Faultlines in Postcoloniality
Contemporary Readings

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Edited by

Ernest L. Veyu and Valentine N. Ubanako

CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS
PUBLISHING

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This book first published 2014

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-4438-6387-4, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-6387-2

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our immense gratitude goes to the members of the Frontiers Research Group for contributing most of the chapters in this book. A number of persons have also been critically important to evaluating and making such remarks as have improved the quality of the contributions. The principal persons in this category are Prof. Stephen Mforteh, Prof. John Nkemngong Nkengasong and Prof. Eunice Ngongkum. We are very grateful to them.

While it is not possible to cite every name here, we are very grateful to all whose contribution has helped in this research endeavour.

PREFACE

The world today is marked by social, cultural, political, linguistic, ideological and literary tensions, which have indeed succeeded in creating cracks in the fabric that holds or is supposed to hold the human race and the world together. The cause of this fragmentation is partly due to the absence of communication or the lack of the creation of communication avenues across the divide, be they imaginary or real. For example, today in Africa and elsewhere, English is learnt and used in different contexts and for different reasons. The language has proven beyond doubts to be an asset in communication and the resolution of conflicts of all kinds. Non-native English writers have found it necessary to adapt and indigenize certain aspects of the language, including both the lexicon and narrative styles. In the same vein, national literatures have come up and new linguistic strategies have been put in place in the quest to enhance dialogue in order to fulfil the people's quest for cultural expression and national identity. On its part, theatre has variously developed, raising issues which spell out and define new identities which are in themselves fissuring. Each of the chapters in this collection is an attempt at ways of bridging the gaps caused by the different linguistic, literary and artistic faultlines.

MBUH Tennu MBUH argues that the religious poetry of John Donne is more than an intellectual exercise in transcendental excursions. To prove his point, he uses three of Donne's poems to show that the temptation to associate a poem with religious sentiments makes it superior to secular creativity. He therefore interrogates the conceit of hymnal poetics and shows the possibility of misrepresentation in the converted voice of Donne. He points out that Donne's Holy Sonnets are foundational in the ideological outreach of European expansionism in the nineteenth century, combining intellectual, political and religious institutions into a colonial strategy. He indicates emphatically that from current colonial and postcolonial discourse, it can be deduced that Donne was indirectly assisting the colonial mission. His poetry, according to Mbuh, is a deliberate ploy to coerce the unsuspecting mind, celebrate a dubious universality and pave the way for different ideologies, especially for the African.

Ernest L. VEYU lays emphasis on the two main concerns in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* namely, human anxiety and managing a sense of loss. He presents the anxiety and mourning which result from the many

losses incurred by characters in the text under study as a mental process which consists in probing into the psyches of the different characters. He affirms that most of the characters in *To the Lighthouse* are creatures of the mind who are plagued by a general sense of loss but who are either unable to mourn the losses or decide wilfully to intellectualise or wade off the effects of such losses. Veyu concludes that mourning is not given any serious attention and that comfort from bereavement becomes unattainable. Thus, death is preferred over mourn as the former is considered as a credible alternative from the calamity or tragedy of human life, laying bare, the author's escapist tendency.

Charles NYITSOTEMVE NAH tackles the issue of origin and place which have always been central to the Caribbean. The journey he points out here is not physical but psychological. Using *Omeros*, the psychic journey consists in the West Indian interrogating himself/herself both intrinsically and extrinsically in order to defragment his psyche from its fragmentary relationship with space and time. Nah thus, posits that the Caribbean is caught between two personalities and is faced with the herculean task of defining a unique personality. Walcott thus, enables his poetic personages to be connected with both situations (the world of the past and the world of the present). According to him, the dual connections of the West Indian, and the fact of emphasising their self-importance, are necessary ingredients in re-ordering the West Indian psyche from hate, nothingness and deracination.

Kelvin NGONG TOH argues that that there is the presence not of one diaspora, but of different diasporas in the Caribbean gulf. He asserts that the area is, indeed, a melting pot of cultures and races but points out emphatically that the different diasporas have constructed different "national" spaces which, most often, have made the Caribbean people hostile towards one another. Using Derek Walcott's *Omeros*, he notes that the production represents the different diasporas in the Caribbean and their struggle to survive alongside others. He is thus concerned in finding out how the characters in *Omeros*, despite their differences in race and culture, attempt to root themselves in the islands considered out of "home" and their efforts to co-exist in such a *foreign* context. Toh thus, holds that Walcott's poem, *Omeros*, advocates a Caribbean fusion of different diasporas in a bid to construct a postdiaspora.

Eric NSUH ZUHMBOSHI believes that there is a faithful nexus between artistic creativity and its socio-political and cultural contexts of production. To prove his point, he uses the music of the popular South African musical diva, Miriam Makeba, whose social context was a serious driving force in her musical composition. He thus analyses some of

Makeba's songs/lyrics which are set within the Apartheid and Post-Apartheid contexts and comes out with the conclusion that Makeba's musical productions are a reflection of the society in which she lives. Her music thus, catalogues the ills, hopes and aspirations of the majority of South Africans faced with a repressive Apartheid regime. He paints Makeba as a committed musician who dedicated her life to the liberation of the South African people. Zuhmboshi concludes that Makeba is a humanist artist whose songs/lyrics, in the days of Apartheid, had a functional purpose and were deeply rooted in the political, economic, and social cosmology of her era.

Donatus FAI TANGEM re-echoes the cardinal role of popular culture as an alternative avenue for self-expression and socio-political participation. He stresses that given its accessibility to a wider societal strata, its extremely diverse focus and aesthetically communicative strategy, popular culture has bridged societal structures and infiltrated its fabrics. He notes that pop cultures sometimes refocus on issues of both global as well as regional interest. Taking the lyrical composition of Tchana Pierre, who by all considerations is seen to re-echo the aspirations of one of Africa's founding fathers, Dr. Nkwame Nkrumah when he enjoined African states to "Unite or Perish", he drives home his point. He further points out that the musical composition of Tchana Pierre thus, portrays him as fighter who is critically involved in the liberation struggle that targets Africa as a continent made up of states that understand the immeasurable value of unity and love. Finally, Fai Tangem points out that through Tchana Pierre's lyrical composition, it is clear that, although Africa experiences severe poverty, misery and deaths, there are ways the multiple challenges can be solved.

