
“Out of them all, you’ll be the only one to survive:” Hybrid “I”, Hybrid Text in I Tituba, Black Witch of Salem

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Abstract

This article tackles the dogmatic riddle put forth in the challenging and assertive title I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem. The interchangeability of the self-assured “I” and the oft-voiceless “Black” distorts the authority of normative discourses and topples the complacent portrayals of the silenced Black and the domineering White. The blurring of demarcating lines between visible/invisible, self/Other, and Black/White marks the hybridized identity that Tituba discloses. The Other, therefore, emerges as a locus around which the entanglement of subjugation and empowerment, subjection and abjection is woven. Indeed, this paper follows the process of constructing and re-constructing Tituba’s identity while concomitantly relocating it in the complex realm of hybridity. In consolidating a wide array of voices into a single and personal narrative, the novel reveals an ambivalent “I” that subtly wavers between self-assertion and erasure as the ex-slave is found enmeshed in the intricate web of racial and gendered cultures. The hybridity of Tituba(s)’ identity is to be tackled not only through her ability to defy heteroglossia and create her own voice, transcending the fixity and artificiality of monologic accounts but also through the hybridized text itself.

Keywords: Hybridity; Heteroglossia; Hybridized Text; Race; Gender; Tituba.

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Introduction

This essay tackles the trope of hybrid I/identity as it is enmeshed within both the patriarchal and racial discourses. Emanating from cross-cultural encounters, the hybrid identity is nonetheless ubiquitously present. Aided by the rumination of postmodern theory, Ihab Hassan defines the concept of hybridization as follows:

Hybridization. Everywhere, today, we witness the mutation of genres in parody, travesty, and pastiche. We observe promiscuous or equivocal forms: para criticism, para literature, happening, mixed media, the nonfiction novel, the new journalism. Cliché, pop, and kitsch mingle to blur boundaries, and "de-define" (Harold Rosenberg) the modes of representation.

Throughout culture, a jumbling or syncretism of styles.

As a trait of Post-modern discourse, Hybridization is three-folded for it encompasses: parody, self-consciousness, and proliferation of genres. The Hybrid is to be tackled in this essay as the ongoing process of "narrativizing" /fashioning one's subjectivity beyond the confines of the other's gaze. The process of formation/ fashioning one's hybrid self hinges heavily on the incorporation of others' narratives to voice one's self (Akhtar et al. 2021). Within this vein, Bakhtin introduces the hybrid voice as "a unique artistic system," that achieves its unity once it transcends the fixity and bleakness/aridity of hegemonic discourses (Saeed et al. 2020).

Insofar as we wrest particular meanings out of general systems, we are all creators: a speaker is to his utterance what an author is to his text. That anyone who speaks thereby creates is arguably the most radical implication of Bakhtin's thought.

Defying the encumbering position in a well-maintained normative society, the hybrid undergoes an intricate discursive process ranging from racial, gender, religious and national to gradually blur the demarcating line between self and other. Hence, hybridity helps re-integrate the deformed misfit, the object in drag who is tangled in the restless realm of uncertainty, liminality, and in-betweenness.

In *I Tituba Black Witch of Salem*, Maryse Condé, debunks the concept of hybridity as a site of resistance to hegemony. She seizes Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose's utilization of the trope 'hybridity' as a mixture of cultures, politics, and races to construct a "third space in which traditional binaries are the deformed replica of the reality that racial and patriarchal hegemony may infer. Condé's *Tituba* invokes the notion of hybridity to blur the male/ female, white/black, visible/invisible dichotomy. She re-evaluates, through the somatic figuration of the (ex)slave *Tituba*, hybridity, sharing Mikhail M. Bakhtin's belief that hybrid consciousness evolves as a kind of narrative. Hybridity realigns henceforth with forms of storytelling to fashion the self through the discourses of others.

