

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: EL DORADO: THE NEW QUEST FOR
CARIBBEAN UNITY

Tanya Liesel Shields, Doctor of Philosophy, 2005

Directed By: Professor Merle Collins, Comparative Literature
Program

El Dorado the gilded man or golden city has always signified the deferred and colonial quest for a New World paradise. It has led explorers, conquistadors, and those they enslaved on fabulous journeys of misinterpretation and trickery. Global reconfigurations in politics, culture and economics generated by globalization on the physical and psychological infrastructures of poor places, has the Caribbean searching for a redefined El Dorado. Through the medium of literature, this new El Dorado has the potential to fulfill the promise of Caribbean unity, inherent in its geography and history, by subsuming national interests to regional ones. This dissertation fuses the concerns of globalization, postmodernism and citizenship into the Amerindian Postmodern, a term coined by me, and a framing, largely influenced by the philosophical work of Wilson Harris. I argue that using an Amerindian postmodernist approach in regional literature allows a crossing of linguistic, geographic, nationalistic, and economic barriers not addressed by political attempts at integration. Art, as a mediator, has the power to shift consciousness and its political power is demonstrated in various liberation struggles and by governmental attempts to repress and restrict how art is created and used. Art culls fact from fiction and desire from apathy, whether the authors' are deliberately part of the process or not.

The Introduction and Chapter One articulate and illustrate Amerindian postmodernism at its most theoretical. These chapters outline the basic tenets of this idea for exploring questions of identity and resource sharing. Chapter Two investigates the role and status of women using a lens, I call the Sycorax Model, which emerges from postcolonial discourse via relationships expressed in Shakespeare's The Tempest. Examining how women use, abuse and transform their muted and stated powers for the benefits of their communities is imperative. Chapter Three examines the Haitian Revolution, as represented in various texts, as one moment during which black people asserted their humanity and the contradictions such a claim engendered. Chapter Four explores how various theatrical forms and festivals concretize the positive ideas of regional nation building and Amerindian postmodernism. In effect, this project argues that a regional Caribbean nation is a good and necessary thing for Caribbean survival and a process through which the cultural arts will help us navigate. It is the region's new quest for paradise, with the understanding that paradise is a process rather than a final destination.

EL DORADO: THE NEW QUEST FOR CARIBBEAN UNITY

By

Tanya Liesel Shields

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Advisory Committee:
Professor Merle Collins, Chair
Professor A. Lynn Bolles
Dr. Dorith Grant-Wisdom
Dr. Carlos Schröder
Professor Barry Pearson

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Dedication

For M.E.

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el dorado: the new quest for caribbean unity

“We were scattered like grains of sand, and the bosses walked on that sand. But when we realized that we were all alike, ...we got together for the *huegla* (strike)...”

--Jacques Roumain¹

Haitian writer Jacques Roumain reinforces the idea of *coumbite*, or collective action, in his 1944 masterpiece Masters of the Dew. A *coumbite* is an agricultural effort in which neighbors collectively work together.² The idea of belonging to land and to a community that works the land is integral in the construction of *coumbite*. Besides belonging, the idea of communion—coming together as a connected whole, a community—is an urgent call in Roumain’s text as peasants realize their salvation will emerge from working together. Though Masters of the Dew romanticizes the peasant, it is Roumain’s articulation of citizenship, awareness and action that are most meaningful for my project, which advocates integration.³

In the early weeks of September 2004, *coumbite* manifested as neighbors all across the Caribbean and Caribbean transnationals around the world, rushed to help islands decimated by a series of deadly and devastating hurricanes. Earlier in the year, during Haiti’s thirty-third coup, Jamaica provided sanctuary for Haitian refugees and, for a time, exiled president Jean Bertrand Aristide. These expressions of *coumbite* demonstrate the continued sense of belonging and attempts at building community across linguistic and physical boundaries. Ultimately, the case can be made that these ideas of community and becoming a regional citizen will undergird the Caribbean quest for El Dorado in the twenty-first century.

El Dorado, the fabled golden destination, has been a myth associated with the Americas, particularly the Guianas and northwestern regions of South America (Venezuela and Columbia).⁴ Exploration stories, with El Dorado as beacon, abound in the quest to tame the Americas. Jane M. Loy suggests that El Dorado was a confluence of American legends and reality. First thought to be a man, the gilded one, then a land in which Indians possessed “hordes of gold,” to a “land of marvelous riches,” to the current quest for timber and petroleum profits, this myth has been part of the “leit motif of the history” of the region.⁵ For Wilson Harris, El Dorado is a moving space, just always out of reach,⁶ while V.S. Naipaul characterizes this moving space as another symbol of loss – often of history and people—that he examines in his book, The Loss of El Dorado. Nonetheless, the most consistent and coherent myth has been that of the city, Manoa, paved with gold, whose wealthy inhabitants are coated in that mineral.

Sir Walter Raleigh’s account, perhaps the most famous one in the English-speaking Caribbean, locates El Dorado in Parima Lake in Guiana:

Many years since I had knowledge, by relation, of that mighty, rich, and beautiful empire of Guiana, and of that great and golden city, which the Spaniards call El Dorado, and the naturals Manoa, which city was conquered, re-edified, and enlarged.⁷

In the Spanish-speaking Americas, Eduardo Galeano recounts the stories of many explorers from Raleigh and Gonzalo Pizarro to Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada:

They crossed swamps and lands that steamed in the sun. When they reached the banks of the river, not one of the thousands of naked Indians who were brought along to carry the guns and bread and salt remained alive...The hunger was worse than the crocodiles, snakes, and mosquitoes...they quarreled over the flesh of any man who fell, before the priest had even finished giving him passage to

Paradise...El Dorado must be on the other side of the mountains, ...not the river's source. So they walked across the mountains.⁸

The stories of Raleigh, Pizarro, and de Quesada are tales told by plunderers and prospective plunderers whose pioneering efforts laid the psychological and physical foundations for continuous incursions into the region not only for profit at all costs but also for paradise. Yet, this idea was also used as a repellent, or certainly a detour, by indigenous peoples. El Dorado, emerging from stories of the Musica peoples of Columbia and their gold dust ceremonies has also been a story of native resistance through deferral. Indigenous people would repeatedly tell Europeans that El Dorado was just ahead, over the horizon, the ridge, river, or mountain, "Always the Indians told of a rich and civilized people just a few days' march away."⁹

These El Dorado stories illustrate several things: first, as Loy intimates, they are a trope of conquest—of the Europeans, of the land, and of nature by the Europeans. El Dorado signals the misreading of the region—the man, the land, the memory of an annihilated people, and Naipaul's "ghost province." Second, these misreadings reshaped the landscape from various European adventures, both national and personal, as typified in the hope to find gold, all of which created the contemporary demarcations of today's nation-states. Finally, El Dorado signals a regional re-articulation of self. It is the region reading, writing, and rewriting itself, through Naipaul and Harris's work which examines the forgotten and convoluted stories of these "adventures."

Naipaul writes that The Loss of El Dorado "is made up of two forgotten stories."¹⁰ The first is the search for El Dorado--the place.¹¹ In an effort to recount the first story Naipaul finds that the town of his birth, Chaguanas, was named after the Chaguanes

people, who are now “extinct.” Reflecting on this, he notes that when Raleigh’s adventure is recounted it is solely from Raleigh’s perspective:

They [writers of Raleigh’s story] pay as little attention as Raleigh [sic] himself to what he left behind. An obscure part of the New World is momentarily touched by history; the darkness closes up again, the Chaguanes disappear in silence. The disappearance is unimportant, it is part of nobody’s story. But this was how a colony was created in the New World.¹²

Naipaul’s *El Dorado* is about the forgotten and the valorized, the extinct and the celebrated; ultimately it is about the memory and rememory¹³ of ghosts. Naipaul’s quest to remember and claim the heritage of a pre-European Caribbean is part of a regional rearticulation and claiming of self. Claiming *El Dorado* means owning a bloody, bruised and often, dehumanizing past. This is not a simple romantic throwback to indigenous people, but a claiming of this space and its stories, with all its pre- and post- Columbian contradictions.

For Harris,

El Dorado, City of Gold, City of God, grotesque, unique coincidence...within a long succession and grotesque series of adventures, past and present capable now of discovering themselves and continuing to discover themselves. So that in one sense one relives and reverses the “given” conditions of the past, freeing oneself from catastrophic idolatry and blindness to one’s own historical and philosophical conceptions and misconceptions which may bind one within a statuesque present or a false future (underlining added).¹⁴

At this juncture, “now” in this present moment, regionally speaking, Caribbean people are able to discover themselves through the grotesque contradictions of the City of God and the City of Gold. Therefore, it is in conceptualizing *El Dorado*, a complex and complicated “dream province,” a simultaneously deferred past and future that is an

appropriate trope or symbol of the Caribbean's new quest. As Antonio Benítez-Rojo writes, though specifically discussing Guyana and Harris's Palace of the Peacock,

In reality the search for El Dorado continues...It is now carried out by present-day Guyanese society beneath the slogan of 'repossessing the interior,' [referring to] economic exploitation of the inland territory,...as well as to the discovery of a collective psychic state which would allow a feeling of cultural identity, extended toward the hinterland,...¹⁵

This El Dorado, a lost paradise of the future and a dream paradise of the present, is the **goal** for Caribbean people. Obtaining and fulfilling this goal is more about a **process** of becoming, rather than the actual utopian prize—Caribbean union. While this prize will be attained it will never be ideal. The ideal manifests in the continual and deliberate effort to strengthen the links of Caribbean identities in service of one Caribbean nation.

This project defines the ultimate goal of Caribbean union as **political integration**, which Anthony Payne and Paul Sutton define as “a process in which countries have to be prepared to accept that the greater regional good must predominate over national concerns even to the point when, on occasion, their national interests are damaged” (underlining added).¹⁶ This, the subsuming of national interests to regional ones, is distinct from their definition of regionalism which is “a method of international cooperation which enables the advantages of decision-making at a regional level to be reconciled with the preservation of the institution of the nation-state.”¹⁷ For Payne and Sutton, the fundamental distinction is in the role of the nation-state. While integration clearly argues for a reconfiguration of sovereignty on the part of the state, regionalism allows for the maintenance of, to my mind, a false and ultimately debilitating construction of the state. The state is under siege. States, primarily because of Western

corporations, cannot function without consideration and at times input, of this monetarily massive constituency.¹⁸ Reinventing or reconfiguring the state is a new (another) priority.

However, the quest, or process of regional political integration, has voices raised in support of a more structurally cohesive articulation of the Caribbean. At the 2003 Caribbean Studies Association conference in Belize City, Belize, Brian Meeks, political science lecturer at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, called on Caribbean thinkers to work on a “vision statement” for the region. In his talk, “Envisioning Caribbean Futures,” Meeks argued that the lack of a dream—something beyond everyday subsistence—has had a debilitating effect on Caribbean people. He asserts that this lack of vision has led to a lack of agency and shortsightedness that has encouraged stagnation and entropy. At its most basic, this blindness has meant constructing El Dorado solely in terms of loss.

I agree with Meeks on this point and am interested in alternative Caribbean futures both fantastic and realistic. Without the fantastic there is no aspiration and no creativity, there is only condemning the present and eventually the future to a realism that remains pedantic, limited, and self-defeating. El Dorado has always signified “a” truth, a memory and a desire, often of a grotesque (Harris’s notion) nature, meaning the plunders and horrors of enslavement and “taming” this land. Concurrently, it has also signaled transformation, trickery, greed, idealism, and defiance of borders, reason, and nature. The perfect El Dorado was a European construct. Thus, Caribbean people united across language, geography, and the particulars of historical, cultural, political, and social manifestations, is the new City of God and Gold, which is El Dorado as process. Still, for generations it will be engaging in the **process** of unifying the region, the **process** of working toward the goal, the trek that will be one El Dorado, which will be both a

refiguring and synthesizing of the Native and European El Dorados. This new quest, this process, is as contradictory as the region because it is proactive and internal, while at the same time, reactionary to the external forces of globalization. Ultimately, El Dorado is the quest for a new consciousness.

One aim of this project is to continue the defiant aspect of El Dorado by projecting the values of regional unity beyond academic circles to realities many Caribbean people live. Consequently, a major aspiration of this work is to find ways of using the tools provided in the academy to refine reality, to make actual living more real or hyper-real by magnification through fictive lenses. The scope of my dissertation is broad and monumental. This is a large idea, ahem, theoretical frame, for moving forward. We are at the point of making the idea/I real and viable. Discussing this idea as a practical good is one step towards Caribbean peoples transforming their realities. It is in essence a vision-statement rather than a roadmap. Hopefully, by engaging critically and concretely with the ideas, we devise feasible and practical frameworks for making them real.

The basic question that drives and propels this project is simple: how to make a difference? How can developing a greater sense of regional consciousness foster setting our own agendas and generally changing our circumstances as Caribbean people? To do this, before I/we can move forward, we must go back, to the wisdom of our fore-parents—cultivators of land and minds—to build on the knowledge, coping skills, and foundations inherited. CLR James believed that cultural workers, cricketers, calypsonians, and writers, have to gather people together. For him, it is the cultural producers who recognize their responsibility as community gatherers who will “do

something” that will most effectively unite the region.¹⁹ The Caribbean personality described by thinkers from Gordon Lewis to Antonio Benítez-Rojo is a creative personality.²⁰ Whether the origins are with Tainos and Caribs/Callinagoes or coming from the Adamic mix of Africans, Asians and Europeans, the Caribbean personality has been one that has had to be innovative. This is a difficult moment for the region. There is a certain comfort on shaky ground, either as a *département l’outre mer* (DOM) of France,²¹ as is the case with French Guiana, Martinique and Guadeloupe, or linkages made with Latin America rather than the Caribbean, as is the case with the Dominican Republic, which pursues a policy of double integration, but emphasizes its connection with Central America.²² The case is also true in the anglophone, Commonwealth Caribbean. There is safety in knowing what has been and what is. There is comfort in believing that small size prohibits the ability to radically transform conditions, as well as the comfort of believing that “our” colonial masters—British, French, Spanish, and Dutch—gave “us” something which makes us more special than our neighbors and closer to “them.” This project enters through that gateway of stasis and overwhelming “reality” and similar to other projects before and I hope, projects to come, will push accepted convention for both the “common” person and the “depressed intellectual.”²³ This is an interdisciplinary and psychological intervention in the public sphere.²⁴

To my mind, cultural producers (in this work, literary workers) have something to offer the Caribbean integration debate. In Ideology and Caribbean Integration, Ian Boxhill argues that regionalism has failed because it lacks an ideology and a value system. In essence this is where and how Caribbean artists can enter and make a difference. It is through the empathy and issues, which can arise in the creative process,

that the values needed to guide a sense of regional identity will be called into play. It is the artist's lens that hones through engagement—intellectual, emotional and ultimately creative—the hard issues of identity construction (race, language, sexuality, gender, parity, belonging, and loss) that is the missing link in debate on regional unity.

Ultimately, the process of El Dorado through the components of Amerindian postmodernism, the complexity of pre-Columbian postmodernist thought (discussed later) will provide the framework and philosophy to access a regionally centered value system.

To return to the political scientists Brian Meeks, Anthony Payne and Paul Sutton, who, among others, recognize that the post-Cold War order typifies

...a world increasingly divided into large economic blocs, from which most of the tiny nations are excluded...Yet, ...the widening regionalism...suggests that there is an increasing recognition that the countries of the Caribbean will either hang together or hang separately.²⁵

Meeks continues, “without popular support there will be no regional integration.”²⁶ To this end, my project seeks, as a vision statement, to first, illustrate how the humanities, specifically the literary and theatrical arms of the cultural arts, can provide a theoretical framework for integration; second, to facilitate a non-“political” space of debate in which all sectors of society can question the theoretical and practical concerns of Caribbean unity. Third, to examine how the aforementioned impact of popular conceptions of self, nation, and region can be used to galvanize the popular support needed for success, which is defined as self-sufficiency and independence.

These texts, which emerge from the defining commonalities of Caribbean history—primarily those of colonialism, neocolonialism, and now globalization—, create

the aforementioned space of interrogation in the public sphere. I turn, therefore, to an examination of how the creative writers embody these processes. My primary texts include the novels (The Ventriloquist's Tale, by Pauline Melville and Kingdom of this World by Alejo Carpentier); poetry (Grace Nichols' "Ala"; Eugenie Eersel's "The Plantation"; and Lucie Julia's "Sacrificial Flowers"); short stories ("Victoria" and "Bella Makes Life") by Meiling Jin and Lorna Goodison, respectively. CLR James's The Black Jacobins; Aimé Césaire's The Tragedy of King Christophe; Rawle Gibbons' Calypso Trilogy; and Michael Gilkes' Couvade are the plays under examination.

Throughout the Caribbean, there is a sense of looking at the world and regional resources from points of perpetual disadvantage.²⁷ To begin the monumental task of mental and psychic re-education, my project examines texts from throughout the region—anglophone, hispanophone, and francophone. It also examines various genres—novels, plays, short stories, and poetry; and theories and perspectives from literature, politics, gender studies, history, and cultural studies. My position in cultural studies, a field that is concerned with political and practical solutions, rather than solely those derived from the study of political science, history or traditional conceptions of literature, permits an interdisciplinary framework by which the examination of these texts, like their production, does not occur in an artistic vacuum. It means that I take into account the economic, political, and social contexts and consequences of the work. A cultural studies framework also allows me to be more overtly present as a participant with these texts and the overall project.

Cultural Studies as a field is expressly concerned with the relationship between culture and society and is invested in political readings of popular culture, both of "high"

and “low” art. Methodologically, Henry Giroux argues that cultural studies “emphasizes the language of critique and the language of possibility...By integrating various disciplines from anthropology, sociology, history, and literature, cultural studies aims for holistic understanding.”²⁸ Thus, the holistic method of cultural studies, in this dissertation, works as an example of the larger processes that inform the integration debate. The advantage of a cultural studies orientation to this topic is the posing of overtly existential questions: What does it mean to **be**? What is the nature of **being**?—for our time through an examination of contemporary cultural production. The added benefit of cultural studies is that it does not negate the political and economic nature of production. For workers, cultural and otherwise, in the developing world (an economic and political understanding build on historical structures of external dependence), or those in the problematic nexus of Third World in the First World, the politics of production, the very function of “art” is **essential** to and in production. Art **is**, art comes into **being** to do something—to move the reader, listener, and viewer-participant. What does it mean to produce art for one’s initial audience? What does it mean to write in the metropole about the former colony or *département*? What happens, for example in the Dutch Caribbean where many writers write in Dutch and not *Sranon Tongo*? So determining what art **is** and what it **is** to the receiver is critical in this discipline. Cultural Studies is one disciplinary approach that recognizes and seeks to uncover connections that encourage intellectual engagement on political, economic, historical levels.

My subjectivity and this framework allows me to be both participant, making change, and observer, recording change. In this way I am allowed to expose my stake and investment beyond the intellectual, in the uses of art as a porthole through which we can

reconceptualize Caribbean citizenship. Antonio Gramsci's articulation of the organic intellectual is one that, like Walter Rodney, not only arrives at his/her intellectual work through the internalization of one's class experiences, but one who fuses these experiences with the accoutrements of formal education; meaning that an organic intellectual remains connected to his or her source, the environment that nurtured him/her. This education, often responsible for distancing an intellectual from his/her class origin, will instead be used in the liberation of that class. At the basis of Gramsci's idea is the function of the intellectual. The professional intellectual, the university scholar, according to Gramsci, traffics in knowledge as a commodity. The organic intellectual, on the other hand, connects knowledge and experience in the interests of his or her class.²⁹

Various artists and organic intellectuals approach this mental and psychic re-education in multiple ways. Gordon Rohlehr argues that art, specifically literature and music, is necessary to the revolution of self-perception.³⁰ Historically, the primary problem of the Caribbean is one of fragmentation in geography, colonial, and linguistic division; and art, broadly defined, in his estimation, is one of the most effective tools for cohesion. To deal with this fragmentation Caribbean intellectuals—artists, economists, historians, politicians, and others—have constructed several frameworks from folktales, plantation paradigms, the Carib bone flute, carnival, and Rastafarianism, (to name a few) to explore Caribbean realities. Embedded in these models on how to articulate fragmentation and its impact, is the idea of reconstruction, the process of reassembling these disparate parts of the self to create a unified whole. This psychological project to reveal, repair, and reconstruct is approached from several perspectives. As Rohlehr

notes, George Lamming constructs his analysis of this fragmentation, around the I-landscape-isolation and community; Errol Hill investigates the potential for retrieval of a regional self through drama because that genre makes these issues real, vivid, and accessible; Edouard Glissant uses folktales as a framework to deal with fragmentation; Wilson Harris uses the Carib bone flute and the limbo gateway, while Merle Hodge argues for a critical literature and theatre for children. These artist-philosophers have recognized that the creative arts, through the process of recognition and identification, allow for transformation of consciousness.

Like Rohlehr, and also writing in 1992, Sylvia Wynter, Caribbean philosopher and author of The Hills of Hebron, a novel, extends this idea about the function of art a step further in her article, “Rethinking ‘Aesthetics’: Notes Towards a Deciphering Practice.” Wynter links the function of art to biochemical brain function and her discussion moves us from land shaping the psyche to biological responses to the stimuli provided by an environment, particularly mediums of information. Her deciphering aesthetic is an antidote to the nihilistic deconstructionist approach in postmodernism. Postmodernism advocates a multi-faceted view of reality with a constantly shifting center—so every perspective is decentered and equalized in that process; it is often criticized for being too atomized with no ethical core. For Wynter, this method enables movement beyond the status quo in a way that she implies postmodernism does not.³¹ Wynter argues that aesthetics is a discourse governed by rules, in the Foucaultian sense, which lock people in or oppress them.³²

Breaking aesthetics into the categories, “Aesthetics 1” and “Aesthetics 2,” she defines the former as the aesthetics of social cohesion, a transcultural form based on a

unitary system of meaning [by which] the rules which govern the production of all culture-specific, altruism-inducing, and cohering systems of meanings must function [as] both rule-governed and in ways that have hitherto transcended the ‘normal’ consciousness of each order’s individual subjects.³³

On the other hand, “Aesthetics 2” is defined as the tastes and values of the middle class Westerner projected and validated as every person’s values.³⁴ The middle-class Westerner becomes the universal subject, the primary arbiter of taste—basically, the global “generic.”³⁵ By extension, the tastes of the non-middle-class Westerner are coded as unrefined, unsophisticated and based on no real criteria or judgment. In essence, they are “unevolved.” Wynter further explains that these “unevolved, unrefined” masses are not only racially coded, but coded as “genetically determined.”³⁶ Their only hope lies in imitation.³⁷

To challenge this and lay the foundations for a deciphering practice, or a “liberating poetics,” Wynter joins the discipline of science with the humanities. She discusses the internal reward system (IRS), “the behavior-regulating internal reward system of the brain [which] condition[s] each culture-specific internal reward system in symbolically coded terms that can dynamically induce the mode of psycho-affective feeling by which the social cohesion of each order is then ensured.”³⁸ Basically, the combination of IRS and semantic discourse results in a social program by which people are controlled. Wynter calls this type of social program another “opiate of the masses.” To counteract this, she argues that using a deciphering practice to reveal the rules beneath the surface and to illustrate what texts do in addition to what they mean is crucial.³⁹ By using the Cultural Imaginary, “the collective [culture-specific] values that provide for unitary meaning,”⁴⁰ defined as reconciling contradictions of one’s existence however

illogical, rather than social programming, the overarching, propaganda-nistic tool for maintaining control, allows for the deciphering of the aesthetic order “in both its transcultural form, Aesthetics 1, and in the form specific to our present order, Aesthetics 2.”⁴¹

Thus, understanding aesthetics as not only a way to shift and transform embedded debilitating concepts, but also as a biochemical connection, allows for a complex framework by which to produce and critique one’s cultural space. For example, the aesthetics of ritual⁴² allow for this complexity. First, participation in rituals that invoke physicality, as in Vodou—dancing, drumming, etc.—, creates biochemical pleasure; second, outside of the pleasure in the ritual performance, the ritual itself is a formalized act with stylized patterns and norms for social cohesion. Ultimately, understanding aesthetics in this way reveals the critical role it can play in shaping societies and shifting perception. Thus regional integration is predicated on psychic integration. My contention is that when regional integration is articulated and ingested as a good by the majority of Caribbean people this will drive and encourage the formal apparatus of the state even more towards integration. In short, the arts, specifically literature, offer a way to experience integration its problems and potentials. Through these literary experiences, Caribbean people then move to larger and external actions. The literary experience allows a connection between the psychic interpersonal experience of integration, which transforms individuals and eventually the places that they inhabit.

Caribbean leaders, especially in the anglophone region, have addressed regionalism politically (attempted political federation and economically through the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)). Caribbean states have made inroads toward

political and economic integration via CARICOM, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and various economic agreements with Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba⁴³. While these attempts are necessary, they have, for the most part, been ineffective. The largely top-down nature of these agreements indicates the significant chasm between “the governed and the governors.”⁴⁴ The benefits and challenges of integration have not sufficiently been debated in the public sphere but rather in conference rooms among political and economic elites whose individual interests may not be served by the process. To date, the integration process has been an anti-democratic one⁴⁵ that highlights the continued top-down approach of inherited democratic models, which lend themselves to abuse and corruption in small and insular places. It is because of the failure of these political and economic endeavors/openings/attempts to engage public discourse and the public imagination that an artistic and cultural approach becomes necessary and viable.

An approach situated in the arts will accomplish several things: first, it will highlighting basic commonalities historical links between European colonialism, African enslavement, plantation economies, massive twentieth-century migrations⁴⁶ and the impact of contemporary globalization. Second, the emotional potential of artistic work allows audience participation in constructing meaning. Art provides vehicles for emotional engagement and for turning that investment into action.⁴⁷ Third, arts and artists from very informal beginnings during enslavement and more cohesive and formal manifestations since the early post-emancipation period have had the **vision** of a unified Caribbean because of intra-regional migration and migration to various European metropolises, where they have pursued this vision in their work. Many, like Aimé

Césaire's global Negritude movement or Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) plays of racial uplift, have used their various mediums to endorse or problematize the possibilities of integration in terms of racial, cultural, national, regional, and, occasionally, global identity/ies.

To this end, the creative arts conceptually and concretely nurture the promise of a Caribbean nation, which is desirable in the face of global economic distress and political realignments. In a more positive framing, it is desirable as a fulfillment of historical circumstance and cultural heritage. This Caribbean nation, largely abstract, is realized through the concretization of Caribbean identities in art and culture. Literature and the performing arts are important to shaping regional socio-political realities because they help to define "a Caribbean identity" and negotiate the difficulties of the theoretical and poetic and artistic transformation needed within these societies. The notion of Caribbean identity has posed a few problems, primarily those of definition of who and what constitutes the Caribbean. Fundamentally, what are the "essential", if I dare invoke this term, elements of the/a Caribbean personality from geography to shared histories?

Conceiving the Caribbean

One defining component of Caribbean identity is the landscapes of the archipelago. Some people live in places where nature seems tame and therefore functions as a backdrop. In the Caribbean, there is a different sense of place and the relationship that Caribbean people have to their surroundings. As noted earlier, hurricanes are potential place shifters from August to November in many islands. In Montserrat, a volcano's eruption has made the island uninhabitable. Martinique suffered a similar fate in 1902 when Mt. Pelée erupted and melted the city of St. Pierre. Early in 2005, Guyana

suffered a flood of biblical proportions, which as Nigel Westmaas observes, “[is] the biggest disaster in all Guyanese history...the Gods do not appear to favor Guyana...But all this is not new. Colonial and independent Guyana has had a never-ending battle with the sea and with floods. Guyana as Walter Rodney and other historians have long maintained is a country built from a struggle with the sea.”⁴⁸ Therefore, this metamorphosing terrain accentuates El Dorado as process—shifts facilitated by nature and by political machinations— and influences who Caribbean people are.

Defining Caribbean space has become a discombobulating exercise in itself, one that illustrates the geographic elasticity and shifting boundaries of the region. According to Franklin Knight and Colin Palmer,

the most conventional definition of the Caribbean includes the islands from the Bahamas to Trinidad, and the continental enclaves of Belize, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana. [This definition] includes all those territories with a closely related history, whose patterns of evolution have followed a remarkably paralleled trajectory.⁴⁹

This circum-Caribbean is referred to as “the greater Caribbean, the wider Caribbean or Meso-American.”⁵⁰ Defining the Caribbean has led to alienation in the integration process with two differing definitions of the Caribbean as articulated by Eric Williams and Michael Manley in the 1970s. According to Payne and Sutton, Williams was deeply suspicious of many Latin American states, while Manley wanted “friendship, cooperation, and closer ties with Latin American states...based on a strong sense of the Caribbean’s geopolitical affinity with Latin America.”⁵¹

Long considered part of the U.S. backyard, the principles of Manifest Destiny led Thomas Jefferson in 1811 to dream of “an independent federation of all the Caribbean islands.”⁵² A few years later, John Quincy Adams in an 1819 address to his Cabinet said,

It is impossible that centuries shall elapse without finding them annexed to the United States; not that any spirit of encroachment or ambition on our part renders it necessary, but because it is a physical, moral and political absurdity that such fragments of territory...should exist permanently contiguous to a great powerful and rapidly-growing nation....⁵³

In 1823, President Monroe codified emerging U.S. hegemonic power in his doctrine, which would consider new European colonies in the region an act of war.⁵⁴ As late as 1981, the region was stretched by the geographically nubile Reagan administration for geo-political and economic purposes to include in the Caribbean basin, El Salvador but not Nicaragua, under the Sandinistas, which borders the Caribbean Sea.⁵⁵

This tautness of Caribbean geography has meant that the Caribbean areas of Columbia and Venezuela are increasingly sites of study. For Mark Kurlansky, the Caribbean or a continent of islands, as his book is titled, includes those islands bounded by the Caribbean Sea and those with a Caribbean coast.⁵⁶ In “Reinterpreting the Caribbean,” Norman Grivan recognizes the constructedness of the Caribbean, which he defines as

a sociohistorical category, commonly referring to a cultural zone characterized by the legacy of slavery and the plantation system. It embraces the islands and parts of the adjoining mainland—and may be extended to include the Caribbean diaspora overseas. As one scholar [Antonio Gaztambide-Geigel] observes, there are many Caribbeans.⁵⁷

Grivan distinguishes the Caribbean in two ways: the insular Caribbean and the Greater Caribbean. The former refers to “a sociohistorical rather than geographic category that includes the islands, the three Guianas and Belize,” while the latter refers to the entire basin.⁵⁸ The Greater Caribbean Survey, a document produced by the French National Institute for Statistical and Economic Studies (Insee) in 2004 notes two definitions of the

Caribbean—one “Anglo-Saxon” and the other “Hispanic.” The former, “populari[z]ed by Dr. Eric Williams’, former Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, is common among English-speaking scholars and restricts the Caribbean to the English-, French-, Spanish and Dutch-speaking islands together with the three Guiana[s] and Belize.” The latter definition “as introduced by Juan Bosch, former president of the Dominican Republic, conveys a broader vision, as do most Spanish-speaking historians. It includes all the Caribbean islands except the Bahamas, the Latin American states, from Mexico to Venezuela, except El Salvador, which has no Caribbean coastline. It emphasizes geographic consistency over historical and cultural vision.”⁵⁹ From historical to political and linguistic definitions, the island is the geographic entity most associated with the Caribbean. This geography has cultivated [sugar] plantation economies and their cultures, a key element of Caribbeanness as articulated by Knight, Palmer, and Antonio Benítez-Rojo.

History, especially the history of the plantation, has been crucial to the development of Caribbean personalities. The history of the plantation is an “American” phenomenon. What we now consider the Caribbean springs from a landscape with only traces of an often, unrecognized Amerindian presence. Pauline Melville’s novel, The Ventriloquist’s Tale, the primary focus of chapter one, serves as an intervention in recognizing and complicating the native presence in the Americas, particularly in Guyana. “European colonial powers created Caribbean colonies de novo, practically virgin-territories—once, of course, the original Taino-Arawak-Carib Indian stocks that had been reduced by exploitative practices.”⁶⁰ On this “clean” slate, Europeans imported

Africans to work the land and propel the plantation machinery. This history of unrelenting work and the culture it produced marks the Americas.

Additionally, the Caribbean as a site of wealth and resource extraction distinguished it from the plantation economies of the U.S. and Brazil. While the U.S. was a European settler colony and the seat of the Portuguese empire was transferred to Brazil in 1822, the Caribbean was a disposable, transitory site, important only as long as it generated wealth.⁶¹ When owners were present their complete overindulgence and decadence underscored the psychic instability of these territories.⁶² Any infrastructure established in these colonies was solely to expedite exploitation of resources. Politically, these areas were governed and administered by career but transient functionaries, who generally had their eyes on rewards in the metropole rather than in the region. All together areas that make up the Caribbean have been characterized by impermanence (the nature of the region—volcanic islands that redraw themselves like Montserrat—is transitory, transient, and impermanent, it is a thru-way, or has been treated as such, rather than as a final destination). However, the constants have been European domination, plantation economic models, imported and exported laborers and the relations of these things in/to the larger global order.

Consequently, the Caribbean and the Caribbean personality are elastic constructions based on the interplay of geography, history, culture and the psychological and political relations within the region and the larger world. All areas that I consider the Caribbean share at least three of these features. They may not be in the Caribbean Sea, but they do share a Caribbean coast, or, in the case of Bermuda, Belize, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana, their historical, cultural, and economic development has

been as part of the circum-Caribbean. Additionally, cultures built by slave labor and enhanced by other ethnic groups from Europe and Asia have distinguished these territories since the 19th century. Yet, Caribbean spaces as noted with Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) and Grivan's definition, change and shift over time.

Historians, like David Patrick Geggus, argue that Louisiana and Florida have been part of the Gulf Coast States of the Caribbean.⁶³ The great Caribbean intellectual, Gordon Rohlehr makes the same argument saying, "the American south, a place like New Orleans, a place like Miami, was certainly really the northernmost part of the Caribbean."

⁶⁴ In a conference paper Professor John Lowe suggests⁶⁵ that, "The American South is in many ways the northern rim of the Caribbean."⁶⁶ Similarly, David E. Lewis, former assistant secretary of state for Caribbean development in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Department of State, maintains that the state of Florida and its private sector "have in essence begun to act as the 'benign hegemon'"⁶⁷ to foster regional cooperation.

Despite the problems associated with not just the United States, but the state of Florida as a 'benign hegemon', this does, even from an external source, reiterate the geographic malleability of the Caribbean, an elasticity primarily linked to economic access for non-Caribbean states. For me, the problem with Florida or U.S. Gulf states as benign hegemon or Caribbean states is twofold. It is precisely that these territories are now located within U.S. borders that makes their Caribbeanness problematic. Their location as U.S. states tied to U.S. national agenda and global policies that entrench colonial power patterns of dependency and stagnation. The second problem is that with contemporary migration--Haitians and Cubans in Florida and Haitians in Louisiana--the personalities of those states, especially the former, is changing within one U.S. national

framework. Acknowledging this reinforces the arbitrary edges of borders in general and the influence of twenty-first century migration on various U.S. states.

In fact, Antonio Benítez-Rojo constructs the Caribbean “as an island bridge, a meta-archipelago with neither boundary nor center.”⁶⁸ In his mind, the geographical fact of the Caribbean is as a discontinuous conjunction in constant flux “transformative plasma...that changes with each passing instant.”⁶⁹ While, for this project, Belize will be considered part of the Caribbean, other countries with Caribbean coasts like Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Venezuela or Columbia will not be included. Unlike Belize, which identifies wholly or primarily with this archipelago, countries with Caribbean coastlines have marginalized minorities of African descent, largely separated from the larger European-descended and Mestizo national publics.⁷⁰ These Caribbean coasts offer interesting problematics with which this dissertation is not fully prepared to engage, a primary example being the question of their political linkages with a regional Caribbean apparatus especially as they seek more patronage from the U.S. The project of cultivating their acknowledged Caribbean identity is, of course, ongoing. However, I believe addressing these coastal areas will mean investigating larger linkages with Latin America,⁷¹ which, while necessary for José Martí’s “Our America,” cannot be adequately investigated here.

What can be addressed is the psychological imprint of their landscape on Caribbean people. It is this spatial relationship which is critical in constructing citizenship and developing local, national and regional identities. Theorists throughout the region, including George Lamming, Edouard Glissant, Edward Kamau Brathwaite and Wilson Harris, emphasize the submarine cross-cultural roots of the Caribbean. Those roots, as Glissant postulates using the language of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari,

highlight the shared, free-floating rhizomatic connections, “the subterranean convergence...of our diverse histories...The depths are a site of multiple converging paths.”⁷² These submarine depths hold Caribbean intersections and are not bounded by topographical boundaries. Glissant also refers to Brathwaite’s, “The unity is submarine,” which for him summarizes the overlapping contemporary and historical realities of the region.

This submerged Caribbean geography challenges and is in tension with the characterization of the Caribbean as an isolated and fragmented island. For George Lamming:

there seems to exist a geography of imagination which imposed on the Caribbean artist a unique location in time and space. The island is a world whose immediate neighborhood is the sea...the island knows no boundary except the ocean, which is its gateway to eternity...the island is a reservoir of secrets. The secret is simultaneously its shield and the pearl which it is often forced to barter (underlining added).⁷³

Lamming’s characterization of the island as a boundary-less space differs from Dorothy Lane’s, author of The Island as a Site of Resistance: An Examination of Caribbean and New Zealand Texts. She characterizes the colonizer’s point-of-view of the island in imprisoning binary terms. Islands, in the colonizer’s mind, “encapsulate ideas of enclosure and control, prison and paradise and protection and tyranny.”⁷⁴ Additionally, colonizers and their compatriots in the motherland saw islands as “unreal or ideal territories which had simplified narratives of replication of the home space, and control.”⁷⁵ Islands were often represented as “female spaces penetrated by male reason and science...with the male colonizers accompanied by male children who reproduce and eventually inherit, his power.”⁷⁶ The primary difference between Lamming and Lane is,

of course, perspective. She typifies how colonizers saw and therefore engaged with the island, while he wrestles, through his artist-scholar's viewpoint, with a worldview stemming from his experience as a black colonial subject. In Lamming's estimation the artist has to come to terms with the concrete geography of the island and the geography of the island that is part of the imagination of the colonizer.