Emelda NGUFOR SAMBA focuses on research on Community theatre, especially its transformative role within deprived or disadvantaged communities. She concentrates on the potential of community theatre to foster knowledge interchange among and between communities and also between communities and facilitators who, for the most part, are professional theatre practitioners.

Focusing on a number of workshops and making reference to several others, she throws light on how community theatre functions, the different stakeholders involved, the kind of knowledge they each possess, how through theatre for development, communication barriers can be broken, how the knowledge is transferred from one party to the other, and finally, how they put the knowledge to use. She concludes that knowledge is not the possession of the facilitators only, since each individual has both personal and community experiences. She notes that although the

community is the primary beneficiary, the facilitators also have a lot to benefit from the process in terms of knowledge and experience. According to her therefore, it is mutually beneficial.

Valentine NJENDE UBANAKO investigates the use of a category of users who work with native speakers as cooks, drivers, yards men and house helps in Cameroon and describes these users as *non-native expatriates*. He claims that although they are lowly educated or not educated at all, by virtue of the fact that these non-native expatriates are exposed to native English, they are able to use English in a peculiar manner. He thus, investigates the way they use English as well as their attitudes towards other users of English. He asserts that these special users of English are able to negotiate new identities and social ascendency and concludes that educational attainment is not a necessary criterion for social ascendency among these non-native expatriates.

IMEN HAMDI examines the African Englishes Phonological Core. Her study comes on the heels of the study by Jenkins and others who suggested that there was a minimum phonological core for international English, with emphasis on Asian countries. Hamdi thus, lays emphasis on African speakers of English to see if the results are the same or different from the study carried out by Jenkins and others. Through conversations between a Tunisian telemarketing man and 53 Africans from 13 different Sub-Saharan African countries, which were recorded and transcribed, deviations from Jenkins' Lingua Franca Core (LFC) were noted. An "African" Englishes Phonological Core (AEPC) was established, and compared to Jenkins' LFC to prove that this latter did not fit the nature of African Englishes. A few modifications to Jenkins' core were suggested. Hamdi concludes that several characteristics predefine the phonological core of African Englishes at the level of consonants and vowels. These characteristics emphasize the idea that African Englishes have their own phonological core. Furthermore, AEPC is distinct, as it has some common features with other world Englishes like the use of assimilation, dissimilation and combination, which are related to native users of English.

Hans MBONWUH FONKA handles the issue whether Cameroon Pidgincreole (CPc) should be taught in school and whether or not it has negative impacts on the acquisition of English. Furthermore, he questions the acceptability of Cameroon Pidgincreole in the school milieu. He uses interviews to elicit the opinions of both students and teachers on the learning and teaching of CPc in school. The analysis indicates that respondents would accept to learn if they were taught in pidgin, would teach if they are asked to teach in pidgin, but most of them support the fact

that the use of pidgin should be banned from schools. Fonka thus points out this paradox where people speak a language, would want to teach and learn it, but at the same time would want it banned. He thus argues that that CPc for Cameroon schools can improve education and nation building and calls on users to have total confidence in the language they use.

Joseph NKWAIN highlights and showcases Cameroon Pidgin English (CamPE) as an important communication tool within the complex multilingual and multicultural setting of Cameroon where the social, political, linguistic and other forces which act against the language are many. He examines different factors which explicate the assertiveness and continuous survival of the language in this difficult context. Among these factors, he cites early contact which enhances the development of the language into a pidgincreole, age and exposure. The (inter)intelligibility of the language, its flexibility and creativity, as well as its spread throughout the country, equally ensures its assertiveness and survival. Considering the potential of the language, earlier researchers are unanimous in asserting that the linguistic tides in Cameroon are most probably going to turn in favour of CamPE, this, just on the simple condition of official recognition by the state. This, he points out, will lay to rest the claims by many sceptics that the language is facing death or extinction in Cameroon.

Eric EKEMBE examines a crucial problem, that is, the difficulty of engaging learners in large classrooms into interactive lessons with emphasis on the Cameroonian foreign language classroom. Due to this difficulty, the study observes that results observed from language testing research in such a context are unbinding as they do not seem to reflect the learning atmosphere of the learners. Specifically, he is out to investigate whether learners' progress in the target language can be attributed to interaction in the classroom and also examine how much progress can be made from interaction in large classes. The result did not show any significant difference at post and delayed post-test in procedural knowledge. He concludes that while classroom size is implicational in the outcomes, the durability of knowledge gained from interaction appeared to have a strong correlation with the learners' previous learning styles and the learning environment.

Valentine N. UBANAKO and Ernest L. VEYU

HYMNAL POETICS AND A POSTCOLONIAL DIALECTICS AT THE CROSSROADS OF DONNEAN (MIS)REPRESENTATIONS

MBUH TENNU MBUH

Introduction: Chorusing Hymnal Politics

In this chapter, I argue that the religious poetry of John Donne is more than an intellectual exercise in transcendental excursions. Based on three of those poems, it is apparent that the temptation to associate a poem with religious sentiments makes it superior to secular creativity. I therefore interrogate the conceit of hymnal poetics, and show how there is possible misrepresentation in the converted voice of Donne. Beyond this, his Holy Sonnets become foundational in the ideological outreach of European expansionism in the nineteenth century, combining intellectual, political and religious institutions into a colonial strategy.