1. Writing Memories: Performing Hybridity(ies)

Maryse Condé's hybridity is presented as an unstable and subtle form of identification. Rejecting a collective and fixed category into which identity is congealed, Condé demystifies the essential notions of identity that demand authenticity. Hybridity is a fluid process by which the long-held paradigm of the fixed identity is deflated, be it the by-product of a well-confined gendered tradition or deeply entrenched racial legacy. Indeed, by virtue of its fluidity and instability, as Judith Butler propels; one's identity is a perpetual act of becoming that is confined neither to the historical constructs nor the political limitations. Identity becomes hybrid depending on the conscious acquiring/seizing of power, on the instability of being either the dominant or the dominated, the "I" or the "Other". Hybridity is the result of the (in) ability to discursively locate one's "self" in a position of either /or. It is also the result of one's capacity to encompass the oft-silenced voices within an empowered version and personal narrative of identification

Condé's profoundly hybrid character has been asserted as torn between textuality and history. Indeed, the title *I Tituba Black Witch of Salem* unveils a multiplicity of selves under the same being. It overthrows, thereby, the narrow definition by depicting the consciousness of the hybrid without framing it as a congealed model. Although she incorporates four disparate identities often regarded as Othered into a normative hegemonic entourage, *Tituba* manages to de-marginalize herself from the long-held view that "Everyone believes he can fashion a witch to his way of thinking so that she will satisfy his ambitions, dreams, and desires...". The assertive discursive subject "I" of a racially different "black", "historical" slave "*Tituba*", and a religious misfit "witch" tends to affirm her unique

identity, through a flamboyantly ironic voice, in “Salem” the theocratic and patriarchal and racial community. The defiant proclamation in “I Tituba Black Witch of Salem”, tramples the slave’s past experience as she fluctuates between the representation and self-representation to culminate into a self-asserted hybridized I / or I’s that eventually challenges the eyes /gazes of the dominant. “Those of you who have read my tale up till now must be wondering who is this witch devoid of hatred, who is misleading each time by the wickedness in men’s hearts? For the nth time, I made up my mind to be different and fight it out tooth and nail.”. Thereby, Condé manages to create and fortify an open and ceaseless process of self-fashioning which is triggered by cross-cultural dialogue rather than a single monologic pattern of hybridity.

The use of the trope of “Hybridities” seems, within this vein, to be more convenient than that of “hybridity”. In *I, Tituba*, hybridities form an alternative site where the traditionally labeled, disparate, and often othered groups -these culturally and racially markers- are incorporated into a single self-sustained “I”. Hybridities seem to follow the unstable form of an identity. As asserted by Hall, the term ‘hybridities’ implies “the transcendence of ‘old ethnicities and the formation of transgressive cultural formations which in and of themselves function to dispel the certainties of a fixed location”. In “New Hybridities, Old Concepts: The Limits of ‘Culture’”, Floya Anthias asserts, “hybrid social identities are now the characteristic identities of the modern world, then struggles over cultural hegemony and the underlying mechanisms that support it, become increasingly empty signifiers; merely to occupy the space of the ‘hybrid’ constitutes an emancipatory human condition”. Indeed, deflating the simplifying and collective identity, and subsuming to all-encompassing rhetoric is to subjugate to the forces of the hegemonic discourses.

Thus, Tituba defies the manifestos of identity as either/or: either black or white, either slave or free, visible or invisible, saint or witch, man or woman. Instead, she seeks to reify an amalgam of selves that stand in sharp contrast with the rigidity and fixedness of categorization through voicing the silenced past. In relating her memories, Tituba manages to portray her hybridities. Her memories provide an indentarian site whereby she wavers between self-assertion and erasure, center and margin. In offering a variety of inward re-membrances of the past when “[she] was six years old again”; instances that openly withstand the norm, Tituba rebuke the long-held view of the fixed identity. She is, indeed, self-figured as the empowered black (ex)slave who challenges the racial mainstream, the daughter who repudiates her mother, the black female who doesn’t believe in sisterhood, and finally the witch whose intentions are purely good.

Dis-membered yet soon re-membered, the portrayals and self-portrayals of Tituba(s) are maintained and fortified with(in) the framework of increasingly complex, diverse, and dynamic memories. Indeed, repugnant to the traditional forms of representations, Tituba affirms herself against the age-old norms through embodying multiple voices that are at once paradoxical, (de)marginalizing, and (dis)empowering. Representing the Salem community through a Black female slave’s memories, Tituba glimpses culture through the gazes of the different kinds of individuals who are deeply ensconced in its intricate webs, conflicts, tensions, and ambiguities. She lays bare, hence by, the rifts and dis-functions lurking underneath the seeming harmony.