Lamming's island is boundless with a "gateway to eternity." However, it is forced to relinquish the protection of its shield, the sea, and its resources when strained by historical and contemporary circumstances to participate in the larger world. This forced participation, based on economic need, turns the natural shields and protection of the island into vulnerabilities –making islands easy points of penetration and development. Penetration and development are constructed in other ways for those residing in Caribbean coasts or in Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana. These mainland **islands**, because of their physical space, are constructed differently. They are bounded by an unending ocean on one side and by vast, inaccessible, seemingly endless hinterlands on the other,⁷⁷ "They are islanded by jungle."⁷⁸ The hinterlands do two things: first, they stretch and contort the notion of the island. Second, for Guyana, land of many waters, and its continental neighbors, the forests become the bottomless, unfathomable deep.

It is a new texture and dimension that, like Lamming's island, nurtures the secret reservoirs of Wilson Harris's limbo gateway. This gateway is squarely built on the ideas of quantum physics, "Quantum reality consists of simultaneous possibilities, a polyhistoric kind of being incompatible with our one track minds. If these alternative (and parallel) universes are really real and we are barred from experiencing them only by

a biological accident, perhaps we can extend our senses within a sort of ‘quantum microscope’.”⁷⁹ Harris’s “vision building attend[s] to antecedents, links and connections of all kinds in our much-divided post-colonial culture. [This] decentered vision hope[s] to **transcend** the stranglehold of binary oppositions inherent in the construction of a colonized people” (emphasis mine).⁸⁰ In sum, quantum physics enables temporal and spatial reconfigurations making it possible for the rupturing of linear, historicizing progression, a hallmark of imperial projects. Second, the hinterlands redefine the space of the exile. Caribbean islands themselves are exiled from the larger world even as they are pulled and forced to barter in it and by it. These continental territories are physically “exiled” or removed from the islands-Caribbean as they are simultaneously enclosed and encoded by them.

As someone born in Guyana, my relationship to the Caribbean is characterized by this geography of the imagination, one conditioned by time (history both distant and recent) and by space (real and imagined)—Guyanese and U.S. landscapes. Edward Said characterizes the literatures produced by exiles as those “efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement.” I do not think of myself as an exile, although I was too young to decide to leave Guyana. My parents left because of the increasingly authoritarian Forbes Burnham regime. However, my early desire to find a home, a place without need of contextualization, exposed me to Said’s crippling sorrow. It is with and from this distance of diaspora, that my identity has been shaped and my perspective on Caribbean realities funneled. It was not until my return to the Caribbean that I realized the [gaping] chasms and permutations wrought with this removal. My experience in the Caribbean diaspora has been an integral part of my formulation of these ideas. It has

been my isolation and solitude as a foreigner in the U.S. that has helped me reconceptualize what it means to be Caribbean—personally, politically, economically and strategically.

My Caribbean identity has developed outside the geographical boundaries of the region and is certainly different from a Caribbean identity in Guyana, Guadeloupe, Cuba, or Belize. I am not the first to experience this history as the continuing story of Caribbean integration attests; nor am I the only person to advocate the formulation of a Caribbean nation as a practical good.⁸¹ My position has given me an often optimistic, if somewhat detached vision. Nonetheless, I believe the diaspora and diasporan and transnational experiences will be critical to understanding and reshaping Caribbean realities, especially if we conceive of the Caribbean as a transworld nation, meaning that its diaspora is part of the territorially bounded nation. It is both a conceptual and a concrete space. This transworld nature of the diaspora reiterates some of the nostalgia of the homeland territories. However, the deterritorialization in this project is not only that felt by immigrants who have left the region, but also will be experienced by those within the Caribbean. The traditional nation-state will have to be subsumed to a regional one taking on many aspects of a federal model, but by incorporating the idea of values based on a larger sense of community identity.⁸²

Caribbean people have historically thought beyond their islands, empires and nations. There have been degrees of regional unity “among the Taino-Arawak and Carib tribes in these territories prior to the imposed Iberian order.”⁸³ Martí, among Caribbean thinkers of the past and present including Eric Williams and Ana Lydia Vega, “argued for a unified Caribbean system, federal and confederationist, that would help the region to throw off the artificial boundaries and irrational loyalist psychologies imposed by

colonialism.”⁸⁴ As the tendencies of economic globalization take us beyond the borders of the nation-state, the psyche still wants a physical place to call home. Some physically have more than one home, but that home is physical—it is not a cyber-home, although those are part of Western, twenty-first century realities too. Caribbean citizenship, in my estimation, is tied to a physical location. At this point, having concrete language, using what I have termed Amerindian postmodernism (which encourages enlarged capacity, reclaimed stories, rehearsed readings, and action), within particular locations, in so largely a theoretical project, is a necessary analytical tool.

My position as a Caribbean person in the diaspora allows me, because of economic and migratory history, to go beyond the borders of the nation-state. Because I have had to construct my Caribbean identity outside of the physical boundaries of the region, I have not developed the same affinities to a single “nation”(or narrow nationalism that are associated with patriotic definitions in most countries) —but look at them all with a sense of ownership, puzzlement, and longing. While my experience has not been one of the dynamic transnational citizen, it is more of the traditional immigrant with a migrant’s psyche, it is increasingly becoming more transnational. But my formative space and identity were certainly shaped by “the trauma [positive and negative] of the lonely exile in which Caribbean nationalism is forged.”⁸⁵ I am part of a tradition, but one, thanks to reconfigurations of time and space (the immediacy of travel) that is shifting right now.

It is through my visitations to the region that I recognize not only myself in maroonage, but the larger Caribbean **self-in-maroonage**, to use Brathwaite’s phrase. European imaginings have characterized this landscape, from Crusoe and Prospero, in terms of solitary confinement. The tensions generated by these imaginings and the

challenges of real life exacerbate Caribbean maroonage. Geographical restrictions have sedimented mentally and produce a Caribbean relationship to the land—one of isolation (inwardness) while reaching out for lifelines. Thus, Caribbean people are exiled **at** “home” and “abroad.” As stated earlier, while I recognized the loss of my immigration experience, it has not been [or is no longer] the crippling sorrow Said discusses. In fact, as Sam Haige argues, there is a “positive potential of forced migration” as expressed in the francophone idea of *l’errance*, which literally means wanderer who is searching,⁸⁶ or Edouard Glissant’s idea of “sacred motivation to revolt against a single root.”⁸⁷

Ultimately, *l’errance* characterizes the generally optimistic, but still fluctuating experience of the transnational. This means not only the recognition of duality in geographies but in identities and identity constructions as well, “*L’errance* is about physical and erotic freedom, mobility and travel across North America [as a] means of shaping identity. Yet here is no traditional search for identity, since any fixed identity is to be avoided as a form of limitation and exclusion which is contrary to the spirit of errance.”⁸⁸ For an earlier generation the self-in-exile reflected and exacerbated notions of alienation (geographic, cultural and social). *L’errance*, “through the duality of self-perception (one is citizen or [and] foreigner)”⁸⁹ and transnationalism uses the space of in-betweenity (or liminality) to construct a self. Instead of being disabled and bowed by removal from one’s native land, the transnational, in the ideal, uses it to advantage. The challenge is to join continuities with discontinuities into a functional identity. This possibility of a functional, if not coherent, identity is due to the relative in-expense of travel (the diminution and shrinking of time and space via air-travel), making return to the Caribbean, for long and short stays, viable annually and biannually rather than the

total disengagement and removal that migration once meant. Naturally, transnational possibilities have reconstructed citizenship nationally, regionally and globally.⁹⁰

Caribbean Identity

Caribbean identity, like that which constitutes Caribbean landscapes and geographies, is another thorny issue. Eddy Souffrant believes that identity constructs, especially collective ones, are no longer usable, in fact, no longer feasible. He posits that we should construct, along the lines of Paul Gilroy, contact identities. Contact identities are defined as those that come into being in a contact zone, a space of exchange, contamination, and influence. Souffrant's characterization leads me to believe that he defines collective identities as oppressive, imposed constructs that limit the freedom and exchange in the contact zone. Caribbean people do need to use collective identity constructs. While I would not characterize the work of Souffrant and Gilroy as meaningless, liberation struggles have to build on existing and shared connections even as they try to dismantle and reform systems. These struggles need an entrance. That entrance, or common space, is beginning with a known commodity that can then be challenged, transformed and/or exposed as fraudulent and inadequate **or** built upon. There is need for individual and collective identities which are shaped, pushed, and pulled by the other, especially given that the processes of corporate globalization, those built on colonialism and imperialism, ask people to identify beyond or in spite of their material conditions and consume. The movements that challenge imperialism and globalization must also build from familiar territory. However, the response cannot only expose the deficiencies of corporate globalization, but it must also appropriate effective, sometimes embedded, latent concepts of self and community. Resistance to corporate

globalization must employ the commonalities of the Caribbean personality to shape a regional nation. The quest for full self-determination means alternatives that recognize the region's elasticity, thus in constructing of Caribbean identity/ies the slippage at the core of these identities must be recognized and cultivated.

Part of a continuing conversation about Caribbean identity expresses itself in a certain reticence and anxiety surrounding race and ethnicity as expressed in movements from Negritude, Antillanité, Créolité, Black Power, etc. The conversations in this debate are enduring and exhaustive and will only be given cursory mention here.⁹¹ Some (e.g., Glissant, Harris) argue that the Caribbean personality is a Creole one, one that is racially and culturally mixed, Adamic (in the sense of Adam in the Biblical Eden) to use Walcott's language. Others, like Frank Martinus Arion, posit that the Caribbean has yet to experience Caribbeanness because it is not a Creole space—the mixes have been shallow cosmetic shifts,

the region as a whole has not even reached the stage of Caribbeanness or even Americanness yet...one of the most essential ingredients of Creoleness, the *interactional or transactional* aggregate of Caribbean, European, African, Asian and Levantine cultural elements, is fading away. There are no more blacks coming from Africa, neither as slaves, musicians, heads of states, missionaries nor even tourists. Instead the region is continuously refilled by Europeans and people from other continents, like Chinese and Indians.⁹²

Arion's point reminds us of the ever-present push in multicultural discourse to lessen the "fact of blackness." That dissolution is always the way to Creole identities, breaking down not all aspects of the mix, but the African component. For me, the Caribbean is a Creole space of interplay and chaos, in terms of language and culture, as characterized by Brathwaite, Glissant and Benítez-Rojo. To my mind, the largest failing of the Creole

construct has been in models of governance, which have not had the interplay and dynamic engagement seen in culture: language, arts, religion, etc. Nonetheless, it is by really engaging that question through a cross-cultural poetics (Glissant's term) that Caribbean people can engage in the interplay between "discrete cultural identities."⁹³

As Errol Hill notes, "[c]oncomitant with the recognition of a common history and shared goals is the expressed need to forge a cultural identity for Caribbean man [and] to establish a life of dignity and self-sufficiency for all Caribbean peoples, no less."⁹⁴ I would argue that a complex Caribbean identity already exists based on Hill's common history and shared goals. In a similar vein, Jose Martí argued for an American character, one distinct from a U.S. character which "must be based on knowledge gained from our peculiar [American] experience. It must repudiate tyranny by creating our own culture, our own history and our own symbols."⁹⁵ While there are a host of factors which distinguish one Caribbean state from the next (size, language, cultural expressions), there are cross-linguistic and cross border commonalities that include: European domination, the plantation economy, imported and exported labor—African and Asian—the experience of colonialism, and now corporate globalization. These shared experiences, reflected throughout the Caribbean, have impacted cultural, social, political, spiritual, historical and economic regional constructions; they also problematize ideas of slippage in terms of space, resistance, power and agency as in the case of citizenship and sovereignty.

In "The 'Pleasures' of Exile in Selected West Indian Writing," Evelyn O'Callaghan, quoting Lloyd Best, Caribbean economist and forerunner of the New World School's Plantation Model, advances the argument that the exiled Caribbean identity is

constructed on the idea of “in-betweenity.” Exiles are Janus-faced citizens of nowhere.⁹⁶ This sense of homelessness is “non-enervating and forges a new kind of Caribbean identity [because] in betweenity and ambivalence form the essence of the West Indian condition.”⁹⁷ For this reason, the texts created in this limbo space, either physical or psychological, “foster alternative ways of seeing.”⁹⁸ In-betweenity manifests in racial, linguistic and/or economic terms; and for most, these racial, linguistic and economic markers are dynamic, shifting and often metamorphosing. In-betweenity is another way of characterizing Edward Brathwaite’s “self-in-maroonage.”⁹⁹ The marooned self defies objectification “through a revolution in self-perception.”¹⁰⁰ This revolution is a

process of ongoing self-affirmation which, in the face of the unchanging rigidity of oppression generally means self-assertion. In asking what that revolution means today we are in fact attempting to assess the quality of our self-affirmation in all areas of our conscious living. These include: politics, literature and music.¹⁰¹

This construct of the self-in-maroonage and in-betweenity offers approaches to transforming or harnessing what appears to be chaos into an asset, while also framing the realities and multi-faceted nature of transnationalism. Because in-betweenity surfaces not just from community interaction, in and out of various Caribbean diasporas, but also from the landscape, the Caribbean self-in-maroonage can be a local epistemology with community-generated terms and part of the El Dorado process.

The actual and imaginary distances in the landscapes of the self-in-maroonage and the exile generate new and different visions. These landscapes, as Harris claims from his interaction with Amerindian cosmologies, foster multiple sensibilities. The sweep of the continental Caribbean can be contrasted to the insularity of the duality of the islands while **intensifying the contradictions and dualities** inherent in their cultures. This

multiplicity enables the construction of an Amerindian postmodern identity that embraces simultaneous contradictions [or chaos] as a liberating and transformative force. The Amerindian postmodern is a construction conceived and nurtured in a particular landscape and is invested with competing ways of being. Because the Caribbean experience engenders multidimensional consciousness, masking, and performance in the service of physical and spiritual survival within these continental landscapes, heighten those contradictions. The Amerindian postmodern is a visionary, but nonetheless complicated idea that predates contemporary constructions of the postmodern condition. Primary in this articulation is the symbiosis—push and pull of deconstruction and reconstruction. The necessity of reassembling the world is implicit in its critique as is the dismantling of the old order. Amerindian postmodernism is simultaneously a concrete and linguistic reconstitution of regional Caribbeanness, reconnecting Caribbean challenges to colonial visions and formations.

Whistling through the Bone¹⁰²

Harris sees postmodernism as “the triumph of an absolute human logic or discourse,”¹⁰³ which began with the specialization during the European Renaissance and continued through its Enlightenment, ultimately severing science and alchemy. In other words, he believes it [postmodernism] has a way of atomizing knowledge and parsing it down to specific, minute specializations. Though postmodernism theoretically claims to question such totalization, Harris constructs it as part of an epistemological project that is deterministic or over-determined, especially in terms of materialism and utilitarianism. Instead, Harris advocates the connectivity of knowledge—all sorts of knowledge with all aspects of experience—conscious and unconscious, alive and dead. He writes that the

philosophic and creative visualization of bridges between music and architecture were broken in favor of a powerful materialist persuasion and logic [that is] a building is a building is a building. Music is music is music. Thus, the cellular cosmos [which allows a building to be sacred and] which springs from an association with music (spatial rhythms and substance)...give way to utilitarian realism.¹⁰⁴

This utilitarian realism is, for Harris, the ultimate soullessness. Besides its serviceable, no-frills nature, postmodernism allows strategizing fully aware of contradictions, which viscerally come to life in art. The bone flutes of pre-Columbian Americans best exemplify the essence and contradiction of art.

Indigenous bone flutes were instruments made from the bones of a living thing—either a human or an animal. These flutes were the ultimate distillation of the contradictions of life. As Wilson Harris characterizes it, they held the contradiction of life, death, art, and beauty. José R. Oliver, specifically discussing the Taino perspective on bones, illustrates that “the Taino considered bones not simply as symbols for the dead, death and sterility; quite the contrary, they were the source of life itself. Among the Taino, bones were the symbolic substitution for the supreme being’s phallus.”¹⁰⁵ Oliver remarks that other Amerindians shared the views of the Tainos; and since the Indigenous people were not cannibals,¹⁰⁶ except, to my mind, in the most ritualistic sense, we can presume that human bone flutes were among their most sacred objects and used for the most holy ceremonies and other moments of great import.

Additionally, Napoleon A. Chagnon (1968),¹⁰⁷ though using problematic but accepted anthropological tools, describes the philosophy on living and dying of the Yanomamö, people of the Orinoco River between southern Venezuela and northern Brazil.¹⁰⁸ Naturally, my project here is not to consign all Amerindian peoples to an

amorphous lump, but rather to get a sense of their cosmological conceptions, particularly as it relates to bones and the dead. After a series of cremations (burning the flesh, sifting through it, removing the bones, burning again), the Yanomamö crush the bones of the deceased several times, and then these ground ashes mixed with boiled plantain soup is eaten.¹⁰⁹ A year after a person has died, there is another feast, “during which the rest of the ashes, again mixed with plantain soup,” are consumed.¹¹⁰ If the person was killed in raids,

they will deliberately save some of the ashes...and before each attempt at getting revenge, eat the ashes of their slain kinsman...The ashes of the deceased are consumed in order that the living will see their departed friends and relatives in *hedu*, [the second, mirror level of existence, inhabited by the spirits]. Members of allied villages show their friendship to each other by sharing, in the ashes of particularly important people, in a very intimate act. Endocannibalism, to the Yanomamö, is the supreme form of displaying friendship and solidarity.¹¹¹

The overlapping beliefs of the Yanomamö, the Taino, and the Caribs indicate their constant awareness and veneration of ancestor and enemy. Such ritualistic cannibalism and endocannibalism are about knowledge acquisition and memory. There is a sense of ingesting poison (the enemy) or power (the ancestor) and transmuting them. The enemy can be understood, while the ancestor strengthens—both forms of influence.

While the Carib method of assimilating knowledge about the “Other” was to eat a morsel of their enemy’s flesh, today we consume others’ experiences through art. Flesh, the fibrous sinuous corporeality of the human body is the physical, raw, core of the enemy (and of ourselves). Today, as essentialisms are decried, artistic gateways open the possibilities of exploring the soul of people, the anguished, tender, violent acts and history that shape lives. Thus, as technologies and processes shift, one contemporary is

experiential, voyeuristic cannibalism. We-- readers, witnesses, participants--are not cannibals in the sense that we eat human flesh or consume civilizations, but we do ingest **experiences** and increasingly, those of us in highly industrialized nations sometimes do consume civilizations. Our consumption, like that of the early Amerindians, who ate the flesh to understand, rather than Europeans who consumed civilizations for their own aggrandizement and in the name of profit (and whose consumption of civilizations means that they are always at the top of the food chain) is to understand and consolidate the various stimuli in our lives. Today, accomplishing it without eating flesh is possible, but consumption is required. It is consumption for epistemological knowledge in addition to capitalist possession.

The Carib bone flute is an instrument of pleasure, pain and panic. It is in essence an epistemological tool with soul. Its architecture allows for harmonious spaces shared with Western sensibilities. But it also tolerates those spaces of conflict between African, Asian, European, and hybridized values. These contentious interactions, the head-to-head butting and the fissures, are at the heart of Caribbean citizenship. The bone flute with its conflicted (death and knowledge) origins functions as part of an 'historical' framework for this idea. The bone flute embodies life as conflict and conflict as part of life. It is not a contradiction because the flute came from a living thing and is used by a sentient being, but between those living things, is conflict, trauma, and death. Harris contends that the Caribs "consumed a morsel of the flesh of their enemy and thought thereby they would understand the secrets of the enemy, what the enemy was planning to do, how he would attack them, how he would ravage their villages."¹² Since citizenship is often constructed oppositionally as us versus them, there is always a foreigner, an

Other, to measure against and, often, feel superior to. The bone flute works on two symbolic levels —indigenous and imposed. The bone flute is an object of a particular reality—its music facilitated knowledge, community, art, and pleasure. In its second reading, an external one, it is an object of cannibalism and a rationalization for conquest. It is used to reiterate notions of savagery and the need for the civilizing mission, another trick in the quest for gold. At this symbolic level, the flute functions like El Dorado—native trickery and deferral and European consumption and imposition.

At the regional level, the [imposed] cannibalistic elements of this construction have already been felt in previous attempts at integration. As Jamaica, a minnow fighting for clout and superiority, withdrew from the 1958-1961 federation after a national referendum, prompting Eric Williams to say, “one from ten leaves nought” meaning that self-interests left nothing,¹¹³ when he decided to follow Jamaica’s lead. This referendum and Trinidad’s subsequent removal because it did not want other countries “takin’ way we prosperity” embodied Williams’ dictum. The schism reached the regional level and the British-sponsored federation dissolved. The divisions with the federation between the more developed countries (MDCs) and the less developed countries (LDCs) along with nationalistically driven psychology of independence led to rifts that are difficult to bridge.¹¹⁴ At the national level, vicious ethnic polarizations, and other internal forms of ethnocannibalism, must be addressed throughout the Caribbean, particularly in Trinidad and Guyana, as well as political tribalism in Jamaica, Haiti, and Suriname. Other non-political insecurities to be addressed are issues of crime and health, namely the AIDS epidemic,¹¹⁵ before they ‘consume’ us. This idea of consuming or being consumed is, unfortunately, a real consequence of colonialism, which has meant defining national self-

interest in acceding to narrow, subsistence ways. It is also, frankly, an inheritance from the region's Amerindian past.

Since

the origins of music for them [the Caribs] lay in the bone flute [, it] was the seed of an intimate revelation of **mutual spaces they shared with the enemy**, mutual spaces within which to visualize the rhythm of strategy...The bone flute gave them access, as it were, to the very embryo of adversarial regime instinctive to themselves..." (emphasis added).¹¹⁶

Harris raises several critical points here, specifically regarding art born of a life-ending and knowledge-giving process of contradiction. Something, or for the Caribs, actually someone (these were human flesh and bones), had to die. In this death, a witness had to be present. This Callinago, often called Carib, community saw and was able to testify, via the flute and the music it produced, to this contradiction. The instrument in this process, the flute (pen, computer, camera, etc) creates a concrete mutual space even as it visualizes and interacts with another mutual space. This formation of being creates spaces of and for strategizing and change. The music generated by the bone flute suggests, through the pleasure of music, a congregational space where solidarity can be nurtured. It is simultaneous—analysis is coterminous with action and production. The instrument gives entrée to the creative and performative space. The text produces a path into the core of an adversary's structure or pattern of thinking and action, a structure that is recognizable. We know this because it also taps into our own instinctive adversarial self. Similarly, in quantum physics this idea of a witness makes one of the polyhistoric universes real (to the witness-participant).

“Is the ritual of cannibalism in the Carib bone flute, a strange camouflage thrown

over innermost shared bias, innermost shared greed for ascendancy within protagonist and antagonist? Does the camouflage of the morsel thrown over the ghost music imply a series of rehearsals?” Harris’s first question, which I understand to be, “Is the ritual of consumption a mask, a cover for our [human] need to be first?” It is a resounding idea if applied to consumptive capitalist cultures that consume with ease and seek only more consumption, while contemplation, particularly at the level of the nation, becomes a scarce “commodity”. Indeed, it has been this sense of cannibalism that doomed the West Indies Federation.¹¹⁷ This ritual of consumption is also simultaneously a manifestation of being first rather than simply masking that need.¹¹⁸

His second question, part one, “Does the product, produced by the bone flute (ghost music) mask, through blending-in (an erasure), the fact that flesh had to be eaten to create it (that music)?” My response is no, provided the context of consumption is clear. To clarify, ghost music would not camouflage cannibalism and the ingestion of the morsel of flesh because the very term “bone” maintains the flute’s point of origin, while music keeps the origins present. However, once the ghost music is on a compact disc removed from the flute, then camouflage is not only possible, but realized. The more removed the music is from the instrument—its origins—the more likely it is to be camouflaged or co-opted. There is deferral. Now, to the second half of the question on rehearsals (or part two of two): “rehearsal” is a synonym for “practice” or “contemplation.” With the bone flute, there can be musical rehearsal, which similar to the El Dorado process is a rehearsal. Implicit in the idea of rehearsal is that of process and continual evolution not necessarily to change in a radical sense, but to refine.

Thus, refinement and contemplation are necessary because without them

consumption is savage and maintains a subsistence mentality, not evolving beyond that basic step. Harris believes that the [theatrical] mask of inspiration (the morsel) over text suggests practice,

How can one know what the enemy is planning if one does not in a sense **share the biases** of the enemy? One cannot know the enemy unless the enemy has something in common with oneself. This has been described as a “transubstantiation in reverse.” [This] means that the bone flute can turn right around and in our day and age one may suddenly be confronted with the necessity to look deeply into oneself and to ask oneself, how can one begin to revise the images in which one’s furies are planted, in which one’s biases are planted?...How can one begin to revise them [the technologies implanted with our furies] unless one looks very deeply into the capacity of fiction by way of its imageries and textual perspectives to “consume its own biases”?¹¹⁹

These final questions not only illustrate Harris’s organic concern with the redemptive possibilities of humanity, but also ask how inherited institutions, such as the state, can be used and adapted and for which, at present there are no alternatives. In other words, the discourses of capitalism, colonization, nation/nationalism and race/ism have camouflaged the latent message of the bone flute embedded in the landscape. The message of the bone flute, the quest for order and stability by recognizing the role and place of chaos and disorder, is a message that, for the most part, was part of African worldviews, which through the trauma of Middle Passage and enslavement was fragmented and needing reordering. Throughout this extensive quote Harris recounts an Amerindian, particularly Callinago worldview.¹²⁰ He constructs the latent, psychological, physical and intuitive personality of indigenous, hemispheric American people.

This American personality, embedded in the landscape, consumes biases in the face of annihilation and creates for and in the self “mutual spaces.” Recognizing the enemy’s

humanity by ingesting biases made accessible in fiction was denied to Amerindians, Africans and Asians by colonizing forces. In fact, the discourses of Progress and Civilization generally negated this possibility. Sadly, non-European Americans and European Americans alike have internalized and externalized through social, political and economic institutions the attitudes of the colonizers rather than the lessons embedded in their landscapes (see also Wynter's discussion, pages 13-16). Of course, the paradox here is that these landscapes were not without violence as manifested in the bone flute. Primary and secondary differences remain in terms of scope and agenda. Thus, art, or the capacity of the imagination fueled by dream, death, life experiences, and the unconscious, helps to know the enemy—"the"/ "our" self/selves—and is the artist's contribution to her particular society and humanity writ large. Our inability to recognize the need for integration and to put this need into practice means we become our own enemies. Harris's construction of the bone flute becomes the basis for an "architecture," a flexible framework, through which the "capacity of fiction," based on, what I have termed, Amerindian postmodernism navigates the primarily psychological aspects of Caribbean integration.

By Amerindian postmodernism I mean a duality and complexity of postmodernist understanding that predates European conquest. Art enables a retrieval of an often ignored or submerged past—one literally and figuratively lost to "time," and the mirroring of this eschatological theory with disciplines born of the Western Enlightenment like the sciences, specifically physics. Not only does art **retrieve**, but through it allows participants to **experience**, thus art recuperates and gives a concrete, though emotional and psychological, way to attain knowledge and experience. In this

case, through Amerindian postmodernism, which is a quantum physics framework and which reflects and refracts many of the metamorphic qualities of pre-Columbian America, witnesses “live” and are affected by every interaction. Physicist Nick Herbert posits that part of the shamanistic aspect of quantum physics is quantum interconnectedness,

the all in one factor...when two objects briefly interact and then you pull them apart, in [this] description at least they never come apart; there’s a kind of stickiness that connects them together, so they’re bound together forever in the theory. They never separate, even though they’re not interacting anymore.¹²¹

In this sense nothing is ever separated. There is always a trace or stain after interaction. Everything and everyone is marked by **any** contact. This idea of interconnectedness also contains a paradox that permeates the entire theory of quantum physics, although things are connected, they are also separate, and that “there’s a certain balance,”¹²² born of the contradiction of separate but connected.

In many parts of the developing world, well-founded or otherwise, there is a suspicion and distrust of postmodernism that was most vociferously articulated in the 1960s as apolitical, nihilistic, and relativist in the extreme. There is a belief that postmodernism is mired in theoretical, intellectual exercises rather than in reality.¹²³ In this sense there has certainly been more of an embracing among creative writers in the postcolonial world of postmodern strategies than among politicians and social scientists, which is not to suggest that these people are any less theoretically engaged than the cultural workers and thinkers. The explicit ethical core of Amerindian postmodernism is one way to reconcile and alleviate the suspicion between postmodernist intellectualism and the fruits of non-linear, non-realist artistic production.

The primary aspects of what I am calling the Amerindian postmodern serve to counteract the nihilistic and atomizing aspects of postmodernism rather than to dismiss the entire theory. Ultimately, Amerindian postmodernism gives the decentered, constantly questioning subject, in and out of the academy, a framework. This framework emerges directly from an indigenous **and** a colonial past and is therefore not only complex, but grounded in specific historical experiences. Thus, Amerindian postmodernism is not only a reading and production tactic, it is also a strategy. In a way, this catapults the debate, “What did modernity give rise to?” back to its cornerstones -- colonialism and post-colonialism. Two quick responses would be capitalism and the consolidated nation-state. Yet, if the pre-nation argument put forth by David Hinds in the last five years, which posits that Caribbean countries have not experienced the developmental stages imposed by Western nations and therefore can only dysfunctionally mimic Western governance, is accepted, then it can be agreed that the Caribbean is straddling and negotiating that uneven ground that is part of our geographical inheritance and part of the vestiges of colonial dependency. In other words, Caribbean nation-building [to date] is not organic, it has been imposed. Therefore, the region remains in a space of early modernity still needing to construct [or more perfectly adapt] institutional frameworks and infrastructure. In this contemporary construction period, Amerindian postmodernism, because it insists on histories and is grounded, surrounded and inured by spatial and temporal conditions specific to the region, makes designing and building a Caribbean apparatus for governance more feasible. Because Amerindian postmodernism maintains the importance of that pesky Marxian concept of materialism, it stresses problem-solving and “stake-holder” involvement. Literature’s representative and

reflective capacity is a useful tool for articulating this materiality. It excites and expects real participation.

As Linda Hutcheon notes, part of the distrust of postmodernism is “its lack of a theory of agency” and its seemingly malleable ethical core, or lack of an ethical core.¹²⁴ This lack, according to Bryan S. Turner, leads some, at extreme ends of the debate, to call postmodernism, not only conservative, but fascist.¹²⁵ Fredric Jameson puts it another way,

There is some agreement that the older modernism functioned against its society in ways which are variously described as critical, negative, contestatory, subversive, oppositional and the like. Can anything of this sort be affirmed about postmodernism and its social moment? We have seen that there is a way in which postmodernism replicates or reproduces--reinforces--the logic of consumer capitalism; the more significant question is whether there is also a way in which it resists that logic.¹²⁶

For me, postmodernism’s etherealness or more stridently stated conservatism comes from a separation between materiality and theory. Theories of agency emerge from material conditions. In this sense Marxism continues to provide a practicable framework for constructing agency and an oppositional consciousness. The lived reality in a dance with theories of nation-building is the same contradictory, compromising process as Marx’s, originally Hegel’s, methodological dialectic (thesis, antithesis, synthesis). The idea of the dialectic is the same idea of contradiction present when we insist on questioning narratives that simplify our pasts—we do it by insisting on a presence largely erased from the region. The indigenous trace, which as Wilson Harris says, influences the very rhythm of our language,¹²⁷ is invoked and embodied. It is more than a trace. It is made visible and immediate, and in so naming becomes one of the ways of making the past, the

experiences (their bones and cultures) of indigenous people present with the utterance. Amerindian postmodern, from the utterance, insists on a history that is no longer dormant, but concretely present. It is a way of making latent tendencies tangible by telescoping the past into the present and vice versa and thereby, providing one way “to resist the logic of capitalism.”

Thus the basic tenets of Amerindian Postmodernism, bolstered by a very specific [sense of the] past, presented through the arts, would be: (a) there are mutual spaces in which we find shared biases (often with the enemy). Mutual spaces are those that foster critical coming together using common ground partialities—music, food, school, work, etcetera. In these spaces of comfortable and shared preference—common ground—there is the possibility to dialogue with the enemy, the self or an external [human] foe. Artistic production can be one such mutual space— carrying the most critical, vile and contradictory elements of society. (b) Amerindian Postmodernism invokes a soulful epistemology which seeks harmony rather than fragmentation—through enlarging the capacity to see another person or group and their experience; reclaiming stories lost in the ruptures or gaps of history; prismatic rehearsal of the past through rereading; and connecting the previous three into action. This harmonizing epistemology is latent and/or submarine: (b-1) this knowledge-system seeks the reconnection between science (evolving Enlightenment technologies of rationalization and explication—the hunt to know and reveal); and alchemy (classifying through mystical, illogical [in an Enlightenment sense] transmutations which recognizes not knowing, as an appropriate type of knowing); thus, finding balance and coherence between science and alchemy an indication of the dynamic movement of culture. (b-2) Therefore, such harmonizing works toward full integration of the self and the people/polity/citizens. It integrates the

aesthetical, ethical, metaphysical, and logical. It is a recognition of knowledge-production as spiritual practice; (c) It is a personal and communal project. This means at the level of the individual and engagement with one's self, developing critical awareness of one's way of being in the world and all the attendant pitfalls. As one looks at the self—through fiction—one changes one's self and, by extension, the world. Therefore, the communal project involves the same interrogations and reflection but **in relation** to more than one self—but to ever greater levels of community. (d) Fiction, using stories and processes forged in the region enables readers/participants to mask themselves in the story, in the characters and act, rehearse, through them. Thus, fiction as a technology, with the connotations of progressive and advanced, through which participants experience their worlds and others; using the capacity of the imagination to incorporate these things intervenes in the region's fragmentary history and helps forge more unified future possibilities.¹²⁸

Many Caribbean artist-philosophers like Derek Walcott and Sam Selvon ask us to look at what was made in the region lest members of our communities are made to feel like Others, as Selvon felt during the 1970s Black Power Movement, "Black Power was never for the coloured races as such. It was for the Black man only...[O]nce again, the strategy of keeping people apart, of creating division, came into operation."¹²⁹ I privilege Caribbean constructions and philosophies. Unfortunately there is a tradition of privileging European theoretical frameworks, that as Paget Henry notes, many Caribbean scholars from Marcus Garvey to CLR James indulged in.¹³⁰ They interrogated, engaged and responded to and with European philosophies and theories, "Caribbean philosophy continues to over-identify with its European heritage. As a result, philosophy has existed

in the tradition largely as an absent presence, a discourse whose submerged existence we cannot quite allow to surface.”¹³¹ Similarly, Wole Soyinka writes that

to refuse to participate in the creation of a new cult of the self’s daily apprehended reality is one thing; to have that reality contemptuously denied or undermined by other cultic adherents is far more dangerous and arouses extreme reactions...The adherent of Marxist ‘import rhetoric’, like the Christian convert, is equally a victim of the doctrine of self-negation. Above all, the new ideologue has never stopped to consider whether or not the universal verities of his new doctrine are already contained in, or can be elicited from the world-view and social structures of his own people.¹³²

Like Soyinka, I am not intimating that there aren’t overlaps and a sense of (re)cognition when reading European theorists, but since my project is about building regional Caribbean unity, I propose to focus on methods and ideas churned up and expressed from that space both psychological and physical. Heeding Selvon and Walcott’s warning of exclusionism and potential disunity by seeking origins outside of the region, I privilege those Caribbean interpretations of Marxism, capitalism, structuralism and so on that arise from Caribbean experiences, thus, inter-national Caribbean philosophy as transubstantiation in reverse—because “One cannot know the enemy unless the enemy has something in common with oneself.”¹³³ However, I do believe there is still value in revisiting Africa and Asia, as is continually the case with Europe, to fully understand the mixes made in the Caribbean. In this instance, I will use primarily European intellectual philosophies in a similar fashion. Rather than being my point of departure or in the foreground they will be background investigated and alluded to for clarification rather than principal questioning. Instead of colonizing another project for regional unity (as was the British federalist plan—a colonial plan) by trying to make external theories fit,

my goal is the reverse.

Contemporary postmodernism, that version privileged in many parts of the academy, is the “unnamable” process of coming into being; and in my estimation, falls into two categories: (a) the collapse of meaning, nihilism and (b) difference, multiplicity, and dialogue. Juggling these goals and aspirations suggests movement, but within this movement is an embedded inertia. Inertia describes the sluggish nature of Lyotard’s **postmodern condition** of certain uncertainty. This condition has been used to simultaneously challenge and reinforce our relationship in/to our world. Aspects of the postmodern, which challenge the (b)order of things¹³⁴ focus on resistance, and strategies for progressive change.

