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Intertextuality and “The Joker”: Tirso de Molina’s *The Trickster of Seville* and Derek Walcott’s *The Joker of Seville*

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Derek Walcott quotes André Malraux' *Psychology of Art* in the epigraph to Book One of his autobiographical poem *Another Life*, "What makes the artist is the circumstance that in his youth he was more deeply moved by the sight of works of art than by that of the things which they portray." In the same vein, Graham Allen observes in *Intertextuality* that "[a]ll texts ... contain within them the ideological structures and struggles expressed in society through 'discourse'" (36). Allen cites Julia Kristeva for whom the text is: "a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text, in which several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another" (35). Kristeva herself defines intertextuality as a "transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another" (111); she prefers the "term *transposition* because it specifies that ... every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an intertextuality), one then understands that its 'place' of enunciation and its denoted 'object' are never single, complete and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated" (111). The question that arises is whether intertextuality is an adaptation or a transformation of a previously existing work by another writer; or rather the evidence of influences from one or more previously existing works within a text. The two versions of the Don Juan tale by two playwrights from different cultures and time periods are a case in point.

In writing *El Burlador de Sevilla y Convidado de piedra* (1630), Tirso de Molina was no doubt influenced by the Spanish folk legend of the Don Juan character, a libertine youth who was a practical joker (Galán Font and Ferreiro 9). Through Tirso's revival of this legend, Don Juan has come to be known universally. Many writers have been inspired to write their own versions of the Don Juan drama, among them, St. Lucian poet, dramatist and Nobel Laureate, Derek Walcott.¹ He has created an adaptation of Tirso's play, called *The Joker of Seville* (1978). Walcott not only restructures the play, but also employs a notable level of significant thematic and structural amplification as well as changes in characterization. For example, action moves between Spain and the New World, while in the case of Tirso's work, action is restricted to Europe. But what is even more to the point is Walcott's use of Caribbean folk languages and traditions in his adaptation of the work. In his essay, "The Caribbean: Culture or Mimicry?," Walcott argues that what the Caribbean artist engages in is not blind mimicry but "an act of imagination" (53-55). I propose to examine points of similarity and of difference between these two plays, highlighting in particular, aspects of structure, theme and characterization, in order to establish that intertextuality, in this case, involves not just references to a work or its adaptation but its imaginative amplification. This amplification results in a change of the text from its European origin to its new Caribbean form where key elements of Caribbean society are highlighted.

The very titles of the works call attention to the differences in their focus: Tirso de Molina's play is *The Trickster of Seville and the Guest of Stone* while Derek Walcott's is *The Joker of Seville*.² Tirso's title reflects clearly two parts of the play: the first alludes to the adventures and misdemeanors of Don Juan, that is, the ways in which he tricks and seduces

women and his challenges to the codes of honor, while the second alludes to his confrontation with the Guest of Stone, which results in his death. In the confrontation, the focus is on the statue of Don Gonzalo, Doña Ana's father, who has died at the hands of Don Juan. It is through this Guest of Stone that divine punishment is meted out to Don Juan (Galán Font and Ferreiro 33-34). On the other hand, in entitling his work *The Joker of Seville*, Walcott has chosen in his title, not to highlight this second important structural and thematic area. This does not mean that the second aspect of the play is neglected in the work itself; however, the "joker" aspect of Walcott's play acquires an added dimension towards the end of the work, where it is stated that were Don Juan to be resurrected, Death would be viewed as a Joker (*Joker* 2.6). This highlights the shift in focus with an emphasis on the "re-creation" of the work through the resurrection of Don Juan. So, from the very beginning, one can see areas where Walcott moves away from his source material to create his own version of the work.

A close look at the *dramatis personae* of both plays leads us to a better understanding of why each play is structured the way it is. In both plays, the principal characters are the same: Don Juan, Octavio, Isabella, Ana, Aminta, Tisbea, the King of Castile, the King of Naples, Don Gonzalo, Don Pedro, Don Diego, Anfriso, Batricio, The Marquis de Mota, Corydon, Cataliñón and Ripio. Walcott, however, has included additional characters in his version. One such character that plays an important role in the development of the plot is Rafael, an old actor. Rafael is accompanied by his troupe of actors. He is one of the first characters we meet, and he is present at crucial moments in most of the scenes. Rafael's words and actions seem to breathe new life into the long deceased Don Juan: "Earth, who holds him like a lover, / release him to us for one night" (*Joker* prologue). Even though Tirso de Molina has, in a sense, resurrected his Don Juan, he does not emphasize that aspect of the work's re-creation. As such, there is no need for such "incantations." He presents a Don Juan who is very much alive and actively involved in indulging in his favorite pastime from the moment the play opens. Don Juan's release to the public "for one night" (prologue) could be seen as (1) his resurrection through the imagination for the theatrical production, and (2) a resurrection of this sixteenth century work in a new place and era. Don Juan's Caribbean resurrection results in a change in the way the society is perceived. Whereas in the European version Don Juan highlights the hypocrisy and materialism of his seventeenth century society, the Caribbean Don Juan parodies a contemporary society still bound to colonial modes of behavior.