The absent presence of Tituba in the crucible is determined by the hegemonic gaze of the personified, all-knowing, yet “uncomprehending eyes”. Miller’s Tituba loses the ability to represent herself and becomes thereby an item in the ocular field of the observer, a part of the White and male space that she can neither penetrate nor gaze back at it. The White man space is hidden, (in)visible, mystical, from which no one can avert its destructive gaze. However, delving deeper into her memories, a site shaped and fashioned through/in her own language, Condé’s Tituba assumes her identity. Aware of the precarious situation in which she is enmeshed: remarkably invisible, discursively inscribed, and then displaced in a male-written narrative, Tituba chooses to voice her inner self, and rebuke the former pre-determined self that she had to embody. She chooses to represent herself rather than be represented.

Refuting the objectifying power that has framed her into “God’s instrument in our hands”, Tituba openly challenges the restrictive, disabling, and barren portraits as she voices her story to not only disturb the homogeneity/fixity of her society but also to assert the multiplicity, contingency and complexity of her identity. Instability proves, hence, felicitous as it turns her into the dominant

interpreter/storyteller/speaker of her memories, to eradicate the Black, the deformer's identity and transform her into a flexible construct ripe for molding. Within these instances of revisiting the past, however, a hybridized Tituba arises one which endures a crisis manifested in temporary/periodical states that replicate her repressed feeling of uncertainty and confusion. These feelings soon alter into a dreamlike atmosphere that endows the character with paradoxical hues of rebellion, mystery, torment, and regret.

Memories create a temporal/spatial site, albeit chaotic and uncertain at some point, a source of power for the character. Cyclical and contrapuntal, the process of revisiting the past through usurping the male's position fortifies Tituba's identity as the writer of her story. Debunking the age-old traditions, Tituba stands as a statement against effacement, exclusion, and reduction to invisibility. She "was becoming another woman. A stranger to [her]self". The more memories she conjures, the more visible she turns, and concomitantly, the more invisible the men of her community become.

Deprived of my shackles, I was unable to find my balance and I tottered like a woman drunk on cheap liquor. I had to learn how to speak again, how to communicate with my fellow creatures, and no longer be content with a word here and there. I had to learn how to look them in the eyes again.

The black-skinned female slave emerges as a re-figuration of the female that is cyclically displaced from the center to the periphery and from the periphery to the center which testifies to the instability of both the gendered and racial body.

Both Martin Heidegger and Michel Foucault have drawn attention to the power of language and representation to ascertain the world around us. Heidegger asserts that "man contends for the position in which he can be that particular being who gives the measure and draws up the guidelines for everything that is". Similarly, Foucault considers language to be a tool that grants power to those who control, select, and organize discourse in society. The discursive position allows Tituba to ponder over and challenges the invisibility that has engulfed her throughout history and the atrocious feelings of dehumanizing it ensues:

It seemed that I was gradually being forgotten. I felt that I would only be mentioned in passing in these Salem witchcraft trials about which so much would be written later, trials that would arouse the curiosity and pity of generations to come as the greatest testimony of a superstitious and barbaric age. There would be mention here and there of "a slave originating from the West Indies and probably practicing "hoodoo". There would be no mention of my age or my personality. I would be ignored. As early as the end of the seventeenth century, petitions would be circulated, judgments made, rehabilitating the victims, restoring their honor, and returning their property to their descendants. I would never be included! Tituba would be condemned forever!

Not only does the act of re-membling construct and recognize the "I", but also dis-members the hegemonic representation of her own self. Remembering is an act of self-assertion that reverses Tituba's negative status. Tituba's encounter with the Other exposes/divulges the intrinsic role of religious expediences in determining racial (im)purity.

By virtue of her race, her geographic origin, and her relation to Mama Yaya, Tituba was portrayed as the wicked witch whose presence proves encumbering in a Christian society built on strictly defined roles. This three-fold cause bracketed the normality of the black female body and made her a paradigm of deviancy against which the standardized female slave is validated. However, Tituba seizes language and manages eventually in trespassing the boundaries that have been set up for her. Her voice dominates the others' representations when she challenges the age-old definition of a witch as a deviant who embodies the dangers of exoticism and marginality.

