalt stele marking historical events. Through his dreamlike narratives, Geoffroy Allen indulges his fascination for the ancient civilization. He follows their trek across the desert, detailing their preparations and their sufferings. These passages are recounted in the present tense, giving them a feeling of the universal, as if recounting the myth of civilization. There is no speech reported, except for a prayer on departure; instead the story is recounted from Geoffroy’s point of view, his stories stimulated by the scenes of the river. Why is he so fascinated by this story of the indomitable Candace and the trek across the desert? Is this a self-indulgent dream since it is narrated within his thoughts? Or is this a story of liberation, giving validation to the tribes along the river and legitimacy to the history of their determined forbearers and their Queen? Or perhaps this is another narrative strategy, one written in parallel to the story of the Allens and with a coda of contemporary warfare in Biafra, that brings to light unknown peoples and their stories. If we examine the story of Aro Chuku, the oracle established by the wandering tribes, we discover its durable secret power; after the Biafran war is over only “l’oracle d’Aro Chuku, par un accord mystérieux, n’a pas été détruit par les bombes.” (288) Its voice long gone,

destroyed by earlier British invasions, it still retains its mystique and acts as symbol of future voices waiting to be heard.

Most of the voices examined belong to female characters who appear to have a freedom denied the male Africans who remain constrained by the prejudices and stereotyping that Simpson parodied in his mimicry of pidgin in front of the other British passengers. Indeed, their introduction in the narrative is within the context of the slaves held in horrific conditions at the Fort of Gorée that Maou and Fintan visited on their voyage to Onitsha. Apart from Okawho, who is Sabine Rodes' servant, and Bony and Elijah, most African men depicted in the narrative are represented by the convicts who are silenced by their crimes. The members of the chain gang coerced into digging the swimming pool at Simpson's house are treated badly, objectified by the cruel greed of the colonizers who ignore their difficult working conditions. Only Maou views them as human beings. For the remaining colonizers, the men are typified by the stereotypical depiction of their glistening black skin that "brillait comme du metal." (84) This is a recurring motif that characterizes the men. Similarly, Okawho's "corps noir brille comme du metal" (221) when leading Geoffroy to "le lac de vie." (219) This is an important reversal of race and gender since female characters may be doubly marginalized on these two counts, but in Le Clézio's novel it is the men who remain constrained by the intolerant preconceptions of the European masters. Can they ever break free of the prejudicial connotations of their shiny black skin? Le Clézio appears to suggest this is unlikely in a world dominated by perceptions based on Western binary oppositions. For example, near the end of the novel, Fintan is disturbed by news of an uprising at Simpson's house where the convicts are digging a swimming pool for the enjoyment of the colonizers and their families. Working conditions are harsh. He hears some shots and sees smoke waft across the pool.

Des corps étaient tombés au pied du grillage. Un noir très grand, torse nu, un de ceux qui avaient conduit la mutinerie, était resté à moitié accroché au grillage, comme un pantin disloqué. (236)

The horror of the wire fence and the dangling broken body convey a vivid image of the tensions underlying a fading colonialism. The fence and the puppet imagery convey the force and power of the Europeans, who control the natives by force, pulling the strings of power in a metaphor recalling the ventriloquism of Simpson's voice, at the party on the boat sailing to Onitsha, to imitate and thus dominate the native voice. "Pantin" may be defined as: "Jouet constitué par une figure de carton peint représentant un personnage burlesque dont on agite les membres à l'aide d'un fil." (D.F.C.) When the strings are broken the control is lost. The rebellion thus represents a powerful voice of dissent and the refusal to obey Western demands. Their violent encounter with authority signifies change, and the end of Empire; the body is "disloqué", dislocated, broken up and or scattered. Significantly this verb is also used to indicate the end of empire, "le dislocation d'un empire". (D.F.C.) This distressing image of the body represents both the silenced, powerless, male racial Other and also the disempowered European colonizer. But if the power relationship has been thus destroyed, who will have the voice of the future? The indigenous natives are either beaten or absent; massacred or imprisoned like the convicts or departed from Onitsha such as Elijah and Okawho who have departed from Onitsha. Conversely, the Europeans are disseminated too. Simpson and Rally are disgraced by their ready dependence on out-of-date autocratic colonialism; Geoffroy has been fired, fallen sick, consumed by the escapism of his esoteric visions, dying in a dream landscape that shields him from the brutal realities of colonial exploitation; Sabine Rodes, the savvy outsider, reveals his own confused allegiance when in his death his real name is revealed to be Roderick Matthews O.B.E., and not the faintly exotic pseudonym he had preferred to hide behind. Le Clézio thus depicts a post-colonial world confronting the challenges of anxious identities in crisis. Who is left to give voice for the future? Fintan is dislocated, an outsider in Europe, while the children of Biafra become child warriors, tragic "enfants affamés" (272) who seek to determine the outcome of their civil war.

In the changing world of the post-colonial emerge figures consumed by the anxieties of identity, a traumatic experience that Le Clézio expresses through parallels of the difficult transitions of adolescence. It is a time to grow and emerge and discover new identities. But who are they? Is this a bleak despairing picture of a post-colonial world in which the evils of colonial exploitation have destroyed the future for the Biafrans? J.M. Coetzee suggested that the future lies in the hands of future generations such as Lucy Lurie's baby, who, even though conceived in violence, can restore the faith in humanity as symbolized by the final utopian picture of Lucy in her peaceful garden which is depicted as a time of promise in a "season of blooming." (D. 216) But Le Clézio's view of Onitsha's future is more ambivalent. Oya's baby "est peut-être parmi ces adolescents au crâne rasé, armés seulement de bâtons en guise de fusils". (270) Is there some hope for these people expressed in Aro Chuku's unbroken spirit?

Many questions remain unanswered in this novel, many deliberately so, creating an unstable but riveting narrative that defies description as a "travelogue". (Thibault 1998: 365) The silent and the silence offer an alternative to the crisis of language often associated with the articulation of voice in white discourse. But ultimately the final consideration is not necessarily who is speaking but who is listening. Le Clézio suggests that while individuals such as Fintan, his mother Maou and his sister Marima remain attentive and empathetic, the West as a collective fails. After the war in Biafra, the narrator comments that "[l]e monde entier détourne son regard." (288) If Le Clézio suggests in his Nobel speech that the responsibility of the writer is to "bear witness" then we should address the responsibility of the reader. *Onitsha* suggests that we should develop an awareness of victims as individuals and like Marima we too should "ressentir un frisson, un tressaillement" (277) when we hear about Africa or any 'elsewhere'.

14. *No Country for Old Men*

McCarthy's novel opens with the anxious monologue of a man in crisis. These disordered thoughts express the unexpectedly tortuous deliberations of an established figure of authority struggling to understand the ruthless brutality that has typified recent criminal activity in his county. He feels a deep-seated anxiety that is evidence of his loss of authority in the area and his feelings of helplessness in the face of this explosion of illegal trade. Ed Tom Bell is sheriff of Terrell County, a region in the borderlands that has recently seen an increase in drug trafficking across the Mexican/Texan border, but more disturbingly has experienced an escalation in the murder rate as the drug cartels struggle for dominance. Oscar J. Martínez argues that border zones "spawn independence, rebellion, cultural deviation, disorder, and even lawlessness." (2006: 3) This violent borderland culture represents the impact of emerging antagonist agencies and their desire to force a culture shift in the power relationship by undermining the authority represented by the border. Homi Bhabha argues that it is "the effect of uncertainty that afflicts the discourse of power" (2004: 162) revealing "[t]hings losing shape" (N.C. 127) as we witness Bell's loss of authority and self-respect.

