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**Torn Halves at the Margins in Shani Mootoo's  
Cereus Blooms at Night**

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Degree of Magister in Post Colonial Woman Literature Written in English**

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# **Dedications**

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to all those who fought for our freedom from the stamps of the colonizer. I do, dedicate it, also, to every woman who launched her silence and inward cry against the bullet of traditional thinking that assigned her in the margin. I do, dedicate it, also, to my best and dear family: my parents, teachers, children, brothers, sisters, my husband Ali and to all my friends.

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## Abstract

In her novel *Cereus Blooms at Night*, The Indo-Trinidadian, Irish and Canadian writer, Shani Mootoo deals with the big changes that Western colonialism has brought to humanity in every angle and area and what follows it in the post-colonial era from unhealed pains, dangerous sores and ruthless annihilation that still burgeon its roots from the same womb of the evil deeds and long-lasting systems full of oppression, hostile milieu, amnesia and many stubborn stains in the colonized minds, that are so laden with the deep seated-sense of inferiority, shame and lack of confidence. The pursuit of liberation is still a wild dream even after the departure of the civilizer and even after hoisting the flags of independence, and since it is the turn of the hitherto-silenced voices to rise their concerns, to spell the bitterest experience and tackle many issues inherited from the fertile womb of the ghostly figure of the “civilizing missions”, Mootoo sheds light on a big trauma embedded from the colonial heritage, a trauma of violence that fragments and a big tragedy that splits people’s bodies, minds, language, memory and even sexuality; focusing on women’s experience of domestic violence, a big dilemma that led to the birth of many anomalous fetus, which Shani Mootoo situates it in the wider context of a reiterated physical and psychological colonial oppression. Alienation, escape, exile and fragmentation of the body and identity are of inevitable drawbacks that open ambiguous avenues to further dilemmas. The primary objective of this research work by the title: Torn Halves at the Margin in Shani Mootoo’s *Cereus Blooms at Night* is to analyze and understand Shani Mootoo’s ideology depicted through her novel in an attempt to unearth the most important ideas it broaches as far as the Post-colonized man and woman are concerned. As the novel I dealt with, pictures a big journey of a writer of post-colonial and feminist heart and mind. Therefore, In three chapters, I put more concern on exploring concepts of Post-colonialism and Feminism; shedding light on the historical and the literary background of the novel. Moreover, dissecting Shani Mootoo’s work and broaching the several themes she dealt with. In its conclusion, an attempt is made for further research in favor of progressing and improving both women’s and Post-colonial Studies.

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**GENERAL  
INTRODUCTION**

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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While our world was/is still wrapped in thorns and barricades in every corner and lot in its areas. Humanity as a sense or right is the property of some at the expense of many. Myriads of people lost their dignity, freedom, breath and self-esteem under the so-called “civilizing missions”. Under the big thorn of civilization, millions of people and their humanity became between the claws of the big masks of civilization and the terrible stamps of the occupier.

Many colonized countries shared a common destiny of a dark history full of complete exploitation of lands, resources and people. Enslavement, indentured labour, and migration forced many indigenous populations to move from their places that they considered “home” and severe their families and children. The hitherto silenced and muffled found themselves in front of unavoidable evil that imposes them to different sorts of domination, exploitation, European languages, cultures, ways and styles of dress. During the so-called civilizing missions, the indigenous cultures of those countries subjected to foreign rule were usually marginalized, sidelined, suppressed and highly denigrated in order to raise the social and cultural preferences and elevate or claim the superiority of the colonizers on the colonized. These ghostly colonizers dared often to depict their colonial subject as existing “outside history” in primitive, barbaric, unchanging, timeless societies, unable to realize any progress without their assistance and big intervention. Thus, they justified their actions including brutal violence that lead to crippling traumas against those who hold up the label of resistance, creating a space for the marginalized that combined with an acute sense of exile, rootlessness and alienation. As Rose Acholonu (1987) observes that “the dehumanizing influence of colonization... is as damaging as it is permanent”

Thus, post-colonial literature appears as a rising sun in a world that is, so laden with thorns, obstacles and obscurity. It emerges as the bullet that explodes an inner revolution existed so long years inside the colonized men. The latter checks to assert the richness, the transparency and the validity of indigenous cultures by restoring pride and more recognition in their practices and traditions that were, profoundly degraded under colonialism, counteract their surroundings by restoring a connection between the silenced people and places. Post-colonized people in their turn have received the

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amount of heed they have for so long ages throughout history been missing from available literature.

Post-colonial writers filled with pleasure and eager to erase the debunking of cultural past, sought reclamation of native culture through the celebration of indigenous traditions and values. Bearing the burden for renewing quest for native roots and distinct self-identity and trueness of being in non-European way. Aijaz Ahmed (1995) holds a similar view by saying “postcolonial is simply a polite way of saying not white, not Europe or perhaps not Europe inside Europe”.

Post-colonial writers either in their languages or the colonizers languages, for language is/was a means of struggle, a source of energy and potential for changing the false images and the cultural bombs imposed on them, as it seemed that the bad destiny and the unavoidable evil had to exist in these land.

Through Post-colonial women literature, women also reflect their plight as women; they never wait to negotiate their real identities, revealing a high rootedness in their nation and national cultures. Through battles of voices, they hope for change and work for progress, representing women as the emblem of resistance and challenge, fleeing from silence and oppression that are shaped and framed for them as a natural bad faith to live in. Through feminine writing, women have challenged the roots of traditional femininity, they have for so long ages been embracing. Through their pens, women could launch their hitherto silenced voices and turned inward cry against the evil ideologies that keep them inside houses and corners serving the masculine needs. Thus, they make their voices heard in every corner and angle in the world through the heavy messages and issues they sent, especially in challenging the caste of superiority that embraced men as citizens and women as refugees. By being the victim of both colonization and misogynistic societies that are so obsessed with male ideologies, she never cares for this double colonization, she has revolted to regain devoured rights and rejected to be a fertile ground for patriarchy and oppression.

If my vision focuses on postcolonial feminine writing, it is because, being a woman; who was born, weaned and grew in a colonized land. On the other hand, being

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a woman who lives under the roof of a misogynistic society that is still wrapping women in neglect, exclusion, fear and invisibility. Thus, I wish to express my opinion, trueness and being among the masculine ones, just as post-colonial women writers do with their pens, hearts and minds, by letting great works for us, still remain significant and valid till now, engraving their healing ideas, imposing their weight, value, authenticity, aesthetic and brave transgression.

As a post graduate student in the sphere of post-colonial women literature written in English, my research work is based on West Indian back ground. I have centered myself in dealing with the deep and profound impact that affect the Caribbean society, especially Trinidad by the ghostly figure of different Western invasions that carry huge political, social, economic and cultural deep change over Caribbean and Trinidad. A shared history of colonialism, slavery and plantation system opened all the doors of in and out migration from different regions in the world. Thus, the Caribbean island became a home of widely different languages, cultures, religions, traditions and even with different motives of being there, intensified by the colonizer's competition in implementing their culture and education. What resulted of course to a hostile milieu, amnesia and shame for a huge debilitating history framed by the Europeans.

Famous writers, thus, bear the burden of this debilitating history, act as representative, spokespersons and interlocutors to provide new images on their alienating history and transcend their alien milieu by overcoming the sense of inferiority and the lack of cohesion, that is the heritage of a long history of dispossession and deprivation and tackle so many issues of loyalty, self-discovery and the search of authentic identity. A big list of voices who prefer to heal their pains, wounds and reshape their home's destiny, includ brave writers who give priority to their nation, such as Naipaul, Eric William, Derek Walcott, Jean Rys, Shani Mootoo, Jamaica Kancaid and others.

In one's mind, the selected work; Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night*, constitutes a female voice most closely addresses such point of colonialism effect on the post-colonized subject in many sides, especially in breaking the colonized's bodies, minds and spirits and challenging the sense of wholeness. In one's mind, too,

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this novel is valuable. I do not mean how this novel is popular or how much success the novel has got, but its bold transcendence and rich complexity, its poetic language, profound sense and magical power, all come into play conceiving the themes it resonates and the variegated bunch of issues it broaches. Thus, I find myself as a female voice curious to read its pages and discover what voices its experiences and defends its case. The main motivation resides in its strong and heavy messages it conveys in attempt to understand and repair the debilitating histories that are full of people's unconsciousness. Therefore, one can not let a great work of big interests without being read, understood and without applying its messages.

My interest in Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night* can be framed in three main ideas. First, though Mootoo proves the impossibility of a united postcolonial Caribbean body, she locates power in the smallest fragmented part of the female character. The characters portrayed in the novel, are marginalized, excluded and alienated as other because of colonial legacy. Thus, marginalization is not without consequences, it becomes as an act of fragmentation because it challenges the sense of identity and wholeness. Thus, the work is set on ground which might be, for many reasons, not thought of as fertile land for women's oppression.

Secondly, it exposes the ways in which the Caribbean body (especially the female one) resists all sorts of barricades, violence, trauma and oppression and finds an authentic space for her/his own where she/he locates an authentic identity though being excluded, marginalized, alienated. The third point concerns the contemporary lesbian writer, who is of multi-cultural experience; she is the product of four cultures (India-Trinidad, Ireland and Canada). My big interest, therefore, is to see how a lesbian writer of hybrid identity and cross cultural belonging can impose her different vision and make her ideology accessible in many issues inherited from the colonizers through using queer characters to deconstruct colonial and post-colonial patriarchy.

The aim, of this research work is then, molded in several objectives. For that cause, attempts will be made to demonstrate the complexities of living for the Caribbean man under the stamps of the occupier in general and the big tragedies and the unimagined atrocities of slavery and slave trade during long years of exploitation

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and trafficking in human beings in a legalized trade in terms of scale, durability and criminality. To go deep with this idea, Shani Mootoo in her novel is highly concerned through her novel with the harsh experiences the diasporic subjects faced through the brutal methods of slavery that coincided with the total absence of humanity, freedom and dignity that were totally obscured or rarely covered up.

This research work is directed towards an examination of the manner through which Shani Mootoo focuses on religion as being deeply a symbol of colonization during the whole years of this legalized trade. Mootoo's narrative indicates the centrality of Christianity for the European colonizers as an intelligent instrument, useful tool and benevolent figure in imposing morality. Therefore, according to her, being between the claws of this space will result in further reconfiguration of the Trinidadian man by taking extreme forms; colonized became colonizer, abused became abuser, the emergence of fragmented bodies, souls and spirits .

A more relevant aim that this research work serves at its center ; is the focus on the destabilization of this type of colonization and what it held from false assumptions, ideologies, bad heritage and impacts on the Trinidadian man/woman through Shani Mootoo's female protagonist Mala.

On the other hand, this research work is directed towards the focus on the *metaphor* of the cereus plant developed in the novel and its relationship to Shani Mootoo's perception and her deep sense as a painter, poet, visual artist and film maker. The fact that cereus blooms at night suggests to everyone that hope grows from pain, light comes from dark, life from death totally as Mala's plants' yard thrive amidst decay.

The following research questions are essentially exposed as:

-To what extent do the Western ideologies influence Trinidad and Caribbean in general and women especially?

-How do Trinidadian and Caribbean women writers bear the burden to resist and challenge the colonizer in their writing?

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-To what extent and in what ways do these writers use their pens to transmit and resist colonial patriarchy?

-Does Shani Mootoo's ideology succeed in deconstructing the highly inherited heritage in its different sides?

-To find suitable answers to the stated research work questions, hypotheses are formulated:

-The big concurrence between the colonizers has shaped the history of the Caribbean and imposed it to different linguistic, cultural and social traditions.

-Colonization has a big impact in splitting the Caribbean into fragments through violence, marginalization, exclusion, oppression and by causing big psychological and physical traumas that causes a high break and challenge the sense of wholeness and the unification of identity.

-Caribbean women writers in general and Shani Mootoo especially, use different strategies to deconstruct the colonial heritage and transmit their heavy messages, raising awareness and challenging the sense of identity and wholeness.

-Shani Mootoo relates religion to her story for deliberate purposes and objectives.

My research work: *Torn Halves in Shani Mootoo's Cereus Blooms at Night* comprises three chapters. The first chapter entitled The Politics of Resistance is devoted to shed light on the concepts of Post-colonialism and Feminism, with emphasis on related theories and issues, such as colonialism, imperialism, and identity and post postmodernism.

The second chapter is descriptive. It is entitled as; Between the Axes of History and literature. It deals with the historical and literary back ground of the novel. As Shani Mootoo is of Indo-Trinidadian, Irish and Canadian background, she chooses Trinidad as a setting to her work. As it provides a better construction to put on *Cereus Blooms at Night*.

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The third chapter entitled Between Colonial and Post-Colonial Oppression; it analyzes *Cereus Blooms at Night*. It attempts to explore the writer's concerns and views on the Caribbean body, tackling the inside themes and the big relation between the author and the heroine of the novel "Mala" as the main character.

The conclusion of the work will try to open new scopes to further research, notably in women literature in the post-colonial world and foster the readers or learners to be highly associated with many issues that concern their nations, culture and people to be cleaned from the colonizers stains. Therefore, the research work will examine such attitudes by using different sources such as journals, articles and books. All of them have a specific touch on how post-colonialism and feminism heal the pains of the broken world and tries to create a positive milieu.



# **Chapter One**

## **The Politics of Resistance**

**Chapter One: The Politics of Resistance**

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## 1.1 Introduction

One can say that Post-colonialism is a revolutionary tool to say and be non-white and non-Europe, it suggests a time after the colonial period, after the times of the Western dreams, ambitions and concerns, perhaps the period of obsession and satisfaction, with declaring so distant lands, resources and people as their own property or possessions. Britain, France, Spain and Germany are the main nations and countries that are highly associated and related with colonial ambitions and projects. They find the colonized lands as the treasure that can turn all their dreams into reality. In fact, the idea of colonialism is very ancient and it sustains to the present day in different forms and shapes. This has led many historians and scholars to disagree about the term Post-colonialism since it does imply a simple during and after a succession that cannot be exact or true, since colonial projects and plans have never actually ceased. Under the big difference in many areas between the colonizer and the colonized in color, ways of dress, culture, language, traditions and religion, the colonized were depicted with the worst terms; they were labeled as primitive, savage, barbaric, and with the variation of such labels, the label “human” was buried in the graves of neglect and; either largely obscured or covered up completely. Therefore, a new age has marked its debut, and a revolutionary era, has given a voice and opportunity to those who have traditionally been silenced and muffled, in an attempt of the pursuit of liberation from slavery, racism, and the tyrannical or oppressive strictures of the past.

A big relation between post-colonialism and feminism is interconnected, and a common challenge and resistance are shared by both, especially in reflecting power, resistance and breaking all sorts of patriarchy. Feminine writers explode lines and words in the face of inevitable “Othering”, marginality, and alienation, being the emblem of women’s battle for the sake of liberation. Post-colonialism and feminism hold an undeniable responsibility over societies full of injustice and inequality, and through language or war, they contain longer roots that narrate a story of a long history of resistance in attempt to redefine and check the real sense of humanity that is a right of some and a big dream for many. Thus, in this chapter, there is an attempt to explore

Post-colonialism and Feminism and shed light on the main concepts dealt with during these periods.

## 1.2 Post-colonialism

The term post-colonialism seems to have much ambiguity, confusion and misunderstanding to hide whether the period refer to cover the colonial era or only refer to the period of the departure of the colonizers after a big journey of blood, amnesia and terrible pain. Hyphenated or not, it is considered as a weapon to resist, challenge and investigate through the power of literature, words and expressions the clash of two cultures, especially if one side claims its superiority and uniqueness on the other.

### 1.2.1 Post-colonialism Definition

Among the latest attempts to define post-colonialism can be seen and proposed in the joint authored book *The Empire Writes Back* (1989). The authors viewed post-colonialism as production that is highly concerned with covering the cultural side that is “affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day” (Ashcroft et al, 1989). These authors do not refer to all sorts of literature, but they focus mainly on the literature produced in former colonies; namely African countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Pacific Island countries and others. It is the oppressive and tyrannical graves that unit these geographically different and separated literature together, though originating in different areas, situations and conditions, according to these authors, what makes these nations united is the fact that they were exposed to the same poisoning, pains and arms, being the emblem of silenced voices, inward cries and hidden liberties; “they emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with imperial power and emphasizing their difference.....”(Ibid). These colonized

countries gathered under one umbrella, one wall and one destiny, holding up dark past and black present, hoping for brighter tomorrow and sunny future as the departure of the “civilized” is never total, though they got hoist the flags of independence that soared highly on their skies. According to these authors post-colonial culture is to “write back” to the imperial power in non-Western ideology, politics and thought in order to assert their national identity which have been robbed, stained and fragmented, their history which have been forged and degraded. Therefore, Post-colonial writers discard their passivity, inspiring all the colonized people to be empowered in front of the dominant.

The prefix “post” on the other hand bears controversial connotations. In fact, it neither refers to “post-independence” nor “after-colonialism”, but it transmits the idea of a revolutionary age as it is totally false to think the end of colonial practices or “the civilizing missions”, but it holds new consciousness and big awareness that appear as the opposite of the status quo and what is embedded by colonial culture because “the inequities of colonial rule have not been erased yet” (Loomba, 1960). Thus, the concept of liberation was never limited on the departure of colonial forces, but the process of “purring” the colonized from the colonizers “contamination” was a central issue during the moment of independence. Anne McClintock (1995) refers to the re-appearing of colonialism the very moment it is awaited to disappear, therefore, we can not completely claim that colonialism is over, or is terminated, the once colonized countries are still nestling by the same residue of poisoning, bullet and arms, remained upset and dire, shrouded in darkness and pains. This is what leads Gregory Derek to declare that we are living in a “colonial present” (1). Post-colonial writers in their turn, their pens never stop to wake up people and raise their consciousness. Ngugi wathing’o in *Moving the Center* (1993) does not wait, but stands powerfully through literature and the strength of lines, words and pages to wage a war against “the civilizing missions” to realize a cultural independence and national unity, warning that the previous colonized lands are still enceinte, bearing fetus who have been born, weaned and nursed in the same uniforms, having the same qualities, dimensions and risks of the so called departed colonizer. On the other hands, Edward Said (1993) points out that; “imperialism is an act of geographical violence”. Said in this way

declares and launches a cultural and ideological war against imperialism, thus, the main weapon for Said is to deconstruct what have the unavoidable evil chanted and constructed. Therefore, Post-colonialism gives right to all those marginalized, oppressed, fragmented and silenced voices to yell against, struggle to articulate the Other, stand proudly without feeling inferiority or shame in front of “the civilized”, and break the line drawn between the colonizer and the colonized, tackling many important issues that refer to the residue of the mask of the civilizing missions that is brought on white ships.

### 1.2.2 Post-colonial Literature

Post-colonial literature has been the exploded bomb as a result of many experiences resulting from the contact and the clash between the colonized and the colonizer. Therefore, post-colonial writing is not only a response to the civilizing missions, but is purely against it, its ideology, existence and its strategies in oppressing people, exploiting lands and resources. Therefore, the European legacy had great impact on the emergence and the development of post-colonial literature. While the post-colonial writers dealt with various issues in depicting the colonized people, the post-colonial novels become veritable weapons to dismantle and break the colonizer’s ideology in creating unequal power, based on the binary oppositions such as “Us” and “Them”; “First–World” and “Third–World”; “White” and “Black”. So, the main primary concern of these writers in a very harsh period of dehumanization; is to salvage history that has been manipulated or taken off. While colonial writers dare to depict the colonized as primitive, inferior, uncivilized and savage. Post-colonial writers have been taking risks, demonstrate power and courage, in order to inspire the colonized people to be encouraged, find an authentic space to resist all what have been depicted and negotiate their national identities. The earliest post-colonial writers globally began with mimicry of writings by the colonizers; they did not try to differ themselves with the colonizer’s culture and their literary canon. This is because the colonial text occupied high status thanks to its narratives and “Europeanisms”. According to Chinua Achebe, “the universal myth.... denigrates the post-colonial text

on the basis that ‘European’ equals ‘universal’” (2). However, a new age has marked its debut, a new era of decolonization began to be associated with deconstruction, new personality has been destined toward suppressing the exclusivity of the master narratives, and a big challenge of self-redefinition and representation reached its peak. Thus, post-colonial literature according to Bill Ashcroft et al (1995) is understood to be a “discourse of oppositionality”. With the rise of myriads of post-colonial writers, acting as spokespersons and interlocutors for third world literature, in a hybridized blend of geographies, it becomes so difficult to determine the source of text or even its writer as the black destiny and the debilitating history put the post colonized writers in the same area and with the same concern. Thus, they view many different issues from the same angle. As Young (2001) writes, “no one really knows where an author ‘is’ when they read a book....and nor should it matter. The difference is less a matter of geography than where individuals locate themselves as speaking from, epistemologically, culturally, and politically, who they are speaking to, and how they define their own enunciative space”.

Deconstruction and decentering are ideological and cultural weapon to throw out what is present or inherited from the evil deeds. Some writers try to seek for a cultural purity far from any assimilation or accepting Europe as good. So, they reject the colonizer’s perceptions, reality, thoughts and existence, especially their language, considering that the only language to define and protect their culture that is free from ‘contamination’, stubborn stains and can distinct them from the dominant, it is of course their own language. Thus, the choice of language is of course a matter of identity. Whereas, most of other writers write in the colonizers language to stand in front of the European’s cultural superiority’. In this sense, Prof Fewzia Bedjaoui (2005) states that “all cultures of the world are equal, then, for each culture owns its own body of values, and values are relative and hence cannot be absolutized”. Therefore, the colonial language was seen as “a fundamental site of struggle” (Bill Ashcroft et al, 1995). These writers welcome and adopt hybridized identities, write in the colonizers language as a source of power, energy and potential, and include mimicry in an attempts to challenge and stood face to face with the European



discourses as Bhabha (1985) notes, “to the extent to which discourse is a form of defensive warfare, then mimicry marks those moments of civil disobedience.....”.

In short, the colonial experience has decided areas of concern for post-colonial pens (3). With different pens, colours and tableaux, post-colonial writers trace one goal, one reality and one challenge; “revising history” to tell many things from their own perceptions, beliefs, thoughts and ideology asserting the richness and the validity of indigenous cultures.

Noteworthy is that these pens are not mobilized by men only, but women’s lenses also reflect their plight as women, and do not wait to negotiate their real identities, revealing a big and a strong rootedness in the nation, resist their cultures and history, making it possible for us as a post-colonized to see their courage in framing “national” constructions of women’s identity as postcolonial. As women, they never stay far or stop to oppose and reaffirm nationalistic agenda whatever the literary work was. Post-colonial feminist writings stood in the same line of ambition, strength and faith as well as man and included brave women who preferred to be added in the list of challenge for humanity, such as, Kamala Maskanday’s, Anita Desai, Tsisi Dangarembga, Arundathi Roy, Assia Djabar, Nadia Fekir .

### 1.2.3 Post-colonial Theory

Post-colonial theory is built from the experience of colonial legacy of post-colonized people who struggle long for liberation, freedom and humanity that becomes so difficult to define in the age of man’s criminality to man and humans division into castes. As Bhabha (2001) notes, “post-colonial theory becomes a constant and continuing struggle in the company of humanity”. Post-colonial theory as an umbrella gathers all those who smell, taste and live pain and horrors in their real sense, many different theories, thus, were developed by a variety of philosophers, writers and anthropologists. Therefore, postcolonial theory aims to examine the relation between the colonizer and the colonized. In an attempt to understand the main philosophy and the principle dimensions of post-colonial theory, one have to be aware how post-

colonial theory appeared, Ashcroft et al (1989) claim that the post-colonial literary theory; “emerges from the inability of the European theory to deal adequately with the complexities and varied cultural provenance of post-colonial writing. European theories themselves emerge from particular cultural traditions which are hidden by false notions of ‘the universal’”. Therefore, post-colonial theory is born out of the colonized people’s desires, fears, hopes, and dreams, aiming for new breath of life and future full of humanity. In this context, major attention in the literature of the colonized was about articulating their identities and reclaiming their past in the face of that past’s inevitable Otherness. The philosophy that originates from this theory is not one of declaring war, separation or conflict on the past, but the war is against the present realities that are the major consequences of that dark past. Therefore, the main focus of this struggle is on neo-colonialism, which is still growing from the same womb of colonialism, and from the same plant’s root, thus, its agents are still burgeoning through all types of exploitation, namely political, economic and social. Moreover, post-colonial theory deals with important issues in terms of identity and culture as main problems of colonial legacy, the post-colonized people’s original selves have been robbed, stolen and embezzled in the frame of hybridity, as a result, these people become nothing more than a fragmented state, separated into smallest parts representing devoid of a unified self. Thus, the main important issue for the indigenous is the fact of ignoring their roots, sharing the sense or the feeling of inferiority, shame and big lack of confidence. The main point is that they ignore who they are and where they come from or belong to. They show mixed features and characteristics of their own cultures and the Western culture, and this is what Homi Bhabha (1994) refers to us by “third space”, “the in between” where “we will find those words with which we can speak of ourselves and others. And by exploring this hybridity, this ‘third space’, we may elude the politics of polarity”. Therefore, among the main concerns of post-colonial theory are negotiating national identities of the once colonized, who become split, fragmented, rootless and dislocated. On the other hand, dealing with the colonized cultures which can not be considered as “pure”.

The key text in establishing of post-colonial theory is Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said views that the depiction of the

colonized culture as alien, barbaric, primitive, inferior and savage is totally wrong and mere a Western invention, the Europeans judgments did not start from a reasonable logic or what is real or viewed with the real eyes in the Orient lands, but it was a big European dream emerged from the West's hopes and plans about this distinct lands. In this sense, Leela Ghandi (1999) states: "Orientalism is the first book in which Said relentlessly unmask the ideological disguises of imperialism". Post-colonial discourse was the outcome of several theorist and writers such as Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Aizaz Ahmed, Bill Ashcroft, Ngugi WaThiang'o and others. Many post-colonial feminists, however, expressed disagreement, considering post-colonial theory as masculine subject. Therefore, much work was implemented to give rise and birth to the post-colonial feminist theory. The latter shows the same resistance, challenge and concerns with nation rootedness and identity problematic as well as post-colonial theory.

#### **1.2.4 Identity/Colonial Identity**

The word identity is defined according to Oxford Dictionary of contemporary English (2010) as "a person's name or who they are [.....] The qualities and attitudes that a person or a group of people have, that makes them different from other people". However, in the field of post-colonial context, the concept of identity is viewed differently with a complete distinct view and requires more thorough and profound analysis. The post-colonial author and theorist of Orientalism, Edward Said, focused on the big differences, disparities and the binary logic that fosters a sever hierarchy that puts the colonizer and the colonized in opposite directions, uniforms and even content leading to a terrible classification and big distinction between center/margin; civilized/uncivilized; metropolis/empire. As said (1978) puts it: "Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure prompted the difference between the familiar (Europe, West, 'Us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'Them')". Thus, "the colonizers saw themselves as the embodiment of what a human being should be; the proper 'self', native people were considered as 'Other', different, and therefore inferior to the point of being less than fully human" (Tyson, 2006). Whereas,

Homi Bhabha goes to refer mainly to what put the colonizer and the colonized in a shared and common angle where the big similarities between them emerge and how key concepts such as ambivalence, mimicry and hybridity put both of them in the same cup that incorporate and dictate what he refers to us as “colonial identity” Bhabha’s focus was on the main sides that make the colonizer and the colonized in the same line of resemblance and the same pot of ambivalence. He defines mimicry as “the process of transmitting of all or half of the colonizer manner by the colonized as ‘almost the same but not quite’” (Bhabha, 1994). The colonized people repeat, imitate and copy, giving a new identity to themselves, that is similar but not totally the same to the colonizer. Many contradict and ambiguous things will be shown as a result of this imitation, and that is what Homi Bhabha called ambivalence. Therefore, hybridity can be accessible through mimicry. Bhabha argues that ‘the third space’, which means that hybridity is a dialogue between cultures that “challenge our sense of historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force” (Bhabha, 1994). This way in which the white is viewed as the tool of oppression and the black as tool that absorb this oppression leads to colonial subjugation of both. Both the colonizer and the colonized are built by different forms of contradiction. In his text; *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha suggested that there is a “third space of enunciation” in which cultural systems are constructed. Bhabha aimed to create a new and different way of viewing or describing the identity of selves and others. Bhabha says:

*It becomes crucial to distinguish between the semblance and similitude of the symbols across diverse cultural experience-literature, art, music, ritual, life, death-and the social specificity of each of these productions of meaning as they circulate as signs within specific contextual locations and social systems of value. The transnational dimension of culture transformation-migration, diaspora, displacement, relocations-makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification. The natural (ized), unifying discourse of nation, peoples, or authentic folk tradition, those embedded myths of cultures particularity, cannot be readily referenced. The great, though unsettling, advantage of this position is that it makes you increasingly aware of the construction of culture and the invention of tradition*

(Bhabha, 1994:274)

Therefore, even culture is not far from the process of hybridity that is highly associated with people, it can be also considered as impure, constructed in the same “Third space of enunciation” (Bhabha, 1994). This tension between the colonizer and the colonized resulted in the bad luck of the displacement of their identity into colonial identity (Young, 2001).

### **1.2.5 Colonialism /Imperialism**

My own definition to colonialism is to establish the white man in the colonies in order to put all lands, resources and people in the hands of the empire, thus, the sun will never set on the European empires. Others go so far to bring their education, language and culture, making it possible for us to see how much humanity is exclusive on the Europeans. It was a moral duty thus to Christianize us and assimilate “the Other” to “the Self”. So, the concept of expansion was not limited only on the colonized territories but also on their minds. The difficulty of the term is in making it synonymous to imperialism as both of them highlight the philosophy of the conquest, in political and economic side. While both of them signify and refer to different ways of exercising power whether through being a permanent settlers in the colonized territories or through indirect strategies and mechanisms. From “savagery”, “barbarism” to “civilization”, this is the Western process or theory in establishing settlement, though it does not prove usefulness in justification. The sole stem that reconciles those different stalks of imperialism and colonization is the chant of “mission civilisatrice”, which obliged the inability of these societies for self-government. Child and Williams stated that a clear distinction must be drawn between imperialism and colonialism. Thus; they define imperialism as; “the extinction and expansion of trade and commerce under the protection of political, legal, and military controls”. However, they refer to colonialism as the process of “the settling of communities from one country in other, usually in a conquered territory” (Young, 2001). Imperialism according to young (2001), operates as a policy of state, driven by the ostentatious projects of power within and beyond national boundaries. On the other hand, colonialism is analyzed primarily as a practice by which colonial rule binds her

colonies to herself, with a “primary object of promoting her economic advantages” (Nkrumah, 1973). Other plausible definition is given by Ashcroft et al (2002) who use the word colonialism to refer to “‘civilizing’ task involving education and paternalistic nature”, a so-called “white man’s burden”.

Colonialism, thus, has been a feature of human history. It has existed many centuries ago, it has brought many countries into subjugation and deprived great many people from their humanity under the exploitation of lands, resources and people. Enslavement, indentured labour and migration obliged many people to lose their lands and places that they considered as mother home under the obscurity of colonial practices and the bullet of the civilizing missions. Ashish Nandy in his book *The Intimate Enemy* states two forms of colonization; physical colonization is limited on the conquest of territories, economic greed and profit, while the second, is that which claims its responsibility in civilizing the primitives, the savage and the Other. He comments on this type of civilization as:

*This colonialism colonizes minds in addition to bodies and it releases forces within colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities once and for all. In the process, it helps to generalize the concept of the modern West from a geographical and temporal entity to psychological category. The west is now every. Within the west and outside: “in structures and minds”.*

(Nandy, 1983:12)

Though colonialism and imperialism differ in their names or meanings, they are embraced under the same disguise, and under the same banner of civilizing the uncivilized, implementing the idea of natural humanity that is not a natural right for the Other.

### 1.2.6 Neo-colonialism

Colonialism’s meaning is full of bad descriptions of homelessness, exploitation, deprivation and dehumanization. Though the post colonized got hoisted “flags of independence” in exchange with their dark past, this does not mean an economic

independence or an attempt to repair that “exclusive past” covered by the stamps of the occupiers. Imperialism as a concept and colonialism as a practice are still burgeoning from the same roots and fetus in a new form called “neo-colonialism”. While Altbach (1995) regards neo-colonialism as “partly planned policy” and “a continuation of the old practices” (4), Young (2001) refers to neo-colonialism as “the last stage of imperialism” in which the once-colonized lands are out of the inability to deal freely or dominate independently their economy as if they are between the mouth of the colonizer even after the country gained its independence. Another plausible perception was provided in (1961) by the All African-people’s conference defining it as follows:

*The survival of the colonial system in spite of formal recognition of political independence in emerging countries, which become victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination by political, economic, social, military or technical, means.*

(Martin, 1985)

In short, though neo-colonialism holds up a different meaning and concept in comparison to colonialism, it holds the same goals, principles and strategies of colonialism; “states being officially independent, but are still directed, oriented and exploited from outside”. During colonialism or neo-colonialism, the Other remained the victim of the colonizer’s hierarchal ideology that rank the colonized in the lowest castes. So why the colonized is deemed as Other? Can the Other be turned to the self? And who can rank people and according to which parameters?