What is a witch? I noticed that when he said the word, it was marked with disapproval. Why should that be? Why? Isn't the ability to communicate with the invisible world, to keep constant links with the dead, to care for others and heal, a superior gift of nature that inspires respect, admiration, and gratitude? Consequently, shouldn't the witch (if that's what the person who has this gift is called) be cherished and revered rather than feared.

Assuming the position of the marginalized witch -the invisible who "communicates with the invisible world"- holds in its fold a refusal of the sharp lamination that precludes the flexibility of identity.

During the witch-craze, Tituba emerges as Bakhtin's "conscious hybrid", a scapegoat who is at the same time the mischievous upon whose back is laid all the misfits of the racial society as the savior who would relieve the society from its darkness. She bridges the culturally forbidden gap between the human and the non-human. She, the empowered female erupts into the veneered-self-conception of the gendered community, tangibly evoking the threat of atavism and promptly alarming the unsexed/emasculated members to the urgency of pruning the misfit and suppressing the menace of the incongruous.

Tituba's desire to self-representation herself was fulfilled by voicing her own memories. Tituba is acutely aware that gendered identity is fashioned and perpetuated through well-centered male language. Hence by, the portrayal of the female in the community is predominantly channeled through a long-held misogynistic vein. In the realm of memories, both the historical and the political become inexorably linked within the same textual space, creating a territory of unstable power relation, for both the dominant and the dominated to emerge. In chiding the emblem of their society and assuming the position of the marginalized, Tituba assumes the role of both the purifier and the damned. She seizes the very normative attributes that used to demonize her to pertain to the society that cyclically singles her out.

Tituba's attempts at self-fashioning are made through remembering her past; such a process could not be realized unless it is dis-membered. To dis-member, one's past is to distance oneself from its constituents, to fragment the diversity of its voices to artistically order them in a well-constructed fiction. The process of constructing identity is hence akin to narrativizing. Storytelling cannot be read within this stance as a manifestation of Truth. It is rather considered as one replica -among others- revisited, and collected by the one who the individual who has undergone this experience. This narrative is presented through the myriad voices of the same individual. Within this vein, Condé alleges, "When you try to tell the truth about your life, you realize immediately that your truth is fiction and that you are fabricating a reality, a somewhat imaginary life. Nonetheless, the desire to be autobiographical is real." The voices that emanate from the deep abyss of one's past were and still are in constant conflict-torn between the tendency to deviate from the norm and the overarching homogenizing forces. Withstanding the long-held, oft-belittled stereotypes, this discursive space seizes the divided and alienated self-engulfed by his/her historical, communal, and personal experience to culminate into a unified liberated self; a hybrid self.

Tituba's memories seem to be besieged by an amalgamation of grisly events that ultimately culminates in the slave's temporary abjection. "Such a bitter, bitter story". As she willingly ventures into the white man world, Tituba undergoes the metamorphosis of being the rebellious Object. Indeed, the encounter between Tituba the slave and her mistress illustrate the aesthetics of displacement as the Othered subject' is compelled to embark upon a process of abjection when forced to silence and invisibility at the presence of the omnipresent, all-powerful White woman who embodies what Lanser calls in her discussion of the "Feminist Poetics of Narrative Voice" "discursive authority". The three-folded prerogative (race, gender, and class) endows Susanna Endicott with discursive authority that of the White hegemonic ideology. One major constituent of narrative authority, therefore, is the extent to which a narrator's status conforms to this dominant social power. ¶ Furthermore, such an encounter between the uncannily Black slave and the White mistress marks the authoritarianism and the traumatizing process of objectification and consequently dehumanization of the White in power.

It was not so much the conversation that amazed and revolted me as their way of going about it. You would think I was not standing there at the threshold of the room. They were talking to me and yet ignoring me. They were striking me off the map of human beings. I was not being. Invisible. More invisible than the unseen, who at least have powers that everyone fears. Tituba existed insofar as these women let her exist. It was atrocious. Tituba became ugly, coarse, and inferior because they willed her so.

In this momentary change from an "I" to a "Tituba", Condé attempts to deflate the importance commonly attributed to the discursive authority in determining one's identity. The swift change in references mirrors the downfall of the fixed identarian meaning/apartness.