Why does McCarthy present the Sheriff in a state of confusion and not introduce him from a position of strength, symbolizing the authority of the legal system that supports his position? Such a representation would imply a clear dialectic between "them" and "us" in the narrative, an opposition that is blurred by the multifarious ethnicities in a multicultural society founded on a policy of immigration that welcomes citizens from nations around the world. But this is a porous border, one that is historically difficult to police and control, and therefore vulnerable to the infiltration of a hostile Other. Drug trafficking becomes therefore an effective symbol of these nefarious influences encroaching on Western authority; their impact is insidious, corrosive, and far-reaching as it crosses all barriers of gender, class, race and age. Martínez argues that "the misguided and callous War on Drugs

[...] bears the major responsibility. Truly, the drug quagmire is one of the greatest tragedies in the history of the border region.” (152) Consequently, Bell’s opening monologue with its doubts and conjectures underlined by his fear of failure, immediately addresses the devastating impact these criminal activities may exert on the very fabric of American society.

While the novel examines this violent drug trade that troubles the borderlands, I argue that *No Country for Old Men*, which was written in the aftermath of “9/11”, also explores the impact of the invading unknown Other, in which the bloody mayhem created by the elusive, unseen Chigurh represents the terror caused by the unforeseen terrorist attacks of “9/11” and how they generate a “crisis surrounding masculinity itself”. (Jarraway 2012: 52) Bernard Beck examines how these emergencies create long-term social and political destabilization and argues that in “a diverse society, different groups have different ideas about when killings make sense and what kind of sense they make. When such disagreements become apparent, the precarious consensus that follows different groups to coexist loses plausibility.” (215) Beck’s analysis explains how such conflicting beliefs deconstruct the legitimacy of the Other, an argument also upheld by David R. Jarraway, who argues that ideological confrontations lead to a sense of lost security. (2012: 51)

McCarthy uses counter-narratives to subvert the authority of white discourse and allow space for the emergent voices of the racial Other as speech, silence, refusal or as agency. I propose that the third person narrative strand writes back to two different genres, the Western and the detective novel, although Robert Jarrett argues that the novel “imitates both the novel of detection and the postmodern gothic crime drama, each with its distinct plot and metaphysical assumptions.” (2009: 36) However, I argue for the influence of the Western that explores the myth of the West as a land of freedom and the cowboy as symbolic of the American hero. Ashcroft et al. argue that the “frontier experience has been

central to self-perceptions of identity in the United States” (2005:107), as a place where men could test themselves. By turning the frontier into a leaky boundary and barrier that define limits and exclude the racial Other rather than provide the challenge as a “frontier of liberty” (Hardt and Negri 2001: 169) the narrative discredits the traditional concept of heroism in which a central contest was between man and the wilderness. The frontier now functions in opposition to its original function of freedom by creating barriers that exclude and limit rather than challenge and liberate. Similarly a central conflict is between the role of the detective and the criminal, in which the detective brings the Other to justice. In McCarthy’s novel, the contest has been decided before the narrative opens. Bell is a defeated man. He is doubly censured, first by his failure to protect the frontier and secondly by his failure to confront and arrest Chigurh. By challenging American mythology McCarthy questions the continuing privileged position America holds in the world. The corpses remain unburied; their very rotting presence challenges Western myths of power because they are evidence of illegal entry through unsecured borders and signal the decay of the very frontiers that challenged the bravery and integrity of heroes in American mythologies as they attempt to define and achieve what Lee Clark Mitchell identifies as “most centrally the question of how to comport oneself as a man.” (2002: 133)

Late in the novel, Anton Chigurh has an interview with one of the industrialists doubling as drug baron. The man asks:

What do you want. I guess that’s my question.

Well. I’d say that the purpose of my visit is simply to establish my bonafides. As someone who is an expert in a difficult field. As someone who is completely reliable and completely honest. Something like that. (252)

Chigurh offers his answer to Mitchell’s question, naming reliability and honesty as the most desirable characteristics. And yet there is an underlying irony, creating what Bhabha names as the “*double* vision” of mimicry. (2004: 126) He is playing a game, providing the perfect answers required in a successful interview, giving reassurances by using familiar

jargon while exploiting the man's uncertainties, which he explains explicitly at the end of their encounter. He observes that people:

pretend to themselves that they are in control of events where perhaps they are not. And it is always one's stance upon uncertain ground that invites the attentions of one's enemies. Or discourages. (253)

He has succinctly divined the man's position in relation to their financial dealings, having noticed his increased heart rate and sweat above his lip. Just casually he takes control of the meeting, leaving an unanswered question hanging in the air. Is he friend or foe? His correct grammar, the formal use of the impersonal "one" conveys professionalism and control. These two examples of Chigurh's speech indicate that it is not so much the literal words that convey his real voice, but rather it is the meaning behind the articulated words of the unspoken intentions, the veiled assumptions of knowledge and the vulnerabilities of the listener. There has been much critical analysis of Chigurh's character and philosophy since the novel's publication but there is a gap in the attention paid to the discursive strategies that McCarthy utilizes to explore the power of Chigurh's voice. I argue that his elusive character and his absence from part of the narrative together with the deconstruction of familiar narrative tropes create a powerful impact of a voice unheard that represents the insidious impact of the unseen Other that threatens Western stability.

At the heart of this novel is the dichotomous power of evil; on the one hand is fear of the menacing unknown violent Other, while on the other is the lure of the power of drugs for trade or for personal use, gained by a few and desired by many. McCarthy explores the same "fascination of the abomination" (H.D. 20) that caused Kurtz's downfall in *Heart of Darkness*, and how this fascination undermines the moral center. As Bell remarks, the drug trade "reaches into ever strata." (N.C.304) Even Bell freely admits that he is so troubled by the ruthless brutality of these murderers that he "don't know what to make of that. [He] surely don't." (3) By combining the literary representation of the criminal and racial Other

the narrative explores how these voices that may be unwelcome, needlessly violent, crude or vicious, introduce new ways of perceiving and understanding another world that cannot be ignored.

These differing representations of the criminal racial Other are depicted within the two narrative strands, a narrative strategy that enables McCarthy to examine the impact of both the visible drug-running criminal and the often unseen hit man. One strand is Bell's interior monologue, in which the narrative is purely reflective and spoken in parallel with, but not necessarily in correlation to, the second strand that is ordered by an impersonal third person narrator. Within this second thread are woven three interrelated stories. One follows the detective work undertaken by Bell and his deputies to solve the innumerable murders, starting with the massacre in the desert; a second strand tracks the journey of Llewellyn Moss, the young veteran who stole the drug money and is on the run from the drug cartels, and the third story trails the bloody carnage left by Anton Chigurh, the hit man employed by wealthy oil magnates to facilitate the drug delivery and deal with "wet" matters."