Even with its obvious flaws today, postcolonial theory still helps in locating authoritative voices that would prefer an acultural status. As a writer whose work has benefitted from uncritical acceptance of its spiritual vision, John Donne is celebrated not so much for his controversies as for the profundity of his poetry. I draw on this intersecting scholarship to propose a reading of three of his Holy Sonnets – "O My Black Soul", "I am a Little World Made Cunningly", and "At the round Earth's Imagin'd Corners" – and based on Sugirtharajah's understanding of postcolonialism as a "descriptor" burdened with "definitional ambiguity" (245) – as insightful to an understanding of how colonialist discourse was to benefit from and valorise colour, universality, and territoriality against Europe's enclaves. To do this, I will argue that the duality in Donne's poetry is a direct reflection of his interesting personality, one that politicises itself into secular and religious avenues almost effortlessly. Abrams et al. argue accordingly how:

> [t]here are two distinct but related authors known as John Donne. The first is the scandalous young spark, who wrote bawdy and cynical – Jack

> Donne, the rake. Then there is the gravely witty, passionately religious divine, who wrote verses to his God as ardent as those he had once addressed to his mistresses. This is Dr John Donne, the Dean of St. Paul's. Yet the key to both men is the same; it is a kind of restless, searching energy, which scorns the easy platitude and the smooth, empty phrase; which is vivid, immediate, troubling; and which makes the reading of Donne's poetry an imaginative and intellectual struggle and an all-absorbing experience. (1059)

I find the emphasis on a "searching energy" not persuasive enough because it attempts to gloss over "bawdy" fervour as synonymous to the divine; a weakness which possibly led to the acceptance of Donne's voice in the mediation of later colonies. Furthermore, I intend to suggest that a hymn performs a duplicity that can be enabling – when perceived as a trough to divinity – or misrepresenting – when it is resisted by a victim-awareness. Yet, a hymn can also be the amorphous space for unique claims – say in gender or race or ideological engagements – that stage centrifugal dialogues against centrist conviction.

At a conference of African and Caribbean scholars in Buea, Cameroon, in November 2008, Christian Cardinal Tumi gave a keynote address in which he cautioned participants against associating with anyone who does not love music. The consoling and energising power of music was his focus and, significantly, he did not draw boundaries between what some zealots have termed "worldly" and "gospel" music. As a universal language that defies every vestige of boundary-markers, music can be contextually discriminatory, but its overall allure is to a chorus from the human soul with transcendental implications. My concern in this chapter is with how the soothing poetry in music (or music in poetry) reaches out to secular and divine spaces; and then with the manner in which the intellectual/religious poet schemes a questionable hypothesis that polarises genuine human sentiments based on a stereotyped understanding of what is worldly and what is divine; and finally with how a postcolonial reading of Donne can reveal interesting intersections in worldviews and essentialist definitions.

In one of my favourite "gospel" songs, the persona (considering the song as a poem) is yet to conceive and against the conspiracy of impatient in-laws, she consoles the husband in the following words: "My husband don't worry, don't worry, I will give you a child". She then sources biblical parallels to her expectant state, and ends up with a supreme conviction that the miracle of Christ will manifest through her. Now, the error will be for anyone to confine this song in a Christian closet: it is not known if the musician is rendering her own condition, that of an

acquaintance, or is purely speculative on such a possibility and how those concerned should then react. Given my suspicion of Christian ascendancy today more than ever before, I suggest that this song can be articulated by a husband to his wife, a Muslim to a Christian friend, a parent to the child, and so on, by personalising the lyrics and meaning, wherein the context should define meaning and not the reverse. Traversing this gender basis, one obvious way to de-feminise the lyrics for an alternative meaning will be to adopt a masculinist position without its negative connotations, as in: "My dear wife don't worry, don't worry, everything will be okay". Here, I deny transcendental stereotyping that miscues daily reality; and then personalise my own hopes and convictions into a personal prayer that deliberately kicks at conservative shins and their monotonous liturgy. Just as the category of wife/husband interchanges, so too can we have other family, social, and professional relationships that appropriate the song for a functionally remedial need.

But the manner in which gender needs are rendered in this song limits other possibilities of solving the problem highlighted. This is because a Jehovah mindset stymies the imagination, which is the reservoir of possibilities for the visionary poet; and then constrains the receiver of the song's message into an apparent cul-de-sac Christian-solution. Drawing on this ambivalence, and by juxtaposing "worldly" and "divine" contexts, it is easy to see how hymns can be institutionally limited and therefore limiting, and go on to narrate a one-sided vision of an otherwise dualised world. The following hymn reveals a representatively homogenising vision that does not recognise cultural relativity:

> Angels are praising God
> Alleluia
> Why can't you praise him too
> Amen, amen!

These are familiar lyrics, which take it for granted that angels are a common cultural currency. But there is no credible data beyond the prefiguring of the so-called traditional religions, to prove that angels, whatever they are, praise God, who is another aggregated construct. The idea of an angel to which human responsibility subjugates itself is a figment of the expansionist imagination which early missionaries and colonial administrators exploited accordingly.

On a purely spiritual side, the inspiration to literalise bible teaching can be seen in the hymnal transformation of Jesus' plea in Luke 18:15-17:

> And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when *his* disciples saw *it*, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein". (KJV)

In Stopford A. Brooke's hymnal version of the late nineteenth century, the anger of the disciples is edited out of the scene probably because of the propaganda that Jesus could or should not be associated with negative sentiments. There is no intermediary as "[t]he mothers from a village brought/ Their children to His knee". The fact that this hymn was written at the height of colonial incursions indicates the way in which Christian theology was transforming the gospel through the universalisation of geo-specific markers like summer.

In the same light, it is interesting to see how hymns valorise that which in another context will be considered negative or sinful. In 2 Timothy for instance, we have one of Paul's Christological Hymns:

> It is a faithful saying:
> For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:
> If we suffer, we shall also reign with him:
> If we deny him, he also will deny us:
> If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. (2:11-13)

These verses provide the inspiration for the hymn, "Onward Christian Soldier" whose first two stanzas indicate a significant parallel in the transposition of earthly and/or human concerns into the divine sphere:

> Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
> With the cross of Jesus going on before.
> Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe;
> Forward into battle see His banners go!
> At the sign of triumph Satan's host doth flee;
> On then, Christian soldiers, on to victory!
> Hell's foundations quiver at the shout of praise;
> Brothers, lift your voices, loud your anthems raise.