Read more overtly, the temporary displacement reverberates the accompanying loss of hegemonic interpellation. As she sloughs off her former subdued self, Tituba reveals her propinquity

to White -skinned standards that would distance her from the Blackened vulnerability and foreshadow the reinforcement of sameness of her portrait, Tituba tentatively and consciously, though momentarily, embrace White cultural values when she revels in usurping her mistress's position. By referring to herself as Tituba instead of "I", her dermal pigmentation is effaced, and she eventually sees herself through her mistress's eye. She undergoes a temporary state of self-effacement: an act of amputation where the insider turns to be an outsider, whereby she emerges a replica of the White mistress, a process that René Girard would term a "snob in drag".

The process of hybridization in *I Tituba the Black Witch of Salem* Tituba unravels contradictory facets of the same character. It is manifested through the split of Tituba into two Titubas: the black vulnerable slave who embodies the inferior position and the stereotypical image of the frail black identity/ and the same black who is nonetheless empowered as she revels in her own marginalized/blackness but has projected in the position of the superior. Different in her sameness, Tituba is left with traces of utter bewilderment that taint her new self and enable her to confront those who have contributed whether directly or indirectly to her tragic former life and her subsequent death.

As she grows to a heroic stature by refusing to submit to the whims of the patriarchal and racial society with its multiple diversities and contradictions, the hybridized Tituba forces herself to appropriate, transform and regenerate the main discourses into one where she affirms her own identity. However, her process of being is nonetheless a constant movement ensconced in a restless and paradoxical space one of rebellion, and submission that is testified by an unstable geographical space. Likewise, Tituba's mobility rebuffs the state of stillness that Miller supplanted his play with. She finds in the state of non-belonging, a way to (re)gain her subjectivity. The instability of home mirrors that of identity. In fact, identity, as Butler argues, is no longer deemed as a social construct that is inexorably linked to the somatic figuration of the body nor to a given group. It rather emerges as an unstable perpetual movement in/out of social and geographical spaces while encountering others.

The hybridized "I" that Tituba evinces can be incarnated in the art of witchcraft that she learned from her Mama Yaya. Creating hybrid plants to heal was a substitute method to adapt to the new situation. The creation of a healing substance as a by-product of disparate elements reverberates with validating one's identity in a different milieu:

Under her [Mama Yaya] guidance, I attempted bold hybrids, cross-breeding the passiflorinde with the prune taureau, the poisonous pomme cythère with the surette, and the azalée-des-azalées with the persulfureuse. I devised drugs and potions whose powers I strengthened with incantations.

Forcefully exiled to New England, Tituba was found displaced/dislodged from her roots. she resorts to making substitutions to revivify her healing power, and hence her own identity. As "[her] prayers did the rest", Tituba constructs a voice, different in its sameness, by transgressing physical, temporal, racial, and cultural borders in order to encounter her others.

That "we are all creators" and "among them all, you will survive" re-defines hybridity(ies) as a new conception of identity. Movement and becoming while writhing in pain impart wisdom. The process of marginalizing, and re-centering while interacting with others helps transcend parochial scripts of identity that are entrapped in the overarching workings of power. As she rejects traditional forms of identification, she forms her "self" with(in) the discourses of others. Tituba's hybrid position enables her to lay bare the inaccuracies of history as her memories expose, the process out of which subjectivities emerge and are imposed on individuals. Her ability to voice, subvert and re-create the normative construction of cultural, racial, and gendered narratives, dismantle the purity and homogeneity of the white patriarchal ideology. Cross-breeding, making substitutions, transforming, and adapting form part of Tituba's abilities to fashion her hybrid subjectivity.

2. Writing Hybridity

Hybridity expresses itself stylistically in the text. *I, Tituba* –both identity and text- can be read as a construct ripe for fashioning and re-fashioning, constructed aided with the rumination of heterogeneous borrowings, while its power instability emanates from one's position regarding its position in a given hegemony. The Hybrid "I"/ hybrid text reflects what Hewitt identifies as "the loss of direction or uncertainty of meaning that troubles the heroine". The narrative structure provides

further insight into the hybridity that defines Tituba's multi-layered identity during her journey throughout a community marked by its seamlessly changing racial norms and gendered acts.