### **1.2.7 Other (ing)**

The creation of the “Other” consists of applying a principle that allows classifying and ranking individuals into hierarchical castes or groups: them and us. On the other hand, the concept of “the Other”, is an act or process of manifesting and showing power relations, i.e. if one group is described as “we” of course the other group who is different, is described as “they”. Consequently, there is a need to create a distance between oneself and those who do not comply the norms. “The existence of others is crucial in defining what is ‘normal’ and in locating one’s own place in the

world” (Ashcroft, 2000). One can trace from this division and distinction that there are some people who are going to be delegitimized, those who embody the norms, their identity is valued, look stronger and better, whereas, the Other that is defined by its faults, is devalued, weak, inferior and primitive, deemed as a prey to discrimination and marginalization. But one may wonder here whether the parameter of dividing people is physical, psychological or another parameter that we ignore it. During colonialism, the Empire instituted a binary separation of the colonizer and the colonized, whereas the “uncivilized” was labeled as “the Other”. The Other is not only a question of colonizer/colonized, however, the publication of Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* in 1949 is remarkable through her exposing the idea of “women as Other”, she asserts that in our societies, women are not defined by themselves, they are defined by men. As a result, women are defined by everything man is not. According to her, man is “the one” and woman is “the Other”, insisting that men are accorded to high status and caste on the social ladder. Men oppress women by the prescription of nature in every context, women are constructed to be weaker by the false traditional notions built by men, thus, men are to occupy the role of the self, or subject, while women are inessential and incomplete ([www.sparknotes.com/lit/Second Sex Summary.html](http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/Second%20Sex/Summary.html)).

### 1.2.8 Orientalism as an Aspect of the “Other”

Professor Edward Said is identified as pioneer, very important and influential, particularly in his *Orientalism* that is regarded as profoundly significant work at the intellectual history of the previous twentieth century. Said is not only a literary theorist; he is also a very prominent and active representative of the Palestinian people. He helps to create and puts a form to fields as post-colonial theory, and has some influence on disciplines such as Cultural Studies, Anthropology, Political science and English history. Said has challenged the concept of Orientalism or the difference between East and West. Orientalism is regarded as a revolutionary work, attempts to dismantle and deconstruct all hierarchical distinction between people and answer many question of why and how the West come to understand the Middle East, who looks different by the virtue of the color of skin, behaviors or beliefs as stranger.



With the arrival of the European countries in contact with less developed countries, they describe these people as exotic, evil-inferior, heathen and primitive, making a big line between two parts of the world. The East and the West or the Occident and the Orient or the Civilized and the Uncivilized. In this respect, he (1978) says: “Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between ‘the Orient’ and (most of time) ‘the Occident’, thus, very large mass administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West” (88). Thus, there is no escape from the European’s definition for them as superior and unique in comparison to the Orientals. The Europeans find this line of division as a high impetus to justify and give full explanation for their colonization under the banner of “civilizing the uncivilized”. In this sense, it becomes necessary or obligatory for the orientalist to generalize the culture of the orient in every area and context. For Said, Orientalism is a form of cultural hegemony that aims to suppress the unequal relation that dominate some cultural forms over others, devising the worlds, its people and cultures into opposite parts, totally like the ideas of Europe such as, “us” and non-Europe as “them” are never far from the circle of Orientalism. Said’s explosion to his revolutionary work was specifically for two main reasons. Firstly, the Arab-Israel War of 1973, which had known many stereotypes and lot of false images and discussions that were widespread in the press about the Arabs described as “cowards” ([www.mediaed.org/asserts/products/403/transcriptspdf](http://www.mediaed.org/asserts/products/403/transcriptspdf)). Secondly, feeling a sort of disparity between what his experience of being an Arab was, and the representation of that in writing.

Said (1978) gives a brief view on his work by saying: “My contention is that Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient’s difference with its weakness....As a cultural apparatus Orientalism is all aggression, activity, judgment, will-to-truth, and knowledge”. He explains how the science of Orientalism developed and how the West starts considering the Orientals as non-human, primitive and barbaric, shaping the Orientals according to their views, perceptions, contributing in the process of Orientalizing the orient to link the others with them, in this sense, Said (1978) says: “Therefore as much as the west itself, the orient is an idea that has a

history and tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given its reality and presence in and for the West”. Said refers to the fact that the European think that they have the right and the complete power to represent and reshape the Orientals as they like or prefer, claiming that cultures and histories are not chattels or commodities to be forged or understood by force, he says: “As second qualification is that, cultures, and histories cannot be seriously understood or studied without their force ...To believe that such things happen simply as a necessity of imagination” (Ibid, 89).

Professor Said analysis of Orientalism is not considered as only a story or description of its content, but a sustained argument, analysis and proof for why it looks the way it does, locating the construction of Orientalism with the history of imperial conquest.

To sum up, the difference in cultures still has its weight, value and means a lot for humanity. So, there is no parameter to consider once culture or its values superior than others .It is still shame that in the intellectual history, men or their regions, in this world are still judged upon their geographical or cultural belonging. In fact, ‘one needs to know oneself culturally in order to be in a better position to understand the Other/Alien’ (Milani, 1998) (5).

### 1.3 Feminism

The sole ideology, faith and politics in order to exchange power between man and woman in a society that is full of patriarchal and oppressive beliefs and thoughts, is without doubt “Feminism”. One can notice that the relation of power between the two sexes touched every sphere, angle and all areas of existence; family, education, work, culture, knowledge and politics.

The roots of feminism dated back to ancient Greece with Sappho (570 BCE), or the medieval world with Hildegard of Bingen (1179) according to (Ruether, 1998). While Mary Wollstonecraft (1797) and Jane Austen (1817) are the modern pillars of women’s movement. Thus, lot of women strive hardly, demonstrating courage, being

full of energy, strength and challenge, being floodlit in a drawn dark world, therefore, they go off in huff to advocate and call for the dignity, confidence, intelligence, strength and the basic human potential of the female sex. But, it was not until the late nineteenth century that all the achievements and efforts for women's equal rights, were translated into a clearly self-conscious and real movement or movements. In fact, the path of feminism has not been easy and smooth, but rough and stormy, and the journey has shown that feminism though barricades and thorns, it touches every sphere of human existence making it clear for us that the philosophy behind the "rising sun", is not to declare war against males, but it is simply to understand that humanity is not limited on one sex without another, thus, as much as we recognize the importance of females, the more and more we become aware and we will understand what humanity is.

### **1.3.1 Feminism Definition:**

Feminism has been defined differently to represent people's diversity, beliefs and thoughts. Most of dictionaries, such as (Long man, 2010) define it as the advocacy of women's rights based on the belief in the equality of the two sexes. One can trace that the variety of definitions illustrate the difficulty and the obstacles of coping with this complex concept. And because of "History is filled with bitter and an intense dispute over what is permissible for feminists to do, say, to think or to feel. Feminists are so fragmented in their opinions that the construction of a simple, modern, shared definition of feminism is very difficult" (Delmare, 1986). So; it is more suitable, thus, to discuss the plurality of feminists rather than one feminism. All of them in reality struggle for the half of humanity, resist and fight the big wall of thorns and patriarchy by portraying their frame as the only true one.

According to Danna Hawxhurst (2001) and Sue Morrow, "Feminism has only working definitions, since it is a dynamic, constantly changing ideology with many aspects including the personal, political and philosophical. It can never be simply a belief system. Without action, feminism is merely empty which cancels itself out" (6).

While, Charlotte Bunch points out that feminism is about transforming the society, because everything affects women, every issue is a woman's issue, and there is a feminism perspective on every subject (7). Barbara Breg defines it as "a broad movement embracing numerous phases of women's emancipation. It is the freedom from sex-determined role freedom from society's oppressive restrictions, freedom to express her thought fully and to convert them freely into action" (8).

### 1.3.2 Three waves of Feminism

Feminist Anthropology can be divided into three temporal categories:

**First-wave** Feminism took place between (1850-1920) (9), appears as the rising sun to suppress the obscurity that covers women's light in a world that sticks them with marginalization, ignorance and deep exclusion from the social life and every think was political, exploding out of a milieu that is characterized by urban industrialism and liberal, socialist politics. First-wave Feminism is used to refer to the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century Feminist Movements that were focusing almost on gaining equal rights of women, particularly the right to suffrage (Jane Freedman, 2002). Man occupies the lion share not only in terms of participation in all fields of life. But even the research that had been undertaken by man favored, privileged and gave more importance to men, and ignored female's role in the society, viewing that women's role should be confined at home's corners, as the biological sex defined the individual's roles in society. Famous feminists during this period are Elsie Claws Parson, Alice Fletcher, and Phyllips Kayberry. Their goal was to design the path of beginning for women to be recognized. They started to open opportunities, demanding equal rights for the oppressed sex, they struggled highly for including women's voices in the public sphere and all society, and to have their voices considered in politics. The first wave formally began at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1902) drafted the Seneca Falls Declaration outlining the new movement's ideology and political strategies. While, a big focus and insistence was put only on their beauty and their role as housewives, no other side in them was given the heed and

interests they have for so long ages been missing in worlds full of oppression, patriarchy and inequality. One need not mention Black women's double travail and the famous activist Sojourner Truth (1883), who demanded: "Ain't I a Woman?"; Sojourner is member of the Methodist Zion Church, she combated for so long against racism that wrapped the black women in black shrouds of injustice, adopted deeply in women's movement, with this way, our world became an easy prey for people's divisions and distinction. So, black women, therefore, became in the smallest caste in the invisible caste framed for women. These women were the symbol of dehumanization, frustration and the big sense of human's hierarchy because of sexism and racism that were the title of the white man and were highly adopted and fostered by white women who generally push the first wave of feminism as well as the middle class, western, and well educated women. In her speech (1851) Hooks says:

*... and ain't I a woman? look at me !look at my arms ... I have ploughed ,and planted, and gathered into barns , and no man could head me-ain't I a woman ? I could work as ush as any man (when I could get it) and bear de lash as wll-and ain't I a woman? I have borne five children and I seen 'emmos all sold off into slavery, and when I cried with a mother's grief, none but jesus hear-and ain't I a woman?*

(Hooks, 1981:160)

**Second-wave** feminism stretched from 1920 to 1980. This wave is characterized by the big rise and growing of self-consciousness of a variety of minority groups all over the world. This stage refers to the reemergence and the resurgence of feminist activity in the late 1960s and 1970s in the big context of civil rights movement, these feminists continue the struggle with the same ambition and power and protest again around women's inequality, although this time not only in terms of women's lack of equal political rights but in determined areas of family, sexuality and work (Jane Freedman, 2002). The voice of this wave was increasingly radical; sexuality and reproductive rights were dominant issues. This wave focuses on women's Otherness, patriarchy and oppression. Much of the movement's work was focused on passing the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing social equality regardless of sex. Sex and gender were differentiated, the former being biological, and the latter was a social

construct. The term woman could gather all female as all of them had the same experiences, concerns and problems. Famous feminists of that time are Eleanor Leacock, Michaele Rosaldo, Lewis Lamphere and Margaret Mead. This wave implements the banner “the personal is political” and drew in women of color and developing nations claiming that “women’s struggle is class struggle”. In this respect, The New York RedStocking Manifesto in 1960 views the Radical Feminist position as:

*Women are the oppressed class .Our oppression is total affecting, every facet of our lives. We are exploited as sex objects, breeders, domestic servant, and cheap labor. We are considered inferior beings whose only purpose is to enhance men’s lives ... We have been kept from seeing our personal suffering as a political condition ... the conflicts between individual men and women are political conflicts that can only be solved collectively ... We identify the agents of our oppression as men. Male supremacy is the oldest, most basic form of domination ... All men receive economic, sexual, and psychological benefits from supremacy. All men have oppressed women ...*

(Bryson, 1992:184)

The key text of this wave includes Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Mary Ellman’s *Thinking about Women* (1968), Kate Millet’s *Sexual Politics* (1970), Eva Fedges’ *Patriarchal Attitudes* (1970), Elaine Showalter’s *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) and Simon De Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949).

### **Simone de Beauvoir**

Simone De Beauvoir as pioneer and architect of second wave feminists, she is highly considered as the queen of women’s vigilance, consciousness and big awareness toward women’s Otherness, exclusion and marginalization in societies that still believe in the superiority of one and the inferiority of others. Although *The Second Sex* (1949) was written many years ago, sufficient ink has been spilled in quarrelling her questions, ideas and assumptions over feminism. These analyses still remain significant in any area and at any moment of time, as her challenge poses the

problem of the consciousness of the Other and his refusal to be enslaved or packaged as a fertile ground for neglect and rejection. In an introduction to her book, De Beauvoir, expresses the idea of considering women as the object and never as subject in a patriarchal world full of male ideologies; she has also referred to women as being naturally weaker physically and mentally. Being posited in debased positions by the prescription of nature. As opposite to man, women are already determined from their earliest year. She states as follows:

*A man would never set out to write a book on the peculiar situation of the human male. But if I wish to define myself, I must first of all say: 'I am a woman'; on this truth must be based all further discussion. A man never begins by presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex; it goes without saying that he is a man.*

(De Beauvoir, 1997:15)

In the *Second Sex*, De Beauvoir questioned the problem of the hard social conditions people lived in, especially women, who found themselves in the lowest degree on the social ladder, in societies based on traditional false notions where men are the first responsible in embedding their pillars and thoughts in defining women in relation to them. In this sense, she states:

*Now what peculiarity signalizes the situation of women is that she—a free and autonomous being like all human creatures—nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the other. They propose to stabilize her as object and to doom her to immanence.*

(De Beauvoir, 1997:29)

The *Second Sex* provides a widely intensive survey with every smallest detail of the origins and perpetuation of the patriarchal oppression of women. Oppression for men is the magical power that will put women of the entire world under their feet. The need for oppressing women according to her lies in the innate desires of human beings to dominate, suppress and lead. Consequently, De Beauvoir fostered all women to raise their consciousness and awareness and to act all together in shaping a new destiny that holds optimistic future, rejecting to be treated as objects.

For de Beauvoir, gender is a construction. According to her, during the early of history, men, who were deemed as physically and naturally stronger beings, were better seen to do hard works, suitable to heavy manual work such as fishing, hunting and fighting. Women's role was confined to the house to serve men's need and take care of their children and their housework. Men, consequently, had more and complete freedom to shape all social, intellectual and political norms and systems of thought and, thus, devoted their activity, energy and time for setting up the red carpet for new civilization. All the institutions of Western culture, then, were shaped, drawn and determined by men from male's mind, ideology and perspective; women were given no value and have been confined to a marginalized position in society.

De Beauvoir (1997) also points out that the Western society is largely built to perpetuate patriarchal ideology and women have been kept in an inferior and lower position. This persistence of patriarchal ideology throughout history has, unsurprisingly, allowed men to assume that they have the right to maintain women in a subordinate state, and many women, hence, have believe and adopt this position, believing that the caste of superiority is limited to men. Consequently, both men and women allow patriarchy to be framed and engraved in people's minds. With her most famous dictum in *The Second Sex* (1997), "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman", de Beauvoir declares that there is no pre-established female nature or essence. Women according to her are the product of civilization, in her own words "it is civilization as whole that produces all creatures" (Ibid). In the *Second Sex*, De Beauvoir also claims that women have been alienated from their bodies and they have been fixed in house's corners, confined to traditional roles of wife and mother. De Beauvoir asserts that there is no essential femininity, focusing on how this femininity has been counterfeited, forged and conceptualized and how women became nothing in this society except as the Other. She observes:

*For him (man) she (woman) is the sex-absolute sex, no less .She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her, she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the Absolute-she is the Other.*

(De Beauvoir. 1997:16)



Women, in other words, are seen as a natural biological objects and category without any distinctive existence or identity. All areas of life make them linked to men. She writes:

*They [women] have no past, no history, and no religion of their own. They live dispersed among the males, attached though residence, homework, economic condition and social standing to certain men-fathers or husbands-more firmly than they are to other women. If they belong to the bourgeoisie, they feel solidarity with men of that class, not with proletarian women, if they are white; their allegiance is to white men, not Negro women ... The bond that unites her [women] to her oppressor is not comparable to any other. The division of sexes is a biological fact, not an event in human history.*

(De Beauvoire, 1997:19)

De Beauvoir, thus, considers that gender is a social construction. Moreover, woman's relation to her body has also been related and defined by false patriarchal notions and norms. She also considers that the passivity of the female body is created and not inherited by patriarchal image; "they did invent her". Thus; these images are accentuated with gender myths and stereotypes. Woman's body, thus, is treated as mere object, objectified by man. As a result, women's bodies are always defined by patriarchal ideologies that put the societies balance in the hand of men and no one else.

In conclusion, *The Second Sex* remains an important work in any discussion of patriarchy, women's oppression and Othering. Simone De Beauvoir paved the way for women to be conscious and aware in understanding that men find women as suitable bottles to be filled with oppressive ideologies. The most important issue touched upon Beauvoir's study, it is to stop blaming man for being the king of the superior caste and considering him the sole agent for exploitation. Thus, if there is an oppressor; women are the main agent that permit an oppressive ideologies and false notions to be shaped and implemented for centuries by their accepting and subjecting to traditional roles that confined them in the houses' corners. By wearing the uniforms of passivity, women assume a big responsibility in opening all the doors of patriarchy to embed its roots in a fertile ground as the natural given for instance as "bad faith". She calls

women to launch their silence and inward cries against all oppressive ideologies to be fruitful in every corner and angles in this world.

### **Betty Friedan**

A pioneer in the American Women's Movement, wrote the *Feminine Mystique* (1963) wherein she called upon women to refuse inferior and marginal social roles that confined women in the cages of exclusion and neglect having no value in the society, politics or even in the construction of knowledge. She criticized the idea that women could only find fulfillment through child bearing and home making. Friedan hypothesized that women are victims of a false belief systems that require them to check their identity and meaning in their husbands and children. According to her, this is the first system that makes women lose their identities in that of their family. Therefore, Friedan's book played an important role in raising the consciousness of women to question traditional female roles, traditional femininity and seek self-fulfillment.

**Third wave** liberal feminists also called post-feminists argue that the 1960's and 1970 women's requests and aims were still following and subjecting to what the society ordered them to do. Third wave be responsible for their choices, beliefs and status. Third wave feminism sprang from 1980 to the present-It was informed by post-colonial and postmodern thinking, this wave has known the subversion of many constructs, especially the notion of "Universal womanhood", body, genders, sexuality and hetronormativity. This wave sprang from first and second waves, turning its direction to gain more rights to progress women's status in highly male-dominated and men occupied ideologies and existence. Third wave feminists appeared as strong and empowered, with more understanding and realizing further maturation in defining feminine beauty and their role according to themselves, rejecting to be an object of sexist patriarchy. Schneider describes the third wave feminism movement's liberation as:

*This movement is concerned not simply with the social, political, and economic equality of women with men but with a fundamental re-imagination of the whole of humanity in relation to whole of reality, including on-human creation. ... feminist consciousness has gradually deepened, the feminist agenda has widened, from a concern to right a particular structural wrong, namely, the exclusion of women from the voting booth, to a demand for full participation of women in society and culture, to an ideal of recreating humanity itself according to patters of eco-justice, that is, of right relations at every level and in relation to all reality*

(Schneiders, 2000:8)

Unlike the second wave which considers gender as cultural construction, third wave feminists show that sex is also a social category like gender. Judith Butler (2006), for example, in her influential work *Gender Trouble* calls gender a sustained “performance” repeated in the same manner and at every moment, suggesting that gender identities are multiple. Third wave feminist’s main concern is to reconcile a larger oppressed, excluded and marginalized into her recognition such as the blacks, none middle class, whose voices were lost in the frame of hierarchy.

### **1.3.3 The Battle of Voices:**

Relational feminism views that their biology and social roles are the primary agents in defining their rights. It calls for legality in a society that does not recognize or call for hierarchies. It encourages the principle of equality in difference. Liberal feminists demand equal political rights for women; as women were seen to be the machine that responds to men’s pleasure and needs and not to call for independence. Liberal feminists believe that the main reason for women’s discrimination is the false notions that our society is built on, this latter holds by nature that women are naturally weaker physically and intellectually. Therefore, they believe in the autonomy of the female self and demand equal opportunities for women. Libertarianism, according to Walter Block is:

*“Based upon the building blocks of self- ownership, private property rights ... That is to say, the individual can do whatever he wants to do. In the libertarian society, he has complete freedom. Except; he can not violate the equal rights of all others by attacking their bodies (murder, rape, assault and battery), on their property (theft, fraud, counterfeiting), or even threaten such activities”*

(Block, 2005: 61)

On the other hand, what liberal feminists want to do is to show that all the justifications and arguments traced and drawn against women, are totally wrong and mistaken (Marysia Zallewki, 2000). Radical feminism, in her sight, points out the need for women to escape from cages of forced motherhood and sexual slavery and regain control over their bodies. Radical feminism questions why women must adopt certain other roles based on gender. In this context, Radical feminism attempts to draw lines between biology determined behavior and culturally determined behaviour, insisting that the idea of natural behaviour has nothing to do with biology and sex. Radical feminists see men’s domination of women as the result of the system of patriarchy which is independent of all other social structures (Freedman, 2000). Radical cultural feminists see sex as male priority and domination and heterosexual’s sexual relations are characterized by an ideology that put men as subjects and masters while women are as objects and slaves. Thus, they propose separation between men and women, repudiate all sexual practices that favour male violence, therefore, they support lesbianism.

While Amazon feminism supports physical equality and opposed gender role stereotypes. Gender feminism excluded men from women’s issues and refer to the embedded discrimination in the society that is based on associating women with weakness and passivity. One can trace uncountable and myriad of voices, each is celebrating, defending and struggling for an idea or ideas. Though each voice has its own chants, belief; points of views, yet all mingle together under the same banner and the same challenge, i.e. “struggling against women’s oppressions”.

### 1.3.4 Black Feminism

While feminism struggled for the human potential of the female sex, it was a pity that not all women were embraced under its umbrella, the pettiest is that white feminism generalized women's oppressions and patriarchy to all women as if the black females were in the same ladder of sufferings and darkness with their white counterparts. Black feminism was born to voice loudly without hesitation all concerns of black women, who were/are still victims to racial and sexual oppressions in the Women's Movement and the Black Liberation of 1960's. So to be black and to be female is to be caught in what many have labeled a double jeopardy of identity (Hill-Collin, 2000). Showalter points out; the black woman is "the other woman, the silenced partner" (1997). What makes this female in the cage of "the Other" is the fact that, neither white females, nor black skinned men revolted for her status, humanity and rights. According to Hooks, this harsh situation puts black women in a position to tackle all sorts of oppressions;

*[I] Tis essential that black women recognize the special vantage [then] and make use of this perspective to criticize the dominant racist, classist, sexist hegemony as well as to envision and create counter-hegemony*

(Hooks, 1992:124)

one can notice that women are often ranked to the low classes, especially to the second class humans, black women represent the last class after white man, white women and black men, left between the dust of human's dark hierarchy, in the invisible cages of neglect, accompanied with double exile and marginalization, representing the invisible flag of "the other of other" **(10)** that soar between the flags of humanity. On the other hand, what made the black women's experience unique, in terms of neglect and racism, incomparable to white females, is the fact that they were a silver spoon and an easy prey in the mouth of colonialism; the latter closed all the doors for the black woman to be included in the list of "natural humanity", or even permit them to soar the flag of existence with dignity.

### 1.3.5 Womanism

The term ‘womanism’ was first labeled by the author Alice Walker in her book *In Search of Our Mothers Garden* (1983). The term has progressed to refer, envelop and frame varied and sometimes opposing definitions. Walker defines ‘womanism’ as being to feminism as purple is to lavender, many black women refer to the fact that womanism and feminism are totally different and opposing directions in terms of many things. This opposition is clear, seen and apparent in the willingness, strength and the power of many women to classify themselves in the frame of womanist (Walker, 1998). In her sight, a womanist was a black feminist or a feminist of colour, both terms are interchangeable, as both are concerned with resistance and harsh struggles against sexism and racism by black women, in an attempt to achieve freedom, liberation and the autonomy from the ambiguous hierarchies that men’s mind endeavor to shape. The term was taken from the Southern black folk expressions of mothers to female children, as Walker States:

*[A] word our mothers used to describe, and attempt to inhibit strong, outrageous or outspoken behavior when we were children. “You are acting womanish!” A Labeling that failed, for the most part for keeping us from acting “womanish” whenever we could, that is to say like our mothers themselves.*

(Walker, 1983:105)

A womanish girl, therefore, is courageous in facing all life barricades and willful woman for all daily dilemmas; she is responsible in doing any hard job, powerful and serious enough. These characteristics led Walker to declare and claim the black women’s superiority and big challenge to her white women counterpart because of the black folk traditions that strengthen her ambitions, in addition to the privilege attributes they have, all these can free them from racism practiced by Feminist Movement. Black feminists called now ‘womanists’ distinguished and differentiated themselves from the white feminist movement, in this respect Hitchcock says that:

*Another reason why it is so hazardous to attempt any critique whatsoever of any respect of feminism or the feminist agenda is that the critic, whether a man or a woman, will automatically be accused of opposing the equality and dignity of women: if the critic is a man, he is called a sexist victimizer of women; a woman critic is an anti-feminist collaborator (sic) with the oppressor of her sex.*

(Hitchcock, 1995:6)

Bell Hooks referred to racism as being a dark point that is widely practiced by almost all feminists, she claimed that white women who were obsessed with racism treated black women in a condescending way and in a strong system that believe in man's hierarchy and man's classification to man, thus, in this way black woman would be under the umbrella of "triple colonization"; the colonizer, black man and white women. Hooks says:

*Much feminist theory emerges from privileged women who live at the center, whose perspective on reality rarely include the knowledge and awareness of the lives of women and men who live the margin.*

(Hooks, 1984:37)

Although feminism addressed, resisted and fought for gender equality, it rarely think of the black woman as one whose humanity is robbed or even addressed equality and justice for her, unfortunately, between the teeth of the black society that was obsessed with misogyny and the white feminists that were obsessed with racism, black women were left there, sad and dire as a prey for oppression, sexism, racism, classism and patriarchy, just due to their color of skin and ethnicity in a world where people are not judged by their minds and content, but by their color of skin.

While feminism can be marginalizing and neglecting to minorities, 'womanism' allows black women to prove, affirm and celebrate their color, content and culture, without feeling shame, or having a sense of inferiority in a way that feminism does not (Hogan, 1995), giving birth to several important organizations which were/are committed to the movement to struggle against all forms of oppression. These women stand proud and very satisfied of their color and promised to defend the harsh and the sever hierarchy of man to man and the process of Othering humans beings into Others, gathering all their energy, potential of faith, every tiny of will, strength, challenge to

dismantle women's silence, explode their inner revolution and tears, and construct new definition for them that their counterparts fail to find, represent or even try to frame. Major contributors to the movement included Toni Cade Barbara, Angela Davis, Jane Jordan, Toni Morison and others.

In short, "womanism" is not against the Feminist Movement, but as Alice Walker declares, it is just a darker shade that included other women's voices.

### **1.3.6 Toward a Definition of Femininity**

According to Oxford Dictionary (2010), femininity is the fact of being a woman. On the other hand, femininity is a multifaceted concept that describes gender, but it is developed through socialization and individual construction of self-identity or self-concept (Mac Donald, 1995). Then, it is possible for a male to see himself as feminine, or a female to see herself as masculine. Early thinking and most societies of the world assumed and considered that the division between men and women was based on innate differences and opposites behaviours that they link with masculinity or femininity. For example, men are strong, aggressive, dominant, intelligent and decisive. Whereas, women are stupid, kind, submissive, weak and delicate.

However, the anthropologist Margaret Mead in *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935), proved that the previous parameters of masculinity and femininity can not be a permanent and fixed norm, i.e. males and females can show behaviours different from what these societies think and are still considered how man and woman or femininity and masculinity should be, so, domination, strength and intelligence can be highly associated with women, while, stupidity, weakness and submission can be related to men. These differences are not a function of their biology, but they resulted from differences in socialization and cultural expectations for each sex. This study at the end caused and fostered many people to rethink and review the nature of femininity and masculinity, considering that masculine and feminine signs are not innate or determined through biology, but they are based on cultural and



societal beliefs that most societies and traditional thinking interpreted as being biological.

In short, though the big difference, contradiction and the confusion in determining what femininity or masculinity is, one can understand that femininity or masculinity is a sort of feeling experienced at any time and place. Therefore, femininity and masculinity are totally different from the human sex; male/female and are explained to the extent and the degree which females feel and experience themselves they are feminine, and masculinity to the extent males experience themselves as they are masculine according of course to their cultures and societies that are also important agents in once gender.

### **1.3.7 Feminism and Femininity**

Femininity according to tradition is formed through the representations of some characteristics to the female sex (for example, they are beautiful, passive, weak, submissive ...). One can trace that this construction or definition is not based on real parameters and tends to dictate man's interpretation of the female body according to patriarchal male ideology, this latter frames the world in accordance to men's minds.

Now, new set of female characteristics break all these traditional norms. Feminists insist that no woman should be defined in relation to men, but they should be renamed and redefined according to each other, as there is no window for women in men's minds, women have to break their silence and yell against those who work on Othering the so called as Other. As humanity becomes "male exclusivity", these men never hesitate to describe themselves as superior, the subject and the absolute, whereas, she is "the angle in the house" (11). This is what femininity means in dictionaries made and constructed by men. Feminists deconstruct all what was referred to us by "natural femininity" as a part of natural humanity that is limited on males. Post-feminist femininity focuses on the body, sexuality and personality. These women become powerful, independent, liberated and educated, seemingly conscious enough, strong in political, economic and social fields, sexually free and empowered by the

gains of second wave feminism. Characteristics which seem to reshape traditional false notions, leading to a new reconfiguration and definition that is totally different from what was traditionally framed and drawn to her. However, third-wavers feel courageous, strong and qualified to interact with men as equals, free and claim sexual pleasure as they want (heterosexual or otherwise), and actively play with femininity (12). While many feminists suggested and called the need for the experience of the feminine strengths as nurturing power instead of striving to access masculine power.

### 1.3.8 Feminist Theory

Tradition and patriarchy have ranked women for so long to an inferior position to men on the social ladder. Women were not allowed to participate or to exist in public spheres; most fields were bound by rules, barricades and thorns that were established and highly formed through a traditional gender ideology. Women were excluded and alienated almost from all political or active participation in the public world. Men were always the only producers of knowledge, science and researches while women were often referred to as the angels of the house's corners when men's minds dictate that. Women, then, tasted a horrifying past, being the killed or injured hostage in hostile hands of those who called themselves as humans. Feminist theory necessitates challenging all what have been refashioned and shaped by men, criticizing patriarchal supremacy, and investing political, social and economic efforts to raise women's consciousness and vigilance. Feminist theory, according to Hill-Colin (2000) has long studied the effect of culture or society on women's bodies and personalities. Feminist theory, thus, is an area and an arena for new definition, representation and recognition of women according to women and no one else. It also depicts a colourful tableau of women voices, challenges and big revolts against the oppressive status quo, and works on sharing all parts of human existence with men such as producing a new knowledge and studies about women as realized by women, it suggests that patriarchal ideology is the sole agent and reason that lead to unequal power structures to be embedded and represented in traditional femininity as an attempt to "sustain gender in equalities and sexual subordination" (Durham, 1999). Therefore, one notes that feminist theory has

been the area and the umbrella of myriads of theoretical thinking that burgeon from the same womb of oppression, patriarchy and inequality such as stand point theory, performative theory and queer theory. Despite their various thoughts and grounds, they have common interests and concerns of those oppressed, voiceless and silenced groups of humans.

### 1.3.9 Post-colonial Feminist Theory

Post-colonial feminist theory emerges as post-colonial studies fails to include gender in their analysis. On the other hand, Western feminism fails also, firstly; to apply feminist theories to the historical, political and socio-cultural specification of black or Third-world women, generalizing the same kind of oppression to all women. Secondly, it fails in defining womanhood in a real sense that includes all women whether white, black or colored; there was lot of criticism towards the power of the white middle class to define and limit the concept of womanhood on one experience as if it is lived by all women. Bell Hooks states that, “white woman who dominated feminist discourse today rarely question whether or not their perspective on women’s reality is true to the lived experienced of women as a collective group”(Hooks, 1984). Post-colonial feminism contends that Third world women are subjected to both colonial domination of the empire and male dominance patriarchy. They are wrapped in double jeopardy that deprives them to breathe freely, to prevent the anvil of colonialism’s stains or the hammer of man’s poisoning. In this context, post-colonial feminist theory investigates the intersection of colonialism, neo-colonialism and post-colonialism with nations, class, race, sexuality and gender in the different context of lives. Many analyses were carried out on the issues of gender as McClintock explains:

*Imperialism cannot be understood without a theory of gender power. Gender power was not the superficial patina of empire, an ephemeral gloss over the more decisive mechanics of class or race. Rather gender dynamics were from the outset fundamental to the maintenance of the imperial enterprise.*

(McClintock, 1995:17)

Even though Spivak brings women into the discussion about post-colonial theory, the core of post-colonial feminism is seen to be situated in Chandra Talpade Mohanty's article "Under Western Eyes" (1995). The essay is important in removing the obscurity that covered completely the sun of Post-colonial women to shine. Moreover, it is more important in criticizing Western feminism that "naturalizes" and unified all women's oppression under different patriarchal domination. Mohanty (1995) asserts that "it is in this process of homogenization and systematization of the oppression of women in the third world that power is exercised in much of recent Western feminist discourse, and this power needs to be defined and named ....."

More importantly, post-colonial feminist theory plays a primary role in breaking the exclusivity of humanity to be limited on the white middle class women and develops a distinct position of its own, from which it can voice all issues it aims to address, identify and rethink discourses built around the Othered and muffled women.