Here, the poet's imagination goes wild in adjusting Christian fervour to what is expected of a true believer, explaining the militant use of metaphor. If we again understand that Paul's Letter to Timothy was against a background of early Christian fears and uncertainties for the new faith, it will become clear that the apostle's words were meant to encourage his followers against the conservatism of the authorities. This in

fact is the general mood in which I read Paul's Letters, in which human concerns privilege divine expectations. Unfortunately, this transition in meaning has usurped the originary human basis of the epistles, and instead favours the latter with undue reverence in terms of the source of inspiration. In the hymnal verses above, this hybridised discourse is evident when the Christian soldiers, inspired by "Christ, the royal Master", must confront the "foe". In the second stanza, that foe becomes identifiable with "Satan" and "hell", both of which are ideological archetypes framed as oppositional zones of spiritual conquest. In other words, the condescending mind activates its own desires and fears into a genealogy of Christian conquest, and not the reverse. This attitude also explains why the notion of hell in Christianity today is diametrically different from its conception in Jewish tradition; and is, in fact, a Romanisation of the ancient tradition which, as Harpur suggests, is synonymous to Hades (84). David Norton further explains that critics of the King James Bible "accused [it] of being made to speak 'the prelatical language' in using words like 'bishopric' and 'hell' instead of 'charge' and 'grave'" (99). And finally Metzger makes it clear that through translation, "Sheol" has become "the grave," "the pit," and "hell" (59). Whereas what came to be known as hell was a transitional space for the Jews, the Christianity that was *exported* with Roman prescriptions was intentionally intimidatory. Hell was thus associated with eternal fire, for fear of which surrendering souls became ambiguous converts who were caught between opposing spiritualities.

My argument then is simple: when we invest a poem/hymn with spiritual potentials, it is appropriate but also misleading because at its basic level, poetry, like every art form involves a spiritual dialogue in transcendence. That is, such art celebrates the fact that it is rooted in social necessity, but also prospects the hereafter as a possible explanation to the inexplicable. As Thomas H. Troeger points out,

> [p]oetry, understood as our capacity to be imaginative, gives vivid expression to the intimations of mystery that draw us more closely to the deep dear core of things. Poetry is the idiom of our visionary powers. It articulates the intangible realities that we sense through the yearning soul and the heart alive to wonder. It opens us to the ineffable substance of the Spirit: "Poetry tries to get at something elemental by coming out of a silence and returning us – restoring us – to that silence. It longs to contact the mysteries; hence its kinship to prayer." (122)

On the other hand, however, such a favourable destiny draws unfavourable boundaries and casts analogous artistic expressions into demonised

spheres of "worldly" art as if some art originates from and is consumed in outer space. Proof of this unfortunate duplicity is the fact that the so called religious artist has the freedom to interact imaginatively and physically between the corporeal and spiritual realms of existence, while his/her *worldly* counterpart is reduced to a victim of sensuality. Donne's poetry captures this duality beautifully as he confesses the earthly, the sensual, and the rational; but also draws on a metaphysical space that is convenient refuge for human vagrancy.

The colour of sin and Donne's "O My Black Soul"[1]

The ease with which the hymn can transform both subject matter and meaning explains why a poet like Donne can be acclaimed both as a secular and religious writer. There is, however, an unworded reprieve in this case, to be administered as with almost every Christian disputation, whenever the conditions are favourable – and it is often not clear how a favourable condition is determined. How Donne's rational mentality ascribes to the Anglicanism of his time seems to be of little concern when we overlay this with how, on the other hand, the irrational poet invades the very conservative conclaves into which he escapes in moments of self-doubt. It is possible that the very religious fervour which he is expected to articulate makes itself vulnerable to schematic postures of the "sinner" in need of redemption, even when it is clear from his verses that he is not ready to surrender sensual privileges, whether corporeal or mental. The dialectical frame of Donne's personality and poetry thus performs the soul-searching and yet dubious sentiments of a doubly-visaged psyche that decides on convenient poses for the reader or observer. In my view this duality and the ease with which it is joggled, can become a postcolonial post-mortem of how Africans relate to sacred literary material.

When T. S. Eliot facilitated the process of recognising metaphysical poetry for what was to become, in Harold Bloom's words "the generous overvaluation by Eliotic critics" (Bloom xvi), it was also not conceivable that such revived status owed a lot to the colonising worldview to which Eliot himself was no stranger. While I will argue that Donne's poetry initiates the process of mapping out colonial routes in the mind, it is also necessary to understand, as Bloom explains, that Dr Johnson's coinage of the term "metaphysical poet" long predates Eliot's:

[1] Apart from "A Hymn to God the Father" which is taken from Abrams et als, the rest of the Donne's poems cited here are from Stringer et als.

> The metaphysical poets were men of learning, and to shew their learning was their whole endeavour; but, unluckily resolving to shew it in rhyme, instead of writing poetry, they only wrote verses, and very often such verses as stood the trial of the finger better than of the ear; for the modulation was so imperfect, that they were only found to be verses by counting the syllables. (Bloom xv-xvi)

While Eliot arguably succeeded in rehabilitating Dr Johnson's negative appreciation, like Donne, he too was engaged in forging an Anglican counter Christianism to Catholicism. Yet, one of the ironies of modernist aesthetics is that perhaps its greatest practitioner, in both literary and critical terms, was above all else a postcolonial subject. In many ways, Eliot's migration to London corresponded to migratory patterns in postcolonialism; and by embracing Englishness and its cloned Catholicism, he was unconsciously dramatising the way in which authoritative notions gained legitimacy, often through intellectual coercion and sheer force, and how these then infiltrated cultural spaces. Eliot's recognition of Donne's poetry is both a measure of his own ambivalent spirituality and an endorsement of how such spirituality was transforming itself into a conquering momentum; a link that further explains Donne's duplicity on secular and religious themes.