To do this historicizing some of the valuable tendencies which predate the discourse of postmodernism, but which we now associate with the concept is necessary. Despite the periodizing **ism**¹³⁵ which situates postmodernism in the late twentieth century, Brenda K. Marshall argues that postmodernism is not a new condition but one that has been present throughout modernity and perhaps before. I agree; postmodern notions of duality, “order/disorder” and contradiction have been present in the Americas before Columbus, and is highlighted by the African experience in the Americas. bell hooks makes a similar observation and argues that, “For African–Americans our collective condition **prior** to the advent of postmodernism and perhaps more tragically expressed under current postmodern conditions has been and is characterized by continued displacement, profound alienation and despair” (emphasis mine).¹³⁶ Likewise, anthropologist Gloria Wekker chronicles the multi-valent “I”s that Surinamese working class women use in self-construction, “when Renate [founder of the only women’s

political party] says, “I talked to my ‘I,’ to myself,” she is indicating that different ‘instances’ of the self need to be consulted. It is clear, then, that long before postmodernism became fashionable in the West, Creoles thought of themselves as fragmented, complex, and multiplicitous.”¹³⁷ Thus, while there is recognition that postmodern tendencies, with or without the ism are part of an American experience,¹³⁸ there are also those who decry what postmodernism has come to represent. Wilson Harris, someone who values the postmodern realities of the Caribbean, specifically as expressed by indigenous people, describes postmodernism, as it is expressed today, as the death of the imagination.¹³⁹ What is the difference between the Amerindian postmodern and what we are calling postmodern today? A crucial factor is digitized technology that quickens the pace of our lives and propels us (in all directions) at break-neck speeds. Of course, in this era of globalization, one of uneven development, some have access to and are impacted by these changes faster than others, but we are all affected; it is simply a matter of degree.

Nonetheless, outside of the speed of innovation, what makes today’s postmodern condition valuable? I find the contemporary postmodern condition a discombobulating and enervating space; one, which Jean-François Lyotard characterizes as “incredulous toward meta-narratives” by which he means those overarching, ordering stories, that are similar to [H]istory as defined by Edouard Glissant in Caribbean Discourse. These meta-narratives or [H]istory are the stories told by the ruling class which reiterate their greatness and de-emphasize the resistance of the masses of people. Lyotard points out that it is the incredulous (ness) of the postmodern condition that allows us to accept as normal, absurdity and injustice. He claims “that the contradictions of the socio-economic

field: less work, lower production costs and more work to lessen the social burden,” foster a situation where “our incredulity is now such that we no longer expect salvation to rise from these inconsistencies, as did Marx.”¹⁴⁰ The postmodern condition that Lyotard describes is one of seduction. The reason absurdity and injustice are accepted as normal, the reason inconsistencies are not questioned is because “the story” has been bought, especially in the U.S., that most people are middle class and that shopping cures all that ails. Coaxed via technology and advertising to believe that radical change can be found at Wal-Mart or the multiplex, “the story” is digested despite personal experiences to the contrary. Ultimately, there is a fear about confronting the seducer because it means taking on responsibilities, through educational and media inundation, that we believe we would rather not have. To put it another way, as Thomas Frank, author of What’s the Matter with Kansas says, there is a disjuncture between our economic interests and our cultural values.¹⁴¹ Globally speaking, we have been sold a culture primarily Western, predominately U.S., of desires especially in the realm of popular culture which often undermine the economic positions and realities of most global citizens. However, this seduction underscores the power and corrosiveness of some stories, which are aired and repeated, but neither criticized nor questioned.

Yet, “the postmodern condition is as much a stranger to disenchantment as it is to the blind positivity of delegitimation.”¹⁴² Here Lyotard contests postmodernism’s soullessness, arguing instead that the postmodern unsettles self-evident meanings of various structures—colonial, corporate, etc. Lyotard’s disenchantment with meta-narratives is reminiscent of the “tartness of [Walcott’s] apple” when he discusses the Caribbean as a new Eden complete with an Adamic man (one born of the mixture of the

African, Asian, and European). The “tartness,” a prior knowledge, is neither innocent nor naïve; it is coded as lack. A lack that postmodernism does not recognize because its re/visions are without political impetus or connection; it is simply a different vision. Lack of innocence on a seemingly blank slate—the sea is history, but the history is submerged and like the sea on a calm day, seems flat; so too are the landscapes which look like simple thicket. But both the landscape and the seascape hold stories that belie the blank slate. The sea has submerged Africans and treasures untold and the landscapes, traces of Amerindians and Maroons. The Adamic personality is a contextual personality. All parts of the mix remember “previous incarnations” and adapt those memories when and where possible. It is a personality whose intuitive knowledge, in the Harrisonian sense, fuels incredulous disenchantments, ‘infinite rehearsals’ and quantum possibilities of the Amerindian postmodern. This disenchantment is often found amongst those whose economic realities are disjointed from rhetoric of the seduction—basically the propaganda of corporations and wealthy elites does not intersect often enough with the realities of many.

Literature and the performing arts engage with the quantum possibilities of the Amerindian postmodern by creating mutual spaces of congregation and convergence. These mutual spaces facilitate intimacy and locality –fiction provides a secure framework through which to question and strategize for change. The metaphoric rereadings (or rehearsals) of reclaimed stories invite ritual engagement with one’s own space as well as another’s.

The terminology--citizenship and identity--is necessary in this era because it minimizes the jarring and destabilizing speed of life. These terms produce intimacy and

locality in a globalizing world. In effect, they interrupt the seduction, especially when the seducer is racially and/or economically removed from the one being seduced. They offer a way to enter at a local level by highlighting a sense of belonging and connection to the larger Caribbean. The challenge in the Caribbean is two-tiered: it is one of ready physical proximity and one, of psychological decolonization. In the first instance, political participation because many places are so small may be dangerous, and certainly has led to communal mocking and shaming.

The language of citizenship (like the language of nationalism) is a known commodity. I invoke the known rhetoric and paradigms of citizenship,¹⁴³ not to call on the hierarchical, overarching, structural, meta-narratives of citizenship, which are there; but instead, as one way to access claimed discrete identities, which enables an examination of citizenship layers based on contextual relationships. However, it also means framing these contextual relationships using Amerindian postmodernism. Basically, situating them in the ideal of community good ultimately leads to personal good, rather than the opposite. To utilize this known commodity while simultaneously looking to transform the term means recognizing Richard Falk's two competing aspects of globalization—from above (multinational and corporate) and from below (transnational civil society). Making this leap means acting regionally, locally, and personally. Citizenship in a globalized world becomes Wilson Harris's infinite rehearsal, an endless rehearsal of constant juggling, shifting, and searching for **mutual spaces of interaction**.

Citizenship, territory, and loyalty take on new shadings as Falk's transnational activist, a global citizen, both in the north and south, inspired by a global quest for social,

economic, and environmental justice intervenes with the workings of corporate capitalism. The citizen sees

the real arena of politics [is] no longer understood as acting in opposition within a particular state, nor the relation of society and the state, but that is consisted more and more of acting to promote a certain kind of political consciousness transnationally that could radiate influence in a variety of directions, including bouncing back to the point of origin...this transnational militancy with an identity, itself evolving and being self-transformed...can't really be tied very specifically to any one country or even any region but may also be intensely local in its activist concerns. It is certainly not "political" in a conventional sense, nor is it "professional," but draws its strength from both sources.¹⁴⁴

Falk's use of the verb "radiate" captures this phenomenon. This transnational citizen makes connections above and below in formal and informal sectors. However, part of the problem here is that "transnational managerial class or 'an international business civil[z]ation' [that] has come to the fore [because] of the ascendancy of neo-liberal ideas [and who are] based in the major private banks and global corporations."¹⁴⁵

Although a Caribbean nation will mean a supranational home, there is still specificity about it. Caribbean citizenship is a three-pronged notion consisting of the (i) community, (ii) the nation, and (iii) the region. To begin with, even if coded at the level of tradition it will be important to ask people to connect their community and national particularity with their regional specificity. Fundamentally people still feel the need to belong to something, somewhere. To do this, land is still important, "governance cannot be divorced from land, its resources and a sense of place. People dwell *somewhere*, and they are neighbors to *these* people."¹⁴⁶ Caribbean citizenship and regional unity are both about transforming government structures and transforming the consciousness of

Caribbean people. However, for my project I believe the latter is most important despite important positive changes in the former.

Being cognizant of our already multiple ways of belonging territorially, locally, nationally, regionally, and using that recognition to inform a political consciousness will imply making greater links through and with Caribbean histories and personalities. In 1949, British sociologist, T.H. Marshall classified citizenship into three categories—civil, political, and social. According to Marshall these categories developed overtime, with the first emerging in the eighteenth century.

Civil citizenship established the rights for individual freedom, such as rights to property, personal liberty and justice...Political citizenship, evolving out of nineteenth century developments, encompassed the right to participate in the exercise of political power. [And] social citizenship, a twentieth century development, emphasized the citizen's rights of economic and social security developed as a consequence of the modern Western European welfare state.¹⁴⁷ Marshall's classifications illustrate the development of citizenship in the West and are based on the evolving notion of personhood and its relationship to the larger physical, economic, and social environment. In other words, Enlightenment articulation of "man" as separate from God, but entitled because he is a sentient being able to exist beyond instinctual needs, entitles him to God-given privileges. The law can only help secure these rights, but cannot restrict or limits one's humanity in so doing. The expansion of humanity—to women and non-white beings—affected and reconstructed notions on/of participation and power; when humans moved from beasts to persons, who are citizens, who belong to a specific environment, the relationship to territory shapes laws. Consequently, social citizenship arises out of some security within the environmental landscape, which means citizens can focus their energies beyond subsistence

constructions of citizenship. Contemporary constructions of citizenship in an interesting way, hark back to previous notions of citizenship and territory, demonstrated by the emergence of ecological citizenship, which is a manifestation of global citizenship. People, in balance with the natural environment, reshape formulations of citizenship. Since this idea of belonging is assembled on preserving an ecological balance, it challenges the borders legal nations. David Held advances some common attributes [or hows] of citizenship:

Reciprocity of rights against, and duties towards, the community...membership in the community in which one lives and membership means participation...citizenship is above all the involvement of people in the community in which they live...citizenship rights are, therefore, public, social and individual entitlements.¹⁴⁸

Held's common attributes are primarily in the context of Western frameworks; nonetheless, to me, important components of citizenship are participation (voting, public debate, right to assemble), redress (courts, law), and accountability (mechanisms for change) and information (education, media). Citizenship is about cultivating solidarity around commonalities (history, language, political agendas—specific material conditions). The “pathology” (fanatic patriotism, xenophobia) of citizenship or negative nationalism is a danger particularly if people hold to their micro-nationalities and cannot work toward a larger ideal.

I divide Caribbean citizenship into five sections: local, national, regional, diasporic, and transnational. The most narrowly defined and discrete unit of citizenship is expressed through family, kinship ties—fictive and biological—and immediate community or neighborhood (sometimes characterized as a “country”). National, in this context, means the state, the government, the actual infrastructure of resource

distribution, rather than an ethnic nation. Regional citizenship is connected to Caribbean geography, though not all regional territories are dealt with in this dissertation. Diasporic citizenship operates on several levels: first, those who have left their national communities; in other words, those who left their own state by migrating to one or more Caribbean states; and second, those who absent themselves from the geographic Caribbean entirely. The final category, transnationalism, has similar demarcations, meaning there can be internal transnationals as in the case of Amerindians, Maroons—those who belong to “ethnic” groupings and nations, as well as those outside national boundaries that are citizens in their natal home and their naturalized or adopted state. This state of citizenship indicated awareness of belonging to multiply places. Thus, in and of itself, it is a very conscious manifestation of citizenship and illustrates the dynamic nature of belonging.

As mentioned earlier, Caribbean people exist on many planes simultaneously. Therefore, considering citizenship and the impact of globalization as a newly named, but constant factor of the colonial experience, is a primary part of reconfiguring Caribbean [national or state] identity/ies. Globalization necessitates this because as Gordon Rohlehr observes, “Would we even be talking about the Caribbean community these days if we were not threatened collectively by the now monolithic world order of globalization.”¹⁴⁹ Indeed, globalization and the furthering of private corporate agendas, antithetical to the public good, as global public good is a primary factor galvanizing this conversation. To this I would add that reexamining Caribbean citizenship means exploring shared experiences generated by globalization. These experiences are often similar to those experienced under colonialism and neo-colonialism, yet they are different in the sense of

awareness and worker mobility within and outside the region. Today's Caribbean citizen is global and transnational in a new sense. Workers understand the global marketplace; they recognize that most corporations can move their low wage work or import low wage-workers when local workers make living wage demands. Because workers themselves sometimes occupy this transnational contradictory place—not able to find low wage work in their countries, they migrate to find low wage work elsewhere, which enables them in this day-and-age to travel between national borders with relative speed. Through telecom technology (phone, Internet, etc), they maintain contact with their home spaces on at least the local level.

Today, citizenship discourse focuses on the emerging forms of citizenship—transnational and ecological to name two. Citizenship, in my estimation, involves activism. A citizen is engaged, not passive. So how does one become a citizen—how does one move from citizen by birth to citizen by right of action? This happens through engagement. The transnational citizen actively recognizes that s/he belongs to two spaces, which necessitates a slew of negotiations. The ecological citizen is engaged in a project—saving the planet from pollution and degradation. Thus, by definition, that citizen's engagement is conditioned by his/her sense of mission and tasks. Caribbean citizenship, necessitated by Caribbean geography, is a type of ecological citizenship at all levels. Of course, the issue is coming into that consciousness, which is to say that is the issue of coming into any type of citizenship. In this regard, Amerindian Postmodernism, connected as it is with the ecological trace of the native peoples, helps to engender one such manifestation of Caribbean citizenship.

My initial thought on (re) conceptualizing Caribbean citizenship came from reading Wilson Harris's essay, "Judgment and Dream". In this essay he discusses the bone flute as a trope built on the idea of literally ingesting a morsel of the enemy's flesh for understanding. This process of ingestion is the ultimate metaphor for transformation and transcendence. It is an instrument through which knowledge, experience, and wisdom are traded and gained from contact with the enemy and the deepest self, it's a way, as Wilson Harris argues, to meet the enemy and engage with the violence of the past and the present **through** fiction and other art forms. As I argued earlier, our contemporary bone flute is art—and its capacity to help "access the adversarial self"—specifically plays, short stories and poems. Through these fictions, the flesh, removed from the bone is eaten; then the charred bones are pounded and boiled into plantain soup, ingested, and synthesized, though one is used for the flute.

The idea of the Caribbean as a theatre, one in which identities (aspects of citizenship), subjectivities and nations are performed redeploys the questions: who is watching, who is on stage, who wrote the script, are the participants knowing or unwitting? The bone flute, an instrument engineered painful change, acknowledges these altered states of being and prismatic ways of seeing. As noted thinkers from Franz Fanon to Lowell Fiet state, masking and performance are embedded in the physical and psychological life of the Caribbean. For Fanon and Fiet, particularly the former, playing (and playing with) assigned and expected roles are characterized by his pithy, "black skin, white masks." From the beginning, through Columbus's misrepresentations, the region performed as the Indies, a mask it still wears today especially in the Anglophone territories. Reconceptualized Caribbean citizenship means drawing together disparate

parts of collective contact identities, those formed in the zone/s of exchange, and dealing with the chaos that these colliding interests bring. These range from ecological, transnational, racial, economic, and gender issues. Indeed, the ecological consequences of global warming, increased hurricanes and floods, as well as deadly ethnic ruptures in Guyana and political tribalism in Haiti, illustrate the unfolding tribulations. Ultimately, it is about taking the critical lens culled from the artistic craft to move beyond narrow notions of (self) interest. The traditions of Amerindian, African, and larger indigenous dialectic is the synthesis of life and death. So that living a fulfilling life does not mean desecration of others and/or the planet, but through shifts in perception, which leads to corrective action, look for mutually beneficial solutions. Literature offers a way to ingest experience that leads to transformation by synthesizing the morsel and altering one's knowledge and vision in the now-time. This dissertation mimics the Amerindian Postmodernism process using the first chapter to enlarge vision or capacity [to see]; the second chapter reclaims stories; the third advocates a prismatic reading or rehearsal of the past; and the fourth brings these together in points of praxis—concretizing these ideas through theatre.

Political scientist David Hinds argues that Caribbean nations are pre-nations,¹⁵⁰ meaning that developmentally they have had to skip and/or consolidate stages of psychological and administrative development that modern Western nations take for granted. As a result, they have been performing nationhood as well. Similarly, Hilbourne Watson argues that the nation-state model masks the ruling-class agenda of the state. In other words, ruling class interests are characterized as national interests.¹⁵¹ This is, of course, reminiscent of Antonio Gramsci's definition of hegemony which links the

control of media, financial and educational institutions by the economic and political elite as a way to manipulate, often without physical violence, the behavior of the masses.¹⁵² Thereby creating an historical, political and geographical connection to theatre, masking and performance. Drama is part of the latent oppositional consciousness of the region. By oppositional consciousness I mean the power to resist and rebel buried deep in the Caribbean psyche. Through the revolution in self-perception that takes place by recognizing one's self and experiences in art, this obscured and concealed consciousness comes to the fore. The point of writing critically and creatively is about communication, about transmitting information that is heard and felt; in the end it is about manufacturing a message that is internalized. Internalization is important because it means transformation on intimate personal levels and at political global levels.

The creative arts allow us to imagine and concretize transformative realities. They reflect the banality of our lives while allowing us to transcend the drudgery and survival-centered nature of life. Once these possibilities are visible on a personal level, the next step is to make the vision real for others. Real, of course, does not mean realist, but rather felt and felt deeply enough to be moved to (eventual) action. In the end, it is about an activist subject—an agent. As Haitian writer Jean Claude Fignole puts it, “the first entrance to self consciousness is neither word, memory or hope. It is ACTION.”¹⁵³ The problem is in scenarios of transformation and transcendence there are always obstacles—which shift, multiply, and are solved before cropping up in new guises.

Richard Falk articulates the simultaneity of the globalizing process which challenges the weight of systemic predestination that keeps one in the suffocating embrace of inertia. Falk's globalization from above and below¹⁵⁴ provides a more

dynamic and interactive sense of this phenomenon. Thomas L. Friedman defines globalization as an “international system [that] involves the integration of free markets, nation-states and information technologies to a degree never before witnessed, in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and countries to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper and cheaper than ever.” He acknowledges that, “it is also producing a powerful backlash from those brutalized or left behind.”¹⁵⁵ To use Friedman’s “system” is to be oppressed by the language of its economic inevitability. This interplay between these contending forces links globalization and postmodernism.

Most theorists speak of four central areas of globalization: production, governance, community and knowledge. Additionally, there are cultural, environmental and psychological elements to globalization. These areas are interrelated and interlocking, however, I wish to focus on globalization in governance and production. The essential aspect of globalization here is economic globalization. Economic globalization—the multinational quest exploitation of cheap labor and resources—has influenced developments at the state level, while also fueling a backlash among disenfranchised, progressive and enlightened (i.e., the Left and poor) sectors that do not benefit from the wealth produced from rapacious capitalism.

Technological change on a grand scale has reconfigured how we perceive and interact with our world. Today’s technology has reduced and reconfigured temporal and spatial relationships, which have directly effected economic and political development. Corporations, the new empires, have meant dire consequences for small places caught in the throes of globalization from above. This type of globalization reemphasizes the continued colonial and dependent nature of Caribbean economies (see [A Small Place](#) and

Life and Debt). First, there has been retrenchment of democracy and an alienation of citizens from their national governments. Second, national governments from the United States to Jamaica have become willing handmaids of corporate, laissez-faire, free-market or neo-liberal ideologies.

My primary texts include Pauline Melville's The Ventriloquist's Tale, Alejo Carpentier's Kingdom of this World; several plays: CLR James's The Black Jacobins, Aimé Césaire's, The Tragedy of King Christopher, Rawle Gibbons' Calypso Trilogy, and Michael Gilkes' Couvade; short stories Lorna Goodison's "Bella Makes Life," Meiling Jin's "Victoria," and poetry Grace Nichols', "Ala," Eugenie Eersel's "The Plantation" and Lucie Julia's "Sacrificial Flowers." I have used a preponderance of plays and poetry because of their accessibility to and adaptability for the masses of people and frankly for their practicality in writing such a broad-range dissertation. Plays and films work more effectively than the novel for accessing broad audiences. The plays, a vehicle for performance and rehearsal, and the poems, a way of accessing orality, are examples of the possibilities of facilitation inherent in literary democracy. Audience access is an important concern when discussing citizenship and belonging. The skills needed to access these issues in the novel may be beyond many people because of economic, education and linguistic limitations. While these texts cover three Caribbean linguistic groups, they are primarily from the anglophone Caribbean.

Chapter one on The Ventriloquist's Tale offers a model and insight into Amerindian experiences from a text that centralizes diverse native perspectives. Using this text which focuses on indigenous communities is one way of invoking the Amerindian postmodern and foregrounding the Amerindian trace. The Ventriloquist's

Tale is perhaps the most theoretical of the texts and chapters. It is the one primarily centered on raising and exploring questions, basically it functions as an allegorical map to deal with the issues and consequences of globalization on a local level. It models the conversations we need to have intra-group, intra-nation, and inter-nation. As a novel, this genre because of issues of print literacy, lack of an accessible regional publication network and the overall expense is also one less prone to popular engagement. To put it another way, theatre and poetry, genres with a predisposition to performance, work best in fostering participation in the public sphere. However, the novel and short story, more introspective mediums, are good for reflection and meditation. Since the Amerindian Postmodern links vision, theory, and practice the novel and short story are places to start.

Chapter two puts forth what I call “The Sycorax Model” using Grace Nichols’ poem “Ala,” Lorna Goodison’s “Bella Makes Life”, Meling Jin’s “Victoria”, Eugenie Eersel’s “The Plantation,” and Lucie Julia’s “Sacrificial Flowers.” While these writers do not overtly relate their protagonists to Sycorax, I believe that the Sycorax Model allows us to retrieve the intertwined and complicated dimensions of women’s lives. This model, like The Ventriloquist’s Tale chapter, foregrounds women’s presence artistically, politically, socially, and economically in the Caribbean nation or supra-nation building project. Just as the Amerindian postmodern helps us to understand and reclaim the indigenous presence, the Sycorax Model, a manifestation of Amerindian postmodernism, foregrounds women’s participation in the supra-nation building project since they were largely absent from the male-centered nation-building projects of the post-Emancipation era. As we disrupted the linear narratives of history by reclaiming the Amerindian story, so too will we disrupt the phallogentric nation-building project with a model that

incorporates women by disrupting both Eurocentric and male-centered colonial and post colonial tropes (i.e., Caliban and Prospero paradigm). In essence, the chapter examines women as citizens—contributors and shapers—of the nation. Like The Ventriloquist's Tale that embodies the Amerindian presence in the region, the Sycorax Model invokes one of the earliest and most silent of European imaginings on Caribbean women. Similar to Melville's reclamation of indigenous complexity, the Sycorax Model complicates the European inheritances, predominately in terms of the inherited, for the middle class, cultural allusions to Shakespeare's The Tempest as well as middle-class Victorian constructions of gender roles, specifically womanhood.

Chapter three, "Infinite Rehearsal" explores the political, psychological, cultural and concrete moment of regional unity—the Haitian Revolution. Using plays from the anglophone (The Black Jacobins by C.L.R. James) and francophone (The Tragedy of King Christophe by Aimé Césaire) areas and a novel from the hispanophone Caribbean (The Kingdom of This World by Alejo Carpentier). Two thousand four marks the bicentennial of the most successful slave uprising to date and the creation of the world's first predominately black republic. The Haitian Revolution is an apt example of a centralizing, coalescing event that has allowed Caribbean artists to envision a regional world. It vividly and dramatically addresses issues of in-betweenity, exile and transnationalism—the longings between organic, authentic selves and creole, hybrid selves. It is also an event that Caribbean people replay in different guises and degrees (Wilson Harris's infinite rehearsal). Hence examining Haiti for the positives and pitfalls for the development within its borders and for the larger Caribbean and as a moment of cultural, historical and political solidarity that in reality gave enslaved people throughout the Caribbean a state. Subsequently in the post-emancipation period, it gave politicians

and artists, especially artists, an event, a trope and a shining star, albeit a bloody and problematic one, of Caribbean possibility. Therefore, the Haitian Revolution is one of the earliest sites, spatially and temporally, of Caribbean citizenship.

Chapter four, “Masquerade: Total Ritual Theatre,” explores the possibilities of theatre by examining several plays that employ two common tendencies developed in Caribbean theatre—total theatre and ritual theatre (Calypso Trilogy by Rawle Gibbons and Couvade by Michael Gilkes. As well as regional initiatives such as CARIFESTA (Caribbean Festival of Creative Arts) and theatrical methods for extending Amerindian postmodernism within the framework of civic groups and the workshops of other social actors. It briefly considers ways in which theatrical methodology as one way to transform people in personal ways through workshops and the like that have made links between quotidian realities and political involvement.

¹ Roumain, Jacques. Masters of the Dew. 90.

² Masters of the Dew, glossary, 189.

³ Though Roumain romanticizes the peasantry, what I find most important is this idea of collective, mass action--the changing of the landscape and the material conditions of a community by the people who work and live there, rather than by the politicians, functionaries and outside interests.

⁴ **El Dorado** (Spanish for “the gilded one”), is “a name applied, first, to the king or chief priest of the Muisca - a South American tribe - who was said to cover himself with gold dust at a religious festival held in Lake Guatavita. The ceremony took place on the appointment of a new ruler. Before taking office, he spent some time secluded in a cave, without women, forbidden to eat salt and chilli pepper, or to go out during daylight. The first journey he had to make was to go to the great lagoon of Guatavita, to make offerings and sacrifices to the demon which they worshipped as their god and lord. During the ceremony which took place at the lagoon, they made a raft of rushes, embellishing and decorating it with the most attractive things they had. The lagoon was large and deep, so that a ship with high sides could sail on it, all loaded with men and women dressed in fine plumes, golden plaques and crowns. As soon as those on the raft began to burn incense, they also lit bowls on the shore, so that the smoke hid the light of day. At this time they stripped the heir to his skin, and anointed him with a sticky earth on which they placed gold dust so that he was completely covered with this metal. They placed him on the raft and at his feet they placed a great heap of gold and emeralds for him to offer to his god. In the raft with him went four principal subject chiefs, decked in plumes, crowns, bracelets, pendants and ear rings all of gold. They, too, were naked, and each one carried his offering. When the raft reached the centre of the lagoon, they raised a banner as a signal for silence. The gilded Indian then would throw out the pile of gold into the middle of the lake, and the chiefs who had accompanied him did the same on their own accounts. After this they lowered the flag, which had remained up during the whole time of offering, and, as the raft moved towards the shore, the shouting began again, with pipes, flutes, and large teams of singers and dancers. With this ceremony the

new ruler was received, and was recognized as lord and king. Lake Guatavita is near Santa Fe de Bogota (Colombia). The Muisca towns and their treasures quickly fell to the Conquistadores. Taking stock of their newly won territory, the Spaniards realized that - in spite of the quantity of gold in the hands of the Indians - there were no golden cities, nor even rich mines, since the Muiscas obtained all their gold from outside. But at the same time, from captured Indians, they began to hear stories of El Dorado and of the rites, which used to take place at the lagoon of Guatavita. There were Indians still alive who had witnessed the last Guatavita ceremony, and the stories these Indians told were consistent. El Dorado became a myth and a dream; a city, personage or kingdom, it always lay beyond the next range of mountains, or deep in the unexplored forests. The search for this other, non-existent, El Dorado, in various parts of South America, was to occupy men's efforts for another two centuries.

El Dorado is also applied to a legendary city called Manoa or Omoa; and lastly, to a mythical country in which gold and precious stones were found in fabulous abundance.

The legend, which has never been traced to its ultimate source, had many variants, especially as regards the situation attributed to Manoa. It induced many Spanish explorers to lead expeditions in search of treasure, but all failed. Among the most famous were the expedition undertaken by Diego de Ordaz, whose lieutenant Martinez claimed to have been rescued from shipwreck, conveyed inland, and entertained at Omoa by "El Dorado" himself (1531); and the journeys of Orellana (1540 1541); that of Philip von Hutten (1541 1545); and of Gonzalo Ximenes de Quesada (1569), who started from Santa Fe de Bogota. Sir Walter Raleigh, who resumed the search in 1595, described Manoa as a city on Lake Parimh in Guiana.

Meanwhile the name of El Dorado came to be used metaphorically of any place where wealth could be rapidly acquired."

From A. F. A. Bandelier, *The Gilded Man, El Dorado* (New York, 1893).

<http://www.campusprogram.com/reference/en/wikipedia/e/el/el_dorado_myth.html> May 29, 2004

⁵ Jane M. Loy. "The Legend of El Dorado." <<http://www.lasalle.edu/~daniels/guyexp/gyeldora.htm>>

September 25, 1998. There has also been reclamation of this idea from sources as disparate as former Guyanese Prime Minister Forbes Burnham, who referred to Guyana as El Dorado in speeches (source).

Similarly, novelist Elizabeth Nunez refers to the land itself as El Dorado in her novel, *When Rocks Dance*, 96-97 and 150-151.

⁶ Harris, Wilson. *Selected Essays*, 55.

⁷ Raleigh, Sir Walter. *The discoverie of the large, rich and bewtiful Empyre of Guiana (1595)*.

Transcribed, annotated and Introduced by Neil L. Whitehead. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997, 52.

⁸ Galeano, *Memory of Fire*, 99.

⁹ Naipaul, VS. *The Loss of El Dorado*, 18.

¹⁰ Naipaul, VS. *The Loss of El Dorado*, 4.

¹¹ Although El Dorado is often situated and associated with South America, as Naipaul's story demonstrates, it also shaped the development of the Caribbean.

¹² Naipaul, VS. *The Loss of El Dorado*, 14.

¹³ Toni Morrison's term, found in *Beloved*.

¹⁴ Harris, Wilson. *Tradition, the Writer and Society*, 35-36.

¹⁵ Benitez-Rojo, Antonio. "Carpentier and Harris: Explorers of El Dorado." In *The Repeating Island*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992, 189.

¹⁶ Anthony Payne and Paul Sutton, *Charting Caribbean Development*, 174.

¹⁷ Anthony Payne and Paul Sutton, *Charting Caribbean Development*, 174.

¹⁸ Traditionally, or rhetorically, states are constructed in the interests of their citizens, generally the most elite citizens, but citizens signified human beings. Today, there is an inundation of the corporations as citizens with more influence than most.

¹⁹ Hall, Stuart, "A Conversation with C.L.R. James." In *Rethinking C.L.R. James*. Edited by Grant Farred. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1996, 40. Glissant blatantly refers to this reconciling of history with the daily live, the writer's duty, "the writer must...reveal the creative energy of a dialectical reestablishment between nature and culture in the Caribbean" (*Caribbean Discourse* 65).

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- ²⁰ The African personality and the “American” personality are also creative personalities. Basically New World personalities have had to be adaptive and creative, especially the more one was forced into “adapting.”
- ²¹ Also called French Departments of America (DFA).
- ²² Lewis, David. E. “Intra-Caribbean Relations: A Review and Projections” In The Caribbean: New Dynamics in Trade and Political Economy, 84.
- ²³ Payne and Sutton, Charting Caribbean Development, 23.
- ²⁴ Payne and Sutton, Charting Caribbean Development, 175.
- ²⁵ Meeks, Brian. New Caribbean Thought, xii-xiii.
- ²⁶ Meeks, Brian. New Caribbean Thought, xvii.
- ²⁷ Clive Thomas characterizes this sentiment saying that when Caribbean leaders got together to discuss the future of the region the, “common vision was that of a region with a seemingly unending catalogue of problems” founding in his September 29, 2004 article in the Stabroek News, “Biting the Dust: The Other Side of 20/20 ‘Brave New World.’”
- ²⁸ Giroux, et al 1, 8 -12.
- ²⁹ Gramsci, Antonio. Prison Notebooks, 10-11.
- ³⁰ Rohlehr, Gordon. Strangled City, 3.
- ³¹ Wynter, Sylvia. “Rethinking ‘Aesthetics’: Notes towards a Deciphering Practice.” In Ex-Iles: Essays on Caribbean Cinema. Ed. Mbye Cham. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1992, 240.
- ³² Wynter, Sylvia, “Rethinking Aesthetics”, 242-243.
- ³³ Wynter, Sylvia. “Rethinking Aesthetics,” 244.
- ³⁴ Wynter, Sylvia. “Rethinking Aesthetics,” 249.
- ³⁵ Wynter, Sylvia. “Rethinking Aesthetics,” 249.
- ³⁶ Wynter, Sylvia. “Rethinking Aesthetics,” 250-251.
- ³⁷ Wynter, Sylvia. “Rethinking Aesthetics,” 250
- ³⁸ Wynter, Sylvia. “Rethinking Aesthetics,” 247.
- ³⁹ Wynter, Sylvia. “Rethinking Aesthetics,” 262,266.
- ⁴⁰ Wynter, Sylvia. “Rethinking Aesthetics,” 248.
- ⁴¹ Wynter, Sylvia. “Rethinking Aesthetics, 248.
- ⁴² In Chapter Four, Rawle Gibbons discusses the primacy of ritual in engaging/developing Caribbean consciousness. Gibbons argues ritual is the common language of the Caribbean and it will be through harnessing that language that Caribbean speak to each other across state borders, regardless of colonial separations. Gibbons, “Theatre and Caribbean Self-Definition.” Modern Drama Vol. 38, No. 1, 1995, 56-57.
- ⁴³ Lewis, David E. “Intra-Caribbean Relations: A Review and Projections.” In The Caribbean: New Dynamics in Trade and Political Economy. Ed. Anthony T. Bryan. Coral Gables, FL: North-South Center, University of Miami, 1995, 77-89.
- ⁴⁴ Meeks, Brian, Narratives of Resistance.
- ⁴⁵ Lewis, Patsy. Surviving Small Size, 198.
- ⁴⁶ Several sources list this attributes variations of them as critical historical and regional developmental links (Remaking a Lost Harmony, Caribbean Discourse, Main Currents in Caribbean Thought, etc.)
- ⁴⁷ For example, the emotional and sentimental nature of slave narratives helped them to connect with readers who were, in turn, asked to help end enslavement.
- ⁴⁸ Westmaas, Nigel. “Guyana, the Great Flood, and History.” In The Guyana Rodneyite. Vol. 1, No. 1, February 2005, 3.
- ⁴⁹ Knight, Franklin E and Colin Palmer, Eds. The Modern Caribbean, 3.
- ⁵⁰ Knight, Franklin E. and Colin Palmer, Eds. The Modern Caribbean, 19.
- ⁵¹ Payne and Sutton. Charting Caribbean Development, 184.
- ⁵² Williams, Eric. From Columbus to Castro, 409.
- ⁵³ Williams, Eric. From Columbus to Castro, 409-410.
- ⁵⁴ Williams, Eric. From Columbus to Castro, 411.
- ⁵⁵ Kurlansky, Mark. Continent of Islands, xi.
- ⁵⁶ Kurlansky, Mark. Continent of Islands, xi.
- ⁵⁷ Grivan, Norman. “Reinterpreting the Caribbean” In New Caribbean Thought, 3.
- ⁵⁸ Grivan, Norman. “Reinterpreting the Caribbean.” In New Caribbean Thought, 6.

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- ⁵⁹ Insee, Greater Caribbean Survey. Trans. Guy Lubeth. ARTE, 2004, 5.
http://www.insee.fr/en/home/home_page.asp
- ⁶⁰ Lewis, Gordon K. Main Currents in Caribbean Thought, 3.
- ⁶¹ See also Eric Williams' Capitalism and Slavery, chapters 4-7.
- ⁶² James, CLR, The Black Jacobins, and Carolyn Fick, The Haitian Revolution from Below.
- ⁶³ Geggus, Turbulent Time, Chapter 1.
- ⁶⁴ Gordon Rohlehr, et al. "Round Table: Wilson Harris and Caribbean Literature." In Theatre of the Arts: Wilson Harris and the Caribbean. Eds. Hena Maes-Jelinek and Bénédicte Ledent. Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2002.
- ⁶⁵ Gordon Lewis also suggests this in Main Currents in Caribbean Thought, "
- ⁶⁶ Lowe, John "Calypso Magnolia: The Caribbean Side of the South" Conference paper presented at Texas A&M, November 16, 2002, 1.
- ⁶⁷ Lewis, David E. "" In The Caribbean: New Dynamics in Trade and Political Economy. Ed. Anthony T. Bryan. Coral Gables, FL: North-South Centers, University of Miami, 1995, 91.
- ⁶⁸ Benitez-Rojo, Antonio. The Repeating Island, 86.
- ⁶⁹ Benitez-Rojo. The Repeating Island, 87.
- ⁷⁰ Darity, William, Jr. "Eric Williams and Color Stratification in the Caribbean." April 2002, 3.
- ⁷¹ This is, naturally, a necessary step, but one that, I believe, would stretch me too thin if pursued in this project and at this time. In a larger project, as Caribbean geography continues to be extended, they will be important considerations, but not now.
- ⁷² Glissant, Edouard. Caribbean Discourse, 66.
- ⁷³ Lamming, George. "Caribbean Labor, Culture and Identity." In Caribbean Cultural Identities. Ed. Glyne Griffith. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2001, 28.
- ⁷⁴ Lane, Dorothy. Island, 1, 10.
- ⁷⁵ Lane, Dorothy. Island, 2.
- ⁷⁶ Lane, Dorothy, Island, 2.
- ⁷⁷ Where these nations conjoin their borders maintain this illusion—they are natural either in the form of rivers and forests.
- ⁷⁸ Payne and Sutton, Charting Caribbean Futures, 175.
- ⁷⁹ Nick Herbert quoted in Wilson Harris. "The Open Door." In Journal of Modern Literature, XX, 1 (Summer 1996), 7-12, 9.
- ⁸⁰ O'Callaghan, Evelyn. "The 'Pleasures' of Exile in Selected West Indian Writing Since 1987." In Caribbean Cultural Identities. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2001, 79.
- ⁸¹ See also Ana Lydia Vega, William Demas, Norman Grivan, Forbes Burnham, Eric Williams, Edouard Glissant, and EK Brathwaite.
- ⁸² Ian Boxhill's evaluation of three models of integration—federalist, transactionalist and functionalist/neofunctionalist—was helpful here. The nation I advocate would take from all three models: the importance of a democratic political process (federalism); the supremacy of cultural commonalities which forge a common identity and value-system (transactionalism); and the incorporation of competing voices and agendas (neofunctionalism). Though from Boxhill's reporting the various interest groups in the neofunctionalist formation are elite; for me they are not. In fact, they come from all sectors of society and are the backbone of a truly democratic political process referred to earlier. (See Boxhill, 14-17).
- ⁸³ Will, Oliver, 5.
- ⁸⁴ Lewis, Gordon K. Main Currents in Caribbean Thought, 324.
- ⁸⁵ Lewis, Gordon. Main Currents in Caribbean Thought, 304.
- ⁸⁶ Haige, Sam. "From Exile to *Errance*: Dany Laferriere's *Cette grenade dans la main du jeune Negre est-elle une arme ou un fruit?*" In The Francophone Caribbean Today, 61.
- ⁸⁷ Glissant, Edouard. Poetics of Relation. Trans. Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1990/1997, 11 and 211 (translator's note).
- ⁸⁸ Aub-Buscher and Beverley Ormerod Noakes, eds. "Introduction." The Francophone Caribbean Today. Kingston, JA: University of the West Indies Press, 2003, xiii.
- ⁸⁹ Glissant, Edouard. Poetics of Relation. Trans. Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1990/1997, 17.

