

“The Thought of Being a Part of What You Could Not Become”:

Colonial Education and the Resistance of Young Minds

A Thesis submitted to
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by

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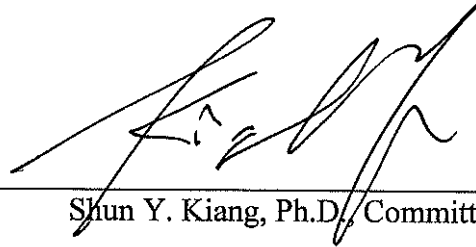
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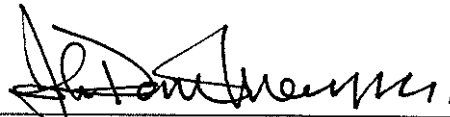
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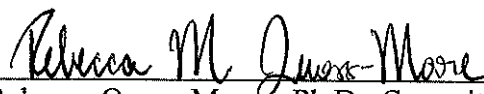
By



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Abstract

This project engages with the colonizer's use of the colonial education system to penetrate the colonized people's pre-colonial cultural systems and the way it leads to the destruction of any already-formed understandings a person may have of oneself. The three chapters explore and explain the ways in which these literary representations are the colonized person's articulation of their resistance to the colonial systems, showing that these representations are to be a way of taking back and reconfiguring one's history and identity.

Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* explains that our education system continues the colonial aim of reproducing proper subjects. He argues that educators must fight against this enforced system, encouraging students to think critically—"the solution is not to 'integrate' them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become beings for themselves" (47). Chapter one of this project presents problem-posing techniques when reading *Frankenstein* to challenge and deconstruct previous Eurocentric readings of the text. Chapter two critiques the colonial education system in Africa and its gendered and racial applications among young peoples, in both colonial and settler-colonial communities. The third chapter emphasizes the form of the education system, highlighting its mimetic nature in order to form "proper" subjects rather than subjects who are able to question the status quo.

Within this colonial education system, colonized people are informed of who they are, who their people are, and who they are in relation to the colonizer. Each of these chapters exhibits a different aspect of the colonial education system put into place during the period of British Imperialism and the ways in which the Other destabilizes this system.

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Introduction

The purpose of this project is to consider the impact colonization has on the identity formation of the colonized and their mindset in response to colonialism. The identities of three-quarters of today's population are shaped by the European values and ideals that have been reinforced in colonies across the globe. The consciousness of the colonized people undergoes a permanent transformation from the moment of colonization. Whether a people are currently colonized or have reached the stage of *post*-colonization, the colonizer has a considerable impact on how the people view themselves. This self-image is crucial to the way they remember their history and the way future generations will remember them.

As the colonizer takes hold of the pre-colonial culture, they begin to alter it as they see fit, eventually grafting it with their own. There are many tools that ensure the erasure of the previous culture, redefine the colonized person's image and self-understanding, and promote a specific order of social systems to benefit the colonizers. Each tool further cements colonial rule. Such tools include silencing the oppressed, implementing social structures in which one is expected to operate, but must not question, and enforcing an education system to solidify the colonizer's hold over the colonized people. Using a variety of tools and discourses, colonial education seeks to build a one-sided relationship between the two parties while simultaneously removing anything from the recorded history that would jeopardize the colonial agenda. Each chapter of this project will provide an analysis of the postcolonial Other, the identity the oppressor has sought to impose on the (post-)colonial Other, and the way colonial education seeks to control identity formation of the colonized people. The process of alienation that the colonized people experience results in a resistance to and unlearning of the colonial system, which in turn gives voice and agency to the Other. Equally important to this project are the

different ways in which the colonized gain voice and agency through the process of alienation and the struggles to resist and unlearn the colonial system.

The literature produced as a result of epistemic colonial violence reveals the impact a colonial education has on the colonized person or, as Gayatri Spivak refers to them, the subaltern subject. The following chapters will detail the different degrees of subalternity one might possess, considering how one's class, gender, and socio-economic status complicate general claims about subaltern status and identity. The literary representations of colonial education—Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*, Bessie Head's *Maru*, George Lamming's *In The Castle of My Skin*, and Michelle Cliff's *Abeng*—examine, question, and resist the colonial process of identity-formation.

The research that this project presents enriches, complicates, and seeks to change the ongoing discussion of postcolonial literature as it addresses the legacy of colonial education within our own classrooms, but this goal can only be achieved if we understand how (post-)colonial identities were formed. If the colonial classroom's purpose is to develop "proper colonial subjects," what impact does this have on the development of people's identity as individuals and as a community? In *The Empire Writes Back*, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin raise the question: "Why should post-colonial societies continue to engage with the imperial experience?... why is the issue of coloniality still relevant at all?" (7). They provide the answer earlier in their text when they say that "more than three-quarters of the people living in the world today have had their lives shaped by the experience of colonialism" (1).

To address the effects of colonization is to address the systemic violence against people of color in our world today. The novels discussed allow us to see the changing reality of the colonized person's identity and the evolution that identity undergoes. The work of Gayatri

Spivak, Homi K. Bhabha, and W.E.B. DuBois provides the groundwork for this project. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, systemic violence initiated by Europeans against non-Europeans permeated the globe, with effects still present today. Identifying the processes and tools colonizers used to expand their own power, of which profit is an instrument and an effect, while forming a subordinate, subaltern identity for the people whose land they took and culture they annihilated, makes possible a reexamination of systemic violence and racial inequalities and allows oppressed people to reclaim and reframe their histories. Once colonized, the colonized people cannot retreat to their previous ways or their original identity. Such violence cannot be undone. The colonized develop a fluid and ever-changing mindset. The mind is now at war with itself. This warring mind, born of the double-consciousness that the colonized people develop, enables the colonized people to resist colonial education and reclaim their agency. The novels chosen for this project illustrate this developing (post-)colonial identity and the ways in which the colonized subjects act against colonial systems in order to reestablish their own narratives.

The first chapter of this project analyzes Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* primarily using the framework presented in Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" and it also provides ways to decolonize the text that seeks to colonize the Being. The Being is the subaltern subject of the text. He is denied a chance at self-representation in the same way that colonized people are. The subaltern or colonial subject's lack of voice can be seen in this early depiction of the Other, which initiates a discourse from which oppressed people will be unable to escape for generations to come. Chapter two examines Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm* and Bessie Head's *Maru* and their portrayal of learning and resisting the education the characters have received. The chapter focuses on the impact that colonial-established social, gender, and religious structures and expectations have on the characters' evolution and the ways in which

those characters attempt to rebel against the colonial systems. The situations the novels depict have drastic implications for the colonized people and their newly-formed colonial identity and mindset. The third chapter examines the colonial classroom as a space of epistemic violence as represented in George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin* and Michelle Cliff's *Abeng*. The colonial classroom is a violent space, and this violence takes both physical and psychological forms. Within the colonial classroom, histories are slaughtered, people forgotten, and students forced to understand themselves within the framework of the colonizer's worldview. This final chapter addresses the complications that arise for the colonized person's identity and mindset as a result of what they are taught, and decisively *not* taught, within the space of the classroom.

Raman Selden asks "Does 'post-' signal a break into a phase and consciousness of newly constructed independence and autonomy 'beyond' and 'after' colonialism, or does it imply a continuation and intensification of the system...?" (228). This question emphasizes the fact that people cannot fully escape the effects of colonialism, no matter how far removed they may now be from being colonized. Each of these chapters demonstrates the colonizer's use of the colonial education system to penetrate the colonized people's previous cultural systems, which leads to the destruction of any already-formed self-understanding a person may have. These literary representations are, first, the colonizing authors' depictions of the fantasized Other, and second, the colonized person's articulation of their resistance to the colonial systems, which provides a way of taking back and reconfiguring their histories and identities. Each chapter exhibits a different aspect of the colonial education system put into place during the period of British Imperialism and shows how the Other destabilizes those systems.

Chapter One

“I shall die... lost in the darkness”:

The Lack of Self-representation in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*

The term “Monster” carries with it many negative connotations. The original definition of monster refers to a “mythical creature which is part animal and part human...frequently of great size and ferocious appearance” (OED). From the very beginning, the notion of a monster suggested to life that was less than human and was more animal-like. Most important to note, though, is that “monsters are not self-evident’ they [are] created to serve [this] role” as one who is less than a human being (University of Cambridge). The notion that monsters are created is a key aspect of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. A being of great size and an appearance that causes people to shriek, flee, and attack (Shelley 98) is created, but never given a name. He is, however, called “devil,” “daemon” (146-7), and “monster” (60), among other names, none of which provide him with a modicum of humanity. The lack of a name influences one’s reading of the text and his character. The ways in which this novel dehumanizes the Being is essential to how the novel has been read and taught in the past. Addressing the issue of dehumanization will allow future readings and teachings to reposition the narrative within a decolonized discourse.

Recuperating the Being’s humanity through radical pedagogy and its commitment to decolonizing Eurocentric habits of reading will encourage readers and instructors to question what information is being withheld. As colonial education systems begin to be enforced, society becomes more and more credulous, finding little reason to question what has happened, as people have done with Shelley’s narrative. A deconstruction of previous readings of *Frankenstein*, mostly those which are based in the concept of race or of the Being as representative of the slave, will show precisely how the views and operating systems of

nineteenth-century European people manifested themselves in the development of people's identity and also how society views those who do not fit a prescribed image—white, wealthy, and preferably male. I intend to achieve this deconstruction of the novel by readdressing its form, by interrogating the image that is constructed of the Other's culture and practices, and by showing how a rebranding of Frankenstein's creation as a Being with human traits, characteristics, and abilities rather than "the Monster" resists essentialist and Eurocentric concepts of the human/non-human divide. Positioning Victor Frankenstein and his Creation within the colonial narrative reveals the novel's most significant flaw—the omission of the Being's chance to narrate his own story—leading to the misrepresentation of this non-European person or culture in past readings and teachings.

***Frankenstein* in Context**

Previous critics of *Frankenstein* have emphasized the Marxist¹ nature of the text in relation to the numerous revolutions that occurred in Shelley's lifetime. They have also focused on the psychoanalytical and feminist aspects of the novel.² More recent postcolonial and racial discourse studies have been done by Joseph Lew, Gayatri Spivak, Paul Stock, and Anne K. Mellor. Many read the Being as the racialized Other, often of Asian descent, or as representative of the slave in a master-slave dynamic. Each of these areas is worthy of further discussion;

¹ Warren Montag's "The 'Workshop of Filthy Creation': A Marxist Reading of *Frankenstein*," published in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein: A Case Study in Contemporary Criticism*. eds. Ross C. Murfin and Johanna Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991, Second Edition, 2000), narrows in on the historical context of *Frankenstein*, particularly in how it represents the different classes that have formed in European society, and the revolutions that have resulted.

² David Colling's "The Monster and the Maternal Thing: Mary Shelley's Critique of Ideology" and Johanna M. Smith's "'Cooped Up' with 'Sad Trash': Domesticity and the Sciences in *Frankenstein*," both published in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein: A Case Study in Contemporary Criticism*. eds. Ross C. Murfin and Johanna Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991, Second Edition, 2000), allow various perspectives on the different theoretical lenses one might apply to the text. Colling's essay connects Shelley's narrative with Jacques Lacan's "symbolic order," while Smith's essay also addresses the concept of different types of spheres that are present in the novel. Lacan's spheres are symbolic and imaginary, and Smith's are the "feminine sphere of domesticity" versus "the masculine sphere of discovery" (362).

though it is critical that we use these theoretical frameworks as a base for new ways to approach (post-)colonialism and the Other within the novel.

In order fully to address issues of (post-)colonialism and the Other in this novel and to meet the need to decolonize readings of *Frankenstein*, one could begin by considering the context and condition in which Shelley thought and wrote as a middle-class English woman. Does she mean to silence the Being by denying him the chance to narrate his own experiences; or, is she highlighting the common practice by Europeans to silence those from outside of their own culture. The “Western intellectual,” as Spivak repeatedly refers to the colonizer, cannot accurately depict the experience of the colonized; therefore, as Spivak argues, the Western intellectual is a “nonrepresenter” of the colonized. The Western intellectual is incapable of depicting a narrative from the viewpoint of the subaltern. The European cannot understand what the subaltern experiences physically or mentally or the role that the West plays in such experiences and so cannot describe the Other’s view of a situation appropriately. Kari J. Winter argues that “in *Frankenstein* Mary Shelley attempts to give voice to those people in society who are traditionally removed from the centers of linguistic power, people who are defined as alien, inferior, or monstrous” (51). I hesitate fully to accept Winter’s argument. How can Shelley “give voice” to those who are usually forced to be silent by forbidding the Being to narrate his own story? I do believe, however, that Shelley *does* highlight the lack of self-representation the subaltern subject possesses by allowing Victor Frankenstein and Robert Walton to dominate the narrative. Dominating a narrative is a Western tool meant to reconstruct a conquered people’s history. By taking the subaltern’s agency—including their ability to speak for themselves—the Western intellectual continues a narrative form that benefits the dominant culture.