Tirso's play begins *in medias res*. Don Juan has just seduced Isabella having deceived her into thinking that he is Octavio. From this moment, Don Juan is the character that dominates the entire play with the majority of the other characters playing minor, supporting roles. Derek Walcott's play opens with the chorus, which includes the minor characters, found also in Tirso's play. But, in addition, the chorus includes "a ship's crew, wedding guests, nuns, courtiers, ladies, slaves, fishergirls, musicians, whores, stickfighters, dancers" (prologue). These characters may best be described as "supporting" rather than minor for they are all active in the interpretation of their roles, which are clearly related to the production of a play with an essentially Caribbean

ambiance; in fact, they reflect significant groups in a Caribbean society. Walcott was commissioned by Britain's Royal Shakespeare Company to adapt Tirso's play in 1973; John Thieme quotes Walcott on the genesis of *The Joker*:

I did not want to produce a play purely for the Shakespeare Company or English actors and audiences. I wanted to write a play that could also be produced in the West Indies. So what I have done is put Don Juan, or the Joker of Seville, in a West Indian setting ... (105)³

The active participation of these "types," who no doubt are affected in one way or another by the misbehavior of Don Juan, allows a panoramic view of Caribbean societies. Intertextuality as amplification that results in a changed end product is evident here not just in the expansion of the corps of actors who bring more local/regional flavor to the work, but in the roles they play in developing more effectively the themes Walcott brings to the fore in his work. The West Indian setting that Walcott refers to is not simply the physical environment; people are an integral part of this setting. In a society that is less rigidly stratified than seventeenth century Spanish society, people of various classes and backgrounds are able to make their voices heard.

Derek Walcott's "caribbeanization" of this Spanish Golden Age play is an interesting study in technique. First of all, the playwright carefully incorporates signature elements of the region's culture and history: environment, language, music, dance and folk traditions. Walcott ensures that what he does is precisely what Kristeva describes as a "transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another" (111). The elements of the Spanish Golden Age text with the various cultural elements drawn from that society have been moved into a different sign system that of the Caribbean. This results in fundamental changes that I will highlight throughout this paper so as to demonstrate that Walcott's use of culture is not superficial but addresses profound ideological issues within the society. The play opens "on a Caribbean estate" (*Joker* Prologue), and is clearly intended to be performed in a specific way because of the detailed stage directions which Walcott includes: "[t]he audience should sit on wooden bleachers close to the action, as in a rural bullfight, cockfight, or stickfight" (prologue). These guidelines, or stage directions, set the tone for the beginning of a folk theater, which incorporates elements of traditional Caribbean folk life. George Northup explains that plays in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Spain were performed in *corrales*, or courtyards:

The stage was set up at one end of the yard. The aristocracy looked down upon it, seated at the windows of surrounding houses. In front of the stage, and laterally around the building, were benches. At the opposite end, directly facing the stage, was a cage termed the *cazuela*, "stewpan," in which women of the lower class were cooped. In front of this was standing-room for the groundlings, *moqueteros*, always a turbulent element. (276)

There is a similarity in the open-air setting for the performance of both plays. However, whereas in Golden Age Spain such a setting was the norm (except for those plays performed in churches and palaces), in Walcott's case it would appear that such a setting is deliberate and is employed to create a particular environment which in many cases relates to the play's action. Quoting the reviews of the premiere performance of *The Joker* in Trinidad, Bruce King states in *Derek Walcott and West Indian Drama* that "the staging created immediacy, movement and contact with the audience" (213). According to King, this resulted in "the lively interaction between cast and audience" (212). With this type of staging, Walcott achieves his aim of "a theatre ... that conveys the power of Jacobean theatre, that has the vigor of common speech, and that has the appeal of the Elizabethan pit—vulgar, rhetorical, but memorable" (Hartigan 4). The cultural hybridity that characterizes the Caribbean is evident throughout Walcott's play; the rhythms of Caribbean language pulsate from every utterance. The play begins with a song in Spanish, and then moves to English and French. The heritage of the people is further captured by the music, which links elements of European and Caribbean cultures with their African heritage. Walcott also uses the English-based Creole that is spoken in the English-speaking Caribbean in some parts of his work. He thus brings to the work "a distinct Caribbean style, a theatre that spoke to the people in their own language—a marvelously lyrical blend of English and patois ..." (Hartigan 4).