### **1.3.10 Post-colonial and Feminist Literature**

Literature remains one of the most important weapons that break all barriers of difference drawn by male ideology, through literature; women find that lines are stronger enough to transcend all what have been framed by men. Words allow women to explode all what have been hidden behind the silenced voices to articulate their inevitable Othering and run in the same line of power, intelligence and being as well as men. Feminist's literature, as well as post-colonial literature are the embodiment of the same tableau of challenge, strength, and awakening the Other. Both of them are literature of challenge, giving voice to all oppressed, marginalized and silenced groups to articulate their being and authentic identity, both of them questioned what humanity is and how it should be tasted and smelled by everyone without an exclusion of another, facing many issues of gender, class, race, hierarchies and sexuality. As Bill Ashcroft et al (1995) argue; "both seek to reinstate the marginalized in the face of the dominant, and early feminist theory, like early nationalist post-colonial criticism, was concerned with inverting the structures of domination, substituting, for instance, a

female tradition or traditions for male dominated canon”. Post-colonialism as well as feminism have been concerned with the ways and the extent to which redefinition, representation and language are important to identity construction in the first degree, and the formation of subjectivity in the second degree, aiming at the opposition of all kinds of women’s oppression and domination. Lazarus points out (2006); “feminist theory and post-colonial theory are occupied with similar questions of representation, voice, marginalization, and the relation between politics and literature”. Brave women writers demonstrate courage and strength, try to free their authentic voices and inspire all women to be empowered to break the story of “natural humanity” that is exclusive on men. On the other hand, post-colonial woman’s experience was unique, as she has her unique story to tell and she is not only the victim to colonization as her male counterpart is. But she remains in closed cages of domination and patriarchy, shrouded in darkness and neglect of sexist societies that continuously assign her to the margin as weak, inferior and powerless. In this context, post-colonial feminist literature sheds light on issues concerned with women’s quest for freedom and liberty from sexist societies, women’s struggle to preserve their authentic identities, historical and cultural heritage. In many disparate geographical areas, women, like colonized subjects, have been brought under the same umbrella of ‘the Other’, they have been relegated to inferior position as sexualized objects, excluded, positioned on the boundary between humans and animals.

In short, post-colonial feminist literature represents the emblem of women’s struggle against a long history of legacy, landscaping women as animals, confusion and disillusionment. What is still alive, recognized and shining in their wake of autonomy, liberty and independence, is their sustained power and challenge that stand correctly on the pages of the innocents, in addition to their commitment and prise de conscience under the bullet of their oppressor, carrying on to fight tyranny and patriarchy till the last breath in their life. Though these women were the subaltern who was denied voice, they were never denied power and the belief of being free and never, never stopped to teach us lessons at high level of human agency.

### 1.3.11 Female Identity

A complicated and unclear concept that plays a central issue in many debates in every subjected of political science (for example, debates about national, ethnic, gender and state identities). Identity in Oxford dictionary (2010) means who or what some body or something is. But the dictionary's definitions have not caught up exactly, failing to capture the words current meanings in every day and social contexts. Identity as we use, refers to what distinguishes one from the others in terms of feeling, beliefs, and the characteristics. But one should also consider that identity is not only what distinguishes one individual from others, people can be referred to in terms of groups according to what they have in common as religion, race, and language, cultural and belonging, therefore, identity can be constructed in terms of sameness and difference. On the other hand, identity is a formulation of dignity, pride, or honor that implicitly links these to social categories. Yet, the contradiction of the term identity proliferates when it is applied to women. In Carolyn Heilbrun's brave book, *Reinventing Womanhood*, she illustrates that the confusion in the female identity, is in being defined by man, claiming that successful women are "man-made" or "male-identified", deeming deeply this definition and representation as failure for women to take her identity from men (Heilbrun, 1979). Thus, women have to be defined by each other.

For feminists and women writers, the quest of identity seems to be a soap opera. While Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar find the women's quest for "self-definition" the main plot of the nineteenth century writing by women, Elaine Showalter sees, "self-discovery", a search for identity. Feminist articulated women's identity in terms of the common and shared experience that gathers the same women under the same wall and umbrella, struggling with oppression and the society's misogyny. Women's main goal was to live in societies free of sexism, male domination and patriarchy, celebrating the female body as a symbol of challenge, resistance and a site of power, confidence and authority, debunking all the old ideas and views that make them in the packages of neglect and exclusion between the claws of animals and humans.

While black feminists blamed white feminists on their mistaken definition to womanhood, that lacks lot of issues such as class, ethnicity and nationality. M Trinh T. Mink-ha finds the sameness in defining “identity”, has no parameters, since it neglects and ignores the difference between the whites and the blacks. Therefore, it is sufficient in constructing the “they” instead of “we” that gather both white and black women.

On the other hand, women seem to relate widely between their appearance and identities, they are encouraged to judge their inner selves through their physical appearance, this led Sandra Bartky to state (1979) “Our identities Can no more be kept separate from how our bodies look, then they can be kept separate from the shadow selves of the female stereotypes”.

Identity depends highly and mainly on the work of psychologist Erik Erikson in the 1950’s; he believes deeply that there is a big difference between the two sexes. Accordingly, they have different roles to fill and do in the culture. Feminist theorists have strongly and totally reject and deny this idea, explaining that the differences in sexes are because of very different expectations, exposure to the world, and reinforcement. They go so far to consider that Erikson is not aware or conscious of how much the powerful impact of the cultural side has on gender roles. They refer, thus, to the big similarity between men and women than to the differences between them. The real life experiences prove and show that women today are expected to progress lot of functions independently and freely just as much as men. Those girls who particularly embraced the Women’s Movement and bled their efforts in struggle, developed more confidence, faith, courage, strength and self-esteem.

To sum up, defining female identity involves examination and analysis of the way it is affected by social, political, and personal institution. Moreover, the environment where people live have more influences and effects on people’s identity.

### 1.3.12 Postmodernism Vs Post-colonialism and Feminism

It is not easy to define postmodernism, every definition and every view of postmodernism will vary. The general philosophy of postmodernism originates to oppose and react the philosophical values of the modern period when the scientific revolution spreads its stems from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the mid twentieth century. Moreover, many sociologists started to believe that there is a move towards a new and another kind of society as modernism's concepts are wrong and misleading. In 1984 Huyssen called Postmodernism as a fad, viewing the postmodern vision in the following way:

*What appears on one level as the latest fad ,advertising pitch and hollow spectacle is part of a slowly emerging cultural transformation in Western societies, a change in sensibility for which the 'postmodernism' is actually, at least for now, wholly adequate. The nature and depth of that transformation are debatable, but transformation it is. I don't want to be misunderstood as claiming that there is a wholesale paradigm shift of the cultural, social and economic orders; any such claim clearly would be overblown. But in an important sector of our culture there is a noticeable shift in sensibility, practices and discourse formations which distinguishes a post-modern set of assumptions, experiences and propositions from that of a preceding period.*

(huyssen, 1984: 8)

According to postmodernist, postmodernism is a kind of "culture" that emphasizes that there is a better and more advanced world than the modern one. Postmodernism vanguards deconstruct reality, truth and reason. Thus, the postmodernists' main important question or inquiry is how can people reason about reason itself which represent the ultimate language of madness for Foucault? So, reason, science, or philosophy are unable to prove themselves outside of the square or tradition of modernity and are no longer seen as the exact sign of truth. Thus, the idea of universal truths are unacceptable and without any specification in the world of postmodernism and should be deconstructed. As Linda Nicholson points out, the privileging of epistemology, or the general principles of knowledge,



*rests upon the modernist conception of transcendent reason , a reason able to separate itself from the body and from historical body and place. Postmodernists describe modern ideals of science, justice and art as merely modern ideals carrying with them specific political agendas and ultimately unable to legitimize themselves as universals of modernity. Thus, postmodernists urge us to recognize the highest ideals of modernity in the west as immanent to a specific historical time and geographical region and also associated with certain political baggage.*

(Nicholson, 1990:4)

On the other hand, Gayatri spivak (1990) points out, postmodernists have “subjected many comfortable assumptions about humanity, knowledge, rationality and progress to disturbing interrogation. But what distinctive about this interrogation is that instead of using science and reason to get a clearer truth, these writers have viewed the very idea of truth with extreme suspicion, something to be dismantled, deconstructed”. Postmodernists, therefore, refer to the huge catastrophes and damage that the Western civilization has brought under the banner of power and knowledge, some of them go so far to refer to the mortal, destructive and oppressive side of science, technology and even reason and logic, being used by evil people, especially during the twentieth century.

Postmodernists writing as well as post colonialism claim to seek and address the interests and the concerns of the “Other”, namely, those marginalized and oppressed by modernist ideologies and those who tasted and lived the horrors of all those deemed themselves as powerful under the cover of humanity. Big value and precious interests, thus, were given to the margin through postmodernism, but it is still described as the thought which refuses to turn the other into the same (During, 1987).

When drawing connection between feminism and postmodernism, feminism is a political trend, it seeks to eradicate women’s oppression, marginalization, and subordination and struggle hard for the equality of both men and women in the society. What makes feminism wear the same uniform of postmodernism is the fact that of “deconstruction”, namely, deconstructing the social norms that the society still believe in.

*Post-modern theories energetic critique of, masculine and feminine the system of hierarchal binary oppositions that under girds Western thought destabilize the classic dichotomies between man and woman, male and female.*

(Cornier, 1996:23)

Some feminist theorists contend that postmodernism frees and liberates feminist theory especially in its anti-enlightenment position, especially by implementing deconstruction and the concept of skepticism as the main pillars of its ideology, the recognition of marginality and the silence of the Other become more incorporated and more demanded. According to Gayatri Spivak what postmodernism offers to feminists is the high consciousness and vigilance toward reshaping of the point of power and knowledge. Spivak on her turn sees that people have to rethink the idea or the ideology of being “the hero” of daily lives who can put an end and solve all problems through the power of reason, she stresses that postmodernists wish to investigate:

*the rationalist narrative of the knowing subject, full of certain sort of benevolence towards others, wanting to welcome those others into his own-and I use the pronoun-into his own understanding of the world advisedly-into his own understanding of the word, so that they too can be liberated and begin to inhabit a world that is the best of both possible worlds. In the process, what happens is that such a world is defined, and the norms remain the benevolent originator of rationalist philosophy .... The hero of this scenario, of these narratives has been in fact western man*

(Spivak, 1990:20)

Both of feminism and post modernism, thus, are built on resisting and challenging the ideological structures and criticizing deeply the status quo. Moreover, the rise of post-colonialism coupled with the rise of postmodernism. Both of them are modes of thought that worked on rising the decentering of narrative discourse, and used the same tools and strategies in the deconstruction of the master’s throne (Audre Lord, 1983). While post-colonized struggle is mainly to articulate “the Other” and in lot of situations, articulating “the Other” in the colonial language, postmodernist refused completely to put “the Other” and “ the Self” in the same cup.

Another aspect of postmodernism is the emergence of Marxist, Psychologist and feminist criticism. As to feminism, much and lot of can be said and discussed if possible relation and link with post-colonialism can be referred to or investigated. As both literatures emphasized on issues of marginalization, subjugation and otherness, being both the emblem of resistance and challenge, and both being the victims of both natural humanity of masculinity or the colonial experience that assign women to the margin as sewages. Postcolonial woman finds a space for her in post-colonial feminism core where she can voice all her issues and send all her hot messages. Both post-colonial and feminist texts are part of subjected and neglected people who struggle against oppression and racism. Postmodernism, on the other hand, is new refugee full of sensibility and sympathy to all those who check and quest to full citizenship in the human race.

### **1.3.13 Women Studies**

In male dominated societies, men have always been leaders, thinkers, superior, intelligent and producers of knowledge, whereas, women have been excluded into the cages and packages of oppression, patriarchy and injustice. Myriads of women's places have always been in the margin; between men's superiority and the society's misogyny. In this context, women's studies as a body of knowledge and interdisciplinary academic field tend to investigate women's status and position in the society, seek and check to improve the conditions of women's lives, both in the United States and globally. Before the late 1960s, there was no place for women's studies courses. Most colleges courses focused specifically on man as the hero of life episodes and only on his experience as the exclusive sex that dominate all public spheres, as men were never separated from knowledge, intelligence and science, women were not a part of knowledge construction, they were shadowy and marginal figures, having no view in deciding which field or aspect of knowledge deserve to be treated, studied or discussed. According to the American feminist Catherin Mack Kionn (1982); "men created the world from their own point of view, which then becomes the truth to be described". The resurgence of feminism in the late 1960s led many women to question

and to ask “where are the women?” The traditional views and notions regarding men as “humans” and women as “Others” must, thus, be challenged and transcended. Such a big confusion and contradiction of maleness with humanity, puts men in the center as subjects, reaching the peak of caste’s superiority, while relegates women to outsiders and “objects”. In this respect, women’s beliefs have changed, thus, they start to understand that making women as the subjects of the study is important in understanding human society and humanity in general.

Women’s studies courses view women as an important part and sex that can share with man everything related with power and intelligence. It also investigates women’s experiences, perspectives, and participations, placing women at the center of the inquiry. It involves the importance of studying gender as the main factor of human existence. As gender concerns what it means to be a woman or a man in society. As Miachel Kimmel (1996) points out “women’s studies have made gender visible”. Women’s studies encourages to ask many questions rather than accepting everything as it is, consequently, they bring their own experience to the subject they are studying since women’s studies itself emerges from many interrogations women misunderstand or ignore about their own situation. So, learning how to question, investigate and ask about what is turning around them is a part of energizing women potentiality in terms of innovation, creation and crafting, this is what Cynthia Enloe (2007) calls a “feminist curiosity”, she says that this can “motivates one to treat as puzzling the relationships of women to any aspect of social life and nature that other people take for granted”.

Women’s studies has evolved at three interrelated phases (Mynrad, 1998). During the recuperative phase, women’s experience gained more interests. During the constructive phase, many important questions emerged such as sexuality, violence and gender hierarchies; however, during the third phase white women were given more priority in the sum of attention women’s studies précised to women’s lives and experiences. In short, women’s studies as an interdisciplinary academic field represented by women voice break the idea that men are the only thinkers and producers of knowledge. No field of study should be limited on men’s intelligence.

Feminist studies and women's studies, "both challenge male intellectual hegemony" (Bowles and Klein, 1994).

To sum up, women's studies was an impetus to challenge male's exclusivity and strive to knock every conviction and belief the world has embedded under the flags of superiority that soared during the aegis of phallogentric, gender-bias belief systems.

### 1.3.14 Feminist Literary Criticism

It is not easy to provide an exact definition for feminist literary criticism. This difficulty is due the big progress witnessed especially during its emergence in the 1960's when literary criticism has progressed and developed in enormous way. Feminist criticism did not burgeon one approach but many approaches have come out. As Guerin et al (1992), in their Handbook of Critical Approaches to literature claimed that, "feminist criticism is a political attack upon other modes of criticism and theory, and because of its social orientation it moves beyond traditional literary criticism." Though these diverse approaches differ and vary in their methodologies, but common issues, goals and objectives are shared and held by all feminist approaches especially in making women as an excluded sex more visible; Maggie Humm, in the Introduction to her A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Feminist Criticism, views feminist criticism as follows:

*First, the issue of a masculine literary history is addressed by reexamining male texts, noting their patriarchal assumptions and showing the way women in these texts are often represented according to prevailing social, cultural and ideological norms ... second, the invisibility of women writers has been addressed. Feminist critics have charted a new literary history which gives full weight to the texts of neglected women, and women's oral culture, previously regarded as extra-literary. Third, feminist criticism confronts problems of the 'feminist reader' by offering readers new methods and fresh critical practice ... Fourth, feminist criticism aims to make us act as feminist readers by creating new writing and reading collectives.*

(Humm, 1994:8)

Feminist literary criticism provides new methods for analyzing texts to emphasize issues related to gender and sexuality. The interpretation of literature includes especially criticism of patriarchy, which privileges men's ideology and ways of thinking and neglect women, assigning them to the margin as animals, having no space in the frame of knowledge, politics and even in society. On the other hand, Feminist Literary Criticism refers highly to women as an alien sex, which is always wrapped in the poisoning of oppression embedded in our man made societies. Thus, "Feminist literary criticism is an appropriate approach used to reveal women's subordination and oppression. In this context, feminist theory is expected to reveal the veil that covers the certain message inside the literary works and reclaim the opinions in literature externally." (Rutheven, 1984). Feminist literary criticism is highly concerned with the opposition to all sorts of marginalization especially the exclusion of women writers from the traditional literary canon. Thus, through literature or the other kinds of cultural production, they undermine all types of women's oppression, economic, political, social or psychological.

Feminist literary criticism is not only an approach that analyses only the representation of women in literature, but it also examines firstly, the pictures and images in texts depicted and written by both authors male and female. The study covers men's views, analysis and perception about women as an oppressed sex, and how they work to describe women; secondly, it examines language as a strong weapon and tool for self-representation and discovery, attempting to create a distinctly feminine mode of writing or *écriture féminine*. Moreover, it examines the big relationship between literary genre and gender, giving more importance and high emphasis on the creation of a female tradition or canon. Humm, in her introduction, she mentions the main realizations and the big achievements of literary criticism, she writes:

*The first and major achievement of feminist criticism was thus to highlight gender stereotyping as an important feature of literary form, The second and equally major achievement of feminist literary criticism was to give reasons for the persistent reproduction of such stereotypes. A third and triumphant success was the discovery of lost and ignored examples of women's literature and a hitherto unnumbered body of women's texts.*

(Humm, 1994:9)

So, the main concerns and goals of feminist literary criticism were to uncover the patriarchal marginalization of women and to foster the second half of humanity 'women' to discard their passivity and pave their way in challenging the unavoidable evil 'man'. On the other hand, One can trace that feminism does not mean a criticism that aims for replacing men and literature dominated by women, but the aim is to see great dynamic change in the world of literature according to women's views, thoughts, perceptions, ideas and ideologies.

The French feminists-most notably Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva-emphasized that woman is constructed as 'Other' through language. In "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1976) "Le Rire de la Medusa" (1975), Cixous argued that "nearly the entire history of writing is confounded with the history of reason...it has been one with the phallogocentric tradition", Cixous emphasized that writing and language have sustained the opposition between male and female, insisting on the fact that masculine style of language has suppressed women. Therefore, women need to assert a distinct feminine language.

In short, feminist literary criticism offers new readings of literature, it challenges all male judges built on suppressing, denying, and ignoring the female voice. Therefore, gender has been constructed within specific languages of literature as Alicia Otriker (1986) notes: "Writers necessarily articulate gendered experience, just as they necessarily articulate the spirit of nationality, an age, and a language".

**Kate Millet**

Is an influential figure in the field of feminist literary theory and criticism-Her controversial book *Sexual Politics* , has been one of the key texts of radical feminism. Her book works to provide a powerful historical, social, political, and cultural analysis of patriarchy. She believes that, though our world is geographically and religiously different, it still awfully believes in one common idea of man's classification to man, therefore, in the eye of man, women are the grave and the cemetery of strength and power. So, patriarchy is still burgeoning in man's mentalities and its embryos are still enslaving them and throwing women in the lakes of marginalization and alienation. She asserts:

*However muted is present appearance may be, sexual dominion obtains nevertheless as perhaps the most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides its most fundamental concept of power.*

*This is so because our society, like all other historical civilizations, is a patriarchy. The fact is evident at once, if one recalls that military, industry, technology, universities, science, political office, and finance-in short, every avenue of power within the society, including the coercive force of the police, is entirely in male hand. As the essence of politics is power, such realization cannot fail to carry impact.*

(Millet, 1970: 25)

Moreover, for Millet, the relationship between sexes is based on the ownership of strength and power. These personal interactions, therefore, are based on patriarchal and traditional beliefs. According to Millet, gender roles are created by patriarchy and the continuation of these rules is also sustained by this ideology. She notes that patriarchy continually reduces women to an inferior position, whereas, it continues to rise men's superiority and this oppressive ideology is maintained by various means of patriarchy (Millet, 1970), Millett goes on to suggest that patriarchy, more than anything else, is a kind of racism since in any regime based on discrimination, the relationship between groups is essentially hierarchical, consisting of the oppressed.



## 1.4 Conclusion

It may be understood that it is not important only to check the meaning of Post-colonialism in dictionaries, articles or books in order to be aware how it emerges and what does it mean . But one should understand and be convinced that the term *post-colonialism* shapes history as a set of stages along a time from the *pre* to the *post* (Bedjaoui, 2005). This concept grew out of myriads of people's experiences, fears, dreams, aspirations and hopes, coming from the silenced and "Othered" voices in the world history.

In the realm of literature, post-colonial writers never stop to wage cultural and ideological wars against colonialism where literary deconstruction and cultural resistance were weapons. With the emerging of myriads of authors who found their loyalties, patriotism, understanding, and representation of their identity, whatever the literary quality of their work was.

Feminism, though it is not easy to define it, it is a configuration of hard experiences and insights, of dreams and ambitions arising from the muted and oppressed women. These so-long silenced groups find themselves between the claws of the so-called "natural humans" (men), and misogynistic societies. They never accept to be defined by male's minds, as it is a failure for successful women to be framed by social system inflicted by gender bias that accords very high status to men. Thus, they decide to be redefined by each other and no one else.

*Post-colonialism* and *Feminism* address issues and preoccupations of colonization, oppression, race and gender. Both are literatures of resistance and both trace the same tableau of challenging injustice and inequalities. And if men were the victims to one oppressor (colonization), women seem to be doubly colonized, being a ready prey to indigenous colonization and men. Therefore women's voices had more to struggle for and more to yell against and more to implement on the ground.

## Notes to Chapter One

- 1- This volume of essays entitled the Colonial Present will be published by the Blackwell publishers.
- 2- Cited in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. (1989) *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* (1995).
- 3- In *The Emergence of African Fiction* (1978), Charles R-Larson explains the different areas of concern focused on by African writers after the coming of the white man to Africa. The first stage was to refer to the initial stages of colonial rule, and African confrontation to Western religion. Moreover, there were novels that dealt with the problem of adaptation to Western education.
- 4- It is mention in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. (1989) *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* (1995).
- 5- Cited in bedjaoui, Fewzia. (2005) *Femininity Between Illusion and Social Construction: The case of Indian Prose Writing*. Doctorate Thesis. Sidi Bel Abbes.
- 6- It is mention in Liss, Turtle. *Encyclopedia of Feminism* (1987), quoted in Abha Avasthi and A K Srivastava. (2001) *Modernity, Feminism and Woman and Empowerment*. New Dalhi: Rawat Publication.
- 7- It is mention in Bell, Hook. (2001) "Feminism: A movement to End Oppression", in Anna Coote and Ters Gill. Ed. *Women's Rights: A Practical Guide*, quoted in Abha Avasthi and A k. Srivastava .Ed. *Modernity, Feminism and Women Empowerment*. New Dalhi: Rawat Publication.
- 8- Ibid.
- 9- It is mention in *The Encyclopedia of Literary and Cultural Theory* (2011), it is mentioned that first wave feminism began from the end of the twentieth century up to the beginning of the twentieth century. While in *Encyclopedia of Women and Gender* (2002), it is said to have spanned the seventieth to nineteenth centuries.
- 10- Generally women are regarded as the Other. Black women are considered inferior than white women. Thus, she is the Other to who is the deemed as The Other.

11-‘In Professions for Women’ (1990), Virginia Woolf suggests that every woman writer have two important missions First, to kill that society-devised ‘angle in the house’, secondly, to ‘tell the truth about her experience as a body’.

12-It is mention in Synder, Clair. (2008) What is Third-wave Feminism? A New Direction Essay. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 34(1):175-196.

# **Chapter Two**

## **Between the Axes of History and Literature**

**Chapter Two: Between the Axes of History and Literature**

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## 2.1 Introduction

Caribbean region is a unique and a distinctive community, its people, land and culture are wrapped between the axes of reality and imagination. Caribbean as a geographical expression, it is not easy to define in the sense that people from different regions in the world, from a variety of linguistic, geographical and cultural backgrounds, were forced involuntary without being questioned to leave their ancestral lands, cultures, traditions families, children and parents to become under an obligatory imposed hostile and alien milieu. These people check new ways and strategies to interconnect and become into contact in one society that define their Caribbean-ness.

The mistaken discovery of Columbus has left the Caribbean with “much closed mouth” and an opened door of dangerous sores, ruthless annihilations and many unhealed pains that shatter the Caribbean’s illusions. The mistaken discovery unleashed to an abrupt beginning of the Caribbean as a “historical impulsion or a phenomenon”. The Caribbean people who are “constructed by history” find themselves as a prey to many colonizing forces that compete to buy them from their countries cheaper than bread, and enslaved them as chattels to realize very high economical position whatever the cost was. The pettiest is that these newly brought people find themselves wrapped in black destiny written by European hands. They were a prey for the big trauma of the Middle Passage during the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the big disaster of the severance from their mother lands and the biggest tragedy of man’s criminality to man.

In a world of sustained flux, movements, displacement, dislocation, plurality of languages, religions and cultures, multi- nationalism become a feature of Caribbean society where various rich African, Asian and European heritage of different cultures reconcile in one faith of Caribbean-ness. Though these people grow from the same womb of pains and big traumas. They send very significant messages to the world on how to heal pains, construct their fragmented identities and how to come into being. Many writers replace the Caribbean voices and offer a challenging view on how to negotiate their authentic identity and enable their shattered illusions to gather their different origins in monolithic visions to deal with many issues that are a big part of

Caribbean society such as, exile, alienation, rootlessness and homelessness. Therefore, in this chapter, I attempt for picturing the Caribbean to many readers and learners, who still have narrow issues and knowledge about a world that gathers imagination with reality, pain with happiness and destiny with choice. Therefore, it is a bit of necessity to give a general view about its history, people and literature that was born from the heart of this history.

## **2.2 The Caribbean History Speaks**

Safra et al (1998) depicts the major physiographic divisions of the West Indies in the following:

A. The Greater Antilles, include the Islands of Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola what is Haiti and Perto Rico.

B. The Lesser Antilles, represent; Anguilla, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Montserrat, Guadelope, Dominica, Martinique, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados and Grenada.

C. The isolated Island groups represent, The Bahamas including the Turks and Caicos Islands, and South American Shelf, including Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Curacao, and Bonaire.

Two main chains of mountains link the islands of the West Indies .While the first includes West-East islands of the Greater Antilles, the other chain includes North-South of the Lesser Atilles. The Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea submerge these two mountains chains.

The Caribbean region has a very distinctive and peculiar history. This history did not appear naturally out of ancient stories and mythologies of the past, but it is a specific story exploded and began suddenly with the discovery of the Bahamas in 1492. “This historical phenomenon” coincided and coupled with terrible and painful

violence and brutal methods and strategies of many occupations and colonizing forces such as Spanish, British, French and Dutch colonization.

Three different groups characterized the Caribbean before the arrival of the explorer Christopher Columbus; the Arawak were the most dominant and numerous group, they inhabited the Greater Antilles, the Bahamas, and the Leeward Islands. Their main and primary practice is agriculture. However, the Carib were seafarers and unlike the Arawak, they were war-like. The last group includes the Ceboney whose main activity is fishing and hunting.

The brutal encounter by Christopher Columbus made the Caribbean people under the stamps of the occupier and fostered the rapid competition of the colonizers, who were single minded in their quest for quick self-profit. One can trace that the mistaken “discovery” of the West Indies by Christopher Columbus draw the dark tableau of the ruthless annihilation of the whole indigenous population, i.e. the arrival of Columbus was accompanied by the big disaster of the complete extermination of the native people, many new people were brought from the entire world, especially Africa in attempt to satisfy the colonizers desire for cheap indentured labour, the newly shipped slaves lived under the horrors and the terrible trauma of the Middle Passage during the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the unimagined atrocious and shocking scenes of slavery on plantations; the big tragedy of the severance, the separation from ancestral lands, families, children, traditions, religions and the imposition to a forced alien language and culture.

The impulse and the surprising start of this “historical phenomenon” led many historians to declare and claim their deduction that the region is “historyless”. According to Naipaul (1979), “history is built on creation and achievement and nothing was created in the West Indies”. The literary artist Eric William (1966) and even Naipaul (1979) were in the same zone and line in considering that the Caribbean is merely a geographical expression which misses a noteworthy history. While J H Parry and PM Sherlock wrote:



*“West Indian history appears disjointed and unreal to West Indians today. It is a story told from some One’s else point of view. The political history Islands has been written in terms of the struggle of Europeans or North Americans for possessions or control”.*

(Parry and Sherlock, 1956:32)

The European colonizers saw and thought deeply that a rich region of different sorts of products such as gold, sugar, tea, cotton and tea, it had to be as one whose economic potentials and resources should be fully exploited. Thus, millions of plantation systems were implemented, and myriads of people severed their original homelands and lost their humanity under the high increase of economic greed and selfish economic consideration. This what led automatically to the institution of slavery in the West Indies. Thus, the history of the West Indies can not, therefore, be divorced from the continuous contact from Africa, as millions of African slaves were brought by the Europeans to the island. Therefore, one can notice the big extent to which African progressed Western Europe with their resources and energies is totally parallel to the extent that Europe degrades Africa by putting it in unrecognized square. The institution of such a trade was in fact nothing but the extension overseas of European interests and profit and implementing their new strategies to put the weak nations under their feet due to capitalism. The Europeans instilled an acute feeling of racial inferiority over races, consequently, the flags of racial inferiority and the lack of self-esteem by the slaves and their descendants soared highly on the Caribbean islands. Since that “constructed history” preoccupied by the ghostly mask and figure of Columbus, the story of the Caribbean and its people has been a tragedy of many unhealed pains, and a story of flux, of many migrating movements, of plurality of languages, cultures, traditions and religions. What made many matters of belonging and identity at the center of preoccupation of many novelists and poets who were in the same cup of historylessness, alienation and pain. Safra, Jacob et al give us a general view about the people that are a big part of the West Indies, they say:

*The population of the West Indies is racially heterogeneous and largely described from an early population society based on slave labour. Most of the blacks are descended from African slaves while many of the white are descended Spanish, French, British, or Dutch Colonist. The West Indies creole languages evolved from pidgin variants and European Languages have become the common languages of people. The French and English creoles are blend of these languages with African and West Indies languages. By contrast the major Spanish language communities-Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic speak pure Spanish, Papiamentu, a Spanish-Dutch-Portuguese English Creole, is widely spoken in Aruba and the Netherlands, Antilles, East Indians constitute a substantial minority in the region, especially in Trinidad and Tobago, where they make up forty percent of the population. Chinese constitutes a smaller minority, and whites account for some seventy percent of the population of Cuba and Puerto Rico. Roman Catholicism, is the predominant religion in the Spanish and French speaking islands, while Protestantism, is the predominant norm religion in the English-speaking and Dutch territories.*

(Safra. et al, 1998:598)

With the arrival of Christopher, the region was fully remarked by its first immigrant, with almost complete, harsh liquidation and total extermination of the indigenous people of the Caribbean (Amerindians) (1) and their change by an imported population. Columbus expected the region as a golden treasure for the Spanish especially and other European countries. He established the first European settlement in the West Indies in 1493 on the island of Hispaniola. Spanish settlement expanded to reap other islands in the Greater Antilles during the early sixteenth century. This act was a black and a grim forecast of the mindlessness and obscurity within which colonial powers would make the entire area for the majority of its people, written history and geographical expression in their hands and under their mercy by opening all the black predictions and fortunes for a created legacy and misfortune that would complicate the present and future's destiny to be calculated or even foreseen.

Under the large extermination of the indigenous population (Amerindians), and the forcibly transported population (from Africa, India, China .....), the region soared a new flag known by its diversity, people of different races, beliefs, religions, languages (English, French, Spanish and Dutch....), culture and even with different motives of

being. George Lamming in *WaThiong'o* referred to the diverse Island's ethnic composition, he says that:

*The Islands are a cocoon of confusion. First a population composed entirely of emigrants i.e. people, slaves or otherwise who had no indigenous link, no ancestral claim on the soil which was to become their new home, a diversity of people organized by different European powers, contending in a scramble for supremacy over them.*

(Lamming, 1972:20)

with the highly increased in and out migration and the institution of slavery that held all profound meanings of darkness, pain, dehumanization, involuntary death and man's criminality to man. The term Caribbean-ness was caught in contradicts conditions. In this multi-cultural milieu, new West Indian personality has been shaped under the figure of different colonizing forces. There, it was so difficult to impose a common Caribbean ethos and identity, especially with the complexity of the socio-cultural lives of the island, the disparities and the distinctiveness of each racial group in culture and beliefs. In this sense, C.L.R James in *The Black Jacobins* states that:

*The West Indies has never been a traditional colonial territory with clearly distinguished economic and political relations between two cultures. Native culture there was none. The Aboriginal Amerindian civilization had been destroyed. Every succeeding year, therefore, saw the laboring population, slaves or free incorporating into itself more and more of the language, customs and outlook of its masters.*

(James, 1963:23)

Therefore, it became difficult for scholars and historians to jot down or write of the Caribbean history. Slavery's abolition for instance was not achieved at a definite period for all the islands. While the end of this criminal practice was abolished in the British Caribbean in 1834, the French Caribbean witnessed the perpetuation of this legalized criminality until 1848, the pettiest it sustained to be engraved in Dutch Caribbean until 1863 and in Cuba in 1886. Most territories, however, still to exist under the umbrella of colonialist's greed and selfishness, covered in frustration and

the double diaspora until they became independent in the 1960 and 1970's, and others are still (semi) independent. Thus, the history of the Caribbean people has been a history of displaced people who over the years attempted to counterfeit and forge an unimagined identity for themselves, struggling with the unavoidable evil to fashion out a culture, which is unique as it is dynamic.

To sum up, historically all the islands of the Caribbean have subjected to the same story and the same colonizing plans and strategies. The “discovery” was the sudden beginning followed by the conquest of the Spanish who engraved the stamps of the occupier and the colours of civilizing missions, these events led to further scenario of the extermination of the indigenous population and its replacement by slave labour from Africa, then, the colonizers strong competition and big rivalry for sugar's canes with the high increase of imposing the area to be the title of diaspora and in and out migration. The last stage is represented in the treasure's partition between the colonizers and the breath of independence finally at different dates for each island followed by post-colonial experience that holds the same colonizer's fetus, burden and the same heritage of the colonial era. One can notice that the black man wherever is situated; in Africa or in diaspora, is the same person who shares the same burden and destiny. But colonization in the West Indies of the African diaspora held very harsh conditions; it was much terrible, traumatic and mortal. While Africans were between the stubborn hands of colonialism, the West Indians were enslaved under the feet of their holders, depicting the image of complete loss of personal and cultural identity by being doubly exiled.