However to reader, filmgoer and critic this hit man represents the archetypal evil protagonist and as such his "voice" or reputation lingers long in criticism, beyond that of the Sheriff. Chigurh is described by reviewers such as William Deresiewicz as "perhaps the most terrifying figure in American fiction." (2005) Similarly, Bernard Beck employs the same superlatives to argue that "the senseless killer has been judged one of the most frightening in movie history." (208: 214) These two comments focus on reader/audience emotional responses to the randomness of the killings. In contrast, Robert Jarrett and John Cant argue that Chigurh's function in the narrative is purely figural. He is an avatar of Satan himself since Chigurh is both "a signifier of metaphysical evil" (Jarrett 2009: 37) and "an allegorical; figure" who is "death personified." (Cant 2009: 56) In contrast, I argue that the evil of Chigurh reaches beyond these one-dimensional descriptions as he reveals a

terrifying logic that determines his personal rigid moral code that directly challenges Western ethics and ideologies.

Despite his pivotal role in the development of the story, Chigurh remains an elusive figure. The lack of visual description in the novel is a significant aspect of Chigurh's conceptual representation, since the imagined is more powerful than the known. The "bad haircut" that signified his potential for a ruthless brutality in the movie directed by the Coen brothers (2007) produces an effective visual identification suggesting that he is a cipher of evil rather than a rational human being. However, I argue that this depiction undercuts the powerful statement of the Other in McCarthy's novel that argues that this new representation of alterity reaches beyond the traditional binaries and despite our abhorrence of his philosophy represented by the coin toss it is a legitimate fathering of order out of chaos.

This is where the horror lies in McCarthy's narrative. He is Any Man. The skin fetish, which Bhabha labels as "the key signifier of cultural and racial difference in the stereotype" (2004: 112), has been discarded in this novel. How can we recognize the Other if our linguistic strategies have broken down because identifying labels and descriptions are no longer relevant? Why does McCarthy construct the narrative so that Chigurh is known to the reader but not to Bell, making the Sheriff's inability to track him more visible? This strategy creates a lacuna in Bell's narrative because Chigurh remains unseen, his voice unheard and his story unwritten. Michael Wood argues that this space creates a crisis in the narrative as it signifies "the place where narrative itself may give out, or become impossible." (2012: 133) Bell's conception of his nemesis becomes an image of the otherworldly and ghostlike, as menacing as the "air of whispering" in *Heart of Darkness* (29) and the "léger bruit" of footsteps in 'L'Hôte'. (97) I argue that Chigurh's identity and motives remain hidden from Bell to indicate the center's declining power; he

cannot master the unseen. When asked “what would you call him?” the Sheriff replies “I dont know.” (192). Bell has lost control both of the criminal Other and of the narrative.

Bell comprehends that there is “another view of the world out there and other eyes to see it.” (4) He attempts to classify the source of the voice within his familiar constructs of reference, turning to the power of religious imagery to describe this “true and living prophet of destruction.” (4) The unexpected juxtaposition of “prophet” with “destruction” creates a paradox within Bell’s discourse by relating “prophet”, an inspired messenger/teacher of God whose teachings offer hope and eternal life, to “destruction”, the abyss of moral loss and annihilation. The religious metaphor alerts us to Bell’s comprehension that despite being ostensibly inscribed within the familiar good/evil dialectic these criminals in fact defy the traditional Christian metanarrative and relate instead to a powerful negative force that is beyond Bell’s understanding of its conceptual basis. This paradox introduces a narrative strategy in which familiar constructs of power are subverted, resulting in an epistemological crisis that destabilizes the narrative and leads us to question the whereabouts of the ethical center of the novel. If Bell’s authority has been undermined, whose voice, if any, dominates the narrative? How far can the voices of the racial criminal Other replace the voice of the center?

We first encounter the racial Other when Moss is out in the desert hunting for antelope. While scanning the terrain for traces of the animals, he notices three deserted trucks and some shapes of possible bodies lying on the ground. Trained in guerilla warfare tactics he carefully studies the landscape for a long time before approaching.

[Moss] stood there. Listening.

In the first vehicle there was a man slumped dead over the wheel. Beyond were two more bodies lying in the gaunt yellow grass. Dried blood black on the ground. He stopped and listened. Nothing. The drone of flies. (12)

What is he listening for? Moss scrutinizes the countryside, listening, waiting and watching for clues to explain the massacre. These Mexicans are anonymous, unnamed, and unidentified; they are remembered for their criminality, not their humanity. The alliterated hard “g” sounds of “gaunt”, “grass” and “ground” suggest the desolate hostility of the unforgiving wretched barrenness of the desert plains where their bodies are left scattered in the sun; while the harshly defined consonants of the “dried black blood” combine to create an aura of dread and to convey the inexorable ferocity of a violent death. No mourning for these individuals, only the droning dirge of the flies that speaks of decay and putrefaction.

Perhaps the more appropriate question would be to ask what is Moss listening to? No vehicles, no human voices are heard and yet the story of the massacre is not completely withheld from the narrative, since the cadavers articulate a story through their abject decomposition. John Dudley argues that “the presence of abjection explains the epistemological crises at the heart of McCarthy’s narrative journeys, crises that are central to his critique of traditional masculinity.” (2013: 175) He references Julia Kristeva’s *Powers of Horror* in which she argues that the “corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infusing life.” (1982: 4) Kristeva contends that the abject is caused by “what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules.” (4) Thus, the rotting bloated bodies symbolize border crime’s insidious encroachment on society, destabilizing accepted concepts of order, not just in terms of masculinity as Dudley argues, but in terms of a more widespread crisis that effectively challenges fundamental myths and beliefs in order to subvert the authority of the ideologies that support Western civilization. Their infiltration across the desert acts as a metaphor for the end of American isolationism; borders no longer exclude and geography no longer protects the continental U.S.A. from invasion or the corrosion influence of enemies.

Anton Chigurh is first introduced as a handcuffed prisoner waiting to be incarcerated in the local jail, a familiar setting of law, order and justice. After having been arrested by a young local deputy, he frees himself with a well-practiced movement that involves swinging his hands under his feet and using his manacled wrists to form a chain of death around the young deputy's neck. After strangling the lawman, Chigurh bandages his wrists and takes the keys and money from the deputy's pocket, all the while "studying the dead man gaping up from the floor." (6) There is a brief glimpse into the psychopath's mind as he looks down abstractedly, clinically, as if staring at an inanimate object rather than the remains of a young man he has just killed. The body's open mouth reveals the endless silence that characterizes his vision of death and his refusal to acknowledge the humanity of the victim. There is nothing to say; there is no hope, no afterlife, and no resurrection, just a cadaver lying on the floor. This brutal murder signifies Chigurh's stamp of authority on the narrative, an authority that is symbolized by his appropriation of Western symbols of power and justice when he uses the handcuffs as a murder weapon and he adopts the police car as an escape vehicle.