As "an act of becoming", I, Tituba seems to be a replica of the Bildungsroman whereby the tropes of identity, sexuality, and gender are foreground through (re)membering her past experience. Indeed, the hero of the traditional Bildungsroman is a male figure who endeavors to root himself within the society from which he is cyclically expurgated. The Bildungsroman has often been woven around male characters whose portrait is penned by a male-written discourse "young male hero [who] discovers himself and his social role through the experiences of love, friendship and the hard realities of life". Cristina Ferreira Pinto points out that the Bildungsroman represents the process whereby one becomes a "'man', that is, [the genre] depicts the development of a male character."

Ellen Morgan ponders over the absent presence of the female figure in the tradition of the Bildungsroman. Pinto's assertion that "the Bildungsroman is a male affair" triggers the discussion on the female-written Bildungsroman which remains stunted in the anti-feminist culture in which she is entrapped: the age-old gendered roles of either marriage or motherhood. Overthrowing the male-written discourse, both Pinto and Morgan open a site of ideological binaries to shed light on some female protagonists who blatantly tackle issues of sexuality and power. Few are examples of female Bildungsroman heroines who expose their personal development, a journey which- unlike the male journey- inadvertently meets a tragic end.

The female protagonists who did grow as selves were generally halted and defeated before they reached transcendent selfhood. They committed suicide or died; they compromised by marrying and devoting themselves to sympathetic men; they went mad or into some kind of retreat and seclusion from the world.

Hence by, a woman's "Bildung" cannot be constructed out of conformist aesthetics, the all-embracing web of dominant orthodoxies. Within this vein, a sharp contrast is set between a Bildungsroman and a novel of female development. The differences are premised on two main aspects: first, while Bildungsroman lays bare the deep abyss of traumatic birth and childhood, the novel of female development is woven around the presence of a mature female character seeking self-fulfillment. Second, whereas a Bildungsroman grants the protagonist a position in the society that has long singled her out, a novel of female development enables the protagonist, eventually, to achieve her dreams.

In her attempts to re-define the female Bildungsroman, Annie Pratt presents some characteristics and features mainly, "the character's childhood, generational conflict, "the larger society", self-development, relationship problems, search for life's meaning and purpose and some philosophy which may lead the protagonist to leave everything behind in favor of new experiences and an independent life". I, Tituba can be read more overtly as a Bildungsroman as it opens a discursive space de-marginalizing the silenced Tituba and enabling her to (re)member in her own voice her life.

Hybridizing the male Bildungsroman, I, Tituba can be read as a quest for the identity of a black female and "deliberate" slave rather than the inclusion in the civic society from which she is excluded. Identity reveals itself as the construction of the subject "I" as it narrates its journey. Indeed, deeply ensconced in torment, the female Bildungsroman opens with instances of displacement, unmitigated violence, and unspeakable horror, meandering its way between somatic distortion and an unyielding quest for identity. However, such a female-written space enables the protagonist to locate herself in or in relation to her own body. Paradoxically, Tituba embodies the represented and atrocious feelings of dehumanizing and depersonalizing struggles that slavery ensues, she is given a space where she revels in her body, blackness, and sexuality in a society that instills a sense of shame of the body and its impulses in women's rearing. "Up until now, I had never thought about my body. Was I beautiful? Was I ugly? I had no idea [...] I took off my clothes, lay down, and let my hand stray over my body. It seemed to me that these curves and protuberances were harmonious".

Along with the hybrid Bildungsroman, the power of irony as a literary technique is seized to deviate power structures among dominant/dominated discourses and culminate into creating a hybrid consciousness. Wayne C. Booth defines dramatic irony as a "shared knowledge between the author and the reader". The narrative opens with a traumatic memory of Tituba's birth as an act of violence against "Christ the King". By ironically laying bare the complexity of memories as enmeshed in the

realm of discourse and textuality, Condé intends to debunk the epic tradition itself. Whereas the traditional epic hero echoes the deeply entrenched hegemony, Tituba endeavors to locate herself within a hybrid culture. Fluctuating between “irony and the desire to be serious”, Tituba attempts to remember and dis-member the patriarchal racial and theocratic communities

Abena, my mother, was raped by an English sailor on the deck of Christ the King one day in the year 1600 while the ship was sailing for Barbados. I was born from this act of aggression. From this act of hatred and contempt.