### **2.2.1 Early Migration**

The West Indies can be seen as an artificially built society, constructed and narrated by the ghostly figure of the European competition for self-profit, especially with the referring to the biggest crime in the history of humanity related to the complete extermination of the indigenous population. Therefore, the inhabitants of the

Caribbean are people from different parts of the world who were either migrated or were forcibly transported there from different places in the world.

The explorer Columbus from his first arrival and his first hypothesis depicted the Caribbean Islands as exploitable commodities and objects rather than places to be developed, and their inhabitants only as unclean chattels and cheap bread that can be kneaded in an easy way as one wants. He rapidly started to think in conquering the region. As its inhabitants were not strong enough neither in their number or arms. Thus, it was sufficient to conquer the island with mere fifty men (Gordan, 1983). The main goal of Columbus was wealth for his country. The Spanish's eyes were on mining for gold and other precious metals. Therefore, the extermination of its population was followed by its first inward migration that brought highly increased demographic change, most tribes were destroyed in unimagined and unacceptable scenes of criminality and only few indigenous people were left alive (Michael Dash, 1994). The worst, Columbus saw these islands as paradise where Europeans dreams, ambitions and hopes would begin. As these natives 'ought to make good slaves for they are of quick intelligence sine I notice that they are quick to repeat what is said to them' (2). These Europeans saw and declared the islands as unknown geographical zones in empty spaces, waiting for an occupier rescue, European hero, Western style of thought and stamps of civilization.

While this discovery was the magic that would turn imagination into reality for the Europeans, it was the dark fortune that soared highly on the Caribbean islands and denied millions of the inhabitants from their existence, breathed air, identity, ownership and constructed the new Caribbean's personality as an empty slate upon which a European's ideology and identity could be stamped (B.W.Ife,1990).

It seems that Columbus's trip and arrival was the bitterest and the darkest poisoning that exploded the bomb of pains and mixed everything, especially that Columbus's way of thinking coincided with cruel law that reached its peak in criminality in acts that Bartolome de las Casas depicts as 'tear [ing] the natives to shreds, murder [ing] them and inflicting [ing] upon them untold misery, suffering and

distress' (Bartolomé, 2004). This terrible treatment was the darkest scene that stopped air to be breathed by the natives and the very quick machine that made an unimagined end to innocent people, their only admitted guilt was their existence in this region. Therefore, rapid destruction of indigenous communities and its people who were engraved on prestigious chattels in very short time in a world where criminality established its throne on those who considered themselves as civilized (Ibid). Therefore, the extermination of indigenous population was followed by a big desire and great need for creating a new labor. In this way, the greatest mission of civilization was still to burgeon its roots, stalks, leaves and fruits on people who were dreaming to live one happiest moment in their lives.

For the big desire of complete satisfaction of this need and for high benefit, the West Indies was fostered by highly increased inward migrations of labour replacement; white indentured labour servants and Africans slaves. While a big difference in terms of the living conditions was witnessed between the white indentured servants slave population and Caribbean slaves, big racial discrimination between whites and blacks set its feet even in the worst condition of humans being "slavery". Black slaves were put in dusty cages, left in dark, shrouded into widespread diseases, malnutrition, excessive work and high punishment unto death (Sheller, 2003). It was the most difficult moments of pain, fright and panic for slaves that were written in their innocent's bloods and tears.

The high competition was, especially between Spain which was the first invading power and supreme force that occupied the lion share of colonies and the other North Western European nations; such as Britain, France and Denmark, these countries were very challenging to this supremacy in order not to embed its pegs and left its sole name in the area. The fact that resulted in a big rivalry between them, what led to the big inflow of the indentured and the enslaved as nothing else was of high interest than profit and wealth. The colonizers mentality was deeply obsessed with superiority whatever the credit or the cost of humanity was. Many battles were between these colonial powers in attempt to enlarge their possessions in the islands and increase their economic investments, what resulted in further reconfigurations and refashioning, as

islands changed its feet, hands and hoisted new flags. This is what made the area exposed to a new scenario that opened the list to shower big problems.

The ongoing arrivals and departures put the inhabitants in the exposure to different and diverse linguistic, cultural and religious influences. In and out migration continued without any stop, especially through the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Even though with the abolition of slavery in the British territories, the area witnessed many transport of Indians and Chinese labourers into the region to replace manumitted slaves. Hundreds of thousands of indentured Indians were brought to the Caribbean islands. The same step was followed by France to cover the great shortage in slaves. These slaves were obliged to establish themselves in permanent and fixed terms; therefore, this newly discovered treasure (Caribbean) became the magnetic that absorbed all colours, shapes and flags from almost all the world continents (Aldrich and Connel, 1992).

The arrivals of new humans made the region as a new source for the arrival of new plants vegetables, fruits, domestic cereals and even animals. Therefore, it is correct to regard that the West Indies as an imported people in a largely imported environment, it's landscape altering along with its population. The great change of the terrain and the newly brought ecological environment drew an optimistic metaphor for the continuous and sustained misdeeds of the past to discontinue, even the Europeans contributed in creating new environment and shipped over wild and domesticated species (Richardson, 1992).

What characterizes the Caribbean colonies is that they were never in safe conditions or stable homes, imperialists fought to obtain a considerable wealth, giving rise to piracy, double-crossing, brutality and sustained violence. As a result, slaves were largely left as mere commodities without any hope for different future or even brighter present, but with a functional value and limited liberty, the Negros's lifeboat was sinking towards involuntary death at any moment. They were never allowed or expected to establish societal bonds or permitted to create a united and strong society

that is not made by Europe. According to Sidney Mintz, the Caribbean colonies were not:

*erected upon massive indigenous bases in areas of declining great literate civilizations, as was true in India and Indonesia; they were not mere points of trade ,like Macao or Shanghai, where ancestral cultural hinter lands could remain surprisingly unaffected in spite of the exercise of considerable European power; they were not “tribal” mosaics, within which European colonizers carried on their exploitation accompanied by some curious vision of the “civilizing” function, as in the Congo, or New Guinea; nor were they areas of intense European settlement, where new forms of European culture provided an accultural “anchor” for other newcomers, as in the United States or Austria. They were, in fact; the oldest “industrial” colonies of West outside Europe (...) and fitted European needs with peculiar intensity and pervasiveness.*

(Mintz, 1971:36)

During the colonial period, people of the Caribbean were not real “humans” in any real sense, they were the outsiders who severed their homelands-the insiders who became wrapped in double exile because of the nature of the island that exploited them for the others prestige and the functional objective that served them as victims to pay the taxes to heal the Europeans greed and selfishness.

Thousands of writer’s voices act as interlocutors and spokespersons in attempt to replace the voices of the slaves’ labour who represent the majority, their concerns becomes the concerns defined by the region, be they the slave-trade, the noble savage, the honest “Other” and the fair human, who stand in opposition to imperial powers and their plans in a sense of crystallizing the counterfeited vision of the island. Being the innocent angels who cry against the evil deeds, cry against the raped mother, the punished man into death and the exploited and deprived child from infancy. Being African, European or Asian parts, there was something stronger than where they are from, but being all united in the face of the criminals who forge the sense of humanity.



### 2.2.2 Slavery and Colonialism

Slavery and colonialism that marked the Caribbean between the sixteenth and nineteenth century represent a crucial sign and marker of the entire Caribbean's islands. Most scholars agree that the history of sugar production is the key of colonial competition and is closely coupled and intertwined with the history of slavery. Thus, there was a big growth in rivalry, greed and economic selfish for the Europeans towards slave produced sugar, consequently, sugar plantations became the main arm of colonial exploitation. The majority of the Amerindian population had purposefully been exterminated after Columbus arrival by lot of unimagined methods and strategies; either had died in battles against the colonizers or had been considerably decimated by foreign diseases or even killed deliberately by the Europeans within a few decades of colonization (Aldrich, 1996).

With the decline of Spain as the main and first power, the Caribbean became the principle and the main object for the intense competition among the Europeans power such as Britain, France, Denmark and the United States. According to Safra et al (1998), Caribbean colonization was not done in only one step, but in continues stages. The first stage was characterized by English and French red light in the penetration of the Spanish and finished with undertaking the Caribbean Empire by a surprising armed attack on Spanish possessions between 1536 and 1609. The second stage is characterized by dividing many colonies between them the Lesser Antilles. However, between 1630 and 1640 the Dutch also widened their colonies and claimed Curacao, Aruba, Bonaire, Saint Eustatius, Saint Martin, and Saba. During the same period, the British expanded its circle of conquest and conquered Barbados, Nevis, Antigua, and Montserrat, whereas the French claimed Martinique and Guadeloupe. While big conflicts and struggles rose between the United Kingdom and France about their possessions, the United States' interest in the Caribbean developed with the occupation of Cuba and Perto Rico during the Spanish-American war (1898), with growing in greed during the early twentieth century, Haiti and Dominican Republic were occupied by the USA during (1915-1935), During the Second World War, the United States military bases were established in the Caribbean islands in attempt to make their

investments and interests in safety (Ibid). Therefore, the Caribbean under the scenario of the European's scramble became a place of sustained struggle for economic monopoly; material gain and political subjugation. Most of these colonizers were stealers and criminals who fled from their own lands, families and houses in order to escape unemployment, aiming for more wealth through immoral and unethical ways. So, what can the West Indians wait from these criminals except man's criminality to man.

The European colonizers were in need for cheap labour which can realize all their dreams, power and projects that would allow them to make their Caribbean possessions economically profitable, this need shaped the main catalyst for the slave trade. There were huge importations of African captives to work as slaves in the newly formed sugar and tobacco plantations as well as in mines. Between the first beginning of the sixteenth century until the abolition of slavery in 1834 and 1848 in the Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean respectively, these two squares were bottles that should be filled with slaves' energy and breath, myriads of African slaves left their families and children from West Africa, had been brought by force to be the heroes and the martyrs who can lose their life at any moment in exchange of the white ships civilization. Moore (1969) submits that the Atlantic slave trade forcibly transported at least twenty million human beings from Africa to the Americas and endured for some three and half centuries. This unimagined long time of slave trade is in reality responsible of black communities diaspora and the main reason for the big grow of racial groups who were affected by the traumatic "constructed history" and "Columbousiana discovery". In addition to the Africans, there were also red carpets for the reception of myriads of the East Indian, Chinese and Portuguese and others whose ancestors came from what is now India and Pakistan. These slaves were also the machine that should work days and nights as planters in the plantations so as to the sun would never set on their holders. In the eyes of all slave holders, slaves were never seen as human beings, but "goods", "chattels" and "commodities", which mean that they were denied all human rights, dignity and embraced all sort of dehumanization.

Hall comments his view concerning the contact between the blacks and the West that was highly based on racial differences and noticed inequality by saying that:

*There are three major moments when the 'west' encountered Black people, giving rise to an avalanche of popular representation based on marking of racial differences. The first began with the sixteenth century contact between European traders and the west African kingdoms, which provided a source of black slaves for three centuries, Its effects were to be found in slavery and in the post-slave societies of the New World .The second was the European colonization of Africa and the 'scramble' between the European powers for the control of colonial territory, markets and raw materials in the period of high 'imperialism'. The third was the post-world world II migration from the 'Third World' into Europe and North America. Western ideas about 'race' and images of racial difference were profoundly shaped by those three fateful encounters.*

(Hall, 1997:239)

Trinidad and Guyana were homes and refuge to nestle a large East Indian population, while, many other islands such as Grenada, St Lucia or Antigua represent the big circle for the arrival of the majority of Caribbean of African descent. The French colonizers tried to impose the same strategy and plan of colonization followed by Britain in making the Antilles in the same dress of civilization as the metropolis, by imposing their administration system, language and culture on the territories conquered during the early seventeenth century.

The Caribbean island's sugar production increased by ranking the first classes in the world, Barbados experienced an increase from 7000 to 12000 ton per year between the end of the seventieth and the eighteenth century (Tomish, 1991). During the same Century, Britain occupied the lion's share with the third highest consumption of sugar in Europe (Tomish, 1991). Once the sugar plantation became the main arm of the British colonies, Britain focused their external trade and developed its trade in humans being; men, women and children; no heed was given to humanity in the existence of inevitable greed and economic profit under what would be known as the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

The plantation systems of the Caribbean which coincided with man's criminality, subjugation and mortality to man, endured for centuries as the model for agriculture production and the loss of humanity between the slave holders and economic rivalry. It left a significant most unfortunate legacy, obscurity and oppression in the Caribbean's. Sugar production provided one of the original means and motivations for European expansion and the European people who raised their flags and set their feet in the Caribbean islands for centuries. Colonization and control precipitated a course of events that would shape the destiny of the West Indies forever.

While slavery dominated the first stage of European colonization of the Caribbean between the seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries, the second stage turned totally its direction on the ideological side rather than the economic side; which was based on the atrocities of slave trade and man's criminality to man. "Civilizing mission" was a major driving vehicle and principle motive behind nineteenth-century colonialism. So, one may wonder what are the real verities behind the newly brought civilization? Robert Young's analysis (2001) referred to the fact that the ideology behind nineteenth-century colonization will be viewed as imperialism, whereas colonialism will be used to implement the colonizing practices. At that period, Both Britain and French's flags soared highly in terms of political and economic power. Moreover, they reaped more territories and expanded their high benefits and investments. From the very old idea of colonialism, the idea of the "civilizing mission" served as ghostly figure, evil mask and crucial argument and reason to justify the imposition of colonial language and values on the colonized people. Therefore, this argument was beneficial in the sense that it was adopted deeply and applied by heart by all the European colonizers to put their colonialism in the frame of legality, though colonialism in its deep content held the same meaning, practices, strategies and put the whole colonized areas in the same tableau of pain, exile, alienation and the acute sense of inferiority and shame with one's self-image whatever its connotations are in the frame of legality.

Under this expansion and under the banner of the "civilizing missions", the imposition of colonial language and cultural values justified the invasion of

imperialism in the Caribbean colonies. The colonized people were regarded as primitive, savage, heathens and barbaric. Thus, the colonial ideologies in spreading civilization was a big duty, sacred responsibility and moral Christian obligation in British colonies, therefore, “the civilizing mission” was burgeoning from Christian missionary practices that instead of focusing on spreading the Christian faith only, it became very important angle and significant area in transmitting the European’s culture and languages (3). Moreover, the idea of introducing colonial education was highly adopted by the colonizers in attempt to implement cultural assimilation and to suppress the colonized people’s original personality and their real identity. Eric William explains:

*The curriculum...was based very largely on foreign materials that bore no relation to the daily lives of the pupils or to their environment. The educational system of the Caribbean violated the fundamental principle that education should proceed from the known to the unknown, from the village to the great wide world, from the indigenous plants, animals and insects to the flora and fauna of strange countries, from the economy of the village and household to the economics of the world*

(William, 1966:460)

Therefore, implementing the Caribbean educational history was totally a wild dream surrounded by the reality of colonial education and the great gifts of civilizing the uncivilized. In this respect, Eric Williams asserts (Ibid, 456) that; “the colonial system was seen at its worst in its neglect and abuse of educational facilities”.

Under slavery, the humanity of the black was completely eroded; more work hours; days and nights, stringent penalties for absenteeism, sanctions and high punishment for simple mistakes, no freedom of movement or simplest exercise of their free will. They could not marry without their master’s permissions and could not own property. Between the claws of their masters and their labours, they were left in uprootment, dispossession and punishment unto death. This unimagined situation that ignores all meaning of humanity, gives rise to myriads of psychological traumas such as alienation, rootlessness, inferiority complex and of course the creation of colonial mentality. Fanon and Glissant, amongst other intellectuals, argue that the black

Caribbean internalized this dehumanization so that they lacked pride in their race until at least 1970s. Thus, it was correct to say that the cultivation of cane was the basic reason for the institution of slavery and had important effects on the Caribbean psyche, the isolationist position, the deep-seated sense and feeling of inferiority that characterized most of the area, all of which are difficult to suppress and remove from the Caribbean mentality and culture, on the contrary, they participated to foster a further amnesia and shame.

During the early nineteenths, schools were built in the Caribbean colonies. But, it was a petty that it was not until the twentieth century that education was introduced. At first, education was limited only on whites, then middle-class. However, coloured children did not gain admission very earlier as their white and middle class counterparts. While, education was based on European models, history and culture rather than implementing local conditions and putting the Caribbean man inside his milieu and culture. This meant that children who were supposed to discover their tradition, culture and language from their infancy in schools, they found themselves exposed to learn about the colonizers culture rather than exposed to their local history or society from an earlier period in their age. Therefore, the dilemma of identity crisis would start at very earlier period. All these concurrences between the Europeans either for economic profit or for the assimilation of the colonized culture under “the civilizing mission”, altered the area into a surface of man’s criminality to man, brutal violence, mortality and involuntary death, millions of people who were not recognized as humans, they were considered as animals, suffered racism, oppression and deprivation.

The silenced people drank the bitterest poisoning of colonial oppression during centuries, passing from shock to shocks and from pain to pains. Thus, these hitherto muffled had to escape the black destiny imposed on them and cry against all sorts of criminality. Thus, resistance in the form of escaping from slavery and its multiple traumas, disobedience, new consciousness, vigilance and slave revolts occurred throughout the Caribbean from the beginning of slavery. Most of these resistances took place, for instance, in Guadeloup in 1981, in Guyana in 1763 as well in Barbados

between 1649 and 1701 (4). While Haiti represented the slaves' source of energy, impetus for liberation and an ideal example for one's humanity. Thus, major and important slave revolt took place and led to the independence. As the Haitian Revolution provided firstly a push to further slave trade uprisings, high consciousness and big awareness raised among the lives of slave communities towards the possibility of brighter life, full of man's value and dignity instead of being wrapped in the black uniforms of the oppressor, especially in Grenada, St. Vincent and Jamaica (Walvin, 2000). At the same moment, the big violence of these revolts increased fear and led to the raise of many supporters of slavery in the metropolis. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, African-Caribbean oppositions and resistance of the unavoidable system of mortality, was supported in Britain by abolitionist movements that opposed slavery for its highly increased mortality. During the nineteenth century, Britain and France saw very similar developed views with regard to anti-slavery and anti-slave trade activities. In the British Caribbean colonies, the first ending of slave trade was in 1807, however, the official abolition of slavery was with passing of the Emancipation Act of 1834 in the British Caribbean and on 1848 in the French Caribbean (Ibid, 97).

The liberation of slaves and the abolition of slave trade caused big shortage of workers in the plantations. Though the flags of slave's liberation and emancipation were hoisted, in the colonizers minds and thoughts slave trade continued to be a European dream and a process to be developed and dominate the world. Britain on the other hand, tried to compensate for the lack of slave labour by bringing huge population from Asia. East Indians, Chinese and Malaysians were the new Asians whose destiny embraced them under the mercy of the European monopoly. Trinidad was a fertile ground for sugar cane. Consequently; it includes the noticeably higher Asian population in comparison of the small Eastern Caribbean islands. Asians were brought to the French Caribbean, too, but in small numbers than the British Caribbean. Both slavery and the hard situation of the black people who were in bad economic, social and even cultural position were exposed to race riot and big division especially between the Africans and the Indians. While the history of Africans in diaspora was largely or completely linked to the legacy of the colonizer's slave trade, Indians had

never been enslaved, though colonized, they did not share the same degree of the terrible heritage of oppression, punishment and the trauma of the middle passage. Consequently, they were not in the same extent of danger of uprootment and self-effacement in the same degree to the Africans because of the dehumanization process of the colonizers. Thus, they were not in the same area or line of physical and psychological traumas.

The big shared trauma of slavery and colonialism has been revisited by both Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean writers in their poetries and fictional representation of violence and suffering. The big division created by the colonizing forces between the individuals and the islands; divisions that are both historical and cultural, the notion of rootedness embedded by colonial culture, has also been challenged and resisted by concepts of cultural identity that emerged especially during the last two decades and by myriads of both Anglophone or Francophone Caribbean's writers who reject to be an easy prey and game in the hands of those who have no relation with either the beautiful world of humanity, nor with the high level of civilization that they ignore. As many West Indian still deny their African roots because of the acute sense of inferiority that result from colonial practices and legacy.

### **2.2.3 The Cost of Humanity**

The Transatlantic Slave Trade is a big tableau that depicts all the pettiest scenes of the kidnap and sale of millions of Africans to European traders along the West of Africa, these people were transported forcibly without being questioned about their choice to be enslaved in a “treacherous journey” to the Caribbean and the “New world”, where they would be obliged to work very hard till death in the production of sugar, cotton and coffee or as servants in the plantations (S.L. Martin, 1999). These people were enslaved as a consequence of many reasons, especially being related to a dark fortune that accompanied them during the whole of their life; either being captured in war, punished for committing a crime or they tried to escape famine and hunger in their countries. Africans were routinely and continuously tortured, whipped,



branded, beaten, chained and separated from their wives, children and all the members of their families; and even deprived to eat, to marry, to speak, to decide freely or even to relax (Suzanne, 2003), it was a petty, thus, that they were also deprived of their own names. The risky and the unimagined scenes of this shocking scenario stopped them to breathe or even to think to be members of the campus of humanity since most of them had understood that not all the doors were opened for all races. Therefore, hardly any of the millions transported across the Atlantic that witnessed the darkest moment of life and what was behind man's criminality to man, tried to think to return to Africa. It was difficult, thus, to calculate exactly many Africans who were killed or died during the greatest play of the Transatlantic Slave Trade with the title "the cost of humanity" that exposed all the scenes of how humans are sold and bought as chattels or bread (5).

Slave trade during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reached its peak in the sense of mortality and involuntary death, many newly brought slaves died during their unforgotten transport to the coast before they finished the Atlantic crossing and other ten millions having survived the treacherous journey (Rediker, 2007). The real images of the voyage were associated and combined with brutal treatment, inadequate or insufficient food, unimagined torture, dangerous diseases and darkest moment that made people as property in impure hands and unforgotten crime that depicted the cost of humanity, even those who were survived were literally and severely worked to death. No Europeans, whether indentured servants or free migrants were ever considered cheap chattels or met the same environment or treatment which was inevitable destiny of African slaves upon embarkation on the slave ship. Most of these slaves taken to the Americas and the Caribbean, their life ended up on sugar plantation where their owners especially in the British West Indies were completely unconcerned and not interested at all for these "cheap object", who paid their blood and sweat to bring for them very high social, and economic value, prestige and the superior status. The combination of hard Labour, exposure to new diseases and inadequate conditions meant nothing except death, as approximately one in every three Africans died within three years from their arrival (Walvin, 1992) where the plantation owners were very

interested to calculate how much their revenue raised and how many slaves they bought cheaper than bread.

Portugal and Spain were the first countries interested in the Transatlantic Trade; their attention was on further project in the newly discovered world, especially after the extermination of native population of the Caribbean after ‘Columbus voyage’. The other European nations that followed them are France, England, Holland, Denmark, Sweden and Germany. They also started from the same belief and satisfaction that such kind of trade would be beneficial whatever the means used against humanity were illegal. These countries sent their ships to the main coastal regions along the African Coast in attempt to bring more slaves and raise their production. The coastal region of West-Central Africa (Angola today), the Bights of Benin and Biafra, the Gold Coast, Senegambia, South east Africa, Sierra Leone and the Windward were major source and the main suppliers of slaves but not in the same percentage and degree as well as Angola (Rediker, 2007). While Portugal was the ghost that dominated this trade from the sixteenth till the seventeenth century; Great Britain was the architect of the Transatlantic Trade from the end of the seventeenth till the nineteenth century since it had the highest rates by carrying the biggest numbers of slaves (Solow, 1987). While the period between 1700 to 1808 represented the years of misery for most of slaves as most slaves were transported during that time, it was called the “golden age” by historians who marked that over 3.6 million slaves were transported during the booming years of 1761 and 1810 (Eltis et al, 2009). By 1755, Britain occupied the lion share by supplying African slaves to its colonies in the West Indies (Hochsild, 2005). The terrible voyage of slaves was called a triangular trade, slaves were traded by the English manufacturers to the coastal regions of Africa, these slaves were carried across the mortal Middle passage to the West Indies where they would be exchanged for sugar, tea, tobacco and other commodities.

The British participation in what has come to be called the “stinking trade” was begun by Captain John Hawkins, who is considered to be the first English slave trader. He left England in 1562 on the first of three slaving voyages. From this modest start,

British participation in slave trade began and would continue until the early nineteenth century.

Regarded by many as an unavoidable evil, the slave trade became a symbol and the banner of Great Britain's commercial greatness that made Britain and wealth in the same ladder during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Robotham, 1997).

The Transatlantic Slave Trade remained the most atrocious crime in the long history of humanity, with its huge and unimagined mortality, sustained brutality, and legal durability, it was the violent blow that shocked innocent people who were never guilty in one day, but victims to man's greed and great desire for wealth and superiority. The pettiest was that this criminality was instituted and legalized for more than three and a half centuries, it is not surprising to say, slaves were treated worse than animals in a big system of violence where death was an opened big mouth for minor offences, and where it was completely forbidden for the black slave to raise his hands in the face of the white. According to French historian Jean-Michel Deveau, slave trade which lasted approximately four centuries, is one of "the greatest tragedies in the history of humanity in terms of scale and duration".

#### **2.2.4 The Movement for Abolition**

After the institution of the darkest point and the stubborn stains in the history of humanity, the unimagined and unforgotten crime of man to man had to disappear in the progress of the intellectual history, no one had the right to close the doors of liberty, limits the concept of humanity on some instead of others or even prevents the vital air to be breathed. This belief paved widely the way for many slaves and movements towards abolishing the unavoidable evil of slavery that becomes the destiny of millions, myriads of slaves found themselves between the anvil of involuntary death and the hammer of living in atrocious crimes in a moment where humanity had to be firmly established on the throne, innocent people and children were properties under the feet of the ghostly figure of colonialism. Therefore, three major factors were the driving vehicle and the principle motive for the British

abolition movement. Firstly, philosophers of eighteenth-century turned their thoughts and efforts to blame and criticize highly the stinking practices, the stubborn stains and the merits of slavery and slave trade. Slavery was considered the top and the height of man's criminality and inhumanity to man. Secondly, religious groups such as Christian Evangelical claimed big support against the slave trade. Thirdly, the cultivation of sugar in the British and French West Indian colonies became unprofitable because of real competition and cheaper sugar was obtainable from India and Brazil.

Great efforts and many tasks were needed for translating the hopes, efforts and the rights aimed to be realized into a legal reality, and of course, no one except the politicians could accomplish this moral duty by their hard work and big control (Fletcher, 1993). In the eighteenth century, lot of campaigns and popular mobilization became the main marker and sustained feature of the British society since the dark poisoning of the slave trade continued its pains, misery and the number of dead slaves was not calculated or bartered for, in any society that labeled itself with civilization and worked on spreading it all over the world. The story, thus, provided no apparent route except death, extreme depression, unimagined physical and psychological harm or high level of torture. Therefore, by the middle of the eighteenth century, the rise of a social movement began through Britain to challenge the endeavors of the slave trade, especially with the rise of a group of politicians including William Pitt, Charles James, and Fox William Wilberforce, who tried to do their best to change the gloomy forecast, to send a symbolic hope inside the upset hearts and minds and to regulate the conditions of "the civilizing" British slave ships. Moreover, during the same century, very important philosophical agendas and liberal ideas were the fertile ground and the pessimistic motive in highlighting many ideas of good will to be embedded in myriads of people to change their views towards unacceptable and illogical practice against humanity. In addition, the contribution of religious agendas was the real vehicle for spreading high consciousness and big awareness for this abolition. Evangelical Christianity which spread throughout Great Britain, offered an egalitarian view based on highlighting human values, suppressing the thought of injustice that equaled men with chattels, being unconcerned with man-made hierarchies or man's

classification to man. Thus, the philosophical ideas of freedom, liberty and benevolence were deeply fostered. Being highly armed and filled with an anti-slavery agenda and human's values, and worked hard to influence other religious groups to be obsessed with a precious thought that reconcile all people in one world that is far from any hierarchies and inhumanity through their widespread appeal, crusade and campaign that enriched the ideology of creating a society for highly humanitarian purposes, with deep emphasis on their banner of "friends and humanity" (Fisher, 1935). Thus, the father of Methodism witnessed that slaves were in miserable condition unsuitable for human beings, as their reality was worse to be accepted, their destiny was the bitterest reality to be recognized and their treatment was filthier than animals. Therefore, he resembled slave traders as "looters", "criminals" and "wolves" and accused them of murder (Merrills, 1945). Religious organization emerged as a strong wall and bullet of faith against slave trade; this is the conclusion of religious organization in public speech:

*Such, Sir, is the general history of the progress of the slave trade; and whatever those interest is concerned in it may pretend to say in its justification, they will not be able to contradict historical facts, which prove it originated in private prospects of gain: was established by violence and treachery; and has been conducted for centuries past, even to this day, with a spirit of cruelty and injustice, unknown in the history of any other people or any other country.*

(London Times, 1787)

In addition to this humanitarian revolution, The Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, also known as the London Committee was shaped and born from the same hope of religious, philosophical and humanitarian thought and anti-slavery became a significant tool in creating an effective step for the abolition (Jarret, 1974). The committee resulted and led to many campaigns by great humanitarian enthusiasm (Wilson, 1950). The reformer, the philanthropist and the humanitarian William Wilberforce who became the main leader and chief advisor of the anti-slave trade campaign, was the strong voice to change the lives of millions; his spoken words were the symbol of strength and power in solving man's humanity to sink in the oceans of hatred and blood. His passions and interests in making end to that poisoning evil,

began at the age of fourteen when he wrote a letter to a New York newspaper blaming and condemning the human to be trafficking in slave trade, considering it the most cruel and barbarous practice.

Though the big tasks done for abolishing slave trade and the heaviest good will condemning injustice and criminality, it was not until the nineteenth century that collective tasks and efforts were taken seriously to abolish slave trade at the international level since many countries united their vision in condemning this practice and considering it the height of man's inhumanity to man. Therefore, these countries translated their vision and signed of declarations to call for the end of this practice (Zoglin, 1986). Though Great Britain became the country whose unforgotten history of the big crimes against children, women and men during the Transatlantic Slave Trade continued to be engraved inside the black people's hearts and minds, it played a significant role in suppressing this evil from existence, making an end to the golden history of criminality, when all the flags of racism, inequality, injustice and dehumanization soared on the slaves' plantations, stopped to exist. In this sense, Frederick Douglass, the most famous American black abolitionist, wrote of this process from a slave's vantage point:

*We were all ranked together at the valuation, men and women, old and young, married and single, were ranked with horses, sheep, and swine. There were horses and men, cattle and women, pigs and children, all holding the same rank in the scale of being, and were all subjected to the same narrow examination. Silver-headed age and sprightly youth, maids and matrons, had to undergo the same indelicate inspection. At this moment, I saw slaveholder.*

(Douglass, 1845:27)

The same step taken by Great Britain was followed by the United States since it also declared officially that slave trade is illegal in 1807. In fact, for another years and despite the abolition of this inevitable evil, thousands and myriads of slaves continued to be exported from Africa and India to the sugar and coffee plantations of Brazil, though campaigns, struggles and the rise of consciousness in the world, Spanish

colonies of Cuba took more years for the illegal trade of slaves to exist and more years be suppressed completely (Bethell, 1966).

### 2.3 Between Two Axes

In the Caribbean or wherever we select to locate its frontiers, border or geographical situation, it is always viewed as an area of different and various population; whites, blacks, browns, yellow and red. People from different angles and areas of the world; Europeans, Africans, South Asians, Indians, Indonesians, and Chinese. There are religions of different beliefs; Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Jews, Vundun and others. Therefore, under the flag of multiple colours and shapes, Caribbean people cohere, coexist, dwell and drink from the same cup of bitterness, happiness and pain. Michel-Rolph Trouillot says:

*Caribbean societies are inescapably heterogeneous.... The Caribbean has long been an area where some people live next to others who are remarkably distinct. The region- and indeed particular territories within it- has long been multi-racial, multi-lingual, stratified, and some would say, multi-cultural.*

(Michel-Rolph, 1992:21)

Therefore, under the big difference and diversity that define the Caribbean people, they act in big solidarity of “multi-nationalism” or according to what Clifford Geertz (1963) called the “givens of social existence”.

Slavery, migration and colonialism have shaped the history of mankind in the Caribbean. Thus, the struggle of every one of his existence led to many ambiguous questions of “who am I? Where do I come from? How do I come? And where do I belong to?” Walcott refers to the Caribbean man as being a product that lost most of his characteristics and what he had during his migration from his original world to the new one. Walcott continued to say:

*That is the basis of the Antillean experience, this shipwreck of fragments, these echoes, these shards of a huge tribal vocabulary, these partially remembered customs. They survived the Middle Passage ..... the ship that carried the first indentured Indians from the port of Madras to the cane fields, that carried the chained Cromwellian convict and the Sephardic Jew, the Chinese grocer and the Lebanese merchants selling clothes samples on his bicycle.*

(Walcott, 1992:5)

If it was not easy to retrieve the Caribbean lands, resources and wealth that were lost during the colonial period. So, what can one say about people's minds, culture, religion, language and identity? Myriads of inward conflicts inside the Caribbean man led to his disorder and, therefore, the notion of Caribbean identity became caught up in many contradictions.