While traveling along the interstate, he picks out a Ford sedan and flashes the driver to pull over. Chigurh approaches the man at the wheel and asks him to step outside the vehicle:

Sir would you mind stepping out of the vehicle? [...]

Would you step away from the vehicle please.

[...]

[Chigurh] placed his hand on the man's head like a faith healer. The pneumatic hiss and click of the plunger sounded like a door closing. The man slid soundlessly to the ground, a round hole in his forehead from which the blood bubbled and ran down into his eyes carrying with it his slowly uncoupling world visible to see. (7)

Chigurh's voice remains coolly controlled and polite as he imitates the comportment of a police officer. In contrast to Bell's opening monologue that is full of hesitant expressions such as "I guess" (4), "I think" (4), "I wish" (4), and "I cant say" (4), Chigurh's voice is

commanding and assured. If the deputy's murder was horrific in its graphic brutality, this driver's death is ruthless in its methodical and mechanical enactment, stripping death of its spiritual elements and leaving behind the physical core. The sibilant alliteration of "slid soundlessly" imitates the body's easy and smooth collapse on the ground, emphasizing the physical breakdown rather than the spiritual hope of eternal life. Similarly, the onomatopoeic "hiss and click" and "blood bubbled" effectively narrate the story through their sounds, replacing the comfort of prayers with the sounds of a materialistic, unfeeling ruthlessness. Chigurh moves from "healer" to "killer", writing a secular counter-narrative to the Christian mythologies that underline Western civilization. The miracle that supports and verifies Christian faith as symbolic gesture of spiritual power is subverted by Chigurh's mimicry of the faith healer who places a hand on the patient's forehead in a sign of peace and faith. This parody of spirituality could be heretical in its mockery, but Chigurh's methodical composure suggests otherwise. For Chigurh death is a process of resolution, a "healing" of the disorder created by problematic issues and situations. The laying on of hands conceals the air-powered gun, the instrument of death used in an abattoir, disturbing our normative assumptions of the sanctity of human life. Man's death is soulless and as final as that of an animal in a slaughterhouse. Together, these two murders give an insight into the hit man's attitude towards life and death. He later admits to his fellow hit man Carson Wells that death "doesn't mean to [him] what it does to [others]." (177)

The novel thus introduces the powerful subversive voice that resonates through the narratives, unheard by Bell but gaining increasing significance with the reader. Chigurh's ruthless tactics indicate that, although representative of the racial and criminal Other characterized by the colonial binary good/evil, he does in fact break with the stereotypes that traditionally typify the literary representation of the racial Other. As a highly trained,

deep-thinking, rational adversary he introduces a new type of barbarity, one based on intellect and emotional detachment.

Like David Lurie in *Disgrace*, Chigurh has a more sophisticated discourse than the other characters and speaks with a more precise pronunciation in an ironic reversal of the colonial dialectic in which white discourse is superior to that of the racial Other, such as Petrus's a-grammatical speech. Chigurh's language is sophisticated and controlled, although he does have occasional lapses into colloquialisms or slurs. For example, when paying for gas he is irritated when the proprietor attempts to engage him in casual conversation. Chigurh dismisses the man's pleasantries.

You all gettin any rain up your way? the proprietor said.
 [...] And what business is it of yours where I'm from,
 friendo?
 I didnt mean nothin by it.
 You didnt mean nothing by it.
 I was just passin the time of day.
 I guess that passes for manners in your cracker view
 of things. (52)

This brief exchange indicates Chigurh's brutal precision, the main characteristic of his speech and gestures. His pronunciation is meticulous, employing "ing" rather than the more habitual "in" of everyday speech. His discourse is closed and secretive as he partially repeats the proprietor's phrases, creating a menacing echo as the man's words are repeated back to him in all their banality. Chigurh's falsely amicable "friendo", added to the end of an aggressively phrased question, emphasizes his disregard for social pleasantries between strangers and functions to estrange and discomfort the man. He transitions a casual exchange into a more menacing interaction by using the pejorative "cracker", a term of reverse racism for poor whites in the Southern States of America, in preparation for a deadly game of power.

He takes out a coin and demands the man calls in a coin toss. The “game” is not under negotiation. But within the harsh, seemingly senseless rules that Chigurh follows there is a code of ethics that demands that the man must “call it.” There is no choice.

You need to call it, Chigurh said. I cant call it for you. It wouldnt be fair. It wouldn't even be right. Just call it.

I didnt put nothin up.

Yes you did. You've been putting it up your whole life. You just didnt know it. [...]

I dont know what I stand to win.

In the blue light the man's face was beaded thinly with sweat. He licked his upper lip.

You stand to win everything, Chigurh said. Everything. (56)

Again, the callous hit man intimidates his victim by the emphatic precision of his deceptively banal statements. Although Chigurh is calling the shots the weight of decision-making is placed firmly on the victimized man, as indicated by the emphatic, repetitive “You”. This strategy introduces a new pattern of dominance and compliance, as insidious in its manipulations as the encroachment of drugs on American society. This is a new form of control that McCarthy is exploring both linguistically and figuratively. Both Linda Woodson (2009: 8) and Lydia Cooper (2009: 39) name the opposing ideologies that Chigurh and Bell represent in the narrative as determinism/nihilism and moral responsibility. As evident in his opening monologue Bell believes in the acceptance of accountability for one's actions. In contrast, Linda Woodson argues Chigurh “exists outside of moral responsibility altogether” (2009: 8) and inhabits “a world that reduces the meaning and value of our lives.” (9) She proposes that Chigurh “sees himself not as having the power to pull together the strings of an absolute destiny, but rather as an “instrument” (57) of that which has already been determined.” (8) She concludes that we must be mindful “of reactive attitudes that define our humanness, to remind us that we can't accede to abjection.” (12) I argue that McCarthy is demonstrating that an important part of our moral responsibility is not merely to acknowledge the existence of opposing philosophies but to recognize their legitimacy.

In a similar scene in which Chigurh invites Carla Jean, Moss's young wife, to guess the coin toss, he tells her that he cannot change his tactics. He explains to her that she is:

asking that [he] make[s] [him]self vulnerable and that [he] can never do. [He has} only one way to live. It doesn't allow for special cases. A coin toss perhaps. (259)

He refuses to make value judgments or to change his mind as that would mean he would have to identify with his victim. Is this insistence on determinism a form of moral cowardice or the manifestation of the psychopathic behavior that Wells identifies? (141) It is a moral capitulation to explain life's journey by repeating the ubiquitous mantra there is "a reason for everything." (257) His conduct is in marked difference to Bell who openly admits his mistakes and weaknesses, and it is through these flaws that the sheriff shows his natural empathy for others, an understanding denied the emotionally stunted Chigurh. He cannot make a mistake and thus rigidly follows his own rules or principles.