To succeed with such a scheme, the data is usually corrupted in order to justify the intrusive ideology. In *The Sixteen Crucified Saviours*, for instance, there is speculation about the original skin colour of Jesus and his mother. This position is of course contested, just as with every emerging detail related to the history of Christ. Colonial colour differentiation benefitted from this Christian bias, where white was the colour of divine purity, and black was that of a doomed ancestry. Ideologies were consequently structured and justified through this essentialism. Donne's reference to a "black soul" is therefore more than just a semantic distinction of a conscious sinner's orientation – it is a linguistic cluster that conjured and fostered divine privileges based on racial histories in which the Church was, and is, intimately implicated. According to Kersey Graves in Chapter Five of his book,

> There is as much evidence that the Christian Saviour was a black man, or at least a dark man, as there is of his being the son of the Virgin Mary, or that he once lived and moved upon the earth. And that evidence is the testimony of his disciples, who had nearly as good an opportunity of knowing what his complexion was as the evangelists, who omit to say anything about it. In the pictures and portraits of Christ by the early Christians, he is uniformly represented as being black. And to make this the more certain, the red tinge is given to the lips; and the only text in the

> Christian bible quoted by orthodox Christians, as describing his complexion, represents it as being black. Solomon's declaration, "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem" (Sol. i. 5), is often cited as referring to Christ. According to the bible itself, then, Jesus Christ was a black man.

It is obvious that Graves himself is using an essentialist definition, when in fact "dark" would be more convincing. Such a debate through Donne, which literally straddled Reformation and Renaissance radicalism and conceit respectively, was to usher in a stringent typology of difference by which the colony was designated and claimed. The vested logic defied relative nomenclatures and forged new alternatives that addressed the world from a Caucasian lens. To analyse the duplicity in Donne's poetry, we have to understand that he was a social man whose sensuality led to uncomfortable cohabitation with conflicting ideologies. The confessional verse, "John Donne, Ann Donne, Undone", captures this image of a man of the world whose rascally manoeuvring of religious mores is justified in his secular poetry.

It has been pointed out that "Donne's Holy Sonnets had only a limited circulation in the seventeenth century" (Stringer et al. lx). This suggests thematic unpopularity, which was at variance with the more genuine scheme of an emerging empire. Even the form of the sonnet may be held partially responsible for this apparent lack of interest since the stylistic form corresponded to a conservatism that was to find fertile grounds in the colony. Describing the limited geography of the British empire around "the second quarter of the eighteenth century", David Armitage points out that "[t]he frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by a common religion and by the Royal Navy" (1). He then goes on to define ideology contextually as "the programmatic sense of a systematic model of how society functions and ... as a world-view which is perceived as contestable by those who do not share it" (4). This is the context in which Donne's religiosity affirms or at least influences British authority over its overseas territories, based on Armitage's guarded description of such an ideological critique as "rationally indefensible, or even false" (5). The fallacy also provides the context for my postcolonial reading of Donne's poetry.

In "O My Black Soul" then, Donne seems to engage inadvertently in a colour debate, already alluded to, with the same haughty indifference that characterised essentialist colonial discourse. In the poem, the essentialisation of colour which Donne adopts was already anticipatory of how colonial biases were taking root in the imagination of the British child. The religious background to this attitude is significant because it privileged the

pure against the damned not based on any biological data but because historical circumstances had prefigured a European supremacist comportment. In the biblical story of Ham, for instance, perverse behaviour was attributed by Western expansionist and enslaving consciousness to the Black race, as a way of justifying assumed superiority of a Caucasian ancestry. As Adams puts it, "this story, as it was amplified and changed in extrabiblical interpretations, became the ideological cornerstone used to justify the slavery of black Africans thousands of years afterwards" (157). Donne certainly grew up aware of the glory of this (falsified) consciousness, and his later conversion to Anglicanism and then to becoming a preacher solidified his faith in the politics of colour. In the poem the speaker compares himself to "a Pilgrim which abroad had done/ Treason". The foreign space suggests the early prospection of the colonial world through the agency of pilgrimages wherein in the words of Tyerman, "penitential war answered a genuine craving to expiate sin" (12). The adventure was not only for religious purposes but, as we will see, adopted warring language for its success.

By playing on colour as such, Donne intellectualises his relation to sin by distancing himself from it, in preference for its direct opposite: "make thy selfe with holy mourning blacke/ ...red with blushing as thou art with sinne". Here, human frailties such as sin and guilt (the latter leading to blushing) are identified with blackness. Significantly, the whiteness of the colonial mentality (as in *white man*) is not invoked by Donne since this will rival the pure whiteness that should come through spiritual transformation in Christ. The blood of Christ is the redeeming image and "being Red" (to be distinguished from the "red" of guilt together with the biased upper casing) "dyes red souls to white". The debate over the original skin colour of Christ exposes the supremacist argument in Donne not just as an intellectual site for reactionary discourses, but also as one in which the process of colonisation can be seen as initially a means of logical arguments that subtly suggest racial hierarchies.

While Donne is famous for his argumentative spirituality, the race card has hardly been a factor in determining his status. Representative statements such as Anthony Herbold's claim that in "Black Soul", Donne "found a structure in the opposition of a black soul ... to the red face of a blushing sinner and to Christ's blood" (Stringer et al 276), pose a problem of acceptability: if blushing is a veritable cultural fact, it must be admitted that "a black soul" is an imaginary imposition that aligns cultural bias of the West with supposed negativity of the non-West, especially the Black race. I think that the overall "neglect" results partly from the fact that the form of colonial education which the pedagogic and intellectual fallouts

from Donne's poetry were to accommodate was one that endeavoured to convince the natives about the fact of their representation, which was actually a misrepresentation. The native was coerced into knowledge of aggregate humanity whose polarised spirituality was not to be contested; nor the intellectual dependency of the native doubted. As a symbol of spiritual revival in Donne, Christ took care of both the soul and the intellect. Whether as preacher from the pulpit or classroom teacher (when the poems represented part of the mind-forging curriculum in/for the colony), Donne's imaginative prowess was at once authoritative and osmotic. In this way, also, it formatted spiritual notions of Self and Other that were false and falsifying, only valuable when we suspend other variables in their analysis.