The white man in the world and the white supremacy was seen to be ingrained intellectually in the native's mind. Consequently, the Caribbean man seemed to be situated or placed in the position of "not quite" or "in-between". Creolization and hybridity, thus, became inevitable result due to the various linguistic and cultural transformation witnessed in the construction of this society. While hybridity or in-betweenness can also lead to alienation which means also to be outside the frame of both cultures.

Slavery, trauma of the Middle Passage during the Transatlantic Slave Trade, made the Caribbean man to be located from the tableau of origins, roots and mother lands to be located in the tableau of trauma, alienation and double exile. The question of belonging to the new era or the new space became too difficult, especially with rebuilding the notion of the new home. The process of migration in the Caribbean that is born of a history of global colonialism and consequently sustains to a decolonizing era, is not without consequences. But, it puts the Caribbean man between two axes of home and homelessness. According to George Rosemary (1996); "(i)migration and the fictions it engenders teach a certain detachment about 'home'". He continues to say that:



*Identity is linked only hypothetically (...) to a specific geographical place on the map. And yet, wandering at the margins of another's culture does not necessarily mean that one is marginal. Home in the immigrant genre is a fiction that one can relocate or recreate at will. ... As postmodern and postcolonial subjects, we surprise ourselves by our detachment from the things we were taught to be attached to.*

(George, 1996:1)

All these data made the Caribbean people in a big dilemma of identity crisis or identity identification and held them a big responsibility in challenging the ambivalent nature of their existence. A new identity; therefore, was born within the frame of slavery, injustice, colonialism and ethnocentrism, therefore, the problem of identity crisis in the Caribbean island increases, in this sense Richardson says :

*It is crucial to note that regionality as expressed by regional characteristics in the Caribbean is an abstraction and perhaps more so than in other broadly delineated world regions. Within the Caribbean 'regional' matrix, imported and local geographical variables have combined in a greater many ways in different places so that in reality the Caribbean is a regional mosaic of subtle complexity and incredible variety; regularities identified in one regional local –to the chagrin of those who seek broad regional generalizations-are often absent in the next.*

(Richardson, 1992:4)

One can notice that the dilemma of identity crisis became more complicated not only because of the impact of colonial legacy that led to different shapes and forms of identity, but also to the chaos that were left behind colonialism by the creation a kind of ruling systems in many areas. Therefore, new-multiple identity had to confront and challenge the unique identity of the European man and powers with a melting pot of extraordinary mixture and rich heritage that reconcile different cultures, religions and languages of our world in one stalk of hybridity and creole.

Within the post-colonial Caribbean, the term identity itself became problematic, carrying many interrogative questions. In the post-colonial's Caribbean, identity became a question or an umbrella of multi-dimensions and plurality, Amartya Sen

(1997), refers to the fact that an individual in the Caribbean belongs to great variety of stems and categories, she says, “American citizen, of Caribbean origin, with African ancestry, a Christian, a liberal, a woman, a vegetarian, a long distance runner, a historian, a school teacher, a novelist, a feminist, a heterosexual ....to all of which this person simultaneous belongs gives her a particular identity”.

The creole identities in Caribbean suffered uprootment from many ethnic and cultural origins. That resulted in a big struggle and a story of in-between the original roots of their past and the diasporic actual position, putting the sort of cultural plurality in a situation of hybridity where Homi Bhabha (1994) says; the creole and hybrid identities suffer from the feeling and the sense of “Unhomeliness or in between”. Many Caribbean writers assume a great responsibility as representative and spokespersons to search for the Caribbean identity and the location of culture of a unique people who are characterized by their displacement and what Derek Walcott (1974) called “collective amnesia”. They relocate themes such as home, marginalization, alienation and exile. They use Creole languages as the real weapon to deconstruct the European myth and decolonize both language and culture, thus, the whole society adapt the process of creolization which appeared clearly in the Caribbean novels as a sense and a symbol of national culture, such as Naipaul, Selvon, Shani Mootoo, David Dabydeen and others.

Stuart Hall’s work (1994) deals profoundly with the concept of identity. He situates the Caribbean identity between two “axes” of the past and the new world. Firstly, He raises the notion of oneness by saying, “the oneness, underlying all the other, more superficial difference, is the truth, the essence of “Caribbeaness” of black experience”. Secondly, he views identity as an identification of discontinuous points, he says, “we cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about, one experience, one identity” (Ibid). Hall linked identity in the Caribbean to the fact the whole area was a big door of contact, therefore, identity was never fixed or can be easily defined. Hall (1994) says that identity is, “a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’”, he adds (1994) that identities are “constantly producing and reproducing themselves a new, through transformation and difference”. To sum up, history is not the sole agent

that defines hybrid identities, but the question of similarity and difference is also linked to the environment where people grow up.

## 2.4 Bleeding Pens

The debilitation history of the Caribbean region was full of the sense of inferiority, lack of faith and the big void of dispossession imbedded by colonial culture and education, what gives born to many sorts of uprootment, shame, amnesia and the feeling of accepting the European man as good, perfect and the colonized as Other. Therefore, the responses to the black's bad realities of the Caribbean and his harsh historical experience, have been born and created by many authors who never accept this destiny written by the European hands, they reject the colonial existence and its politics in forging the whole history of the region with the unforgotten accident of the extermination of its indigenous population. They stand to oppose all created scenes that changed their area into a surface of economic selfish, benefit and the logic of exploitation built on man's criminality to man. These writers hold the bitterest to act as spokespersons to challenge their alien milieu and hostility, bearing the burden to heal their ills and implement positive responses inside the Caribbean man who was an easy prey in the mouth of the colonizer. I will use the term "**West Indies**" to refer to writing from the British colonies or British writers from these colonies. While, I use the term "**Antilles**" to refer to writing from French colonies.

### 2.4.1 West Indian Bleeding Pens

The colonizing forces competed to suppress people's identity, personality and ownership, the result was a terrible situation of rootlessness, homelessness and pain. The fragmented new environment of this region, led to an acute sense of alienation, unimagined exile and a big sense of dispossession. West Indian writers, then, discard their passivity, being full of power and challenge, assume a big responsibility in encapsulating this debilitating history and celebrate a new common identity, that is

totally different from the Europeans, Africans and Asian, but it is a fantastic mixture and a rich heritage that encompasses all shapes under one flag of Caribbean-ness. In this sense, David Dabydeen and Nana Wilson explore the responsibility of the West Indian writers in voicing their past, history and the process of dehumanization that follow them.

*The writer from the colonies felt a need and duty to represent colonial societies, to reveal the humanity of the people to a British society maliciously ignorant of that humanity. The urgent task was to address and convince a British readership of the human values that resided in black communities.*

(Dabydeen and Wilson, 1997:83)

Caribbean literature is a stalk embraced under the big umbrella of black British literature. So, black British literature encompasses all literature that is “.....created and published in Britain largely for British audience, by black writers either born in Britain or who have spent a major portion of their lives in Britain” (David Dabydeen, 1988). However, one can notice that the term “black” itself refers to a racist location since it is still illogical and unacceptable to rank any movement whatever its literary tendency was, on the basis of the skin’s colour. Anglophone Caribbean writers are those who are from the West Indian (British colonies) or those who migrated to Britain from these colonies.

Though the gloomy circumstance and the depressing history, West Indian writers choose to act as representative against all sort of colonial oppression and legacy, new definitions, thus, were proposed, self-discovery and self-representation were checked and master narratives were challenged in attempt to create a West Indian national literature produced by its own people and language . Caribbean literature was fostered, thus, by Caribbean writers who prove a new step towards an evolving future out of the past’s experiences and out of the created history that was wrapped by the colonial’s thorns. In this sense, Walcott Said, “You who feel the pain of hystorylesness, look at the work patterns, the dances, the dreams, the songs and the memories of your forefathers, analyze these and you will be writing your history” (Brodber, 1983). On the other hand Gerald Moore (1969) notes that “...even if the

West Indians had created nothing else, they have certainly created a people". These writers believe strongly that the West Indians should move positively toward refashioning pessimistic future by overcoming all sorts of shame and inferiority that were bad consequences of colonial heritage. Creating a national literature that gather all the Caribbean people was a big project especially since 1950 in order to challenge the British culture and educational dominance that was based on embedding the European's culture and ignoring totally the history and the culture of the Caribbean region. Before the literary boom of West Indian writers, i.e. between (1920-1930) there was no unifying strategy to create a national literature, but, West Indian writing was different from that of the British metropolis. Donnell Alisson states that:

*There was no single nationalist ideology and the expressions of the need and the desire for a distinctly Caribbean (or island-centered), culture did not cohere in any easily definable manner during this period".*

(Donnell, 2006:15)

C.L.R James short story; "Trumph" and his novel Minty All (1936) can be regarded as a landmark text at that period.

Most scholars agree that the first origins of Caribbean literature dated back to the eighteenth century where slave narratives, autobiographies and even letters were weapons to break the colonizers legacy and the big oppression imposed on these slaves in plantation where the cost of humanity and freedom was very expensive. To be humane, thus, was story of untold misery in a world where man's criminality to man became a natural scene to be repeated every moment and in every angle in the Caribbean.

Caribbean literature is a big response to the highly brutal projects of different and various colonizing forces who were single minded. Edward Baugh describes it a "colonial literature" (1978). During 1950, West Indian writers achieved a kind of "boom". Most writers of this stage were and are still emigrant thanks to greatest amount of immigration to Britain. Most of these writers were novelists who share the homeland's concerns and main issues of colonialism experience, slavery and

displacement, forgetting their exile. Between 1950 and 1960, the first generation of West Indian writers was highly interested in issues of roots, exile and migration.

In this sense, Sandra Pouchet Paquet (1995) states “despite the voluntary exile of most writers published at this time, they were characteristically concerned with the structure and values of Caribbean society”. In the Same line, Kenneth Ramchand wrote about the concern of Anglophone Caribbean authors that:

*the nostalgia of the émigré, and the professional writer’s awareness of the preconceptions and the ignorance of his foreign readers affect mood, content, and expression to some extent but the novelists writing in London seldom depart from a concern with the shape and possible directions of their society, its central issues and causes, its patterns of group life, and the quality of life possible for individuals in it.*

(Kenneth, 1970:13)

On the other hand, George Lamming refers to the fact that Caribbean writing grow from the same womb of deprivation and exile, being the symbol and the emblem of challenge and resistance to the black destiny that deprives many people from their freedom and humanity and stick many great people with unavoidable terrible pain. In this respect, Louis James claims that:

*To a large extent, West Indian writing has grown out of the pain of “leaving” out of a sense of deprivation. Its sharpness of focus has often been produced by the fact that it is a literature of belonging, seen across a void of ocean”.*

(Louis, 1968:55)

One can notice that though these writers were not forcibly transplanted, the tableau of being sticked to the Caribbean land, people and history has no end inside the West Indian author’s hearts, the image of outsiders-who were always insiders occupied the lion share in the Caribbean’s novels. Ngugi Wa Thiong’ o states that:

*The West Indian novel in English is in part preoccupied with general quest for roots beneath most West Indian fictional characters there lurks a sense of exile. Alienation, individual and communal, is the unifying theme in the West Indian novel.*

(Ngugi, 1972:40)

During this period over 100 novels were written by these authors, the question of identity was a central project questioned by nearly most of writers who oppose the colonial heritage and its bad memories on people's minds. The colonial practices created a hostile milieu; as a result, the Caribbean man became a devoid of a united body, very shame of his African roots and black skin. In this context, Roger Toumson, (1986) says, "question of identity [...] asked by nearly all Caribbean writers" is a product of wounds practically every Caribbean person feels in himself".

Among the first generation of Anglophone writers, Andrew Sal Key, Kamu Brathwaite, Wilson Harris, James Berry, George Laming, Naipaul and others. Most of these writers migrated to Britain for economic reasons on the one side and for publishing houses that were absent in the Caribbean. Migration, therefore, meant the possibility of widening the square of readership, and gaining more jobs with high payment. In fact, these writers were disappointed by difficult experience of unemployment and high level of racism. Though these hard conditions, the sense of "Caribbeaness" or "West-Indianess" reached its peak under the flag of Britain, George Lamming (1984) says: "No Barbadian, no Trinidadian, no St Lucian, no Islander from the West Indies sees himself as a West Indian until he encounters another islander in foreign territory".

The second generation of writers arrived either as children or teenagers that means they educated in Britain. Identity remains one of the preoccupations of these writers, sharing the same experience and struggle of belonging and acceptance in the British society. Among the Anglophone of the second generation, Cary Dhillips, Zaidie Smith, Merle Collims and many others.

Generally speaking, West Indian literature, is to a major extent a response to the unimagined historical realities, West Indian writers, therefore, are the unique and distinct voices who attempt to refashion new identities, rejecting to be wrapped in a tragic world of sustained suffering and credibility of life.

### **2.4.2 Antillean Bleeding Pens**

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the common legacy of colonial oppression, exploitation and the unimagined scenes of black people's dehumanization in the Caribbean became the impetus for the rise and the development of many black emancipation movements that characterized many literary discourses, especially between 1920 and 1950<sup>s</sup>. The majority of writers choose to replace the colonized and slave's voices, to reflect their pain, exile and to narrate the stories of unavoidable evil in the paradise of innocents, being the pens that try to liberate the black man whether in Africa or in diaspora from being shame because of his skin's colour or feel inferior because of his origins or even deny his roots. It was, thus, an "inner revolution" that break colonial heritage that embedded savagery in the black man and open all the big doors in order not to accept the outward appearance, the innocent personality and the rich heritage of African culture. It was an "inner revolution", thus, to kill every inherited evil in black people's mind that equal blackness with ugliness and sin.

These intellectuals, writers and artists held on their responsibility the heavy burden of awakening and rising consciousness, and explode the heavy bomb shrouded in colonial thorns that make the Caribbean man reap homelessness, rootlessness and a big sense of inferiority and dehumanization, which was very hard to recover. Many issues and problematic of ethnicity, skin colour, roots, home, exile and self-acceptance were questioned and interrogated by the Francophone writers and the Antillean Literature.

Antillean literature is the literature developed in the square of French Caribbean for instance, in French Gviana, Martinique, Guadeloupe and Haiti. Many critics put the



Antillean literature in the same frame and objectives of Negritude Movement (1930<sup>s</sup>). Many scholars rank this type of literature in a wider context to “black writing” that holds and shares the same ideologies and ideas of African texts entitled as literature negro-Africane (6). These intellectuals, artists and Authors stand to oppose colonial oppression and its policies in building a big wall of assimilating the colonized culture and ideology. Moreover, it aimed at the affirmation of the black cultural identity as the colonial practices raise a sense of shame, inferiority and kind of amnesia in African roots and origins. In this sense Young stresses the big role of Negritude in affirming the Black’s cultural identity, he says:

*Negritude was thus developed as part of an already highly articulated anti-colonial movement [...]. Négritude was developed to articulate a new form of [black] cultural identity [...]. It did this by developing the agenda of a re-establishment and affirmation of African culture within the context of the larger historic intellectual and cultural struggle by Africans in Paris and the French colonial empire against the mission civilisatrice ideology of French ‘civilization’ and its unquestioned superiority.*

(Young, 2001:266)

Four centuries of slavery and colonization, is sufficient in creating a debilitating and negative effect on the Antilleans psyche, especially in making the Antillean man believes that the colonizer is the only one who would rescue him from savagery and barbarism.

In contrast to the West Indian writers between 1920 and 1930, Francophone writers emphasized the big connection that link the Caribbean and Africa, questioning and interrogating the big contradiction that connect blackness with savagery, considering it to be highly racist combination. Therefore, these writers transcend the boundaries by situating people’s culture, identity and African heritage at the top of negritude discourse and claiming the black-man, self-respect and self determination to oppose the self-estrangement and self-hatred embedded by colonial practices, values and culture. Negritude Movement was an offshoot to raise the awareness of the black.

Its three founders are, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Aimé Césaire and Léon-Gontran Damas.

African and Antillean writers devoted their texts to struggle the colonizer's thoughts and ideologies based highly on discrimination, racism and the logic of classifying humans into superior and inferior castes. Their pens were weapons to deconstruct the European graves that bury the uniqueness and the richness of the black's culture.

The dehumanization process internalized by the occupiers fostered the sense of ignoring and denying roots by the Caribbean people. Most writers, therefore, devote their writing to make people vigilant and conscious of their rich heritage and cleaning their mind from the evil embedded inside them; that everything African was inferior, lower and degraded. Thus, African and African Caribbean's self-assertion included a sustained struggle against the colonial legacy. In this sense Ngugi Wa Thiong'o said:

*To Africa, to their past, even to their skin colour, they (Caribbeans) were made to look in shame and discomfort. So that the West Indian intellectuals and writers in between the wars and even after may well have realized, as (C.L.R) James has said, 'that before they could begin to see themselves as a free and independent people they had to clear from their minds the stigma that anything African was inherently inferior and degraded'. Hence their political, literary and emotional involvement with Africa*

(Ngugi, 1972:82)

The same challenge of opposing the idea of historylessness, uprootment and the emphasize on European history in the Caribbean was affirmed in the "Haitian Indegenisme" and "New Negro" movements, with high emergence of 'black' Caribbean consciousness and assertion of their ethnic origins and culture. While, New Negro or Harlem Renaissance refers to the writers who established in the united states during 1920 and argued the necessity of recognizing the African origins of black Americans (Belinda Elizabeth Jack,1996), among these writers; Jean Tomes and the Jamaican writer Mc Kay Claude, Indigenisme opposed the imposition of North American culture and tradition on Haiti, and like negritude, it emphasized also the rich

heritage of black Haitians African origins and called for the re-evaluation of the African history and cultural tradition that tend to rank people according to colour or race (Kesteloot, 1999). Senghor (1971) argued that “far from seeing in one’s blackness inferiority, one accepts it; one lays claim to it with pride; one cultivates it lovingly”, in the same line Marcus Garvey (pan-Africanist leader) said, “Negroes, teach your children that they are direct descendants of the greatest and proudest race who ever peopled the earth”. In Post-colonialism, young (2001) focused that negritude is anti-colonial project that highlight the big awareness and pride of black people’s in Africa or diaspora.

### 2.4.3 Caribbean Poetry

The misdeeds and the bad practices sustained longer as a big sign perpetuated by the colonizers on the peoples of the Caribbean islands caused great psychological ruin, terrible traumas and high emotional damage which, on an unconscious level, has continued to exist through many generations and populations in the islands and it is reflected and seen today in a big sense of displacement, a strong faith in searching for authentic identity and is highly depicted in the realm of the literature of the region. But one can notice that poets unlike their fellow novelists rarely hold the responsibility or the big burden of tackling issues in their poems associated with the terrible atrocities and big sores of their history. Derek Walcott was one of those who suggests a powerful, different strategy and point of view on how Caribbean literature should be; a literature of one voice, one pain and one future. In this sense E.j. Chamberlin (1993) refers to this view by saying “Walcott has written a lot about how West Indian poets must find their own voice.....to transform their anxiety and anger into a new expression of what it is to be West Indian and into a new West Indian literature. Rejecting what he calls a literature of revenge written by descendants of slaves or a literature of remorse written by descendants of masters”. While Kamu Braithwaite (1981) on his turn has another different view, a vision that builds a shining future which can not be separated from their dark past as a big sign of debilitating history and

the existence into a fertile ground of dehumanization. He believes that Caribbean literature “must represent the central heritage of slavery shared by black West Indians”. Kamu believes strongly that blackness is sufficient image to depict the acute sense of dispossession and exploitation and is sufficient to make their future stand in the face of stubborn colonial heritage.

Between these two opposites’ opinions, the Caribbean poetry has always been overshadowed by Caribbean fiction which is expected to be more accessible and has a wider part and surface of readership. West Indian poets, as well as the novelists in Britain faced the same obstacles and gnaw. Therefore, they have had to fight and struggle longer for more recognition and integration in an attempt to find a small square in mainstream British literature since they faced the same tableau of racism, neglect and bad conditions. These poets were concerned highly and primarily with migrant experience, they raise issues of displacement and alienation. The poetry of New Diaspora burgeoned two main trends. The first trend included poetries that focus on the Caribbean past and what it held of long history of untold misery and bad memories. The main example of this poetry is characterized in David dabydeen’s collection of *Slave Song* (1984) and *Coolie Odyssey* (1988) where he best illustrates the discovery of his diasporic West Indian’s ancestry, later, he turned his direction to fiction in the 1990s. The second trend progressed between 1960’s and 1970’s ,it depicted the rise of the ‘dub poetry’ i.e. poetry spoken to a reggae rhythms , is highly characterized by its orality, through this poetry black poets reacted and opposed to the widespread domination of white writer’s oral poetry. Therefore, these poets can make their poems accessible, and heard in every angle by their audience through readings and performing in many places and clubs, these poets who decide to make their beautiful words and attractive rhythms touch all those who prefer to taste and smell the elegant expressions, they tried to produce works to be seen on the white page and read between lines. But, this was faced with a great wall of rocks and massive challenge since many publishers thought that the work would simply not “stand up correctly” in print and books (kadija Sesay, 2005). Claude MC Kay, Louise Bennet, James Berry, John Agard and jane Binta are famous dub poets in Great Britain and the

West Indies. With the publication of his trilogy the Arrivants: A New World trilogy (1973), Brathwaite, too, participated in blooming significantly the beautiful expressions of poetry written in non-Standard English (7). One can trace that lot of works of this literary genre are characterized as being highly of political activism, criticize misery, deprivation and discrimination against black people. This genre of poetry and those who adapt it, use a literary form to criticize highly the problem of enslaving people's minds and body's through racism in the metropolis instead of liberating human's brains to feel, to donate and break the grim forecast of loneliness and alienation. These poems were usually written in Creole (a mixture of English and African dialects) or a form of West Indian English rather than English standard.

Moreover, the twentieth century witnessed a big variation in topics and themes, especially in its first half. The colonial oppression and the terrible history that held all meanings of marginalization, the massive mortality of slaves and the big sense of inferiority, paved the path to explore themes of slavery, colonialism, British superiority and racial prejudice. However, in the post-war period "the Caribbean ethnic poetry" started to progress and develop, it aimed at depicting the real image and the harsh conditions that limit the British ethnic minorities in Britain in invisible circles that prevent them to liberate their energy or to create a special room for their own, this perpetuated mental enslavement still degrade the Caribbean man in the lowest degree in the social ladder, putting him between the claws of racial prejudice and white discrimination. Consequently, these poets rise a big sense of challenge and courage in a hostile community that still believe in human's classification, on the basis of skin colour, but not on content. Their experience was an impetus to search their authentic identities and belonging to this society, which became a source of power of expressing their political activity and cultural heritage. The ethnic poem tried to capture the natural rhythm of speech and often depict their own experience.

The choice of language was a matter of identity, most of Caribbean poets who settled in Britain rejected standard British English; the choice of creole was to distinguish themselves from the white, language is considered as a social and cultural weapon that shattered the colonizers' illusions and dreams built in the colonized lands.

#### 2.4.4 Recovering the Hidden History

What makes the Caribbean writing very unique is the fact that it is born from the same womb of dispossession, migration, exile and nostalgia. Therefore, the whole Caribbean writers are held all together from the same background of sadness where they share the pain of historylessness, collective amnesia, oppression and the deep sense of colonial exploitation (Richardson, 1989). Consequently, Caribbean writing was and still be the voice of all the Caribbean man's traumas psychological ruins, becoming a skillful process of a big response to colonial legacies, prejudice, assimilation, narrating a strong story of one's misery, big umbrella that asserts one's Caribbean-ness. Douglas Midgett (1977) argues; "[t]he very act of writing in societies that are as profoundly colonial as the West Indies is initially an assertion of identity".

On their turn, women writers in the West Indies were not isolated from that pain that gather all the Caribbean in the same area of challenge and resistance. Though women's writing didn't reach its peak in the nineteenth century as well as man, Caribbean women writers checked many ways and strategies for self-redefinition and representation, they never hesitate to give voice to their debilitating history and check an authentic identity. According to Merle Collins;

*Caribbean women's writing tends to be concerned with all that has gone into the shaping of Caribbean societies: colonization and its consequences, the effects of slavery and indenture, the meaning or meaninglessness. There is a concern with formation-formation of the society, formation of the individual and with reclaiming and devoicing. This devoicing means [...] a revealing of the stories told by mothers, aunt, godmothers, tanties, nenens, so that many of the themes overlap with the themes explored by male Caribbean writers.*

(Collins, 1996:8)

Though the Caribbean was an angle for people of different regions, cultures, religious, languages, it was the shared history and past that put the various forms and shapes in the same pot of Caribbean literature. Kamau Braithwaite argues that:

*The most significant feature of West Indian life and imagination since Emancipation had been its sense of rootlessness, of not belonging to the landscape; dissociation, in fact, of art from act of living.*

(Braithwaite, 1996:344)

When speaking of Caribbean female authors texts during the nineteenth century, it seems that women writers were completely absent from the realm of literature and the literary history of expressions. The best item that summarizes the echoes of the silenced graves was that of Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido (1994) who use the term “voicelessness” to express the scarcity and the paucity of novels by Caribbean women writers who maintain their marginalization and exclusion from a literary history rich of male’s writings. By voicelessness, they mean that in a very specific and significant Caribbean history when women writers have to stand strongly, powerfully with a big challenge on the stage, women’s find their path blocked with big rocks of oral inherited tradition. Women’s attitudes, positions and strong weapons to deconstruct a colonial legacy and a cultural heritage full of inherited colonial chaos seem to be between death and mortal diseases. Women’s texts that should express what were inside their hearts towards very specific and important issues such as slavery, colonization identity, social and cultural issues, were shrouded in the dust of lost years of expressions.

The process of writing in the West Indies during the nineteenth century was an impulsion that did not exist for many ordinary women writers who grow on inherited oral traditions that were the main obstacle to start writing. Moreover, most West Indian women writers during colonization have finished their studies at an early age in their lives, what means that they lack the literary capacities and skills to write (Anselm and Juliet, 1990).

Even in the twentieth century, women’s writing was still in its infancy and need lot of neatness and consistency, because when reading Kenneth Ramchand’s biography of Caribbean writers between 1903 and 1967, one may be shocked that there were only six female authors who stood on the stage to embody the women

presence in the history of literature and broke the long years of silence and a hidden history that is still wrapped in obscurity and poverty of expressions. According to Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory (1994), most women who were active are of African descent and were storytellers. They refer to the big desire of women who wanted to write, to break their strong messages against the colonizer in their own words and language in a way that can't be done by men. But, they were soon impinged by massive barriers that posit them in forgotten scenes without any location.

While the Caribbean novelist George Lamming declared that he was waiting deeply for a woman in the Caribbean to write a novel which will state the position of the Caribbean (8). Toni Morrison goes so far to explain what was behind the scarcity of the West Indian novel written by women. She says, "The lower classes did not need novels at that time because they had an art form already: they had songs and dances, and ceremony and gossip and celebration (9). On the other hand, David Dabydeen and Nana Wilson provide the following explanation:

*Very few women write for a living in the West Indies, and the paucity of writers is perhaps a good explanation for the absence of tradition of women's writing in the sense that exists or instance in Black American Literature.*

( Dabydeen and Wilson,1997:45)

Even those writers who choose to settle in Great Britain were surprised that their inherited tradition created a "cultural shock" in the new society since these unknown forms did not stand in the new society. West Indian women in diaspora found their efforts and energies ended and ceased during their hard journey to succeed with a small square in this hostile society. Therefore women find themselves between the anvil of this harsh struggle to find a small place in Britain and the hammer of early years of colonial legacy, oppression, and high exploitation. While the new society was expected to be the paradise where all their dreams should be realized, they were soon disappointed by a very high and a civilized society that still judges people not on their content, but on their skin's colour. It is only that during their stability in the new society, they started to recover their absorbed energies to launch their silence and



voice their recorded memories. However, recovering the hidden history and reconstructing the lost years found a new path when about fifty women participated in an international Conference at Wallesey Colledge in 1988. The booming years of women's writing started to grow on 1970; brave and Courageous women who empowered each other and free themselves from the lack of writing traditions and the misfortune that accompanied them during many years. Many women writers raise their consciousness and find new appropriate voices to challenge their traditions. Thus, the early novels of Caribbean women writers become more concerned with their colonial and post-colonial cultures.

Renu Juneja refers to the fact that Caribbean women's writing is very unique and distinct since women writers are highly interested on focusing on double colonization, exclusion, marginalization and intersecting gender with class and race. In this sense, Renu Juneja (1995) Says "writing by women shares Caribbean literature's interest in issues of race and colonialism, and in the emergence of a distinctive identity which is viewed as synthetic and hybrid, in opposition to imposed colonial norms, and rooted in the local folk culture".

As well as their male counterparts, West Indian women writers were deeply interested with themes of roots rootlessness, alienation and exile. While, the questions of asserting identity occupied the lion share, in this context, in her introduction "The Women, The Writers and Caribbean Society", Helena Pyne-Timothy claims that:

*Through their work [Caribbean women writers] have reclaimed their homeland are assisting in the assertion of identity, the infusion of meaning, and the transformation of society which art can accomplish. The Conference wishes to embrace and honor all Caribbean women writers, whatever their national origin or their domicile, so long as they were part of that vital recuperation in time and space dedicated to the assertion of a Caribbean unity and understanding.*

(Pyne-Timothy, 1998:5)

Caribbean women's writing, hence, it is about more than just asserting one's self and one's womanhood in the world of a male dominated society.

## 2.5 Conclusion

Slavery and colonialism represent a specific sign and a historical marker of the entire Caribbean islands. The arrival of Christopher Columbus on 1492 was followed by big geographical and cultural displacement of many ethnic groups who were brought subsequently from Africa, India, China and other places from the world. The legacy of slavery and colonialism put the new Caribbean man in a trauma of oppression, uprootment, homelessness, and exile. This harsh experience influenced highly the inhabitant's self-image since the Caribbean black man became very ashamed of his origins and skin's colour and covered in deep-seated sense of inferiority and lack of confidence because of the many brutal method and modes of slavery that coincided with racial discrimination, uprootment and dispossession.

The Caribbean writers hold many responsibilities about their history. Their primary commitment remains the search of identity and self-discovery. The Anglophone or even the Francophone Caribbean's writers highlight the power of language and the authority of pages and words as a tool of liberation and a weapon of deconstructing a big heritage of colonial legacy intensified by a colonial education and culture, this heritage makes the Caribbean man obsessed with false ideologies such as being satisfied that the colonizer is the supreme and perfect man, who would rescue him from many dilemmas that would complicate his life, these writers bear the heavy burden to create a positive and optimistic milieu, to heal the West Indian's pains and ills and to rewrite their history that was forged by the ghostly figure of the colonizers.

They give the hitherto silenced, marginalized and excluded groups a voice to challenge the sore of Columbus's feet that still unhealed and bring the Caribbean's existence into being.

Women writers also were big part of the shared history and legacy, since they were born from the same womb and background of dispossession and nostalgia, their assertion of Caribbean-ness becomes a question of self-consciousness, and recognition as they are part of vital recuperation of many national issues as well as men.

**Note to Chapter Two**

- 1- The largest Amerindian communities in the Caribbean live on the South American continent, particularly in the Guianas; Arwaks represent the majority of the indigenous population who have intermixed with creoles and lost much of their own culture and language (Lowenthal, 1972).
- 2- Christopher, Columbus. (1492). *Journal of the First Voyage* (*Diario del primer viaje*). Ed. BW, Ife. (1990).
- 3- The influence of the church in the British Caribbean as a big institution that represents the metropolis is referred to in different fictional texts from the late twentieth century. Many writers represent the British colonial presence in the Caribbean through the image of the Christian missionary who is responsible for evangelizing the locals and, in most cases, for simultaneously teaching them European cultural values.
- 4- In *The Sociology of Slavery*, Patterson (1967) provides a succinct analysis of the development of collective resistance to slavery in Barbados, Jamaica, etc. He compares between the planters and slaves in determining the revolutionary nature of slave resistance mentioned in many documentation.
- 5- The estimates for the exact number of Africans killed during The Transatlantic Slave Trade are varied; each publication has a different number.
- 6- It is mention in Edward Kmau, Brathwaite. (1973) *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy: Rights of passage, Islands and Masks*. For his critical engagement with the impact that black musical rhythms such as reggae, calypso and jazz have had on the development of dub and performance poetry.
- 7- As the titles suggest already, many critical texts such as Lilyan Kesteloot *histoire négro-africaine* (2001); and Belinda Elizabeth Jack, *Negritude and literary Criticism: The History and Theory of 'Negro-African' Literature in French* (1966) discuss African and Antillean writing together within the context of 'Negro-African' literature.

- 8- It is mention in Daryl Cumber, Dance. (1984). *New World Adams: Conversations with Contemporary West Indian Writers*
- 9- Toni Morrison is quoted from an interview with Mari Evans, in “‘Not a Story to Pass On’: Living Memory and the Slave Sublime”, by Paul Gilroy (1996) in *A Practical Reader in Contemporary Literary Theory*.

# **Chapter Three**

## **Between Colonial and Post-Colonial Oppression**

## **Chapter three: Between Colonial and Post-Colonial Oppression**

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### 3.1 Introduction

Colonialism has brought many colonized nations under the big umbrella of dispossession, exile and alienation. While the first form of colonialism was limited on the exploitation of lands, resources, people and wealth; the other form is not as transparent as the expansion of territories and greed.

Under the banner of civilizing the uncivilized, people's minds, bodies, cultures, languages and identities became between the hammer of the colonizer's evil deeds and the anvil of stubborn post-colonial heritage, especially with the high increase of immigrants, hybrid nations and the different cultural diversities. Thus, the question of identity became problematic and occupied the lion share by post-colonial writers who check many interrogating questions about the destiny in the former colonized countries and immigrants from these countries who find themselves face to face with diaspora and, therefore, with the big difficulty in constructing their identity.