One of the most disturbing features of Chigurh's character is the fact that he exhibits qualities that are usually admired. Even his rival Wells acknowledges that Chigurh follows a code of honor. He explains that "[y]ou could even say that he has principles. Principles that transcend money or drugs or anything like that." (153) Wells's analysis implies that neither greed nor materialism motivates his conduct, in contrast to the greed of the drug consumers. He "gave [his] word" (255) to Moss to kill Carla Jean and he keeps that terrible promise; he is prepared to test himself to challenge his skills, and tells Wells that he thinks he let the deputy handcuff him because he "wanted to see if [he] could extricate [himself] by an act of will. Because [he] believe[s] that one can [...] But it was a foolish thing to do. A vain thing to do." (174) His commentary reveals his insistence on reason rather than emotions, on fate rather than choice. He constantly strips the empathetic down into the logical. But at the heart of his "crazy" (175) reasoning there lies a brutal honesty that Bell is denied because he has lived with a lie all this life, that he did not deserve his military commendation because he had deserted his dead/dying colleagues after the attack.

Bell is afraid of the outcome and admits to his uncle “you have to make up your own mind that you’ll live with the consequences. But you don’t know what the consequences will be.” (278) Perhaps this determinism is Chigurh’s strength after all, because as a fatalist he accepts the consequences automatically, without question and without fear.

Chigurh is not represented as an anti-Christ figure but as a force beyond Bell’s reach that menaces the narrative, similar in effect to the whispers and silence that haunt *Heart of Darkness* and ‘L’Hôte’. Lydia Cooper argues that because “Chigurh is so inexplicable, he seems less intentionally malicious than the Judeo-Christian devil who is often depicted solely in terms of his desire to thwart human beings.” (2009: 48) I argue that it is this very elusiveness that creates his menace, far beyond that of the Mexican drug runners whose criminality is visibly evident and therefore within reach of our comprehension. The intangible has no boundaries. Language is power, and the failure to describe is an admission of failure to constrain him. Bell’s language breaks down as he wonders about the identity of this unknown killer, whether he is a man (282) or a ghost (299). I argue that this reference to otherworldliness signals that Chigurh is beyond the conceptual references of white discourse that cannot define beyond a vague representation of “another view” of life. (4) Although the racial Other represented by Chigurh and the Mexican drug runners is still defined by degeneracy and barbarity, these concepts require a new definition and vocabulary. He wonders “[w]hat do you say to a man that by his own admission has no soul? Why would you say anything?” (4) When his deputy asks him what he thinks about the bloody massacre of the Mexicans in the desert, Bell is beyond speech and he merely “shook his head.” (76) When asked what he would call Chigurh language again fails to describe this elusive adversary and he replies that “[he] don’t know.” (192). Chigurh’s function is to destabilize and challenge by asking the questions that Catherine Belsey identifies as seeking to define the postmodern world, such as “are you able to think beyond

the limits of what is already recognizable? Is it possible to acknowledge the hitherto unknown?" (2002:104) Bell struggles to internalize these issues. He explains that:

When you encounter certain things in the world, the evidence for certain things, you realize that you have come upon something that you may very well not be equal to and I think that this is one of them things. (299)

But Bell recognizes unexplained and inexplicable differences that differentiate these offenders from others. It is not just a case of change in merchandise from cattle to drugs; Bell identifies a more insidious crime, the attack on Western civilization itself through a clash in ideological differences. The lack of respect for the sanctity of life that the criminals show indicates a turning either towards a more secular ideology or a religion based on a different ethic. Bell is disturbed by these new voices that estrange themselves from the norm because he is not prepared to jeopardize his own soul. It is this refusal that deconstructs the power of the white protagonist in McCarthy's narrative. Whose voice will now articulate the supremacy of Western culture? Whose voice will answer him? This is the basis of the power of these voices of the Other in McCarthy's novel, those voices that disturb basic assumptions of humanity and force us to reconsider the boundaries of knowledge that are 'fixed'. We need to learn to listen, as Susan Barton urged us to do, to listen to the silence.

I argue that these questions underlie the narrative because they address contemporary political, social and ideological issues of difference that trouble society and signal a dangerous breakdown in global communication. Should we communicate only with those who share our beliefs? Does this statement imply that communication with those who hold different conceptual beliefs is impossible, or even unnecessary? Should difference be respected, tolerated or even ignored? Does difference imply more than fragmentation, but rather complete disintegration when white discourse fails to master it? Who is responsible for these reactions? If we do not speak to the Other, how should we communicate? In a

world still shuddering from the new form of terrorism signaled by the horrific events of “9/11” these questions become increasingly important and too dangerous to be left lying fallow.

The emerging voices of the criminal racial Other in the novel attack the metanarratives that underwrite Bell’s narrative and create a subtext of doubt and fear that destabilizes the authority of his voice and his status. This book is about the confrontation between two different ideologies, that of moral responsibility based on Christian ideals of good/evil espoused by Bell and that of secular determinism practiced by Chigurh. Such a conflict is not based solely on the recognition of difference but understanding that such differences exist in themselves. As Chigurh explains to Carla Jean Moss, one of his victims, the problem is how “to prevail over that which you refuse to acknowledge the existence of.” (260) The voices of the racial Other in McCarthy’s novel proclaim the need to reach beyond into the unknown to glimpse the unwritten and listen to the unspoken.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined the literary representation of the voice of the racial Other in novels written by white male authors. These narratives were selected in order to study the development of the indigenous native voices emerging from the margins and their subsequent impact on the traditional power relationship between white male figures of authority and the racial Other. Much recent literary criticism has focused on the voices of the indigenous writers emerging from post-colonial societies but I consider that the examination of the literary representation of native voices evolving in white writing yields precious insights into the constantly shifting relationships in a globalized world and enables the West to acknowledge the political importance of articulating voice as a reflection of the contemporary struggles of subjugated peoples. Through close analyses of the texts I demonstrated how these literary representations of the marginalized voices differ according to the political climate in which the novelist is writing; the Algerian War of Independence, the struggle for the end of apartheid in South Africa, Nigerian demands for Independence, and the drug wars and the insidious infiltration of the hostile Other across the American/Mexican border all signify social, political and cultural changes that have important ramifications for colonial power hierarchies.

I demonstrated that two clear patterns develop from this analysis. The selected novels recount stories of mastery, referencing those conflicts that describe the colonizers struggling to maintain supremacy and the colonized fighting to subvert the established colonial relationships based on the Manichean dichotomy. Hence power is the linking motif of these novels from England, France, South Africa and the United States. First the emerging native voices destabilize the equilibrium of the power relationship to the degree that the encounter with the white figures of authority not only creates a space in the narrative through which native voices can be articulated but this very development also subverts Western authority to the extent that the white protagonists fall into a social and

moral decline. Their downfall does not function merely as a metaphor for the defeat of authoritarian regimes but also registers the deeply felt personal responses of the colonizer that include guilt, fear, a loss of respect/self-respect, defeatism and a genuine confusion when confronted with the rapidly transforming postcolonial landscape; from this nadir of patriarchal failure, new voices begin to emerge ranging from the hesitant or subdued in novels by Conrad, Camus and Le Clézio to the violently criminal in those by Coetzee and McCarthy. Secondly, the literary representation of the native voice subverts traditional white discursive strategies, creating unreliable narratives such as Marlow's retelling of his experiences in Africa. Through the newly unstable discursive forms composed of multiple, parallel, non-linear narratives the voices are variously expressed, ranging from a-grammatical language and pidgin to the muffled, muted and the withheld.