Evidence of Caribbean English-based Creole, which is the language of the people, exists in the song of the slaves as they sail across the Atlantic: "Hey, hey, hey! / Is the U.S.A. / Once we get dere / we gonna be O.K!" (*Joker* 1.3). The use of Creole is one of the aspects of adaptation in the work that brings the Caribbean to the fore. This is again evident when Tisbea first encounters Don Juan on the shore. She moves from her eloquent metaphorical language, which establishes that she is educated and widely read, to the Creole utterance of a bashful girl. When she is asked her name, she responds: "Me? Oh, I ent nobody, sir. Tisbea. A poor fishergirl" (1.4). Later in the same scene, as the fishergirls sing of Tisbea's seduction, Caribbean Creole again surfaces: "Tisbea went and bathe, / a swordfish take she maid" (1.4). The swordfish here should not be interpreted as a literal fish, especially given the fact that this image was used colloquially some decades ago to refer to a "Don Juan" type individual, no doubt because of the phallic image this particular species of fish evokes. The swordfish image is also appropriate as the shipwrecked Don Juan literally comes "out of the sea" to seduce Tisbea. The creole element in Tisbea's speech when she is nervous contrasts with that of her counterpart in Tirso's work whose eloquent diction never falters. Patricia Ismond, in describing the language of *The Joker*, points out that "the 'high,' dignified style of the original classic is being brought closer to and modulated by the earthy style of popular West Indian expression. The popular intersects with the grand style to remind the latter in its own coinage" (263). What Walcott engages in here is an integral part of his ideology regarding language in postcolonial theater. In *What the Twilight Says*, he describes language as a weapon that the post-colonial subject uses to deliver himself "from servitude" (15). He argues that "the only way to re-create this language was to share in the

torture of its articulation. This did not mean the jettisoning of "culture" but, by the writer's making creative use of his schizophrenia, an eclectic fusion of the old and the new" (16).

According to Walcott, "[r]hythm ... is inherent in the [Caribbean] culture ... [t]here is something in the West Indian temperament—white, black, green, Chinese, whatever—that has a terrific spontaneity" (qtd. in Hartigan 5). The rhythms of language, music and dance are also integral parts of this drama. In the introduction to the play, Walcott informs us that the music of the Spanish people, through their language, "entered [his] head" and he is thus able to relate "the music and drama of the Spanish verse to what strongly survives in Spanish Trinidad" (4). Walcott's revelation of the role that Spanish music and language played in the genesis of this play is significant as it points to the way in which he uses elements of a foreign culture in his creation of a truly Caribbean musical drama that reflects the cultural and social realities of the region. There are the songs of the chorus, the fishergirls, the nuns, Rafael and his troupe and some sung by the protagonist himself. The play opens with a song, and of the fourteen scenes in this work, only five do not end with music. Much of the music in Walcott's play evokes the Caribbean through the lyrics, the rhythm and the instrumentation. The song quoted earlier, which is sung by the fishergirls, is itself an adaptation of a West Indian calypso: "Dorothy went and bathe / And a catfish mek a raid / Dorothy bawl, / Oh, fire in de wata!" Sheila Rampersaud, in her review of a 1988 staging of this work, pinpoints "the music, the lilting strains of the guitar accompanied by the soft notes of the pan?" (25).

Walcott also incorporates the song and dance routine of the stickfight into his version of the play. The stickfight, a part of the Trinidadian folk tradition, probably has its origins in Africa. According to Errol Hill it is seldom practiced today, except at carnival time (25). Hill goes on to describe the stickfight as "both a dance and a combat. The fighter was first a performer conscious that his play was watched by a critical audience. He had to demonstrate complete mastery of the art by executing intricate dance steps up to the moment of an attacking or defensive maneuver" (27). In the opening scene of Walcott's play, there is a stickfight in which Don Juan is resurrected to relive his life as a skillful "stickman." Here, Walcott uses a Trinidadian folk tradition and parallels the dexterity of the stickman in his master performance with Don Juan's actions as he maneuvers his way from conquest to conquest in a combative spirit. Don Juan as a conquering stickman invokes the traditional image of the *macho* Caribbean male whose "virility has been celebrated in many classic calypsos" ("A Caribbean Don Juan" 64).

In Tirso's play, aspects of the culture of the Spanish people are brought out in acts 2 and 3 in the wedding celebration of Aminta and Batricio, two peasants. There is too, the tradition of honor, which transcends social classes. Music, although present in Tirso's play, is less highlighted, as the musicians only appear on three occasions: (1) in act 2 immediately before and after he attempts to seduce Doña Ana, and after the subsequent murder of her father; (2) towards the end of act 2 at the wedding of Aminta and Batricio; (3) and in act 3 during Don Juan's encounters with the statue of Don Gonzalo. In Tirso's play, this music does not give us much

insight into the character of the people; in Walcott's, it does. It is thus safe to say, that in this rewriting of Tirso's play, Walcott transforms the text to suit a Caribbean audience, one that is very much defined by its music. The musical rhythms of the English and Spanish speaking Caribbean have achieved international notoriety, from calypso, soca, and chutney, to salsa, meringue and bachata. Loud pulsating rhythms are synonymous with life in the Caribbean. Walcott's incorporation of the Caribbean, language, music and folk culture is a strategy, which suggests that Don Juan can be resurrected in any society, and is thus universal and possibly immortal.

