'Latent Cross-Culturalities': Wilson Harris's and Wole Soyinka's Creative Alternative to Theory[1]

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Cross-culturalism has been for some time a major theme in postcolonial criticism though, as with many concepts, it elicits a variety of interpretations. To writers like Wilson Harris and Wole Soyinka it clearly implies more than a recognition of different kinds of otherness, cultural exchange, or even cultural hybridity. Their early attraction to ancient Greek culture, clearly a stimulus to their creativity, their revival and adaptation of some of its myths, archetypes or literary masterpieces to their own cultural inheritance[2] already point to a kind of ontological cross-culturalism which subverts prevailing Western assumptions concerning human nature and societies and their representation in art. In his version of *The Bacchae* Soyinka sought, he said, to bring to light man's need to relate to nature and the gods while striving for psychical liberation. He also wrote that a genuinely eclectic approach to creativity, an 'awareness of a universal catalogue of metaphors of art' is 'the only reliable antidote to the everchanging establishment monomania of the artistic world'.[3] In his *Carnival Trilogy*[4] Harris breaks down monumental figures like the hero/monster Ulysses into multiple, multi-dimen-

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[1] This paper was read at the University of Leeds on 2 September 1994 at the Conference 'Moving Words, Moving Worlds'. Its title is borrowed from Wilson Harris's essay 'Quetzalcoatl and the Smoking Mirror. Reflections on Originality and Tradition', *Wasafiri*, 20 (Autumn, 1994), 38–41, p. 40.

[2] See Wilson Harris's personification of Guyanese peasants as Greek heroes in his poetry collection *Eternity to Season* (Guyana, 1954, rpt. London: New Beacon Books, 1978) and Soyinka's identification of Yoruba gods with Greek deities.

[3] Wole Soyinka, 'Between Self and System. The Artist in Search of Liberation', in *Art, Dialogue and Outrage. Essays on Literature and Culture* (Ibadan: New Horn Press, 1988), pp. 71, 77, and 65.

[4] Wilson Harris, *The Carnival Trilogy* includes *Carnival* (London: Faber and Faber,

sional character/masks in a process of re-vision and cross-culturalization of all fictional elements. Moreover, both writers have explicitly drawn attention in their criticism to rationally inexplicable cultural correspondences, commenting on strange examples of cross-culturality.

In his essay 'Climates of Art' Soyinka explains that when first confronted with one of Francis Bacon's self-portraits, he was struck by its resemblance with an *egungun* mask. He emphasizes 'the similarity in the use of distortion' between the Yoruba mask in motion and the faces in Bacon's painting which, he says, 'appeared to be... almost an attempt to capture an essence of that mask in motion — but without the numinous dimension'.[5] His most striking experience, however, was when he entered the studio of the Australian artist Colin Garland, and on seeing one of his paintings, exclaimed "abiku!" When a Yoruba mother loses several young children, it is believed that the same child dies and comes back to life again in a different form, tormenting his mother by threatening to go back to the other world. This is the Abiku, and Soyinka had seen 'an extension of Abiku's mythic metaphor in the painting' while he felt that the painter 'had unwittingly been made an instrument of the wilful child'.[6]

In two recent essays Wilson Harris gives a few examples of cross-culturality he became aware of in North America:
— a small Mexican clay figure called warrior with a caricaturized royal tiger showing a striking resemblance to Henry VIII.
— arom the same period, between the sixth and tenth century, a ruling personage known as the Juarez sculpture because of its resemblance to President Juarez.
— an ancient Mexican figure with a Chinese physiognomy.
— a hieratic ape from Guatemala, dated A.D. 100, which might have come from a medieval European cathedral.
— and a massive Olmec head from LaVenta which seems Negroid or African.

'It is,' Harris comments, 'as if all ethnicities, all the races of the earth travelled to ancient America to become models for their craftsmen and artists'.[7] But the most wide-ranging instances of artistic cross-culturality

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1985), *The Infinite Rehearsal* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), and *The Four Banks of the River of Space* (London: Faber and Faber, 1990).

[5] Wole Soyinka, 'Climates of Art' in *Art, Dialogue and Outrage*, pp. 256–7.

[6] Soyinka, *Climates*, p. 258.