The novels themselves offer a substantial argument for the study of the literary representation of these emerging voices. As this thesis has demonstrated, even though the racial Other is relegated to background roles in the narratives these minor characters provide a pivotal function in the storylines through their encounter with the white protagonist. However, it is notable that in these narratives the character of the racial Other typically fails to evolve; apart from Petrus in *Disgrace* they remain enmeshed in their degeneracy as slaves or criminals. Even though Friday, as an exception, is converted in *Robinson Crusoe* I argued that this development is less to enhance the native's transformation than to enrich Crusoe's spirituality. This thesis demonstrated that all the novels, apart from *Robinson Crusoe*, which establishes colonial dominance, trace the decline of the white protagonists from this position of supremacy. The titles themselves seem to indicate this regression as they range from moral doubt in *Heart of Darkness* and *Disgrace*, displacement in *L'Étranger* and *No Country for Old Men*, and the ambiguity of undefined identity in *Foe* and 'L'Hôte'. Only the name *Onitsha* appears straightforward, although I have demonstrated that this place name may also reference the ambiguous since

it is representative of the elusive “elsewhere” of dreams that reflect recuperation of the mythologies that record a rich historical past or conversely suggest the desire for the exotic, a negative response that confines the Other to a position of inferiority.

Crucially, Toni Morrison asks in what ways “does the imaginative encounter with [the Other] enable white writers to think about themselves?” (1993: 51) I demonstrated that the encounter is a valuable narrative device to denote the need to make culture shifts but these encounters also demand a reconfiguring of basic referential concepts. For example, when the Arab in *L'Étranger* dares Sintès to fight, the caveat “si tu es un homme” (48) is not merely a challenge to personal bravery but carries the subtext addressing more fundamental issues of manliness, identity and ethical responsibility, in this example the defense of family honor. This simple challenge is remarkable because it is the voice of the Other that is articulating this question that effectively subverts white male supremacy. What defines a man? Notably, both Conrad and Coetzee include the figures of the racial Other to define their understanding of manhood rather than choose the white male protagonists. The natives are emblems of “restraint” in *Heart of Darkness* and of basic humanity in *Foe* in which Friday is introduced as “a man”. In contrast, there is no such approval expressed in relation to the white protagonists, as we know from the titles. Lurie in *Disgrace* realizes “[y]es, there has been a fall” (167) and regards himself as a displaced “figure from the margins of history” (167), while Sheriff Bell in *No Country for Old Men* concludes he is “a man of this time.” (N.C. 279) But the violent disordered society he describes in his narrative does not suggest he is a man of authority but full of uncertainties and doubt. Although Morrison dislikes objectifying the racial Other “as surrogate and enabler” (51), within these contexts it is a role of powerful agency which forces and/or “enables” the dominant to examine basic cultural and ethical assumptions of patriarchy, justice and degeneracy.

Apart from Sheriff Bell and Cruso, each narrator describes first his own statement of self-deluded dominance. Marlow is a favored nephew and privileged European; Meursault and Daru are outsiders, isolated by a lack of commitment which implies a disinterested arrogance to those upset by such independence; Lurie's egotistical arrogance permeates his academic and personal life; in *Onitsha* Geoffroy Allen in contrast is a dreamer and idealist while Gerald Simpson represents the supreme colonial autocrat. However, Sheriff Ed Tom Bell is disheartened by his failure to maintain law and order and in this respect he becomes an emblem for them all when he asks his uncle in confidence "[d]id you ever do anything you was ashamed of to the point you never would tell nobody?" (N.C. 273) His question voices their dark inner secrets, the suspicion, represented by the whispers and footsteps that haunt their stories, of shame and guilt, the reality hidden by appearances of authority. They are forced to recognize their own flaws and face the dark inner Other. Marlow lies to Kurtz's Intended; Lurie begins to acknowledge that he is a "great deceiver, and a great self-deceiver." (188) Geoffroy realizes his weak acquiescence to colonial brutality and Bell starts to come to terms with his cowardice, his unwillingness to confront the terrifying Chigurh and his own fear of death. Like Lurie he is a defeated man. Humiliation and shame characterize their experiences, but as Lurie wonders in *Disgrace* can each one now he has been dragged down from the heights of arrogance to the disgrace of "nothing" (D.205) be described more ambivalently as "[n]ot a bad man but not good either." (D. 195)

If the natives are depicted as non-evolving "enablers" does this indicate that white narratives are still restricted by the skin fetish of the stereotypical 'shiny black bodies' (R.C. 27; H.D. 30; F.3; O. 85) and secondly whether this stereotypical representation of the racial Other is a function of a rationalization powered by fear? Homi Bhabha defines stereotypes as "a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated." (2004: 95) This fear or anxiety is reflected in the colonial need for 'fixed' identities and roles in

the narratives to constantly affirm the superiority of the Self and the inferiority of the Other. I question whether maintaining the marginalized characters as ‘fixed’ non-evolving ciphers of degeneracy in white discourse is the ultimate gesture of white egocentricity since even on the most basic discursive level these individual roles are confined within hierarchical constructs of power, or whether there is another way of looking at this supposed function of the racial Other in these novels which is more productive.

Le Clézio introduces a new way of looking at the natives in *Onitsha* juxtaposing the stereotypical black-skinned prisoners with elusive figures from the countryside, families or other familiar characters from the towns along the riverbanks. By introducing such diversity yet maintaining the stereotype Le Clézio is able to draw an empathetic portrayal of the Other which defies criticism of exoticism while effectively deconstructing the colonial concept of “savage/sauvage”. I demonstrated that Le Clézio redefines “sauvage” from indicating barbarity to meaning liberation and loss of inhibitions. When the young prepubescent boy narrator, Fintan Allen, discovers the pleasures of rain after the heat of the day “[il] ôta ses chaussures, il les accrocha autour de son cou par les lacets, comme un sauvage.” (72) His innocence compounds the new definition, particularly in contrast to the craven conduct of Gerald Simpson the District Officer who panicked during the prisoners’ uprising and ordered the gunfire that killed the unarmed, trapped prisoners. Simpson’s reaction seriously questions how we define barbarity and how do we define justice.

Bhabha’s definition of the stereotype implies a tension between the certainty of the colonial ‘fixed’ way of looking at the world and an underlying doubt as to the enduring legitimacy of such perspectives. I demonstrated that a growing awareness of this dichotomy results in an expression of this hesitation within the narrative which subverts ‘fixity’ and creates spaces where language fails to articulate the voice of the white protagonist (F.57, N.C. 3,4), such as Lurie’s primordial “hurling out shapeless bellows that have no words behind them, only fear.” (D. 96) If the colonizer can no longer articulate his

own voice then he can no longer dominate the voice of the Other. As Fanon has demonstrated, since language “possesses the world expressed and implied by that language.” (Fanon 1967: 18) it becomes a primary source of power and dominance.