There are other telling structural differences in these two plays. Tirso's play is one that is typical of the Spanish Golden Age in that it consists of three acts, each act having a different number of scenes. For instance, act 1 has four scenes, act 2 has three and act 3 has eight. Walcott's work consists of a prologue and two acts. Act 1 is divided into eight scenes while act 2 has six. Walcott's prologue indicates his intention to set the scene and the background against which the play is to be performed "in the Trinidad countryside." As mentioned previously, the prologue depicts a stickfight scene, which involves Caribbean music and dance. The presence of this episode establishes from the beginning an essentially Caribbean tone, which makes the play unique in its own way. More importantly, the prologue reveals how Don Juan can be resurrected whenever the drama is to be re-enacted. The very important role of Rafael, an old actor and village elder, is evident here as he announces:

This is the eve of All Souls,
our carnival of candles,
when our village, San Juan, re-creates
a legend that cannot grow old ...
... bring him across
the ocean, with salt, real flesh
as man, to live his loves over.
(Kneels)
Earth, who holds him like a lover,
release him to us for one night ... (prologue)

In this way, Walcott resurrects Don Juan so that the action may begin in scene 1. In contrast, Don Juan is very much alive when Tirso's play opens.

Although for the most part, both plays follow the same sequence of events, there are some noticeable variations, which point to the idea of plurality of the object that Kristeva cites as vital to intertextuality. In scene 1 of both plays, the action takes place in Naples and involves Isabella's seduction by Don Juan. Whereas in Tirso's play all the action that takes place in Naples is completed in this first scene, in Walcott's work the action in Naples is carried over to scene 2 as Octavio is apprised of the situation concerning Isabella's seduction and the penance she is required to pay. Scene 3 of *The Trickster* is devoted entirely to the initial encounter

between Tisbea and Don Juan whereas, in Walcott's *Joker*, this scene begins with the King's meeting with Don Gonzalo at the Spanish court and ends with Don Juan and Cataliñón sailing to the New World aboard a ship when they are shipwrecked. Here there is more evidence of variation since the meeting between the King and Don Gonzalo takes place in scene 4 of Tirso's work. An examination of act 2 of Walcott's work highlights another variation. Some of the events that are included do not appear in Tirso's play. For instance, in act 2 scene 3 of Walcott's *Joker*, we meet Octavio, Isabella's former betrothed, who is returning from a year spent in a monastery. In *The Trickster of Seville*, Octavio never enters a monastery, nor does Ana ever enter a convent. In the second section of act 2 scene 4, Octavio and Rafael devise a plan to avenge themselves against Don Juan. This episode does not take place in Tirso's play. Moreover, in *The Trickster of Seville*, Don Juan is killed towards the end of act 3 when he goes to supper with Don Gonzalo's statue. In Walcott's version, he is killed during the supper that takes place at Don Juan's sanctuary in the cathedral (2.6). What this shows is that although for the greater part the plays follow a similar sequence of events, Walcott makes vital structural changes that are closely linked to the ways in which he amplifies the themes and sub-themes which are related to the history of Caribbean societies in regard to conquest, colonization and independence.

Characterization is a key element used to highlight the themes of both plays. The themes of vengeance and a preoccupation with honor are of prime importance in Tirso's play. These themes are typical of seventeenth century Spanish Golden Age drama, particularly the honor plays. Walcott takes his characters beyond the development of these themes on a personal level and sheds light on how these are linked to the wider society and its concerns. An examination of the roles of Don Juan, Isabella, Ana, Tisbea and Aminta allows a better appreciation of this amplification. Isabella is the first woman whom Don Juan seduces. In Tirso's play, she is portrayed as a noble woman who is seeking sexual gratification and who does not display a high degree of intelligence. She is the stereotypical woman of the Golden Age drama who is flattered by a man's description of her physical beauty; one who is concerned about her honor only after it has been lost. At the beginning of the play, Isabella glories in "each flattering oath, / Promise, and tender wish ..." (*Trickster* 1.1). She, however, laments her lost honor: "What makes me forlorn / Is honour which, though wife, / I must lament the years of all my life" (3.2). In similar fashion, we note that soon after Isabella realizes she has been "duped" by Don Juan, she laments: "Oh, my lost honour!" (1.1). She decides to seek vengeance for the outrage, even though she admits to Tisbea: "no vengeance can suffice so great evil" (3.2). Isabella is portrayed as one who is motivated by her quest for vengeance. But, she is a flat character. Her main concern at the beginning of the play is a noble marriage to Octavio. Indeed, when the King of Spain learns of Don Juan's exploits in Naples, he decrees that Don Juan marry Isabella. The fact that she is losing her original love does not worry Isabella. She will still be marrying a nobleman. Note her words to Fabio: "My sadness is not due / To marrying Don Juan, since it's true / He is most nobly born / And the world knows it ..." (3.2). Isabella's behavior thus highlights a quest for vengeance, and a preoccupation with regaining her honor.