⁹⁰ In the post-September 11, 2001 “security”-era, while traveling into the United States may be curtailed somewhat, there is still brisk movement of Caribbean people in and out of the region, though not (from the region for permanent stays, but for short visits).

⁹¹ For a more involved exploration of this debate see the following: Caribbean Creolization: Reflections on the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature and Identity. Eds Kathleen M. Balutansky and Marie-Agnès Sourieau; “In Praise of Creoleness” Jean Bernabe, Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphael Confiant (trans. Mohamed B. Taleb Khyar). In Callaloo, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Autumn, 1990) 886-909; Edward Kamau Brathwaite, Contradictory Omens; Edouard Glissant Caribbean Discourse (1989) and The Poetics of Relation (1990). Frank Martinus Arion. “The Great Curassow or the Road to Caribbeanness.” In Callaloo, Vol 21, No. 3 (Summer 1998) 446-465; and Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture. Eds. Verene A. Shepherd Glen L. Richards. Kingston, JA: Ian Randle Press, 2002.

⁹² Arion, Frank Martinus. “The Great Curassow or the Road to Caribbeanness.” Callaloo 21.3, 447-48.

⁹³ Balutansky, Kathleen M. and Marie-Agnès Sourieau, eds. “Introduction.” In Caribbean Creolization. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 8-9.

⁹⁴ Errol Hill, “Introduction.” In The Time and the Season, ix.

⁹⁵ Martí, Jose. “Our America.” In The Jose Martí Reader.

⁹⁶ O’Callaghan, Evelyn, “The ‘Pleasures’ of Exile in Selected West Indian Writing Since 1987.” In Caribbean Cultural Identities, 78.

⁹⁷ O’Callaghan, Evelyn, 80.

⁹⁸ O’Callaghan, Evelyn, 101.

⁹⁹ Rohlehr, Gordon. Strangled City and Other Essays, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Rohlehr, Gordon. Strangled City and Other Essays, 1.

¹⁰¹ Rohlehr, Gordon. Strangled City and Other Essays, 3.

¹⁰² While my project situates its vision using Amerindian ideas, it is noted that this way of viewing the world is embedded in Afro-Caribbean religions (Comfa, Guyana; Winti, Suriname, Shango, Trinidad, Myal, Jamaica, Santeria, Cuba and Vodou, Haiti). My choice to use Amerindians instead of these others was to claim the trace of the Amerindian past, depending on where one is located, and to recognize that Caribbean history and experience does not begin with enslavement. Using Amerindian cosmologies unites pasts—pre-Columbian and enslavement—with present and future. It fully recognizes an Amerindian trace as well as the land/geography hospitable to these dualities. A territory that, in fact, allowed Africans to reconstitute their belief systems.

¹⁰³ Harris, Wilson. “The Open Door,” 10.

¹⁰⁴ Harris, Wilson. “The Open Door” 9.

¹⁰⁵ Oliver, Jose R. “The Taino Cosmos.” In The Indigenous People of the Caribbean. Ed. By Samuel M. Wilson. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1999, 147.

¹⁰⁶ Louis Allaire, in “The Caribs of the Lesser Antilles.” In The Indigenous People of the Caribbean. Ed. By Samuel M. Wilson. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1999, 184, argues that while cannibalism existed and “the eating of human flesh was indeed practiced. Its precise role, whether ideological or purely nutritional, is still widely debated.” Allaire cautions against “making value judgments and stick[ing] to the cultural relativism that has always been a backbone of the [anthropological] profession, especially when living people are no longer involved in these practices.”

¹⁰⁷ This book, published in the 1960s, is in the mode of traditional and perhaps uncritical school of anthropology. Chagnon is in the Orinoco basin to study “primitive and unacculturated tribes of South America [who] state of chronic warfare” (1-2) intrigued him; and which by no means suggest “that primitive man everywhere is unpleasant”(3). What I find valuable in Chagnon’s study is his recognition that “there is room for thinkers” (44) in Yanomamö culture and he takes the time to relate some of their cosmology. In Yanomamö: The Fierce People. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.

¹⁰⁸ Ghagnon, Napoleon A. Yanomamö: The Fierce People. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968, 44-50. Ghagnon reports that the Yanomamö cosmos is made up of four levels: *duku kä misi*, the uppermost or tender plane, which originally a generative space is now a void; *hedu kä misi*, the sky level inhabited the mirror spirits of the men on the third level, *hei kä misi*, located on earth, the realm of men; the fourth level, Amahiri-teri, a semi barren place of continual struggle inhabited by the first men, the *no hadabo*, who were part spirit and part human (44-45).

¹⁰⁹ Ghagnon, Napoleon A. Yanomamö: The Fierce People. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968, 50.

- ¹¹⁰ Ghagnon, Napoleon A. Yanomamö: The Fierce People. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968, 50.
- ¹¹¹ Ghagnon, Napoleon A. Yanomamö: The Fierce People. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968, 50-51.
- ¹¹² Harris, Wilson. "Judgment and Dream." In The Radical Imagination: Lectures and Talks. Eds. Alain Riach and Mark Williams. Liège, Belgium: L'université de Liège, 1992, 22.
- ¹¹³ Thomas, Clive. The Poor and the Powerless, 306.
- ¹¹⁴ Payne and Sutton, 178-179.
- ¹¹⁵ According to Clive Thomas, the regional HIV-AIDS infection rate "is the second highest in the world." Stabroek News, February 29, 2004.
- ¹¹⁶ Harris, Wilson. "Judgment and Dream," 22.
- ¹¹⁷ Payne and Sutton, Charting Caribbean Development, 174-175.
- ¹¹⁸ This reiterates Payne and Sutton's definition of regionalism which allows the micro-nationalist state to persist.
- ¹¹⁹ Harris, Wilson. "Judgment and Dream" 22-23.
- ¹²⁰ The Macusi also had a bone flute made from Jaguar bones (The Radical Imagination 82-83).
- ¹²¹ Herbert, Nick. "Interview with Dr. Jeffrey Mishlove," <http://www.williamjames.com/transcripts/herbert.htm> October 12, 2003.
- ¹²² Herbert, Nick. "Interview with Dr. Jeffrey Mishlove," <http://www.williamjames.com/transcripts/herbert.htm> October 12, 2003.
- ¹²³ Storr quoted in bell hooks' "Postmodern Blackness." In Postmodern American Fiction: A Norton Anthology. Eds. Paula Geyh, Fred G. Leebron and Andrew Levy. New York, NY: Norton, 1998.
- ¹²⁴ Hutcheon, Linda. The Politics of Postmodernism, 174.
- ¹²⁵ Turner, Bryan S. "Postmodern Culture/Modern Citizens." The Condition of Citizenship. Ed. Bart van Steenberg. London, UK: Sage Publications, Ltd., 1994, 153.
- ¹²⁶ Jameson, Fredric quoted in "Fredric Jameson's Postmodern Marxism." Jonathan Clark, <http://www.mun.ca/phil/codgito/vol4/v4doc2.html> October 18, 2004.
- ¹²⁷ Landscape of Dreams: An Interview with Wilson Harris. Michael Gilkes. 52 min. Cave Hill, Barbados: UWI, 1994.
- ¹²⁸ In Amerindian postmodernism there are several key terms: camouflage, mask, erasure, transubstantiation, transformation through ingestion; ingestion, artistic morsel as flesh; cannibalism; contradiction, mutuality, architecture, quantum reality, sight/witness, fictive capacity, renewal, rehearsal, revision, imagination, and technology. These terms are, of course, taken from Wilson Harris's work describing the Carib Bone Flute.
- ¹²⁹ Selvon, Sam. "Three Into One Can't Go: East Indian, Trinidadian, West Indian." In Foreday Morning, 218.
- ¹³⁰ Henry, Paget. Caliban's Reason, 12-15.
- ¹³¹ Henry, Paget. Caliban's Reason, 4.
- ¹³² Wole Soyinka quoted in The Empire Writes Back, Eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. NY, NY: Routledge, 2002, 162-163.
- ¹³³ Harris, Wilson. "Judgment and Dream" 22-23.
- ¹³⁴ April Householder, University of Maryland Comparative Literature PH.D candidate used this phrase for a graduate conference.
- ¹³⁵ Radhakrishnan quoted in Marshall, Brenda K. "Introduction." In Teaching the Postmodern: Fiction and Theory. London, UK: Routledge, 1992, 6.
- ¹³⁶ hooks, bell. Postmodern Blackness, 627.
- ¹³⁷ Wekker, Gloria. "One Finger Does Not Drink Okra Soup: Afro-Surinamese Women and Critical Agency." Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures. Eds. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. New York, NY: Routledge, 1997, 334.
- ¹³⁸ Lourdes Vázquez makes such an argument in "A Brief History of My Country," saying, "We've been working on magic realism since the Tainos decide that the region of the dead was called Coaybay. Here in Coaybay the dead come out to take a walk and eat guava at night. In order to recognize the other dead, one touches the area around the navel, as a dead person lacks a navel" (81). In Caribbean Creolization. Eds. Kathleen M. Balutansky and Marie-Agnès Sourieau. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1998.
- ¹³⁹ Harris, Wilson. "The Open Door," 10.

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- ¹⁴⁰ Lyotard "The Postmodern Condition" 330-331.
- ¹⁴¹ Now transcript. Interview with Bill Moyers and Thomas Frank July 9, 2004. Also heard on WPFW's "What's At Stake" with Terry D. Kessler on August 18, 2004.
- ¹⁴² Since it is neither my intent nor my desire to trace the historical development of the postmodern condition my discussion, necessarily, will be circumspect. Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition, 331.
- ¹⁴³ There is a complication here of invoking the rhetoric and a certain tradition of citizenship, while at the same time advocating a reconfiguration of the state to which citizens belong.
- ¹⁴⁴ Falk, Richard. "The Making of Global Citizenship." In The Condition of Citizenship. Ed. Bart van Steenbergen. London, UK: Sage Publications, Ltd., 47.
- ¹⁴⁵ Payne and Sutton, Charting Caribbean Development, 19.
- ¹⁴⁶ Young, Iris Marion. "Self-Determination and Global Democracy." In Inclusion and Democracy. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 261.
- ¹⁴⁷ Steenbergen, Bart van. "Introduction," In The Condition of Citizenship, 2.
- ¹⁴⁸ Held, David. "Between State and Civil Society: Citizenship." In Citizenship. Ed. Geoff Andrews. London, UK: Lawrence and Wishart, 21
- ¹⁴⁹ Rohlehr, Gordon, "Calypso," 58.
- ¹⁵⁰ Caribbean political scientists like Trevor Munroe and E. Franklin Knight have argued that the Caribbean is a feudal space. But in the last five years, David Hinds has not only pushed the language of prenation in academic and journalistic arenas.
- ¹⁵¹ Watson, Hilbourne. "Caribbean Options Under Global Neoliberalism." In The Caribbean: New Dynamics in Trade and Political Economy. Ed. Anthony T. Bryan. Coral Gables, FL: North-South Center, University of Miami, 1995, 167.
- ¹⁵² Gramsci, Antonio. Prison Notebooks, 105.
- ¹⁵³ Erouart-Siad, Patrick. "The Wound and the Dream" In Boston Review, October/November, 2000, 7.
- ¹⁵⁴ Falk, Richard. "The Making of Global Citizenship." In The Condition of Citizenship. Ed. Bart van Steenbergen. London, UK: Sage Publications, Ltd., 1994.
- ¹⁵⁵ Friedman, Thomas L. "A Manifesto for the Fast World," and Juan Enriquez's "Too Many Flags." In Globalization. Ed. Katrin Sjuren. New York: HW Wilson, 7, 2000.

at the edge of hope

Globalization and the Collapse of the Guyanese Nation-state in Pauline Melville's *The Ventriloquist's Tale*

An examination of Pauline Melville's first novel, The Ventriloquist's Tale (1997), offers an opportunity and model to investigate some of the ramifications of globalization and Caribbean integration in the [anglophone] Caribbean especially as it relates to the rights of indigenous peoples in a development context. The Ventriloquist's Tale centers on the lives of the Amerindian McKinnon family, their interactions with each other, the Guyanese state and the larger global order. The novel juxtaposes Amerindian, European and "Coastlander," a mix of African, Asian, and European worldviews. Out of these ways of seeing emerges Melville's complex tale that allows us to ponder questions of citizenship, sovereignty, and globalization. The essence of survival for Melville is posed in the simple question of exogamy or endogamy—which? In examining this text for Caribbean positions on globalization, one notes they are mired in these two poles of mixing, which can narrowly be applied to Amerindians or more broadly to the region. To mix or not to mix, or rather **how** to mix; on whose terms has, does and will the region and its people participate with each other and in the wider world?

The Ventriloquist's Tale offers several parallel love stories with which to discuss these issues. Chofy and Rosa, a Wapisiana man and his British lover; Danny and Beatrice, an incestuous brother-sister relationship which results in a child, Sonny; and patriotic love of community or nation as expressed by Tenga, Chofy's cousin, and Olly Sampson, the fictional Guyanese finance minister. This novel enables readers to participate with a history, more than likely, not their own through fiction. Fiction and

history often coded, as strange bedfellows are actually the sharpest lenses to view the other with. Fiction has a way of recounting history's truths, while history has a way, primarily through its causal narrative sequential process, of fictionalizing the past. In effect, the historical method limits and reduces the complex truths of the past to facts, that are often, as Derek Walcott would say, "the partial recall of the race."¹⁵⁶ As current scholarship claims, especially of the postmodern variety, history is a fiction—a way, no more valid or true than any other, of constructing reality in the past and for the present.¹⁵⁷ The critical difference between the fictive and historical modes of constructing reality is in the weight of legitimacy, or ultimately which narrative is implicitly more valid. In this paradigm, those who have constructed history through non-scribal means have had to make meaning against hegemonic notions of [H]istory.

Amerindians, who horizontally construct themselves across the borders of Venezuela, Guyana, and Brazil, rupture Guyana's vertical territorial space. Due to the treaties signed by various colonial powers, "Amerindians enjoy certain entitlements linked to their status of first inhabitants of the Latin American countries. Amerindians are free to cross the borders between the different ex-colonies in South-America,"¹⁵⁸ indicating the enduring transnational nature of indigenous communities. Citizenship and sovereignty, outside the purview of states, are more grounded in smaller notions of community and tradition tied to ethnicity and tradition. Tenga, Chofy's cousin and ideological foil, clearly articulates this position:

We Amerindian people are fools, you know. We've been colonized twice. First by the Europeans and then the Coastlanders. I don't know which is worse...by companies, scholars, aid agencies, tourists or politicians...Amerindians have no chance in this country [Guyana].¹⁵⁹

Tenga's response is to leave the corrupters and colonizers of the European and Coastlander varieties alone. Egyptian economist Samir Amin puts forth one controversial view of "how" those who are so marginalized might ensure survival on their own terms. He suggests "delinking" as a strategy. He argues that the developing world has nothing to lose by withdrawing politically and/or economically from the West, or more precisely from Western corporations and institutions. Amin defines delinking as "not autarky, but the subordination of outside relations to the logic of internal development and not the reverse."¹⁶⁰ Amin is asking for an examination and foregrounding of how "interests," both national and personal, are constructed. Why and how do the interests of the West or its hegemonic minority/ies (the "black-skinned, white masked" minorities) in developing countries become global interests? The value of Amin's apparently audacious prescriptive is that he invites us, with this challenge, to refine and redefine our reactionary responses and to think more creatively. He provokes us, by the boldness of his proposal, to think outside of accepted norms. If current [reformist] strategies do not work and delinking is advocating insanity, what are the alternatives? While Amin's ideas might be dismissed as unreasonable or unrealistic, he is proposing in the realm of "hard" reality what The Ventriloquist's Tale discusses in fiction. His solution (to invoke Samir Amin in the context of this work of fiction) is to delink and focus on Amerindian and Wapisiana concerns above all else. Tenga's retreat from the "states,"—Guyana, most clearly—is one endogamous response. It asserts the power of delinking—the Guyanese state cannot or does not address Amerindian concerns; thus, it is in Amerindian interests to help themselves by foregrounding their priorities. In reality, outside of the world of the novel, Amerindian prioritizing led to a coalition with ranchers in which the two

groups were part of “the aborted January 1969 Rupununi Uprising” which Prime Minister, Forbes Burnham characterized as an

insurrection [which] was planned, organized and carried out by the ranchers of the Rupununi—the savannah aristocrats...And which was drawn mainly, but not exclusively from the Hart and Melville families...Such Amerindian citizens as were involved were employed in a secondary capacity and appeared generally to have acted under duress and in person to the orders of their rancher employers...the Venezuelan press were reporting an Amerindian uprising...and suggesting that it arose out of the wish of these Guyanese citizens to come under the sovereignty of Venezuela¹⁶¹ (underlining added).

This comment serves as evidence that Melville’s tale is historically grounded and continues to be relevant as these issues which then and now remain current and have an influence not only for her personal history, but also in shaping Guyanese economic and socio-political realities.¹⁶² While Burnham categorizes Amerindian participation as secondary and one operating under rancher duress, the fact of the matter is that Amerindians were negotiating for land title and recognition of rights with his administration, one that through linguistic sleight-of-hand, allowed Amerindians land titles for “those areas occupied by [them] at the time of independence”¹⁶³ rather than the unreasonable fifty percent of Guyana’s land mass that approximately fifty thousand Amerindians were claiming as their ancestral lands.¹⁶⁴ This concession reiterates the fluidity of sovereignty between indigenous populations and settler communities.

The situation in Guyana, and others that concern the rights of indigenous people throughout the Caribbean and the world, is one that examines Amerindian claims not only in the context of conquest, colonialism, and neocolonialism, but also under the rubric of human rights. As human rights constituencies have been recognized by the U.N. and other international organizations, indigenous groups have been acceded the

right to ancestral lands that allow for the perpetuation of their ways of life. Ultimately these claims could lead to more isolated and autonomous Amerindian enclaves. In Melville's fictional work, though, Tenga advocates privileging Amerindian boundaries and knowledge systems; he does not argue for total isolation from the non-Amerindian world. The novel begs the question: what is the effect of contact with the outside world on the system of values, and on the economic and political organization of these Amerindian communities?

Globalization is a process that literally continues to sweep the globe. Simply stated, economic globalization is an expansion and integration of markets in an age of rapid technological advancement. Although this process affects other aspects of life and cultural production, its impact on Caribbean development is primarily economic, political, social, and cultural. The impetus to locate fresh sources of and invest capital in raw materials, and to expand wealth through expansion of global markets drove European expansion into the Americas. Capital has not rested since. It is still on the prowl for more and more profit. To this end, states, especially in the "developing" world, or global South, have opened their markets to capital coming from the "developed" world, or global North. Generally Western, first-world corporations—using various institutions including: the state, aid agencies, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)—have weakened national governments in the quest for profit. For example, the explosion and implosion of textile free-zones in Jamaica and Haiti; the development of tourist zones in Cuba, and in the Guianas the mining concessions granted to foreign multinationals.¹⁶⁵

These reconfigurations occur at all levels of spatial and temporal intersection(s) from the personal, communal, and national to the global. This means that all facets of

life are affected by these changes. For example, air travel has rearranged time and space for twentieth/first-century people by making it easier to get from one end of the globe to the other in less than forty-eight hours. Air travel has effectively reduced the space and time it takes to travel great distances. However, the inequities inherent in the process of globalization are rife for several reasons. First, these changes are inequitably distributed, that is, not everyone has **access** to air travel or other technological advancements that are part of this globalized space. Second, this contradictory process has meant the creation of more wealth for some middle- and many upper-class elites throughout the world while increasing poverty for most global citizens. Paget Henry calls this dismantling of the “third world capitalist [welfare] state savage globalization [or] the West’s new imperialism.”¹⁶⁶ This “new imperialism” becomes the backdrop for Third World development issues of diversity, equality, and citizenship.

In the novel, these issues of purity and contamination emerge in the sometimes binary relationship between Tenga and Chofy, cousins who have different notions of racial, cultural, and intellectual integration with the Guyanese state. These matters also highlight who owns and controls knowledge about the Amerindians and access to that knowledge via the contentious relationship between Professor Michael Wormoal and Rosa Mendelson. Both these European experts want information from indigenous people, since Rosa’s need is not directly related to the Amerindians themselves, but is rather about the visit of the English writer Evelyn Waugh, she feels superior to Wormoal, an anthropologist who is invested in his superiority to the native populations—Amerindian and Coastlander. Wormoal contends that he “probably know[s] more about the Amerindian peoples than they know about themselves;” and laments that “Indian culture is disintegrating these days—contaminated mainly by contact with other races.”¹⁶⁷

Wormoal's quest is another form of plunder that allows him to explain the Amerindians to the larger world, because he will not share his collected data with them. Similarly this need to know, catalog, and categorize defines Europeanness against nativeness—with the former the evident winner.

However, the knowledge shared with Europeans, specifically Rosa's revelation of the meaning of Chofy's name, "explosion of rapids or fast-flowing waters,"¹⁶⁸ with Wormoal, who, in turn shares it with the executives and engineers of the U.S. drilling company, Hawk Oil,¹⁶⁹ has led, as argued by April Shemak, to misinterpretations and misrepresentations by outsiders. Bla-Bla's death exemplifies¹⁷⁰ Shemak's point and illustrates how knowledge shared **among** Europeans, even when based on fact, disrupts native communities,

translation becomes the site of cultural collision and negotiation of power because it is always partial: Chofy translates his name as 'explosion of rapids or fast-flowing waters,' [which] by the time the oil workers use it to warn Bla-Bla the meaning has become merely 'explosion.' Chofy's decision, as a native informant, to share the meaning of his name with Rosa sets off the series of events that lead to Bla-Bla's death, thus translation because a space of violent disruption and dislocation.¹⁷¹

This misinterpretation of the native catapults the El Dorado trope into the lives of the Wapisiana and is another rehearsal that reveals how the quest for foreign "gold," defined here as knowledge, continues to infect indigenous people. Knowledge as gold is another hallmark of globalized economies.

In the Caribbean, economic globalization has manifested in its typical fashion in the global South. It is an experience of moderate to extreme wealth for capitalism's collaborators and penury for the rest. The Caribbean middle class, a sector of service workers in managerial government and small business posts, as well as educators, similar

to middle classes elsewhere, is on the ropes. Moreover, local economic and political elites, those who own wholly or in-part businesses that are necessary to the country's economy—like tourist resorts— or are government ministers and officials who set policy, are part of the class of global professionals who manage the movement of goods, services, and if need be, politics in service of multinational corporations. Richard Falk posits that this growing technocratic transnational elite of finance capital shares a “global culture of experience, symbols, infrastructure, food, and music that constitute [their] way of life.”¹⁷² Increasingly, neither national identity nor regional identity holds sway for the “deterritorialized and homogenized elite global [citizen whose] culture is becoming extremely influential as a social force driving the political and economic systems of the world.”¹⁷³ The economically rickety portion of this transnational house, are those citizens who cross borders in search of financial stability and who send “remittances” to their home or family space.¹⁷⁴ Both these groups have formed mutual spaces, those of secure congregation, across national boundaries. Deterritorialization and homogenization are veering from one extreme to another; while there are advocates of purity, there are others seeking greater integration between groups and nations. Tenga, however, is not among the latter group.

Rather Tenga wants to reassert a pre-colonial space. He says, “I am not Guyanese, I am Wapisiana.”¹⁷⁵ For him, this means ignoring the Guyanese state and its borders. The Wapisiana nation—which predates the contemporary states of Venezuela, Brazil, Suriname, and Guyana—spills across these borders, thus **undermining** them all. The border as a site of flux and contemporary contestation is reinforced. The deterritorialized border, which for economic globalization is transparent, while similarly invisible in this case, is problematic especially for the surrounding states. Basically, the

pre-colonial Wapisiana nation can claim the rights to its sovereignty across this vast territory. Its claim rests primarily on constructions of indigenous identity, while delinking advocate Samir Amin finds identity politics problematic, it does hold sway in many liberation movements.

Yet, an integrated, and I must stress, **defacto** Wapisiana state based solely on Amerindian identity, is more of a threat to Guyanese territorial borders than are the endless border claims made by Brazil, Suriname, and Venezuela. This is mainly because claims made by these states seek legal restitution and acknowledgement, while the Wapisiana do not. Well, not quite. The Wapisiana when aligned with a state, do seek the legal acknowledgement of their land claims and human rights as indigenous people within the state. However, if they do not acknowledge the state, they do not seek its validation in any respect.¹⁷⁶ In Amin's parlance, they have delinked; and as symbolized by Tenga, **ignore** outsiders and construct [and represent] themselves and their nation on their own terms. As globalization challenges the legal limits and sovereignty of European ordered and endorsed states, the Wapisiana nation reasserts its right to nationhood across borders and beyond legal administrative structures of the West. In fact, between Suriname and French Guiana (Guyane) this movement of Amerindians, Maroons and Haitians into these states continue to undermine these borders.¹⁷⁷ The Wapisiana and other Amerindian communities in the Guianas never relinquished their land rights to colonizers such as the British by "conquest, cession, treaty or papal bull, yet [the British] asserted sovereignty over them,¹⁷⁸ enshrining a policy of assimilation over Amerindians objections.¹⁷⁹ Paget Henry argues that "the colonial state is an illegitimate formation in local political discourses, and so also is the authority of the foreign cultural elites. Yet the stability of the larger hegemonic order requires that these illegitimate

formations be made to appear legitimate.”¹⁸⁰ Tenga’s effort is one to delegitimize European-drawn borders by ignoring them. His is the most narrow, familial form of citizenship. In essence, it is the citizenship of the blood. The second possibility is of participation within these states and therefore a demand for recognition of Amerindian human rights and land claims. This is the perspective of an internal transnational citizen—one who belongs to two nations. Fundamentally, it is one who claims citizenship beyond kinship, ethnic and racial lines.

The Caribbean has been part of global market expansion since Europeans scrambled for economic power and political influence in the late fifteenth century. In the last century, the Caribbean attained global visibility as part of the economic and political tug-of-war between East-West during the Cold War and through mass tourism. The collapse of the Communist East has meant not only the diminished role of the Caribbean as a geo-political strategic space, but also the decline of economic trading partners. Most recently the Banana Conflict, which denied most favored market status to Caribbean bananas in Europe, has indicated the precarious position of the Caribbean in the global marketplace where “economic sovereignty in the third world is being forced to beat a major retreat.”¹⁸¹

While one might argue that mono-crop, third world economies were never sovereign, there is no doubt that the World Trade Organization (WTO) voted to deny the European Union (EU) the right to designate Caribbean bananas favored status.¹⁸² This means that small-farm, non-corporate Caribbean bananas have lost their protected European market and must compete with transnational banana behemoths like Chiquita and Dole. According to Patsy Lewis, the small size of the region did not entitle them to representation and a voice in the negotiations “because their interest in the industry fell

far below the required 10 per cent of trade.”¹⁸³ The power of the WTO over the EU is another indication of limited sovereignty and the power of narrow economic interests. These interests are coded as national or transnational, but always corporate, “The Europeans stressed that this was a matter of sovereign foreign policy in relation to former colonies while the U.S. argued that EU tariffs prohibited American banana companies in Central America from reaching lucrative markets in Europe.”¹⁸⁴ States, large and small, are increasingly servicing the agendas of transnational corporate power. Within these states, elites who benefit from economic and political power pursue these policies despite their destabilizing risks to the masses of people at home and abroad. In the novel, Hawk Oil Company, a U.S. conglomerate looking for black gold in Wapisiana territory, best represents the concrete manifestations of globalization.¹⁸⁵ Similarly, the Guyanese government, in direct contradiction of Amerindian desires, granted this very same access to Rupununi lands to Migrate Mining Company of South Africa.¹⁸⁶

In globalization, deterritorialization allows money and other commodities, except labor, to move effortlessly through borders. In The Ventriloquist’s Tale, landscapes and territory shift the conversation on contamination, purity, and citizenship. The landscape one “belongs to” conditions one’s participation in politics, both formal and informal. In fact, how would Tenga, as citizen, retreating from the West and Guyana’s imitation of the West, operate in a globalized space? Would he be increasingly marginalized? Here again, the novel manages to merge historical conflict with contemporary concerns. In speeches to the Amerindian Leaders Conference in February and March of 1969, Burnham spoke to Amerindian leaders about loyalty. His speech, coming just seven weeks after the Rupununi Uprising, a “revolt proved to be organised [sic], armed and financed by the Venezuelan government,”¹⁸⁷ spoke directly of citizenship and Amerindian

marginalization. Burnham reminded Amerindians that the British had patronized them characterizing them as “children of the forest,” and that they would, if they could, beggar them. He reiterated that his administration was the only one in the neighboring region to recognize Amerindian land claims. And he asked Amerindians to acknowledge that they were citizens of Guyana and that the “riches of the interior are the riches of the nation.” He reminded them that “those who come with Bibles and leave with diamonds” have neither their interests nor the interests of the Guyanese nation at heart.¹⁸⁸ Burnham’s intention is preservation of Guyana as a state, which has access to the management and exploitation of natural resources. Thus, the Guyanese state recognizing Amerindian rights within its territory, but not Amerindian desires to organize across the borders of the Guyanese state.

Michel Laguerre, author of Diasporic Citizenship: Haitian Americans in Transnational America, argues that transnational citizenship means not being a minority because one remains connected to a homeland.¹⁸⁹ Similarly, as Desrey Fox, sociologist and Akawayo, one of the aboriginal communities in Guyana, expresses,

We as indigenous peoples, should get together and do something about our plight because the whole Indian question is a problematic question in the South....we should get ourselves organized like the Caribbean Organisation of Indigenous Peoples [or the] World Council of Indigenous Peoples and some other brother organisations like the Mezquito organization in Nicaragua and really talk about what the Amerindian people want in the future, what they want for their progress. [Because] we find links in Belize—the Garifuna of Belize. I was just there [and] I thought that I was there before; the familiarity was there...¹⁹⁰

Fox observes that organizing across boundaries is the way to Amerindian empowerment and her project incorporates the global South, not just Guyana or Central America. In reconfiguring indigenous identities in a global framework, Fox recognizes the importance

of a “whipped up consciousness [that enables me] to merge what I learned [in sociology courses] with my own Amerindian experience [and utilizing the knowledge] from both cultures.”¹⁹¹ Fox’s solution for potential marginalization or in-between status of Amerindian cultures is to find spaces of accommodation. She posits that Amerindian cultural abandonment has been an impediment, “We tend to see it a little wrong, I mean my own people too. After they have been introduced to this modern, contemporary education [and lifestyle] they tend to go aside with the dominant culture and leave their own culture along and try to develop that way, but then you realize that you are neither here nor there.”¹⁹²

It is through confronting this space of in-betweenity, “neither here nor there,” that The Ventriloquist’s Tale explicitly examines notions of citizenship within Amerindian communities and the larger world. As Dersey Fox’s observations note, constructing Amerindian citizenship across not just conjoined borders, but all borders, is a conversation Amerindians are actively pursuing. Tenga, though the primary proponent of an endogamous lifestyle, lives in a non-Wapisiana Amerindian village near the capital and is theoretically (or imaginatively), rather than physically, aligned with the open vistas of the savannah. The high wide grasslands of the savannah that appear harmless have many hidden dangers that nurture shadows that are exacerbated by the remoteness of the savannah from the capital and which, because of the overall physical environment of the country, maintain the illusion of exclusivity. Guyana is situated below sea level and prone to flooding from its many rivers. As the narrator, Sonny/Makunima comments, the landscape is predisposed to rot, “We cannot hoard in the tropics. Use it or some other creature will eat it. Sooner or later everything falls to the glorious spirit of rot with its fanfares of colour and nose-twisting stench. The spirit of rot and its herald angel,

smell, announce most events in my part of the world.”¹⁹³ Other writers have described this north-eastern part of South America as a place where nature always reclaims itself, the landscape always returns to its “original” state. Similarly, human interaction has affected the savannahs and like other areas, they have changed. People have not tamed them, in the sense of cultivation, but access to the forests and subsoil has transformed the land. Whether this change is permanent is debatable—the landscape repeatedly reclaims the changes man has made, but drilling, deforestation, and other human interventions affects the land and its [inherent] viability.

In such a physical space, Tenga’s position makes sense. Amerindian traditions evolved through an interaction with a reclaiming nature, one in which the natural cycles of flooding eradicated whatever changes were made to the land. The Amerindians found a way to live within the limits of the natural environment. The Guyanese government and the multi-national corporations trying to exploit the region’s resources have eroded these sustaining traditions. In part they believe, in Enlightenment sense, that they can control, mitigate, and deal with natural flows in ways Amerindians technologically were unable to. Tenga’s position becomes not only a discussion on Amerindian culture and notions of citizenship, but also one that foregrounds the ecological (historical and social) nature of citizenship and this discussion in an ecologically unstable world. Tenga’s ally, strangely, is Professor Wormoal, who believes that “the purity of the nation...has its attractions.”¹⁹⁴

Tenga’s enemies range from the obvious Guyanese state, Coastlanders, and multinational corporations to Chofy. With the Guyanese state and the Coastlanders, Tenga shares a geographic space. Similarly, with the multinationals he shares geographic space and differing ideas on how to use the natural resources. With Chofy, the potential

enemy most like his mirror-self, Tenga shares landscape, biology, and traditions. Tenga seeks unity with other members of his tribe and with other Amerindians since he lives in a non-Wapisiana village, but not with the Coastlanders, the Guyanese government, or the MNCs. Tenga's preferences are based on his understanding of how Wapisiana history and culture have been corrupted:

Look at this shop. Before it opened, people used to fish and share everything with the other families here. Now they take the fish to sell in Georgetown for money to buy things in the shop. And did you see the well outside? Some people came and asked us what we wanted. We didn't know. We just said a well. They built it for us. But people missed going down to the creek to fetch water and talking to each other. It destroyed the social life of the village. And the well water tastes different – horrible—like iron. Then somebody shat in the well or children threw rubbish in it and half the village got poisoned.¹⁹⁵

These development initiatives were external and “destroyed the social life of the village.” For Tenga, development and technology are at odds and he has no plan for rectifying this problem. Because of this, his beliefs on returning to an imagined Wapisiana purity are still conflicted “You say we should mix,’ said Tenga bitterly. ‘What to do? We’re destroyed if we mix; and we’re destroyed if we don’t.’”¹⁹⁶ The novel does not explicitly answer these questions and Melville confesses that she, too, is ambivalent about the possibilities.¹⁹⁷ Two central unanswered questions is the novel is how to proceed—how to accommodate the endogamy, exogamy question and how to deal with these accommodations across race, ethnicity and nationality. However, what is valuable about the novel's approach is the continued interplay between these issues. The recognition that no one space, or text, can provide a panacea, but radically fusing, sometimes disparate elements, to reconfigure new ventriloquisms. Makunaima recognizes that different masks are projected:

while I was in Europe I nearly became fatally infected by the epidemic of separatism that was raging there. The virus transmutes. Sometimes it appears as nationalism, sometimes as racism, sometimes as religious orthodoxy. My experience in the rain forest of South America provided me with no immunity to it...I saw that the desire to be with your own kind exerts a powerful attraction. In an effort to rid myself of the affliction, I used my ventriloquial gifts to reproduce the voice of a dissenting heckler.¹⁹⁸

What the text does offer is its version of the mutual spaces provided by the bone flute—ventriloquism.¹⁹⁹ The ventriloquist is a master of projecting voice, throwing it around a space or through a dummy for a reaction. This novel, as a document, provides the mutual space, the one through which readers congregate, to experience various registers of the Amerindian story. The novel employs characters as ventriloquists and is itself a demonstration of ventriloquism. As a bone flute, the novel published in English, is a device that presents non-Amerindians access to one version of indigenous reality. The discussions generated from such a text are a single part of the Amerindian postmodernist project—the first part, enlarging the capacity to envision other experiences. At this juncture, the discussion generated by The Ventriloquist's Tale will be among those who have access to the book. However, the economic, political, and cultural realities of globalization have meant that as Fox highlights, affected communities are grappling with these issues. Yet, given its current limited audience the text still functions to raise questions within the academic community, who can use it as a basis for strategic intervention in classrooms and through any civic work that they are engaged in. One possibility of disseminating these questions more broadly, to communities unable to use the novel in its bound form, is through theatre and theatrical methodology, an option discussed in chapter four.

Caribbean citizenship, in this discussion, is divided into five areas: local, national, regional, diasporic, and transnational. The most narrowly defined area is kinship ties—fictive and biological—and their immediate community. National encompasses the state and its governing apparatus, the actual infrastructure of resource distribution, rather than an ethnic nation. Regional citizenship is territorially constructed around Caribbean geography. Diasporic citizenship operates on several levels: first, those who have left their national communities; in other words, those who left their own state by migrating to one or more Caribbean state; and second, those who absent themselves from the geographic Caribbean entirely. The final category, transnationalism, has similar demarcations, but the primary difference is that transnationals are engaged with minimally two national spaces simultaneously, for example, Amerindians who belong to an “ethnic” grouping or nation.