As one considers the conditions in which the text of *Frankenstein* was produced, the next logical point to consider is the form of the novel. Epistolary novels were popular at the time, but in this particular novel, Shelley's choice of form is similar to the manner in which many in Europe learned of the newly conquered lands—they received letters from friends or family members that contained detailed, one-sided accounts of the Other's culture and practices. It was not uncommon for the letters to contain an altered or distorted version of events, especially if the recipient was a woman. The letters sent back home were meant to continue and uphold the narrative that the dominant class needed to maintain the status quo and justify their often heinous actions. In many cases, the oppressor is the sole voice of a narrative. The production process that allows such narratives to form begins with “a story about power, a story about those who won” (Trouillot 5) and develops into a tale that benefits those victors. Spivak states, “the soldiers and administrators of the East India Company construc[t] the object of representation that becomes a reality of India” (Spivak *A Critique* 203), suggesting that one cannot treat this version of events as wholly accurate. Even more intriguing is who the recipient of the letters is. In the case of *Frankenstein*, it is Robert Walton's sister. The eighteenth century witnessed a rise in the “theme of female innocence” and the importance of protecting that innocence (LeGates 27). If Walton must protect his sister's innocence, he is likely to dilute Frankenstein's story and its more disgraceful aspects. This calls into question the image that is created of the Being. This image cannot possibly be trusted, and the Being is never allowed the opportunity to correct the image that Victor Frankenstein has forced upon him.

British imperialism brought forth specific aspects of a self-image for the British people—superiority, justification, protector—and the imperialistic ideals spread to every facet of British life. The creation of the Other is the Western people's attempt to gain authority over the world's

population, even as they reconstruct non-European communities to mirror their own society. Shelley's *Frankenstein* depicts the frequent attempts made by Europeans to overreach and expand beyond previous boundaries while simultaneously "provid[ing] a metaphor for the upheavals of the age" (Christie 204). This reminds readers "that it should not be possible, in principle to read nineteenth-century British literature without remembering that imperialism, understood as England's social mission, was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English" (Spivak *A Critique* 113).

Shelley clearly describes her characters in terms that define them as European or non-European and, in doing so, denies the Being, the Other, a chance for self-representation. "Why does the monster tell his story?" asks Beth Newman, but the more pertinent question is: does the Being tell his own story, or is someone else dictating this narrative (Newman 150)? The omission of the Being's voice throughout the novel is incredibly misleading when one recalls that half of the novel is meant to be his own story. The binarisms between European and non-European, civilized and uncivilized, and the ways this binary applies to representation deserves further analysis. This chapter aims to further the discussion surrounding the silencing of the Being and the ways this impacts his sense of self and shapes our understanding of him as a character, while also reflecting on how this representation corresponds to society's views of Others, reinforced by readings and teachings that do not challenge the Eurocentric nature of the narrative.

Radical Pedagogy and Decolonizing Eurocentric Readings

The manner in which one refers to the colonized Other's community is a major factor in the ways society views that community. It is used to "politiciz[e]" the community and is used "as a powerful signifier of oppositional identity" (L. Smith 6-7). The dominant party uses terms and

names to provide an image of the Other as different and inferior, and one can see how such an assignment of identity impacts the development of the Being's character. Freire's explains that our education system, which is primarily based on that of colonization and oppression, continues a reproduction of oppressed mindsets. He argues that educators must fight against this enforced system, encouraging their students to think critically—"the solution is not to 'integrate' them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become beings for themselves" (47). By challenging this structure, one can implement change that will allow one to reclaim one's own narrative and rewrite it to represent oneself within the global narrative. If, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues, "colonialism facilitated [European] expansion by ensuring that there was European control, which necessarily meant securing and subjugating the indigenous populations" (22), then readers and teachers today must see how education was and still is used as a tool of power and must acknowledge the dire need to adapt the way we approach canonical texts such as *Frankenstein* and the images it conveys of the Other. This chapter speaks directly to Freire's notion that we must ultimately restructure the way we, readers and instructors, approach and teach texts. Texts such as *Frankenstein* can benefit from decolonizing methods and a problem-posing critique, which questions monstrosity, form, language, mimicry, mindset, and silence.

A problem-posing education is based "in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information" (Freire 52). Freire posits that "students, as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, will feel increasingly obliged to respond to that challenge" (54). How does one relate *Frankenstein's* Being to the world today in

a way that the reader will see its relevance in today's society?³ Calling to attention the immense racial divide in today's society is one way to let present-day readers connect to the Being, but it is also worth focusing on is how we, as a society, create and manage images of people.

Using a problem-posing approach allows readers to “see, realize, [and] to know how knowledge has been astutely deployed as a means and method for colonial rule” (Burney 198). Inclusiveness is also critical to this approach. Keeping the Being in sight will help craft an experience for readers that encourages them to think about their own perception of Others (Bissonette 111) and also provides a gateway to questions they should consider about the text: “Who [is] speak[ing]? Who is silenced? Whose voices do we hear? Whose experience is described? Who is the protagonist? Whose perspective is being presented? What kind of images and words are being used to describe characters in the text?” (Burney 205). This analytical strategy leads readers to become more familiar with posing questions and developing an analysis that does not necessarily conform to the Eurocentric canonical reading.

³ For a pop culture connection, look at *Frankenstein* and the *Marvel Universe*, specifically the creation of Ultron. In the movie *The Age of Ultron*, Ultron is created by Tony Stark and Bruce Banner, two members of the Avengers. He is designed as part of a peacekeeping force meant to assist them in their battles against invading forces. Like the Being of *Frankenstein*, Ultron is a self-teaching character, who uses the internet—the modern day equivalent to the Being's readily available texts—to learn what he can about his creators, but in doing so he also learns of the horrid treatment of Others. He is also described in similar terms, as far as abilities go, as the Being is. He is said to have advanced strength, durability, reflexes, and stamina (Fandom). The Being studies John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which reminds him of his exclusion, Goethe's *The Sorrows of Werther* to learn of human emotions and the domestic, and Plutarch's *Lives* in order to develop an understanding on the origins of society. The Being also listens to the DeLacey's read Volney's *The Ruins*. As he reads, he learns of society's characteristics, but he also learns of their “vice and bloodshed” (Shelley 108), which forced him to “turn away with disgust and loathing” (Shelley 108), just as Ultron does to his creators, calling them murderers and explaining to them that “I know you mean well, but you didn't think it through” (*Age of Ultron*). Posing this connection between Shelley's text and a current example of such a character can allow readers to connect more, and perhaps analyze the character on a more intense level, than by simply reading the text as a stand-alone nineteenth-century narrative.

Upon realizing that the Being's inability to narrate his story resembles the subaltern's lack of voice when it comes to establishing generational histories and experiences, questions of reliability and accuracy rise to the surface. In her seminal essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak," Spivak contends that the subaltern's inability to voice their experiences is a direct result of Western influence on colonized people. By silencing the voice of the oppressed, the oppressor is able to spread a sense of powerlessness among the people, inhibiting the people from uniting.

If the dominant culture is the only voice heard throughout this storytelling process, what does that mean for the indigenous populations they conquer? To discuss postcolonial theory in relation to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries means to address these issues regarding the voice of Others. The oppressed person's ability to narrate personal and popular histories depends on the culture's connection to language. Homi K. Bhabha elaborates on the idea of language and its necessity in a people's culture. For Bhabha, language allows people a link to cultural history, but it also gives birth to the colonial stereotype. The conqueror uses language against the people to enforce and maintain a new public order. The oppressor does not always use physical violence to enforce change and establish dominance. There is also the form of structural violence that attacks the very systems of non-European societies. The conquerors use language as a tool, too. They impose a new language on the conquered people. The new language is required to succeed in this newly formed world.⁴ As the people begin to learn new practices and ways of communicating, they lose the connection to cultural and ancestral history. The Being never

⁴ The act of enforcing a new language can be seen across the globe, particularly in early dealings with American Indians and the boarding schools that were opened to strip away the children's connection to their heritage and become accustomed to the white settlers' practices. This included altering the children's dress and teaching them English, as well as forbidding the use of their first languages. Conversation with Dr. Janet Wolf, Professor Emerita, SUNY, at the SCSECS conference 2020.

possesses his own language. He is forced from the beginning to learn the language of his creator, stripping him of a chance to form a linguistic-based identity outside of Eurocentric understandings of language as a tool for power. Understanding that the Being's survival depends on learning the language of his creator allows readers to question the way language is used in society and to question their own use of language.

The notion that the subaltern cannot speak is complicated by the subsequent idea that another group is unable to represent the subaltern either. Raman Selden explains, "the oppressed subalterns cannot be spoken for by Western intellectuals... nor speak for themselves" (Selden 224). The understanding that the subaltern is unable to represent themselves and that the colonizer is also unable to characterize them leads to the thought-provoking yet horrifying idea that society truly wishes to preclude any subaltern narrative at all. If no one represents them, their identity, their experience, even their very existence vanishes into the abyss alongside other conquered peoples. Samuel Johnson states, "languages are the pedigree of nations" (Boswell 186), which directly correlates to the issue of self-representation within *Frankenstein*. This quotation, when applied to Shelley's narrative, emphasizes the mistreatment of the Being's story at an even higher level because it shows the Being has no language of his own. Left with no other choice, the Being learns the language of his creator and oppressor, Victor Frankenstein.

The enforcement of a language highlights the fact that while we are told the Being's story, we cannot overlook the issue of who tells the story. The narrative is filtered through Victor Frankenstein, who is "masquerading as the absent nonrepresenter who lets the oppressed speak for themselves" (Spivak *Critique* 292), as well as by Robert Walton, the author of the letters we are reading. Victor speaks for and represents the Being as he deems necessary, Robert is free to take liberties with the narrative as he pleases, and all of this occurs through the use of the

European language. The Being becomes a product of Victor Frankenstein's story rather than a producer of his own narrative. L. Smith asserts that,

History is also about power. In fact history is mostly about power. It is the story of the powerful and how they became powerful, and then how they use their power to keep them in positions in which they continue to dominate others. It is because of this relationship with power that we have been excluded and 'Othered.' (35)

History is about power, and that power relies on a narrative that benefits the dominant party, often at the expense of the Other. Within this context, one must consider how the narrative and the history being conveyed within it reflect and resonate with the very community that it silences. This makes it clear that the text, by denying the Being a chance to narrate his own story, represents the European oppressor as the silencer of the subaltern subject, which shows the need to address the many colonial implications of the text.

Decolonized Reading of *Frankenstein*

We cannot decolonize the novel until we understand the causes and impact of colonization on nineteenth and twentieth century identities. Freire explains that "people must first recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity" (21). This is precisely what a decolonized reading of *Frankenstein* aims to do. The novel not only highlights the characters harsh treatment of the Being. It also shows how the notion of the Other is created and transformed, allowing today's readers to analyze this act of creation from a non-Eurocentric perspective and break down the barriers that have been put in place for those deemed Other for so long. It is critical to question and interrogate certain elements of *Frankenstein*—the image created of the Being, his education and language, the epistolary form, and his relationship with Victor Frankenstein—so that we may truly deconstruct the novel and approach it from a new, decolonized perspective.

Understanding how the European-non-European binary worked and shaped identities is critical to producing a new situation for those caught within it. Shelley depicts Victor as European and his Creation as a non-European Other. Paul Stock supports the notion that Victor's ambition is a mirror for all of Europe. Because of European aspirations, people set out to discover the world, and because of Victor's ambitions, he brings the Being to life. Victor displays "an eager desire to learn... the secrets of heaven and earth... the outward substance of things... the inner spirit of nature and the mysterious soul of man" (Shelley 44). He becomes susceptible to the hunt for "the elixir of life" (Shelley 47) and does not stop until he successfully creates life within the safety of his laboratory. Victor's actions lead directly to the creation of the Other.

During the British imperial expansion era, European's developed a notion that it was their right to "over-reach," a term that becomes directly related to the European people. It is "through Frankenstein the European, the novel [is able to] explor[e] radicalism that both redefines 'European' progress, and creates a terrifying non-European 'other'" (Stock 3). Victor Frankenstein claims, "In other studies you go as far as others have gone before you, and there is nothing more to know; but in a scientific pursuit there is continual food for discovery and wonder" (Shelley 54). The product of Victor's scientific pursuits is a being who comes to life, but is deemed unacceptable to enter European society. At first, Victor doubts whether or not he should "attempt the creation of a being like [him]self, or one of simpler organization; but [his] imagination was too much exalted by [his] first success to permit [him] to doubt of [his] ability to give life to an animal as complex and wonderful as man" (Shelley 57). When the time comes, though, Victor is disgusted by his creation: "I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were

fixed on me... I... rushed down the stairs [and] took refuge in the courtyard” (Shelley 60).

Victor, motivated to reach new heights, creates the Other, which is meant to be a reflection of himself, but the events that unfold from this moment until the time of the Being’s death are violent and chaotic.

From the very first moments of the Being’s life, Victor has already labeled him as a monster, positioning him as an inferior living being. The way one refers to another is directly related to the image that one creates for them. The terms used to describe a person or group of people is one of the tools the colonizer uses to gain power over the colonized. Walton writes to his sister: “He [Victor] was not, as the other traveler seemed to be, a savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island, but an European” (Shelley 34). From the very beginning, before Walton knows anything of the events, he already describes the Being as a savage; a term that carries with it negative connotations.

There are moments when the Being clearly disagrees with the image Victor paints of him. For instance, when he says, “remember that I have power... You are my creator, but I am your master;—obey!” (Shelley 146) he is using the statement as a tool to attempt an assertion of dominance over Victor. On the other hand, Victor continuously describes his creation in derogatory terms such as “Devil” (Shelley 146), “daemon” (Shelley 147), and “monster” (Shelley 60), supporting his feelings of superiority. The Being’s statement hints at his disbelief that he is inferior, but he is powerless in the matter of his narrative. It is crucial to note, here especially, that the Being has no power of purpose, only the power to destroy. The relationship between Victor Frankenstein and the Being becomes one of dependence.