In both works, Isabella is deceived into thinking that Don Juan is Octavio because of his disguise. However, in Walcott's *Joker of Seville* more detail is provided regarding the nature of the deception. We are told that Octavio gives his cloak to Don Juan who pretends to be a poor beggar woman: "... May my cloak's / arm husband you through this cold night" (*Joker* 1.1). When the matter is made known to the King, Isabella's attempts to defend her actions fall on deaf ears. As the King sentences her to a year's penance in a convent, she maintains her silence before patriarchal authority:

A woman, yes! That was my wrong,
born to this privilege of debasement,
ordered to keep a civil tongue
locked in its civil ivory casement.
When you are pious, she's a wife,
and, when appropriate, a whore.
Now that you've simplified my life
to silence, I will speak no more. (1.1)

Walcott's Isabella sheds light on the way in which women are regarded in that male-dominated society. When we meet Isabella later, after her year in the convent, she is a different person; one who is "liberated." She owes this liberation she says, to Don Juan, who "taught us choice. / He, the great Joker of Seville, / whose mischief is simply a boy's / has made us women, that is all" (2.2).

Walcott's Isabella does not seek vengeance. She has gained insight into Don Juan's character and realizes that in many ways his victims share the same character traits that he does. She says to Ana:

... he's shown the lot of us
is that our lust for propriety
as wives is just as lecherous
as his ... He set us free! (2.2)

Isabella thus moves from being the stereotypical Golden Age lady who conforms to societal pressure, to one who now recognizes the hypocrisy of the society in which she lives. She knows what kind of person she is and is comfortable with herself. She has matured and has grown psychologically. Thieme argues that in *Isabella*, Don Juan has gained a convert to his philosophy (69). Isabella's characterization therefore, reinforces Walcott's critique of a society that is stuck in the past in its treatment of women. Walcott's *Isabella* reveals that a society that values marriage at all cost forces women to engage in some of the same practices as philandering men like Don Juan in their attempts to secure husbands. In Caribbean societies where propriety by women particularly with regard to the opposite sex is highly valued, Isabella's voicing of her independence in a 1970s play is indeed a revolutionary move. By declaring her liberation from

these restrictive patriarchal practices that deny women their voices, Isabella points to an opening up of Caribbean society to a point where women see patriarchy's shortcomings for what they are and are willing to move beyond these to secure their own independence.

Another point of difference between the two plays is the treatment of Ana. In Tirso's work, Don Juan does not seduce Ana. She discovers who he is before he puts his plan into action and calls for help. Her father Don Gonzalo comes to her rescue. In the ensuing encounter between Don Gonzalo and Don Juan, Don Gonzalo is killed. Doña Ana's main concern for vengeance is not emphasized in this play. She virtually disappears after her father's death. She is mentioned towards the end of the play when the marriages are being arranged (*Trickster* 2.2). Ana is much more active in Walcott's work. In contrast to what happens in *Trickster*, Don Juan does, in fact, seduce Ana. To make matters worse, he also kills her father. The fact that Don Juan seduces her and kills her father means that she must then seek vengeance. In conversation with Isabella, she refers to Don Juan as a "serpent ... [who] struck [her] father" and speaks of her hatred for him and of her wish that he pay for what he has done:

... With my last breath
I'll pray for justice, and for both
of you, until he pays that debt. (*Joker* 2.2)

Ana's expanded role in Walcott's play emphasizes the theme of vengeance and justice for wrongs committed. Even though these are the themes that are key to Tirso's work, by having a different character convey them Walcott emphasizes the active role played by women in Caribbean societies. Ana actively contributes to her own downfall by arranging a rendezvous with the Marquis de la Mota, quite unknown to her father. This is what results in her seduction by Don Juan. Her character is much more developed in Walcott's play, not just because she emphasizes more overtly the themes of vengeance and justice, but also because she is an active participant in all the action and does not simply fade into the background, as does her seventeenth-century namesake.