The Indo-Trinidadian, Irish and Canadian writer Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Nights* sheds light on the unimagined drawbacks of colonialism in the Caribbean islands, especially Trinidad and the weight of suffering it carries for both men and women by reflecting it through each character in the novel. For Shani, colonialism is the knife that splits the post-colonized man and woman into very small parts in a united body.

In *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Shani Mootoo is eager to explore women's dire experience under a highly oppressive and patriarchal world where trauma and violence are situated in a wider context of psychological and physical oppression.

Through her narrative, Mootoo means to say a lot, not only by merely exploring the female harsh experience under the wall of colonial and post-colonial experience, but she stands powerfully on the stage and distinct ground to broach how the female can escape trauma and check an authentic identity where she locates herself.

This section, therefore, will be devoted to reflect the different avenues for students of literature to profit from the very deep concerns and issues launched through women's contribution to enrich this field of study.

### **3.2 Shani Mootoo's Philosophy in Reshaping Challenge**

Shani Mootoo either as a human being or as a writer was a victim to many obstacles, barricades and to a big ground full of thorns and obscurity. However, because of having a strong faith, personality and unimagined resistance and being the product of four cultures from different continents, she creates new source of energy, challenge and strength in imagining things in different ways and reshaping new destiny in the frame of sustained struggle.

#### **3.2.1 Between Life Barricades and Writing Barricades**

Shani Mootoo, is the writer who combines different cultures, diverse traditions and customs, long journey of shifting boundaries and extraordinary pot of talents. She was born in 1958 in Ireland and raised in Trinidad. Her father (Romes) and her mother (Indra) are Trinidadian of Indian origins. At an early age of her life; the age of 19, she moved to Canada in an attempt to progress her new career as a visual artist. Very skilled, active and talented multimedia artist, painter, poet and video maker. Her videos are very popular and have been shown at the level of many film festivals. What makes her life distinct from the other writers is the fact of being a victim of sexual abuse at the hands of her uncle at an early age of her life. The pettiest is that Mootoo was warned by her grandmother not to tell those words again to anyone else because of traditions that confine such issues as taboo. Mootoo's experience of sexual abuse prompted her to a new and distinct world of pictures and painting that is safer than words according to her. The fact of acknowledging and naming her experience of abuse pushes her to return to the big world of expressions and words, giving birth to



her writing to stand and be engraved on pages, launching her first collection of short stories *Out on Main Street*, published in 1993.

Mootoo is from a family of high status in terms of education, very professional background characterizes Mootoo's family; her father was a doctor and a high politician. Mootoo finishes her Bachelor of Fine Arts in visual art in Canada at the University of Waterloo, Ontario in 1980, Shani held also the responsibility of teaching high school English literature and art in Trinidad. However, her arrival and stay in Canada, was an impetus to gain more experience and maturity, therefore, at an age of 25, she studied for one year at Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design.

After Mootoo was asked many times by many people about the reason of choosing to write fiction rather than the other genres of literature, her answer was completely different, explained in academic way, by choosing this question to be the main topic and title of her Guelph master's thesis in English. The thesis which was entitled "writing fiction, reading theory: A self-reflective exploration of how and why I Write Fiction and the Role of Politics and Theory Therein", was a satisfying answer, big response and a great opportunity to reflect on what her fiction is and why she is writing it.

Mootoo is the author of four novels; one long-listed and one short-listed for the Giller Prize, in addition to her short stories. The experience of being migrant and immigrant is highly implemented and appears clearly in Shani Mootoo's work as a central theme where she exposes the big difficulty and the wide complexity and shifting borders of a hybrid identity. Shani Mootoo is the product of four cultures: Irish, Indian, Trinidadian and Canadian, each culture means and adds a lot to her, this is what she said about her experience of migration:

*[...w] e is watered-down Indians-we ain't good grade A Indians. [...] I used to think I was a Hindu par excellence until I come up here [Canada] and see real flesh and blood and blood Indian from India. Up here, I learning 'bout all kind a custom and food and music and clothes dat we never see or hear' bout in good ole Trinidad. Is de next best thing to going to India, in truth, oui!*

(Mootoo, 1993:45-47)

She adds:

*I wondered what wisdom it was (if that is what it was) that kept people from committing crimes right there and then. A familiar burning touched my knuckles, but this time it was from too tight a fist wanting to impact with history. An urgent rage buzzed around my head and ears like a swarm of crazed mosquitoes. I unfisted my hands and flayed them round my head. Brushing away the swarming past and present*

(Mootoo, 1993:121)

Writing for Mootoo is not merely to narrate stories, infuse characters but writing is a big process of discovery and heavy messages. In this sense she says: “I usually start with some small thing, sometimes an image, sometimes a phrase, I do this kind of work so much that I am constantly unconsciously creating, but what usually leads to a book is an image that grips me. I keep thinking about it ... I want to know what led up to it” (Mootoo, 2000). In an interview with Lynda Hall, Shani Mootoo describes her pleasure gained through the process of writing that is another world for her as follows:

*The first delight in writing, for me, is the invention of stories, situations, events, where I can impose my own vision of how things would be in my ideal world. My ideal world is not void of the lower states of existence that is of anger, hellishness, hatred, greed, etcetera. But in my ideal world these states are out-smarted, or given the slip by good, truth, beauty and innocence. Writing itself is a way of giving the slip to the traumatic aspects of my own life-experience .It is a way of re-ordering a world in which many aspects of my own self have been denied or injured.*

(Mootoo, 2000:110)

Writing for Mootoo is a question of how to invent, create and rewrite without being shy when being in uncomfortable position, Mootoo refuses to be a driven person or agenda or a fighter who combats only for specific goals, but she finds more comfort in uncomfortable issues, Therefore, inventing new things that are hidden in this world is a big and sacred responsibility to be held for Mootoo. In this context, she says:

*I am interested in fixing things and making them beautiful. Suddenly I can see the possibilities in how you can use words and I get trapped in that. I can see the possibilities of fixing the landscape that no longer belongs to me but it is my landscape and I am so surprised when I go back to Trinidad since the landscape has changed so much. I can fix it and I fall into the trap of eroticizing my own landscape.*

(Mootoo, 2000:110)

Mootoo's life during her childhood was highly wrapped in pain, sexual abuse and compulsory silence. A trauma of sexual abuse kept her in a big world of words abandonment, it suppressed Mootoo's smile to appear and filled her infancy with a big cloud of obscurity. Mootoo through her piece of writing; *Cereus Blooms at Night* depicted this harsh scene of sexual abuse and what it held from heavy pain and horror on the child's psyche, this terrible situation may be engraved in once memory until his adulthood as it appears in her life and novel. Mootoo says:

*It is true that when I was a child, not yet five years old, I attempted to tell my grandmother about the family friend who was sexually abusing me .She did hush me, no doubt because of her own panic and inability to deal with it, not to say such a thing again. In some ways the people of the town in my novel might be a mirroring of that experience with my grandmother... It was not until years later; when I was in my late twenties, that I was forced to come face to face with the demons of child sexual. It was then that I actually began to use those dreaded words to speak out what had happened, only to find that in more sympathetic situations, those same words were being heard, encouraged and believed.*

(Mootoo, 2000:109)

In addition to her sexual abuse that prevents her from the world of expressions and words, Shani Mootoo as a contemporary lesbian writer refers to another kind of dilemma, which makes her and other writers who are in the same square and circle of lesbianism acclaimed for their first works only, she claims that even her parents were unhappy and very worried about some poems written by her to describe love between two women, or two men. She said that her parents were very afraid for how much risks

these themes might bring for her future. Mootoo explains how much barricade she faced because of her identification, she says:

*The early nineties was a kind of blessed time for many of us. We were making a lot of noise, the same sort of noise that was being made by disenfranchised artists for many years before, about how we and our works-our writing, visual arts, etc., weren't being treated equally, weren't being given equal space and time, weren't being judged with understanding of difference and uniqueness. We said-as it has been said by numerous activists before-that such insensitivities occurred because the gate-keepers were ill-equipped to understand and judge our works. There was a lot of word-wrestling between those of us banging on doors and those who had the power to open those doors or to keep them closed then.*

(Mootoo, 2000:114)

Most critics situate Shani Mootoo's work in the frame of queer literature. But Shani Mootoo herself contextualizes her writing in the field of post-colonialism. Most of her writings are about uncovering the stubborn stains of colonial heritage in the Caribbean (Trinidad), especially when it is linked to complex issues such as class, skin colour, and place of origin, sexuality and gender. Shani mootoo claims that:

*But in the place where our works were taken up, it was as it-regardless of who was behind the podium in the classroom-it was not quite conceivable that "we" could exist simply because we actually do exist. If we were invisible before, this sudden visibility, the surprise of our presence in the landscape, had to be given a context. "Post-colonial" was the frame put around us, that explained us, that permitted our rants about being invisible and being denied, left out, forgotten, side-stepped, ignored, etc. It is understandable that frame is needed. But that one-note frame, the frame of "Post-colonial".*

(Mootoo, 2000:115)

On the other hand, Mootoo can not be described only as a post-colonial writer but also as a postmodernist since her work is depicted in the frame of rejecting the "universals", especially that of maleness, purity and whiteness.

The beginning of her literary career was with the publication of a collection of short stories; “*Out on Main Street*” on 1993, *Cereus Blooms at Night* was the first full-length novel, published by Press Gang in 1996, this novel was a corner stone for Mootoo’s potential energy and impetus to publish other novels, *Cereus Blooms at Night* combines powerful subject matter with memorable characters and a unique background. A special debut for Mootoo took the international literary world by storm, established her as one of the most gifted new storytellers. *Cereus Blooms at Night* was shortlisted for the Giller Prize, and long listed for the Man Booker Prize. It has been published in fifteen countries and won the New England Book Sellers Award in 1998. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ShaniMootoo>). Her other novels are: *The Predicament of Or* (2001), *He Drown She in the Sea* (2005), *Valmiki’s Daughter* (2009) and her recent novel; *Moving forward Sideways like a Crab* (2014); long listed for the Giller Prize.

In *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Shani Mootoo combines diverse storytelling traditions in order to make very important issues of identity, gender, and violence very clear for us; moreover, she tries to crystallize people’s capacity to love despite the widespread sense of cruelty, disguise and despair.

In her paintings she refers to the silence imposed on upon her by her tormentor, a big silencing trauma that is sadly and grimly perpetuated by one of her family’s member and by society in general. Mootoo (1989) asserts that “Having been sexually abused as a child is a big part of my particular life experience-an experience I can talk about, write about and paint about without having to imagine and conjecture”.

In addition to writing and painting, Mootoo’s life is full of experiences and projects that enrich her cultural heritage. She is a Writer in Residence at the University of the West Indies, in 2008; West Indies University hosted a “symposium on the fictions of Shani Mootoo in the context of Caribbeans women’s writings. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shani\\_Mootoo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shani_Mootoo)). Thus, the places where Mootoo is located, the events that surround her, her feelings and emotions towards herself and others trace her hybrid identity and her ideology in viewing things differently.

### 3.2.2 Hybrid Identity

It seems that shani Mootoo is the product of four cultures that are the potential energy which influences Mootoo's personality and shapes a new path for her writing. India, Ireland, Trinidad and Canada are diverse melting pot of mixed religions, languages, customs and tradition that trace Mootoo's hybridity.

**India;** for instance is a country in South Asia. It is the seventh largest country by area and the most populous democracy in the world. India is divided into 26 states; each state has a distinct government which is determined by its own population (Kobayashi, 2004). Its culture is largely influenced by the British during their campaign of colonization (Rajesh, 2005). India is known as the birth of Hinduism and Buddhism, the third and fourth largest religions. While, Christians and Sikhs make up small percentage of the population, Hinduism is the predominant religion. Some Hindus perform daily rituals to their gods. Dharma is one aspect of Hinduism; it describes how a person should behave and what to do in his life (Rinehart, 2004). On the other hand, the caste system has been a big part of Hindu society and tradition since 1200 BCE (Shukla, 1997). It is related to occupations and is divided onto four different varnas; Brahmins, Ksatriyas, Vaisyas, Sudras and the "outcaste"; the untouchables (longhurst et al, 2008). The highest varna is Brahmin, it includes priests and teachers, Ksatriya includes landholders and warriors, Vaisya encompasses businessmen, while, Sudra represents workers. "Untouchables" are the oppressed, marginalized and excluded caste (Ibid). English is the major and administrative language, but there are fourteen official languages and very large number of other dialects spoken (Hillary Mark, 2004). Family is so important for the Indians; parents choose or groom for their children from a family from the same caste. Women's education and financial status is seemed to be the responsibility of their parents. Women's dowry during marriage is provided by her parents also.

**Ireland;** is an island in North West Europe in the North Atlantic Ocean. The island lies on the European continental shelf. Ireland's culture has been primarily Gaelic, Ireland has been highly influenced by its colonizers; Anglo-Norman, English and Scottish culture. Ireland was a prey for the Anglo-Norman's colonization during

the twelve century. However, the conquest of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17 century resulted in the appearance of the Anglo-Irish and scots Irish. Ireland saw a large scale of emigration, as a result; Irish culture has to a greater extent been influenced and modified by the Irish diaspora.

Ireland; is a place where religion and religious practices have always been taken in high esteem and great consideration. Christianity is the most widely practiced religion in Ireland. The majority of people are Roman Catholics, while there is a minority of Protestants who are gathered in Northern Ireland that constitute the majority of the population. On the other hand, the island of Ireland has made a great contribution to world literature in almost all its branches in both Irish and English languages. Among the names that engrave their touch in the world of writing; George Bernard, James Joyce, William Butler, Samuel Beckett and others. Ireland is widely known by its early history of visual arts, folk music and dance. However, during the twentieth century, the Irish society was attempting to add and make new touch of modernization to traditional Irish music, tending to look to Britain and United States as models of progress, therefore, Jazz; Rock and Roll became more popular. Irish and English are dominant languages in Ireland. But while English is the most widely spoken language, Irish represents the first language by some minorities in the island.

**Canada**; is located in the northern part of the continent of North America. Its Eastern and Western boundaries are the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean respectively. Canadians come from many different and diverse backgrounds. They speak different languages and adhere to many religions. Therefore, it is so difficult to define typical family, as Canada is known as being a multicultural country with a vast range of cultural influences that give birth to different range of customs and traditions. Therefore, Canada became the first nation in the world to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy (Kymlicka, 1998). Under this diversity, the Canadians are very proud and happy for this unique identity that is heavily and highly influenced by its colonizers; the French and the British. National cultures is very important in the construction of cultural power and highlighting the notion of nation, according to Hall(2000), answering “what is Canadian?” requires determining what is not

Canadian. Canada is a welcoming country for any religion and the right to freedom of religion is seen as a tool for protecting the religious minorities, although the majority of Canadians are Catholic or Protestant (Brown David, 2000). Multitudes of language are spoken in Canada. English and French are the preferred language. The other widely-non-official languages are Chinese, Italian, Spanish, Punjabi and Arabic.

**Trinidad**; is an archipelagic republic in the Southern Caribbean between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, northeast of Venezuela. Trinidad is the largest island in the southern Caribbean in terms of population, area and natural resources (Lloyd et al, 1993). It was named by Christopher Columbus on his third voyage to the New World. Trinidadians of African descent are called Negroes or “Black”, while Trinidadians of Indian descent are called “East Indian”

Trinidad is multilingual, with inhabitants speaking standard and nonstandard forms of English. It is highly defined by the ethnic and religious diversity. But Catholics were first religious groups in the country when the Roman Catholic Church was officially established. Trinidad was captured by the British who steeped the big tusks of slave trade to satisfy their needs and economic selfish, therefore, they brought many Africans to work on the island’s plantations. After the Abolition of this trade on 1834, Africans were replaced by the Indians to work on sugar cane plantations (Kale, 1998). The coming of new population brought many religious customs and festivals. The newly brought population of immigrants brought many religious customs and festivals. Consequently, one can say diaspora leads to further reconfiguration to Trinidad in terms of religion, customs and traditions.

Trinidadian literature has its roots in oral storytelling existed through African slaves and to the religious folk tales of the Indian indentured labour. However, the twentieth century witnessed the rise of many writers, novelists and poets who bear the heavy burden and big responsibility to suppress the highly inherited hostile milieu created by the colonizers. Literature has known great bloom thanks to many writers such as; C.L.R. James, V.S. Naipaul, Derek Walcott and Saint Lucian, they show more rootedness in nation, making it possible for us to see how national identities are big



part of Trinidadian writers to be checked and represented in authentic ways. The debilitating history was also a big sore for these writers to be healed.

From all these diverse and different backgrounds, Shani Mootoo absorbs her energy, strength and ideology, giving a chance to hybrid identity to be engraved, new vision in deconstructing a heavy colonial heritage and new philosophy in imagining and creating new modes of gender and sexuality to be shaped.

### 3.3 Hints from the Novel *Cereus Blooms at Night*

This is the story of *Cereus Blooms at Night* published in 1996, by the visual artist, painter and video maker, The Indo-Trinidadian, Irish, and Canadian Shani Mootoo.

Shani Mootoo's novel recounts the story of an old, aging and eccentric Mala Ramchandin. The story took place in the fictional town of the Paradise Alms which is an imaginary land of the real town of Trinidad (1) where Shani Mootoo lived as a child. *Cereus Blooms at Night* starts with a grim picture and figure of its central and protagonist female "Mala"; the daughter of Chandin Ramechandin and Sarah. Her father Chandin became the adopted son of the Reverend Thoroughly; a white man in exchange of his parent's conversion to Christianity.

Mala became characterized by her complete cognitive decline, loss of communication, language, social skills and connection. Her perception begins to differ radically from her usual social behaviour's acceptance. Mala becomes heavily kept under great physical and psychological constraint. In the novel, she is reconfigured by "an old crazy woman" (Mootoo, 8).

Her psychic breaks, retreats from all interpersonal relation, her isolation, madness and long silence sustain for a long time, and even her voice was caught simultaneously 'in-between' and beyond the opposition 'normal' and 'mad speech' (Schlichter, 2003). Therefore, she was sent at the Paradise Alms Nursing Home after the judge found her in unsuitable situation, unable to stand trial as Mala was suspected of

the murder of her father and she was in unfit psychiatric situation. Mala was treated with fear and disdain by the local residents of the town who believe that she is insane. Mala is cared exclusively by Tyler; a young transgendered nurse. Mala who is nervous around all other residents and workers at the home, she relaxes in Tyler's behavior.

Therefore, with deep empathy and complete kindness, he tries to record her story and gains her total confidence, Tyler patiently engages in actions that help the trust building between [himself and Mala] (Mootoo, 18). In such way, Tyler, being the primary narrator and witness of this old and mad woman. Tyler the feminine man cares for her and slowly gains her trust, "you must trust me" (Ibid, 22). Thus, the records of Mala's story by Tyler, was done in the purpose of it gaining attention of her long lost younger sister Asha. Tyler explains:

*[I]f we live in a space that is radically in question for us, that makes our barest speaking a problem to itself .... And alienation in that space will undercut our writing, make it recoil upon itself, become a problem to itself.*

(Mootoo, 1996:36)

The first sounds that Mala makes are perfect imitations of species of birds, frogs and crickets.

*Mala's companions were the garden's birds, insects, snails and reptiles. She and they and the abundant foliage gossiped among themselves. She listened intently. With an ear pressed to the ground she heard ant communities building, transporting food and breeding. She listened to worms coiling arduously from place to place. She knelt on the ground and whispered to the grass and other young plants, encouraging them to grow, and then she listened as they stretched up to her. She did not intervene in nature's business. When it came time for one creature to succumb to another, she retreated. Flora and fauna left her to her own devices and in return she left them to theirs.*

(Mootoo, 1996:127-28)

But Mala does not speak. Tyler's interest in Mala's situation in the sense that he tries continuously to understand the social circumstances perpetuating Mala's psyche and her alienated position from John Hector; the gardener of the Paradise Alms House where Mala now resides:

*[S]ince I growing up I hearing bout she. When I was a young fellow my pappy used to threaten that it didn't behave myself he would take me and drop me in shipyard and leave there [...] plenty people use to go and harass the lady [...] Children used to go and pelt she and pelt she mango and come back frighten-frighten but still excited that they break a window or sling-shot a bird.*

(Mootoo, 1996:73)

Tyler offers the readers with an important reminder of the complex nature of the individual in the case of responses to harsh traumas by saying:

*I wonder at how many of us, feeling unsafe and unprotected, either ends up running far away from everything we know love, or staying and simply going mad. I have decided today that neither option is more or less noble than the other. They are merely different ways of coping, and we each must cope as best we can.*

(Mootoo, 1996: 97)

Mala's father "Chandin" falls madly in love with Lavinia, the daughter of the Reverend and, therefore, his "sister". In order to gain her love, he tries to forget completely his Indian behavior as Chandin's family came to the town during the period of slavery and colonialism. Chandin becomes as the British gentleman, starting to mimic the Reverend in a complete sense till the denial of his background. Chandin is paid some respect because of his British Christian education:

*While many shunned him there were those who took pity, for he was once the much respected teacher of the Gospel, and such a man would take to the bottle and to his own child, they reasoned, only if he suffered some madness. And, they further reasoned, what man would not suffer a rage akin to insanity if his own wife, with a devilish mind of her own, left her own husband and children. Whether they disliked him or tolerated his existence, to everyone Chandin was Sir.*

(Mootoo, 1996:195)

Unfortunately, the respect he is paid by people, is completely unrecognized by Lavinia who does not see him as a person to be associated with or as an object of love and desire. Lavinia as a white woman still sees Chandin as black slave Indian despite his cover that is full of Western values, English language and his sacred job of spreading Christianity among the Indians. Under this circumstance; Chandin becomes

with broken heart, deep sense of inferiority and big disappointment. Chandin decides to marry the Lantanacamaran Sarah; however, he sheds his learned behavior:

*His body began to accede to its inherited nature. A faint echo of his father's curvature developed, all the more evident as he shed Watlandish fashion and fell into dressing like an overseer*

(Mootoo, 1996:49)

Chandin's British stamps, Western uniform and European values sustain even with his marriage with the Lantanacamaran girl, especially when Lavinia visited Sarah, he continued to show his "Europeanism":

*He began to dress impeccably, to speak with the accent and strut with the airs of the Wetlanders he once again seemed to so admire.*

(Mootoo, 1996:51)

Sarah gave birth to two daughters' pohpoh (Mala) and Asha. At the meantime, Lavinia had turned to the Paradise Alms after her leaving for the Shivering Northern Wetlands. Lavinia visited Sarah very often until they were caught by pohpoh (Mala) in a moment of intimacy. The same unexpected scene was discovered and noticed by Chandin. Therefore, Sarah left her two children and eloped with Lavinia to love each other freely.

After the spread of the news in the area, Chandin's life was turned to a big hell; he gave up his religion, his God and starts to drink heavily. Chandin's big disappointment resulted from his wife treachery, was turned into a big sexual abuse towards his two daughters, especially his eldest Mala, "one night he turned his back to Asha, and in a fitful nightmarish sleep, mistook Pohpoh for Sarah" (Ibid, 65). However, this mistake was soon turned to reality when he started calling one of his daughters every night, this sexual abuse was continuous; "when he gets up and takes Pohpoh by strong force, breathing heavily like a mad dog" (Ibid, 66). This unimagined scene of rape was done in complete silence and without any spread of news in the community as it is a big part of taboo.

Mala's sacrifices in her dark world continue when she saves her sister from abuse and offers herself to her father, "As it were nothing at all" (Ibid, 67).

While Asha chooses to escape abroad, Mala stays in the dark world of rape. Mala's abandonment to her mother and continuous rape was filled with a childhood friend called Otoh, a man with female born (Ambrosia) and his father Ambrose as admirer. Chandin's discovery to his daughter Mala in romantic affair with Ambrose was by raping her in unimagined scenes of horrific violence.

At the end, Mala killed her father as a revenge of her childhood's bad memories that were full of sexual abuse and oppressive tyranny. At that time, she regained a big sense of selfhood as she killed her oppressor.

*Eventually Mala all but rid herself of words. The wings of gull flapping through the air titillated her soul and awakened her toes and knobby knees, the palms of her withered hands, deep inside her womb, her vagina, lungs, stomach and heart. Every muscle of her body swelled, tingled, cringed or went numb in response to her surroundings-every fibre was sensitized in a way that words were unable to match or enhance.*

(Mootoo, 1996:126-27)

The police arrested Mala for a court visit after the discovery of his corpse, which continues to rot for decades.

### **3.4 Lantancamara and Not Another Place**

Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night* requires readers to acknowledge Indo-Trinidadian histories which are a big part of Caribbean history, a history of colonialism and slavery. Mootoo's novel acknowledge her readers about the role of the Indian indentured labour on Caribbean sugar plantations; precisely the period between 1837 and 1917 which represents the end of legalized slavery that is built in a wider context on the exploitation of Africans slaves and its substitution later with the Indians who were approximately 430,000 men and women brought to the British Caribbean (Kale, 1998). Therefore, Mala's Ramchandin's parents, Chandin and Sarah descend from indentured labors family, brought from India to Trinidad to cover the shortage of African slaves and as an economic solution at the end of legalized slavery (May

Vivian, 2006). In this respect, Alexander Jacui explains for us how the Indians were brought to Trinidad by saying:

*As Trinidadians we did not all come on the same ship as the national (ist) myth held. Some of us, Indian, had been captured/brought under indenture to work on plantations evacuated after the “end” of slavery, with the broken promise of return to Calcutta, Bombay, Madras. A colonial betrayal pushed under the surface, constantly testing Indian loyalty to Trinidad, the home of forced adoption .... Some blacks captured/sold from a geography so vast the details would daunt memory and produce a forgetting so deep we had forgotten that we had forgotten. Missing memory.*

(Alexander, 2002:81)

Mootoo's setting for the novel is the imaginary island of Lantanacamara, which represents in reality Trinidad where Mootoo grew up. In a mystical light, Shani Mootoo represents the island of Lantanacamara which is an imaginary place that misses a geographical map. Therefore, the setting and even the events of this novel seem to be autobiographical. The choice of the setting was deliberately to depict what is happening on the third world especially Trinidad. Mary Condé (2001) suggests that “there is a deliberate haziness about [Cereus's] setting in time and as well as place”. He adds that the chosen setting fit the events of her novel. He says:

*Evasion of certainties in its simultaneous exploitation and subversion of various categories of belonging Trinidad, for example, is not the setting of the book, but Lantanacamara, which is a mythical version of Trinidad.*

(Condé, 2001:73)

Mary Condé refers to the utility of this imaginary and fictional setting, providing many readers that this deliberate strategy helps to remind identities and debilitating histories full of amnesia and exile in different way. He asserts that this vision is not shared only with Mootoo in reflecting her colonial past of Trinidad and her own experience as non-native Indian. But; it is shared by many other Caribbean women's writers;

*Like Bernda Flanagan's Santabella in You Alone Are Dancing (1990). Just as Paule Mrshall's Triunion in Daughters (1992) is and is not Barbados and Merle Collins's Paz in the Colour of Forgetting (1995) is and is not Grenada, so Lantanacamara subverts the categories of "real" and "imaginary".*

(Condé, 2001:64)

Mootoo's fictional island is a space without any specific location or geographical map, May M Vivian (2006) suggests that: "The fictional Lantanacamara is a place outside the terms of "real geographies and maps, spaces named by colonial cartographers". Therefore, this setting is thought to be useful and suitable, especially when uncovering shared histories of violence, trauma, exile and diasporic context.

The decision of Mootoo in creating an imaginary space is an important strategy to deconstruct the dominant discourse that depict or mirror the real world. May Vivian suggests that:

*Cereus has larger political implications and social meaning... creates an opportunity to reflect back upon the real to critique it, to push beyond what is already known, usually perceived.*

(May Vivian, 2006:108)

In addition to Mootoo's own geographical history, Mootoo depicts her own story of sexual abuse at the hands of one of her family members, she creates the character of Mala and infuses her own experience of abandoning the spoken word, her silence and then turning to painting that she believes is safer than words. Similarly, in the novel Mala's trauma of sexual abuse renders her voiceless, unable to speak and communicate with others and then she turned to the garden and nature to escape her trauma. Therefore, the big similarities between Mootoo and Mala emphasize deeply the autobiographical touch in the novel.

### 3.5 Shared Queerness, Colonialism and Alienation

Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night* (1996) creates many characters who are struggling with their existence in an attempt to understand their selfhood from the

debut of the novel till the end. Shani Mootoo's characters in *Cereus Blooms at Night* inhabit and exist in both the center and the margins of her piece of writing.

Mala; the protagonist of her narrative, very old, mad woman, suspected of the murder of her father, Tyler the narrator, a post-colonial sexual hybrid, native to Lantanacamara, of African origins, sought his education in Britain where his "perversions" were invisible. Tyler, is biologically male, a feminine male, who has sexual affinity for men and engages in cross-dressing. Tyler shares with Mala a kind of sexual hybridity that draws him towards her (2). What makes both Mala and her story's narrator Tyler seen from the same angle and frame by everyone who reads the novel, is their shared queerness, colonialism, dispossession, alienation, displacement and big sense of unbelonging.

According to Caral Ann Howells (2003), Tyler and Mala share the position of marginality accompanied by their sexual deviancy due to; "the binary structures inherent in colonialism". The result of this ruling imperial is the "notion of community that this novel produces is correspondingly not of universal incorporation, authentic belonging, or ambivalent identification" (Grace Hong, 2006), Mala; the central character in the text, shares with Tyler a big sense of marginalization and exclusion.

Both of them are rendered homeless in the beginning of the novel, what increases their self-inflection is the fact that both are rebuffed not only by the residents of the Paradise Alms House where Mala is supposed to be helped from her harsh psychiatric state after the judge find her unfit to stand trial. But, this sense is shared by whole inhabitants of the Paradise town in Lantanacamara. As a big part of colonized people, they share the sense of dispossession in their native soil. Mala the central character of Shani Mootoo's novel, is rendered at the margin, unable to speak, to move, left voiceless, but not altogether silent.

Mala is the victim of unimagined tableau and tragic trauma of sexual abuse at the hands of her father Chandin Ramchandin. She depicts literally the big sense of abandonment from different sides and angles. Firstly, she was abandoned by her careless mother who escapes with her love Lavinia. Secondly, she was abandoned by



her sister Asha who escapes abroad from her father's sexual abuse. In addition to the abandonment of her love Ambrose. Therefore, Mala's sexual abuse and abandonment put her at the heart of dispossession as colonized diasporic character. Shani Mootoo through the character of Mala depicts all painful suffering, oppressive tyrannies and the bitterest wounds that are inevitable destiny for the Caribbean woman who becomes so laden with the dark scenes of dehumanization, sadness, torture and tears.

While the novel begins with a menacing cloud of darkness in depicting Mala as an old lady, shrouded in a very complicated psychiatric state that obscured the sun of the Paradise; an ostensibly mad woman unfit to stand trial for the alleged murder of her father ;

*Figuratively difficult to 'place'. Scandalous rumors circulate about her past, and the facts concerning her life are unclear and mysterious, as Judge Bissey complains that 'he was not about to have an old woman, a crazy old woman, tried to his court based on a lot of words and no hard fast proof of anything'.*

(Mootoo, 1996:8)

Mala's childhood is wrapped in a pettiest grim forecast written by the stained hands and the mimic mind and body of her father. Mala is the heart of events when it comes to alienation, exile, marginalization and homelessness. Mala is doubly homeless, doubly marginalized and doubly colonized, what complicates her life and imprisoned her identity to be shaped and framed in highly increased crisis. Mala becomes fragmented into two halves, the old Mala and the child Pohpoh as a result of her perpetuated scenes of violence, rape and sexual abuse that turned her childhood into hell; writing is so tight here that is hard to imagine how a child is the victim of terrible traumas and forced isolation and society's criminal silence. Unimagined tableau of sexual oppression and violence steeped Mala in the peripheral edges, muted and silenced her literally by harsh systems that never look upon the child as a victim. Mala's womanhood is robbed from her at an early age of life:

*Mala turned her face to the ground and cried. He kicked her in the thighs... Mala got up slowly. To her astonishment he did not hurry her. He did not utter a word. Every inch of her body pained. She licked her lip. She could tell it was swollen. She could feel that her eye was also swollen. Her pelvis and thighs hurt so much the slightest motion made her dizzy. As she made her way slowly to her room she noticed the cleaver was no longer by his bed.*

(Mootoo, 1996:223)

Mala's double colonization, firstly by the real imperial rule of the Northern Shivering land that brought her in difficult circumstance of displacement and diaspora, then, Mala was under a big colonial rule over her home, including incest, rape, and isolation from her brutal abusive father, who becomes a colonizer in his own right on a microcosmic level. This is what complicates her growth as child in a highly increased crisis; she is split into two halves: Mala the old lady and pohpoh the child. Mala's split is not only in terms of body and mind, but even her memory is torn into halves because of the traumatic experience inflicted itself upon her mind as a psych wound that is understood in its belatedness, her split makes her unable to even tell her story, but she relies on others such as Tyler to tell it to her.

Mala is doubly homeless; culturally and even personally. She becomes able to redefine what home means only after killing her father when she moves to the garden's spaces and locates them with her memories and imagination. Firstly, she does not occupy neither a position on the social ladder of the society of Lantanacamara, nor she seems to have a geographical space in this area. The concept of home becomes more complicated for Mala as from her first orientation by the judge to the Paradise Alms House, she was not welcomed by Sister; a matron at the Paradise Alms House, justifying her reaction by the absence of rooms for Mala as a mad woman, but the rooms are for the poor. Bachelard in the Poetics of Space defines the house as:

*“The human being’s first world where ‘[l]ife begins well, it begins enclosed, protected’. As the place where one’s first knowable experience occurs, the house should ideally function as a womb-like space that is protective and sheltering. And if one’s first experiences of home are of positive ‘well-being’, then those first memories will cultivate an endless store of reassuring and heartwarming daydreams.*

(Bachelard, 1969:7)

While it does not seem that this house defined by Bachelard is the one that Mala lived in or felt. Mala’s humanity, thus, is robbed by the absence of any place mapped for her during her existence. Her dislocation does not prevent her to stay in her house even in the darkest moment and the most inhumane periods of her life. While her mother and sister escape, she remains under the roof of sexual violence and the four walls of oppression, creating a space for her own in the garden rather than the walls of her confinement.