[7] Wilson Harris, 'Imagination, Dead, Imagine: Bridging a Chasm', *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 7, (1994), 185–95, p. 186.

he explores are between Titian's painting of the 'Allegory of Prudence' which represents three men's heads at different ages 'doubled' in a sense by three heads of animals, wolf, lion and dog; the god-man Quetzal-coatl; a Macusi bone-flute; and finally, an Australian aboriginal painting in which human presences seem to be rooted in animal creatures.[8]

The transcultural similarities Harris and Soyinka detect in areas of creativeness so widely separated in both time and space illustrate a perception of creativity and of the function of art in society which differs from concepts that underpin much postcolonial theory, although these writers' essays, particularly Harris's, are repeatedly used by theorists to support or vindicate their position. Soyinka stated that 'man's recognition of certain areas of depth-experience... are not satisfactorily explained by general aesthetic theories'[9] and rejected both theory as a discipline and the ideology that informs it in his well-known essay on Barthes. Harris too has repeatedly expressed his reservations about theory. When questioned on postcolonialism in a recent interview, he declared:

> Fashionable theories [are] not altering anything.... Theorists read each other, but I don't know whether they look at novels and... what is changing in the language of fiction. They claim to be liberators, but they are conquistadors in another sense... They believe it's all locked up. There's a formula, whether they call it magic realism or they call it deconstruction or whatever.[10]

The indicting words here are 'they believe it's all locked up' and 'formula', which point to habits or systems of thought developed in a European intellectual tradition. When therefore Harris and Soyinka advocate, **not** the rejection of European culture, but the recognition of their own native traditions and above all of their metaphysics, they do so on different grounds from postcolonial theory's exception to eurocentrism. That in spite of its repeated protests against eurocentric cultural influences, postcolonialism has not freed itself from basically European intellectual premises is obvious in the paradoxical attitude which consists in claiming

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[8] Wilson Harris, *The Radical Imagination. Lectures and Talks,* ed. Alan Riach and Mark Williams (Liège: L3-Liège Language and Literature, 1992), pp. 76–8.

[9] Wole Soyinka, 'The Fourth Stage', in *Myth, Literature and the African World* (Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 140.

[10] Wilson Harris interviewed by Kerry Johnson (Cedar Falls, Iowa: 5 June, 1994), *The Journal of Caribbean Literature,* I, 1 (1977), 83–95, p. 94.

the right to appropriate Euro-American post-structuralist theories and intellectual approaches while simultaneously claiming a circumscribed cultural group identity (in Soyinka's words, 'self-apprehension'), whose basic values are antinomical to Western culture. It sometimes leads to amusingly embarrassed or apologetic comments on the writers discussed when these diverge from the theoretical orthodoxies into which their work is enclosed.

Harris opened a recent address by saying that his 'criticism is a long extended footnote to [his] fiction',[11] thus pointing to the common inspiration of the two. One major strand running through his criticism in *The Radical Imagination* and as yet uncollected essays, is his exploration of the nature of the pre-Columbian cultural tradition which he sees as now inseparable from the European culture that drove it underground. This is not, strictly speaking, new since in his first major critical essay Harris already insisted on the need to retrieve a native eclipsed tradition in the Caribbean. The new element in his recent discussions of cross-culturalism is the emphasis on the existence of parallel universes or realities, original and different cultures constellated at an invisible and mostly unconscious level, actualizing what he calls 'true-diversity-within-intimate-yet-ungraspable universality'.[12] The similarities which Harris sees as expressions of a 'fluid variable identity'[13] related at an unconscious level are comparable to the *'essentialist correspondence'*[14] Soyinka perceives between Picasso's *Guernica*, a Rodin sculpture, African traditional masks as well as other artistic forms. For both artists this correspondence illustrates a universality utterly free from the imperialism of any specific culture.

In recent essays Harris also reflects on the 'pitiless slogan "ethnic cleansing" which has echoed around the globe within a chorus of grief, raped women, bombed villages and cities'.[15] He then suggests, paradoxically at first sight, that an understanding of the pre-Columbian tradition may help us see the fallacy in such concepts and 'prevent the death of the imagination within frames of dogmatic identity and... homogeneity'.[16] The two attributes of the imagination Harris has always insisted on, i.e. its intuitive nature and its capacity to conceive of humanity in

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[11] Wilson Harris, 'Faulkner's Orphans', Talk given at the South Bank Centre in London on 7 April 1994. Unpublished.

[12] Harris, *The Radical Imagination*, p. 31.

[13] Harris, 'Imagination, Dead, Imagine', p. 187.

[14] Wole Soyinka, *Art, Dialogue and Outrage*, p. 174. Italics in the text.