An analysis of the way Tisbea is portrayed by both playwrights shows that she is a well-read, intelligent person. When she is describing Cataliñón who rescues Don Juan, and is bringing him from the sea, Tisbea makes references to Greek mythology, for example: "A man, borne on the rising swells / And bravely with the seas at strife, / Upon his back his comrade saves / As once Aeneas bore Anchises" (*Trickster* 1.2). In *The Joker*, Tisbea professes knowledge of Homer (1.4). Nonetheless, despite her protestations of being "hard to get" she seems easily conquered by Don Juan's charm. Walcott makes it quite clear that what Tisbea hopes for in her relationship with Don Juan is marriage. After giving herself to him she says, "And, sir, all that you're looking for / I hope I'll give like a good wife" (*Trickster* 1.5). On the other hand, in *The Trickster* it is Don Juan who initiates the talk about marriage in order to be able to seduce Tisbea. Of course once Don Juan makes her this promise, she readily accepts it and becomes another one of his conquests. Tisbea, in Walcott's *The Joker of Seville*, helps to emphasize Don Juan's belief that

women seek marriage as a “weapon . . . to lambaste [their] ravaged honor” (1.6). Where in Tirso’s play *Tisbea* and all the other women are more passive and are seduced by Don Juan, in Walcott’s work they make it clear that they must conform to the societal norms, one of which is marriage in cases of lost honor. Marriage to all intents and purposes seems to be used as a remedy to rectify the consequences of their desire.

There is an added dimension to the role played by Walcott’s *Tisbea*. She is the innocent girl of the “New World” who is seduced by the worldly-wise trickster from the Old World. *Tisbea* in representing the “New World” which is ravaged by the “Old” further amplifies the element of social criticism, which includes exploitation. Don Juan speaks of bringing “the old gospel to the New World” (*Joker* 1.4). *Tisbea* is ravaged and left dejected and abandoned to her own destructive devices. Walcott seems here to be drawing a parallel with what occurred between Europe and the New World where rich, virgin territory was exploited and abandoned. In caribbeanizing the play, it is not surprising that Walcott includes social and historical considerations, which played a vital role in shaping the character of the region’s inhabitants.

Both Tirso and Walcott portray Aminta (another rural female) as being materialistic. In order to seduce her, Don Juan has to flatter her with promises of riches and of course, with marriage to a nobleman:

Ah, my Aminta,
Tomorrow you will walk in silver buskins
Studded with tacks of gold from head to toe.
Your alabaster throat will be imprisoned
In necklaces of diamonds and rubies,
And your white fingers, in their flashing rings,
Will seem transparent pearls. (*Trickster* 3.2)

The Don Juan in Walcott’s play also flatters and deceives Aminta, though he does not have to use as much persuasion to seduce her. Aminta, who is about to be married to Batricio, seems quite happy that she is “still / a bride, but more: a royal one” (*Joker* 2.1). Aminta’s materialism and her pragmatism are further highlighted in act 2 scene 2 when she meets with Isabella and Ana at the palace. Through her conversations with these two ladies, she realizes that Don Juan has tricked her. She says to Don Pedro: “I’m not leaving here without / at least a duke. I spent money to get here” (2.2). The ensuing conversation indicates that Aminta does succeed in getting a duke, Don Pedro:

DON PEDRO: A duke, eh? This court
is one fairyland of dukes,
if they’re the sort you’re looking for.
But a fresh, rational girl with looks
& like yours needs something more mature.

You've an elemental nature
and the great thing about nature
is how she heals herself, rather
than brood and pine. It's laughter
of a deeper sort.

AMINTA: His Majesty's
waiting, sir.

DON PEDRO: There's just one thing more.

AMINTA: What's that?

DON PEDRO: May I? You have rude eyes.

(Aminta laughs)

Someone has told you this before?

AMINTA: Yes, but I'm starting to forget
his name.

DON PEDRO: I love the way you laugh.

AMINTA: Well, sir, a certain Joker taught
me this same laughter that you love.

(Aminta and Pedro exit, laughing arm in arm.) (2.2)

Aminta is therefore portrayed as the peasant who seeks upward social mobility, through marriage to a nobleman. She helps to reinforce Don Juan's point that the hypocrisy and materialism of the society transcend all social classes. He expresses his view of the country folk in this way: "Simple country folk ... / but give them a chance, and they'll juck / your eyes out, just like the bourgeois. / This is no different from the court" (2.1).

The portrayal of the protagonist by both writers further emphasizes the use of thematic amplification through characterization. In Tirso's work, Don Juan is a rougish rake whose sole purpose seems to be the seduction of women. His behavior, although despicable, is portrayed as being prankish, a game. When planning to seduce Ana, he says: "Oh, I could roar with laughter! I'll enjoy her / By the same trick that limed the other one, / Isabel, back in Naples" (*Trickster* 2.1). Later, in the same scene when he is criticized by Cataliñón, he replies, "... he who *does* most / *Wins* most" (2.1). Another example of his flippant attitude is noted when he senses imminent success with Tisbea, "Well in credit I must be / If not till death my reckoning: lucky me!" (1.5).