I have demonstrated that the emergence of the native voice in white discourse demands new discursive strategies to articulate a voice that is not dominated by the cultural and ideological authorities of the West that Fanon identifies. Both Camus, in *Le Premier Homme* and ‘L’Hôte’, and Coetzee, in *Foe* and *Disgrace*, address the problematic of representing the colonized voice within the referential framework of the language of the dominant colonizer. Subsequently, some post-colonial natives are depicted in more autonomous roles such as landowner, orator, hard-working family groups and historical figures who accept authority and as such redefine patriarchy to reflect a new autonomy based on land ownership and belonging rather than power based on assumptions of supremacy. However, *No Country for Old Men*, while following similar discursive patterns and strategies, does not reflect political change after democratization but represents instead the invasion into the democratic and economic center of the West itself. These emerging intrusive voices of the criminal Other represent different, even antagonistic, ideologies and ethical values that challenge those espoused by the West and forcefully demand a new way of looking at the world. How does the representation of the Other develop from the totally dominated voice of Friday to the autonomy of the menacing Chigurh whose power and influence is based on his absence from Bell’s narrative? When the colonized speaks he/she becomes subject, and consequently adopts an unfamiliar role that destabilizes the binaries inherent in white discourse. Thus two important questions concern this thesis. First, how does the writer articulate the voice of the racial Other and subsequently how can these voices be articulated without being ventriloquized through the dominant discourse of the European center?

Friday's acculturation indicates his enslavement; his voice is dominated within the narrative by Crusoe's controlling strategies that include using indirect speech and expressing his ideas in "broken *English*." (R.C. 204) The binary superior/inferior is indubitably established by the Christian/heathen and civilized European/degenerate cannibal oppositions. Hence Friday's voice is silenced by his native heritage.

Conversely, Conrad's novel questions the white mythological assumptions of supremacy and realism that Crusoe espouses. Conrad employs ambiguity, irony and imagery to criticize the supposed evangelical mission of colonialism by exploiting the greed of the "pilgrim" colonizers while simultaneously using mask imagery to shield the native faces from narrative scrutiny, suggesting we can never "know" the Other. Language becomes unreliable, even treacherous, in Marlow's narrative as the tension between appearance and reality is reflected throughout his story and reaches its nadir in the character of Kurtz, the dark Other, whose duality expresses the ambivalence within us, our "fascination of the abomination" that lures Marlow further and further into the *Heart of Darkness*.

Within this narrative, I demonstrated that Conrad introduces two new important challenges to white male superiority, the lure of our inner dark side, the dark underbelly of colonialism, that exerts a new form of mastery over us in the form of the "fascination with the abomination" and the growing suspicion that this dualism is the cause of our own downfall, the exposure of our weaknesses and flaws such as Kurtz's demonic rhetorical deceptions and Simpson's cowardice. This "'ambivalence' composed of conflicting affectionate and hostile impulses" (Fanon 1967:19) represents fear of the unknown, and fear of the trace of the Other within ourselves. I demonstrated how this is most powerfully depicted in *Foe* when Barton looks reluctantly into the mouth of Friday and sees "nothing in the dark save the glint of teeth white as ivory." (F.22) In this context, the white ivory adopts a crucial ambivalence, confronting the horrors of colonial economic exploitation of

ivory, but also the suspicion that the whiteness represents goodness and the trace of the Other within Friday himself, an illustration of Fanon's assertion that "the white man is not only The Other but also the master, whether real or imaginary." (1967: 138n.) Thus I propose that this psychological awakening and the political liberation from authoritarianism function as metaphors for each other in these narratives.

Within the complexities of an unreliable narrative voice and uncertainties of language and the dichotomy of appearance and reality I demonstrated how Marlow gives voice to the Other through fetishes and sounds. The little bit of white worsted around the dying slave's neck, Marlow's dying helmsman's enigmatic frown, the drumming in the jungle and the piercing cry from the jungle are all defined by their ambiguity. No explanation is given; just multiple possibilities are left open within the narrative.

Encounters in multicultural societies are more complex, bringing together diverse ideologies and cultural practices, as evidenced in the French colony of Algeria. I argued that Camus introduces an existentially alienated Other who is troubled by issues of identity and belonging. These dislocations are emphasized by the question "whose truth?" that reverberates throughout his novels, particularly in *L'Étranger* in which the trial scene in Part Two rewrites the events of the preceding chapters and changes the focus of the trial from Meursault's crime, the murder of the Arab on the beach, to his supposedly reprehensible conduct at his mother's funeral. The trial becomes a declaration of heritage and belonging, two extremely sensitive issues in a colony assimilated into the French state. This change effectively erases the Arab victim from the narrative because his voice is silenced and his story remains unwritten. However, his image/persona lingers either as the eternal, unresolved unidentified victim as a symbol of those others who have lost their lives or as yet another unknown, forgotten victim. Le Clézio also addresses this painful issue when he condemns how "[l]e monde entier détourne son regard" (O. 288) from the

tragic child soldiers and other victims of the Biafran War. The bodies are powerful totems of our indifference.

Camus's tersely written novel criticizes the absolutism of authority effectively. I argued that the Muslim nurse's 'veiled' face is 'unreadable' and therefore the narrative cannot master her. However, her body language becomes a powerful mouthpiece in the place of her voice as her knitting references the revolutionary French knitters at the guillotine and the moral and social injustices of the authoritarian regime against which the revolutionaries fought.

The schoolteacher Daru is depicted in the ambiguous position of a European Algerian. He neither supports the law enforcer Balducci's conservative attitudes nor identifies with the Arab prisoner's group of freedom fighters, a treacherous position in a landscape increasingly polarized by the demand for Independence and consequently the teacher pays dearly for his hesitation. The short story reflects the demand for Algerian autonomy and consequently the Arab is given a powerful voice when given the opportunity to choose his own destiny. As surprised and perhaps as disappointed as Daru, we see the prisoner unexpectedly walking towards the prison. There is an underlying paradox in the narrative since Daru, who gave the prisoner the voice of choice, also silenced this same voice when attempting to explain. We are left hanging, unable to provide closure to the story. The prisoner has stepped outside the margins but the schoolteacher remains inside, punished for the ambiguity of his actions and non-partisan politics.

Similarly, Coetzee's novels also challenge authority in both apartheid and post-apartheid regimes by writing counter-narratives that undermine Defoe's archetypes and paradigms. I demonstrated how Coetzee rewrote Defoe's iconic encounter on the beach by introducing Barton as castaway and by challenging reader expectations of the archetypal native; by opposing the darkness of the stereotypical native with the light of his reality, the narrative indicates that the canonical structure will not be repeated in Coetzee's novel. I

showed that Coetzee effectively questions the authority of white discursive strategies of power and that the text itself is now “Foe”. In the absence of Crusoe in *Foe*, Friday’s story becomes the subject of the novel but he still has no voice, because his silence is enforced by the muteness that symbolizes censorship in South Africa. Foe represents the authoritarian absolutism of traditional discourse while Barton insists on new ways of looking, of being open to possibilities. She insists on listening, a process that disempowers and objectifies the listener. Friday’s unspoken voice flows into the space, wordless, soundless but fluently flowing through the water, heard but not understood in a new medium that defies appropriation by the narrator.