Tyler on the other hand, shows a big sense of diasporic otherness. He is Lantanacamaran and a new comer to the Paradise Alms House, Tyler designates his location, feels himself and states that he was, is and may be always “an outsider” (Mootoo, 6). Tyler starts working in the female dominant job of nursing with a big sense of alienation, the whole staff make big effort to put him in the periphery by mocking him in a “condescending tone”, showing big dissatisfaction about his appearance; “conveying the malice in their words” (Ibid, 15). Though his education, formal training abroad in the Shivering Northern lands, he finds himself unwelcomed, unacceptable and strange person in many sides, even at the level of nursing activities, the matron rarely assigns him important tasks, but he is confined in menial chores (Ibid, 6).

The sense of otherness becomes more complicated when it comes to understanding himself, his body, and identity. Tyler is lost between what is natural in him and his perversion. Tyler “pondered the gender and sex roles that seemed available to people and the rules that went with them” (Ibid, 47). Tyler’s hybridity complicates for him before the others to discover who really is; he is “not a man and not ever able to be a woman, suspended nameless in the Limbo state between

existence and nonexistence” (Ibid, 77). Like Mala, Tyler is alienated having no central space in the society of Lantanacalara, everyone sees him as strange, outsider and abnormal. Critic Grace Kungwon Hong states;

*Tyler situates himself and Miss Ramchandin as two marginalized figures whose “queerness” refers to sexual practices that transgress cultural codes of heterosexuality and masculinity, placing them outside social limits of acceptability”.*

(Grace Hong, 2006:96)

The big split lived by Mala in terms of body, sexuality and identity, is experienced by Tyler in terms of ignoring who he is; Tyler never sees himself as a person that embodies what a man should be. But, he views himself as a woman trapped and wrapped in man’s body. He feels ashamed that his “mammary glands were flat” and that his “man’s member mocked him” (Mootoo, 38).

The character of Mala, thus, reduces the sense of otherness, misunderstanding and big estrangement felt by Tyler since they share a common reception and neglect from the rest of the world.

Chandin in the novel shares the concept of marginalization with Tyler and Mala, but, while Mala and Tyler occupy the fringes and the periphery of their society, Chandin tries to be in a high position and embrace the center. Chandin in the novel represents “the colonized”, who is taken from his motherland in India, his ancestors and “freed from his Karmic destiny” (Ibid, 26). Chandin is invited by Reverend Thoroughly “to go and live in his own house” (Ibid, 30), in an early period of his infancy, Chandin is forcibly separated from his family, being adopted by the white family under the stamp of good education and a honest career as ‘Christian teacher and missionary’ (3). He is highly indoctrinated with Western teachings and ideals, viewing them as the appropriate behaviours and as an ideal example to be copied. May Vivian says that:

*He is a symbol of appropriate assimilation and conversion for other Indians in the labor camps and simultaneously a symbol of the (here to fore) heathen-like, tropical non Christian for his classmates.*

(May Vivian, 2006:112)

Therefore, Chandin shares a big misunderstanding for himself with Tyler, he finds himself doubly alienated; either from his parents' culture and the Western culture and even the religion of the Europeans "Christianity" though his big efforts to make this religion accessible for his people. Chandin's privileged upbringing was a kind of manipulation and a big treachery by the Reverend Thoroughly as a colonizer: "even before he entered the Reverend's seminary he was unwillingly helping to convert Indians to Christianity" (Mootoo, 29). The contention in this manipulation is that the colonizer assumes and holds a big parental instinct towards the colonized in attempt to attract him, assimilate him and lead him to the word of God. A new European model and strategy of colonization relegated Chandin to the periphery of the periphery; he is neither "Indian nor European", "he left immense distate for his background and the people in it" (Ibid: 31). The split of Chandin is not only in terms of his personality and identity but even in terms of his sexual desire, as he lusts after a European girl; the Reverend's daughter; Lavinia, and because of his inescapable darkness, he was completely refused. In the eye of the colonizer, the Other is never turned to the self; he "saw what he most feared, a short and darkly brown Indian, Lantanacamaran boy with blue-black hair" (Ibid: 14).

Though being a tool and weapon for the execution of the European project of colonization, Chandin was rejected because of his "blackness", which raises the big sense of racism and discrimination internalized by the Europeans. Chandin, thus, shares with Mala and Tyler the double alienation and otherness; he is alienated from his Indian heritage, moreover, he is separated from the Western family that adopted him. After the fact of being rejected, he occupies the position of the "colonizer"; he becomes alcoholic person, anti-Christian and transformed his house to a grim scene of sexual abuse to his daughters especially Mala. In this way, Chandin occupies the position of both the colonizer and the colonized;

*He threw her on the mattress of his sagging bed and ripped her dress off. She shut her eyes and cried out loudly. It is the first time since that very first time when she was a child that she felt so much pain. Chandin locked the bedroom door. He set the cleaver down by the bed. He raped her three more times that night. He made her stay in his bed. Next morning he got up as usual. He left the bed room door wide open, carried the cleaver into the kitchen, stepped over the broken furniture and glass and made his way out to the verandah. Mala got up slowly. To her astonishment he did not hurry. He did not utter word. Every inch of her body pained.*

(Mootoo, 1996:223)

Otoh is another character in the novel, he is anatomically female called Ambrosia, but he possesses the out makers of masculinity, his perversion is similar to Tyler, his parents; “hardly noticed that their daughter was transforming herself into their son” a trans-formation that “was flawless” (Ibid, 109-110).

Both Tyler and Otoh are a clear and apparent example of sexual and gender identity that is highly against the social norms and constructs. While Tyler possesses the out makers of femininity, Otoh possesses the out makers of masculinity. They share with each other a sexual relation that is based on respect and affection, Mootoo, associates both Tyler and Otoh with Mala. Mala and Tyler are related with their “shared queerness” (Ibid, 48), while Otoh and Mala because of shared ‘secrets’ (Ibid, 124).

Mala acts as an ambivalent environment where both Tyler and Otoh can discover who they are and express their real identities that they were shame to reflect in front of the others.

### **3.6 A Reiterated Colonial Oppression**

Reading a novel without themes leads the reader to be lost in a big frame of misunderstanding and annoyance. Therefore, a writer should be conscious in the themes he/she addresses since the piece of writing is at the end a precise message to be understood and /or applied.

The novel *Cereus Blooms at Night* is narrated in exceptional way, being narrated by more than one voice of her characters, using flashback technique. The novel deals with different themes in poetic language, deep sense of feeling, artistic manner and extraordinary imagination. Among the themes treated; identity fragmentation because of many harsh traumas, ambiguity in once gender and sexual identity and psyche colonization through religion and colonial values.

### 3.6.1 Trauma that Fragments, Cereus that heals

In *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Shani Mootoo chooses the imaginary island of Lantanacamara as a place for her bleeding ink, shifting between reality and imagination in an attempt to focus on the traumatic impact revealing what aggression and violence has had on many societies such as the Caribbean community. This technique and stylistics device is an attempt from her to subvert and deconstruct the social boundaries imposed in her piece of writing. Mootoo on the other hand, transfers the story of fragmented Caribbean identity. Therefore, she combines of “fact” and “fiction” to address post-colonial countries’ dilemmas and taboos like domestic violence which is still establishing itself on the throne of the Caribbean society.

Through the combination of what is real and imaginary and through her continuous allusion, Mootoo transmits many issues and questions many social, cultural and ethnic categories, she emphasizes that the idea of violence, rape and abjection are different forms of oppression and widely regarded as a legacy rooted in the colonial era that is a fertile womb to burgeon its fetus in the neocolonial era when the so called “civilized” is supposed to disappear.

Mootoo herself is a contemporary post-colonial and post-modernist writer who shares the female experience of suffering, pain and deep silence, as the writer herself falls between the claws of violence and sexual abuse at the hands of her uncle. Therefore, Mootoo is not only attempting to write what she feels, but what she lives literally, being more conscious and aware about the difficulty for child to be wrapped in the shrouds of sexual abuse.

Mootoo transfers the story of Caribbean fragmented identity and lost beauty, thus, she uses all elements of violence, rape and crossing boundaries to focus on male violence that is inflicted upon a female colonized subject. In this sense, Mootoo is problematizing the colonial legacies as being internalized and reiterated by the locals themselves as an inherited poisoning that break the post-colonized even with the departure of the “evil” and its deeds.

Mootoo’s novel is set in the colonial period. Chandin aggression and domestic violence is highly related to his raising and upbringing out of the Lantanacamaran values, but by the immoral Western values and Christian principles that he idealizes in the European family of the Reverend Thoroughly. Chandin sustains his cruelty, foolishness and dirtiness to his own family, his blood and flesh; Mala and her daughter at all levels of human existence; physically, psychologically and mentally. This unimagined and unforgotten trauma is a dark tableau of the reminiscent of the master’s abuse to women slaves in the plantation and, especially in the Middle passage of the Transatlantic Slave Trade where women’s slaves suffer the bitterest of domestic violence from the whites. The trauma lived by Mala at the hands of her father is simply a copy of the trauma of the Middle Passage. Therefore, Mootoo puts two dark tableaux at the same level, the tableau of Caribbean historical invasion by colonialism and Mala’s sexual invasion by Chandin. Thus, Mootoo explores violence as it is the bitterest reality for the Othered women who are a big part of the Caribbean society and who are still struggling for the pursuit of liberation to breathe the given air freely in a world that still believes in the equality of womanhood with marginality and exclusion.

Donatien Patricia (2008) says that, “Shani Mootoo is one of the most unsettling of the new generation of Caribbean writers”. It is, thus, this reason what makes Mootoo locates her characters in fictional spaces of Lantanacamara. These characters share a big sense of fragmentation and split in two halves, and like her characters, the story itself is of fragmented structure. Mala’s fragmentation makes her unable to tell or narrate her story by herself, but it is recorded by Tyler. In this sense, Donatien Patricia (2008), says that the story is not voiced by Mala herself, but there is more than one



voice in attempt to “e [voke] individual dramas and the collective suffering endured by deported laboures during the colonial period of Trinidad” ( 94).

Mala’s struggle is a way to embody the struggle of her whole people as being torn halves, into small parts and shrouds by colonizing systems and forces. Domestic violence and rape at the hands of her father means a lot for her as an innocent child who in her earlier age should establish herself on the throne of happiness, smile and dreams. But, her circumstances lead into a further reconfiguration of childhood in a new cage of suffering, isolation, rape and violence in a fruitful period of her life. Donatien Patricia (2008), says that “Mala; becomes the body on which pain [historical and familiar] is inflicted” (97). After Mala kills her father in self-defense, Mala appears as crazy, mad woman, unable to control herself with highly disturbed memory. Metha Brinda (2004) explains this inevitable result of madness and loss of control by saying; “women mourn this loss of self in terms of a certain manifestation of madness [which is the], impasse confronting those whom cultural conditioning has deprived of the very means of protest....” The victim Mala attempts to oppose simultaneously the big wall that is so laden with aggression and violence in its real sense. From her liminal space, Mala tries to escape trauma. But Mala’s opposition leads her to the periphery; torn halves at the margin. Though Mala has grown between walls of sexual abuse that confines her childhood, humanity, womanhood and even leads to the erasure of her identity, Mala as a girl whose mother, sister and Boyfriend have abandoned and left her for the claws of her father, depicts many strategies to avoid trauma, but it is not the same strategy of her mother or her sister who find escape as refugee, neither like her father who becomes an easy prey in the mouth of the colonizer. Mala escapes trauma through moving to the garden as the house becomes the symbol of “the sleeping beauty and womanhood” where all her happiness and dreams are absorbed or bled, according to Donatien-yssa (2008), it is too “intimately related to the violated space of domesticity and to her raped body” (99).

The garden is the natural space where Mala’s power is relocated in her smallest fragmented parts of her body. Fragmentation for Mala is a means and a weapon to survive. She creates a special universe within the garden where violent abuse;

patriarchal house and colonial oppression are highly subverted and broken. Isabel Hoving (2005) explains what the significance of the garden is for Mala, he says that the garden is “a woman’s safe space, outside of the violent patriarchal sphere. An argument in favor of this interpretation might be found in Mala’s retreat from verbal and literary signifiers”. Mala stops speaking and chooses to be muted in her world that is full of insects, plants and animal sound:

*Eventually Mala all but rid herself of words. The wings of a gull flapping through the air titillated her soul and awakened her toes and knobby knees, the palms of her withered hands, deep inside her womb, her vagina, lungs, stomach and heart. Every muscle of her body swelled, tingled, cringed or went numb in response to her surroundings-every fibre was sensitized in a way that words were unable to match or enhance.*

(Mootoo, 1996:126-27)

Mala escapes trauma through the strategy of her own system of language. She avoids confrontation with the painful experience through big refusal to communication and through a big flight to an imaginary built world through her own construction. Bessel Van der Kolk et al (1987) describes, “the traumatized individual (can be) left in a state of ‘speechless terror’ in which words fail to describe what has happened”.

Mala is turned to a voiceless state and develops a distinct form of “language”; it is similar to the child pre-linguistic babble gesture and signs of language that marks the child development to communication until he arrives to the stage of speaking clearly. Warnock argues that:

*The victim is silenced not only because the traumatic experience cannot be conceptualized but also because of the familial, social, and cultural circumstances surrounding the circumstances surrounding the abuse, as well as the damage done to the individual’s sense of self.*

(Warnock, 2007:273)

This kind of communication that is characterized by non-verbal language developed by Mala is called by Julia Kristiva; the semiotics chora, according to her the chora is:

*An essentially mobile and extremely provisional articulation constituted by movements and their ephemeral stases. We differentiate this uncertain and indeterminate articulation from a disposition that already depends on representation.*

(Kristiva, 1984:2)

Mala's new constructed form of language (chora) **(4)** situates her neither in the society of Lantanacamara that is a copy of the colonial society, neither in her disrupting family that is another copy of the colonial practices. In this way, Mala resists her colonial violence expressed in the form of physical aggression, psychological torture and pain. Therefore, she claims her withdrawal from her society that is reiteration of imperial oppression, and from the colonizer and its language. This is not enough for Mala, Mala tries through her double life (the child Pohpoh and the adult Mala) to separate herself during her adulthood from the sexually abused part of her body **(5)**. Mala changes the name of her childhood (Pohpoh) that is the name of her father. Moreover, she tries to find a refugee at the heart of her boyfriend Ambrose. A double life in Mala's adolescence, so laden with her dual personality. Big attempts, thus, from her to be detached from the violated and dark part of her life. Even after she arrives at the nursing home, Mala continues her silence and mute communication. The withdrawal of Mala from doctors and nurses is as a big reaction from her to their adoption to the colonial culture that Paradise Alms House is running accordingly, like Tyler who received his education abroad, doctors and nurses also, have been trained out the society of Lantanacamara i.e. in the metropolis. Inside the Paradise Alms House, a form of colonization seems to be similar to that of Chandin's mimicry, implementation of English standard and idealizing the Western values. Therefore, the legacy of colonialism has touched every corner and angle in the Lantanacamaran society.

Mala's detach of communication and her nonverbal language shapes and forms a new way and a strong strategy of feminist challenge and resistance to phallogentric language **(6)**. Her non-verbal language at the nursing house is not only a kind of rebellion against doctors and nurses who adapt the colonial moral values, but, it is a rebellion against a colonial cultural invasion that embeds its roots easily in the society

of Lantanacamara. She does not interact even with patients; “They quickly lost interest in this new resident though she was seemed to live in a world that did not include them” (Mootoo, 123). Mala accepts to speak with only one person; Tyler because of their shared queerness, alienation and big sense of dispossession. While Tyler finds Mala as a refugee to claim his identity, Mala finds Tyler the voice through which her story can be narrated. Tyler says:

*To everyone else, Miss Ramchadin appeared to have a limited vocabulary or at least to have become too simple-minded to do more than imitate. However, I knew for a fact she was able to speak and had volumes of tales and thoughts in her head. She rambled under her breath all day and all night, as long as she and I were alone.*

(Mootoo, 1996:99)

Mala represents the opposite side of her father who lacks the ability to fight back against the highly oppressive system of colonialism. Mala’s strength is located in her fragmented body, figuring the ways of surviving even in the most hard, criminal and inhumane circumstances, teaching all her readers a precious lesson of high values, therefore; damage has been done and time heals one’s wounds, according to Donatien Yssa (2008); the process of deconstructing silence or “Breaking the Kumbra” Should be embodied if strength is to be situated in fragmentation. For Mala, self-healing is in the invention of new type of language which seems to be located in the natural environment, this language is based on movements, sounds in nature, and visual language rather than the vocal expression.

Despite the house that imprisoned her between four walls of colonial oppression and patriarchy, through flora and fauna, Mala becomes into existence and integration into communication. Mala’s non-verbal communication, silence and choosing the garden as refugee is a kind of escaping trauma and retreating from oppressive colonial and mimic post-colonial society. Mala’s way of escape necessitates the need for change and finding solutions that emerge from the post-colonial mind and not arising from the colonizer’s heritage and strategies.

The novel ends with this sentence, “you are to her the premise of a cereus scented breeze on a Paradise night” (Mootoo, 249). This sentence launches the sense of hope

though trauma, sexual abuse and abandonment, when Mala escapes from her house to the garden, she waits for this night every year, when the Cereus Blooms:

*Close to midnight the buds had opened fully. They intensified their scent, steadily pumping it into the air, an urgent call to insects and bats to find and pollinate the flowers. One by one the moths came. They slid from cracks in the walls of Mala's house. They bored through and wriggled out from every moth-ridden enclave in the neighbourhood. They unbound themselves from sticky webs nestled in dents of rocks and from cocoons that dangled from leaves. They migrated in swarms from the lime tree in her yard to the wall of expectant cereus. The arrival of thousands of moths, already drunk from the smell alone, held Mala spellbound. The sound of a thousand pairs of flapping wings drowned out the screaming crickets and created a draft. Mala rubbed her arms for warmth. Crazy bats swooped by, crisscrossing each other's flight en route to suckle the blossoms. They disturbed the swarms of frantic moths. They brushed their hairy bodies against the blossoms to sample the syrupy, perfumed juices. Then, thirst and curiosity satisfied, they darted off. By two o'clock in the morning, every moth was thirstily lapping sweet nectar, bruising and yellowing its body against the large stamens that waved from the flowers. The smell in Mala's yard drenched the air and flowed across town. Neighbours in deep sleep stirred, suddenly restless. Some were pried wide awake but were soon pleasantly besotted by the perfume and swept back into deep sleep.*

*The moon lifted higher. Mala herself felt intoxicated and finally, deliriously tired. She must have dozed off because suddenly there was only a handful of moths' liting heavily and precariously in flight. She hadn't noticed the swarm leaving. She slumped in her chair. The scent was indeed more pleasant than the stink that usually from behind the wall.*

(Mootoo, 1996: 138)

So, hope lies in Mala's reactions, and since hope is a sort of feeling and of dreaming, permeates our lives and motivates them, it is, thus, Mala's dreams and her big surveillance of her second part, her self-childhood Pohpoh that her recovery is realized.

### 3.6.2 Psyche Colonization:

In *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Shani Mootoo emphasized big attention on the members of the Indian diaspora in the Caribbean community, their pain, madness, love, hatred, split, fragmentation and ambiguity in their sexual and gender identity.

The story of the Indo-Caribbean, thus, in the fictional island of Lantanacalara is a story of a big struggle of the displaced and dispossessed due to harsh and acute colonial oppression and even post-colonial inherited conditions that depict the same tableau of oppressive practices and violence. The diasporic members subjected to an acute sense of colonial oppression, suffer alienation, dispossession, internal and external violence.

Being a subject of colonial rule, in troubled space resulted in further reconfiguration of these characters by taking extreme forms; a colonized and abused who becomes a colonizer and abuser, split of the post-colonized subject in either his/her body and even the soul, and in between spaces. But inside this change and big transformation; there is a space for all forms of creatures; mad, queer or nervous.

Colonialism's oppressive practices and its effects on the Indo-Caribbean is represented clearly in Mala's father, Chandin Ramchandin, the indentured labour, who is "adopted" by the white missionary, Reverend Thoroughly. In the opening of the novel, it seems that religion is seemingly a symbol and the banner of colonization, when Chandin's parents must "convert" from Hinduism to Christianity for better education for Chandin. Chandin himself becomes alienated from himself due to Christianity as he is "freed from his Karmic destiny" (Ibid, 26), due to his English education, he becomes indoctrinated with Western teachings and ideals. Therefore, the Reverend shapes the identity of the young Chandin and uses him as a tool and an intelligent weapon of converting Indians into Christianity. The Reverend assumes a parental instinct that the colonizer adopts toward the colonized as a new European model of colonization. Then; he pulls him from the periphery to the center in order to lead him to a total assimilation.

The Reverend is seemed as benevolent figure, offering opportunities of learning and “civilizing” the natives, who are themselves immigrants as well as the British. Generally, the natives present praises to the Reverend who is clever in the creation of treacherous masks. This is what the natives usually think and say of the Reverend;

*Now, you see any schools set up for children, besides the Reverend's?  
... we looking after our own self, because nobody have time for us.  
Except the Reverend and his mission from the Shivering Northern  
Wetlands. All he want from us is that we convert to his religion.*

(Mootoo, 1996:28)

Chandin in this way occupies a space in between Indian and European, though he tries to free himself from his Indianess; “He felt immense distaste for his background and the people in it” (Ibid, 31). Chandin’s Western behaviour, social, cultural and Western ideal and European mannerism’s push him to forget his brown skin and turn his sexual desire towards Lavinia; the daughter of the Reverend. Though Chandin’s Western values, English language and Christianity, he is completely rebuffed and rejected by the Reverend and Lavinia to be her husband. A big chock, thus, for Chandin turned him to alcohol and the worst kind of sexual abuse towards his own members’ family; his blood and flesh; Mala and Asha. A big rejection, therefore, emphasized Chandin’s otherness and inescapable darkness. Frantz Fanon (1963) explains this point about the colonized in *The Wretched of the Earth*; colonialism uses extreme violence to keep the colonized oppressed, and when the oppressed subject reaches the limits of tolerance, he/she either explodes in revolt or implodes. This “nervous conditions” that is inevitable destiny of the post-colonial subject turned Chandin as an abused into an abuser. Chandin becomes as mad person who can not imagine that even the European values and Western ideals can not raise him in the same ladder and degree as well as the colonizer. Chandin’s psyche colonization has been embodied clearly from his first tutelage by the white missionary. Ngugi wathiong’s (1986) referred to this type of colonization by saying: “the bullet was the means of the physical subjugation [of the colonized]. Language was the means of spiritual subjugation”. Ngugi makes it clear for us that language is the bullet that confines the colonized spirit, soul and body in a closed circle imprisoned in one

thought, and one ideology limited in the idea that the European man is the superior, he is the most perfect one on the globe, this is what leads Chandin to copy and imitate the Reverend, adopt his values and westernize his Indianess. According to Homi Bhabha (2004); “he is almost the same but not quite”. In this respect, Chandin is neither Indian nor European, neither Hindu nor Christian, but in between. Chandin’s psyche turns from colonized to a colonizer and from abused to abuser. The ambiguity is embodied clearly when even his masculinity becomes defined in opposition to his daughters mistaking Mala as his wife Sarah. As Fanon (1963) observed that the neurotic colonized subject does not resist the oppressor but instead tries to become more like them.

Chandin’s psyche starts to shift not only in internalizing the values and the ideals of the colonizer, but he also starts to think that his external appearance will relegate him to the periphery and the margins. Though his privileged upbringing, Chandin as a colonized is often ranked to the fringes and peripheral spaces. Though the high superiority given to the colonizer by Chandin either by embracing his way of life, or thoughts, Chandin “was unsure of his place in this new household”, “He felt conspicuously lost” (Mootoo, 33). Therefore, though being adopted and raised by the Reverend as his ‘own child’ (Ibid, 30), he was never given the heed he was checking for many years and never becomes a part of the Thoroughly family. Converting, assimilation, mimicry were not enough for Chandin, but his psyche shifts towards thinking of Lavinia (the daughter of the Thoroughly) as a wife, what symbolizes his ruthless and silly desire to be related and united with a colonial family. But Chandin is “like the chandelier that hung low” (Ibid, 33). In this sense, Ashish Nandy (1983) claims that; “colonialism colonizes minds in addition to bodies and it releases force within the colonized societies to alter their cultural properties once and for all”.

Chandin’s “unnaturalness” is widely represented in raping his own daughters, especially Mala, in her turn, she does not escape abroad, but she stays under the mercy of her father’s psyche. This rape is the evil inherited in Chandin’s mind, while the first was considered as a mistake, Chandin’s big confusion of Mala as his wife is highly engraved by a European design; Chandin’s abuse for his daughter continues to be



inevitable evil for an innocent child; Chandin wakes up and takes Pohpoh by force “breathing heavily like a mad dog”. This is Chandin reaction in a moment of anger.

*I ever hurt you? I never before hurt you. You want to know what hurt is? Eh? Forgiveness? Mercy? I'll show you what hurt is. He pushed her to the sink and shoved her face down into the basin, pressing his chin into her back as he used both hands to pull up her dress. He yanked out his penis, hardened weapon-like by anger. He used his knees to pry her legs open and his feet to kick and keep them apart. With his large fat fingers he parted but tocks as she sobbed and whispered, “Have mercy, lord, I beg, I beg”. He rammed himself in and out of her. He reached around and squeezed her breasts, frantically pumping them to mimic the violent thrusting of his penis*

(Mootoo, 1996: 221-222)

His big powerlessness has to be affirmed through violent strength, therefore, he sustains to tyrannize and abuse his daughter Mala from her childhood until her adulthood when she names herself Mala. Unimagined scene, thus, depicts how humanity, childhood and womanhood are robbed and snatched from her owner in a reiterated colonial oppression, in this passage there is a depiction of the whole body parts; face, shine, hands, penis, legs, and breasts. No part of the body is considered a taboo because of Mootoo’s Canadian cultural background. While the penis here is represented as a tool and weapon for colonial bad practices, Mala’s breasts are the symbol of womanhood that Chandin thrust himself into her and destroy it the very moment Mala’s womanhood is awaited to appear. Writing is still for me easier than to imagine the potential of actualization. There is more:

*He pulled her up by the front of her dress and pushed her toward his bed room. He threw her on the mattress of his sagging bed and ripped her dress off. She shut her eye and cried out loudly. It was the first time when she was a child that she felt so much pain. Chandin locked the bedroom door. He set the cleaver down by the bed. He raped her three more times that night.*

(Mootoo, 1996:223)

After Mala has killed her father in self-defense, his corpse continues and sustains to rot for many decades. A strong magical realist metaphor, therefore, is introduced by Mootoo, signifies that even after the departure of the colonizer, colonialism in all its

forms of abuse, violence and oppression burgeons and continues in the very moment it is thought to disappear and being absent.

Chandin becomes the colonizer whose “dirtiness” is inevitable result of his evil actions and bad deeds, while Mala is not; innocent child that injustice and torture are highly inflicted upon her. Mala’s abandonment, abjection, and alienation are filled by an admirer called Ambrose. When her father caught her in a moment of intimacy. He raped his daughter in unimagined scene that represents colonial oppression in its real sense and literal apply; reiterated in domestic violence and rape.

Thus, Chandin’s oppression soars as a dark cloud that covers the sun of Mala and stops its rays to shine, to give light or even to sing a chant of childhood. In this way, Mala’s cloudy sun has robbed the permanent smile from the innocent heart of tolerance and benevolence to be portrayed in the Paradise.

### **3.6.3 “In-Between, Unnamed” Things in *Cereus Blooms at Night*:**

The fictional island of Lantacamara is a place where an utopic community of diasporic subjects heal their illness and engrave selfhood through coming into contact with each other through the recognition of their “shared queerness”. Lantacamara is not mapped by any geographical place, but it is highly mapped through homosexuality, sexual deviancy, and gender ambiguities.

Mala’s Indo-Caribbean mother Sarah flees the islands after she develops passionate relationship with Lavinia Thoroughly, very wealthy white woman. Sarah leaves her husband and two daughters; Mala and Asha in an attempt to be free with Lavinia to love one another.

The most unique and distinctive scene that steeped in gender and sexuality lines occurs in the characters of Tyler and Otoh. Otoh, whose “transformation” into a man is “flawless” (Ibid, 110). Tyler, a feminine male, expresses his attraction to men and his big love to feminine clothes. Otoh and Tyler love each other, in this sense, both Otoh and Tyler frame hybrid gender and even sexuality. Both of them represent a gender

that is difficult to define and discover “one being neither properly man nor woman but, some in-between, unnamed things”. In terms of their genitalia, they seem to have a heterosexual relationship, but they appear to be two gay men. Therefore, Mootoo’s definition for one’s personal sexuality and gender identity has totally a complex vision.

In this way, Mootoo is giving new comment on the nature of defining what male and female can be. The big destabilization of gender binary of male/female is accompanied according to Mootoo with an ambiguity of the two concepts of sexuality and homosexuality. Mootoo creates new modes and images of what sexuality can be, it is more ambiguous, fluid and complex than the suggested categories. Heather Smith says:

*Cereus Blooms at Night presents sexuality as a fluid from of identity and parallels sexual indeterminacy or outlaw sexuality with other forms of border-crossing identities.*

(Smith, 1990:147)

Mootoo suggests also that even the cultural differences between men and women are not exact and fixed standards, but are redefined and renegotiated, since the label of man/woman is flexible as that of heterosexual/homosexual.

Tyler on the other hand, offers a representation of transgressive gender roles when he offers us that he is the only male nurse in the dominant female job in the island of Lantanacamara.

Another transgression appears clearly when Tyler resists the idea that a man “ought to be strong and fearless and without need of protection” (Mootoo, 10). Tyler does not embody these characteristics as being an anatomically man.

Therefore, new identities are suggested not only “in between sexuality and homosexuality”, but also between the angles of man and woman, “in-betweeness”/ “unnamed” can be viewed as “non-existence” in the society of Lantanacamara, since Tyler is always seen as unfamiliar, strange, unnatural and abnormal. Both Tyler and Otoh are gathered by Mala who gives them the sense of belonging and provides them

with a high voice to claim their “unnamed and in-between” man/woman, heterosexual/homosexual identities. Teaching them that ambiguity is natural sign in one’s composition since it is an important part of people’s identity.

### 3.7 Conclusion

Through the imaginary island of Lantanacmara, Shani Mootoo deconstructs and breaks silence through post-colonial characters. Shani Mootoo pictures themes through the adventure of Mala and other characters by combining reality with imagination.

Post-colonial subjects depicted by Mootoo submit to harsh traumas, alienation and dispossession, they struggle, fight and resist, but fragmentation was inevitable result of psychological and physical ruin.

All the characters pictured by Shani Mootoo are alienated and excluded to the periphery and marginalized as “Other” by Western patriarchal and oppressive discourses. According to Homi Bhabha’s (1994) the Other is never separated and detached from the space of marginalization and exclusion and from this liminal space, he leads to the emerging of cultures and identities, therefore, the margin is never the flag of one “other” but the power of many Others and their cultural experience.

The post-colonial subject in *Cereus Blooms at Night* is given no square on the social ladder, no value and even no place is mapped for him/her either because of their gender, color, class and sexuality. Being marginalized, oppressed, relocated and alienated means nothing for Mootoo rather than fragmentation. Multiple traumas, abandonment, humiliation cause high break, fracture, big split and high fragmentation of one’s identity through challenging the sense of wholeness and one’s unity.

Caribbean woman on the other hand, is doubly colonized; firstly by male as the community rules oblige women to submit to their desires, demand and control. Secondly, by oppressive colonial ideologies and practices which are also reiterated by the locals. Women have been silenced, marginalized and split into parts by a colonial patriarchy and its residue in the post-colonial era.

Shani Mootoo depicts the trauma of sexual abuse as it is a reiteration of the same tableau drawn during the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Middle passage where masters used to rape brutally women's slaves.

Mootoo proves the power of the post-colonial woman as she represents the struggle of the whole Caribbean and proves its power to be located in her torn halves and the smallest fragmented parts of its body that shine strength, challenge and resistance by checking to find new space where she locates and situates an authentic identity rather than being an easy prey in the mouth of the colonizer.

Mootoo uses the natural space as a sort of refugee from trauma, a dream and big opportunity to re-build and re-born one's self. In this respect, Bell Hooks

Says:

*Home is that place which enables and promotes varied and ever changing perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference. One confronts and accepts dispersal, fragmentation as a part of the construction of a new world order that reveals more fully where we are, who we can become, an order that does not demand forgetting.*

(Hooks, 1990:205)

Therefore, Mootoo through her beautiful piece of writing challenges colonial and post-colonial patriarchy, insisting on the necessity of checking real solutions emerging from the post-colonized' minds, culture and land rather than applying what is dictated on them by colonial projects, plans and dreams in the colonized territories.