In both plays, Don Juan uses his power and influence, earned through his social status to take advantage of women. Tirso's characterization of Don Juan highlights the ills of Spanish Golden Age society. Don Juan, as a favorite of the King, continues his rampant course of seduction almost unchecked. He attempts to quell Cataliñón's fear with these words: "Seeing my father is chief justice and / The King's most private friend, what can you fear?" (3.1). Through Don Juan, one is made aware of the hypocrisy, double standards and materialism of the society. One also realizes the importance of honor, and vengeance, and the quest for justice, which follows in the wake of lost honor or, of wrongdoing. For example, these are the words of the dying Don Gonzalo: "My frozen blood you've swelled / With fury. I am dead. I can expect / No better thing. My fury will pursue you" (2.2). In the end, Don Gonzalo's fury vents itself on Don Juan when he is killed by the dead man's statue. Ironically, however, the King decrees that Don Juan's tomb be preserved as a "memory through all time" (3.8). There is the suggestion that in keeping Don Juan's memory alive, his reckless lifestyle and the resulting Divine punishment could be used as an example to admonish all who would like to emulate such a course in life. However, this pronouncement could be interpreted as a triumph of the societal hypocrisy, since the crown is bestowing recognition on one who is so infamous.

Walcott's characterization of Don Juan is presented more forcefully than his Golden Age counterpart. In Walcott, Don Juan describes himself as "a force, a principle" (*Joker* 1.5). Later, he says to Octavio:

I serve one principle! That of
the generating earth whose laws
compel the loping lion to move
toward the fallow lioness,
who in this second embodied
his buckling stagger! I
fought for that freedom delivered
after Eden. If I defy
your principles because I served
nature, that was chivalry
less unnatural than your own. (2.6)

Don Juan sees himself as the agent that causes others to reveal their true selves, or as a phenomenon that is automatically born when certain conditions, such as hypocrisy, materialism and the like are prevalent. In an already corrupt society, he brings to the surface the ills that exist. He therefore sees himself as the one who frees women from the restrictions of a hypocritical society, to love in the way they would like to be loved. Don Juan "sees himself as an opponent of the hypocrisy of chivalric society and a liberator of its women" ("A Caribbean Don Juan" 69).

Walcott's Don Juan is more openly critical of the society and its norms. In criticizing the code of honor, he says: "This madness they call Honor kills / for the revenge of cuckoldry"

(*Joker* 1.8). He also criticizes the way the society views women. Note what he says of Ana: "Send her to a brothel, / or a convent, since Castilian / justice has simplified her choice" (1.8). Such a verdict shows that a woman does not have much choice in that society. Don Juan describes the societal obligation of marriage as "the lies / of contracts, churches, marriages" (2.1).

In an initial reading of Walcott's *The Joker of Seville*, one may question the characterization of Don Juan and his treatment of women. Even though Tirso's Don Juan does portray *macho* behavior, there is a degree of subtlety in his portrayal. In Walcott's work his *machismo* is treated much more openly. On one level, such characterization speaks of the Caribbean where the male is still to some extent viewed as "a walking phallic symbol" ("A Caribbean Don Juan" 64). Ken Jaikeransingh, in his review of the play, speaks of "the glib, 'sweet man' persona in which Walcott has wrapped his protagonist ... Don Juan chats up his women in that unique mix of exaggeration, adulation, lewdness and *mamaguey* that historically has worked so well for the West Indian male" (16). Jaikeransingh shows that Caribbean audiences can identify with this characterization and so, for them, it holds a particular appeal. At the end of Walcott's play, the Ace of Death sings:

Now, whether Juan gone down to Hell
or up to Heaven, I cannot tell;
whether he gone down to Hell
or up to Heaven, earth will not tell;
but the truest joke he could play
is to come back to us one day,
because if there's resurrection, Death is the Joker;
sans humanité! (*Joker* 2.6)

Here, there is a question as to whether or not Don Juan can be resurrected. The fact that this is done in the very work in which the question is posed, speaks for itself.

In both plays, Don Juan is immortal in the *macho* ethic that is still prevalent in many societies. He is also made immortal through his being portrayed as a force that criticizes the wrongs in the society. As mentioned at the outset, Walcott introduces many new characters in his play. Two such characters whose roles are directly related to the amplification of themes in this work are Jack and Rafael. As a member of Rafael's troupe, Jack is a young, cross-dressing singer. His first direct encounter with Don Juan comes in act 1 scene 7. Don Juan requests a song from Jack. However, in requesting the song he also refers to Jack as "that catamite there [who] tucks his soft candle through his thighs / and simpers like an Infanta!" (*Joker* 1.7). No doubt it is because of Don Juan's open criticism of Jack's sexuality that "[h]e'll never sing again," as he commits suicide (2.4). Jack himself recalls: "Boy, girl, girl, boy. They called me Jack. / I was both in that other life, / till, in the square that day, your look / divided me, deep as this knife" (2.6). Jack's inclusion in the play is a critique of the bigotry in West Indian societies toward

homosexuals. This adds to the crimes of which Juan is guilty. For in Walcott's play it is not only Don Gonzalo that he kills. He is responsible for the deaths of Jack, Anfriso and Batricio. Such bloodguilt, along with his numerous other crimes, indeed makes it impossible for Don Juan to escape Divine Justice. Hence, through characters like Jack, Don Juan is seen not just as a rake that seduces women for the fun of it, but also as a destructive force within the society.