[15] Harris, 'Imagination, Dead, Imagine', p. 185.

[16] Harris, 'Imagination, Dead, Imagine', p. 185.

heterogeneous terms, not just in a racial sense but, as we'll see, with reference to all living species, sustain the pertinence of pre-Columbian perceptions of the universe and man's relation to it to counter notions of racial purity and their present-day catastrophic effects. When he underlines that relevance, Harris simultaneously draws attention to the limitations of the European tradition, particularly from the Renaissance onwards. It isn't only that since then Europe and the West generally have been thriving on conquest and still exert economic and cultural control in many areas of the world. The break which occurred between science and art, science and an imaginative psychological, even 'magical' apprehension of the universe, entailed a cultural fragmentation that impoverished the European tradition and was to culminate in the Enlightenment and a constricted rationalism. Taking his argument one step further, one can say that the ultimate outcome of this intellectual approach in the twentieth century has been the conceptualization, through theoretical discourse, of the collapse or denial of its own tradition's referents and values though not necessarily of what Harris would call its limiting frames of thought.

Without being anti-social, the kind of cross-culturalism Harris and in a different way Soyinka propound is, as already suggested, extra-social and extra-national. It is psychological, metaphysical and/or religious and even extra-human or, as Harris puts it, 'beyond human logic'.[17] In other words, it is essentialist in the original sense of the word which posits the existence of intuitively accessible metaphysical essences, though these differ from the absolute entities that used to underlie Western systems of thought. Their cross-culturalism is also non-idealistic, though it is referential and arises from what Harris calls the 'World's unconscious' or the 'universal unconscious'.[18] Interestingly, both writers use the word 'numinous'[19] to describe the dimensions or proportions inherent in their art and their approach to culture, while their conviction that art is and should be linked with the sacred and with myth is well-known. Soyinka wrote that

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[17] 'Profile of Wilson Harris', A Talk with Fred d'Aguiar and Pauline Melville. A BBC Radio 4 Kaleidoscope Feature, broadcast on 27 November 1993, p. 9. Unpublished.

[18] Harris, *The Radical Imagination*, p. 25.

[19] Wole Soyinka in *Art, Dialogue and Outrage*, p. 256, and Wilson Harris in *The Radical Imagination*, pp. 76–7, and 83.

> Yoruba traditional art is... 'essential' [and expresses] a quintessence of inner being, a symbolic interaction of the many aspects of revelations (within a universal context) with their moral apprehension.[20]

And Harris says that 'An elusive deity alerts us to the fallibility of a purely human discourse',[21] though again his God is not some fixed, all-powerful divinity but, as one of his characters says, 'a true creator whose unknowable limits are *our* creaturely infinity'[22] thus focusing on creation as a dialectical process.

For all their influence then on postcolonial theory, particularly in their analysis of imperialism and of a postcolonial/neocolonial world in crisis, Harris's and Soyinka's divergence from theory lies in their approach to that crisis. This divergence is ontological and epistemological and springs from the two writers' conviction that a deeper apprehension of the nature of being, of the neglected non-rational elements in both individual and culture, might offer a salutary basis for change. Their opposition is also to an exacerbated intellectualism which takes little account of the deeper emotions and beliefs that inform human behaviour or transforms them into abstract oppositional stances. To take one example: in his essay on 'The commitment to Theory', the frequently quoted post-colonial critic Homi Bhabha emphasizes the relation between politics and theory, which he presents as an instrument of progressive social transformation and innovation.[23] His postulate of a 'translation of value' and his notion of a 'Third Space of enunciation' as the transitional meeting ground between moving subjects seem to have been inspired by Harris, from whose essay 'The Writer and Society' Bhabha quotes in support of his point. A basic distinction remains, however, between Bhabha's 'emphasis on the representation of the political, on the construction of discourse', his denial of an 'essentialist logic'[24] and Harris's adumbration in the very essay Bhabha quotes from of his all-encompassing metaphysics of being. As must be obvious from his fiction and criticism, Harris never denied the importance of the political and said that 'political change is not just a technicality. It's a very profound cultural, phenomenal, primordial, sensational reality'.[25] Still there is a flagrant contrast

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[20] Harris, *Myth, Literature and the African World*, p. 141.
[21] Harris, 'Imagination, Dead, Imagine', p. 189.
[22] Soyinka, *The Four Banks of the River of Space*, p. 32. Italics mine.
[23] Homi K. Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory', in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 21, 23.
[24] Bhabka, *Location*, p. 27.
[25] Interview with Kerry Johnson, p. 91.