Ross Murfin believes that the dominant ways of viewing the world, or, in this case, the Being, is “held by individuals holding power” (532); Victor’s opinion, therefore, establishes the

real power dynamic of this text. Victor and Robert both hold a considerably greater amount of authority because they are allowed to dictate the story. The Being has virtually no control in his own tale. The form of the narrative also adds a level to this power structure. Frankenstein transforms the entire story and makes it his own. He tries his hardest to convince Walton that he is not the monster of the story. He was innocent, and terrible things happened to him for reasons out of his control. The Being never speaks on his own. His story is filtered through two other people, neither of whom care to show him in the best light for personal reasons. In 1818 William Blackwood wrote in his "Remarks on Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus; a Novel," that "the result of [Victor's] extraordinary discovery [means] it would be unjust to give in any words save those of the author" (615). Blackwood's statement adds to the overwhelming sense that the European's narrative is the only valuable narrative. Furthermore, the epistolary structure of the novel places power within the hands of yet another person who is not the Being, Walton's sister Margaret Saville. The nature of this story leaves Mrs. Saville twice removed from the truth. The fact that the recipient of the letters is a woman is of utmost importance. It is highly probable that the narrative is altered in certain respects in order to be acceptable for "Mrs. Saville, [who is] safe at home in England... cut off from the [characters] and the dangers they pose" (Newman 144). It is likely that Victor's treatment, seeing as he is the European in the situation, is toned down in its harshness towards the Being, while the Being's evil acts are amplified to maintain the image of the Europeans as the justified protector of the realm. Even Walton, who appears enamored with Victor throughout the novel, questions the reliability of Victor Frankenstein's account. This, however, does not stop him from recording it, discussing it with Victor, and allowing Victor to edit his text.

The process of toning down the true nature of Victor's treatment of the Being recalls the censoring of colonizer activities in the various colonies, but it also builds the stereotype surrounding the many non-European others. It becomes clear that "every effort is made to bring the colonized person to admit [their] inferiority" (Fanon 1361) throughout the empire, and censorship is one of the many tools used to accomplish such a task. The Being battles against his creator's attempts to coerce him into submission throughout the novel by challenging the power dynamic that has been established. He attempts to seize power over his creator with the belief that he can obtain power only through destruction. What does this say about contemporary attitudes surrounding colonized peoples and their mistaken belief that they have some form of control in this new society?

The implementation of a European language in a colonized area is a way for the colonizer to dominate the people, and by leaving the Being no other choice than to learn Victor's language in order to survive, the novel enforces a specific power dynamic—one in which the Being is left with few options to overcome his oppressor. Early in his observance of the cottagers, the Being "found that these people possessed a method of communicating their experiences and feelings to one another by articulate sounds" (Shelley 102). The more the Being observes, the more he adapts. He explains, "I conjectured, therefore, that he found on the paper signs for speech which he understood, and I ardently longed to comprehend these also... I improved... but not sufficiently enough to follow up any kind of conversation... I eagerly longed to discover myself to the cottagers, [but] I ought not to make the attempt until I had first become master of their language" (Shelley 103-104). The Being believes that if he learns the language of the people, they will "overlook the deformity of [his] figure" (Shelley 104) and he will gain some authority within their world, but this accumulation of false authority is a mere "illusion of wholeness"

(Barker and Jane 267) incapable of providing the Being with self-power. The Being does not successfully accumulate the kind of power he initially seeks; rather, he uses Victor's language to attempt to defend himself throughout the novel.

According to the Being, Robert's objections to him are all based on the image Victor depicted of him. The Being says,

Am I to be thought the only criminal, when all human kind sinned against me?
Why do you not hate Felix, who drove his friend from his door with contumely?
Why do you not execrate the rustic who sought to destroy the savior of his child?
Nay, these are virtuous and immaculate beings! I, the miserable and the
abandoned, am an abortion, to be spurned at, and kicked, and trampled on. Even
now my blood boils at the recollection of this injustice. (Shelley 187-188)

The Being is not wrong. Victor portrays him in a very negative light in order to justify his own behaviors, and Robert cannot see him in any other way because "all men hate the wretched," and the Being is the most wretched, "miserable beyond all living things!" (Shelley 92). The other characters with whom the Being interacts have done worse than he has, but he is the one who is looked down on and subjected to violence. The Being says, "And what was I? Of my own creator I was absolutely ignorant; but I knew that I possessed no money, no friends, no property" (Shelley 109). He learns these are the characteristics that society takes into consideration when deciding whether or not a person is to be accepted within their community, and he determines that he lacks such resources. He is "more agile than they... [he bears] the extreme of heat and cold with less injury... [and his] stature far exceed[s] theirs" (Shelley 109); nevertheless, he is considered a lesser or lower being than them. The most intriguing part of this passage, however, is that it does not mention Victor. Furthermore, the characters who have done worse exaggerate their fears of the Being because he is different and unknown, but their fears are misplaced because these aspects of the Being they fear are already have been present for some time in their supposedly civilized society.

If the Being is trying to show that there are bad humans in the world, then why not use Victor, the most obvious example? Victor is, after all, the one who created the Being. The Being learns the “possessions most esteemed by [Victor’s] fellow-creatures were high and unsullied descent united with riches. A man might be respected with only one of these advantages; but, without either, he was considered, except in rare instances, as a vagabond and a slave, doomed to waste his powers for the profits of the chosen few!” (Shelley 109). Neither of these “possessions” belongs to the Being. Victor creates the Other of this narrative. He then spends the rest of his life attempting to reinsure the Being remain at the bottom of the social pool, with no chance of successfully integrating into society.

The Being’s self-realization leads him to form an identity separate from the one Victor forces on him; this new identity is a combination of his independent identity and what he continues to retain from Victor’s image of him. The formation of the hybrid identity raises the question: Is there such a thing as freedom from a colonizer? “Does ‘post-’ signal a break into a phase and consciousness of newly constructed independence and autonomy ‘beyond’ and ‘after’ colonialism, or does it imply a continuation and intensification of the system...?” (Selden 228). The imperialistic nature of Shelley’s time worked to rid the colonized of their precolonial cultural habits to adopt new ones. Many found themselves “fixed within the dehumanizing institution of [colonization], where two cultures of people, hav[e] to adapt themselves to a new environment and to each other “ (Murfin 532). The nature of the relationship becomes more of a mutation, binding together parts of both cultures and discarding the aspects of the precolonial culture that will not aid in the new world to come.

The way of life for a colonized people changes from the moment the colonizer takes over until well after the people gain independence from the colonizing country. Ross Murfin insists

that colonized people need liberation from the colonizing country (531), but there is a chance that once colonized, people on both sides of the spectrum will be unable to escape each other. The conquered people feel a need to be accepted by a group of people; they need to belong somewhere. Such thoughts are apparent in the Being's desire to be recognized by the cottagers, followed by his wish for a companion. An individual's identity is in many ways connected to a sense of place, or a specific location within the world. When colonizers force their way in, hybridize the precolonial culture, and impose their own ways of life in the area, the only logical question is how one could be without their colonizer when their way of life is being grafted with that of the dominant culture? The dominating culture imposes a sense of desire among the people to become a part of the dominant community. The desire for such belonging leads the conquered people to give in and begin altering their own way of life. If we believe Victor's detailed version of events, the Being does this when he "master[s]... their language" (Shelley 104) and uses it for his own benefit. It appears his initial desire was to learn the language to find a place among people who despise him, but what if there is another layer to his desire to communicate? Communication skills would quite literally give him a voice; this would provide him, in turn, with a chance of connection, belonging, and self-representation. When he fails to obtain these three things—connection, a sense of belonging, and self-representation—the Being acts out against his oppressor. Victor is the oppressor in this story, and the fact that while the Being does master the language yet is still stripped of the chance to narrate his own story speaks volumes about the lack of self-representation in this novel.

The relationship between Victor and the Being is similar to that of a colonizer and the colonized people, the European and non-European other: "Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind" (Shelley 92), the Being says to Victor. The Being

adapts to his situation and understands his place in society based on the societal constructs of the time. He does not break from society's expectations until Victor refuses him the one thing he claims to desire, a companion. He states,

Hateful day when I received life!' I exclaimed in agony. 'Accursed creator! Why did you form a monster so hideous that even *you* turned from me in disgust? God, in pity, made man beautiful and alluring, after his own image; but my form is a filthy type of yours, more horrid even from the very resemblance. Satan had his companions, fellow-devils, to admire and encourage him; but I am solitary and abhorred. (Shelley 117)

This statement shows the Being's belief that he is lower and lonelier than even the most despised angel, Satan. The Being continues by asking Victor to create a companion for him: "If you consent, neither you nor any other human being shall ever see us again: I will go to the vast wilds of South America" (Shelley 129). One of the constants of the novel is the Being's desire to be included, whether it be as part of "an already established... family unit," which Victor strips from him through the methods he uses during his life-creating experiment, or, "to be given a wife and children of his own kind whom he can cherish" (Mellor 22). Victor's denial of the Being's desire prompts the Being's destructive and violent behavior.

Upon denying the Being's request, Victor says, "you propose... to fly from the habitations of man... How can you, who long for the love and sympathy of man, preserve in this exile? You will return... This may not be: cease to argue the point, for I cannot consent" (Shelley 129). The exchange between the Being and his creator at this moment is intriguing because Victor claims to be denying the Being his wish based on the premise of protecting humanity:

She also might turn with disgust from him... she might quit him... Even if they were to leave Europe, and inhabit the deserts of the new world, yet... one of the first results of this sympathies for which the daemon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth, who might take the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror. (Shelley 144).

Even if the Being were to leave Europe, the prospect of the Being's future offspring is too threatening for Victor. To add to that fear, he also contemplates how a newly formed companion might react to his first creation. Would they maintain a peaceful relationship, or would she, the new creation, turn from her companion in disgust? The uncertainty of how the creations would interact with one another leads Victor to consider the future. He continues,

Had I a right, for my own benefit, to inflict this curse upon everlasting generations? I had been struck senseless by his fiendish threats: but now, for the first time, the wickedness of my promise burst upon me; I shuddered to think that future ages might curse me as their pest, whose selfishness had not hesitated to buy its own peace at the price, perhaps, of the existence of the whole human race. (Shelley 144)

Victor reflects here on the Being's feelings on the way the Being's chances to reproduce might negatively impact future generations, and specifically, on how the ways those future generations will understand his role in the matter. Victor's claims are merely an echo of his creation's reasoning. The Being argues, "The guilty are allowed, by human laws, bloody as they are, to speak in their own defence before they are condemned" (Shelley 94). Victor's narration of the Being's personal experiences is simply another tool to justify his own actions. By telling the Being's side of the story, he not only incriminates the Being, but he also argues in his defense to the future generations that might judge him for what he's done. His testimony, as intriguing as it may be, is not the most interesting aspect of this moment. What is most interesting is that he gives in and agrees to help the Being.

Only after he begins to create a companion for the Being does he destroy his work. Perhaps he is attempting to "protect" other humans and his image in the minds of future generations, or, he could be experiencing a sense of fear because the Being will no longer depend on him and on their connection to one another. The Being will have a new sense of connection to someone or someplace other than Victor and his homeland. One cannot overlook the fact that

while the desire for a companion is treated as an outrageous request for the Being to make, Walton not only seeks but is allowed a companion in Frankenstein. Adam Komisaruk notes that while “at sea, deprived of immediate contact with his beloved sister, Walton yearns for male companionship as a ‘substitute...’ (415). Komisaruk’s highlights that Walton not only yearns for this companionship, but he is granted such companionship, while it seems unthinkable that the Being desire or be granted the same comfort.

As the novel comes to a close, and Victor dies, the Being has one last decision to make. Spivak discusses the Indian woman’s choice to partake in the act of *sati*, which is the act of burning a woman on her husband’s funeral pyre. While informing her readers about the process, she is sure to note that a person’s view of the act is determined by who tells you of the practice. It is an accepted practice in some cultures, but the “British perceive [it] as [a] heathen ritual” (Spivak “Subaltern” 300) because of how a person describes it to them. Spivak argues that “the British ignore the space of *Sati* as an ideological battleground and construct the woman as an *object* of slaughter,” which allows the British to position themselves as the savior, not only of the woman but also the “chaotic” and “misguided” culture they are taking over (Spivak *Critique* 235). Two cultures being thrown together in such a way inevitably leads to more chaos and more misguided understandings of customs and practices. Bhabha posits that “cultural difference emerges from the borderline moment of translation... The transfer of meaning can never be total between differential systems of meaning” because one’s language is “unsuited” to another group’s narrative content (Bhabha *Nation* 314). This in turn, makes it nearly impossible for a peaceful or seamless transformation from one culture into another. Spivak’s valid questioning of who is telling the story and what their intentions are raises the issue of trust regarding narration. The Being may plan to perform his own act of *sati* when he decides to take his own life after

Victor dies. The Being's last words are: "I shall die, and what I now feel be no longer felt. Soon these burning miseries will be extinct. I shall ascend my funeral pile triumphantly, and exult in the agony of the torturing flames," and then he disappears through the window, "lost in the darkness" (Shelley 189).

Shelley would have likely been familiar with the practice of *sati*, as the British empire made moves to ban the practice. *Sati* also made its way into the works of authors such as Robert Southey's "Harold; or, The Castle of Morford" (1791) and *The Curse of Kehama* (1810). Lew notes, "[p]erhaps more important was Mary's frequent childhood contact with Charles Lamb, a Servant of the East India Company... one cannot avoid thinking that he became the Godwin circle's principal informant for the latest news from the East" (257). Her likely knowledge of the *sati* practice finds its way into her work. By suggesting he will perform his own *sati*, Shelley once again aligns the Being with those deemed inferior. In India "women were regarded to be inferior to men in the social strata" and are viewed as essentially worthless after their husbands' death (Victorian-era.org), proving that even the Being's final action is yet one more reminder of his status as an inferior, subaltern subject who would rather die than be faced with a life of oppression and marginalization without a comparison.