**Notes to Chapter Three**

- 1- The fictional island of Lantanacalara resembles the real island of Trinidad where Mootoo grew up.
- 2- The reader learns later that Mala is a victim of sexual incest, making her a sexual outsider and a victim of sexual patriarchy, much like Tyler.
- 3- It is mentioned in Condé, Mary. (2001) 'The Flight from Certainty in Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night*' In *Flight from Certainty: The Dilemma of Identity and Exile*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 63-70.
- 4- In *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984), Julia Kristeva explains that semiotic chora usually characterizes an early stage of a child's development can be compared to vocal or kinetic rhythm, in other words to gestures or sounds: the chora precedes and underlies figuration and thus specularisation, and is analogous only to vocal or kinetic rhythm.
- 5- During her youth Mala tries to detach herself from the sexually abused part of her personality, as depicted by Pohpoh, this step is an attempt to grow up like other adolescents. Mala changes the name of Pohpoh that her father nicknames her, into Mala, the name she wants to be called by her lover, Ambrose, Mala, therefore, aims to separate herself from the violated body.
- 6- The aspect of resistance is implied in Kristeva's notion of semiotic chora in so far as it is on the path of destruction, aggressivity, and death; Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*.

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The Indo-Trinidadian writer Shani Mootoo is a brave female voice devoted to voice post-colonial man and woman's issues; she breaks silence through many characters on the imaginary island of Lantanacamara.

She, through her work *Cereus Blooms at Night*, directs more attention on domestic violence as being a reiteration of colonial oppression in a wider context. She also calls attention to push woman's reaction against traumas that split the post-colonial subject into fragmented parts, to find an authentic space and relocates power in her fragmented parts to negotiate a real identity. Shani Mootoo through her piece of writing suggests that the Caribbean community had better think for real solutions that are not based on colonial thoughts and discourses, but it should emerge from the native Caribbean's mind to build a real post-colonial community through her characters.

On the other land, Shani Mootoo suggests that even the cultural differences between men and women are not exact or fixed standards, but they are redefined and renegotiated since the label of man/ woman is flexible as that of heterosexual and homosexual. Mootoo creates new modes and images of what sexuality or gender can be.

Chapter one the Politics of Resistance; deals with the definitions of theories and issues connected to the concepts of Post-colonialism and Feminism. In shedding light on post-colonialism, many scholars dispute the term as it implies a simple during and after chronology that can not be true since colonial projects and dreams have not been erased yet. Big difference was between the colonizer and the colonized in color, culture, religion, language and even the way of dress, while the colonized was labeled as primitive, savage, barbaric, and highly synonymous to the Other. Humanity, therefore, remained so distant dream that was largely obscured, or rarely covered up. The post-colonized was widely left to taste terrible pains and horrors or breathe the sense of criminality instead of freedom.

While freedom was thought to be brought by the colonizers on white ships under the big lie of "civilization", the colonized's physical liberty and mental autonomy were under the civilized's feet when strong and clear third space took place between pre and



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post tragedy, many problems of identity, culture, language and religion are still born from the same womb of colonialism that contaminate the purity of the post-colonized reality.

Post-colonial writers, therefore, act as representative, spokespersons and third world interlocutors, giving voice to those who have been traditionally silenced, broken, fractured and fragmented, in an attempt to liberate voices that have been longer wrapped in slavery, racism, violence, and the tyrannical and oppressive strictures of the past. Colonial projects have not been ceased through the expansion of territories and wealth. But, myriads of people were robbed from their culture, their language had been dismantled, their history had been forged and real identities had been splitted. Consequently, post-colonial writers soared highly the flag of challenge and resistance and addressed many issues of race; hybridity, language, identity and the big impact the colonial experience had had on the colonized country as whole.

Feminism on the other hand, as new faith, ideology and new politics appear to grant the oppressed and the Othered sex its rights and status. The revolt, thus, was against inevitable tormentor who was deemed as being superior, unique and the only one who can establish himself on the throne of knowledge, politics and science. One can notice that the relation of power has touched every sphere and area of human existence; wok, education, knowledge and politics.

While the post-colonized tasted pains and horrors of their colonizers, women tasted the horrors of misogynic societies of phallogocentric ideologies. Harsh struggle, stormy journey and smooth campaigns show how the path of feminists was not easy and how it was difficult to launch their cry against male systems that frame them in the circle of marginality and neglect. Through barricades and thorns, a new declared war was inevitable. However, the philosophy was not to declare war against man, but it was simply to understand the sense of humanity and how it should be shared between all sexes.

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Post-colonial Feminism refers to the abuses from more than one side. The colonial experience and its bad consequences, then, the indigenous patriarchal society that puts the post-colonial woman's liberty and freedom in the cages of neglect and devalues her status in the lowest degree in front of her white woman counterpart. Therefore, a common challenge is shared by both post-colonialism and feminism and a big relation is highly drawn between them in reflecting power and breaking all sorts of patriarchy. Post-colonial women's writings explode lines and words in the face of inevitable "Othering", marginality and alienation. These women fight for not to be seated in the margin of societies which deny the sense of humanity, justice and equality to be engraved as a title for their existence; therefore, they select to be the emblem for the pursuit of liberation and rights.

Post-colonial Feminism is a story of a long resistance, struggle and fight through language or war to negotiate and redefine what humanity is and what it should hold for its dreamers.

Chapter two; Between the Axes of History and Literature, is highly concerned with both the historical and the literary context which is the main basis and the stone corner of the selected novel: Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night*. The writer chooses Lantanacamara which is Indo-Trinidad in reality to design her story in the Caribbean though her multi-cultural background, thinking of this imaginary landscape as a suitable place to deconstruct colonial oppression. Mootoo on the other hand, embodies the history of her ancestors, i.e. the Indians who were brought to the Caribbean as an economic solution for the end of legalized slavery that was based hugely on exploiting brutally the Africans in the plantations of sugar. A debilitating history of the Caribbean was shaped by the ghostly figure of the big rivalry of the colonizing forces, resulted in the institution of slavery and slave trade that coupled with racial and cultural diversity, in a hostile milieu, where slaves experienced all sorts of uprootment and big dispossession. This unimagined experience leads to a deep sense of inferiority, amnesia, shame, exile, alienation, inevitable Othering and irremovable marginality. Therefore, various writers hold big responsibility, bear heavy

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burden and act as spokespersons to heal their ills, ruthless sores and stubborn stains to make their people aware of their endemic and create a positive milieu.

In chapter three; Between Colonial and Post-Colonial oppression, Shani Mootoo depicts how colonial violence, oppression and abuse are reiterated by the locals themselves in a brutal image of domestic violence. Mootoo's protagonist; Mala, suffers the abandonment of her mother, sister and boyfriend and the brutal sexual abuse of her father, unimagined trauma that splits Mala's body, spirit, soul and sexuality. Mala becomes as mad and crazy woman rendered to the margin, wrapped in the shrouds of dispossession and alienation. Mala as a character is a compound of two parts; Mala the adult and Pohpoh the child. Harsh trauma, therefore, fragments one's identity and memory, Mootoo situates it in a wider context of a reiterated colonial oppression.

In the novel, the Caribbean woman is doubly colonized, firstly, by the imperial power that assign her to the margin, without any value, shrouded in a big dilemma of diaspora. Secondly, being a big prey of colonial oppression of male patriarchy that confines her between the walls of rape, incest and domestic violence.

The novel's writer is highly interested in depicting many themes that refer to the Caribbean society, that's why Shani Mootoo transmits real messages through her novel she thought are noteworthy to be understood and applied literally, especially in checking real solutions for the third world and colonized countries rather than reiterating colonial ideas, ideologies and values.

This research work has presented a detailed analysis and described many concepts that burgeon from colonialism womb as a fetus that still grow in the post-colonial era, and touch every sphere, angle and area including both men and women. Several findings can be drawn from this research mainly:

- Colonialism has shaped the Caribbean as an empty territory that needs the stamps of the occupier.
- Colonialism has constructed the Caribbean as racially and culturally diverse nation in terms of language, culture, religion and tradition

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- The Western invasions were the main reason for the Caribbean man diaspora (either he was brought from his ancestral lands or migrate out of the Caribbean lands)
- These invasions were the stone corner for giving birth to a new kind of writing to be a weapon to liberate the Caribbean man from the inherited evil deeds.
- Caribbean women writers through language and words deconstruct what the Western has brought from civilization in their white ships.
- The departure of the colonizer is not enough for real freedom, but the colonial heritage is still form a big danger and risk in the post-colonized mind.
- The author depicts the whole Caribbean struggle through a female character; Mala, depicting how the reiterated colonial oppression breaks, splits and fragments one's identity. Then, she relocates power in the fragmented body of the female identity.
- Challenging trauma, escaping bad memories and checking real solution that is not inherited from colonial minds is the best way for best and real post-colonial communities.

Through writing one can express his feeling, experience and understanding. Shani Mootoo through an autobiographical touch infuses the character of Mala and pictures the scenes of sexual violence that were a big part of her life, resulted in extreme silence and escaping the world of communication to heal her sores and pains. A difficult circumstances that may every one encounter and experience. In comparing Shani Mootoo's female characters, one can notice that they resemble to some extent the Algerian /Magrebian or African women in its trauma, struggle and in locating strong power in their fragmentation.

The main contribution that my research work raises resides in the high consciousness and the big awareness that the post-colonial mind; man/woman should implement in building the basic pillars of their societies that are highly sinking in the colonial heritage which is still threatening these people though their recognition of how much danger this heritage has had on their bodies and minds; so if religion is widely related to the novel, what can be seen as the ultimate cause of its failure?

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- Mootoo, Shani, View (Canada, n.d.)
- Mootoo, Shani, The Wild Woman of the Woods (Canada, 1993)

### **Shani Mootoo's Visual art exhibitions and video screenings**

- Topographies, The Vancouver Art Galley, 1997
- Transculture, The Venice Bienneale, Venice, Italy, 1995
- The Museum of Modern Art, New York City, USA, 1994? 1995
- Queens Museum, New York, USA, 1995
- Solo Exhibition, The National Galley, Port of Spain, Trinidad, 1980.



# **GLOSSARY**

## GLOSSARY

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### Glossary 1: Literary Concepts

\* **Alien:** is an act or a process whereby people become foreign to the world that they live in or belong to. It also refers to a low degree in integration, a rejection of social values and a state of isolation, withdrawal from society, a state of despair, anguish, failure, weakness and disappointment. One can notice that persons can be alienated even from themselves and not only from society. It is important to note the literary meaning and use of alien, alienated or alienation. All diasporic characters of Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night* are alienated either by colonial or a post-colonial inherited society. Alienation for diasporas depends of their historical and contextual specificity i.e. ways and under what conditions, different languages and class groups travelled. How they arrived and inserted themselves within the social relations of class, gender, race, sexuality among others.

\* **Assumptions:** are beliefs or ideas that we hold to be true, often with little or no evidence required things are assumed, supposed or taken for granted. They are manifest to an individual that are perceptible.

\* **Borders:** are the boundaries or sites that are commonly defined as the lines that divide and distinct political, social or legal territories where the individual and collective memories collide, reassemble and reconfigure.

\* **Civilization:** a term that has more meanings than one to refer to. It can refer to a highly developed human potential and organized society in its entire dimensions; physical, intellectual, spiritual, moral and physiological. Civilization means collective efforts by the whole society, its benefits should not be restricted to few members of this society, and it should have the ability of spreading to other societies, maintaining continuation and duration, it does not emerge to disappear.

\* **Colonial Literature:** it is a type of self-conscious writing of otherness, produced out of the colonized's minds, hands and experience; writers of British or European heritage established new national myth, resisted and struggled to define their own national literature.

## GLOSSARY

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\* **Culture:** is a way of life. It might be defined by everything from language, religion, habits, music, literature, ideas, customs, skills, arts and tools which characterize a given group of people in a given period. It also refers to a particular group of people or a country's repertoire of socially transmitted and intra-generationally determined ideas about how to live, to think and to behave, generating what characterizes and distinguishes them from others in terms of cultural models that are inherited from the preceding generation.

\* **Diaspora:** coming from dispersion, it refers to a group of people who live outside the area in which they had lived for a long time or in which their ancestors live. Diaspora is the result of many consequences, such as colonialism, wars, slavery, famine, checking for jobs ...etc.

\* **Discourse:** is a body of text that is either written or spoken, it means to communicate specific data, information, knowledge in which meaning is a collaborative construction involving author, text, culture and reader.

\* **Exile:** means to be away from some one's home, by either being explicitly refused permission to return or being threatened with imprisonment or death upon return. It can be a form of punishment and solitude. Terms such as diaspora and refugee describe group exile either voluntary or forced. Exile can refer to a sense of loss and displacement from a traditional homeland, particularly through such processes as colonization and modernization.

\* **Feminine:** in its most traditional sense, the term 'feminine' evokes certain qualities, attributes, behaviours and roles generally associated with girls and women, for example women are nice, altruistic, soft, narcissistic, fragile, powerless, healing, emotional..., etc. In more recent years, however, arguments on whether or not feminine attributes are biological constructs stimulated great debates between essentialists who believe that femininity is biologically determined, and constructionists who argue that femininity does not reside in the female body, but is rather a social product. Therefore, femininity is made up of both socially-defined and biologically created factors. This is what makes it different from the female sex.

## GLOSSARY

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\* **Feminism:** some of the currently used definitions are: a doctrine advocating social and political rights for women equal to those of men, a challenging campaign and struggle launched against oppressive ideologies and patriarchal systems adopted by men. These campaigns attempt for the assertion of the claims of women as a group and the body of theory women have devoted to create a change and new belief in the necessity of large-scale of satisfying social status in order to increase the power of women.

\* **Feminist theories:** conceptual frameworks that generate ideas about the nature of women's oppression. It studies gender, patriarchy and women's oppression, positing methods to establish gender equality. It developed at three stages; the first stage focused on suffrage and political right. The second focused on social inequality while the third emphasized the concept of globalization, post colonialism, post-structuralism and postmodernism.

\* **Feminist writing:** a distinct feminine language particularly challenges men literary canon (criteria) that assign women to marginal spaces and exclude them to an inferior position. *Ecriture feminine* is a real example in the so-called French school of feminist criticism on the existence of a distinctive woman's language.

\* **Gender:** the strong belief that the difference between men and women are not only biological. It does not focus on biology in determining one's maleness and femaleness, but it refers enormously to the effect of society and cultures to precise the extent of femininity and masculinity. Unfortunately, the term is used both in academic discourse and in the media as interchangeable with sex. In fact, it hides, mystifies the difference between the biological given-sex and the culturally created-gender. Gender leads up to clear understanding to masculinity and femininity, aiding to avoid ambiguity in using the term sex. It is largely culturally determined and affects how people perceive themselves and how they expect others to behave.

\* **Gender Identity:** the belief and the persistence sense of ourselves as masculine or feminine according to shared societal norms.

## GLOSSARY

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\* **Gender roles:** a range of shared societal norms and expectations that determine the type of the behavior and personality traits that a culture assigns to, as being suitable, acceptable, and appropriate for people based on their perceived sex than the other. Gender roles focus usually on conceptions of femininity and masculinity. Gendered expectation may vary as well as they may be common among cultures.

\* **Home:** place of desire of lived experiences, a place for family to come together in rituals, a place of worship, and a protective space from being isolated. Home also refers to boundaries of home; the latter brings into play the questions of inclusion and exclusion as well as the ensuring of political and personal struggles of belonging. In the *Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard (1969) refers to the home as the most intimate of spaces that allows us to dream and daydream, and, in turn, the house protects the daydreamer.

\* **Heterosexuality:** sexual attraction with a person of the opposite sex.

\* **Homosexuality:** sexual attraction to people of the same sex.

\* **Hybridity:** refers to the interaction, integration and mingling of cultural signs, characteristics, and practices from two different and distinct cultures: the colonizer and colonized cultures. The difference is in terms of many issues; language, customs, traditions, religion. Therefore, this interaction results new reconfiguration of both of the colonizer and the colonized.

\* **Identity:** refers to the qualities, beliefs, expressions and characteristics that distinguish a person from another one or from a group, and result in determining who they are. It refers both to what an individual has in particular that marks his individuality.

\* **Ideology:** a belief-system that include a wide range of opinions, visions and ideas. This belief is held by an individual, group or society. It determines the way people view and conceive themselves and culture. In colonial projects, the colonizers follow the ideology of civilizing mission to justify their actions in the colonized countries. In

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feminist theory, the term male ideology is used, by many theorists, to refer to a system of oppressive and false conceptions about the female experience.

\* **Imperialism:** imperialism can be explained as the concept that reflects the relationship of dominance and subordination, a policy of expansion and extending the authority of the empire either by military forces or diplomacy. While imperialism is the idea driving to practice, colonialism is the process of practicing and establishing settlement in a territory. In defining the two concepts, according to Young (2001), “imperialism operates as a policy of state, driven by the ostentatious projects of power within and beyond national boundaries. On the other hand, colonialism is analyzed primarily as a practice by which colonial rule binds her colonies to herself, with a ‘primary object of promoting her economic advantages’”.

\* **Lesbian:** A woman whose sexual orientation is to other women.

\* **Literature:** is a term used to describe pieces of writing and sometimes spoken material. It usually refers to works of creative imagination. It includes: drama, novel, short stories....

\* **Orientalism:** means a system or a way of bringing the Orient to Western study or learning, The Orient is a reflected image of what is barbaric, primitive, inferior and alien i.e. Other to the West. Said Edward influential book *Orientalism* (1978) claims that *the Orient* can not be studied in a non-Orientalist manner. Orientalism is a revolutionary work, aims to deconstruct and dismantle all hierarchical distinction between people and answer many questions of why and how the West come to understand the Middle East who is different as strange.

\* **Other:** the Other is anyone who is considered or viewed as different from the self. The existence of the Other is crucial in defining what is *normal* and in locating one’s own place in the world. While the colonized is deemed as *Other* through establishing the binary separation of the colonizer and colonized and asserting the superiority of the colonizing culture, men on the other hand othered women by putting themselves as the ‘One’ and claiming women ‘Otherness’.

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- \* **Patriarchal:** an assumption held by feminist criticism that society and culture are dominated rather with traditions so structured by the prescription of the nature, to promote masculine values, status, and to maintain the male in a privileged position and subordinate women.
- \* **Post-colonial:** it refers to the study of the clash and interaction between the colonizing countries and the countries they did colonized. It began to circulate in the Western academy in the early 1980s and congealed in 1989 with the publication of the *Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* edited by Bill Ashcroft. It raised many issues of identity, rootedness in nation, hybridity...etc.
- \* **Phallogentric:** a perspective that is highly predominated or exclusively male.
- \* **Queer:** a pejorative use for gay, now it is claimed by some gay men, lesbian, bisexuals and transgendered persons for self-affirming.
- \* **Queer Literature:** includes any writing is concerned with the themes of queer theory and queer life experience.
- \* **Queer Theory:** it emerges from gay/lesbian studies' attention to the social construction of categories of normative and deviant sexual behavior. But, it does not focus only on homosexuality, it concerns itself with any and all forms of sexuality that are "queer" and then, by extension, with normative behavior and identities which define what is "queer". Therefore, "to queer" is to render "normal" sexuality as strange and to challenge heterosexuality as a naturalized social-sexual norm and promote the notion of "non-straightness" that challenge the ideology of "straight".
- \* **Sex:** it refers the physiological differentiation between men and women, and it refers also to the erotic activity between two people. 'Sex' is generally considered as the biological sign that differentiate between femaleness and maleness. However, masculinity and femininity are determined through gender as a socio-cultural construct of these two concepts. To Judith Butler, however, 'sex' is not a biological category, 'sex is a norm' (Osborne and Segal, an interview with Butler, 1993). She believes that

## GLOSSARY

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due to certain institutional conditions, certain arbitrary biological difference are deemed as fixed signs for sex.

\* **Sexism:** a stereotypical belief that accords high superiority and status to men rather than women.

\* **Stereotype:** are false or misleading generalizations about groups held in a manner that is defined as relatively fixed. They generally focus on negative and unfavorable characteristics. The term is derived from the Greek word *stereos*, meaning solid, and *typos*, meaning image or impression. Therefore, stereotype is originally a solid shaped image that is difficult to change. Stereotyping generally limits one's perception, while at the same time, it reduces the ability to inquire and learn about others. So, the inner self should accept to modify and recreate.

\* **Subaltern:** a person holding a subordinate and weak position that follows immediately from a universal. It is used to refer to those groups in society who are subject to hegemony of the ruling classes. Subaltern classes may include humans of very low rank, everybody who has limited or no access at all to the cultural imperialism is thus subaltern. The term has been adapted to Post colonial studies, Gayatri Spivak points that speaking is a transaction between speaker and listener, but it does not reach the dialogue level of utterance. Spivak spoke against an overly application of the term by saying:

*subaltern is not just a classy word for "oppressed", for [the] Other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie.... In post-colonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern-a space of difference. Now, who would say that's just the oppressed? The working class is oppressed. It's not subaltern... Many people want to claim subalternity. They are the least interesting and the most dangerous. I mean, just by being a discriminated-against minority on the university campus; they don't need the word 'subaltern'.... They should see what the mechanics of the discrimination are. They're within the hegemonic discourse, wanting a piece of the pie, and not being allowed, so let them speak, use the hegemonic discourse. They should not call themselves subaltern.*

(Gayatri Spivak, 1992)



## GLOSSARY

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\* **Transgression:** the fact of transcending borders and challenging the norms that are morally and legally acknowledged limits to be respected.

\* **Womanist:** the term was first coined by Alice Walker to refer to the specificity of black women's experience, strong struggle and campaign to fight sexism, racism and oppression, distinguishing her harsh experience and black reality from her white counterparts.

\* **Women's emancipation:** refers to the act of liberating women at the level of many sides, it is women's autonomy, independence and freedom from all oppressive and patriarchal constraints set by society or man.

## GLOSSARY

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- This glossary is taken from sources related to my dissertation.

### GLOSSARY 2: Extracts from the novel *Cereus Blooms at Night*:

EXTRACTS	PAGES
A name change for Chandin was briefly discussed by the Reverend and his wife. Mrs. Thoroughly thought that a Christian, if not Wetlandish name was more suitable for a son of theirs. Chandin was eager to have his Indian name replaced.	30
Pohpoh's heart leapt when she saw the tips of Aunt Lavinia's fingers grasping Mama's waist. She understood something in that instant but save for a flash of an image of hers fathers face in her mind, she had no words for to describe what she suddenly realized was their secret.	56
Every few days, a smell decay permeated the house. It was the smell of time itself passing but lest she was overcome by it, Mala brewed an odour of her own design. She collected and boiled six empty shells at a time. After an hour, the shells lost their pink and yellow.	115
The cereus will surely bloom within day-an excitement diminished only by the fact there is still no word from Asha Ramchandin. Judge Water Bissey has contacted a colleague in Canada, who promises to use all legal means to determine if an Asha Ranmchandin still resides in that cold country.	249

Mootoo, Shani. (1996) *Cereus Blooms at Night*. New York: Avon Books

**GLOSSARY**

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# **SYNOPSIS**

## SYNOPSIS

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### Shani Mootoo's Biography

Shani Mootoo was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1958 to a Trinidadian father and an Irish mother. She rose and grew in Trinidad. Then, she moved to Canada at the age of 19 where she lives actually. Mootoo at an early age showed high level in the world of creation and talents; drawing, painting, visual arts, writing, poems, and asserted more capacities in being an artist when she was ten years. She earned a fine arts degree from the University of Western Ontario in 1980. There, she began a career as a painter and video producer.

Mootoo belongs to an educated family that encouraged her to progress. Mootoo's father, Ramesh was a Trinidadian politician and a medical family doctor. She has had exhibitions in the U.S and Canada, and her videos have been shown at a number of film festivals. Her paintings and photo-based works have been exhibited internationally as well, including at the New York's Museum of Modern Art. Mootoo's poems generally express love between two men or love between two women, a talent that her parents think that is risky and may hold heavy burden for her future. Mootoo expressed the fact of being painter firstly before being a writer, She has said also that she favors visual arts, because as a child who suffered child abuse by a member of her family (her uncle), and was told never to speak of it, she found pictures safer and more comfortable refuge instead of words. Through painting and art, Mootoo has confronted sex offenders with her personal story that is full of moral values. "It's very much about trying to find out what the purpose of life is, wondering why certain things that happened to me as a child could be permitted to happen, and why the universe would allow such a child to survive...it's about what to do with suffering". Art for Mootoo was an arm to deconstruct and dismantle trauma in its literal meaning

Mootoo began her literary career with a collection of short fiction, entitled *Out on Main Street*, published in 1993 to enthusiastic reviews, exploring the theme common in everything she does, triumphing over childhood abuse. Her second book, published in 1996 in Canada, *Cereus Blooms at Night* was a finalist for the 1997 Giller Prize, the Chapters/Books in Canada First Novel Award and the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize. One

## SYNOPSIS

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of Mootoo's paintings appears on the cover. Mootoo focuses on issues of authenticity and identity in both of her written works. She "exposes the uncertainty of the hybrid individual" and "she explores a variety of situations in which her characters are pressed to display a prescribed cultural authenticity both by individuals from the same culture and from those who are clearly Diasporas". Mootoo followed her novel with a collection of poetry, *The Predicament of Or* in 2002. Mootoo's second full length novel, *He drown she in the Sea*, published in 2005. In 2008, her novel *Valmiki's Daughter* is set in Trinidad and exposed deeply the issue of identity. Mootoo's recent work; *Moving Forward Like a Crab* (2014) was also shortlisted for the Giller prize.

She also spent a good deal of time mentoring aspiring authors as the 2002 Faculty of Arts writer-in-residence at the University of Alberta. She reviewed manuscripts, provided advice for students and faculty as well as anyone in the wider community interested in developing their craft.

She is currently a contribution editor for CBC Radio's "This Morning". Mootoo divides her time between Vancouver and New York City and is working on her second novel tentatively called "The Woman Who Gave Love Birds for a Present".

Finally, "Mootoo is very happy to be 'Canadian' writer, although she was born in Ireland, raised in Trinidad and is of East Indian ancestry. The last thing she wants is to be known as in an Indo-Trinidadian-Irish-Canadian-Lesbian writer".

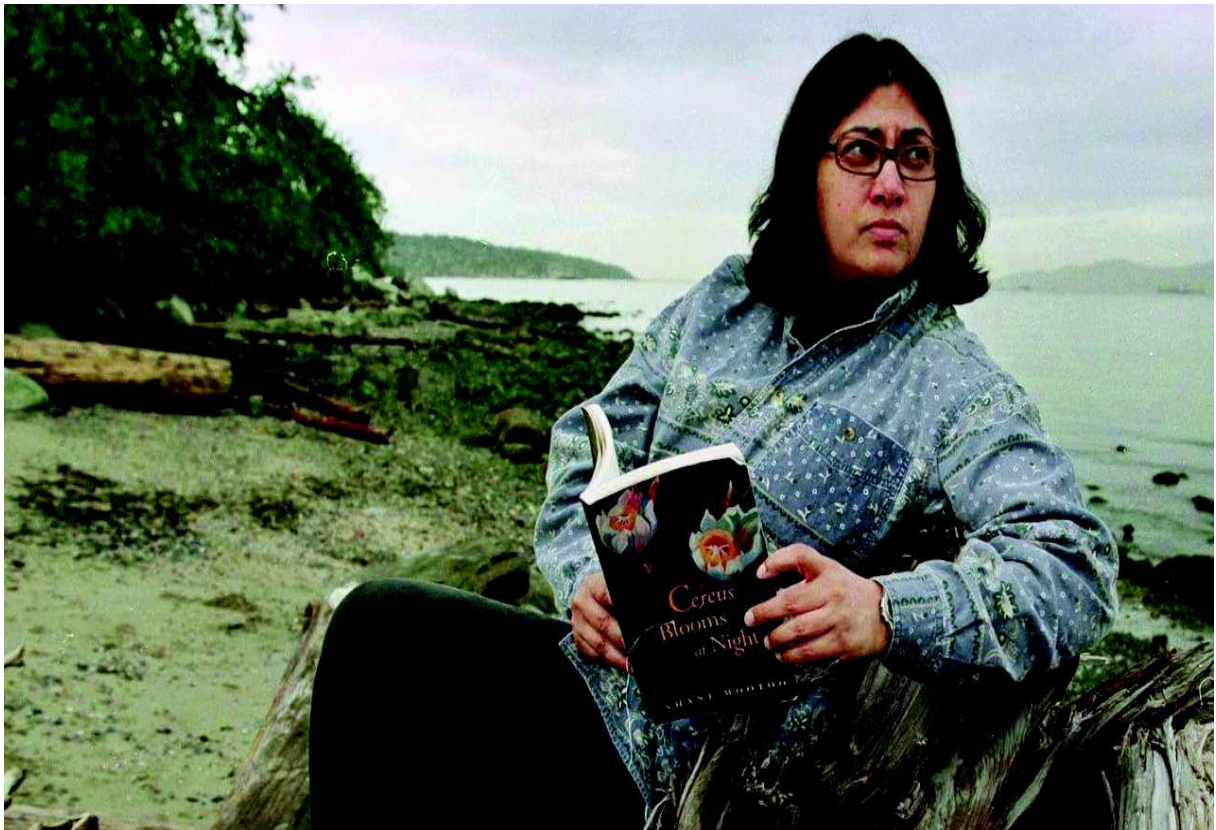
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shani-Mootoo>
- [www.postcolonialweb.org/canada/literature/mootoo/bio.html](http://www.postcolonialweb.org/canada/literature/mootoo/bio.html)

# APPENDICES

## APPENDICES

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### Appendix One:



<https://www.evripedia.com/shani-mootoo/>



## APPENDICES

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### Appendix Two:

#### **Praise for *Cereus Blooms at Night***

The novel received lot of praises by many newspapers and journals. These are some praises for *Cereus Blooms at Night*.

“This novel covers the whole range of human motivation, from abject cowardice to self-sacrificing bravery, and shows the humble triumph of goodness....*Cereus Blooms at Night* is a stunning first novel”.

-The Times (London)

“A gripping novel ...A cracking narrative and Mootoo’s description of the island are so lush, you can almost smell the cereus off the page”.

- Elle (UK)

“The sinuous unwinding of Mootoo’s clever plot will remind many readers of Arundhati Roys *The God of Small Things*, which this novel resembles also in its plentitude of exotix detail, magical realist interludes, and captivating language”

- *Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

“The fecund and fertile cycles of Caribbean life pervade this powerful first novel from Mootoo, who invokes all the senses...to portray the town of Paradise on the fictional island of Lantanacamara”

-*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

“*Cereus Blooms at Night* is a gem, a wonderful flower of a first novel; Shani Mootoo can be counted as one of our gifted writers”

-Vancouver Sun

## APPENDICES

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“*Cereus Blooms at Night* is a novel that is both beautiful and disturbing....Witten with profound sense of the visual in hauntingly poetic language, it combines powerful subject matter with memorable characters and an exotic background. Reminiscent of Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*, this extraordinary first novel blends a sense of the mythical with an intoxicating rythem. The result is captivating and unforgettable”

-Discover

“Shani Mootoo writes with great precision and strength...Mootoo has commandeered a strange, new territory...full of synchronicity, where the bizarre is made beautiful without restoring to magic....This sad, seductive story deserves to be read”

- The Observer

This first Novel...is both a compelling narrative and a magical evocation of a lush environment that is filled with beauty but tinged with tragedy...Her readers are taken on a fabulous journey and awake refreshed as if from a deep and dream-filled sleep.”

-The Sunday Telegraph

“Strong, sad, and sensual...Wrought as deftly as a piece of lacework...A confident and lively first novel”

- Los Angeles Times

# APPENDICES

## Appendix Three:

# Trinidad



[www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/namerica/caribb/tt.htm](http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/namerica/caribb/tt.htm)

# APPENDICES

## Appendix Four:

### India



# APPENDICES

## Appendix Five:

# Ireland



[www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/europe/ie.htm](http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/europe/ie.htm)

# APPENDICES

## Appendix Six:

# Canada



[www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/namerica/ca.html](http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/namerica/ca.html)

## ملخص

تعتزم الكاتبة الهندية الترنيدادية الأيرلندية والكندية شاني موتو في روايتها "الشمعية تزهر بالليل" نبذ العالم الذي أعيد بناؤه حديثاً من قبل المستعمر الغاشم والذي ورط تاريخ كل من الرجل والمرأة في معاناة طويلة الأمد تحمل بقع سوداء وأشواك صعبة الإزالة لا تزال تؤرق الرجل المستعمر وتلفه في قفص الإهمال. تلقي موتو من خلال روايتها الضوء علي الصدمة الكبيرة التي تعود جذورها للموروث الاستعماري الذي يعد صدمة كبيرة و تراجيديا عظمي قسمت الشعوب، العقول، اللغة، الذاكرة و حتى الجنسانية ، مركزة بذلك علي معاناة المرأة خصوصا فيما يتعلق بالعنف المنزلي، وهي المعضلة الكبيرة التي خلفت العديد من الأجنة المشوهة والتي تصنفها موتو في السياق الأوسع للاضطهاد الاستعماري البدني والنفسي المتجدد، و يعد الاغتراب، الهروب، النفي وتفتيت الجسم و الهوية من السلبيات التي لا مفر منها في فتح آفاق غامضة للمزيد من المعضلات

## Summary

In her novel *Cereus Blooms at Night*, The Indo-Trinidadian, Irish and Canadian writer, Shani Mootoo intends to repudiate the newly reconstructed worlds by the evil figure of the colonizers which had plagued both men and women's history with stubborn stains, darkest points and irremovable thorns of long lasting effects of their suffering that are still wrap the colonized man in dusty cages of loss and neglect.

Mootoo sheds light on a big trauma embedded from colonial heritage, a trauma that fragments and a big tragedy that splits people's bodies, minds, language, memory and even sexuality; focusing on women's experience of domestic violence, a big dilemma that led to the birth of many anomalous fetus, which Shani Mootoo situates in the wider context of reiterated physical and psychological colonial oppression. Alienation, escape, exile and fragmentation of the body and identity are of inevitable drawbacks that open ambiguous avenues to further dilemmas.