between Bhabha's reliance on an abstract, 'constructed' system of thought to bring about change, even if indirectly, and Harris's insistence on the need to descend into the void (which Bhabha equates with his Third Space of enunciation or, if I understand rightly, discourse) but in which Harris discovers 'a new and profound fiction of obscure... humanity'.[26] The void for Harris is not an empty space but an unrecognized one and what he sees as a third nameless dimension is infinitely expandable:

> It is [necessary] to begin to conceive a third factor or entity beyond conventional fixture or polarisation, a fourth world, a fifth, a sixth, a seventh, etc., whereby the task of tradition essentially alters as it acquires complex inter-related perspectives beyond sovereign fear into passion or marvel or intricate beauty.[27]

Harris often recalls that his experience in the South American rainforest and his intuitive perception of 'densities' and non-human dimensions while he was actually reading European novels on his expeditions, made him aware of the inadequacy of the realistic tradition of the European novel and its language, however significant it may have been as a mirror held up to homogeneous European societies. On the other hand, he finds in the pre-Columbian world-view a validation of his fictional rendering of the multi-dimensionality of being, though he is also careful to acknowledge that, before the invasion of their world, the Aztecs too had allowed the triumph of restrictive convention to hasten their fall into rituals of heart-wrenching sacrifice.[28] In fact, he compares the Aztec fall into absolutism with the inquisitorial intolerance, in roughly the same period, that sent Giordano Bruno to the stake for his adhesion, among other heretical views, to the Copernican revolution. But whereas the collapse of the Ptolemaic universe was seen in Europe increasingly in purely scientific terms, the crumbling of the pre-Columbian world and cultures and the advent of a different universe were heralded by portents in the sky and 'in some terrifying kind of theatre'.[29] This is where Harris discerns in his own writing and evokes in his criti-

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[26] Wilson Harris, 'The Writer and Society', in *Tradition, the Writer and Society* (London: New Beacon Press, 1973), p. 62.

[27] Wilson Harris, 'The Complexity of Freedom', in *Explorations*, ed. Hena Maes-Jelinek (Aarhus: Dangaroo Press, 1981), p. 124.

[28] Harris, 'Imagination, Dead, Imagine', p. 187.

[29] 'Interview with Kerry Johnson, p. 90.

cism a link between his vision and an earlier pre-Columbian mythical world, in which gods and men, sky and earth, the divine and the animal, i.e., plural and different layers of being, are orchestrated into a communal whole, as exemplified in Quetzalcoatl but also, very differently, in the multi-dimensional genius perceptible in Titian's 'Allegory of Prudence.' In an altogether different register, Harris also finds a confirmation of his early intuitive denial of the passivity of 'landscapes/riverscapes/skyscapes'[30] and of his conviction that 'parts of ourselves are embedded everywhere — in the rock, in the tree, in the star, in the light, in the wood',[31] he finds a confirmation of this in 'Quantum immediacy',[32] i.e., in the axiom put forward by Quantum physics positing the existence of multiple, parallel and multi-dimensional universes and associations between different forms of being. The bold analogy Harris draws between native, pre-Columbian and Quantum perceptions of the world or worlds, between the 'phenomenal literacy'[33] of ancient peoples and a modern Western, largely rationalist, scientific literacy, is surely a major example of the cross-culturalism which, in his view, could counter the manipulation and abuses of supposedly passive landscapes, which threaten to destroy the world. It is also an appeal, as the narrator in *Carnival* puts it, to acknowledge 'the pagan womb from which civilization comes... from which we all derive'.[34]

This wide-ranging cross-culturalism bridging spaces, times, civilizations is, of course, replicated in the multiracial configuration of peoples in the Americas:

Therefore [says Harris] you need an orchestration of imageries and resources and histories ancient and past, modern and ancient, that may not be contained in the novel form that one associates with Europe. Thus one had to find traditions older than the novel form, as well as to find within oneself the originality to cope with the stresses that one faced. Because it is so easy to succumb to the temptations of writing the kind of novel... which will appeal to the colonial masters, the institutions that still govern culture.[35]

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[30] Harris, *The Radical Imagination*, p. 72.
[31] Harris, *The Radical Imagination*, pp. 81, 94.
[32] Harris, *The Radical Imagination*, p. 81.
[33] Wilson Harris, *Resurrection at Sorrow Hill* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), p. 10.
[34] *Carnival*, pp. 103—4.
[35] 'Profile of Wilson Harris', p. 5.