Rafael's role is that of "an old actor" who is the Village Elder. He has a troupe that includes the Ace of Death, the Queen of Hearts, the Joker and the boy named Jack. It is of interest that Rafael, at the beginning of the play is dressed in "a costume resembling the statue's" (prologue), that is, the statue of Don Gonzalo. Note also that it is Rafael's incantation, which brings Don Juan back to life. Rafael is also present at certain crucial times in the play. For instance, it is Rafael, with a "street crowd, and stickfighters" who witnesses the duel between Don Juan and Don Gonzalo, which results in the death of the latter (1.8). As Gonzalo's body is borne away, Rafael and his troupe sing: "O Lord, let resurrection come from this stickfight! / ... We cannot believe that death is champion" (1.8).

Rafael also appears in the concluding act of the play. Both he and Octavio seek vengeance on Don Juan: Octavio, because of Juan's seduction of Isabella, and Rafael, because it is Juan's attitude which causes his troupe member, Jack, to commit suicide. Don Octavio therefore presses Rafael into service in his quest for vengeance. Rafael, dressed as the statue, is to play the role for which he is dressed, thus deceiving Don Juan into believing that it is really the dead Don Gonzalo with whom he is dining. Then, as Octavio says to Rafael, "... you just unnerve him. / I'll end it ..." (2.4). However, the prophecy in the song of the Ace of Death seems to be fulfilled when, instead of Rafael, the statue itself turns up to dine with Don Juan and seeks its own vengeance by "pull[ing] him down to hell" (2.6). But, Don Juan may yet reappear. According to the song sung later by the Ace of Death, "... if there's resurrection, Death is the Joker" (2.6). Death does seem to be the Joker here, for Rafael and Don Octavio are both cheated out of their desire to have a hand in Don Juan's death. Also, the tables are reversed when Don Juan finds himself in the position of the *burlado* (the one who is laughed at). When confronted by the statue, he thinks that it is the costumed Rafael and pleads, "All right, Rafael. The joke is done ... / Let go!" (2.6). However, his avenger is not whom he thinks it is, just as he often times is not the person expected in the bedrooms of various women. Rafael concludes by expressing a thought similar to that expressed by Isabella in act 2 scene 2:

How silent all his women were!
Custom gave us the natural art
to sing in couplets and depart.
And custom gave us our roles
of those who danced before us ... (2.6)

Bound by tradition, the women and the society at large submit to the decisions of the patriarch, in this case, the King of Castile. Here, once again, social criticism is more overt than in Tirso's play.

In conclusion, Walcott has engaged in what Thieme calls "cultural cross-pollination" ("A Caribbean Don Juan" 64), and this has made his work more complex than the original. Bruce King even suggests that some critics feel that in amplifying the work Walcott made it too complex to be easily understood (209-15). However, it is evident that Walcott has with this project sought to underscore the maturity of his writing. In "The Muse of History" he explains that he sees "the assimilation of the features of every ancestor" to be a mark of such maturity (36). He has done this through his restructuring of the work and the amplification of many of its elements, including its characters and themes, within a Caribbean context. In Walcott's play too, society, with its false standards in this regard, seems more blameworthy than Don Juan himself. Thus both *The Trickster of Seville* and *The Joker of Seville* deal in their distinctive ways with themes of honor, vengeance and justice, and social criticism, which are as important today as they are in the seventeenth century. The Don Juan story is a text that is open to an endless series of interpretations. As Walcott himself says in the preface of one of the programs for a performance of *The Joker*: "legends find their own vessels, when one oracle is exhausted, they may spring up in unexpected ground, just as vital, real, vulgar and apprehensible as they were when they first sprung to life" (qtd. by Jaikeransingh 16). Walcott reveals that intertextuality is not simply mimicry or transplantation. It is evident that he has not engaged in simple mimicry. He imaginatively amplified structure, themes and characterization in an attempt to highlight fundamental elements and ills of Caribbean society, in so doing what we have in *The Joker of Seville* is a not a recasting of an old work but a new drama, a Caribbean drama.

Notes

¹Two memorable versions are: *Don Juan ou le festin de pierre* (1655) by the French writer Molière, and *Don Juan Tenorio* (1844) by the Spaniard, José Zorilla y Moral.

²For the purpose of this paper Roy Campbell's (1985) translation of Tirso de Molina's play *El Burlador de Sevilla y Convidado de piedra* is the one from which all references are taken. References from Campbell's translation are indicated in parenthetical documentation by the word *Trickster*, followed by the Act and Scene numbers.

³This quote originally comes from an interview with Walcott by Therese Mills entitled "Don Juan was a Stickman!" *Trinidad Guardian*, 18 November 1973, 4.

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