Since the Enlightenment two traditional distinctions have emerged in Western citizenship discourse: the *citoyen* and the burgher. The ideal citizen, according to Bart van Steenberghe, or *citoyen*, is active in public life and willing to sacrifice for the greater good. The burgher, or economic citizen, “generally lacks the feeling of responsibility and public spirit.”²⁰⁰ Transnationally, these categories systematize class relationships. The *citoyen* can be found across class lines, but can reproduce class concerns within its public manifestation. Burgher citizens are not only Falk’s transnational economic elite, which in the Caribbean has traditionally been an absent planter or investor class, but also those who migrate for [meager] economic opportunities and whose responsibilities are more narrowly tied to households rather than municipalities.

Making a similar argument, political scientist Mahmood Mamdani examines the roles of race and ethnicity in the postcolonial state. Mamdani posits that imperial

governments had two policies for defining colonial citizenship. First, under a policy of direct rule, political identity was race-based, distinguishing between settlers and natives. Settlers had the power to govern and shape policy, while natives were limited to an economic arena, where they were rarely owners or managers, but rather wage earners. In the second scenario—indirect rule—political identity was “fractured along ethnic lines.”²⁰¹ Therefore, under direct rule, the civilizing project, linked concretely to the law, distinguishes the colonizer from the colonized and encourages the development of a class that can participate in the civic (civilizing) sphere.²⁰² This class, one that Fanon describes as blacks wearing white masks, Mamdani characterizes as the assimilationist class, and “those with the culture of the colonized considered the hallmark of civilization, the destiny of all those considered capable of being civilized, and thus becoming citizens.”²⁰³ Basically, this means that only those who internalized and externalized the marks of civilization as defined by the colonizer had a chance of becoming citizens. As a result, the notion of civilization is connected to whether one is **worthy** of citizenship.²⁰⁴

Under indirect rule, the colonial powers fragment the “native” population even more. Instead of the racial split that manifested as native versus settler under direct rule, colonial governments under indirect rule invoke the use of ethnicity to split non-white majorities and move away from “the shared civilizational project.”²⁰⁵ This ethnic separation “sliced natives into many separate ethnicities. With each...governed through its own ‘customary laws,’ to be enforced by its own separate ‘native authority,’ administering its own ‘home area.’”²⁰⁶ This, in essence, fractures the political power of the majority by focusing on small enclaves of power rather than a uniform national project of power sharing. However, in the Caribbean the global political, social, and economic upheavals of the 1930s to independence allowed for a slight restructuring of

power in the region. The new power base included landed elites who are no longer just white absentee landowners, but local citizens. Labor leaders, who emerged from middle-class families and galvanized workers, transformed many Caribbean countries and eventually became part of the governing elite and thus, today, part of the problem.

These groups exemplify Frantz Fanon's class of black skins, white masks--those trained by the colonizers to visually replace them while still collaborating with their agenda,²⁰⁷ one that, is internalized as their own agenda by the new or restructured elite. Typical examples of Fanon's observation would be the light or near-white members of government and the ruling class who have comprised the economic and political elite of the region. Though skin color can be a marker of this class, more important is its ideological associations (based on a certain education and articulation of class interests) and collusion with the arms of Western and/or capitalist power/agenda and rationale.²⁰⁸ Often, these wealthy political players whose progeny are educated in the heart of Western power share more with their counterparts in India, Ghana, and Senegal than they do with local populations. Nonetheless, it is the power of this class to manipulate other sectors in society in sharing and working in service of their views that allows them, in Gramscian terminology, hegemonic control over national and regional interests.²⁰⁹ This class typifies the idea of the burgher, while wage-dependent members of society should be *citoyens*. The disassociation (and co-option) of this class from its national and even regional connections serves, in a larger context, to highlight the need for global anti-corporate organizing strategies. As most members of the middle-classes align themselves with global interests, it behooves the rest of the population to seek cross-border links not only to counteract their agenda but also to actively assert their own interests.

Tenga, like his Guyanese enemies from Chofy to the Coastlanders, grapples with

the idea of mixing. Though he values the ideal of Wapisiana purity and wants Wapisiana unity, he recognizes the impossibility of achieving it. However, he sees both--inter-ethnic mixing and its opposite--as resulting in crisis. Similarly, in Guyana, Trinidad, and other Caribbean nations with significant “ethnic” populations, prejudices and racist attitudes about “other” ethnic groups are evident. While governments push the “national” identity--“We are all Surinamese, Cuban, etc.”--the material realities based on a history of colonial governments pitting groups against one another on the ground have resulted in inequities, in access and choice, and have bred resentment.

For Tenga, reconnecting science and alchemy, or making the [harmonizing] epistemological link between colonial and Amerindian categorizations, is as paralyzing as all other options. Because mixing or not mixing yield the same result, Tenga is maintaining the status quo. Taking an active stance in one direction or another is too great a commitment for him. Full integration of Amerindians into Guyanese society, at least according to this Wapisiana citizen, means a loss of culture, a literal poisoning of cultural wells. Limited integration, what is currently in place, is a slow poisoning of indigenous people. Tenga’s reference to Jonestown, the rum-hut, is where people go to disappear.²¹⁰ This Jonestown referral naturally goes to the heart of the massacre of nine hundred and fourteen people lead by charismatic, U.S. evangelist, and leader of the People’s Temple, Jim Jones. Jonestown, the site of the Kool-Aid sweetened salvation or murder of hundreds of people has disappeared by an overgrowth of weeds and vines; Jonestown, as fact and metaphor, is another encroachment of foreigners bringing death and doom through their refreshing beverages. However, Tenga and Chofy avail themselves to the drinks in Jonestown, when Chofy brings Rosa for a visit and reveals that she is a researcher.²¹¹ Tenga is unable to reconnect science, technologies of

rationalization and categorization, and alchemy, unscientific transformations, and thus incapable of making the epistemological link that can transform his reality.

In the framework of Amerindian postmodernism, Tenga's inability to unify or, at least engage with, science and alchemy, indicates that he cannot shape a hopeful space from the chaos and despair of the contemporary circumstances of indigenous people. He cannot fashion a mutual space. In the post-colonial space of native peoples—a site that one can argue is still not **post** colonial, giving the continual colonization that some (Tenga) might argue they still experience from the Guyanese state—Amerindians are faced with the challenge of transforming traditional notions of citizenship. Tenga cannot transcend his Amerindian national space or (even transgress, as he would see it, into) the national spaces of the nation-states that enclose Wapisiana territory. Because Amerindians vacillate between being characterized as native minority groups within the states they inhabit or as autonomous states or independent enclaves within larger states, integration into the larger society by both sides has been a struggle, one example is Dominica.

Anthony Layng constructs Carib identity in Dominica as a minority group saying that such a group is

Characterized by the following attributes: (1) they are subject to differential power in that their access to natural resources is somehow restricted or otherwise controlled; (2) they are subject to discriminatory treatment and are viewed stereotypically; (3) they tend to be endogamous; (4) they are assumed to be identifiable to outsiders; and (5) they share a 'common fate' identity: an inclination to equate their individual welfare with that of the group as a whole.

Further, he correctly points out, that while the Caribs of Dominica have been fully assimilated culturally, Dominica remains structurally pluralistic because the reality of reservation status ensures that Caribs a distinctive niche in the social structure.²¹²

Consequently, the process of coming to terms with Amerindian territories and, living up to previously made bargains, will be a lesson on power-sharing and remaking the state into a more serviceable entity that allows for greater participation and encourages activism rather than apathy. This challenge will mean incorporating a variety of damaged ecologies from these flood-prone, drought-affected, deforested, and hurricane ravaged landscapes with a few urban and prosperous spaces.

The idea of constructing narratives, a way to construct subjectivity, is one way to move beyond narrow identity formation. Constructing narratives, as Benedict Anderson argues in Imagined Communities, are key to national development and national identities. Such narratives are a critical component of nationalism and citizenship discourses. Transnationalism is defined in Nations Unbound “as the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement,”²¹³ the important factors being “post” colonialism and deterritorialization. Thus, issues of transnationalism and transnational identities, are considered in this project not only concern immigrants outside their national borders, but as is the case with Amerindians, natives within their own territory that were consumed and, cobbled into states, by outsiders in the colonial process. That is one aspect of the post-colonial condition as it regards citizenship; the other is, of course, the economic effect of colonialism that breeds dependency. Central to this discussion on citizenship is how identity is used to cultivate belonging and how, as Mamdani argues, political citizenship and identity have been subsumed to cultural and sometimes economic identities.

Chofy, unlike Tenga, goes out to the primary Guyanese landscapes, the coastal areas of the capital. Georgetown supports eighty percent of the Guyanese population and it is there that Chofy tries to recoup his economic losses and send remittances to the

Rupununi. After suffering financial reversals because his cattle were killed from bat bites which drained their blood, Chofy, along with his Aunt Wifreda, who needs a cataract operation, leaves his wife, Marietta, and his son, Bla-Bla, and travels to the city to make some money. In this solitary and uneasy²¹⁴ landscape Chofy is stifled, and thus describes the city as an empty, foreign place with grids and a spatial structure that indicates the messy madness of mixing:

It was as if the architects and builders had attempted to subdue that part of the coast with a geometry to which it was not suited and which hid something else. The labors of men had thrown up a city made of Euclidean shapes, obtuse-angled red roofs, square-framed houses on evenly spaced stilts, delicately angled Demerara shutters, all constructed around transparency, emptiness and light.

From the start, the city's population was not great enough to cause bustle. Even the width of the streets produced melancholy amongst the European colonists, used to the narrow cobbled alleys and uproarious slums of their own capital cities.²¹⁵

Georgetown, the “city built of space”, with elastic buildings, is a grid of contradictions full of stuffy offices and narrow streets. Stabroek Market, once a slave market, is a maze of stalls unlike the savannahs. Georgetown is a place of racial mixture, heat, humidity, and rot. In a sense the city is representative of a “larger world,” one closer to the West. The city, like other colonial cities, especially one built on the foundations of Dutch slave markets and engineering that is an ode to European technology and efficiency, is the link to Western values, ethics, and knowledge. It is no accident that Chofy works in a library, arranges, and restocks validated bits of European knowledge.²¹⁶ Libraries, like museums, have been spaces in which Amerindians have generally been the objects of study; Chofy as an arranger of this knowledge inverts the idea of who owns and arranges knowledge.

But like Chofy's stay in the city, which is an enclosed space in which he finds love with a Marxist British researcher, Georgetown also offers a contradictory reading as a site of Western connection. While Georgetown is spatially the most technological and structurally Western space in Guyana, it is also "contaminated" by the mixtures of Western colonialism, a mixture that fosters the "tingaling tingalinga"²¹⁷ culture and history of the steel pan, a drum invented in 1930s Trinidad and Tobago. Georgetown, an enclosed space, because of limited road and rail infrastructure, is isolated from the rest of the country. Such containment from the hinterland has made it a site of mixing or contamination, depending on one's perspective. The contradiction of Georgetown is that it too, while Western, is alienated from the West. It is stuck in a colonial mode of imitation and reaching for something it can never be, either in spatial or temporal terms. Georgetown is a spatial manifestation of the Carib bone flute. It is an instrument of cannibalism and contradiction. Even as space is technized and subdued, as with the taming of the landscape to make a city, it is a space that reiterates Amerindian unbelonging and alienation. Instead, their salvation is linked, somewhat romantically, to the open vistas and "brown clumps of grass"²¹⁸ of the savannahs. Georgetown for Amerindians is a place where they are teased, tormented, and on the fringe. Chofy's sojourn in the city illustrates that Georgetown's possibilities of love (Rosa) and, inversion of knowledge (his job in the library) can only be temporary.

After Chofy begins an affair with Rosa Mendelson, a Jewish researcher from London, he argues the positives of mixing with other communities. Disagreeing with Tenga, he says, "We [Amerindians] have to mix; otherwise we have no future. We must get educated. We can't go backwards. Guyana has to develop."²¹⁹ Of course, Chofy means education in a formal, European sense. In this instance, integration seems to be

the obvious correct **progressive** answer. Chofy and his family are products of mixing fostered by colonization and globalization. Retreat for them is, if nothing else, genetically impossible.

Paula Burnett posits that Chofy “is one of the Wapisiana, who inhabit a zone of exchange between the constantly hybridizing cultural communities of the coastal strip and the unmodified traditional cultures of the interior.”²²⁰ Burnett’s argument, in part seems to be that Chofy’s singularity, his entrance into the zone, is made possible by his racial mixture, a heritage not all Amerindians can claim. Therefore, his genetic identity enables him to enter this buffer zone where he negotiates two cultures. While I agree with this, recognizing that this exchange zone is one way of characterizing transnational citizenship, I disagree with Burnett’s assessments that Amerindian culture is unmodified. While Tenga would hope so, the fact is that interior cultures have been changed precisely because people like Chofy exist.

Besides racially mixed people, the interior zone, while not as hybridized as the coastal strip, is itself a zone of exchange and flux. This zone is the site of intense logging and gold mining by multinational corporations²²¹ as well as interactions between Brazilian and Venezuelan ranchers and Amerindians. Burnett claims that in this zone of exchange, Melville constructs two poles, endogamy (incest) and exogamy (trans-racial interaction).²²² For Burnett, these poles exist in and outside the novel. She discusses Melville’s use of two deceptive narrative styles that “destabilize and overturn the reader’s world and in doing so effect the revolution. The culture of late Western capitalism is being warned that its apparent victories may be illusory—that when, sometimes, in its centrism it perceives its own mastery, it may in fact be facing defeat.”²²³ The destabilization of this zone and Melville’s dual strategy are linked to the duality-plus

component of the Amerindian postmodern. The mutual spaces, those shared with the enemy, center on the postmodern, non-linear storytelling structure of the book. This writing strategy is both part of 1960s postmodernism and Amerindian postmodernism. This strategy of destabilization, especially of the narrative, itself becomes one of the contested spaces of postmodernism that can simultaneously be liberating and paralyzing, going to the core of postmodernism as a theory without a mobilizing moral center.

Melville's "soulful epistemology" is steeped in juxtaposing modernity or "modernness" with Amerindian postmodernism. She reconnects science, Enlightenment strategies to uncover and "know;" and alchemy, indigenous classification strategies that recognize chaos and the unknowable, by showing that science is no better than alchemy and, may in fact, be less useful. Yet, the characters she uses to illustrate this point are themselves invested in "science" and other modern methods despite the fact that these methods fail them. Mainly, these characters reside permanently or temporarily in the city, a contaminated location removed from the purity and romance of the savannahs. The urban characters Rosa and Olly share this category,²²⁴ of those invested in Western disciplines, structures, and knowledge strategies; while Father Napier, the missionary, homosexual priest and Alexander McKinnon, the patriarch of Chofy's family and the Savannah oligarch, represent this pole in the interior. However, it is most obviously represented by Michael J. Wormoal, an anthropologist from Switzerland's University of Berne, studying comparative mythology.

Initially, Wormoal's name indicates that he will be a self-serving, smarmy character. However, though he is a straw-man in many regards, his name also invokes the supposition in quantum physics of wormholes. Simply put, a wormhole is speculated to be a tunnel that connects a black hole (which absorbs matter) and a white hole (which

repels matter).²²⁵ In this tunnel exists the possibility of time travel and or traveling great physical distances in an instant. At this time, wormholes are mathematically impossible to construct “without breaking any other laws of physics. [In fact,] most researchers agree that wormholes require “exotic matter”—stuff that is repelled by gravity, rather than attracted [to it].”²²⁶ For Amerindians, though, wormholes are conduits to an understanding of their essential worldview, something that quantum physicists are now discovering. The implication here is that quantum physicists are discovering the centrality of the wormhole idea from an Amerindian worldview.

Illustrating the idea of who owns what knowledge, cultural and intellectual, Wormoal brags about the accumulation of the academic data he has gleaned from observation, books, and documentation that the Amerindians, themselves, cannot access. He believes that these facts are his way of “owning” indigenous peoples: “Information is the new gold. You, as a scholar, must know that. My knowledge of the Indians is a way of owning them—I admit it. We fight over the intellectual territory. But it is better than stealing their land, isn’t it?”²²⁷ Wormoal has devised an algebraic equation that will reveal the “internal logic” of myths because “it is to science that we must now look for explanations of mythology. Even such a rambling and misshapen body of artistic entities as mythology can be proven to have a scientific basis.”²²⁸ Wormoal is one of several minor characters who deal in knowledge rather than knowing. Melville uses Wormoal to resurrect a debate on whose science, whose knowledge, and in the end, whose worldview is more valid? At this historical moment, it does seem as if Wormoal (and his kind) “owns” indigenous peoples through knowledge, though this is continually undermined; it is a knowledge that is broken down to a soulless articulation of rationality and mathematical theorems.

Ultimately, Melville decries this type of knowing. For her, indigenous people had found accord between science and alchemy through mastering calendars, predicting astrological events such as lunar eclipses, and discerning other astrological phenomena. The difference Melville seems to be making between Wapisiana science and Western science is in whose interests does this knowledge serve? How integrated is this knowledge with the rest of the world or one's world? I would argue that Melville believes that Wapisiana science is integrated with alchemy. This integration creates a larger understanding, one implicated by overlapping, intersecting concerns. For example, from the very beginning of the novel, the narrator claims that he is a descendant of a group of Ecuadorian stones.²²⁹ In the novel's prologue, he discusses the "veneration of the lie" and the notion that all writing is fiction;²³⁰ in essence, this beginning alerts readers to a notion of time and space and composition of cells, atoms, and words that transcend rational understanding and that cannot be continued by the mathematical formulas as we have characterized them. Therefore, this richer more complex sense of time and space has created a science that is compatible with alchemy, a science which is not in opposition to the notion of unseen forces of transformation, forces that are actively part of the equation.

Amin would agree with Chofy since he equates diversity, a synonym for mixing, with democracy, "The basic democratic principle, which implies real respect for diversity (national, ethnic, religious, cultural, ideological), can tolerate no breach [narrow identity formation]. The only way to manage diversity is by practicing genuine democracy."²³¹ Intriguingly, Amin argues that identity politics is a way to greater fragmentation and is another manifestation of the "divide and conquer" idea:

In place of legitimate political movements, perhaps those based on clear class interests, new movements centered around the demands of the Greens or of women, movements for democracy or social justice, and movements of groups asserting their identity as ethnic or religious communities...this new [single-identity] political life is therefore highly unstable.²³²

Here Amin constructs a world in which delinking, diversity and democratization not only coexist, but also fuel, to his mind, legitimate social transformation.

However, this call to abandon identity politics brings a mixed bag and is, frankly, a discomfoting place for me. First identity politics has, both in the modern era and in many revolutionary movements, culled peoples' commonalities to call them to action. Yet, as brought to our attention by various fundamentalisms in the twenty-first century, identity politics has had dangers previously associated with extreme nationalism. Such constructions lead Mamdani to conclude that political identities have been imbricated with cultural and economic identities, rather than separated and strategized around. Mamdani's argument clarifies Amin's and raises a new question: how do people who have constructed their political identities around cultural and economic ties separate from that construction and develop more functional power sharing methods of governance? Because the commonalities of religion and/or capitalist culture have become the rallying cries for all kinds of violence—not aligned with a particular state—there is pressure to devise new definitions.

Chofy's buffer zone also embodies Amin's ideas: delinking from his Wapisiana home, which he considers territorially part of the Guyanese nation-state; from his wife, Marietta to pursue Rosa; and from Wapisiana notions of education, as indicated by his belief that the Amerindian "must get educated." Chofy's disassociation from a pure Wapisiana home and identity is, like the rest of the novel, mitigated by his return to the

savannahs because of his son, Bla-Bla's, death—a return that prizes cultural identifications over political ones.

Moreover, Chofy's temporary disconnection from his Wapisiana world presents one delinking alternative. Temporary delinking highlights the privileging of shifting priorities. Removal from his Wapisiana world made it possible for Chofy to have other experiences, primarily a love affair with Rosa. Chofy may have remained indefinitely in the city space if not for his son's tragic death, which calls for his immediate removal from the city to the savannah. Initially Melville's vilification of the city reads as the easily burned²³³ straw-man, offered up to tap the restorative properties of the savannah. Yet, this, too, is undermined.

Though Chofy eventually leaves Georgetown and Rosa, his return to the Rupununi is, not celebratory. It is with a heavy heart that he is compelled to return to his former life:

As Chofy stared at the stern and exhausted little face, he felt a crushing pain in his chest and his arms seemed to lose their life. The expression on Bla-Bla's face was a sneer of accusation. It seemed to accuse him of many things: of abandoning his family, deserting his son, of not being able to keep the land safe for his children. With shock, he felt that he had lost not only a child but a whole continent.²³⁴

Chofy's return and Bla-Bla's death are weighted with blame, "Tenga blames Chofy for deserting his own people...[and he was] silenced by the guilt."²³⁵ For Chofy, the landscape is poisoned, with "evil dripping from the thatch."²³⁶ Eventually, however, it facilitates his recovery:

Once he was out in the open again, the sight of the vast plains, the grasses leaning with the wind and the familiar ridges of the Kanaku Mountains soothed Chofy

and steadied him somewhat. The great, unchanging open spaces gave him time and a frame in which to think. Despite the grief and guilt, in the savannahs his son's death seemed contained within a certain order of things and not just an extra, random confusion, as everything was in the city. From a distance, the affair with Rosa began to seem like a sort of bewitchment, something unreal."²³⁷

The contradiction of Chofy's choice continues when juxtaposed with other concrete events; Bla-Bla's death and Aunt Wifreda's sight all belie the dream Chofy wants to create. Indeed, as Rosa had been warned, "nothing keeps in the tropics,"²³⁸ reiterating the reality of tropical impermanence and the predisposition to rot. Thus, the Guyanese territory –Amerindian and Coastlander—seems only capable of temporary encounters. Every event is a "bewitchment," which will not last. Every event (in the tropics) by the very decay-oriented nature of the place demands detachment and delinking, in other words, constant reevaluation. The lesson in Chofy's response to the landscape (territory) is that nothing is permanent **except change**. Essentially, there is nothing to lose by reassessing one's relationship to one's thatched house, a capital city, or nation-state.

By juxtaposing city and savannah, though she seems more authorially pre-disposed to the savannah, Melville begins a conversation about models and re-evaluation—which models of citizenship and nation are best suited for the Wapisiana, which should they reconsider. The critical part of finding new solutions is, as Ngugi wa Thiong'o posits, to ask what is at stake and from whose perspective are the stakes assessed. What, therefore, are the stakes of being a nation-state, especially the one dressed in tattered European rags? As one writer put it, regionalization is globalization's twin.²³⁹ The buried (or not so buried) contradiction is that as Europe becomes more regional, the Caribbean and other underdeveloped regions need to consider maximizing the power of their resources or addressing lack of them through equitable, mutually

sustaining regional options--not to mimic European regionalism, however, but to construct the promise of the nation embedded in Caribbean geography.

Chofy's stay in the city also underscores his transnationality. He, unlike Tenga, sees himself as both Wapisiana and Guyanese. Textually, transnationalism is another option for the Wapisiana, though it is clearly one of the most painful (Bla-Bla's death) and costly choices. Nonetheless, Chofy's experience constructs the transnational citizen internal and external to the region. Chofy's struggles emphasize new and complex representations of Amerindians in a globalized and technologized world, while also highlighting groups who have been excised from or romanticized in the construction of the nation--historically and/or politically.

As for the mutual spaces Chofy shares with the enemy, initially they are centered on the idea of development. Chofy, like Coastlanders and foreign investors, believes there is value in education and mixing. In fact, he argues that it is the only way Amerindians will survive. Yet, by the novel's end, Chofy recants this earlier position and because of Bla-Bla's death returns to the vast and soothing openness of the Rupununi. Chofy's loss of his son, a child whose choices after the accident would have been paralysis had he lived, or death, represents continual depletion of Amerindian "blood-stock," and to a degree, Amerindian choice.²⁴⁰ It also reflects in a more complex sense the loss of life due to ethnic violence among Coastlander Africans and Indians in Guyana similar to the political cleansing in Jamaica between the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and the Jamaican People's National Party (JPN or PNP) and other instances of violence--ethnic, political, and increasingly violence related to sexual orientation. However, Chofy's retreat to the savannahs—and especially their characterization in such romantic

terms—reads a bit too neatly. Upon his return, Chofy is thrown into the creek by his horse and is chided by Marietta:

You been away too long. Don' you remember that horse? You have to do his girth up tight because he pushes his belly out when you saddle him...Chofy, soaking wet, stood on the banks and dabbed at his bleeding head with a leaf while Marietta sat and cried with laughter.²⁴¹

It is Chofy's earlier position as a transnational citizen straddling two different communities with mixed agendas that is intriguing. This dilemma of the transnational of where to put one's loyalty, beyond familial associations, becomes a core question and test in advancing a larger Caribbean community. Did Chofy, as Tenga claims, betray his people and his family by going to the city? He certainly betrayed his wife, but is Marietta synonymous with the Wapisiana nation? How is Chofy's earlier transnationalism reconciled with his retreat to the savannahs? It is a dilemma Melville also claims not to have resolved. In a 2001 talk during a class visit, she said, "I am still trying to decide how I feel about the issue of to mix or not to mix. I'm still not sure about it."²⁴²

Despite Melville's uncertainty, her life as a writer moving between the United Kingdom, the Caribbean, and various Wapisiana territories, across the borders of Guyana and Brazil, Danny's move across the same terrain, as well as Chofy's move between city and savannah, all point to the transient, migratory aspects of life for fictional and real characters. In the globalized world, this type of movement becomes a necessary part of life. Entrance into systems of exchange in the global order has necessitated the acquisition of money and skills that in turn foster the inherent portability in peoples' lives. In a sense, migration has created, in an age of supersonic travel, transnational citizens who belong to more than one place and actively participate in and comment on several "local" communities. Transnationalism is shaped by many factors;²⁴³ however, in

the scenario in the novel, transnationalism is formed by the semi-autonomous Amerindian spaces, which endogamous advocates such as Tenga, would like to be independent.

The Wapisiana national construct, like the rest of the novel, does not provide a romantic refuge. Danny and Beatrice's incestuous relationship is emblematic of the lack of romantic answers. They are the ultimate manifestation of Tenga's position, since it is difficult to be more introspective and endogamous than a sexual relationship between siblings. Their family, the larger Wapisiana community, and other Amerindian communities treat the relationship with various levels of discomfort and horror. During their affair, conducted crossing the savannah, "Beatrice had no qualms about visiting other villages, because, at heart, she did not believe they were doing anything wrong."²⁴⁴ Familial and national splits further manifest in the reactions of their parents. Alexander McKinnon leaves the Savannah, because "after twenty-five years, he realized that he did not belong."²⁴⁵ McKinnon, Beatrice and Danny's father, and the most liberal incarnation of a European, is ruptured by his children's relationship. He realizes that he is not as open-minded as he once believed and reverts to his Christian and European value system/s by bringing Father Napier, the Catholic priest, to counsel Danny. Father Napier's role is to help Danny realize the "inappropriateness" of his actions. Under the weight of his own guilt and the pressures of his family, Danny, who textually is aligned with irrepressible wildness and the unmanageable, unrestricted, untamable nature of the savannah, marries the Brazilian border crosser, Sylvana. Eventually, both he and Beatrice depart the country, abandoning their family and nation.

In contrast to Alexander McKinnon, who is based on the "fertile person of H.P.C. Melville...born in Jamaica, the son of a Scottish parson, who was caught in the gold

fever that broke out in British Guiana,”²⁴⁶ Maba, Danny and Beatrice’s mother, has perhaps the more complicated response to her children’s affair: “I know it’s not good, what Danny and Beatrice are doing, but it is not the worst thing in the world. It’s happened before.”²⁴⁷ Maba’s matter-of-fact response reiterates Amerindian worldviews—in which the incest myth is a myth of “accepted” contradiction and harbinger of change. In Amerindian folklore and in this family, incest is tied to the eclipse, a form of obliteration, which leads, according to Walter Roth²⁴⁸, former Chief Protector of Aborigines in North Queensland, Australia, to metamorphosis.²⁴⁹ Danny’s uncle Shibi-din tells the story of the loss of Wapisiana immortality, in which the killing of a deer and the murder of plants is followed by an eclipse:

‘You killed a deer. You killed a creature,’ they screamed.

‘Keep away from us.’ He cut more plants and they screamed. That day, a bite seemed to be taken from the sun. Everything went dark and the whole savannah turned the colour of rust-colored blood. When the eclipse was over and the sun became itself again, we Wapisiana people had lost our immortality and we could no longer speak to the plants and animals.²⁵⁰

As Danny and Beatrice travel the savannah, other Amerindians refer to their incestuous relationship as “living close,” to the confusion of Father Napier, who does not understand the implication of this phrase. Around the campfire, Father Napier becomes enamored with Wario, a young Wai-Wai narrator, perhaps another incarnation of Makunima, who tells the Wai-Wai version of the incest myth, ““A long time ago, Nuni made love to his sister. Yes he made love to his own sister...He left his spirit to play the flute and let his body come to her. He came over and over again...”²⁵¹ Once discovered by his sister as her lover:

the brother changed after that. He was sad because he knew that he could not have his sister for his wife here on earth, so he rushed out of his hut with his bow and arrows. He came to a clearing and shot an arrow into the sky. It stuck there. He shot another into the butt of the first and so on until he made a ladder of arrows from the ground to the sky. He climbed up until he reached the sky. His sister came after him naked, having thrown away her skirt...In those days there was no moon. So, after he reached the sky, he became the moon. That's why the moon's got a dirty face. She became the evening star. They were able to live together in the sky.²⁵²

Another Amerindian incest myth coming from the Taruma has the brother becoming "the sun [and the sister] becoming the moon. He is still chasing her round the sky. Whenever he catches her and makes love to her there is an eclipse."²⁵³ In the text, the incest and eclipse myths are characterized as deeply internal or endogamous but generative beginnings of the world **and** as the beginning of [sexual] awareness. The stories allow the characters and tribes to travel inward to reveal truths of desire, conflict, and the forbidden. These stories of incest and eclipse reveal what Amerindians have lost and gained. In Shibi-din's story, the loss of immortality leads to the story. The story becomes a way to carry life, a way to immortality. While incest—the ultimate endogamous position—fractures the family and community, it functions, in the novel, as an effective vehicle to engage with questions and rivalries of nations coming to terms with complicated histories forged in desire, conflict, and taboo. These stories of loss bring recognition, but not harmony for indigenous and non-natives who participate in the story, either through listening to it or reading it.

So what change does the eclipse signal? First, there is a clear indication that Amerindians, despite policies and assumptions to the contrary, were not obliterated; they did not become museum relics, but they have changed. Within these incestuous tales of

forbidden love (mythical siblings, Danny and Beatrice and Chofy and Rosa) a process of destruction, exposure, unmasking, separation, and eventually transformation (into stars) is metaphorically rendered, as well as stories of belonging through shared perspectives and common histories of indigenous people. These incest stories—of Wapisiana, Wai-Wai, and Taruma—emphasize the commonalities among Amerindian peoples and foster an Amerindian nationalism. The metaphorical process through stories and as gateway to transformation is the most critical component in these tales.

If, as Paula Burnett asserts, writing about the apocalyptic (incest) forges new models of interaction within a family or society, then we could find persuasive Lois Parkinson Zamora's claim that, "Because the myth of apocalypse insists on the inevitable link between individual and collective fate, it is precisely those writers prone to apocalyptic vision who are most likely to concern themselves with essential relations between the self and its surroundings, between autonomy and solidarity."²⁵⁴ The family as the traditional building block in communities—local, national, regional, and global—is the first site of citizenship because it is the initial space of belonging, a critical concept in citizenship discourse.

Since this chapter explores The Ventriloquist's Tale as an articulation of shifting Amerindian perceptions as well as the ambivalence underlying them, the question is how to characterize this shift. What is opened up if Danny, Beatrice and their relationship represent the region? Does this signify that retrenchment from current economic and governmental structures will result in the eclipse or disappearance of the region, as was the destiny of the Mayans? In a sense, this has already happened. Other global hotspots and an ostensible end to the Cold War have removed the Caribbean from Western radar.²⁵⁵ The current discussion on global terrorism has put the region "back on the U.S.

map.” The U.S. has now made terrorism (by Muslim fundamentalists and not capitalist fundamentalists) a top global priority. Because Caribbean nations, especially those in CARICOM, the Caribbean Community, still cannot imagine themselves as viable without the “okay” from the U.S., terrorism is now a Caribbean priority with some Caribbean governments, such as that of the current Gerard Latortue regime in Haiti, which codes Lavalas opposition members as terrorists.²⁵⁶ While The Ventriloquist’s Tale, written in 1997, does not speak directly to these priorities, it does perform the valuable artistic service of engaging with and encouraging analysis of development issues and attitudes and thus, remains relevant in light of the contradictions between changing and entrenched attitudes toward the developmental process.

Within the McKinnon Wapisiana family, an incestuous relationship births a god. By the novel’s end Sonny slyly reveals that he is the god Makunima²⁵⁷ and shows that a part of the Amerindian worldview is one that is able to find redemption in even the most taboo and unredeemable relationships and situations. “Son”ny, the silent son²⁵⁸ (in other incarnations Makunima and his brother are children of the sun),²⁵⁹ disappears into the bush, a region of difficult to discern possibility and impossibility—an unknown territory. The man with the parrot—a ventriloquist’s symbol—is, of course, Makunima, formerly Sonny. By the end of the text, it is revealed that he is the narrator. The textual weight of an incestuous relationship birthing a god is inescapable as it begs the question. Though the brother and sister left the savannahs and their relationship could not be sanctioned in this space, a god is still the result of what seems to be an obvious taboo. The son also has to leave the savannah to fully embody his Makunima identity. This character, Sonny/Makunima/narrator, juxtaposes Western, “American” (Brazilian), and Amerindian constructions of indigenous peoples in this hemisphere.

To begin with, Sonny's initial silence could be read as idiocy or retardation, a not unexpected consequence of incest. In Shakespeare's Macbeth "Life is but a walking shadow, a poor player/ That struts and frets his hour upon the stage, / And then is heard no more; it is a tale/ Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing".²⁶⁰ In Melville's text and in Amerindian lore, the tale told by an "idiot," the mute, possibly retarded child, Sonny, is not full only of sound and fury. Instead, it is a tale to pay attention to as, "Imbeciles are regarded with awe by the Indians, for according to their traditions, these are in close intimacy with good Spirits, and hence their words and actions are regarded as signs of divinity."²⁶¹ The device of Sonny/Makunima/the narrator serves to connect Amerindian, Western, and mixed value systems.

In the prologue, the narrator speaks of his veneration of the lie and his love of the cream suits he likes to wear—the embodiment of the jet set gigolo (one who uses the conveniences of technology—air travel—to see the world). This is no one's noble savage, staid, naked, and native. The narrator's ability to see the world as a stage, and to perform, then return to his origins indicates two things: one, that the trope of performance is as crucial for indigenous people of the Americas as it is for non-Amerindian Caribbean people; and two, in his soliloquies, the prologue, and epilogue, the narrator clarifies that he is rectifying a past of Caribbean, Brazilian (non-Amerindian), and European distortions and misrepresentations of indigenous people. Sonny's ability to transition beyond the boundaries of his origins means that he transcends local and national identities. To leave his Wapisiana family he goes into the bush, where he is transformed to or embraces his identity as Makunima. This character wears several masks throughout the text, each revealing limited information—at his discretion—and a co-mingling of factual lies and ultimate truth. However, Sonny's transcendence of

boundaries does not foster regionalism, rather his project seems to be taking on the larger, global post-colonial world. It engages with the political agenda of this adaptable and outrageous being who does not respect constructions of space and time, as they are generally understood in the contemporary space, who is a master of disguise, a lover of women and his people and a god. The crucifixion of history as a discipline, the function of art and culture and the use of language are typical concerns of postcolonial studies.

Sonny/Makunima is a god whose truth cannot be denied or burned, as are the truths of a Christian god, through the diaries of Father Napier, the missionary priest who travels the savannahs converting native people. This god is a 20th century manifestation of Amerindian cosmology. Melville resurrects Amerindian gods and shamans in an age of Pentecostal proselytizing and increasing fundamentalism by Christians, and to a lesser extent, Muslims in the region. Similarly, Sonny/Makunima erases (or challenges) Mário de Andrade's modernist, nationalist Macunaíma. In Andrade's text Macunaíma symbolizes the Brazilian nation and even invents soccer, the national sport. Melville's narrator characterizes Andrade's Macunaíma story as "getting it wrong."²⁶²

The mutual spaces Danny, Beatrice, and Sonny share with the enemy are, as is the case with other characters, both internal and external. But for this trinity, it is the internal enemy that is most forcefully displayed. These characters share with the enemy; however, rather than needing to consume a morsel that will reveal knowledge of the enemy, they need to acknowledge that the morsel is already within. Their function, in the novel, moves beyond consumption to synthesizing and understanding how this enemy operates and how to mitigate its negative influences or convert them to strengths.

These characters are intimately tied to Amerindian epistemologies and ways of knowing the world. In fact, their lives are expressed manifestations of said cosmologies.

Yet such stark expressions of these internalized traditions do not serve them well. Sonny is the only character who might be said to triumph in this scenario. By virtue of the personification of these traditions, the harmony between science and alchemy is not fulfilled, since both Danny and Beatrice have to leave and cannot function in any of the nations in territorial Guyana. They do not transcend; they escape. It is Sonny who claims a broad swath of space that best characterizes the links between science and alchemy.