Referring to this persisting colonial mentality, the protagonist in *Carnival* argues that

> [an] exacerbation was occurring at many levels of our colonial civilization and would result... in a nightmare feud of one sort or another, meaningless violence, inexplicable assaults, accidents, horrors, all sprung from addiction to frames that hypnotized peoples into believing themselves not only helpless or insecure or threatened but... overseers of human destiny by divine territorial right...[36]

In the blend (not just reconciliation) of victor and victim[37] Harris finds another seed of creative cross-culturalism as opposed to what he calls a *perverse* cross-culturalism which claims an impossible independence from formerly dominating cultures. 'Cross-culturalism can no longer be evaded', he says, 'because the whole world has been built on it for centuries'.[38] His way into it as a means of liberating man from static frames of thought has been through repeated fragmentations of all the entities that make up the realistic narrative (characterization, space, time, narrative structure and imagery) while *simultaneously*, at a deeper level, bridging chasms between closed worlds, closed fields or traditions, above all between the oppositional yet related compartments of his characters' psychic space or the psycho-cosmic theatre of their experience. This inter-relatedness is also one reason why Harris's postcolonialism differs from post-modernism. Fragmentation may elicit vulnerability but is also a creative process, a 'creative schizophrenia',[39] as Michael Gilkes called it, generating multiplicity and multi-dimensionality. We are by now familiar with Harris's view of the human personality as a cluster of partial selves, 'strangers in the self' involved in a never-ending quest whose aim is not an absolute or even a desirable but unachievable unity, though they may get glimpses of it. In his novel, *Resurrection at Sorrow Hill*, even God is presented as 'multi-dimensional. *Not* uni-dimensional'.[40] The purpose of the quest is the protagonist's awareness of this

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[36] Harris, *Carnival*, p. 114.

[37] 'Our antecedents were the victims of conquest, our antecedents were paradoxically also victors who gobbled up land and gold.' 'Quetzalcoatl and the Smoking Mirror', p. 40.

[38] Harris, *The Radical Imagination*, p. 141.

[39] Michael Gilkes, *Creative Schizophrenia. The Caribbean Cultural Challenge*. The Third Walter Rodney Memorial Lecture, December 1986 (Coventry: Centre for Caribbean Studies, University of Warwick).

[40] Harris, *Resurrection at Sorrow Hill*, p. 29.

inner and outer multi-dimensionality and of his participation through it
in an 'unfinished genesis'. In this sense each protagonist is a moving
cross-cultural world.

Sorrow Hill in the novel just mentioned harbours a former prison
turned into an asylum for the 'greats'; Hope, the protagonist, is both
dead and alive and re-enacts on this existential frontier, in his inner
theatre or Dream-book but also in the multi-dimensional Guyanese
Heartland, his confrontation with the ambivalently named Christopher
D'eath as well as the other inmates' real and imagined trials. Each feels
both himself, a contemporary South American, and a 'great' representa-
tive of past civilizations whether Montezuma, Leonardo da Vinci, Judas,
Socrates, the Buddha, etc. Hope's simultaneous present experience and
descent into vanished cultures through his co-inmates' collaboration is
also a voyage into various dimensions of being, which Harris calls 'a
unique comedy of animal and human interchangeable masks'[41] as well
as 'revisioned' or 'original' epic. The following brief passage shows
D'eath's wife, Butterfly, who has just made love with Hope, escaping
into the bush after D'eath killed a deer:

> Butterfly made her way into the clearing. She was still naked. But
> D'eath was gloating on the creature he had slain. He scarcely saw
> her. She could have been one of a multitude of phantoms plastered
> on a wall of Bush at that moment... The animal he had killed was
> a marvellous creation, an El Doradonne deer. Its horns were as
> luminous as a new moon's upon a head of darkness. Was it a
> head? Was it the stillness of a dance? D'eath was blind to Butterfly's
> presence as she placed herself between the horns.
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> They seemed to tilt, then to straighten into the constellation of a
> body. Male uplifted constellation horns. Female constellation
> thighs. Counterpoint of El Doradonne male/female beauty within
> the miracle of species. Butterfly's slenderness — sculpted as it
> were from the deer's horns — acquired the intricate, beautiful flesh
> Hope alone had perceived when he held her. It was as if her danc-
> ing feet had grown into impossible/possible marvel, the marvel of
> limbs sprung from the horns of a golden deer.[42]

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[41] Harris, *Resurrection at Sorrow Hill,* Author's Note. Unpaginated.
[42] Harris, *Resurrection at Sorrow Hill,* pp. 40–1.