The unknown world imagined cunningly

In the next poem for analysis here, "I am A Little World Made Cunningly", it is easy to see why its opening verse appealed to Eliot, whose own creative mind loved abstracting meaning from the physical into the mental world. In "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" for instance, the persona imagines the universe "squeezed ... into a ball" and "rolled" toward the overwhelming question of his obsession and fear (Mack 1578). Interestingly, Eliot had been inspired by Donne's contemporary, Andrew Marvell in "To His coy Mistress", to speculate on the existentialist loneliness of early twentieth century European man, a man whose ego had already been universalised as an alibi for colonialism. In Marvell's poem, there are references to "the Indian Ganges", "the flood", and "conversion of the Jews", which reveal the subjugating perspective from which the persona's "vegetable love should grow/ Vaster than empires", only slower, because of the ultimate necessity against inevitable decay of the flesh – to "roll all our strength and all/ Our sweetness up into one ball" (Abrams 1361). The expected consummation reflects the haste with which colonies, which were typically feminised, were ravished; and, here, art was providing the mental manger for such expansionism. So I reread Donne's words – "I am a little world" – with a bias not only against the appropriation of the world in which the individual's status is stressed in upper case, but also with a foreboding understanding of how that world imposed itself on other spatio-spiritualities. Logically then, the verse concludes by celebrating the fact of its persona being "made cunningly/ Of elements, and an angelic sprite;/ But black sin hath betray'd to endless night/ My world's both parts, and oh! both parts must die".

There is therefore an implied dialectic in Donne that foregrounds his world and its superiority, that "world's both parts being the person/sinner who is universalising his symbolism; and which are betrayed by "blacke sinne ... to endless night". This black-sin juxtaposition (with its implied complementary metaphors of eternal darkness and fire) exposes Donne as a child of the formative years of colonial education. Ironically, such education initially victimised the British child whose mentality had to be conditioned to suit the challenges of the colonial world, into a false self-image. The process required a specific form of pedagogy which relied on graphic images that served as a kind of shock therapy. If Christ had confessed about the weakness of the flesh against the willingness of the spirit at the initial moment of his earthly transition, colonial religious lessons were meant to toughen the flesh/skin of the British child against the malarial tropics of sin; while at the same time transforming the African through a "muscular Christianity", which Castle describes, in his analysis of how the African child was presented in colonial periodicals, as a "bold, energised and aggressive approach" (87). In the Indian case, "educationists disentangled Englishness from Christianity" and coupled with the "adoration of Anglo-Saxonism", the Indian was "receiving the 'masculine' ideals which had greatly influenced the ethoses of English schools and universities". No wonder too that the speaker in Donne's poem acknowledges the fact that "both parts" of his personified world (the spirit and the flesh) "must dye" for what, according to my reading, will be a possible resurrection into the colonial manhood of Anglican expansionism.

As a genre that propagated the merits of the colonial mission, the British novel reveals such characters to us from Daniel Defoe's Crusoe to D. H. Lawrence's Skrebensky. Between these rough temporal markers, we move from a vague island-spatiality in Defoe to a specific locale – India – in Lawrence, where, for over two hundred years, British colonial conquest endorsed a chauvinism which was complicit with the Christian message of dispossession. In Donne's tentative writing of the colonial imagination, he seems to replicate Anglo-Saxon characterisation of the feudal lord in the early days of Christianity in the British Isle, who was transformed into the Christian Lord with all the familiar attributes of a hero, saviour, protector, benefactor, etc. These qualities also characterise the pastoral world of Chaucer and become the ideological cornerstone of Shakespeare's work. The conservative world of Shakespeare's great tragedies is based on the idea of the King as God's representative on earth, a widely held view amongst European so-called benevolent despots who were meant to either punish or reward their people depending on their standing in the eyes of God. The ruler's immanence was therefore not only earthly but also

transcendental. And in Donne we find a significant parallel to this twist from secular to divine authority:

> You, which beyond that heav'n which was most high
> Haue found newe spheres, and of newe lands can write
> Powre newe seas in mine eyes, that so I might
> Drowne my world with my weeping earnestly

For Edmund Gosse, Donne, in the poem, is

> call[ing] on the discoverers of America to lend him their new seas to add to the old, and make a flood deep enough to quench the fires of lust and envy before they have consumed his soul away, since he wishes to save as much of that soul as possible to be the prey of a very different conflagration, the zeal of the Lord and of His house burning him up. (*Critical Heritage,* 135)

Written in the mid nineteenth century, it is not surprising that Gosse privileges "an Angelicke Spright" as a proper solution to "black sin", a qualification that was also riding the waves of colonial conquest. From a religious perspective, the narrative is clear and convincing enough. But if we shift beyond what is apparent, it becomes ironic that the preacher-missionary was staging a conscious expansionism in spatial and ideo-spiritual terms. The misery which colonialism was to beget finds a most appropriate metaphor in the suppliant's wish to "drowne my world with my weeping". Even today, this personalisation of "worlds" still manifests when interventions in the world's trouble spots are determined by colonial ancestries. Even more, the coloniser's weeping represents a self-vindicating montage of goodwill for the Kiplingnesque "white man's burden"; white men being, for Kipling (as Phillip Mallett points out), "those who speak English and live quietly 'under Laws which are neither bought nor sold'" (Mallett 206, n.13). In Donne's vision, that burden, subtly expansionist, can only be shouldered after personal atonement with God and cleansing of the "foul" body from frailties of "Lust and envy". The transformation, which draws on the contemporary tradition of the Morality Play which personified states of mind, is psychological, but also a preparatory for the purified body to become "thy house".