Conclusion

Selden discusses Spivak's notion that people desire a "manageable other" as well as her argument that "a master text of English literature needs an 'other' to construct itself, [while ignoring that] this need" (Selden 224) is the product of labels meant to make someone feel inferior. The goal of decolonizing canonical readings of *Frankenstein* is to position the Being outside of such binary labels. To realize that he is indeed a living Being, not a monster, means recognizing the Other as such, too. Shelley's novel created an image of the Other that has been

inescapable since, but developing an understanding of how the image came to be and how it was maintained enables the text to enter into a new discourse that breaks from the concepts and taken-for-granted assumptions about coloniality and the racialized Other that characterizes nineteenth-century British fiction. This will allow for a radical and decolonized perspective that aims to recuperate the Being's humanity and gives voice and agency to his subalternity, allowing him to become the center focus of this canonical, Eurocentric narrative.

As one reads *Frankenstein*, questions of reliability, form, branding, and identity arise. A problem-posing technique encouraging readers to break down these questions and see the long-term impact each element of the Being's experience and the various aspects of Shelley's narrative has had on society as a whole. The ending of the narrative is a "white-out," which emphasizes "the failure and inability of the dominant culture to find a place for the other" (A. Smith 563-564) while denying the Other a chance at self-representation. The ending is a call to action for all readers and teachers, urging them to consider who was and still is being silenced throughout history.

Chapter Two

Total Victory or Total Failure:

Head, Schreiner, and What the Colonial Space Teaches

The imperial project's intent to colonize as far and wide as possible has had a long-lasting impact on society leading into modern times. The terms imperialism and colonialism have been used interchangeably by many, but Linda Tuhiwai Smith determines that "colonialism is but one expression of imperialism" (L. Smith 22). Smith makes clear the different ways people understand the term imperialism, and what the imperial project meant to do. L. Smith says imperialism can be understood "as economic expansion... as the subjugation of 'others'... as an idea or spirit with many forms of realization... [or] as a discursive field of knowledge" (22). The various purposes of imperialism are filtered into the colonial education system; the discursive aspects that are used as forms of mind control have the ultimate goal to reproduce Englishness. The effects of imperialism and colonialism have determined the way one is taught, the way one understands social constructs, and the way, as a society, we are meant to understand gender as either masculine or feminine. Anne McClintock's assertion in *Imperial Leather*, a seminal text to both feminist and colonial theorists, that "gender dynamics were, from the outset, fundamental to the securing and maintenance of the imperial enterprise" (7) highlights both the critical part gender plays during the colonization process, and also, although perhaps not directly, the role gender plays in the settler colonial communities as well. We can see the conflict of gender and the colonial space collide in Bessie Head's *Maru* and Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm* and their delicate but pointed portrayal of the binary ways the individual represents the community, whether it be in the form of colonizer and colonized, male and female, or educator and the educated. The two authors show how vastly different, yet consistently problematic, the

colonial education experience can be, particularly in terms of gender. Both novels look at the ways the colonial space works in terms of education. Each novel critiques a different colonial space. In one, readers witness aspects of a settler colonial community and the way gender roles are developed within that space based on the expected education for boys and girls at home in Britain. In contrast, *Maru* blends the space of a settler community and one being colonized, and allows readers to see how gender functions differently in these two settings. However, it does still stem from the gender roles they are taught growing up. An analysis of the two novels' critique of education as epistemic violence, particularly towards women, highlights the need to replace their indigenous and exogenous Other identities with one suitable for this newly formed colonial space, especially in regards to the education of women.

Maru and *The Story of an African Farm* present readers with very different experiences of two young girls growing up in Africa, yet the chronicling of the characters' education into womanhood leads to similar outcomes despite those differences. In *Maru* a young African girl is adopted by a white missionary woman. Throughout her childhood she is never taught what makes her different from those around her. She is not simply an African girl or a European girl. She is Masarwa, a group of African people who, according to the novel, are seen as the lowest of living beings. The young girl, Margaret, grows up and is bright but unaware of how the world sees her. Her naïveté leads her into a marriage she would have most certainly otherwise avoided. In comparison, the young girl in Schreiner's novel, Lyndall, appears to be well aware of how she will be situated in society, though she is unaware of how little she will be allowed to advocate for her selfhood. Lyndall originally has high hopes that she can change her pre-destined fate, to become a wife, by receiving an education that will allow her some independence; however, even as a white woman she only has the possibility of entering into a marriage. Any hope she has of

growing up into an independent woman is unrealistic for the time and her class status. Both novels speak to gender and identity formation, as well as racial and class issues; however, the most significant connection between these two novels involves what the colonial system deems most important in terms of the young girls' education growing up.

To see how education functions throughout these characters' lives, it is necessary to consider whether they are operating in a colonial or settler colonial space, how the knowledge they are provided through various educational outlets prepares them for wifehood before personhood, and also how notions of colonialism, race, and gender intersect.

Gender in the Colonial and Settler Colonial Space

In discussing colonialism and settler colonialism as different yet connected concepts, it is necessary to establish precisely what connects and differentiates the two and what they mean in colonial and postcolonial readings of texts. First, one must ask, "am I reading about a colony whose purpose is exploitation or a colony meant for settlement," and then one must look at the differences of the two colonies as reflective of the colonial and settler colonial agendas. An exploitive colony looks to build on what successful practices the Indigenous people have in place, in order to return home more prosperous than when they left. The key in this formation, as in the colonial project, is the intention to return home after conquering and altering the indigenous way of life. Those with the aim to settle in a new place do not mean to exploit the indigenous peoples; rather, they work to remove and replace them completely. Patrick Wolfe argues that "settler-colonialization is at base a winner-take-all project whose dominant feature is not exploitation but replacement. The logic of this [settler colonial] project, a sustained institutional tendency to eliminate the Indigenous population, informs a range of historical practices that might otherwise appear distinct—invasion is a structure not an event" (163). A

structure based on removal and erasure is integrated into the colonial education system, in which the dominant party relies on the mimetic nature of the colonizer-colonized dichotomy.

Similarly, Lorenzo Veracini argues that the settler colonial's educational project relies on "making a new man" by the process of "Europeanisation," which "consists in the attempt to sustain and reproduce European standards and way of life" (22); in other words, the desired outcome is to domesticate the settler colonial space according to European social and moral standards, whether the inhabitants of that space be the Indigenous or the exogenous Other, through various educational outlets.

In this context, a question of how novels display these differing characteristics arises. Veracini claims,

what is crucial in the context of an exploration of colonial and settler colonial narrative structures and their different modes of operation is that whereas a colonial ideology would understand 'progress' as characterized by indigenous fixation and permanent subordination, a settler sensibility envisages a particular set of narrative refrains and a specific understanding of history where 'progress' is typically understood as a measure of indigenous displacement... and ultimate erasure. (101)

In fewer words, "settler-colonialism's narrative tells the story of either total victory or total failure" (Veracini 115), but Head's and Schreiner's novels both fall somewhere in between these polar positions as they both represent and uphold the constructs and violence inflicted upon the characters in the colonial space while simultaneously resisting and attempting reform. In *Maru*, the younger Margaret's education appears to only focus on drowning out any knowledge of her ancestral heritage, in order to propel her towards a more Eurocentric view of herself and the

world, as was the case for most colonized people receiving a colonial education. The emphasis of the younger Margaret's education stands in opposition to Lyndall's in Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*. Lyndall's education, as a white woman, instead focuses on developing her into what is understood as the ideal wife. That is not to say that the younger Margaret is not also educated about the same wifely duties as Lyndall, but as a non-European person her education has a deeper reliance on erasure than Lyndall's ever could. Lyndall fights relentlessly against her destiny, which is to have no identity of her own, but only that of a wife, and in the end this resistance leads to her downfall. The younger Margaret, too, leads herself to destruction by going beyond what she was taught—simply recording, with no interpretation, as the elder Margaret does in her sketches and one-note captions—and adding a level of understanding and awareness to her paintings that her teacher never could. In their own ways, both characters resist their education, which in turn leads to the destruction of their individual female identities, and to their silence.

Settler colonialism must be considered broadly, but it must also be examined at deeper levels in order to understand fully how and why it became so successful that the “discontinuation of a settler colonial circumstance remains unthinkable beyond... suppression” (Veracini 104). One such level is that of gender within the colonial and settler colonial space. As ideas of gender and the settler colonial space intersect, it becomes clear that the same techniques of control that are being applied to the indigenous people are also being used to construct gender identities for all, indigenous and exogenous Others alike. Men became associated with characteristics like adventure-seeking, courage, and resourcefulness (Mills 49), while women remain limited to their

domestic duties, the sort of Angel of the House⁵ character who is so prominent in Victorian Britain, and is very visible in Schreiner's young women characters Lyndall and Em.

Just as men “had to behave in a way which was appropriate for colonial British subjects” (Mills 49), women settlers had to become what all women were expected to strive to be. Sara Mills, in *Gender and Colonial Space*, argues that British women in colonial spaces symbolically represent Britain, but in the same breath she asserts that bourgeois Europe is “informed and constructed through the paradigm of imperialism” (45-47). One can see the individual as representative of the community, but one also notes “the ideological strictures on women... within the colonial zone were important in shaping a notion of a woman's place” (Mills 68). The deep-rooted belief that a woman's place was within the home determined how the women across the colonies were expected to act, even when it did not align with the various situations in which they found themselves. It was not probable that a woman could give attention only to the household duties when they were in places that required more of them in order for survival, and that is where the connection between colonial and settler colonial communities and gender lies. The Angel of the House image can certainly work in a colonial community, but in a settler community more work outside of the home was required of the women in order to successfully eradicate the indigenous peoples.

A Gendered Education Based on Religion and Race

It is critical to consider the role that gender plays in children's education growing up. The concept of bourgeois femininity takes hold, and these young characters cannot escape its grasp.

⁵ A poem by Coventry Patmore, published in 1854, which he wrote it in praise of his firmly domestic wife. As Dr. Susan Spencer described in a lecture during her British Literature survey course, “Basically, the idea was that a woman was meant to serve as a household's moral compass, setting an impeccable example of conduct for her family and friends... As a result, she was protected from potentially corrupting influences throughout her life...” Em strives to become this domesticated woman while Lyndall does not see that lifestyle as empowering to women.

Both authors speak to the particular type of education their characters receive, based on a model of bourgeois education for women in Europe, in which all feminine education that did not adhere to homemaking should be supervised, for it could corrupt young women's minds into thinking they could do more, and be more, than the colonial patriarchy needed them to be. The terms of their education were complicated further by religion, race, and class issues. What Head and Schreiner accomplish in their works is to show the deracinating effects that such an education has on women within the colonies, thus enabling readers to see more clearly how the colonial power meant to structure along gendered lines the new lands and people they obtained.

Bessie Head's novella *Maru* addresses the concepts of gender, race, religion and education. Each concept is informed by the colonial understanding of another and they build on each other to construct a society according to the dominant party's purpose. The colonial paradigm of these four concepts become intertwined with the indigenous way of life, as they have no choice but to graft their culture to that of the other.

The form of the novel addresses the issue of gender. Head begins at the end, and then fills in the story. Doing so instantly reminds readers of the necessity of marriage for a woman at the time. By beginning the story with Maru's marriage to an unnamed woman, Head emphasizes that the ultimate goal of a young woman's education is to find her place next to a man, preferably one of higher status, and to be content with her wifely-self as she fades into the background. She also shows readers that once a woman is in a marriage, she loses all individual identity, transforming into whatever her husband deems suitable to his purpose. Such marital domination is apparent in Maru's infatuation with the younger Margaret and his decision, made on a whim, to take her as his wife. He knows nothing about her but is still determined to have her as his wife.

Maru's purpose for marrying her is self-centered and will focus on the need to experiment. Maru says, "Everything I have done has been an experience, an experiment. I just move on to more experience, more experiment. When [Margaret] walked into the office this afternoon, I merely said: That's one more experience for me, but it shows all the signs of being a good one. A woman like that would ensure that I am never tempted to make a public spectacle of myself" (50). He needs her to be his moral, or social, compass. If he married a Masarwa he could not also risk behaving badly in public, because he has already done damage to his own image.

The younger Margaret has been trained according to expectations for a white woman rather than for someone of her own identity. This means she has been educated as other European women have been. Young bourgeois European women were meant to be educated in matters of the household and wifehood rather than learning skills that will help them to build individual identities that might or might not align with the gender constructs of the time. The younger Margaret's education, however, goes beyond her wifely duties, as she is also being given knowledge that will cause her to be an outsider in all situations in which she may find herself.

Head adds in another layer to the younger Margaret's education—class coupled with the use of religion as a controlling tool by the colonial power. Margaret Cadmore, a member of a missionary organization located in Africa, is unaware of the class system in her new surroundings. She cannot understand why the people of the town refuse to bury the younger Margaret's biological mother, whom she deems a goddess, and so she could not possibly know to teach the adopted Margaret Cadmore of such issues. Instead, she educates the younger Margaret as if she were a white woman who was part of the colonial power, and she ignores how this form of education will affect the younger Margaret over time. The education the younger

Margaret receives is an experiment on the elder Margaret's part, which shows the lack of respect the colonizing party has for those whose lands they are occupying.