Such a passage clearly breaks the unity of the self through a language that fleshes out Harris's concept of a 'fluid, variable identity' and evokes humanity's roots in nature and its links with animality. The recovery of these roots, also Soyinka's declared purpose in *The Bacchae,* is one of the meanings of the resurrection in the novel. Another is the resurrection of meaning itself and the coming to life, as in earlier fictions of 'live absences' and/or 'absent presences'.[43] The pursuit — never straightforward but discontinuous, in a forward and backward, multi-angled movement — of 'an infinite goal,' whether elusive god, unfathomable centre, enigma of values or ungraspable wholeness, has led one protagonist after another to penetrate a profusion of (sometimes deceptive) appearances as so many windows into reality. Hence the endless number of 'convertible imageries', as Harris calls them, or of 'transitive chords'[44] within the aroused densities of nature. For a major feature of his metaphysical yet, as suggested, **non**-idealistic cross-culturalism is the perception of linkages between apparently alien images apprehended as rhythms animating different ways of being, different spaces and worlds as well as overlapping partial visions. Soyinka sees a similar symbiosis between language and music when he writes that

> The nature of Yoruba music is intensively the nature of its language and poetry... Language in Yoruba tragic music undergoes transformation through myth into a secret (masonic) correspondence with the symbolism of tragedy, a symbolic medium of spiritual emotions within the heart of the choric union.[45]

For Harris, the uniting rhythms of the text are its silent music, linkages also between different forms of art not just language and music but painting and sculpture.

Language for Harris is the agent of arousal of deep, latent, polysemic cross-culturalities. In his own phrasing 'it raises the whole question of the Word made Flesh'.[46] This is, of course, at the opposite pole of what Soyinka also sees as typical of Euro-American society, 'a society where art has lost its moorings to a humanistic shore and creates for itself an autonomous existence'.[47] For Harris, on the contrary, language and real-

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[43] Harris, *The Radical Imagination,* p. 81.
[44] Interview with Kerry Johnson, p. 84.
[45] Soyinka, 'The Fourth Stage', p. 147.
[46] Harris, *The Radical Imagination,* p. 53.
[47] Soyinka, *Art, Dialogue and Outrage,* p. 63.

ity are one. Language is what 'we are and which we acquired, not only from our mother's lips but also from the sound of the rain falling, from the sigh of the leaves, from the music of the earth as we pressed on it, what crackled under our feet'.[48] It is the medium through which the world, its terrors and its ecstasies come into being in a multi-textured fabric, 'text playing against each other as a profound creative democracy begins to break the apparition of tyranny, the habit of conquest'.[49]

This conviction of the referential cross-culturality of language made Harris reject both fictionality, 'the fictionalizing of fiction' (and in criticism the 'constructedness' of discourse) which, he says, is 'the game that the post-modernists play',[50] and a 'progressive' or linear realism which he has always seen as the privileged tool of an exclusively European culture and its vested interests. Here is one expression of his vision of the genesis of Word and World:

> Silence in the depth of [the] myth of the absolute Word ripples into layers of sound within all gestures, all species, within the shape of rocks whose hieroglyphic utterance in crevice and markings, markings of age akin sometimes to a cradle or an epitaph descended from the stars, is espoused and matched by the applause of the elements in a clap of water within a waterfall.[51]

This is reminiscent of the emergence from the cracking 'chrysalis of the Word' Professor alludes to in Soyinka's *The Road*.[52] Both writers' allusion to a mute but real essence differs from Bhabha's 'Third space of enunciation.' The third space for Harris is actually 'the womb of space', whose variable dimensions can expand and multiply indefinitely.

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[48] Harris, *The Radical Imagination*, p. 78.
[49] Wilson Harris, 'Literacy and the Imagination', in *The Literate Imagination. Essays on the Novels of Wilson Harris*, ed. Michael Gilkes (London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1989), p. 27.
[50] Harris, *The Radical Imagination*, p. 40.
[51] Harris, 'Imagination, Dead, Imagine', p. 191.
[52] Wole Soyinka, *The Road* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 45.