Because Beatrice and Danny leave, they forfeit their citizenship in the Wapisiana nation. Sonny, though constantly on the move, still claims the South American landscape as his. Though he eschews the hard work of citizenship, his articulation of fiction as a lens or technology is again the clearest and most vociferously stated. Sonny claims that writing, in the Western sense, is a toothless fiction, with heroes too pedantic to enchant, and the legacy of rationality and other “triumphs” of Western norms and institutions. Sonny’s understanding of fiction and the function of heroes is a cultural and political understanding. In this, he constructs a political framework of knowledge and links this frame to acting on a worldview. Because he understands and dismisses Western fictions, he can be carefree, perhaps another fiction—the venerated lie. It is his explicit articulation of this power that is most triumphant in the book and it is, ironically, the most closely linked to issues of citizenship and globalization. Sonny’s migratory movement is that of a deterritorialized citizen, though he only refers to the “rain forest” as home. Critically, this is a necessary condition of regional citizenship. Citizens should, like Sonny, care about the region, but need to see beyond micro-nationalistic ties. This is not to advocate abandonment of one’s local space, but to argue for the need to work at balancing it with a regional sensibility.

This other way of seeing dramatically manifests in the character of Olly Sampson and the rupturing of the Guyanese state. After thirty-eight years of “independence” in 2004, Guyana is as ruptured as a state can get without an official declaration of war. One of Melville’s funniest and sadly, truest moments is when, Olly, discarding “the idea of turning the whole country into an enormous theme park for tourists...[where] history would be created as a spectacle,”²⁶³ fantasizes about dissolving the Guyanese state at the United Nations:

Ladies and Gentlemen, I should like to inform you, on behalf of the nation state of Guyana, that we are going to resign from being a country. We can’t make it work. We have tried. We have done our best. It is not possible. The problems are insoluble. From midnight tonight, we shall cease trading. The country is now disbanded. We will voluntarily liquidate ourselves. The nation will disperse quietly, a little shamefaced but so what. We had a go.

Different people have suggested different solutions. Do it this way. Try that. Let me have a go. Nothing works. We are at the mercy of the rich countries. A team of management consultants from the United States could not find the answer, and for not finding the answer, we had to pay them an amount that substantially increased our national debt. We give in, gracefully, but we give in.²⁶⁴

Olly Sampson, like Samir Amin, posits an alternative; though outrageous, it is an alternative. Sampson’s fantasy highlights the fragility of national models and truly exposes their failure, especially in the Guyanese context. Therefore, why keep investing in national models that have not worked? Why keep fighting for territorial integrity when there is little integrity elsewhere?²⁶⁵ In the context of fictional Guyana, Melville’s text suggests that the supposed nation does not exist for a substantial portion of its citizens. Internal racial strife as articulated in Grace Nichols’ Whole of Morning Sky, is an

indication that, “ideology don’t win elections in this country. Race is the thing.”²⁶⁶ This issue, combined with oppressive international debt and limited economic development means that this country continues to stagnate. Amin’s delinking, subordinating external desires and relations to/for the benefit of internal development, becomes more attractive when looking around and seeing that models of correct behavior are corrupt colonial and neo-colonial entities such as Great Britain and the United States. These models are preferred not for their moral superiority but for the economic and military might that buttresses them.

Olly Sampson, the clearest representation of the Guyanese state, knows that not only is the state about to collapse, but believes that it should be proactive in its dissolution. Like Tenga, Sampson, does not see the value of the Guyanese state continuing primarily because it has failed to function. Sampson’s critique is powerful because he represents the educated, economic, political, and social elites who are still invested in this dysfunctional state.

As a patriotic citizen, Sampson, to this point, has been invested in the state as a manifestation of national aspirations. Yet he realizes that the Guyanese state does not function and he has no alternative to put forth—the gaping debt, IMF conditionalities, and dicey elections all contribute to his despair. Olly Sampson has seen the enemy corporations, the very structure of government, but he is paralyzed by the problems. He does not see a way out. Sampson retreats to a world of fantasy because he cannot construct any real world solutions while still bound by and to the apparatus of an admittedly failed state.

Gramsci's notions of hegemony and capitalist seduction are relevant in this context because the belief that external products are better than local ones continues in the economic and political arena. The inherited system of governance and the management experts were both imported. Attempts, specifically in Guyana, at changing the system are met with resistance, primarily from the party in power. Currently, the predominately Indian People's Progressive Party is in power and unwilling to entertain new conceptions of governing this increasingly miserable plot. As David Hinds argues, power sharing is a way forward because it combats the entrenched governmental gridlock of the last sixty years.²⁶⁷ According to Hinds, a political lightning rod on the Guyanese political scene, the advantages of power sharing is that for plural societies, it is the most obvious step towards fairness and participation. To share power means forming a grand coalition of political actors, a mutual veto system, proportional representation, and local autonomy.²⁶⁸ Hinds goes on to propose a multi-person executive, a coalition cabinet and "a bicameral legislature including an elected People's House of Representatives and an appointed Chamber of Civil society..., which will include representatives of the bar association, the council of churches, women's organizations and the private sector commission" to name a few.²⁶⁹

Here Melville's The Ventriloquist's Tale is an interesting commentary on the state of the Guyanese nation, as the problem of establishing and stabilizing internal legitimacy plagues not only the citizens at the national level but anything the government would embark on at the regional level.²⁷⁰ To be or not to be, that is the question. The twofold question that faces Guyana and the rest of the Caribbean is not how to function as individual nation-states, but what exactly does that (a Caribbean nation-state) look like in a globalized world? David Hinds echoes Melville's observation that the polemicized

nation-state of Guyana is on the verge of collapse. He further states that “Caribbean nations as such have never been nations—they have always been in the pre-nation state.” In other words, they have always been in a state of imitation or degenerative mimicry (to invoke Derek Walcott)²⁷¹ in terms of governance, developing no institutions independent of Europe. While I do not believe that the region must disclaim its European inheritances, I would argue that as it has done in the arts, the inheritance must be **adapted** to regional particularities.

The region cannot continue to employ methodologies that cripple it, which, I believe, happens when governments continue to run as if Georgetown, Kingston, and Port-au-Spain were Whitehall, Westminster or Washington, D.C. While the Guyanese state and, indeed every [Caribbean] state, might be invested in territorial borders, when fictional truth, reflecting real situations, invites us to dissolve these borders or the state, itself, it is imperative to then explore cooperative potentials such as power sharing because these strategies are effective at the local, national, and regional levels.

Pauline Melville’s The Ventriloquist’s Tale has great promise, to my mind, as a guide for the conversations and considerations needed in the integration debate. Where Melville’s text falls short is in relation to the very real and overwhelming issues of race. Melville revisits the race question slyly through an examination of Amerindian realities. The Amerindians do represent race, indigenaity, and minority perspectives, but I would stress that overtly addressing the broader issue of race in the Caribbean is a necessity. In the text, Chofy interacts with his East Indian landlords, and the black Coastlanders who were a threat to the community in Danny’s mind. However, the day-to-day tensions between Afro and Indo Guyanese are not explored. To me this tension and dealing with it is critical given the role racism and ethnic strife play in all Caribbean societies.

European notions of white supremacy in the building of these communities were foundational and continue to haunt and corrode them and while in so complex a text with references to history, science, competing cosmologies, and nation building there is an absence in this area. An issue Melville's Chico recognizes with Europe at the end of the novel, "while I was in Europe I nearly became fatally infected by the epidemic of separatism...sometimes it appears as nationalism, sometimes as racism, sometimes as religious orthodoxy...the Serbs, the Scots, the English, the Basques, the Muslims, the Chechens—everybody was at it."²⁷² Perhaps like the romantic depiction of the savannahs, Melville felt the region had problems aplenty without adding this. Additionally, in the larger Caribbean context, language reconfigures race and new racial constructs give way to new challenges, for example, the mulatto class in Haiti functions as a non-black class of people in that space. Racial nuances, but not necessarily racism, are coded differently in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, which in the larger Caribbean nation will be a majority space.²⁷³ To that end, Ana Lydia Vega's short story, "Encarcananublado," provides a useful counterpoint to The Ventriloquist's Tale for its overt attention to issues of race and language in the larger Caribbean national project.

Found in her collection of the same name, which is dedicated to "the Caribbean Confederation of the future"²⁷⁴ "Encarcananublado" illustrates many of the issues of The Ventriloquist's Tale in a multi-lingual, transnational setting. On a boat destined for the U.S., three men who would be considered black in the U.S.: Antenor from Haiti, Diognes from the Dominican Republic, and Carmelo²⁷⁵ from Cuba—chronicle their desire for a better life through migration, while also exploring the difficulties of regional cohesion.

Antenor sets out for the U.S. from Haiti, and seeing a bobbing head, helps Diognes aboard. Though the two speak different languages—Haitian Creole and

Dominican Spanish—they lament being black, poor, and Caribbean. Noticing another bobbing head, they drag Carmelo, another Spanish-speaker, into the boat. This addition changes the linguistic and power dynamics in the patchy craft. Diognes complains to Carmelo that *madamos*, a derogatory term for Haitians, are taking Dominican jobs. Antenor, unable to follow their conversation, does recognize the term as a slur. As tensions rise, Carmelo demands access to Antenor’s provisions. Antenor’s refusal leads to a fight that the Spanish-speakers win. Carmelo extols Miami as the land of plenty, a place where his cousin was able to start a profitable bordello. Bordellos, outlawed by the Cuban government, and further undermined because “Women think they are equal to men since the Revolution,”²⁷⁶ are lucrative enterprises in the U.S. Ironically, prostitutes are among the highest exports from the Dominican Republic.²⁷⁷ On the rough, shark-infested seas, another fight erupts over Antenor’s refusal to share his water with Diognes. Instead of sharing, Antenor would prefer to throw his water overboard. They fight while Carmelo follows the action, “as an adult watching children.”²⁷⁸ Their boat capsizes and the U.S. Coast Guard miraculously rescues them. The “Apollo-like, blond, blue-eyed Aryan” who captains the vessel orders his staff to get “the niggers below so that the Spiks can take care of them.”²⁷⁹

In the hull of another ship that crossed the Atlantic, unsure of their fate, the three are again poor, black, and Caribbean, their racial, linguistic, and cultural differences erased in the literal belly of the U.S. beast. When only Antenor and Diogenes were in the boat, they were cooperative, united by “hunger and the solidarity of dreams.” The solidarity Antenor established with his Dominican brother is ruptured by the shared language ties he has with Carmelo. Unable to communicate, Antenor is further Otherized

and alienated from his political, economic, and to a certain degree cultural brothers in arms. For Vega, in this story, language is the largest hurdle to Caribbean unity, while race, poverty, and geography continue to unite.

The sense of ethnic strife and the raw, naked, corrosive elements of power—even at the smallest scales—as it is exercised and expressed in the story, revisit the concerns of Samir Amin and Mahmood Mamdani—that identification along ethnic lines is a divide and conquer strategy that keeps the indirect rulers in power indefinitely. So in the new Caribbean we cannot continue models of governance and democracy that maintain winner take-all systems. Part of this challenge to combat ethnic and cultural divisions is to have new, more inclusive proportional models of democracy—revisiting power-sharing strategies as discussed by David Hinds and others.²⁸⁰

As Edward Kamau Brathwaite has said, unity is submarine and based on those rhizomatic connections. I have argued and do believe that Caribbean unity is subterranean and alluvial. Acknowledging two things--the latency of this truth--has hampered its function as trace or nostalgia and by real material conditions in the economic, political, and ethnic spheres. However, both these texts challenge the rhetoric of unity, not because poverty and race are not enough to engender solidarity, but because the connection between these things, survival, and building community is not always overtly stated. As Mary Turner notes, “the fundamental impetus which generated collective organizing among slaves...was the struggle for survival.”²⁸¹ Therefore, harnessing and cultivating true coalitions means deeply and consciously acknowledging and working through differences of embedded and imagined power. These texts ask that reader-participants not lose themselves in easy rhetorical spaces, but through the lens of

an ancient technology—fiction—grasp the differences, and deal with them. Differences are grasped by beginning the conversation with the story, which puts these issues in the public sphere and ask for two things: first, using the characters as tools to discuss the issues; and second, thinking of the characters as ourselves. Therefore, there is a platform for discussion and change—the texts have created a mutual space that fosters realigning science and alchemy.

Pauline Melville's The Ventriloquist's Tale is one text that speaks to issues of definition in an era of globalization that is not new; in fact, it is built on age-old structures that colonized people recognize. This text raises questions that are important to Caribbean states, and to the development of a Caribbean nation. In fact, it serves as a model and map for the conversations and approaches that will be valuable in a regional nation-building project. It is this provocative nature of art that allows us to imagine beyond our borders and limitations for innovative and creative solutions. Ultimately, it is about rupturing expectations. The novel suggests that Guyana, and by extension the region, must practice simultaneity in power relations, extending its “hands” inward and outward—like the knot at the center of a tug-of-war rope. The region must exercise that tautness and tension and push as it is pulled. The internal hand has to address basics. However, those basics must link to the external hand that touches the Caribbean and the world.

¹⁵⁶ Walcott, Derek. “The Muse of History.” In Is Massa Day Done? Ed. Orde Coombs, 2.

¹⁵⁷ de Certeau, Michel. The Writing of History. Trans. Tom Conley. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1988 and The Practice of Everyday Life. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984; Lyotard, Jean-François, The Postmodern Condition. Minneapolis, MS: University of Minnesota Press, 1984; and Foucault, Michel. The Archaeology of Knowledge. New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1972.

¹⁵⁸ <http://www.guyana.org/NDS/chap22.htm> October 13, 2004.

¹⁵⁹ Melville, Pauline. The Ventriloquist's Tale, 34-35.

¹⁶⁰ Amin, Samir. Capitalism in the Age of Globalization. London, UK: Zed books, 1997, 40.

- ¹⁶¹ Manley, Robert H. Guyana Emergent: the Post-Independence Struggle for Nondependent Development. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Company, Inc., 1982, 51. And Burnham, Forbes. A Destiny to Mould: Selected Speeches. Compiled by C.A. Nascimento and R.A. Burrowes. New York, NY: African Publishing Corporation, 1970, 172.
- ¹⁶² As recently as 1999 the South African mining company, Migrate Mining, received permission from the Guyanese government over the objections of Amerindian people to “conduct reconnaissance surveys over 8 million acres of land.” <http://www.sdn.org.gy/apa/southafricancompany.htm> November 20, 2004.
- ¹⁶³ Colchester, Marcus. Guyana: Fragile Frontiers. Kingston, JA: Ian Randle Publishers, 1997, 135.
- ¹⁶⁴ Manley, Robert H. Guyana Emergent, 53.
- ¹⁶⁵ Kurlansky, Mark. A Continent of Islands, .
- ¹⁶⁶ Henry, Paget. “Philosophy and the Caribbean Intellectual Tradition.” CSA Conference Paper, 2000, 2.
- ¹⁶⁷ Melville, Pauline. The Ventriloquist’s Tale, 77-78.
- ¹⁶⁸ Melville, Pauline. The Ventriloquist’s Tale, 78.
- ¹⁶⁹ Melville, Pauline. The Ventriloquist’s Tale, 309.
- ¹⁷⁰ Shemak, April. “Doing What We Ask It To Do: Native Transmutation in Pauline Melville’s The Ventriloquist’s Tale.” Conference paper presented May, 27, 2003, Caribbean Studies Association Conference, Belize City, Belize.
- ¹⁷¹ Shemak, April. “Alter/Natives: Myth, Translation and the Native Informant in Pauline Melville’s The Ventriloquist’s Tale.” Forthcoming Article. 2005.
- ¹⁷² Falk, Richard A. “The Making of Global Citizenship.” In The Condition of Citizenship. Ed. Bart van Steenbergen. London, UK: Sage, 1994, 43.
- ¹⁷³ Falk, Richard A. “The Making of Global Citizenship.” In The Condition of Citizenship. Ed. Bart van Steenbergen. London, UK: Sage, 1994, 44.
- ¹⁷⁴ Chierci, Rose-Marie. “Caribbean Migration in the Age of Globalization: Transnationalism, Race, and Ethnic Identity.” In Reviews in Anthropology, Vol. 33, 2004, 48-50.
- ¹⁷⁵ Melville, Pauline. The Ventriloquist’s Tale, 54.
- ¹⁷⁶ Because of their special status as indigenous people, Amerindians are entitled to make claims on these states.
- ¹⁷⁷ Pèrina, Michaëlla L. “French Guiana” and Alan West-Durán, “Suriname.” In African Caribbeans: A Reference Guide. Ed. Alan West-Durán. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003, 88-89 and 176-177. for both these writers, especially Pèrina, this border-crossing raises questions about local identity. She asks, “How does Guiana reconcile these migrations with the political and economic challenges it faces? Is Guianese culture only a mirror of society or can it help create a new model for social harmony and development” (88)?
- ¹⁷⁸ Colchester, Marcus. Guyana Fragile Frontiers, 129.
- ¹⁷⁹ Colchester, Marcus. Guyana Fragile Frontiers, 129-130.
- ¹⁸⁰ Henry, Paget. “Philosophy and the Caribbean Intellectual Tradition,” 17.
- ¹⁸¹ Henry, Paget. “Philosophy and the Caribbean Intellectual Tradition.” CSA Conference Paper, 2000, 2.
- ¹⁸² In 1975, former European colonizing powers agreed to grant their former colonies in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) preferential trading concessions. This arrangement is known as the Lomé Convention (Lomé) (Grivan 1). Lomé, renewed every five years, came to an end in the 21st century. It has been replaced by the Cotonou Accord (2000), which only guarantees a protected European market for Caribbean bananas and sugar until 2008 (Ahmed 1).
- ¹⁸³ Lewis, Patsy. Surviving Small Size, 189.
- ¹⁸⁴ Ellwood, Wayne. The No-Nonsense Guide to Globalization. Toronto, Canada: New Internationalist/Between the Lines Press, 2003, 36.
- ¹⁸⁵ Melville, Pauline. The Ventriloquist’s Tale, 327.
- ¹⁸⁶ <http://www.sdn.org.gy/apa/southafricancompany.htm> November 20, 2004.
- ¹⁸⁷ Burnham, Forbes. A Destiny to Mould, Editorial Notes, 171.
- ¹⁸⁸ Burnham, Forbes. A Destiny to Mould, 141 143.
- ¹⁸⁹ Chierci, Rose-Marie. “Caribbean Migration in the Age of Globalization: Transnationalism, Race, and Ethnic Identity.” In Reviews in Anthropology, Vol. 33, 2004, 48.
- ¹⁹⁰ Desrey Fox Interview, Transcript. Banyon Productions. Georgetown, Guyana, 1989. <http://www.pancaribbean.com/banyan/desrey.htm> January 15, 2005.

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- ¹⁹¹ Desrey Fox Interview, Transcript. Banyon Productions. Georgetown, Guyana, 1989. <http://www.pancaribbean.com/banyan/desrey.htm> January 15, 2005.
- ¹⁹² Desrey Fox Interview, Transcript. Banyon Productions. Georgetown, Guyana, 1989. <http://www.pancaribbean.com/banyan/desrey.htm> January 15, 2005.
- ¹⁹³ Melville, Pauline. *The Ventriloquist's Tale*, 3.
- ¹⁹⁴ Melville, Pauline. *The Ventriloquist's Tale*, 79.
- ¹⁹⁵ Melville, Pauline. *The Ventriloquist's Tale*, 55.
- ¹⁹⁶ Melville, Pauline. *The Ventriloquist's Tale*, 55.
- ¹⁹⁷ Melville, Pauline. Class visit. *The Caribbean Experience in London*. August 2001.
- ¹⁹⁸ Melville, Pauline. *The Ventriloquist's Tale*, 355.
- ¹⁹⁹ April Shemak discusses the novel's use of ventriloquism as trickery—a way to mislead and masquerade.
- ²⁰⁰ Steenberg, Bart van. "Introduction." In *The Condition of Citizenship*. London, UK: Sage, 1994.
- ²⁰¹ Mamdani, Mahmood, *When Victims Become Killers*, 24.
- ²⁰² Mamdani, Mahmood, *When Victims Become Killers*, 24-26.
- ²⁰³ Mamdani, Mahmood, *When Victims Become Killers*, 26.
- ²⁰⁴ See also Sylvia Wynter in the Introduction and Infinite Rehearsal, the Haitian Revolution chapter.
- ²⁰⁵ Mamdani, Mahmood, *When Victims Become Killers*, 24.
- ²⁰⁶ Mamdani, Mahmood, *When Victims Become Killers*, 24 and 25.
- ²⁰⁷ Wa Thiong'o, Ngugi. *The Barrel of a Pen*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1983, 80.
- ²⁰⁸ Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*.
- ²⁰⁹ Antonio Gramsci's idea that ruling class interests, through power over the economy, education and the media, are presented as the interests of the masses. This is often coded in terms of social order, stability and [national] advancement (Progress).
- ²¹⁰ Melville, Pauline. *The Ventriloquist's Tale*, 53.
- ²¹¹ Melville, Pauline. *The Ventriloquist's Tale*, 53.
- ²¹² Gregoire, Crispin and Patrick Henderson and Natalia Kanem. "Karifuna: The Caribs of Dominica." In *Ethnic Minorities in Caribbean Society*. Ed. Rhoda E. Reddock. St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago: University of West Indies, 1996, 116.
- ²¹³ Basch, Linda and Nina Glick Schiller, Cristina Szanton Blanc. *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States*. Langhorne, PA: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1994, 7.
- ²¹⁴ Melville, Pauline. *The Ventriloquist's Tale*, 34.
- ²¹⁵ Melville, Pauline. *The Ventriloquist's Tale*, 35.
- ²¹⁶ In fact, Melville takes on several texts that represent either Guyana (Waugh's travelogue) or Amerindians (*Macunaíma*)
- ²¹⁷ Melville, Pauline. *The Ventriloquist's Tale*, 31.
- ²¹⁸ Melville, Pauline. *The Ventriloquist's Tale*, 34.
- ²¹⁹ Melville, Pauline. *The Ventriloquist's Tale*, 55.
- ²²⁰ Burnett, Paula. "'Where else to row, but backward?'" Addressing Caribbean Futures through Re-Visions of the Past." In *Ariel*, 30:1, January 1999, 11-37, 25.
- ²²¹ Sizer, Nigel. *Profit Without Plunder: Reaping Revenue from Guyana's Tropical Forests Without Destroying Them*. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute, 1996, 3-7.
- ²²² Burnett, Paula. "...Addressing Caribbean Futures," 24-25.
- ²²³ Burnett, Paula. "...Addressing Caribbean Futures," 24.
- ²²⁴ Rosa, while like Wormoal in pursuit of knowledge is uncomfortable with the idea of possessing knowledge, control and the colonial project. Rosa characterizes Wormoal's ideas on knowledge as the "new" colonial project (Melville 80). However, control of knowledge in accumulation, distribution and characterization is an old mainstay of imperial and colonial powers. Because Rosa's knowledge accumulation focuses on citizen of the empire rather than a subject, her research seems less nefarious. But she too shares a sense of possessing Chofy (through sex) that Wormoal gets from books. Olly Sampson, on the other hand, [perhaps better left for the Olly Sampson section...]. See also Alexander McKinnon whose pride in his rationality (213) is fractured by the incestuous relationship between his children, Danny and Beatrice.
- ²²⁵ <http://www.hypography.com/topics/wormholes.cfm>, October 22, 2004.
- ²²⁶ <http://www.hypography.com/topics/wormholes.cfm>, October 22, 2004.

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- ²²⁷ Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 80.
- ²²⁸ Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 81.
- ²²⁹ Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 2.
- ²³⁰ Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 2.
- ²³¹ Amin, Samir. "Imperialism and Globalization." In [Monthly Review](#), Vol. 53, No.2, June 2001, 14.
- ²³² Amin, Samir. "Imperialism and Globalization," 13-14.
- ²³³ Various part of the city of Georgetown, because it was built out of wood, have burnt down (1864, 1913, etc)
- ²³⁴ Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 345.
- ²³⁵ Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 343-44.
- ²³⁶ Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 345.
- ²³⁷ Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 348-49.
- ²³⁸ Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 346-47.
- ²³⁹ Macdonald, Laura. "Citizenship, Participation and the Public Sphere in the Americas." Meeting Draft for the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, Summer 2000, 3.
- ²⁴⁰ In the epilogue, Melville's narrator recognizes European ethnic and racial violence, but not that in the Caribbean, 355.
- ²⁴¹ Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 350.
- ²⁴² Melville, Pauline. The Caribbean Experience in London, Class notes, August 2001.
- ²⁴³ Basch, Linda, et al. [Nations Unbound](#), 9.
- ²⁴⁴ Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 200.
- ²⁴⁵ Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 210.
- ²⁴⁶ Swan, Michael. [The Marches of El Dorado](#). London, UK: Jonathan Cape, 1958, 125. Swan, in his 1950s search for El Dorado, recounts with relish the story of H.P.C. Melville, who moves from prospector to land and cattle baron in the late 19th century Rupununi, made him "Chief of the Wapisianas." Characterizing the relationship with his wife, Swan writes, "[she] had borne him fine children. He treated her with a certain indifference, I gathered, and their relationship had little in it of Captain Smith's idyll with the Princess Pocahontas. He taught the Indians many things that were of use to them, and they, besides giving him their allegiance, sharpened arrow points so fine ...he was able to use them as gramophone needles. He found them a meek, utterly passive people who accepted whatever fate brought them" (125). Chronicling his relationship with his two partners, Mamai Mary, his Wapisiana wife and an unnamed Patomona wife, Swan illustrates Mamai Mary's lack of resentment, since she reportedly said, "She can have him. I had the best of him" (126). Swan concludes Melville's history, which like McKinnon's does not end in the savannahs, "Old Melville did not die on the savannahs; in fact the end of his story is a slight disappointment, an unromantic acceptance of the values of civilization. No wonder there is a slight mystery about it. He put his two wives to live with their children and sailed away to the Scotland his father left so many years before. Here he married at the kirk, and here, in or about the year 1930, he died...It was interesting, as I traveled all over the savannahs and met the Melville children and many of the hundred or so grandchildren of the old man, to see the Mendelian sports that the mixed bloods had played. And I felt at the end that those powerful Scottish genes would be active till the end of time" (127).
- ²⁴⁷ Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 215.
- ²⁴⁸ Manne, Robert. "The Colour of Prejudice." Rabbit-Proof Fence website.
- ²⁴⁹ Roth, Walter E. [An Inquiry into the Animism and Folk-lore of the Guiana Indians](#). London, UK: Johnson Reprint Company Ltd., 1970 (1915), 198.
- ²⁵⁰ Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 122-123.
- ²⁵¹ Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 191.
- ²⁵² Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 191-193.
- ²⁵³ Melville, Pauline. [The Ventriloquist's Tale](#), 193.
- ²⁵⁴ Zamora quoted in Burnett, 13.
- ²⁵⁵ Find Source.
- ²⁵⁶ Faul, Michelle, "Haiti's Ruler Chides World for Disinterest." In [Guardian of London](#), October 23, 2004.
- ²⁵⁷ The name Makunima means "one that works in the dark" (Roth 130). This makes sense for a child of the eclipse.

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- ²⁵⁸ It is interesting to note the Bla-Bla, vernacular for too much chatter, and Melville's loquacious cousin (Burnett 13) is visited by and talks "to a man he could see in the corner of the room, who had a parrot sitting on his shoulder" (Melville 344).
- ²⁵⁹ Jan Carew's adaptation, Children of the Sun, fuses Amerindian and African mythologies and is a story marketed to children.
- ²⁶⁰ Shakespeare, William. Macbeth, Act V, Scene V, lines 22-33.
- ²⁶¹ Roth, Walter E. An Inquiry into the Animism..., 166
- ²⁶² Melville, Pauline. The Ventriloquist's Tale, 1.
- ²⁶³ Melville, Pauline. The Ventriloquist's Tale, 324.
- ²⁶⁴ Melville, Pauline. The Ventriloquist's Tale, 325.
- ²⁶⁵ This debate rages on in Guyana after the flooding of early 2005 and the government's inability to provide services. The Stabroek News, January 15, 2005.
- ²⁶⁶ Nichols, Grace. Whole of Morning Sky, 72.
- ²⁶⁷ Hinds, David. "Power Sharing: Towards a New Political Culture."
http://www.guyanacaribbeanpolitics.com/commentary/hinds_ps.html May 28, 2004.
- ²⁶⁸ Hinds, David. "Power Sharing: Towards a New Political Culture."
http://www.guyanacaribbeanpolitics.com/commentary/hinds_ps.html May 28, 2004.
- ²⁶⁹ Hinds, David. "Power Sharing: Towards a New Political Culture."
http://www.guyanacaribbeanpolitics.com/commentary/hinds_ps.html May 28, 2004.
- ²⁷⁰ Grivan, Norman. "Reinterpreting the Caribbean." In New Caribbean Thought: A Reader. Eds. Brian Meeks and Folke Lindahl. Kingston, JA: The University of the West Indies Press, 2001, 16.
- ²⁷¹ Walcott, Derek. "The Caribbean: culture as Mimicry?" In the Journal of Inter American Studies and World Affairs. 16 (February 1974), 3-13. Walcott addresses this idea as both a positive and a negative. In addressing Naipaul, Walcott says that "our pantomime is conducted before a projection of ourselves which in its smallest gestures is based on metropolitan references. No gesture, according to this philosophy, is authentic, every sentence is a quotation, every movement either ambitious or pathetic, and because it is mimicry, uncreative"(6). Walcott acknowledges that this would indeed be a paralyzing phenomena, one he characterizes as not just West Indian, but American.. Walcott goes on to argue that mimicry, but mimicry by design is what the Caribbean needs: Mimicry is an act of imagination...endemic cunning...Camouflage...is mimicry, or more than that, it is design. What if the man in the New World needs mimicry as design, both as defense and as lure..."(10). Degenerative mimicry would be that imitation without design. That imitation that is neither a tool nor a weapon, but the "crippling...uncreative...pantomime..."(6).
- ²⁷² Melville, Pauline. The Ventriloquist's Tale, 325.
- ²⁷³ Grivan, Norman. "Reinterpreting the Caribbean." In New Caribbean Thought: A Reader. Ed. Brian Meeks and Folke Lindahl. Kingston, JA: The University of the West Indies Press, 2001, 19-20.
- ²⁷⁴ The full dedication reads, "To the Caribbean Confederation of the future, lets hurry up and get through the rain and dark times so that the sunshine of confederation may reign."
- ²⁷⁵ An examination of the characters' names shows all of them have a direct connection to the ancient cultures of Greece and Rome. Antenor was an Elder of Troy during the Trojan War. He is a figure in the Illiad and a founder of the Italian city of Padua. Diognes was the Greek mythological figure not only associated with masturbation but is primarily remembered as the person with a lamp looking for an honest man. The Carmelo association with the ancients is stretched. However, an Argentine father-son fencing duo made it to the Olympics.
- ²⁷⁶ Vega, Ana Lydia. Encarcananublado.
- ²⁷⁷ Kurlansky, Mark. A Continent of Islands: Searching for the Caribbean Destiny. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1992. "Any Caribbean port that wanted to make claim to first-class brothels tried to offer women from the Dominican Republic. The desire for mulattoes has provided work to Dominican women in their own capital and around the region" (189).
- ²⁷⁸ Vega, Ana Lydia. Encarcananublado, .
- ²⁷⁹ Vega, Ana Lydia. Encarcananublado, .
- ²⁸⁰ Another Ana Lydia Vega story in the same collection that illustrates the issues and the hard lessons of integration is "Jamaica Farewell."
- ²⁸¹ Turner, Mary. "Chattel Slaves into Wage Slaves." In From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves. Kingston, JA: Ian Randle, 1995, 34.

soulsister sycorax

Sycorax: When them ask—who is she? Tell them I'm a roots rebel woman on the other side of soul. Here with sistren from another space and time. Try as you might we won't leave this place—just out of [pure] spite.
(from *soulsister sycorax*—work-in-progress).

The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy
Was grown into a hoop? hast thou forgot her?
...This damn'd witch Sycorax,
For mischiefs manifold, and sorceries terrible²⁸²

One of the earliest imperial and “global” images of Caribbean women can be traced to Elizabethan England. Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* provides one of the first fictive visions of Caribbean womanhood in the person of Sycorax. This “blue-eyed (or blue-lidded) hag (demon)” from Algiers, Caliban’s mother and Prospero’s absent nemesis, is barely mentioned. She does not have one line in the play. Yet, despite her apparent absence, her presence shadows the action. Shakespeare’s comedy has the Duke of Milan, Prospero, shipwrecked on an “uninhabited”—except for black and brutish Caliban—*island*. Their power struggle embodied through language, land, and Miranda, Prospero’s daughter, has become a foundational trope in post-colonial discourse. For George Lamming, novelist, critic, and philosopher, and indeed many others, the Caribbean relationship with colonial overlords (the colonial relationship) is best characterized by the Caliban/Prospero paradigm. The focus, when reclaiming this text in the Americas—by Aimé Césaire (*A Tempest*) or José Enrique Rodó’s (*Ariel*)—has been on Caliban and Ariel, the masculine inheritors of the island.²⁸³ When charting Caribbean women’s experiences in colonial and postcolonial literature, where should we begin?

Reclaiming Sycorax's story allows several things: recognition of various strands of mother discourse (motherland, mother of the nation, literal mother); an exploration of intrasex class and race conflicts by comparison with Miranda, and fictive and realistic comparisons of the negotiations of Caribbean women in the "work" spaces they occupy and their constructions of power and resistance in those spaces. Basically, Sycorax's story can be understood as embodying a critique of embedded structures of power subtle and overt. These texts were chosen not because they overtly invoke Sycorax, they do not; rather they represent a variety of linguistic groups and two genres, and demonstrate how using the Sycorax Model, a component of Amerindian postmodernism, reclaims [h]istories, not included in hegemonic [H], written in nation language and which deal with gender power relations and can access a latent oppositional consciousness. This model can become part of a consciousness-raising process in the Caribbean nation-building enterprise. This chapter explores the impact of gender identities, stereotypes, and organizing systems as they are expressed in the poems "Ala" by Grace Nichols (Guyana), "The Plantation" by Eugenie Eersel (Suriname), "Sacrificial Flowers" by Lucie Julia (Guadeloupe) and the short stories "Victoria" by Meiling Jin (Guyana) and "Bella Makes Life" by Lorna Goodison (Jamaica).

At this moment, academics will be the primary users of this model; however, it is my hope that with cross-fertilization and sharing between academics and artists (through conferences, articles, etc.), artistic production will be influenced, as has been the case with the reclamation of Caliban.²⁸⁴ What I have termed the "Amerindian postmodern" encourages simultaneity and as artists rethink or reconstruct Sycorax's story, the performance and presentation of existing pieces that lend themselves to a reading through

the Sycorax Model will be useful. This chapter, therefore, considers cultural re/presentations of Sycorax in contemporary poems and short stories, as an educational tool for academics and those outside the university.

The aforementioned texts examine Caribbean women as citizens through various experiences and environments--historical, contemporary, public, and private--and deal with the recurring issues defining a woman's space, how work impacts this idea, and how the ideas of space and work impact the articulation and development of power, agency, resistance, and negotiation. In doing so, these poems and short stories foreground not just the necessity of including women in the nation building project, but the necessity of building a nation where women's rights as citizens are foundational components of the nation rhetorically and substantively. Women have worked, for the most part, behind the scenes in the process of building Caribbean nations. Thus, in the regional supra-nation building process, the knowledge women have gained historically and experientially not only connects Caribbean peoples' experiences across borders, which strengthens regional foundations, but also foregrounds the voices of women who have been left on the margins or out of political and social debates. In fact, this focus on women, like the focus on indigenous people in the previous chapter, reclaims space for those generally restricted to the margins of historical writing and the edges of political and social debates. This is not to imply that women, indigenous people, and these "marginalized others" share the same concerns. Rather, the Sycorax Model and the use of Amerindian postmodernism are about widening the real and imagined spaces of citizenship and belonging. Thus, while disabled people and homosexuals are among those at the periphery, their marginalization is not the same qualitatively as that for women or

indigenous people, unless they are indigenous lesbians. But even such a scenario would yield different concerns; and certain disabilities and homosexuality have other cultural contexts in Amerindian lore and history.

To reiterate, these models are not about lumping together the disempowered or groups who do not have formal power, but rather about opening multiple fronts for inclusion and agitation to promote the full rights of citizenship for all citizens. This is, of course, not to say that these groups and women share the same concerns, but to recognize that, like women, they need a place in the Caribbean nation –building process. Including women’s experiences opens the door to including all experiences, given that feminist methodologies emphasize relational and power sharing models.²⁸⁵ This chapter will briefly examine some concerns of Caribbean feminists, namely the physical, historical, and symbolic body, the way in which Caribbean feminists negotiate gender systems, and their goals in retrieving and critically analyzing women’s existence—past and present; and the multidisciplinary and participatory methodological apparatus for fulfilling those goals.

In appropriating a character from The Tempest, my goal is certainly not to continue to valorize European beginnings in a Caribbean context, but to examine how European influences continue to inform the discourse on Caribbean identity and personality and ultimately political conformity and transformation. As Sycorax functions in the literary colonial imagination as a silent and mysterious backdrop, the quest to acknowledge her presence and her voice mirrors the reclamation of Caribbean women’s lives and contributions, thus connecting women’s lived reality to fictional representation. Although, in one sense, taking Sycorax as a model confines this discussion as relevant

primarily to women of a certain class and /or education who read Shakespeare, I do not believe this analysis is so limited and constrained. I believe that especially through the genres of poetry and short stories, the Sycorax analysis becomes portable. Poetry and short stories lend themselves to performance and a certain translatability in local civic and religious settings and even for radio and television airing. Naturally, while the specifics of Sycorax may not be known if one has not read or seen the play, her experience—just like Caliban’s—resonates for Caribbean people. So women who may not be familiar with the literary Sycorax know their experience and that of other women in their space. While this model is based in literature, it is of course not meant to preclude application to women who may not necessarily know or be at ease with this text or even reading in general. As we examine the legacy of The Tempest in terms of gender, race, politics, and scholarship, we must note that scholars characterize Caribbean philosophy as L’Héritage de Caliban, Caliban’s Reason and Caribbean women’s experiences are characterized as those of Caliban’s sisters and daughters. Occasionally, we speak of Caliban’s “Other” woman—Miranda. Rarely do we speak of the first woman in Caliban’s life—Sycorax.