The major issue that arises from this style of education, which is based on a white person's religion, and serves a white person's purpose, is that it leaves the younger Margaret divided in how she sees herself. Her understanding of herself as an individual is fractured between "her life in the home of the missionaries and... herself as a person" (9). She views herself as "hardly African or anything but something new and universal, a type of personality that would be unable to fit" (9) into either society as she should. The elder Margaret forms the younger to be an Other of white society, but also of the African community she will move to, forcing her to become doubly-Othered amongst those who she must find a way to live amongst.

This dynamic is related to that of race, because in this particular book, the issues Head is addressing is that of interracial prejudice. As one can see in George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*, the people who are being or have previously been colonized are taught to view each other as the enemy rather than seeing the one who displaces their traditions and standards as the enemy. The negative view the African peoples have of the Masarwa has been cultivated over time and was likely increased as the colonial power moved in and began attacking the very identity of the African communities. In the colonial view, the Africans make up the lowest class, but for the African people, the Masarwa fill that slot. Head writes,

Before the white man became universally disliked for his mental outlook, it [prejudice] was there. The white man found only too many people who looked *different*. That was all that outraged the receivers of his discrimination, that he applied the technique of the wild jiggling dance and the rattling tin cans to anyone who was not a white man. And if the white man thought that Asians were a low, filthy nation, Asians could still smile with

relief—at least they were not Africans. And if the white man thought Africans were a low, filthy nation, Africans in Southern Africa could still smile—at least they were not Bushmen [Masarwa]. They all have their monsters. You just have to look different... then seemingly anything can be done to you, as your outer appearance reduces you to the status of a non-human being. (5)

For colonization to be successful, a class system is necessary to ensure a proper balance of power, and this requires that someone be viewed as less than another. Because of the lack of awareness of this issue that is passed on to the younger Margaret, she only “slowly become[s] aware that something was wrong with the world in relation to her” (10), but she cannot recognize what so many others seem to know is wrong.

This set of phenomena have a religious dimension as well within the colonial environment. European colonizers justified their actions and treatment of Others under the guise that it was their duty to save people who were different from them—racially or culturally—and they did from the beginning with the use of missionaries. The elder Margaret claims that she “had to do it” (12), referring to saving the younger Margaret, because it was “for the sake of [the younger Margaret’s] people” (12). The elder Margaret took on the role of savior when she adopts the child, and she believes she is doing so to save a people she does not understand. The phrasing here is especially important—to save a people she does not understand—because this is at the center of many colonial education policies.

The young Margaret is not part of a settler community, as Schreiner’s characters are; rather, she is “saved” by a missionary woman who raises her and educates her through a European religious lens. The missionary Margaret Cadmore “was... a scientist at heart” (Head 8) and becomes excited as she adopts the young child because “she [now] had a real, living object

for her experiment” (Head 8). The elder Margaret’s view of this child’s life as an experiment is not only reminiscent not only of Frankenstein and the Creature he creates but also of the widespread notion among the colonizers, whether part of a settler community or not, that indigenous people were there for the colonizer’s benefit, fancy, and personal purposes. Naming the child after herself, her experiment becomes dependent on the child’s mimicking her, absorbing all of her ways in order to transcend the obstacles of her heritage, but as the elder Margaret comes to understand, “there is nothing [she, or they,] can do to change it” (11). So while the elder Margaret forms the younger into a brilliant woman, that “brilliance [is] based entirely on social isolation” (11) and a lack of understanding, particularly on young Margaret’s part, of the ways in which race and class will work once she reintegrates into society. The younger Margaret’s lack of understanding, and the elder Margaret’s unawareness of the need for such an understanding, leaves young Margaret unprepared to present herself when she begins a new job, in a new city, that is so unfamiliar to her.

The colonial standard is to erase the previous culture and replace it with the colonizer’s own, but doing so shows how little the colonial power knows of that previous culture. They do not attempt to understand, they simply see it as different and, therefore, as wrong and as a threat that needs to be handled. In this context that the first major connection between Head’s *Maru* and Schreiner’s *The Story of an African Farm* can be found.

Schreiner’s *The Story of an African Farm* provides insight into the various types of colonial education that occur outside of the space of a classroom. The religious and social structures in place are meant to condition all people in the colonial setting to act as the colonial power wishes. Furthermore, Schreiner suggests that the colonial systems and agenda are intended

to make one feel caged, with no hope of escaping. The characters' upbringing, as well as the religious beliefs found throughout the novel, are all a form of colonial education.

Lyndall's hope for education is very different from what was imposed on Margaret. Lyndall believes "there is nothing helps in this world... but to be very wise, and to know everything" (12), but she also understands that she cannot learn everything from books because "books do not tell everything... what you want to know they never tell" (15). Lyndall believes she can gain power for herself through education. Lyndall and Waldo believe that books "shall tell [them] all,all,all" (64), and after Waldo is brutally beaten by Bonaparte Blenkins, Lyndall tells him "we will not be children always; we shall have the power too, some day" (94). Her notion of power lies within the ability to gain knowledge and an education, which will raise her status above Tant' Sannie's and Bonaparte Blenkins's. She is severely disappointed when finally given a chance to go to school because the school's intention is to only teach skills that coincide with her submission to men, as expected by society. Her belief "that education will bring her closer to more sophisticated culture [and provide] her [the] ability and power to shape her life" (Diniejko) is not an unrealistic idea. Being white and English-speaking, however, does not mean she is exempt from the colonial systems found in colonial Africa. Her education's only purpose is to propel her towards a pre-determined destiny that she cannot escape, although she does try.

Preparation for Wifehood not Personhood

Head's and Schreiner's characters are indoctrinated to live their lives as wives, but not as individuals. Robin Visel, whose research interests focus on women's fiction in twentieth-century Britain and in Postcolonial literature, argues that Schreiner does not deal with the colonizer's violence against the colonized, but instead "she focuses on the settler culture's violence against its own children, in particular its female children" (115). This concept is repeated in Head's

Maru, when the white woman Margaret Cadmore takes in the young girl of color and teaches her of white society, only to abandon her to be doubly-Othered among a community of African people.

Schreiner's narrative focuses on the children's state of mind. As they try to "transgress the constraints imposed by patriarchal religion" (Diniejkko) and colonial constructs, readers witness the vicious cycle they are a part of, which they cannot break and which from destroys them. The characters slowly unravel as the systems become more opposing on the life they envisioned for themselves. Their mindset has changed while fighting against the colonial systems. Their interactions suggest a more anti-colonial approach than a postcolonial one. They are forced to choose who they will be—the person they aim to be, or the person the Empire demands that they be.

When Lyndall returns from boarding school, Waldo asks her whether she has learned as much as she always boasted she would. Lyndall tells him, "Yes; I have learnt something, though hardly what I expected... girls' boarding school... are called finishing schools, and the name tells accurately what they are. They finish everything but imbecility and weakness, and that they cultivate" (151-152). The boarding school is meant to form a woman into a proper candidate for marriage. Lyndall refuses to learn that which the other girls do. She says, "I did not learn music... and when the drove made cushions and hideous flowers that the roses laugh at... I went to my room" (152). Instead, she used her money to purchase books and newspapers and to travel and meet people from different cultures. The boarding school made her feel caged, like a bird in its cage.

Lyndall continues to question why women are treated as if they were less than the opposite sex. She determines that men give women a false illusion of power because men deny

women “the right to exercise it openly” (158) and instead women use their power to further the power of the men to whom they are married, for that is the only way they can operate with any influence. Lyndall compares this notion to that of a caged bird. She says, ““If the bird *does* like its cage, and *does* like its sugar and will not leave it, why keep the door so very carefully shut? Why not open it, only a little? Do they know there is many a bird will not break its wings against the bars, but would fly if the doors were open?”” (159). Lyndall is questioning the power dynamic between the sexes and wonders whether the only reason women are kept from real knowledge is because men fear the power that knowledge would allow them. According to Lyndall, it should not be this way because, she says, it is “*we* [women who] bear the world, and *we* make it. The souls of little children are marvellously delicate and tender things, and keep forever the shadow that first falls on them, and that is the mother’s... The first six years of our life makes us... and yet some say, if a woman can cook a dinner or dress herself well she has culture enough” (160). Lyndall’s point is that women must be given more opportunities to access knowledge beyond the scope of matrimonial and household duties because women help to curate the next generation’s culture and beliefs.

When Lyndall is confronted with more than one marriage proposal, she claims that she would rather marry “the fool” than the man that would better provide for her. Lyndall’s stranger asks “what kind of fellow” the man she plans to marry is, and she replies, “a fool” (203). The stranger is shocked and thinks her answer is absurd. Their conversation continues:

The Stranger: “And you would rather marry him than me?”

Lyndall: “Yes; because you are not one.”

The Stranger: “That is a novel reason for refusing to marry a man...”

Lyndall: “It is a wise one... If I marry him I shall shake him off my hand when it suits me. If I remained with him for twelve months he would never have dared to kiss my

hand. As far as I wish he should come, he comes, and no further. Would you ask me what you might and what you might not do?"

The Stranger: "Why do you wish to enter on this semblance of marriage... why not marry me?"

Lyndall: "Because if once you have me you would hold me fast. I shall never be free again."

For Lyndall, marriage will take all of her freedom. She will become, in many ways, a prisoner to her husband and of wifely duties. If she marries Gregory Rose, the fool, she will be able to control him and maintain her self-identity. Marrying this stranger or nearly any other man would not allow her such satisfaction.

Young Margaret's preparation for wifehood is different from that of Lyndall's; more specifically, her resistance to the preparation is different. Her education manifests itself in the way she views the other women around her as well as how she views herself. Upon meeting Dikeledi, Maru's sister, she thinks her "clothes were too bold, the skirt too tight" (14) and "in her eyes there was the tenderness and devotion of a dog... even though the man obviously took it for granted" (18). Dikeledi's status and education does not help her out when it comes to potential relationships. She is too "distracting" with the "way she wore her skirts, plainly revealing the movement of her thighs," "she was too beautiful, physically" (20). This perception of her highlights the idealistic image of the Victorian woman that men sought after and women were meant to strive to be.

In contrast, Maru and Moleka are both drawn to Margaret because of her more plain and meek appearance and behavior. She does not present as one who will be a challenge in a relationship or their manhood. Margaret's education and upbringing have taught her to be complacent rather than combative. She does not speak out against being called names when she

is younger, nor does she do so when she is older. She does not speak out against marrying Maru. She battles an inner turmoil every day but does not outwardly fight against that turmoil.

Man, Woman, African, Non-African: The Binaries that Make Up Colonial Spaces

The various colonial spaces that these two novels describe complicate the gender and racial binaries that they describe. As the colonial education system is brought in, both in the physical space of a classroom and the European expectations of the different genders, as well as Europeans distinctions among races and genders become more clear. The characters challenge their expected roles in several ways throughout the narratives. Margaret and Lyndall, because of their ability to revolt against colonial practices, present as masculine throughout the narrative. Likewise, Maru and Waldo are both males who present more feminine characteristics, and like the female characters of the novels, they are silenced in the end. According to the texts, “When people of Dilepe village heard about the marriage of Maru, they began to talk about him as if he had died” (Head 94), while Waldo dies because he cannot fight back and take hold of his own power. When Em offers him the money to get an education, which is all he ever wanted growing up, he refuses. Just moments before his death Waldo says, “The time was when I would have been very grateful to anyone who would have given me a little money, a little help, a little power of gaining knowledge. But now, I have gone so far alone I may go on to the end. I don’t want it...” (Schreiner 265). Waldo’s words as the novel comes to a close mirror his thoughts at the beginning of the novel when he is beaten by Bonaparte Blenkins. He does not resist the beating, and once it begins, he calls out to God for assistance only to receive no response, which makes him question whether he is alone in this world and why that may be. On the other hand, Head speaks to her aim to create a male character who is “so feminine in his tenderness and unpredictabilities, with peculiar mannerisms and habits, like the habit of sitting alone for hours

with his thoughts. This shadowy, tender soul of a male was so attractive that... women [fall] in love with him” (xiii). He, like Margaret, directly challenges the notion of what is expected of individuals based on their sex and gender.

The silencing of these two men is a result of their ability to transcend gender norms as much as a result of prejudice amongst their own people. Head describes the African people’s feelings towards the Masarwa, with whom Maru aligns himself when he marries Margaret, while Schreiner shows readers the difference in treatment towards “proper Europeans” and the German family living on the farm alongside them.

Bonaparte Blenkins, a self-claimed descendant of Napoleon Bonaparte, is one of the best examples of what it means to be a European conqueror of Other peoples; he beats Waldo, the German’s son, to the point that Waldo questions whether God has abandoned him. To further emphasize the nature of this disconnection amongst one’s own race, Tant’ Sannie, the Boer woman, finds delight in the simple thought of Waldo’s future beating—“Tant’ Sannie nodded, and giggled. There was something so exceedingly humorous in the idea that he was going to beat the boy” (89). Tant’ Sannie takes it a step further by convincing Waldo that he really is not at fault for taking a few peaches, but then begins screaming at him, confessing that she has been doing this nearly all of her life. She says, ““Say you took them, boy. Young things will be young things; I was older than you when I used to eat ‘bultong’ in my mother’s loft, and get the little N-----_whipped for it...”” (90). Tant’ Sannie has been abusing others for her actions all of her life. Her decision to do so is embedded in the structure of society that she has been a part of. The only way to know that you are not the one at the bottom is to insure someone else is. The need for a class or status among the colonized population structure is essential to the success of colonial and settler colonial communities, and as Tant’ Sannie shows, it has been since the beginning.