A despondent/sarcastic tone seems to be overwhelming, lingering until the end echoing Tituba’s agony as she is bound to “suffer during [her] life. A lot. A lot’ [Mama Yaya] uttered these terrifying words perfectly calmly, almost with a smile. ‘But [she]’ll survive’”. Born out of a rape, witnessing her mother when hanged in an idealistic haven based on theocratic principles, Tituba unveils the dim intimation of Puritan society. Indeed, the male religious chauvinistic community who suffered from religious oppression tends to re-enact the same pattern of intolerance and violence against those who deviate from their norms.

Condé’s unstable irony holds in its fold both the tragic and comic traditions in an attempt to fashion a hybrid text. The narrative follows the atrocities of the black-skinned female protagonist fluctuating between “irony and the desire to be serious”. Condé asserts that “[she] hesitated between irony and a desire to be serious. The result is that she is a sort of mock-epic character. When she was leading the fight of the maroons, it was a parody somehow”. By endowing Tituba with the prerogative to voice his own memories, Condé places the reader in the precarious position of choosing to fathom the irony of the author or to be serious about how traumatizing history of the ex-slave.

Tituba’s self-fashioning compels a mutual relationship between her former subdued self/(ves) and the newly-formed one whereby a dialogical interaction is triggered to ensure a more fluid rather inclusive process. Recognizing the hybridized “I” holds in its fold incorporation of others’ narratives. Through the intertextual references to Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, Condé puts white feminism in limelight. The use of allusion bestows upon the text the hue of feminism by merging the emotions of both anger and solidarity into racially free remarks that Hester voices.

I stopped the movement of her hand. “Mistress . . .”

“Don’t call me mistress.”

“What shall I call you then?”

“By my name: Hester. And what’s yours?”

“Tituba.”

Condé’s allusion to the heroine of Nathaniel Hawthorne *Hester Prynne* aims at subverting the history that has long silenced and eclipsed Tituba to create “multiple layers of interpretations” along with the multiple layers of identities. Myriad are the features of Tituba’s perspective on gender binary as it is inexorably linked to race, region, class, and slavery as her social status in the text as the typical mock-epic hero mirror the complexities of identity.

Jeanne Snitgen examines the presence of Hester as infiltration of Western feminism as “primarily separatist”. Both characters seize sexuality to overthrow the deeply-entrenched sense of shame of the body that has been instilled in women rearing. Whereas Tituba revels in her sexual intercourse with her husband, Hester is charged with adultery. yet Snitgen reads Tituba’s rejection of Hester’s sharp rejection of the male figure as a sharp undercut with the Puritan’s binary of good and evil. However, Tituba’s response to Hester echoes Alice Walker’s understanding of womanism, “committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female”(69) Snitgen writes, “a separatist society of women would be unthinkable for Tituba who in the end will die for the liberation of her people as a whole”(72). A bond was established between these rebellious figures despite their different dermal pigmentations, which stresses the overwhelming power of patriarchy where “Life is too kind to men, whatever their color.”

Conclusion:

The articulation of a hybrid self is premised on the ability to demystify the long-held objectifying discourses. It culminates in transcending the dialogic encounter with the Other and subsuming the stunted strictures of oppositional discourses into one’s own narrative. Since identity, as Foucault asserts, is a discursive construct, the hybrid’s self is, nonetheless, utterly dependent on the manly and

white existence and by consequence the regulations of the patriarchal and racial society. Acclimating to constraint becomes a necessity to ensure one's presence. Tituba's identity as a hybrid self emanates not only from the presence of the empowered other but also through the Other's language. It is amidst this interaction between discursive voices that the scathing line that has long stratified the I and its Other is demystified by/through a self-asserting narrative hybridized "I". Therefore, "I am me' in someone else's language, and in my own language, I am other" (Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination* 315.) In weaving history, the discursive construct, and narrative, Tituba turns into a "symbolic presence" that would pinpoint the hybrid terrain of diverse invisible, overshadowed, and suppressed black female ex-slaves. Although historically effaced, she manages to validate her own identity amidst a hegemonic culture. In inscribing a female figure within a Bildungsroman, irony within the drama, and narrative within history, Condé manages to not only reclaim but also re-position the invisible and silenced voice within the center creating hence a multi-cultural terrain, or hybrid space.

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