It is important to acknowledge the first Amerindian woman to struggle against colonial invasion. This discussion of Caribbean women’s experience begins, therefore, by celebrating the spirit of indigenous women such as Aracaona (sometimes spelt Anacaona), a *cacique*, native leader, “who took over the chieftainship of Xaragua in Hispaniola, when her brother Behechio died”²⁸⁶ and resisted Spanish encroachment.²⁸⁷ Jamaica’s Nanny of the Maroons, Barbados’ militant creole insurgent, Nanny Grigg, Antigua’s Mary Prince, and Guadeloupe’s warrior woman, Solitude, who was executed

the day after giving birth for fighting the re-imposition of slavery, are included among women who initiated or sustained resistance. In a more general sense, all rebel women²⁸⁸ of the Caribbean should be acknowledged. They spoke back to systems of oppression, literally and figuratively, or quietly prayed and plotted. They were natural rebels—field and domestic workers, wet nurses, prostitutes, mothers, trade unionists, writers, preachers, teachers, nurses, wives, and others.²⁸⁹ These women of fact and material reality may seem the purview of Caribbean history, but interdisciplinary work asks us to make the cross-cultural, transversal connections inherent in our submarine experience—psychically and physically.²⁹⁰ Therefore, when considering interlocking Caribbean experiences of history, literature, work, resistance, and power, Sycorax can provide the template for examining women’s lives and renegotiating the colonial paradigm that has schizophrenic designations for women of color.

Sycorax offers a model for retrieving Caribbean women’s experiences in terms of their relationship to space and power, that is, for examining the locus of women’s “work” and channels for expressing power—formally and informally. What is her story and what does it tell us about Caribbean realities and possibilities? The effort of scholars and artists to reclaim [black] women’s **everyday** lives, and to give voice and visibility to the beauty and power therein,²⁹¹ has catalyzed an awakening in Caribbean communities to their interior worlds and gradually to connections with political realities. Thus, the excavation and illumination of Sycorax in a colonial and imperial text and context becomes an empowering exercise; through this process, she no longer belongs to Shakespeare or an academy which continues to collude in her erasure.²⁹² From Sycorax and literary retrieval, the stories and histories—our own and those told about us—reposing in the

ruptures can be reclaimed and reexamined. As Sycorax's power—seen and unseen, tangible and intangible, is perceived, there is recognition of the power and possibility of “real” Caribbean women—enslaved, indentured, and free. The process of scrutinizing the contradictions of these intersections and experiences will allow the forging ahead and building of new patterns and reinvigorate traditional responses.

To begin with, Sycorax is a “suck-teeth,” black woman from Algiers. It is important to note that in post-colonial discourse Caliban's race is primary to his oppression; thus, it is equally critical to recognize that Sycorax's erasure and silencing are tied to her race and sex. Her offense and the reason for her subsequent banishment are unknown, but she is a rebel woman in the African Caribbean tradition. She was a roots woman who cast spells and utilized knowledge—power (magic)—that rivals Prospero's. His power comes from and will be carried by books. It is not organic. It is this authority, for lack of a better word, though she is absent, against which Prospero has to justify his might (or right to rule). He reminds Ariel (himself and later Caliban) that it was his “art...that made gape the pine and let thee out.” Prospero is in a constant space of legitimization, illustrating that he recognizes the limitations of his power and the illegality of his claim. Though Prospero tries to erase Sycorax, and to eradicate and enslave her child, he is destabilized and made insecure by her trace, made most visible in Caliban.

Sycorax marks Caliban through land and language and he inherits his claim to the island through her. Caliban teaches Prospero the island, as Sycorax had taught him. To subvert her power and erase her, Prospero renames the landscape. Nonetheless, Sycorax remains stubbornly present and is embedded in the landscape. She is literally buried

there. In this land her bones, her blood, her dust, and her ash remain commingling with the island and its invisible antecedents—the Amerindians. Caliban’s utterance, his speech, is Sycorax’s language, which gives him another way of being, another way of constructing himself and shaping reality. Sycorax’s language, spoken and unspoken, offers Caliban the power of a latent oppositional consciousness. This language is not just speech, but ritual and other retentions brought to the New World. Although he is not conscious of it, her strategies and ways of being are ingrained in his psyche. Caliban has the tools not only to resist Prospero’s authority, but also to chart a new course in his own subconscious. While many characterize the colonial dilemma as one between Prospero and Caliban, any critical consideration of the experience of women and post colonial masses cannot be limited to these two, but must include Miranda, Prospero’s daughter, and Sycorax for a fuller understanding of the problem and the cure.

Miranda (virgin/Madonna), represented as pure and undefiled, and Sycorax (hag/Diablesse) characterized as demonic, defiled and defilable, offer two idealized and controlling images of women in Prospero’s patriarchal paradigm.²⁹³ An important component in this matrix of control has been religion. Official religion, the religion of the colonizer, has undergirded male power and has been used to keep women in the background, though women perform much of the institutional and maintenance work. Conversely, religion has also been part of black and Caribbean liberation struggles because it has been a way to revision the world.²⁹⁴ African-based religions and/or religious practice within European-derived churches have been flexible—eluding erasure through camouflage, interplay, and incorporation of syncretic layers and in rituals. However, the elasticity of these spaces is constantly shifting. These colliding religious

universes, one unofficial and the other state-sanctioned, have investments in the cult of true womanhood, which is constructed on religious doctrine, and condition the experiences of Miranda and Sycorax.

The cult of true womanhood, a guiding set of principles for nineteenth century women in Britain, the U.S., and by extension the Caribbean used embedded religious notions of purity, piety, submissiveness, and domesticity to circumvent women's participation, at the mass level, in the public sphere, the world external to the home. According to Barbara Welter, the four "cardinal virtues" determined acceptable feminine and masculine behavior and shaped ensuing gender relations. Though this model was the jurisdiction of middle and upper class women, it was a marker to aspire to, coded as progress. Although this binary does not seem as rigid in its operation today, it continues to operate at the level of the ideal, and despite all the negotiations to the contrary, it functions in the daily lives of men and women. Within this paradigm women are relegated or "held hostage"²⁹⁵ by the domestic, private sphere, while men are part of the public sphere. Caribbean scholars, in my reading, have not referred to this dynamic as the cult of true womanhood, but in terms of domestication or as the ideal of the "good" woman and good mumma²⁹⁶:

For example, the lifestyle of an upper-class European woman, married, with limited education in the classics, housewife (but with servants), subservient to her husband and confined in her public life to social work, became a model for 'the good woman'. The loud, working-class, unmarried African woman became the opposite. Migrant Indian women...at their point of entrance into the society, were reconstructed into otherness, often in opposition to the negative values associated with working-class African women in the society.²⁹⁷

This image of the good woman, enshrined in the nineteenth century, has an historical, ideological, and material presence. Caribbean history, like American history, is a story of plantation economies, which subverted patriarchal views on sexual division of labor for profit. From the point of conquest, Europeans put indigenous men and women “to work on ranches, and in mines and fields as virtual slaves.”²⁹⁸ Indentured European women, enslaved African women, and later indentured Indian, Chinese, and Javanese women followed these Amerindian women. Indentured and free white women, however were granted particular protections by virtue of race, class, and sex, while enslaved African women, constructed outside the norms and values of African²⁹⁹ and European womanhood, were subjected to a different set of gender negotiations. Thus, from the beginning of the transatlantic slave trade and New World plantation economies, gender has operated as an ever changing and unfixed system.³⁰⁰

For example, Prospero, the embodiment of the law of the [European] father and Miranda’s pater, is concerned with her potential defilement and debasement at the hands of black Caliban. Miranda is inside this space, held hostage by Prospero’s managing of her education, socialization, and sexual and reproductive life. Hilary Beckles characterizes white women as the moral center of the white community and the household authorities who “found it impossible to ‘live’ at an ideological distance. [Thus,] no distinct culture of the white woman as mediator of slavery emerged; rather her subscription to slavery and colonialism led to an ideological assimilation that produced...political sameness and symmetry.”³⁰¹ During slavery, white women occupied various social strata. Elite women maintained the “law of the father,” and were compelled to maintain the slave system. Some working class white women were

displaced by slave labor, but others profited from it.³⁰² Miranda, in all her guises, is another justifier for the father. She reinforces Prospero's truth, despite their problematic relationship centered on his denial and erasure of her mother.³⁰³ The essence of Miranda's citizenship and selfhood are based on the us/them, or more precisely, the dynamics of free white woman and enslaved black woman. Miranda, though under Prospero's thumb, exercises his deferred power over poorer white women and black women—free and enslaved.

Similarly and simultaneously, Prospero speaks of Sycorax only to curse and devalue her—she is a hag, a whore, and a criminal. Caliban learns this language to curse Prospero. But linguistic acquisition places Caliban in a psychological conundrum with a language that devalues him and his antecedents. The only positive power the language offers Caliban is in privileging his position as a male. Therefore, Caliban internalizes systems of racial and gender oppression. However, as thinkers such as Roberto Fernández Retamar have pointed out, their language, the colonizers', is “now *our* language.”³⁰⁴ What *our language/s* encompass and their various registries is a constantly debated psychological and epistemological issue in the Caribbean region. Nonetheless, in representing Sycorax in this way, Prospero, similar to black men later, those who inherit power, “puts her in her place to safeguard his manhood threatened by authority of the female upstart.”³⁰⁵ Patricia Hill Collins argues that there are four controlling images of black women, which together with class and other factors re-inscribe black women's oppression.³⁰⁶ Prospero's construction of Sycorax reminds us that black “women occupy a position whereby they are the inferior half of a series of converging dichotomies, and this placement has been central to our subordination.”³⁰⁷ Sycorax is simultaneously the

Jezebel, “the whore or sexually aggressive woman,”³⁰⁸ a loose woman since Caliban’s father is absent and unknown (to us); and the emasculating (castrating) black matriarch, the very reason for black poverty and underdevelopment. The black matriarch is characterized as a bad mother.³⁰⁹ She “fails to fulfill [her] traditional “womanly” duties,” in this way violating spherical boundaries. She is outside the domestic space to the detriment of her family. Well, we know Sycorax was “bad” because she was banished. She is a violator in “Algerian” society and certainly would challenge any construct in which Prospero has the authority. As a violator of Algerian space, Sycorax does not belong and is forced out. In the Caribbean, in making a way, perhaps within an indigenous community, the dynamics of belonging shift. She is an initial outsider, who shares or appropriates the land from the native people. This new space defines Sycorax as worker more than as woman, and she has little to lose in challenging an inherited order. In fact, it is her performance as worker, mother, and manager that shapes her story.

Sycorax’s story offers a framework for a latent oppositional consciousness. She is embedded in colonial and post-colonial discourse, but not discussed. Her story means that colonialism and development do not only belong to those who are most visible and speak loudest, but those who are engaged. Recovering her story is only the ‘beginning;’ to enlarge and go beyond colonial and imperial structures, the stories of others like her must also be redeemed. Recovering Sycorax in a context of popular resistance is not just recovering her for the academy, but it means that public intellectuals, writers, artists, and others committed to social change must work with this information. Ultimately, it

requires cultural community workers forging links between theory and cultural expression as their praxis.

For me, recognizing Sycorax and her relationship to this paradigm of colonialism, resistance, and emancipation is critical to constructing new understandings of a Caribbean personality valuing women's contributions and recognizing their embedded investment in Caribbean regionalism. Sycorax, like all enslaved African women, was brought to the island against her will; she was pregnant, then abandoned, perhaps with only Ariel as slave/servant/helpmate.³¹⁰ She "litters" (births) Caliban on the island, mixing womb and blood with earth. The land ingests her placenta, creating a connection that is impossible to sever. Caliban's birth signals that Sycorax has birthed a nation and a discourse. From this beginning, Sycorax has to find a way where ostensibly there is no way. She has to make life and meaning. Her life begins, we must imagine, with work (in a new space).

"Intersection" and "contradiction" are "essential" terms in Caribbean gender analysis and have served to define the terrain. According to the editors of Engendering History, Caribbean gender studies must explore relations between the sexes to "influence the transformation of societal structures and male-female relationships in all spheres and activity within the region."³¹¹ This desire for transformation speaks to the latent oppositional discourse. On the one hand, masses of Caribbean women do not identify with the word "feminist," "but in all ways of female empowerment, [they] do grassroots politics on a daily basis."³¹² This disassociation with the term has meant considering feminist praxis in the context of women's daily lives and not necessarily as a formal political movement. Reclaiming Sycorax's story offers a way to reclaim women's

actions and lived experiences with a theoretical apparatus for making the link clear.

Sycorax's experience, like theirs, has been disassociated from our readings of her and our readings of colonial discourse.

Three examples include Patricia Powell's The Pagoda, Edward Kamau Brathwaite's poems "Tom" and "All God's Chillun'," and André Schwarz-Bart's A Woman Named Solitude.³¹³ Powell's novel is Lowe's story, a Chinese woman masquerading as a man to enjoy the fruits of her labor in nineteenth century Jamaica. This story not only foregrounds a Chinese experience in the Caribbean, but also the experience of sexual minorities and others who have had to don disguises (race, class, and here gender performance) to exercise power and to survive. Brathwaite's poems in the first part of The Arrivants trilogy, reconfigure the stereotypical figure of the Uncle Tom. Both poems render Tom independent of the white community. He is neither shuffling, coddling, nor performing for massa; rather he is remembering his-story, his former glory and his new timidity: "And I/timid Tom/father/founder/flounderer/speak/their shame/their lack of power."³¹⁴ Tom becomes a complex person. These interior moments give readers another perspective on Tom and "Tom-ing." Tom is angry in "All God's Chillun.'" He curses his ungrateful children, laments for their future since he is the recipient of their misdirected anger rather than the [white] power structure. They have no coping strategies, no memory, and have to contend with internalized hate as well as external racism which will have them "teeth their own/gravestones, /pinched/by fever/lynched/by the balls."³¹⁵ Brathwaite's poems are important not only because they reconnect the experience with the reading but for their intrinsic performability. The structure and language of the poems compel orality and performance, which is a critical

part of disseminating these ideas and various ways of seeing—having texts, which lend themselves to that type of transferability and portability. Finally, André Schwarz Bart’s construction of Solitude, Guadeloupean freedom fighter, complicates the unrelenting black superwoman stereotype. (As an aside, it is important to remember why there is a desire to harken back and forward to the most heroic depictions of black people: the continued overt and covert expressions of oppression and extermination.) Though his novel sometimes veers into the territory of another stereotype—the distressed and tragic mulatto—his re-imagining and re/presentation of Solitude as a woman damaged at every turn by slavery, dehumanized, and mentally unstable, is compelling. Solitude’s story begins in Africa with Bayangumay, her mother, who will abandon her by becoming a maroon in the hills of Guadeloupe. Solitude’s moments of strength are conditional and contextual. She fights as she flees; she is constantly moving from one unstable space to the next. In the end, Solitude names her life and claims her space, which leads to her death. Nonetheless, her desire to “own” herself and make a space for herself places her within the Sycorax trajectory.

Similarly, disassociation occurs when women, not reading themselves and their experiences, lose vital political awareness. According to Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, “the history of Caribbean feminism...is a long and contradictory one with autochthonous roots that reveal the conflicting realities of Caribbean women.”³¹⁶ Despite these naming and practical contradictions, Caribbean feminism, both scholarly and otherwise, seeks “to produce alternative histories”³¹⁷ and reconstruct knowledge by retrieving experience.³¹⁸ In retrieving Sycorax’s experience, we return to the latent potentialities of this discourse by providing a model of how literature and history can come together to mitigate gender

stereotypes and colonial and patriarchal silencing. The primary function of this harvesting is to reclaim women's stories to enlarge and understand their roles in the family and to their communities. It is hoped that this complex vision of the past will allow men and women to look more critically at their current positions and break rigid public/private dichotomies.³¹⁹ This process of recognition, especially in so canonical a text, makes possible historical and literary emancipation. It also makes it possible to forge regional links in terms of the historical experience of enslaved females on plantations—which is critical to redefining the region economically, politically, socially, and culturally.

Plantation experiences are not confined to pre-emancipation, and, as Antonio Benítez-Rojo claims, are a clear component of Caribbean identity formation,³²⁰ which, given the dependent nature of Caribbean economies, persist today. According to the Human Development Index compiled by United Nations Development Program in 2002, the earned estimated income for women and men, in independent Caribbean nations differed drastically. In Barbados, women earned an average of \$11,634 dollars, while their male counterparts received \$19,116 dollars. In the Bahamas the difference between male and female earners was \$7,325 dollars, with men, of course, earning the higher wages. In Trinidad, the gap was \$7,179 and \$6,203 in the Dominican Republic, with the most equitable discrepancy being amongst Haiti's population with a gap of \$919 dollars between men and women.³²¹ In education, there is a reversal in Grenada and Haiti. They are the only two countries where women were not the majority of enrollments. In these nations, men had an enrollment average in primary, secondary, and tertiary education of 73 percent to women's 57 percent in Grenada and male 53 to female 51 percent in Haiti. Guyana boasts a tie, with both men and women enrolled at 75 percent of the population;

while most other countries exhibit a male-female gap, with women ahead by only one percentage point in Belize (22:21) and Costa Rica (70:69) or as many as 26 percentage points in St. Kitts and Nevis (111:85).³²² This illustrates that though men may be lagging behind in schooling, they continue to earn more than women in every country that had available data.

Sycorax, as Shakespeare embodies her, politicizes the text for black women, and for working women and men, who have not had to consider her presence. In understanding her experience, they reevaluate their own presence (to the discourse), a political act. While academics are in the business of re-evaluation, a primary question of this project is how to encourage re-evaluation on the part of the larger community. One strategy, discussed in chapter four, is the use of theatre workshops and evaluative approaches that make sharing the research details and evaluation techniques more feasible.

Using Sycorax as a model for these strategies, we also interrupt the binary of public and private. As was true for enslaved women, who were part of the public but not the political sphere, Sycorax has been mentioned, alluded to, and recognized as Caliban's mother, but not regarded as a political agent. The imperial codes for ideal man and womanhood have meant that a silent Sycorax is an ideal Sycorax. She is a person unworthy of consideration; she won't muck up men's business in terms of the economy or national development. But to acknowledge her intrusion in the imperial paradigm is to realize that Caliban has a history. A politicized Sycorax challenges not only Prospero but also Caliban, who is a popular figure by virtue of the valuable theoretical work of [male] Caribbean and Latin American writers and intellectuals. In identifying with Sycorax,

Caliban embraces master/mistress narratives and universalizing tendencies in their tracks. Christine Barrow makes it clear that Caribbean people cannot forget the plantation machine in their assessment of Caribbean gender systems. She points to five specific characteristics:

(1) there was no pre-capital model in the Caribbean, it has always been a site of pure capitalism—the plantation; (2) slavery was gender-blind; (3) female-headed households are not new to the region, they begin with slavery and are reinforced with male economic migration in the early 1900s; (4) penetration of Eurocentric ideologies such as domestication, which was promoted by the church, school and law; and (5) the impact of Eurocentric value complexes of respectability and domestication on gender equality after slavery.³²³

Another point of contention for Caribbean feminists is, as Paravisini-Gebert points out, “woman as maverick...the rugged individual.”³²⁴ This “fully emancipated [heroine born] out of the mire of patriarchal culture”³²⁵ becomes a central feature of white U.S. feminist theory. She notes,

that heroism, especially female heroism, has been sought in the subsuming of individual aspirations and desires into the struggle for the betterment of the community, and where women have followed a tradition, in history as in literature, of grassroots activism, courageous resistance, and at times, even martyrdom.³²⁶

I draw attention to Barrow and Paravisini-Gebert’s concerns because throughout my reading, when Caribbean women have been responding to external feminisms, coded as U.S., it is often white women’s universalizing to which they refer. This is NOT to say that African-American women may not be guilty of the same eliding, nor is it to minimize the first world privilege that they have. Still, we must acknowledge when critiquing external feminist constructions that black feminist theory has, at its base, the

same concerns arising from their historical experience as New World capital in the plantation economy. This is important to note, especially since feminism can be coded as a hegemonic U.S. or Western discourse creating ideals and stereotypes itself.

Current gender discourse has moved from binary constructions of masculinity and femininity to gender continuums. Throughout the Americas, gender discourse has been characterized by patriarchal norms, “the overarching [and often, overbearing] rule of the father.”³²⁷ However, Patricia Mohammed and others argue that this “classic” [read white] feminist understanding has changed and must be characterized differently. For her, examining gender systems, which are defined as

rules governing the social, sexual and reproductive behavior of both sexes... Components of the system include socially assigned roles, cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity, sexual division of labor, rules regarding marriage and kinship (monogamy, polygyny), social significance of women’s identification within the family and women’s position relative to men within political and economic life,³²⁸

means constructing analysis around gender systems. This requires exploring how these systems operate, and examining the apparatus of negotiation inherent in most systems. Mohammed cautions that this process of negotiation is not a “rational” or fixed act, rather it is “ongoing [and] built on compromise and accommodation.”³²⁹ Negotiation takes place at the personal or “individual level of the workplace or the home and also at the cultural, public/collective level—the level of debate.”³³⁰ Gender negotiation is an inherent but often unacknowledged part of the public sphere.

Barrow begins her discussion of work and space with the idea of “the male public domain or symbolic order,”³³¹ reflecting the idea that “work” has always been part of the public space. In tandem with the cult of true womanhood, domestic work, coded as a

natural extension of women's breathing, is not characterized as work. Work has been defined as wage labor, which takes place outside of the home. Thus, in order to get a better sense of women's contributions, it has been necessary to redefine work and retrieve women's work experiences. The Women in the Caribbean Project (WICP)³³² "concept of 'work' includes not only wage labor but also survival strategies, [thus taking work beyond] only those activities which have monetary exchange value."³³³ Along with the WICP's definition, Caribbean women themselves

considered work to be anything which is functionally necessary to maintain themselves and their households. Women's perception of work includes the caring and rearing of children, household chores and related activities. Like a job, these activities consume time and energy. The only difference perceived is that women gain monetary rewards for jobs while they do not do so for housework. The WICP concluded that Caribbean women's all-embracing perception of work implies that 'except for leisure, all activities which contribute to human welfare is work and not merely those which are linked to a particular form of economic accounting'. In effect, 'women hold a broadly based perception of work which implies that most women, are, in fact, workers'.³³⁴

This broad definition of work indicates that Caribbean women's sphere of influence has never just been the domestic output in her home, but also includes her labor in other women's homes and in the fields. This reality of women's lives has meant her unpaid labor in the home is not valued, and her underpaid wage labor outside of her home places her beyond the ideals of the good woman. These women were, in Lucille Mathurin Mair's words, equal under the whip:

Slavery, in many essentials made men and women roughly equal in the eyes of the master. Legally they had identical status as chattels, as objects which could be owned. They were seen, not so much as men and women, but as units of labor. Their jobs on the plantation were distributed not according to sex, but according

to age and health. In theory men were supposed to do the back breaking tasks of the field and the factory; in fact, as long as women were young and fit, they were recruited into the same work force as men, and shared more or less the same labor. [And] when slaves caused offence, men and women alike received the same punishment in accordance with West Indian slave laws.³³⁵

Given these realities, the fact that Caribbean and African women throughout the Americas have participated in the male symbolic order through work means gender fact and fantasy have to be recontextualized. As people equal under the whip but voiceless in political participation, enslaved women occupied multilevel positions. Their body became a site of literal and symbolic contestation. They were “owned” by someone else, but found ways to reclaim their bodies for themselves.

This act of reclamation is not only found in the texts under analysis, but in the lives of the writers, themselves. To begin with, Grace Nichols in speaking about her I Is A Long Memored Woman and Sunris collections invokes the mother spirit and imagery. She talks about women calling on their mothers for strength, invoking their mother’s smiles and all their wiles in order to survive. Nichols has summoned her mother in her work, especially her collection of poems, Sunris. The very title invokes her mother’s name—Iris. Similarly, Lorna Goodison, especially in her poetry, calls on mother figures. Her collection, I Am Becoming My Mother, is dedicated to “the big women of Harvey River-- Dorice (her mother), Ann, Rose, Barbara, Betty, Joan, Anya and in memory of Jo, Nanie and Joyce Bending.” Goodison has several poems and the collection, I Am Becoming My Mother, dedicated to the strength and complexities of her own mother, mothering in general, and mother as a trope. Lucie Julia is the pseudonym for the first Guadelupean, man or woman, recruited by the Department of Health. Julia comes from a family of small farmers and she does not ascribe to what she describes as “unreasoned

feminism.” In her quest to educate women about gender “inequalities and exploitation,” she ran for and was elected president of the Union of Guadeloupean Women in 1958. In this position, she realized that some “militancy” in terms of women’s rights “may be appropriate.”³³⁶ Julia is a bilingual, writing in both Creole and French.³³⁷ Surinamese Eugenie Eersel is relatively unknown, but like Julia holds a post in the government. She is a counselor at the Surinamese embassy in Guyana though she is trained as an anthropologist. Though Eersel is not widely known, her poem, “The Plantation,” overtly links the history of slavery with contemporary Suriname and is a theme that is critical to examining notions of power and race. Meiling Jin, born in Guyana but living between England and Canada, is a playwright, filmmaker, and poet in addition to her work as a short story writer.

These writers, at various times, articulate their commitment to retrieving women’s lives through storytelling. This stated agenda manifests to varying degrees of success,³³⁸ but from the inception, it is their desire to give voice and life to women’s experiences across a range of languages that makes them important here. In terms of the Sycorax Model, their “latent language” is also form and the use of women’s experiences in various storytelling forms. Grace Nichols characterizes herself as a Caribbean writer whose philosophy of “difference, diversity and unpredictability” comes “from that particular part of the world.”³³⁹ The Caribbean “has poverty and backwardness, but just thinking about all the different cross-influences and mixtures—Amerindian, African, Asian, European—gets me high.” Along with Lorna Goodison, who sees her role as an artist—poet, painter, and short-story writer—as dealing with devastation and healing, Meiling Jin’s plays, poetry, and fiction continue the work of giving image and voice to a

multiplicity of Caribbean experiences. To reiterate, the writers chosen in this section are exclusively women, though men such as Robert Antonio, Earl Lovelace, and Edward Kamau Brathwaite among others, have drawn complicated female characters. I chose women authors of short stories and poetry as vehicles for both reclaiming Sycorax and her story, the subject of this chapter, and for foregrounding through the true fictions of women's lived experiences rather than those born of some [assumed] biological imperative. These voices are particularly salient given that Sycorax's experiences, language, and voice have been largely excluded from wider debate. Second, the genres of short stories and poetry provide accessible points of entry, which besides being portable, able to move between the cracks and across borders, and translatable to performance mediums that have the possibility of reaching larger audiences of women—via the stage, screen, and radio waves.

Grace Nichols' poem "Ala" speaks to these issues of work, space and reclamation. "Ala" is the story of Uzo, an enslaved woman who refuses to "create" another laborer, perhaps another Caliban, for the plantation system. Uzo is "the rebel woman/who with a pin/stick the soft mould/ of her own child's head/sending the little-new-born/soul winging its way back/to Africa—free."³⁴⁰ Ala is the Dahomean earth deity that the women call on to reclaim Uzo's soul because her body will remain in the Caribbean. For her crime of infanticide, Uzo is held "face up/...her naked body/to the ground/arms and legs spread-eagle/each tie with rope to stake/then they coat her in sweet/molasses and call us out/to see."³⁴¹ Here, as Nichols explains in the I is a long Memoried Woman video, the commodity that Uzo produced, molasses, is used to coat her body to allow the "red and pitiless ants" to pick away her flesh.³⁴² Her body is

tortured both by what she produced (molasses) and by what she refused to produce (a child).

Uzo, like Sycorax, is a rebel and a mother. She rebels against the power structure by refusing her condition as breeder-mother. Rejecting her breeder status puts Uzo in direct conflict with the power system. Her punishment is not banishment or exile, but torture and physical death. She is an example used to threaten other rebellious women. Similarly Sycorax is Prospero's example with which he repeatedly threatens Ariel. While Uzo doesn't leave a child to mark, she does mark the landscape and the other "rebel women." Her defiance buoys other women and her tortured molasses-coated body being feasted upon by ants marks the land. Sycorax's experience is marked by psychological violence—exile by Algerian society and imprisonment by Prospero. The violence of Uzo's experience is psychological and physical. The psychological violence of enslavement leads to Uzo's physical acts against the system, her body and her child. Uzo's violence is prismatic, at times heroic or pathetic. Her actions cannot be read in a one-dimensional way.

This poem exemplifies several intersections: first, retrieving women's experiences which demonstrate female networks and rebellion and coping strategies; second, the body as a site of work and torture, not just discourse;³⁴³ and third, art and consciousness. The realities of enslaved women's experiences are reflected in this poem with the convergence of motherhood, work, and a female support network. Uzo's desire not to create another slave is understood by this community of enslaved women. They witness her further degradation and torture by the slave system and "sing, weep, work" and pray for her. However, in "good mumma" discourse, Uzo is a failure. Her child, any

possibility for the future, is destroyed. Uzo is completely outside the space of domestication. She is a savage. Her transgression and punishment take place under the blinding sun, literally outside the house. In terms of art and discourse, “Ala” is a piece on mothers—Uzo as a mother, other rebel women as mothers, and Ala as a mother/earth deity. The women call on a goddess from the motherland and woman’s body is metaphor of land. Nichols’ creation of this historical (enslaved) mother remembers the past and relates to women today, illustrating that choosing motherhood for African descendent women in the Americas has not been and is not a simple choice. Motherhood in the context of plantation and globalized economies always falls outside the simplistic idea of nurturer-mother.³⁴⁴ Uzo is tied to the Caribbean landscape, her remains, like Sycorax, will be put to rest in this space.

The body in this context is functioning as a site of contending forces: one of subversion and rebellion for Uzo, and one of reclamation and empowerment for Nichols. As Denise deCaires Narain notes, “post-colonial writers have used literary texts to catalogue the violence done to the black body under colonial regimes and to celebrate the power of the black body to survive such violence.”³⁴⁵ Uzo’s body, like most black female bodies, is simultaneously de-gendered and re-gendered; the plantation profit system puts her body outside of the domestic sphere. Yet, her body is reinserted into the domestic sphere for childbearing. This reinsertion is doubled since reproduction is for profit. The enslaved woman’s reproduction, then, traversed the public and private divide. In this instance, the gendering and racializing of the black body is tied to the disruption of the public and private space. This relates to the unstable gender ground that the enslaved woman occupied.

Finally, in terms of art and consciousness, “Ala” offers two possibilities: its reclamation of Sycorax’s latency and the possibility of taking it beyond the academy. First, as an embodiment of Sycorax’s latent consciousness, the women return to a spiritual and intangible antecedent, Ala. Like Sycorax, they had to call on pre-Columbian spirits and ways of knowing and coping. Second, this poem and the larger collection from which it springs, are portable and accessible. The poem, easily performed in most venues, can generate discussion through recognition and connection through the Forum Theatre method. This theatre, developed by Brazilian Augusto Boal in Peru as part of literacy program,³⁴⁶ highlights audience participation in creating the text, “and [gives] spectators themselves opportunity to discover their own solutions to their collective problems.”³⁴⁷ This could be a strategy here or with questions after performance of the text. The film, I Is A Long Memored Woman includes an expressive depiction of this poem, which can also be used to bring people to the poem and finally, it can be performed. It is short with evocative language that speaks to women whether they are mothers or not. They are daughters and workers and can connect to the poem through those gateways.

Similarly, the black bodies at work and rest in Eugenie Eersel’s poem “The Plantation,” expose the violence of that institution while juxtaposing it with the relative contemporary comfort of a Sunday drive in Suriname. The poem’s protagonist is a young woman who remembers the stories her mother told her of enslavement under the Dutch system. During the “Sunday-family-rides” with her family, which indicates the middle class comfort and leisure she enjoys, her mother acts as an historical tour guide of the land they whiz past. A scream links past and present, as the speaker is haunted by the

sounds of the past which come to her through her mother's telling the sacrifice story of "the most beautiful young Negress/as offer to the God of Profit." The mother would relate this story of torture "when [they] passed a sugar plantation/ in equatorial Suriname." The family clearly no longer works the land, if they ever did, and has the middle class comfort to take a drive on Sundays. History is carried, though ostensibly removed from them, in several bodies—the mother's, the daughter's and the sacrificed Negress. The daughter, a listener and speaker, is in communion with the past via the scream of the young Negress, which leads to her own screams. The haunting of the past becomes tangible when she passes the plantation and the cane crushers, which were christened with the breaking of the black woman's body--"in this place they still use/the same cane crushers/as in slavery days/mama said/the Dutch would mark/she said/the installation of a new machine by picking out and crushing/the most beautiful young Negress/ as offer to the God of Profit." In this poem, the female body is disposable—literally broken as ritual, an offering—an enactment of sacrifice. The broken woman did not make a choice, but was used in the tradition of virgin sacrifices—an appeasement to monetary gods. However, the poem also links historical and contemporary black bodies. The contemporary black women, the mother and daughter, experience the violence of the plantation in psychological rather than physical ways—both of them "daughters" of this history. As the daughter is traumatized by the story of the breaking of a black woman, the mother uses the trauma of the past to shape the present. Her story makes sure that the sacrificed Negress will not be forgotten. Erasing the trace of the Negress, like that of the Amerindians, from the landscape is impossible because her presence, like theirs is intertwined with machinery—physical economical and political—still in use.

Eersel's plantation uses the "embodied" landscape and the reclamation of voice noted in the Sycorax Model. There is no escaping the historical and contemporary function of the land. Even though Surinamese people are no longer enslaved, as a matter of fact--enslavement for them ended on July 1, 1863--they, like all Caribbean people, live with the ramifications of the plantation. Eersel illustrates how issues of work and leisure are still impacted by slavery. The tools of the plantation economy—the cane crushers—are the same ones from enslavement—a reference illustrating that though some people are no longer enslaved, the "technology" of the plantation is still in place. Thus, work conditions, despite the trappings of modern machinery—cars and leisure time produced from labor-saving devices and activities (such as Sunday drives)—are still built on the economy spawned from the plantation. As the narrator began the poem "what's haunting me is not a shadow..." in fact, she later says it is a story, one that is ongoing and physical. This generates a sense of historical claustrophobia that is a significant part of the haunting. The mother's story of the crushed Negress telescopes history into the present. It is she who codes Dutch behavior by making the link between the crushed Negress, the land, the machine, and the God of Profit. "The Plantation" connects the spaces of work and leisure with the breaking of the black, specifically female body, demonstrating that though slavery has "ended" for the large majority of Caribbean people, black bodies will be broken in the name of profit.³⁴⁸

The poem, published in New York 1978, three years after Surinamese independence and two years before a military coup,³⁴⁹ manages to graphically link the colonial enterprise with globalization. This linkage reiterates that colonialism is not over, but renamed. It is interesting to note, given the time the poem was written, that Eersel

focuses on an Afro-Creole and a class sensibility but not the antagonisms between the Afro-Creole community with the Maroon or Asian communities.³⁵⁰ The absence of other communities and the valorization of the Afro-Creole community, while not Eersel's project, raises issues of race, ethnicity, and identity that will not abate, and that are possibly connected to Eersel's stay in the U.S., where she characterized herself first as "Black woman: resident of the United States, citizen of the Netherlands,...born in tropical Surinam[e]...Note that I'm somewhat of a foreigner in all my three countries."³⁵¹ This choice is striking given the historical moment in which Eersel writes. The poem was published at a time when an overwhelming number of the Surinamese Asian population emigrated to the Netherlands, "resent[ing] independence, [and] seeing it as a Creole-inspired movement that was worked out with the Dutch, without proper consent of the East Asian and Javanese populations."³⁵² In this climate, Eersel's choice to focus on the damage of the plantation economy on one group—Afro-Creoles is an indication of whose stories mold national and regional identity. Eersel's perhaps unacknowledged tension between valorizing a degraded and contentious Afro-Creole past and connecting that plantation history to other communities is a significant challenge for regional Caribbean nation building. However, as Eersel, writing in 1999, states,

With the budding awareness of cultural identity after the Second World War and a form of partial independence in Suriname, a higher spiritual awareness among all ethnic groups in Suriname started to manifest itself. Our cultural assertiveness has not always manifested itself in a peaceful manner, but it managed to capture everybody's attention...We citizens of Suriname started to learn to know and appreciate each other more, maybe each through our greater cultural assertiveness.³⁵³

In an article written for Caricom Perspective and from her position as an employee of the Surinamese government abroad, Eersel puts a tempered spin on race and ethnic relations. Yet it is her comment on cultural assertiveness that is most striking. For her, there is a need to reclaim and acknowledge every ethnic experience individually before integration and to avoid shallow forms of mixing and amalgamation. This balancing act of inclusion is really about the construction of citizenship and whose or which experiences shape a nation, indicating that citizenship is itself a performance. To underscore this notion of citizenship, Eersel returns to an Amerindian past. She suggests that “the essence” of Suriname “is spiritual” and connected to “an Amerindian spirit guide, who will never leave us no matter what our ethnic origin may be.”³⁵⁴

The reaching back for an Amerindian spirit guide threaded with the creolized Winti forms is Eersel’s Sycorax. Eersel posits that Suriname, and I would say by extension the Caribbean, is “merging in a metaphysical sense.”³⁵⁵ Astrid Roemer further contextualizes this idea explicating the practices that arise from Winti, “which literally means wind and metaphysically it means breath or life force, is a religion focus[ed] on the belief in personified supernatural beings that can both possess and disconnect an individual’s consciousness. In doing so, these beings can disclose the past, the present, and the future.”³⁵⁶ Gloria Wekker, in her article, “One Finger Does Not Drink Okra Soup: Afro-Surinamese Women and Critical Agency,” characterizes Winti in relation to women’s agency and their deployments of various manifestations of “the self.”³⁵⁷ Winti, the least adulterated African American cosmological system is also an epistemological one, which “transmits knowledge from spirits to human beings and is not conceptualized as external, transcendental beings or entities, but as integral parts of the self.”³⁵⁸ One

manifestation of the Winti self is through same-sex relationships, characterized as *mati* work, which is

the mutual obligations between two female partners in nurturing, social, sexual, and economic spheres. [These relationships do not preclude relationships and are not characterized as bi-sexual.] *Mati* work is not conceived as an innate identity, as is often the case in the Western universe, but rather is seen as engagement in a pleasant activity, instigated by one particular instance of the “I.” Thus, female *mati* claim no true, inherent “bisexual” self, but see themselves as carried by a strong male *winti*, Apuku, who cannot bear to see his “child,” the woman, engaged in a long-term relationship with a flesh-and-blood male.³⁵⁹

Mati work, Wekker argues, not only indicates the multi-faceted ways Afro-Surinamese women arrange versions of themselves, but also indicates that there is ultimately no inconsistency between these seemingly contradictory selves.