Schreiner's novel offers glaring examples of epistemic violence outside the confines of the colonial classroom. Readers witness Waldo being whipped for what appears to be a man's amusement. If one considers the need for a class system, however, it becomes clear that Bonaparte Blenkins beats Waldo in order to reestablish a hierarchy amongst the characters. The European man's actions towards Waldo are crucial because they not only show the environment in which people are growing up, but they elicit with Waldo's unanswered prayers to God for help. If religion is based on oppositions such as good and evil or dark and light, then what does it mean that God does not answer Waldo's prayers? Is this a moment that highlights the belief that God only answers to those who are worthy of being answered—echoing Head's notion that looking different reduces you to a non-human being, one not worthy of response? If so, what does it mean that the elder Margaret comes to save the younger Margaret but Waldo, the European, receives response. This comparison allows Schreiner's novel to take on a new perspective, one that shows that the religious beliefs being spread as part of the colonial project reminded the oppressed of where they stood on the social ladder, and that even a European person can find themselves in a position as lower than those they have conquered.

Head's novel highlights the colonial practice of pitting the colonized peoples against each other as enemies for two reasons: First, if they are focused on their own people as the enemy, then the colonizer cannot be the enemy; second, there must be a class or status system in place for everything to function properly. The colonizer will clearly be at the top, but who will be closest to them is determined among the colonized peoples. Head's novel clearly shows that in this particular case the lowest are the Masarwa. She writes, "Of all things that are said of oppressed people, the worst things are said and done to the Bushmen [Masrawa]. Ask the scientists. Haven't they yet written a treatise on how Bushmen are an oddity of the human

race...” (6). She continues by emphasizing that science experiments are only performed on dead humans and animals, so what does that mean for the Bushmen, the Masarwa? This highlights their classification as other than human, and in many instances lower than animals. Such a hierarchy defines their status, but young Margaret breaks through this barrier. Head gives an explanation for *Maru* and the emphasis on the issue of racial prejudice within the novel:

With all my South African experience I longed to write an enduring novel on the hideousness of racial prejudice... In Botswana they have a conquered tribe, the Basarwa or Bushmen. It is argued that they were the true owners of the land in some distant past, that they had been conquered by the more powerful Botswana tribes and from then onwards assumed the traditional role of slaves... I knew the language of racial hatred, but it was an evil exclusively practiced by white people. I therefore listened in amazement as Botswana people talked of the Basarwa whom they oppressed... I found out above all that type of exploitation and evil is dependent on a lack of communication between the oppressor and the people he oppresses. (xi-xii)

Her approach to the novel is clear within its pages. The people do not talk to their Masarwa slaves. Until young Margaret comes along and challenges the biases they have against the Masarwa peoples. The interruption of their beliefs is also a threat to their class and status structure. They see her as a challenger, and this is why they are so adamant about removing her from the school. By having her in one of the few positions of power in shaping the minds and viewpoints of the next generation, Head suggests a strategy for fully dismantling the colonizer's imposed structure.

The last pages of Head's novel suggest that this separation and disconnection among the people is critical to the dominant party's success. Maru contemplates what it must be like to be

Masarwa, one of a people who “had lived faceless, voiceless, and almost nameless” (81) for so long. Maru thinks of the prejudice the Masarwa have faced. Such prejudice includes peoples’ thoughts and comments such as, “They can’t think for themselves. They don’t know anything” (81). He continues by reflecting on the physical abuse they have endured: “The matter never rested there. The stronger man caught hold of the weaker man and made a circus animal out of him, reducing him to the state of misery and subjection and non-humanity” (81). Once again, Head has returned to this underlying notion of the Masarwa as less than human beings.

No matter where they go, “the combinations were the same, first conquest, then abhorrence at the looks of the conquered and, from there onwards, all forms of horror and evil practices” (81). They have been complicit for so long with the white man’s systems and practices, but it is not until now that Maru realizes they were not safe, that “mistreated people are also furious people...” (81) and that they were “finding it more inconceivable than the white man to consider the Masarwa a human being” (81), putting their self-identity at the greatest of risks. They can easily be placed in the Masarwa’s position within this social system that has been created, and the colonizer will not stop it from happening because it will not reach the colonizer’s level. He realizes that they have lost control and security when they “sat down and let [Masarwa] clean [their] floors and rear [their] children and cattle” (81), and now the Masarwa have entered into their society in ways that cannot be erased or dismissed so easily.

Conclusion

Both Head and Schreiner address issues of gender and class all through the scope of colonialism, but their difference lies in the arguments they make about race because they are speaking to two different nations of two different races rather than “the entire human race” (Wilhelm 1). Many have compared the works of Head and Schreiner—in part because Head

viewed Schreiner as a type of mentor, but also because they are two of the most prominent African women writers of their time—but Schreiner does not deal with race, and her entire focus is on that of the white woman within settler communities. Visel and Elleke Boehmer have noted how people of color only act as a means to an end, or as shadow characters, within *The Story of an African Farm*. In comparison, Head's novel, they argue, deals almost exclusively with people of color. These criticisms are not wrong: Schreiner does not allow readers access to the people of color in the book, and similarly Head writes of only one white woman, Margaret, in detail. One cannot deny a significant difference when it comes to race in the novels; however, it is critical to understand that this difference highlights another crucial element of colonial education—the notion that your own people are the enemy, not the people in power. With that being said, each author speaks to the interracial prejudice that becomes inflamed across the colonies as the dominant power adds to the rift amongst communities. This dynamic is determined by the education systems in place, which in turn shapes the education that following generations will receive. The fact that the past systems inform future ones is critical when considering why it is so important to read these two novels together, despite scholars honing in on their differences, because they provide us with a literary representation of how colonial education intersects with gender, race, and class as areas of critical importance in shaping colonial control.

At first glance, the endings of these stories, which are both about rebellion and pushing the boundaries of social constructs, suggest the only option these characters have to break free of the colonial systems is to cease to exist. Maru loses his status, and Waldo dies. Similarly, Margaret is silenced under Maru's. Maru “turned to the woman standing silently beside him, and said: ‘We used to dream the same dreams. That was how I knew you would love me in the end.’” What could she say, except that at that moment she would have chosen anything as an alternative

to the living death into which she had so unexpectedly fallen?" (93). Margaret no longer has a name; she has simply become the woman next to Maru. She ceases to exist as an individual identity. In contrast to the restrictive nature of marriage and wifhood, Lyndall dies rather than to succumb to the lifestyle she has so desperately fought to avoid her entire life. Head and Schreiner do not mean for the subjects of their novels to perish at its conclusion. The issues addressed are meant to continue on with people. Schreiner describes a change that takes place within all people, the "Times and Seasons" (101-118), which is a series of alterations to the way persons understand themselves and what is happening around them; the times and seasons Schreiner describes reflects the learning processes that characters in both novels undergo.

Chapter Three

“A terror of the mind”:

Disrupting the Violence of the Colonial Classroom

Identity deformation is an unavoidable result of colonization. One must unlearn the identity that the colonial regime forced on one under the guise of a education. The colonizer grafts their culture with the now conquered people’s culture. The people exist in a society that forms two separate types of identity—that of the many, and an identity that praises difference. Stuart Hall explains that the identity of the many connects the people by means of shared history; that of difference addresses the events that have occurred in order to manufacture the current experiences of the colonized people. Hall argues that identities are “not as transparent or unproblematic as we think” nor are they “an already accomplished fact”; rather, identities are “a ‘production,’ which [are] never complete, [and are] always in [the] process” of being formed (222). When looking at one’s identity as a ‘product,’ one must ask whether one’s identity can develop separately from the colonizer. How do the characters of Michelle Cliff’s and George Lamming’s novels counter and retaliate against this forced identity production? If identity is formed and altered throughout a person’s life, then aspects of colonialism undoubtedly filter into the self-image of the postcolonial Caribbean subject. Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin* and Cliff’s *Abeng* both speak to the impact the colonial practices of cultural erasure, bond formation, the introduction and enforcement of new colonial policies, and mirroring, as established by lessons within the classroom, has on a child’s identity.

Reading the two novels in tandem unifies the experiences of the characters and strengthens the image of the classroom as a non-physical but unarguably still violent site for

colonial erasure. The authors draw from childhood experiences to depict the violence that students endure within the space of the classroom. Such depictions are important for two reasons: first, they highlight the epistemic violence that flows through communities with the colonial classroom at their center, and, second, they show how such violence causes a person's self-image to evolve into a fragmented, unstable identity. The fragmented nature of the characters leads to the creation of a double-consciousness, which then develops into an uneasy understanding of class and race. When discussing the idea of double-consciousness, W.E.B. Du Bois claims, "one ever feels his two-ness. Two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (846). Du Bois emphasizes the violence inflicted by the colonial classroom on its students minds. In this context, Lamming's and Cliff's novels become firsthand accounts of how the colonial classroom affects students on an individual level as well as on a broader, collective level.

The colonial classroom is one element of the British desire for expansion. As Brian Hudson explains, "[t]he descriptions of colonial schooling which are found in many West Indian fictional and autobiographical writings reflect the authors' personal experience of an education system which was developed by the British authorities largely as a means of promoting the interests of the 'mother country'" (324). The colonial classroom intends to eradicate the previous culture of a people while simultaneously promoting the colonizer's language and culture. As Cliff and Lamming show in their novels, this intention reinforces dependence on the colonized people's part. The colonized culture now identifies with and belongs to the British Empire. In reading these works, then, it becomes clear that Europeans use the classroom as a tool for cultural erasure for the purpose of developing a bond among the different colonized peoples, as

well as an application of colonial policies that fashion the Caribbean community as a mirror of European society.

The British government office determined what materials were available in the colonial Caribbean classroom. The students learned basic English and mathematic skills. Mainly, though, the classroom “reinforce[d] students’ awareness and acceptance of the British empire in which the colonies and their peoples played vital, if subservient, roles” (Hudson 325). To build a sense of connection and a feeling of dependence, the British replaced the Caribbean people’s history with Britain’s history, only mentioning the Caribbean as it related to Britain’s needs and visions of expansion. As Sian Jones and Lynette Russel claim, “the concept of belonging is evoked as a means for describing relationships between people, and between people and places. It expresses the human desire or need for a sense of home or homeland” (275). The British government took advantage of such desires to strengthen its power across the empire. The classroom is designed to reiterate Britain’s dominance, and as time goes on, those being colonized accept this power dynamic. The Caribbean people do more than simply agree to this social hierarchy, which “cause[s] those from the periphery to immerse themselves in the imported culture, denying their origins in an attempt to become ‘more English than the English’” (Ashcroft 4). The farther the people drift from their history—pre-European domination—the more they begin to mimic what they understand to be upstanding European character.

In “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” Homi K. Bhabha argues that “mimicry *repeats* rather than *re-presents*” (128). By introducing the “English School” structure, the colonizers raise a “mimic man” (128). The mimic man is similar to the English gentleman in his “tastes... opinions... morals and in intellect” (128). This mimic man learns to replicate, and, in doing so, he further develops the English standard across the globe.

This kind of mimicry is born from “a desire not only to be accepted but to be adopted and absorbed” (Ashcroft 4). Britain’s “acceptance” of the people instills a sense of accomplishment and belonging among the people. The classroom is where students take their first steps into a cycle that is dependent on mimicry and repetition. Lamming’s and Cliff’s depictions of the colonial classroom and of what the Caribbean children learn, according to the British government’s agenda, emphasizes the need for and application of mimicry.

If the colonial classroom’s purpose is to develop “proper colonial subjects,” then what impact does that development have on the people’s identity as individuals and as a community? Three-quarters of the global population’s identity today is shaped by the European values and ideals that have been reinforced in colonies across the globe. The identity of the colonized people, whether they have achieved liberation from their conquerors or not, undergoes a permanent transformation from the moment of colonization. Whether the people are currently colonized or have reached the step of *post*-colonization, the fact remains that the colonizer has a considerable impact on the way the people view themselves.⁶ This self-image is crucial to how they remember their history and the way future generations will remember them. If “it can certainly be argued that not knowing one’s past is a form of epistemic violence, in that being denied such knowledge means being denied at least the basis for the articulation, validation, and valorization of identity” (Murdoch 78), what is one to make of Britain’s explicit negation of Caribbean history in the classroom? By keeping ancestral history from the Caribbean people, and replacing it with Britain’s ancestral history, Britain successfully erases that history from the

⁶ Raman Selden’s question “Does ‘post-’ signal a break into a phase and consciousness of newly constructed independence and autonomy ‘beyond’ and ‘after’ colonialism, or does it imply a continuation and intensification of the system...?” (228) adds to the notion that people cannot escape the effects of colonialism, no matter how far removed they now are from being colonized.

community's memory. This "selective excising of historical fact" (Murdoch 78) is key to Britain's success in dominating the globe over the years. Selden argues that "the project of domesticating and civilizing indigenous populations is founded on ideas of repetition, imitation and resemblance..." (226), which confirms Britain's need to erase the established history of a people.

This chapter explores the colonial classroom as a non-physical, yet still violent, tool for cultural and historical erasure throughout the Caribbean. The lessons of the classroom negate the Caribbean portion of a child's identity, leading the child to develop a hybridized understanding of their identity, which is just as much Caribbean as it is English.

Lamming and Cliff provide an in-depth look into postcolonial Caribbean life and the extent to which it remains under colonial influence. While Lamming focuses on the individual's and community's interaction with the British perspective, Cliff calls closer attention to the implications of colonial thought on the individual and to the divide it causes within families. Read together, these novels examine the colonial classroom as a determining factor of character growth. No matter the level one is looking at—individual, family, or community—the common denominator in every scenario is the colonial classroom.