The end of the poem is characteristically ambiguous, when "a fiery Zeale/ Of thee" suggests the persona's determination to participate in the propagation of Christianity. But then, "thy house" which is both the church building and the "born again" soul is at once personalised and representative, the individual soul affirming a vision beyond itself. However, it is not clear what that "which doth in eating heale" represents,

although it can be a composite of the Church and its spirituality, the sacrament and its own healing powers. I suggest that the "little world" at the start of the poem finally reveals its "cunning" architecture as analogous to "thy house" in the final verse, wherein the universal or universalising individual situates personal and ideological meanings in evangelisation as both an idea and food. Indeed, the idea of Christ as the bread of life fulfils this purpose. The therapeutic goal is the purpose of Christian propaganda with which the "little World" of Donne was to conquer other realms into its vision. If Donne was not a colonialist – and there is hardly any evidence to suggest this – his poetry seems to propose an agenda for spiritual pedagogy that was to constitute the blueprint for the colonial text.

Staging territoriality on conjecture

From my analysis of Donne's metaphysical vision and how this tangled with religious and political perspectives, it is possible that his carpet-crossing from Catholicism to Anglicanism was not only a political strategy; it was also a Christian backlash against its own overlapping dialogue in which conflicting interests were/are often justified by resorting to a purist dogma. Born into a Catholic family, Donne later converted to Anglicanism and "wrote polemical tracts against the Catholics" (Lieder et als 428). Eliot, whose contribution enabled Donne's visibility in the twentieth century, is perhaps the most celebrated intellectual-writer of such conformist attitudes whose faith-switching decision raises more questions than provides answers about the purpose of Christianity. From such an example, and how it helps us to understand the nature of the propaganda in Donne's religious poetry, it is also possible to understand how territoriality became an important factor in Christian identities.

"At the Round Earth's Imagin'd Corners" validates the expansionist strain of the previous poem in an imagined apocalypse from which the persona assesses his own unworthy credentials for paradise. The speaker summons Angels to sound their trumpets after which the "numberless infinities" will "arise/From death". These latter include victims of the Flood, "War, Death, age, Agues, Tyrannies/ Despaire, Law, Chance"; and because "fire shall overthrow" these frailties and impediments, it is obvious that the spectre of death will be humbled in the end. This is a famous theme in Donne, one that attests to the ultimate triumph of those who congregate within the redeeming ideology. Lieder et als. argue that "[a]s in youth he [Donne] had been a poet of love, he now occupied himself with death and the hereafter" (428). It is possible that in this way,

knowledge or fear of death, which Donne personifies, imposed humility on the bolting soul, so that in "A Hymn to God the Father" he confesses that he has "a sin of fear" (Abrams 1104). After this collective survey of "Round Earth's Imagin'd Corners", the persona examines his personal situation and realises that he is not yet ready for the transformation that will save him from "tast[ing] Death's woe". He reasons that it will be useless for him to wait and make amends only when he is in the celestial realm. He thus prefers to do so "on this lowly ground" and consequently submits himself to God for assistance on "how to repent, for that's as good/ As if thou hadst seal'd my pardon with thy blood".

There are confused geographies in this poem, beginning with the assumption that "the round earth's imagined corners" are vulnerable, but also redeemable through Christian stereotyping. But the confusion is deliberate, following the logic of a prefigured Christianism, which Donne was assisting. The notion of a homogenous world benefits from such representation, and while there is a specific reference to trumpeting angels and the Floods, the rest of the flaws which humanity confronts are vague dramatisations of the obvious. For instance, "age" just like the "agues" and tyrannies are givens in human life and society, but narrated through a Christian voice, they assume an intimidating significance that can only be appeased through repentance in a Christian sense. The collapsing of the world's relative identities into Donne's shallow redemptive imagination is quasi-colonialist.

A sovereign whose domain had been assured by his predecessors notably Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, James' "authorisation" of the bible is a perfect example of how the political economy of Christianity was enunciated in the colonies. In the Dedicatory to the Everyman edition of the King James Version of the bible, we notice an Anglican voice that hailed King James as almost more than a true representative of God on earth: he is "the Most High and Mighty Prince" ordained "by the Grace of God [as] King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c"; while the translators ululate how "Great and manifold were the blessings, most dread Sovereign, which Almighty God, the Father of all Mercies bestowed upon us, the people of *England*, when first he sent Your Majesty's Royal Person to rule and reign over us" (xlix). Thus privileged, it is evident that spiritual rivalry especially between Catholics and Anglicans fostered a continuous splintering of Christianity that justified not only the image of the prostitute "[w]ith whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (Rev. 17:2), but also the fact that this practice was to commodify territories for a Christian empire.

Interestingly, while the bible text remains largely unchanged from its pre-Reformation version, it is the ideology that guides its understanding which keeps fluctuating. Part of my argument here is that the poetry of Donne constitutes a significant element of this indoctrination in which territorial expansion was factored into the spread of the gospel in Europe's enclaves. It is not just his mediation of secular rascality into Christian piousness that smacks of a schematic liturgy; it is also the fact that his authoritative voice was itself authorised by a political benefactor in the person of James himself. The partnership between the secular and the religious here privileges the former and explains why Anglicanism itself is a formidable political strategy which campaigned for intellectual authenticity in the same way that the Roman Catholic Church was doing on continental Europe. How Eliot could be silent on this collusion (or react to it as an enabling partnership) is a disturbing instance in his own complicit pedagogy. We recall how in *Murder in the Cathedral* Eliot plays out the tension between secular and religious powers, and his sympathies are obviously with the martyred clergy, whose Catholic orientation in 1170 sheds light on Eliot's confession that his own converted consciousness was still proto-popish, that is, "Anglo-Catholic in religion" (Murphy 286). The tension between the monarchy and the church in Eliot's play is resolved, at least symbolically, in the patronising relationship between James and Donne. Accordingly, when Donne "[found] other paths to preferment closed [after his illicit marriage to Ann], he yielded to the persuasion of James I, and, for having taken orders, accepted an appointment as Dean of St Paul's Cathedral in 1621". His status as "the most famous and eloquent preacher of the day" and the fact that "[h]is religious lyrics written at this time are almost fanatical in their fervour" (Lieder et als 428) make Donne's religious vision tolerant to a conservative platform that was to establish itself more securely in conquered territories, based on a convenient partnership with Christianity. Unlike Eliot's confrontational representation, I am suggesting that the less antagonistic partnership that played out between James and Donne was probably because the poet-preacher remained appreciative of the position which James' intervention had favoured him with.