In *Disgrace*, Coetzee again undermines the reader’s expectations of the encounter. The first meeting between the white protagonist Lurie and the Xhosa dog man/assistant Petrus is marked with a handshake; I argued that this gesture is an important indicator of respect and autonomy and symbolizes equality in the new South Africa, and should demand greater critical attention. However, this may serve only as a paradigm for the ideal and the violent rape represents the true hostilities surging through the new South Africa, and even in mimicry of colonialism’s rape of the non-West. Lurie’s stumbling on the toilet floor is a cruel mockery of Crusoe’s original encounter with Friday as though in retribution for the past. Thus this scene effectively answers Morrison’s question how these imaginary encounters enable the white writers to think about themselves. In literary representation Coetzee deconstructs the underlying concepts of power. This encounter challenges the authority of the colonizer and the patriarchy that authorized Lurie. I showed how the patriarchy that Lurie exemplifies is based on the entitlement and prestige afforded by his sexual magnetism and not on integrity, masculinity, or fatherhood; in contrast the patriarchy evident in Petrus is associated with a strong work ethic and extensive contacts based on respect and above all the protection of his family. He builds literal and metaphorical walls and fences. Their understanding of the concepts of power are

differentiated by assumptions of superiority on the one hand and acceptance of familial and social responsibilities on the other. There is no one ‘fixed’ concept, and the binaries are blurred, but ultimately Lurie’s lost patriarchal rights demonstrate how white assumptions of superiority no longer legitimize expectations of dominance in the transitioning society.

If patriarchal systems are transitioning and definitions of superiority and inferiority are changing, the space emerges within the interstices to allow the expression of the native voice as a single cry that echoes the degradations of the past and the promises of the future. The cry in the jungle “as of infinite desolation” (H.D. 68), the guest speaker at Petrus’s party “orating in rounded periods that rise and fall” (D. 135) and the lone singer on the boat to Nigeria in *Onitsha* whose music is “pas vraiment triste, pas vraiment un plainte” (O. 44) encapsulate the ambivalence of the moment, of loss and promise, of fear and hope expressed in emotions that defy white discourse; the narratives break down. All reveal how the white narrators must learn to listen, to pay attention rather than interrupt; the songs cannot be written because the wordless music is outside the realm of our experience. And the emotions are beyond our sphere of mastery. This powerful moment indicates that the author intends to articulate the voice of the Other not necessarily through language but through gesture, signs, and silence, but above all through the mystery of “the withheld”. The withdrawn differs from silence in *Onitsha* because it is a deliberate act of agency in contrast to the muted Oya’s inability to explain; the withheld poses questions, implies paradoxes and asks questions that are refused answers. (O. 218, 229) The withheld implies choice, independence, and knowledge. The natives are the mentors and guides to the secrets of Africa, having replaced Crusoe and Kurtz, the two figures who represent the extremes of colonialism. Le Clézio’s novel writes back to Conrad’s novel by restoring the history, human rights, culture and spirituality to the indigenous natives with dignity. I demonstrated that *Onitsha* also explores other silent/silenced voices that call through the ages, the unwritten voices intrinsic to the facial scarification of the natives that articulate

the origins of the tribes, the ruins that speak of diasporas and hardship and the voices of Aro Chuku, the ruined oracle that still seems to have a mystifying hold over contemporary Nigeria and tells of a spiritual past; when told together these signs narrate stories of warfare, destruction and hardship, thus placing the natives within a rich historical context.

The concept of voices waiting to be heard takes on a different meaning in McCarthy's *No Country for Old Men*, in which the silent voices that threaten social and political order do not relate the past but are menacing threats to the present and the future. I argued that Chigurh's mysterious presence, his unknown ambivalent origins, his refusal to be mastered by authority and his own philosophy which contrasts but does not necessarily conflict with Western ideologies, represent the voices of the unknown terrorist Other who menaces contemporary law and order. He is otherworldly, so mysterious and elusive the Sheriff likens him to a ghost, a metaphor that implies inheritance from another reality. I argued that Chigurh represents a more sophisticated and hence menacing criminal other than the Mexicans whose abject bloated bodies symbolize the insidious encroachment of drugs and corruption across American society. Both produce powerful statements of intention which resist mastery.

In the face of such menace, it is not surprising that Bell expresses uncertainty and loss of confidence and respect. There is a new lacuna in his vision of life and he turns to Christianity to restore meaning. But like many of the white protagonists who are forced to confront the increasingly insistent and powerful voices of the racial Other, he turns to a wife or partner for support. Marie, Susan Barton, Lucy Lurie, Bev Shaw, Maou and Marima all function as the nurturing female in the narratives, restoring confidence and encouraging the white men to see a different way of looking. This is in many respects a comforting view of the world, but I argue that this role fixes women in stereotypical roles of nurturer and supporter. And if we re-examine the voices emerging from the peripheries,

despite the discursive strategies that create spaces in the narratives and deconstruct colonial power, the white protagonist still resists articulating the voice of the racial Other outside the colonial binaries. Have they learned nothing? Have the protagonists resigned from their positions of authority without understanding the reasons for their downfall? Have the others lost their lives for nothing? Do we as critics also depend on these binaries and stereotypes to help us order our world? In the face of the increasing threats to political and social stability perhaps the binaries assist us to make sense of a puzzling and frightening world in which we need to know if “we are still the good guys” not necessarily in order to disparage the Other but to restore our own identity in a rapidly changing world. I argue that the ambivalence inherent in stereotyping, referenced by Bhabha’s definition, may become a way of ordering the changing diversity of the unknown and that like these narratives have shown be alert to the developing power concepts and the challenges to the metanarratives that underline our society so that questions like “Whose truth?” and “Whose reality?” do not become divisive but are functions of reasoning and understanding. McCarthy’s novel shows very forcefully the importance of recognizing the legitimacy and difference of other ideologies.

I argued that Le Clézio’s different approach successfully brought dignity and autonomy to the natives in his novel despite criticisms that his empathy for the natives had undertones of exoticism. Le Clézio claims in his Nobel Prize speech to be witness for the marginalized Other, a statement that determines his interpretation of voice as an expression of individuality, bringing them out of the morass of anonymity. We cannot live in a silent world. Similarly Camus argued in his Nobel speech that the ethical responsibility of the writer is to speak for truth and liberty while Coetzee challenges authority and argues for the right to autonomy. How effective is the role of the racial Other to enable the fulfillment of these humanitarian aims? But the main objective of the Other is to challenge us to reach beyond the familiar so we can try to listen to the silence and read the unwritten

discourse of these unknown elusive figures. In this respect the literary representation of the racial Other plays a significant role in a globalized world in which the unknown figures who represent different ideologies such as ISIS may be imagined and contained to help us reach beyond the known. It is the author's responsibility to disturb, to make the reader reconsider basic assumptions. I demonstrated that these novels effectively bear witness to the racial Other and strive to articulate a voice that is unencumbered by prejudice and cultural difference. In a world in which diasporas brings the ethnically, racially, politically, ideologically and culturally different into juxtaposition I argue the literary representation of the Other is an important narrative and conceptual strategy with which to explore difference as diversity and identity.

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