Colonialist ideals penetrate nearly every one of G.'s and the village people's experiences in Lamming's novel. Lamming employs a collective narrative by seamlessly inter-weaving multiple characters' interpretation and understanding of events. The shared descriptions provide a more developed, collective narrative that addresses on a broader level issues of colonial influence and the building of self and community images. G.'s personal experiences are highlighted during scenes of his upbringing with his mother, his shared experiences with the other boys at the village school, his time at the high school, his teaching post afterward, and even

his discussions with Trumper at the close of the novel. The village people experience colonialism in different ways, depending on their age. The children come into contact with colonial ideas at the village school. The students must *perform* at the elementary. Additionally, the students must perform using only the limited education to which they are granted access by the British colonizer. The adults have a completely different relationship with the unfamiliar ways of colonial culture. The union that forms, the selling of the land they live on, and their inability to understand why it is not their property are part of their introduction to the colonial world and demonstrates their failure to immerse themselves with new practices fully. Each of these different perspectives adds to the fractured and, at times, confused identity of G.

Cliff, on the other hand, disrupts her storyline repeatedly in a manner similar to that of oral tradition to plug in moments of history that have been erased by the colonizer in the classroom. By reiterating the importance of the past by means of oral tradition, Cliff complicates the British plans for the colonial classroom. Her emphasis shifts slightly from the colonial attitudes the education system imparts to the history it does not teach. She highlights the differences in thought through Clare's relationship with her parents and the schoolroom. What her father teaches her about her privilege and duty to "lighten the family" goes along with what she learns in the classroom about how non-European races "are meant to suffer," and both stand in opposition to the little her mother is able to pass on of her people's history. Cliff also emphasizes elements of the Caribbean people's past that they do not know. The stories she tells are lost over time, thanks to the British agenda, and collectively they are almost entirely forgotten. There are few characters in the novel, such as Clare's mother, who remember and still feel a connection to that past. Such characters, as Clare herself grows to be, defy the new order of the postcolonial Caribbean world and their assigned place within societal systems.

Decentering the colonial systems is challenging when the narrative continues to use the colonizer's language. The colonizer's enforcement of their language as the dominant form of communication is a tool of cultural erasure. Cliff uses the colonial language as a tool of her own to reconstruct Caribbean history in a postcolonial society in her novel *Abeng*.⁷ She addresses the impact of “fragmentation, silence, and repression [on] the life of the Caribbean subject under colonialism” (Gikandi, *Postcolonial Moment*, 234), showing it as double-sided. On one side, it is a problem to control and alter the ways of a community, while another view is that of colonial rule as a condition of possibility. Simon Gikandi elaborates on this notion by saying, “an identity is created out of the chaotic colonial and postcolonial history” (*Postcolonial Moment* 234). This raises the question of what such an identity looks like and what the consequences are associated with this identity? If such an identity is preferred, why does Cliff spend time reestablishing and legitimizing a Caribbean history and experience that appears to be unknown to the present-day characters of her novel? And why does Lamming address the multiple layers of complications that inevitably arise from such identity formations? The chaos brought by the British has many consequences—such as forcing the people to question their own race, their self-image, double-consciousness, and new aspects that will determine what a person's and a community's identity will look like thereafter.

The Colonial Classroom as a Means of Colonial Influence

⁷There are some characteristics of the postcolonial novel which borrow from Europe's typical Victorian novel structure, such as dividing the books into parts. There are other aspects which disrupt the colonial narrative through the use of elements similar to that of oral tradition. The Caribbean's lost history represents the oral tradition. The flashes of historical moments and characters in *Abeng* acts as a form of oral tradition, forcing the erased and forgotten history back into the Caribbean people's lives. The point “is not to prove that Nanny actually existed” (Gikandi *Maps* 245), but to show that people such as her did exist. By reinstating figures such as Nanny into Caribbean history, Cliff reconnects Jamaica's roots to Africa rather than Europe, undoing the work of the colonial classroom through the use of oral tradition.

The characters of these novels are always under the pull of colonial policies. Both Cliff and Lamming portray colonial power as having a hold over the people in these novels, which furthers the argument that colonial influence has helped to structure the characters' lives. To begin, let us turn to the most obvious example of the colonial authority over the Caribbean Islands in Lamming's work—the very nickname of Barbados. Barbados is known amongst the islanders as “Little England” (25) because that is what it “was called in the local school texts” (25). If the purpose of the school was to form a “mimic man,” then what better way to do so than by creating a sense that the very island the people live on is a microcosm of England. The characters come to know that

Big England had met and held Little England and Little England like a sensible child accepted... Barbados or Little England was the oldest and purest of England's children, and it may always be so... Little England remained steadfast and constant to Big England... And who knows... one day... Little England and Big England... might hand-in-hand rule this earth... Big England had only to say the word and Little England followed. (37)

This section occurs during the school inspector's visit from Britain and actualizes the success of the colonial initiative. The Barbadians are devoted, beyond a doubt, and see themselves as equal to their larger counterpart. The school inspector adds to the island's misunderstood sense of similarity when he concludes the performance by saying, “Barbados is truly Little England!” (39), although, as Bhabha notes, the people of Little England will always be fundamentally different from their “Big.”

The islanders, also share the understanding, established by British inhabitants, that the Caribbean people are their own worst enemy. This type of thinking—of Barbados as Little England with a happy, loyal relationship to Big England and the idea that the people of Barbados are responsible for the problems that arise between the colonizers and colonized—is produced by the colonial education the people receive. The school inspector assures them “the British

Empire... has always worked for the peace of the world. This was the job assigned to it by God, and if the empire at any time has failed to bring about that peace it was due to events and causes beyond its control” (38). He portrays Britain as a savior, a necessary force. His portrayal positions Britain as superior to all nations and the Caribbean as part of its successes.⁸ The school inspector’s representation is a powerful image for the school children; however, it does not negate Britain’s false reassurance of their position within the scope of the empire. When the boys of the village are informed that they are “the pride and treasure of the Empire” (38), it is in direct comparison to the realization that people usually “refe[r] to them as

a b ab catch a crab
g o go let it go” (36).

The former recognition, given by the school inspector, follows the students’ performance as good, English-inspiring boys while the latter simplifies their abilities. Rather than singing their typical and more basic songs, the boys learn “God Save the King” so they can impress the school inspector. The inspector notes their “performance” (38) as an example of their loyalty to the empire as well as an acknowledgement of the part they play within it. The repeated reassurance of coming one step closer to becoming the stand-up English colonial subject is “founded on ideas of repetition, imitation and resemblance...” (227), which ensure smooth assimilation into the dominant culture.

The schoolteachers, in turn, do not allow the children to learn about their own past accurately. They stick to the approved colonial curriculum. One student asks the teacher, “what

⁸ The Commons Sitting Session from May 15, 1823 establishes the common need for the British to take on the role of saviors. One member comments, “For his children, there is a wider range of recompense. We may strip them of every vestige of servitude; and, by taking upon ourselves, for a reason, the whole burthen of their maintenance, education, and religious instruction, we may raise them into a happy, contented, enlightened, free peasantry.” United Kingdom: “Commons Sitting, May 15, 1823.” Second Series. Vol. 9. House of Commons Hansard Sessional Papers.

was the meaning of a slave, and the teacher explained. But it didn't make sense... The little boy had heard the word for the first time and when the teacher explained the meaning, he had a strange feeling... Thank God, he wasn't ever a slave... Thank god nobody in Barbados was ever a slave. It didn't sound cruel. It was simply unreal" (57). The lesson continues, "It was too far back. History had to begin somewhere, but not so far back. And nobody knew where this slavery business took place. The teacher had simply said, not here, somewhere else. Probably it never happened at all" (58). The question that one should ask at this moment is: does the teacher know the true history, or has he forgotten it as well? Have the British achieved a full erasure of Caribbean history? Cliff appears to suggest the latter. Later in the novel, the teacher makes it known that they believe it is "better the children should not know this part of their history..." (90) because it would sadden them, but if they do not know it, they cannot know themselves fully.

So too, in *Abeng*, the characters are led to understand their connection to the empire and to interpret their history in terms of that relationship. Prohibited from learning of their history before the introduction of British ideals into their culture, the people fall victim to the colonial classroom. The resulting history is far from the truth and therefore inaccurate. Lamming does not address the misrepresentation of the island people's history as forcefully as Cliff. Very early in the novel, Cliff establishes that the people do not know of their history. She begins with the story of two sisters, Nanny and Sekusa. Sekusa "remained a slave" (18) while Nanny "fled slavery" (18) and "was the magician of th[e] revolution—she used her skill to unite her people and to consecrate their battles" (15). Cliff ends chapter two by stating, "it was believed that all island children were descended from one or the other" (18). Interestingly, this is the last line of chapter two, and chapter three begins with the idea that the people know of slavery and their past. They

do not talk about it, however, in relation to the Caribbean-European relationship: “In school they were told that their ancestors had been pagan. That there had been slaves in Africa, where Black people had put each other in chains. They were given the impression that the whites who brought them here from the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast were only copying a West African custom” (18). Such false histories establish the depth of control the colonial classroom has on the colonized people, for it is in the colonial classroom that the people begin to forget their past and form an attachment to their newly formed history and the colonizer who has made it so.

The influence of the colonial classroom transforms the people’s history, moving them away from their past and myths to devotion and knowledge of the English monarchy. Readers learn that “no one had told [them] that of all the slave societies in the New World, Jamaica was considered amongst the most brutal... They did not know that some slaves worked with their faces locked in masks of tine, so they would not eat the sugar cane as they cut” (18-19). The fact that the people are unaware of those who fought and died to rid the island of slavery or of the many accomplishments of their ancestors highlights their lack of knowledge regarding their own connections to slavery. Instead of thinking, as Lamming’s characters think, that the Queen freed them, Cliff’s characters are simply unaware that they needed to seek freedom, just as they are unaware of the depth of history that is kept from them as a result of the colonial agenda. Cliff writes:

The people... did not know their ancestors had been paid to inform on one another... of course they did not know who Kishee had been. They did not know about the kingdom of the Ashanti or the kingdom of Dahomey, where most of their ancestors had come from... They did not imagine that Black Africans had commanded thousands of warriors. Built universities. Created systems of law. Devised language. Wrote history. Poetry. Were traders. Artists. Diplomats. They did not know their name for papaya—*pawpaw*—was the name of one of the languages of Dahomey. Or that the *cotta*... was an African device, an

African word.⁹ *That Brer Anancy*, the spider who inspired tricks and tales was a West African invention. (19-21)

The people do know, however, “the history of the English monarchs... [and] the history of Jamaica as it pertained to England” (84). In other words, the students learn what the English want them to learn. They develop a connection to England rather than with their ancestors, as Lamming shows in his work as well. The English are more interested in molding the people to be a mirror of English society and building a sense of loyalty or debt to England while severing all ties to earlier periods of colonization. The colonial classroom rewrites history, and this spreads into every other aspect of the people’s lives and determines how each colonized person forms an identity and understands their position within society. *Abeng* attempts to disrupt the colonial hold on the Caribbean subject’s story. The use of the colonial language to replace the conquered people’s past, to establish dominance, and create a sense of connection is apparent in the colonial classroom throughout the British empire.

Double Consciousness and Self-Image

The impact of a mind at war with itself is detrimental to the way one sees oneself, but how can one’s mind be anything but at war with itself when one’s world is in a constant state of conflict? Clare and G. both show how debilitating this inner war is on their identities and understandings of self. In the introduction of *In the Castle of My Skin*, Lamming notes that “the colonial experience of [his] generation was almost wholly without violence... [instead,] it was a terror of the mind” (xxxix). This terror takes form in the self-doubt the characters exhibit at

⁹J.J. Thomas’s work on grammar highlights the use and meaning of different words from the Creole language. It is an excellent companion to the sections of *Abeng*, which establish that the people do not know the history behind certain words and titles that are in use because the people no longer have access to the language of their ancestors due to the education they are receiving in the colonial classroom. J.J. Thomas, *The Theory and Practice of Creole Grammar*, The Chronicle Publishing Office, 1869.

various moments of these narratives. The colonial influence, which still rules their societies, inhibits them from forming a full and distinct identity. Instead, the characters must conform to multiple identities at odds with one another. The resulting identity is that of a fractured consciousness. Du Bois explains, “it is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of the other, by measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (846). G. and Clare are forced to look at themselves through the colonial ideas that have taken over the islands because the eyes of their parents, their teachers, and their neighbors see them based on these colonial influences.

Lanning successfully depicts G.’s growing sense of double-consciousness throughout the novel. G. describes the collective thought that “no black boy wanted to be white, but it was also true that no black boy liked the idea of being black” (127). The village people, made to see each other as the enemy, create this conflicting state of mind. It spreads from race to the different categories of identity that exist within their town. G. attempts to find middle ground in this complicated system. His attempts to straddle the high school world and village life is how G. assumes a double-consciousness. As G. prepares to leave for his new teaching position in Trinidad, he reflects on his life:

I have always been here on this side and the other person there on that side, and we have both tried to make the sides appear similar in the needs, desires, and ambitions. But it wasn’t true. It was never true. When I reach Trinidad where no one knows me I may be able to strike identity with the other person. But it was never possible here. (261)

From the text, one gathers that he is referring to the people he builds relationships with over the years; however, there is another possible meaning to his reflection. Perhaps G. is referring to his fractured identity. He has made attempts to reconcile the opposing sides that make up his identity, but as long as he remains in the situation that created his warring identities, he will

never be able to merge them into a coherent identity. His acceptance of the Trinidad position is his way of fighting against his fractured, not-yet-fully-formed identity.