Conclusion

If the status of the king was important in the spread of Anglicanism in the colony, and such a personality partnered with the poet-preacher intimately, it is obvious that Donne's religious poetry served a political purpose that was not unconnected to later colonial manhood. The

masculinist verve of Anglicanism can thus be understood (as representing a Christian logos) from the nature of phallic-talk and narcissistic consciousness in Donne's secular and religious poetry, bearing in mind that his spiritual transformation did not imply a denunciation of these pre-conversion sentiments. If Donne did not distance himself from that creative output beyond his intellectual alienation from them in the religious poems, it is plausible that their thematic duality was a necessary reinforcement of a colonialist faith that was to disseminate a dispossessing sermon in the colony. Indeed, the Christian soldier who is urged to march onward under the divine protection of Jesus' blood, also targets the colony.

A postcolonial bias for reimaging canonical writing thus warrants us to consider how the Christology that was transmitted by hymns and holy poetry eventually transformed the mental and cosmic landscapes of the colony. A common example is the puritan approach to preaching by early missionaries in the colonial world of Kenjo Jumbam's *The White Man of God*, where the preacher beats reluctant or distracted parishioners into submission. This torturous Christianism benefitted from and was tolerated by indigenous credulity with regards to a double vision through which Christianity was packaged. Because the normal human vision was not sufficient, the white missionaries resorted to their lenses as a means of enforcing authority in their physical absence. The inhuman work to which the converted parishioners were subjected in the name of God, was a version of *covée* which formal colonialism instituted in their forts; a version of which, as Cox explains in the case of the West Indies, saw the bishops "condemn[ing] the harsh treatment of slaves by slave masters, but not slavery itself" (124), while in China and India, the inhumanity was "guided by a sense of God's providential work in the world that was judged opportunistically. God's hand was seen in the work of imperial expansion only insofar as that expansion opened the way for Christian expansion" (216). Arguably, Donne's religious poetry carries an identical aura of puritan fear and intimidation to which the rational self was expected to submit.

Theorising the hymn is therefore one of the odd critical catchments in a postcolonial appreciation of Donne's religious poetry. While the bias in this chapter was from an African point of view, the overall impact is also the dilemma of the colonised world in which the critical association of Donne positively with the so-called New World of America complements the conceit of converting of the Jew in "A Little World Made Cunningly". The condescending voice here is that of Roman Catholic infiltration of Jewish religious and cultural space, and becomes instructive to the way a

combination of colonialism and Christianism were to prey on Africa. In Donne already, we see evidence of the orientalising strategy, which Edward Said was to finally conceptualise as a possible leeway to resolving what still remains even in the twenty-first century, subtle forms of colonial education: "Christianity completed the setting up of main intra-Oriental spheres" in which "[t]he Orient ... alternated in the mind's geography between being an Old World to which one returned, as to Eden or Paradise, there to set up a new version of the old, and being a wholly new place to which one came as Columbus came to America, in order to set up a New World" (58). One of the lessons from Said's dialectical thrust may be expressed as a need for intellectual reawakening to the dangers still posed by the glossy liturgy, especially in Africa where the mutations in colonial structures are moving beyond globalisation and postmodernism virtually unchecked. Apart from the frustrating dependency on the West even for goods whose raw materials are abundant on the continent, it is disturbing if not alarming to hear that the futures of both Islam and Christianity are in Africa! This advocacy recalls Kipling's position in echoing the fears of some who argue that "Islam is dying and that nobody cares", while "others [are consoled by the fact] that, if she withers in Europe and Asia, she will renew herself in Africa and will return – terrible – after certain years, at the head of all the nine sons of Ham" (Lycett 193). For one who saw Africa generally from the lens of minority white South Africa, and whose critics are misled into similar generalities, it is important to note that the prophetic voice of one of Empire's most committed sons relates today to the ideological inscrutability which Africa in particular is burdened with. On the other hand, "Africa is the 'most' Christianized continent, with the significant presence of not only traditional Christian churches but also African Instituted (or Initiated) churches with highly contextualized spirituality as well as rapidly growing Pentecostal/Charismatic movements" (Kärkkäinen 386). The dearth of indigenous theory is only one point to consider here, and beyond postcolonialism which is being hijacked by the western academy, we need new insights from the area of African bioethics to negotiate an acceptably objective position for the reading of both colonial and resistant literature. This perspective goes beyond our present concern, and while Donne was foundational to the former, we need to be cautious about too much idealism in flagging the latter.

Even then, Donne's poetry remains a self-conscious enactment of the Western ego's conceit, a celebration of its state of visibility from repentant ways vis-à-vis the known and *imagined* world. To this extent, it is understood as part of the intellectual package that defined European

identity condescendingly as the apogee of human utterance; weaving rhetorical cadences into a poetic brilliance that paralleled the scientific advancements of the age. But as I have also indicated, the imperative of critiquing colonial and postcolonial discourses today also makes it necessary for us to insist that a poet like Donne was indirectly assisting the colonial mission. His poetry was to coerce the unsuspecting mind, celebrate a dubious universality, and pave the way for what is today an entanglement of ideologies, especially for the African. And one way of distancing the African consciousness from this wholly homogenising pedagogy is to highlight the colonialist loopholes in Donnean poetics.

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