Like G., Trumper also grows to understand the dynamics present in his childhood village as distinct from the rest of the world. According to Trumper, G.'s only chances at understanding himself is to leave the island and travel even beyond Trinidad. Trumper travels to the United States, where he learns of a new way to see himself as a person of color within a white-dominated world. When G., confused by Trumper's claims, states "there are black people here too" (295), Trumper explains to him, "'course the blacks here are my people too, but they don't know it yet, You don't know it yourself. None o' you here on this islan' know what it mean to fin' race. An' the white people you have to deal with won't ever let you know" (295). Not only does Trumper speak of the distinct effect a double-consciousness has on a person, but he also highlights that the British, "white people," control what G. and the other islanders can or cannot know, even as is it pertains to his and their own history. G. can either attempt to "fin' race," as Trumper puts it, with no guarantee he will succeed in doing so, or he can hope to join English society (but, as Bhabha points out, he will never be fully accepted into it). For G., "*the thought of being a part of what you could not become*" (299) is worse than all of the other conflicting moments of his life throughout the novel. How can he be a part of something and still not be fully integrated into the system? Questions such as this one add to G.'s sense of double-consciousness and leave him with no choice but to escape the environment that produced, and continues to produce, conflicting elements of his self-image.

This fractured consciousness, or double-consciousness, is inevitable for the colonial subjects. Cliff with her character Clare destabilizes colonial attempts to inflict warring concepts

on the mind. Clare, like Cliff herself, questions the systems in place. She has the following conversation with her father on the matter of what race she is:

Clare: "What if I married a Jew?"

Boy Savage: "Then you would be an outcast..."

Clare: "Suppose he was only half-Jewish."

Boy Savage: "It doesn't matter. A Jew is a Jew."

Clare: "Then how come you say I'm white?"

Boy Savage: "What the hell has that got to do with anything? You're white because you're a Savage."

Clare: "But Mother is colored. Isn't she?"

Boy Savage: "Yes."

Clare: "If she is colored and you are white, doesn't that make me colored?"

Boy Savage: "No. You are my daughter. You're white."

Her father denies half of her identity, decentering her sense of self even further. At this moment Clare's "rebel consciousness," as Jennifer Thorington Springer defines it, begins to form. She fights against the fractured image of herself to build an image she can understand and an identity that functions to her benefit rather than to the colonizers'.

Cliff describes Clare's relationship with her parents as being similar to that between a colonizer and colonized person, exposing the rootedness of the colonial structures in society. Her life is dependent upon the needs and desires of her parents, and the colonizer attempts to establish a sense of dependency. Her parents control her life, worldview, and understanding of self, "which is of course nothing new—only something which makes resistance very difficult, and may even make a child believe that resistance is impossible or unnecessary" (Cliff 49). It is imperative, however, to realize that Clare does resist. Her parents leave her little choice but to conform to more traditional understandings of womanhood. Boy and Kitty decide to send Clare to live with Mrs. Phillips, a lady with "a good education [and] good manners... [who] can teach [Clare] to take advantage of who [she] is" (150-151). The "education" Mrs. Phillips will provide Clare is intended to teach her the rules of English society and to transform her into a proper

woman. Clare claims she “don’t want to be a lady” (150) but still finds herself forced into living with Mrs. Phillips. Once there, Clare continues to rebel by engaging in conversation with Mrs. Stevens, Mrs. Phillips’ older sister. Mrs. Phillips forbids Clare to communicate with her sister, but Clare rebels and does just that. Clare spends her time rebelling against the education prescribed for her, just as Cliff rebels in the very form of her novel. The sporadic episodes of history Cliff plants throughout the novel are direct attempts to rewrite Caribbean history and destabilize the colonial systems.

Class and Racial Divide as Disruptions to Character Relationships

The double-consciousness the characters experience develops into an uneasy understanding of class and race. The fractured self-image Clare and G. share is simply a new iteration of Du Bois’s “unasked question.” This “unasked question” is, “how does it feel to be a problem?” (845). For one’s self-image to be that of a problem, makes clear the violent impact such images have on a person’s mind. It takes root within a person and one must really work, and as we see in Clare’s and G.’s cases, rebel and fight against such violence that is introduced through the colonial classroom.

To understand the class and racial divide occurring in the Caribbean at this time requires an understanding of how non-European races are presented and addressed in the colonial classroom, as well as outside of the classroom. The systems that are in place induce a fractured sense of security for the people—fractured in respect to their very livelihood and also their security in who they are as a person. As colonial influence roots itself more and more deeply in the people’s culture, their understanding of identity becomes more fragmented. The confusion brought on by colonial influences causes an eruption of self-hate, self-doubt, and even deeper divides amongst the people. As these ideas spread throughout the islands, one can see that the

English are determining the circumstances every step of the way in order to ensure their image of dominance where they can. The new social order the colonizer succeeds in establishing, as demonstrated by Lamming and Cliff, is a product of the colonial influences present within the classroom.

In *In the Castle of My Skin*, the landlord acts as an extension of the classroom to establish a social structure to which the people must adhere to. The landlord lives atop a hill, looking down on those lower than him on the social ladder. This landlord is a white British man who has been put in charge to maintain order. People at each level of the social ladder, excluding the landlord, share a common thought: “the enemy was My People” (26-27). The upper class blame the village people, and the villagers accept this notion. They “accepted instinctively that the others, meaning the white people, were superior” (27). The language used to convince the people of this is that of the landlord alongside “the overseer... the Government servant... and later... the lawyers and doctors who had returned stamped like an envelope with what they called the culture of the Mother Country” (27). This ability to infiltrate the minds of the people allows Britain to project an image of a savior of sorts. The people think “the queen... free[d them] in a kind of way... and then nothing mattered but the empire” (71), forgetful of the fact that it was the Queen’s government that came to dominate their own culture for Britain’s benefit. The British government arrived and created the illusion that they were there to save the Caribbean people from themselves.

In *Abeng* readers learn that students are to understand the British as the superior party who is attempting to save the rest of the world from the non-Europeans’ own inferiority. The justification is that non-European people’s “parameters of behavior were out of the range of civilized men. Their lives obviously of less value” (40). The idea is magnified when one reads

about a lesson within the classroom. The lesson explains that some races should suffer because of the color of their skin, although this is out of their control. Clare's schoolteacher explains that the "suffering of the Jews was similar to... [that] of Africans... [because] both types of people were flawed in irreversible ways... she went on to stress again the duty of white Christians as the 'ordained' protectors of other people" (71). Cliff stresses the fact that the teacher delivers this lesson to a "class of Black, Brown, Asian, Jewish, Arab, and white girls" (71). The students are learning in the classroom the exact view the dominant party holds of them—and that they should hold this same view. The text directly states, "Clare had learned that just as Jews were expected to suffer in the Christian world, so were dark people expected to suffer in a white one" (77). Clare's discovery only leads to the conclusion, based upon this particular lesson, that no matter what the Caribbean people do, they will always be deemed inferior, and this lesson becomes a not-so-subtle reminder of that very crucial "fact" of empire..

Lessons such as this one stick with students throughout the remainder of their lives. Clare's parents' view of the world represents the hauntings of such lessons. The islands' parents are conditioned, more or less, in the same manner. It can become problematic, as is the case for Clare Savage, whose parents have very different experiences concerning their childhood education. Clare's mother still possesses an awareness of her connection to the island's past struggle. Her father, on the other hand, aligns himself with the colonizer. He teaches his daughter that her only chance for a future is to marry a white man, that it is her responsibility to "lighten" the family line through marriage. Her father, Boy Savage, implies, rather bluntly, that "she came from his people—white people, he stressed—and he expected Clare to preserve his green eyes and light skin—those things she had been born with. And she had a duty to try to turn the green eyes blue, once and for all—and make the skin, now gold, become pale and subject to visible

sunburn” (127). The problem with her father’s approach is that Clare’s mother, Kitty, is black. This divided family dynamic, coupled with the notion that she must marry a white man, causes Clare to question whether she is white or black and whether she can be *only* one or the other if her parents are both. The divide also crystalizes the sense of double-consciousness Clare has been developing throughout the novel.

The most obvious example of Clare’s parents’ divided views occurs during one of the family car rides: “Ahead of them now, winding down the road, was a procession of people dressed in white... In the middle of the procession were four men, each holding... the end of a freshly cut green bamboo pole... Between the four poles a hammock swung... ‘What are those people carrying?’ Clare asked” (50). Her mother explains that it is a funeral ceremony. The passage continues with the description of the chant they start. “The words of the chant were strange, unrecognizable.” (50) Clare asks, “‘what are they saying?’ Kitty turned to face her daughter in the back seat. ‘They are singing in an old language; it is an ancient song, which the slaves carried with them from Africa.’ ‘Some sort of pocomania song,’ Mr. Savage added, a bit smugly, as if to contradict the tone of his wife’s voice, which had a reverence, even a belief to it” (50). This obviously divided scene shows Clare’s mother’s connection to her Caribbean roots, while her father is more interested in the colonial ways of life that have become standard.

Lamming addresses the idea of the class divide through the relationship G. has with his mother. It becomes clear that “G.’s mother [has] raise[d] him to advance within the colonial hierarchy of power, not to challenge it” (Paquet xv), as Clare’s father attempts to do with her. We learn that his mother took precautions to ensure he would go beyond the village school and not become a tradesman, as was expected of most of the village people. He was eleven “when the results of the public examinations were announced and I learnt that I would be going to the

High School” (216). G. continues, “I was wild with joy, It seemed in a way the only thing I had looked forward to” (216). Upon gaining entrance into the high school, G informs readers, “it was true my mother had been preparing me for it. For three or four years she had paid for the private lessons which were a preparation for the public examination” (217). His mother has been training him to be a part of a different, unfamiliar world and the high school is a very unfamiliar world, one that causes the world he knew to become unfamiliar to him over time.

G. finds himself outside of both his odd and new social circles, as the process of the colonial classroom begins to take hold and “gradually the village receded from [his] consciousness although it wasn’t possible for [him] to forget it” (219). G. learns the world of the high school and returns to the village every night, but he finds it more and more difficult to “participate in their life” (219). Lamming notes that the boys “who went from the village school to the High School” had a difficult time “cop[ing] with the two worlds” (219). G. soon learns his friends believe his “allegiances... had been transferred to the other world” (220) and “whether or not they wanted to they excluded [him] from their world just as [his] memory of them and the village excluded [him] from the world of the High School” (220). G. is caught between two different worlds—the world he has always known and the world his mother has made sure to prepare him for. G. reflects on his dilemma, realizing that having a full connection to the high school, which is representative of English society, and to the village school, which is representative of the Caribbean tradition, is impossible. His only hope, it seems, is to choose one over the other, forcing G.’s consciousness to be at war with itself. The issue is that his time spent in both places make up who he becomes, and so it seems unreasonable that he should have to choose.

For both Clare and G., the divide within their families and communities divides the characters' self-image. They both develop a sense of double-consciousness, their "two-ness" (Du Bois 846) being a compilation of the remaining Caribbean histories they possess and the aggressive English ideals. The characters struggle with their own perception of who they are and how others see them, as is apparent in Cliff's and Lamming's works.

Conclusion

If a person desires, or needs, a connection to a place, and written and oral practices can provide such a link, then it is easy to see the divide an oppressor causes for a people's identity. *Abeng* and *In the Castle of My Skin* emphasize the problems that arise when a colonizer begins to alter the world of a colonized person. The world-shattering alterations colonizers make are on display in the battle between the written and altered curricula of the colonial classroom and the oral and forgotten tradition through which characters glimpse a forgotten history within the pages of these novel. As the oral tradition begins to lose its importance in a colonial and postcolonial world, the members of different colonized cultures start to forget their history and really only know of the past that is re-taught to them in written form. The use of either tradition, or one rather than the other, impacts the peoples' self-formation, and it is for this very reason that Cliff's structure in *Abeng* is so rebellious and that Lamming's seamlessly interwoven narratives are so challenging to the colonizer's claim to culture. The combination of the two forms speaks to the postcolonial attempt at maintaining elements of the previous culture before being dominated and their past erased, allowing the colonizers complete control of the subject's identity. These authors' ability to break from the colonial systems still in place in a postcolonial society affords them the chance to refigure history and rewrite the Caribbean story.

Conclusion

While colonization was a global undertaking, the experiences of the colonized people are localized. The experiences of a young child in the colonial Caribbean cannot be identical to that of one in Africa or India. Reading, researching, and analyzing these texts allows one to see just how distinct these experiences can be while also showing the universality of the tools the colonizer uses to achieve a rewriting of history. Bringing these strands of narrative together shows the long duree of colonial education, one not limited by periodization.

The last two chapters focus on the education of the colonized subjects. They highlight the many ways in which the characters resist the colonial regimes and how they reclaim their narratives. The first chapter, though, is a literary representation of both the silencing of the subaltern subject and how the education of those at home in Europe shapes their understanding of the Other, as well as how it forms a long-lasting identity for the Other. Showcasing how Europeans are informed and educated about the Other is critical if we are to reshape how we teach and read those characters deemed as Others.

Each of these chapters demonstrates the colonizer's use of the colonial education system to penetrate the colonized people's previous cultural systems, which leads to the destruction of any already-formed self-understanding a person may have. These literary representations are first, the colonizing authors' depictions of the fantasized Other, and second, the colonized person's articulation of their resistance to the colonial systems; and provide a way of taking back and reconfiguring their histories and identities. Each chapter exhibits a different aspect of the colonial education system put into place during the period of British Imperialism and shows how the Other destabilizes those systems.

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