Black women have always worked in the Americas and thus, have always been outside the cult of true womanhood. Sycorax, outside of Miranda’s beauty and with a power that rivals Prospero’s, is, though absent, an affront to the former Duke of Milan and his articulation of the norms of the world. With emancipation, the white and free colored population, along with newly freed slaves and newly indentured Indians, subscribed to domestication of women; trying to transcend the boundaries of the slave system meant adopting the Eurocentric values that were part of the plantation system. Social mobility in the post slavery period meant the representation of black women in the “good mumma” mold, rather than the actuality. Although “female slaves...reverted to a subordinate position within the black family after they were freed,” it is argued that this “position was aspired to but unattainable under enslavement.”³⁶⁰ Beyond slavery, middle class co-option and upward mobility meant embracing the tenets of the cult of

domestication. It is at this moment that gender negotiations shift again and the obvious disruption of the male symbolic space by African and Indian's women field labor is "covered up."³⁶¹ Indian women also idealize and internalize the domestic space while performing all manner of work. Mrs. Drobotie Naipaul, mother of Shiva and V.S., expresses this sentiment, "You see a woman has a place in this world and when she abuse that place, she has lost the thing they call womanhood because she is no more that woman."³⁶²

Meiling Jin's "Victoria," named in honor of the ruling British monarch, highlights a character that complicates the Sycorax Model by introducing another aspect of race, since she is the first protagonist, in this chapter, not of African descent. While the majority of Asians in the Caribbean come from India, there are notable communities of Chinese descent in Guyana, Trinidad, Jamaica, Suriname (both Chinese and Javanese), and Cuba. In fact, Guyana at its peak had only ten thousand Chinese indentured workers,³⁶³ while Cuba had more than 100,000.³⁶⁴ Nonetheless, Victoria's tale allows us to explore issues of work, power, and resistance in another ethnic group. Since the Sycorax Model seeks to integrate women's experience into the regional project, this clearly means considering a variety of women's experiences.

This coming-of-age tale demonstrates a less overt expression of relational power. Victoria is a Chinese-Guyanese woman in the early twentieth century and she struggles against family, friends, and the prevailing notions of the time. Victoria moves between Berbice and Georgetown, a distance of more than a hundred miles, and by the end of the story relocates to Trinidad. From the beginning Victoria is described as a rebel who comes from a line of risk takers including a maternal grandfather, Ho, who left China and

then fled Lainsi, the man to whom he was indentured, for greener pastures. Victoria “was no easy child. Right from the start she would cry for her own way and later she did often fight with her brother, Eddie, bullying him into parting with his prize possessions: his fishing stick, catapult, and even his shoes one time.”³⁶⁵

Fighting against the sexual advances of her sister, Alice’s husband, Mr. Chin, Victoria leaves Georgetown and returns to her father’s grocery store across from the punt-trench, “used to transport harvested cane from field to factory,”³⁶⁶ in Berbice. Forced to do so by falling sugar prices and global economic upheaval, Victoria and Wong, her father, return to Georgetown to live with her brother David, a baker, and his wife, Esther.

This time in Georgetown Victoria befriends Nettie, another Chinese girl. They become fast friends, but when Victoria declines marriage to David Fong and proposes that she and Nettie make their fortune in Trinidad, things change. Nettie refuses and instead accepts Victoria’s old suitor, opting for Georgetown and domestic bliss. Victoria, on the other hand, “marveled at how different they were, yet how quickly they had become friends.”³⁶⁷ Victoria realizes that, “Nettie had chosen just like she had chosen, and who was to say who was right?” Textually, it is Victoria’s choice that is validated with the last word as she takes a “ship for Trinidad”³⁶⁸ in 1934.

Meiling Jin concretizes a series of expectations as played out by Alice and Nettie against Victoria (and her masculine relatives, particularly Ho, her grandfather and Wong, her father). Like Sycorax, Victoria does not conform to the standards around her. She negotiates a complex space between her desires and social categorizations of women as wife, mother, and social and sexual objects. In Guyana in the late nineteenth century,

Chinese women were only “seventeen percent of the immigrant population,”³⁶⁹ and these numbers dwindled in the twentieth century. Brian L. Moore notes that those workers who were able to form Chinese families recreated value systems brought from their home and “ideas of male dominance were reinforced in the plantation environment, result[ing] in occasional wife beating.”³⁷⁰ In Jamaica, though Chinese immigration followed a different trajectory with most coming “between 1900 and 1940”,³⁷¹ there was still an expectation that “Chinese women would play a secondary role [which was] not significantly different from that of [other] middle-class counterparts in other ethnic groups.”³⁷²

However, in most places the process of creolization, defined by the editors of Caribbean Creolization “as a syncretic process of transverse dynamics that endlessly reworks and transforms the cultural patterns of varied social and historical experiences and identities,”³⁷³ took hold quickly because the populations were small, scattered, and overwhelmingly male. For the second generation, adoption of western norms in dress and through education was the marker of creolization.³⁷⁴ This did not come without some pain, for as noted by Dr. James S. Donald in 1871 Berbice: “Among the Chinese inmates I have been struck with the frequency of epilepsy and epileptic mania, and have been equally puzzled to account for it. It is particularly more noticeable in females.”³⁷⁵ While Trev Sue-A-Quan rightfully points out the skewed nature of the doctor’s analysis,³⁷⁶ it is a startling fact, nonetheless. In Guyana, the adoption of Christianity was not a large part of the creolization process because many immigrants “were either already Christians or had been exposed to Christian proselytization before they [arrived].”³⁷⁷ In the early twentieth century, Guyanese citizens of Chinese descent were intermarrying

with Creole (black) women, “who began to consider Chinese men desirable ‘marriage’ partners particularly when they set up lucrative retail shops in Creole urban neighborhoods and villages.”³⁷⁸ In fact, Moore concludes that, “the result of such miscegenation was that by the mid-twentieth century, 80 percent of the local-born (*t’usheng*) scarcely looked Chinese.”³⁷⁹ Declining birth rates reveal that the Chinese births were only twenty-five percent of Indian births, “statistics for births in 1877 [reveal that] Indian immigrants were having 21.61 births per 1,000 but the Chinese population saw only 5.80 births per 1,000.”³⁸⁰ Thus Chineseness, which had once manifested through clans, secret societies, and gangs, was in decline at the turn of the century.³⁸¹ Victoria’s world was a bit rarified with a Chinese community significant enough to find marriage partners in Guyana of the 1920s and 1930s.

Ultimately, after her father’s death, Victoria defies expectations and goes to Trinidad for personal gratification and economic benefit. For her historical counterparts, Trinidad offered economic opportunities to Chinese workers. Trev Sue-A-Quan surmises that because “there was not an established ethnic group which dominated the middle economy...like the Portuguese in Guyana...the opportunities for getting ahead as shopkeepers and merchants were better over there.”³⁸² Victoria rejects both the narratives of the time inherited from China and those fostered in colonial Guyana about a woman’s place and those of her namesake, the breeder-queen, Victoria.³⁸³ In the end, “Victoria” is a story of self-determination and freedom. Like Sycorax, she is not afraid to start a new life, based on work, in a new space, Trinidad. Victoria, unlike the descendents of black Sycorax, has a different racial relationship to society though the gendered one is very similar to that of black and Indian women.

Because the Chinese community in Guyana was small and diffuse, their retentions, like those of their African Guyanese predecessors, were fused into larger ethnic communities:

In British Guiana the Chinese adopted many aspects of European culture and organized their relationships with members of the general population (and with each other as well) based on socioeconomic level. On the other hand, the Chinese in Jamaica not only maintained their cultural distinctiveness but emphasized it through the establishment of exclusive Chinese trade associations, schools, newspapers and the like....This corporate display of ethnicity lasted until the middle of the twentieth century when nationalist sentiment in Jamaica became very strong and the Chinese were forced to abandon much of their ethnic identity and to accept West Indian “creole” cultural symbols.³⁸⁴

As the Africans in Guyana merged their traditions into an Afro-Guyanese culture, which then interacted with Amerindian and European culture and later Indian culture, so too did the Chinese. Written in a conversational Guyanese Creole, Jin’s characters embrace the language of this new space. Chinese creolization manifested in their acceptance of British religion and language. It is through the local Guyanese Creole that Victoria constructs herself and world. This Creole, born of opposition to the master’s language, as well as fusions of African languages and often derided, is the language of people—the nation. EK Brathwaite defines nation language as a language not so much of “lexical features, which resemble English...but as rhythm, timbre and sound explosion.”³⁸⁵ This language rooted in the experience of living in the Guyanese and Caribbean space, Caliban’s utterance, is a gateway to Sycorax’s latent oppositional consciousness.

My initial conception of space was of land, a tangible territory, not an intangible, socially constructed sphere. Issues of work and space have also meant looking at the Caribbean as a space roughly situated between North and South America. This space has

a history of exploitative and dependent work patterns with Europe and North America. The Caribbean, as we know it, has always been a site of work and workers who, most often, toiled in the service of foreign interests. This statement is not as totalizing as it sounds. Individuals have worked their plots of land and small farms; nonetheless, the general pattern of development within the region has been work for export.

Contemporary work, whether shipped abroad or consumed in the region, is still geared for an outside clientele (such as tourism). In the space of the Caribbean proper, people—women—continue to work in emotional (caring heart tourism)³⁸⁶ and concrete ways (domestic workers for other women in and out of the region). In this real world of work and space, the black female Caribbean body has always been part of the male symbolic order. Hilary Beckles notes that women in the Caribbean have always had a public voice but not a political voice.³⁸⁷ Emancipation and Independence relegate women, though still working, to visible but not politically powerful majority.³⁸⁸ With emancipation, there was an attempt to restructure that black body and labor to resemble European values; this was unsuccessful. It was in the workplace, originally the fields and big houses, that women's resistances and negotiations within the slave system took place.

Resistance always connotes power dynamics and has played a crucial role in Caribbean development manifesting in many forms throughout the region and in every sector of society. For example, “indigenous women have a tradition of resistance before European arrival in 1492. Taino women, captured by the Kalinago, resisted by holding on to their language and culture.”³⁸⁹ Additionally, indigenous women fought Europeans and greeted Columbus's second voyage “with a shower of arrows.”³⁹⁰ African resistance predates their arrival in the Americas:

[r]esistance began in West Africa and continued during the [M]iddle [P]assage. Anti-slavery mentalities, therefore, preceded the plantation. It connected African women to their creole progeny delivered on the plantations by enchained wombs, collectively, these women set their hearts and minds against slavery.³⁹¹ Other forms of resistance to the plantation system included maroonage, malingering, property destruction (of tools and including self-mutilation and infanticide) and work slow downs.³⁹² A particularly female form of resistance was “back chat.” Mathurin Mair chronicles that, “it was a notorious fact that female slaves more often deserved punishment than male[s], for they used to great effect ‘that powerful instrument of attack and defense, their tongue’”.³⁹³ Thus, resistance has characterized the Caribbean workspace from the very beginning, both in speech and in open insurrection, and it is critical that speech and voice are tools of this woman’s resistance because these are weapons that come from the body and are contained by the very instrument of women’s oppression--themselves. Retrieving all these forms of resistance has been important in the Caribbean quest for self-determination across gender largely because they illustrate non-violent, but nonetheless effective modes of resistance.

This quest has by necessity meant creating heroines and valorizing certain experiences. However, as Caribbean gender discourse, steeped in social history directives, recuperates **everyday** resistances, survivals, and coping mechanisms, the urge to chronicle rebel women experiences must be resisted, for fear of valorizing one type of resistance and leaving many others unacknowledged.³⁹⁴ Hilary Beckles distinguishes between the rebel woman and the natural rebel. He characterizes the rebel woman as a “cultural icon invested with political leadership, magical and spiritual powers, around whom the community rallies.”³⁹⁵ The natural rebel, on the other hand, is the

typical woman in the fields, who possesses no claim to distinct individuality and is therefore one of the masses. Her identity, and the level of consciousness that informs her politics, have been conceptualized and defined by...the everyday experience of her enslavement [and] represents the basis of a culture of refusal and resistance through which she claims a 'self' and an 'identity'.³⁹⁶

Beckles' desire to reclaim as many of women's everyday experiences as possible accomplishes two objectives. First, it provides contemporary women, "reglar colored girls" in Ntozake Shange's words, with "real" role models. It also challenges the tendency to deify common in reclamation work. Beckles argues that a dependence on heroines developmentally disables feminist consciousness and scholarship.³⁹⁷ Certainly any project utilizing a poetics of liberation cannot focus on nor originate from a few. The temptation to proceed from the hallowed halls of the academy, upraised sword and charge, is seductive, but ultimately fruitless and undermines democratic strategies in the long-run. Consciousness raising strategies use frameworks of exchange to avoid the top-down imposition strategies that emerge. This means that the reflective and critical action I advocate for "the masses," I must engage in myself. My liberation is intertwined with a relational, harmonizing practice, which derives strength from **all** types of role models—mundane and mythic. Though my construction of Sycorax leans toward the mythic, there are mundane qualities that buttress her heroic construction. In other words, she is both mystic and natural rebel, mythic, and mundane.

To this point, I have discussed resistance without overtly discussing power. Power and resistance are, of course, embedded in each other. At the core of any of the physical resistances I have chronicled is the psychological resistance that must exist even at the most embryonic level. The mind's ability to exist in not just a duality, but a plurality of contradictions permits women and men to resist "good woman"

domestication, while they simultaneously hold it as an ideal. These contradictions characterize women as powerful in the home but not in the public sphere.³⁹⁸ This has meant coding women's power as "cunning," relational, and "circumstantial, not apparent to wider society and [without] great impact at the level of national decision-making."³⁹⁹

In the Caribbean context, women have used their cunning, circumstantial, and relational power against the plantation and colonial apparatus, the independent state, and against each other inside and outside of class, ethnic, and race structures. These multiple identities point to the shifting that women assume for survival. Lynn Bolles puts forth several definitions of power in her article, "Working on Equality: Commonwealth Caribbean Women Trade Union Leaders." However, the one I prefer is as follows:

power can be a combination of the ability to influence others, determine others' behavior and the potential to achieve goals...three basic and overlapping sources of power (1) participation in central and essential activities of the organization; (2) participation in activities that set the future agenda; and (3) access to and control over resources.⁴⁰⁰

This definition primarily addresses women's roles in the public sphere; however, if organization is substituted for household, the definition works for both spheres. Any power that women have is in contradiction to patriarchal ideologies.⁴⁰¹ Women's power continues to be circumscribed. Women find their political voices within the boundaries of specified social units. Caribbean women may be perceived as matriarchs, but because their authority does not effectively transcend the domestic space, those who head households are among the poorest and most destitute. Therefore, the critical questions become: how do women subvert this construction and how do they translate the power and ability for negotiation not just in the public sphere—their jobs—but to the public political sphere?

Here again recuperating Sycorax's experience for discussion in the public sphere illustrates the relational and influential aspect of power. Sycorax determines Prospero's justification narrative that is born out of his illegitimate access to power.⁴⁰² She exercised enough influence in Algiers to be transported rather than executed. Once on the island, she sets the agenda vis-à-vis Ariel, Caliban, and Prospero. Women's power is portrayed as that conditioned by relationships and interactions. It is not seen as an active power, a phallic power, or as one inherently imbued as an agent of change. However, the slave's experience tempers this; when "relationality" is reassessed, it becomes a strategy of empowerment and a doorway to a rebellious I-consciousness.

There are several ways to examine this relational power: as overt, covert, and a mix of the two. Lucie Julia's "Sacrificial Flowers" captures the rebellious nature of one Guadeloupean heroine, Solitude. Like Eersel's "The Plantation," Julia's poem links a bloody past with a frustrating present. In Julia's poem the speaker calls upon Solitude and "all those women" like her. The speaker opens a history book of living and bloody memories and participates in the past. History for her is not detached facts removed from her present circumstances, "**I saw** the nakedness, the shame .../**I heard** the clanking sound of irons.../**I shivered** in my flesh.../**I felt** the pain in the eyes of SOLITUDE" (emphasis mine).⁴⁰³ She embodies the past, emphasizing with the "I's" her connection and participation with it. Her link to history is not ruptured; instead the I-emphasis physically moves her from recitation of facts to the lived experience. The protagonist's power is mental, based on the relationship she constructs between her present and a Guadeloupean past. Julia imagines a direct link between past and present. Invoking the fore-parents means their spirits will galvanize people today, "Flowers—souls of our

foremothers which must never fade/Let the stars in the sky water them with their blood/On nights of tears all through the years/So that they might spring again red across the fields.” Julia’s poem bridges the mythic Sycorax-like rebel woman Solitude with the natural rebels of the past and contemporary women, “I saw all those women, casting off servitude, /sacrificial flowers, dying, in Baimbridge.”

“Sacrificial Flowers” invokes an open, overt rebellious spirit, the spirit that led to Sycorax’s transportation. Building her poem around Solitude, the pregnant Maroon warrior woman who fought the French alongside Louis Delgrès to oppose the re-imposition of slavery, Julia takes Solitude, and others like her, from the mists of time and connects them to a concrete history and to the present. Solitude, an historical expression of Sycorax, was a *mulâtresse* born from her mother’s rape by a sailor during the Middle Passage. Her mother escaped enslavement when she was eight. And she escaped slavery as an adolescent, becoming a Maroon. “She was captured, after leading a Maroon Battalion against Napoleon’s troops and sentenced to death.”⁴⁰⁴ For her efforts she was executed just after giving birth. Julia recalls Solitude’s presence in only one line of her four stanza poem, “I felt the pain in the eyes of SOLITUDE,” instead spending much of her time on the women or natural rebel, without names and making connections between the readers, the historical every woman, or natural rebel, and the rebel woman of mythic proportions such as Solitude.

In Julia’s poem and the aforementioned texts, as women name the past they also name themselves. The women in “Ala” name that deity and in so doing name and claim their own identities. Likewise in Eersel’s poem, “The Plantation,” it is naming the Negress’s experience that calls the history of enslavement and the speaker’s into being; in

“Victoria” it is the claiming of a future on her own terms that is at stake. Astrid Roemer refers to this “I-stance” as “the life force, the feeling force, the dream force, the thinking force behind everything that flows out of me as a material product: for instance, the work that I publish.”⁴⁰⁵ History/herstory becomes critical, too, in the artistic expression of these writers—and in reclaiming stories lost in the hegemonic ruptures of [H]istory, they not only write Sycorax’s latent consciousness into being, but also appeal for such an authenticating approach to writing histories. Julia’s poem is about women’s sacrifice, like the Negress in Eersel’s poem, but sacrifice made by choice and in the name of freedom. Living with shame, pain, deprivations, whips, and bloody bodies, these women cast off servitude. Like Sycorax, they challenge the imposed order in trying to live on their own terms. The allusions to Solitude call to mind that, like the imagined Sycorax and Uzo, she was an actual rebel and mother. She, like her fictional counterparts, battled with the plantation economy (literally born into it) and the political and military apparatus that sought to maintain this economic structure. Though Solitude’s fight initially seemed to be in vain, Julia stresses that this spirit of militancy is needed today.

Lorna Goodison’s short story “Bella Makes Life” (“Bella”) comically deals with issues of space, work, migration, power, and resistance while telling the tale of Bella and Joseph (Joe Joe). The story charts Bella’s periodic return from her job(s) in New York and the impact of her absence on their family, most particularly Joe, his sense of self, manhood, and competing material desires. Bella steps out of the Norman Manley Airport looking like a checker cab complete with red oxide jherri curl, “Material Girl” gold chain and loud talk. Joe is embarrassed to see this overweight Bella, who has changed from a quiet woman he could talk to, to this. Joe reflects Bella’s change by comparing her first

letter to her last. In the letters (a device for reclaiming the female voice) Bella moves from missing Joe, reminding him to remain faithful, to her desire not to mix with disreputable Jamaicans in New York. In her last letter, she speaks of picnicking at Bear Mountain and responds to Peaches' gossip; "I go with some other friends on a picnic or so to Bear Mountain. I guess that's where Peaches says she saw me. I figure I might as well enjoy myself while I not so old yet."⁴⁰⁶ Joe is appalled. He characterizes Bella's change as mercenary, overbearing, over-the-top, and unattractive—physically and spiritually. He reflects that while Bella is becoming someone beyond his recognition he had been working hard as a taxi driver and "was working so hard to send the two children to school clean and neat, Joseph become mother and father for them, even learn to plait the little girl hair. Enjoy himself? Joseph friend them start to laugh after him because is like him done with woman."⁴⁰⁷ To Joseph, while Bella's chasing of the Yankee dollar allows them to have "a number of things they could not afford before, he missed the old Bella who he could just sit down and reason with and talk about certain little things that a one have store up in a one heart...Bella said, America teach her that if you want it, you have to go for it."⁴⁰⁸ In missing Bella emotionally, spiritually, and physically, Joe has also had to invert gender patterns to maintain his children—becoming both mother and father to them.

This story reflects the interplay between gender systems negotiation and the stereotypes of the male/female ideals at play in a contemporary Caribbean space. Joe is "feminized" as the partner left behind. He becomes the caretaker and his manhood is questioned because of his fidelity to Bella. She, on the other hand, feels the power and freedom of an independent woman. She is in the U.S. making her way, earning her keep,

and providing for her family. She is not overtly masculinized in the text, though she crosses the public/private sphere divide with a certain ease. Both Bella and Joe maneuver socially assigned roles, sexual division of labor, and marriage norms. Bella has the economic and emotional power in the relationship—she controls resources (her income), and also sets the agenda (deciding when to return to the U.S. and when to initiate sex).

Interestingly, while the story's tone is certainly more sympathetic for poor, bemused Joe, the text enables us to read Bella through Joe. Similarly, we are accustomed to reading Sycorax (if we should read her) through Shakespeare's Prospero and Caliban—that is, both an imperial and a male gaze. Thus, we read Sycorax through men and their representations of the ideal and the real. In "Bella," we will read representations of Bella, through Goodison's Joe. This story's bewilderment centers on the excesses of Bella's transformation—her loud talk, her physical corpulency, her boldness (which he doesn't mind in sexual matters), and her material fetishes such as the name brand children's clothes and their cost. In this gaze-shifting, readers recuperate both Bella's and Joe's stories, enabling us to play with the theoretical and material bargaining that goes on.

This story offers two contradictory and simultaneous depictions of ideal/real relationships. First, it treats as natural the shifting gender patterns in Bella and Joe's relationship. He "mothers" the children out of necessity—he even learned to plait hair. Joe's mothering reverses the idea that "fatherhood is limited to fertilization...and that women have mothered **and** fathered the race" (emphasis mine).⁴⁰⁹ In Bella's mind, she journeys to the U.S. out of economic necessity. She repeatedly states that she wants a better material life. Bella returns to the U.S. and Joe takes his friendship with Miss

Blossom, a neighbor, more seriously. Second, it is with Miss Blossom that Joe is allowed to be a man again, taken care of by a woman. Joe is able to enter another idealized relationship with a woman. Miss Blossom would send him food and “[h]e just wanted to enjoy eating the ‘woman food’. Somehow, food taste different, taste more nourishing when woman cook it.”⁴¹⁰ He tells her to get rid of the married man she is seeing so that they can have an exclusive friendship. However, when Joe tries to work things out with Bella during the Christmas holidays, Miss Blossom goes to Fort Lauderdale, becoming another Bella. By the end of the story, Joe thinks that he will have to find “an American woman who want[s] to live a simple life in Jamaica.”⁴¹¹ Joe’s notion of simplicity, while on the one hand a desire to have a companion, is also tied to his notions of what a woman is and how she should behave and thus, ultimately, what he is and how he should behave. Joe’s desire to have an ideal woman –one he can talk to, whose food is more nourishing and who will remain simple, speaks to the continued functioning of the “good woman” stereotypes in Caribbean life. Simultaneously, Joe is able to negotiate between gender prescribed roles for his family’s survival. He becomes a “mother” when necessary.

In this piece, Joe and Bella traverse the public and private sphere based on their economic realities and material aspirations. For both Joe and Bella, the public sphere is about work, not politics. Bella’s ability to control resources because of her participation in the public sphere has changed her. Her migration has allowed her “to make it so that you and me and the children can live a better life and stop having to box feeding outta hog mouth.”⁴¹² Meanwhile, Joe thinks, “sometimes things had been tight but they always had enough to eat and wear”⁴¹³ and he can now pursue a relationship with Miss Blossom because of Bella’s absence. Here the children are receiving two competing messages—a

woman pursuing her desires and a man looking for an ideal, “simple” home life, an inversion and subversion of domestication ideals. On various returns to Jamaica, Bella is an involved higgler, to the detriment of her relationship with Joe.

There were some other changes in Bella that did not please him so much though. Like he thought that all the things in the many suitcases were for their family. No sir! While Bella brought quite a few things for them, she had also brought a lot of things to sell and many evenings when Joe Joe come home from work just wanting a little peace and quiet, to eat his dinner, watch a little TV and go to him bed and hug up his woman, his woman (Bella) was out selling clothes and ‘things’. She would go to different office and apartment buildings and she was always talking about which big important brown girl owed her money....⁴¹⁴

Bella’s higglering, informal, itinerant saleswoman, allows her to traverse the public and private domain in the Jamaican space. She wields power over Joe and “the important brown girls who owe her money.” In this space, Bella is likened to African and enslaved “hucksters and market women [who] had more individual freedom to secretly accumulate money, gather information, and develop friendship and functional relations with potential patrons.”⁴¹⁵

Bella’s public sphere work and access to money limits her participation in the domestic sphere. In that space, Joe has the authority, especially when he demands she take the jherri curl out of their son’s hair.⁴¹⁶ However, Bella’s higglering and awareness of her power is, textually, not a political awareness. Nonetheless, Beckles and Rosemary Brana-Shute posit that higglering and the control of scarce resources empowers women.⁴¹⁷ Does “Bella” offer a vision of Caribbean feminism? Yes. In “Bella Makes Life,” Bella makes a way, thereby negotiating gender systems in public and private domains. Though Bella and Joe’s compromises are unnamed, they do exist, as they

engage with each other in conscious and unconscious ways. She lives in communities both in and outside of Jamaica, and is self-sufficient and resourceful. Bella crosses space (U.S. and Jamaican terrain) to make life. She leaves Joe and simplistic stereotypes behind. This short story allows readers to see Bella and Joe as complex articulations of power relations—gender, economic, and national. Bella, though she never claims the name, is an embodiment of Caribbean feminist praxis because she represents the everyday juggle and struggle of Caribbean people expressed through one of their languages and its humorous registers. Bella’s “making a way” emerges from her specific relations to class, race, national, and gender constructions in Jamaica and the U.S. In each space, Bella’s “cunning, circumstantial, relational” negotiations shift as she moves and interacts with various segments of the gender continuum—in and out of her home.

Caribbean women’s lives, past and present, have encompassed a complex array of influences. To fully grasp their import, Caribbean feminists are committed to recovering women’s experiences, past and present, and analyzing them to better serve the development of Caribbean communities. Similarly, retrieving Sycorax’s voice and experience from the ruptures of The Tempest, colonial, post-colonial, and nationalist discourse permits us to explore issues vital to women’s experience of the plantation, the colony, and the (in) dependent state. Examining Caribbean women’s lives has meant interrogating their experiences **in** community; a female-centered approach is a community-centered approach.

As such, issues that have been central to understanding Caribbean women and their communities have included constructions of womanhood and work in public and private spaces. Whether defined as inside or outside these boundaries, these notions have

influenced women's responses to themselves and their families. Good mumma discourse has influenced whether Uzo or Bella can be good mothers. Similarly, what is the body of the Caribbean woman for: reproduction, work, or mimicking European, African and Asian notions of gentility? The material reality of African and Asian women in the Caribbean has meant that, despite the norms of patriarchal societies from which they originated, their experience in the Americas has always been characterized by work—both hard labor and domestic maintenance. Ideas of work and womanhood have also structured how women maintain, subvert, and resist ideal and/or imperial representations of them and their place in the world. Women have challenged ideal representations of masculinity and femininity through daily negotiations by redefining terms and through art. The psychological contradiction of not being the ideal woman, but wanting to be the ideal woman has influenced their negotiations.

Caribbean feminism articulates grounding theories and the practice of emancipation. It is about weaving unified and holistic images of Caribbean communities. “Unified and holistic” is neither simplistic nor easy. In fact, Caribbean feminists are committed to exploring the complexities, contradictions, and intersections of every member of these societies. Part of this multi-layered practice means drawing on a variety of sources, and representing the information recovered in diverse, multi-disciplinary, and multi-media projects. Cultural production has been a cornerstone in Caribbean resistance, recovery, and liberation. Merle Hodge characterizes the act of writing stories as guerilla warfare. Stories become vessels for an alternative latent consciousness both in form and content. Grace Nichols' “Ala” and Lorna Goodison's “Bella Makes Life” allow women and men to theorize. Art as channeled through song and dance in plantation

resistance⁴¹⁸ has opened access to a range of responses for Caribbean people to their oppression and quest for liberation.

The feminist project in the Caribbean builds on women's historical experience of self-sufficiency and community. These projects not only promote a woman-centered historical consciousness, but also explore contemporary experiences and contradictions, and, encourage action. It is acting on the links, making the public voice a political voice that will lead women's and the region's collective emancipation. Patricia Mohammed remembers the excitement of recognizing the "extra-regional influences and regional collaborations and initiatives" of feminist organizing.⁴¹⁹ The excitement of recognition enables people to see their common interests, which in turn allows women to weep and pray for Uzo, and thus embrace and build on a shared experience. Moreover, it is this recognition of experience recovered by Caribbean feminist methodologies that ultimately can enable Caribbean people to access the latent oppositional consciousness, thus transforming the personal and the local to the national and the regional.

²⁸² Shakespeare, William. The Tempest, Act 1, Scene 2, 259-269.

²⁸³ [White] British writer, of some Caribbean ancestry, Marina Warner has a novel Indigo, which gives Sycorax more of a voice than she has ever had.

²⁸⁴ In terms of academic production, Caliban's reclamation can be seen in various texts: Daughters of Caliban, Caliban's Reason, Caliban in Exile, and L'heritage du Caliban to mention just a few.

²⁸⁵ Power sharing is increasingly become a model in governance too as discussed in chapter one.

²⁸⁶ Shepherd, Verene. Women in Caribbean History, 11.

²⁸⁷ Bell, Beverly, ed. Walking on Fire: Haitian Women's Stories of Survival and Resistance. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001, 75.

²⁸⁸ Mair, Lucille Mathurin. Rebel Woman. Kingston, JA: African-Caribbean Publications, 1975.

²⁸⁹ Beckles, Hilary. Centering Woman. Kingston, JA: Ian Randle Publishers, 1999.

²⁹⁰ Glissant, Edouard. Caribbean Discourse. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1992.

²⁹¹ Walker, Alice. In Search of Our Mother's Gardens. San Diego, CA: Harvest/HBJ Book, 1983.

²⁹² Marina Warner is an exception to this with both scholarly and creative works on Sycorax, most notable her article, "Siren/Hyphen; or the Maid Beguiled" and her novel, Indigo.

²⁹³ Collins, Patricia Hill. Black Feminist Thought. London, UK: Routledge, 1990/1.

²⁹⁴ Olmos and Parvisini-Gebert, Creole Religions of the Caribbean, 9.

²⁹⁵ Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860." In American Quarterly, Vol. 18 (1966), pg. 151-174.

²⁹⁶ Senior, Olive. Miracle Workers, 108, 189.

- ²⁹⁷ Reddock, Rhoda. Women, Labour and Politics in Trinidad and Tobago: A History. London, UK: Zed Books, 1994, 10.
- ²⁹⁸ Shepherd, Verene. Women in Caribbean History, 15.
- ²⁹⁹ Both enslaved African women and indentured Indian women came from patriarchal societies where work was divided by sex. Additionally, “the essentially patriarchal basis of Africans societies which can result in the social oppression of women, despite their relative economic independence” (Bush 92).
- ³⁰⁰ Mohammed, Patricia. “Writing Gender into History.” In Engendering History. Eds. Barbara Bailey, et al. NY, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1995, 28.
- ³⁰¹ Beckles, Hilary. Centering Woman, 89.
- ³⁰² Shepherd, Verene. Women in Caribbean History, 30.
- ³⁰³ Wynter, Sylvia. “Beyond Miranda’s Meanings: Un/silencing the ‘Demonic Ground’ of Caliban’s ‘Woman’.” In Out of the Kumbia. Eds. Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1990, 307-309.
- ³⁰⁴ Fernández Retamar, Roberto. Caliban and Other Essays. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1989, 5.
- ³⁰⁵ Hodge, Merle. “The Shadow of the Whip.” In Is Massa Day Dead? Ed. Orde Coombs, NY, NY: Doubleday, 1974, 116.
- ³⁰⁶ Collins, Patricia Hill. Black Feminist Thought, 67-93.
- ³⁰⁷ Collins, Patricia Hill. Black Feminist Thought, 70.
- ³⁰⁸ Collins, Patricia Hill. Black Feminist Thought, 77 and Barbara Bush. Slave Women in Caribbean Society: 1650-1838, 94-97.
- ³⁰⁹ Collins, Patricia Hill. Black Feminist Thought, 74.
- ³¹⁰ Sycorax’s relationship with Ariel is another point of complexity. Exploring that relationship, Ariel’s subjugation to/by a woman illustrates part of the dynamic of free colored people who owned slaves.
- ³¹¹ Bailey, Barbara, et al. Engendering History. NY, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1995, xiv.
- ³¹² Bolles, A. Lynn. We Paid Our Dues. Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1996, 77.
- ³¹³ While these texts re-associate experience with critical readings, they are not under extensive examination here because they are (1) novels and too long for immediate critical dissemination to larger audiences; and (2) some are by male authors—this chapter privileges women’s voices as cultural producers, while still recognizing that men are capable of this work as well. These are women’s voices that have not found, outside of Lorna Goodison and to some extent Grace Nichols, covered in critical journals.
- ³¹⁴ Brathwaite, EK. The Arrivants. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1967/1980, 15.
- ³¹⁵ Brathwaite, EK. The Arrivants. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1967/1980, 20.
- ³¹⁶ Paravisini-Gebert, Lizabeth. “Decolonizing Feminism.” In Daughters of Caliban. Ed. Consuelo López Springfield. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997, 9.
- ³¹⁷ Beckles, Hilary. Centering Woman, ix.
- ³¹⁸ Mohammed, Patricia and Catherine Shepherd, Eds. Gender and Caribbean Development. Kingston, JA: Canoe Press, 1988/1999, 10.
- ³¹⁹ Bailey, Barbara, et al. Engendering History, xiii.
- ³²⁰ Benitez-Rojo, Antonio. “Three Words toward Creolization.” Trans. James Maraniss. In Caribbean Creolization. Eds. Kathleen M. Baluntansky and Marie-Agnès Sourieau. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1998, 54.
- ³²¹ Human Development Reports. October 26, 2004
file:///Users/tanyashields/Desktop/Human%20Development%20Reports.html
- ³²² Human Development Reports. October 26, 2004
file:///Users/tanyashields/Desktop/Human%20Development%20Reports.html
- ³²³ Barrow, Christine. “Charting Futures,” 353-354.
- ³²⁴ Paravisini-Gebert, Lizabeth, “Decolonizing Feminism,” 11.
- ³²⁵ Paravisini-Gebert, Lizabeth, “Decolonizing Feminism,” 11.
- ³²⁶ Paravisini-Gebert, Lizabeth, “Decolonizing Feminism,” 12.
- ³²⁷ Mohammed, Patricia. “Writing Gender into History,” 21, 27.
- ³²⁸ Mohammed, Patricia. “Writing Gender into History,” 21.
- ³²⁹ Mohammed, Patricia. “Writing Gender into History,” 28.
- ³³⁰ Mohammed, Patricia. “Writing Gender into History,” 29.
- ³³¹ Barrow, Christine. Caribbean Portraits. Kingston, JA: Ian Randle Publishers, 1998, xxxii.

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- ³³² Undertaken between 1979 and 1982, the WICP was the first multidisciplinary, multinational, woman centered examination of the lives and work of women in the English-speaking Caribbean (Senior 1)
- ³³³ Senior, Olive. Miracle Workers, 104, 110.
- ³³⁴ Massiah qtd. in Senior 114-115.
- ³³⁵ Mair, Lucille Mathurin. Rebel Woman, 5-7.
- ³³⁶ Lucie Julia. Biographical Notes. <http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/ile.en.ile/paroles/julia.html> May 25, 2004.
- ³³⁷ Fenwick, MJ. Sisters of Caliban, 382.
- ³³⁸ Because of limited access, issues of translation, location, publishing etc some women are heard more than others. A central argument made by Monique Blerald-Ndagano in her presentation, "*Un soufflé nouveau: La littérature guyanaise au féminine*," was "French Guyanese women don't write because they work." Reminding us not only of how women's material experiences impacts their artistic production, but also how Sycorax, because of experiences centered in the work place continues to be silenced.
- ³³⁹ Nichols, Grace. "The Battle with Language." In Caribbean Women Writers. Ed. Selwyn Cudjoe. Wellesley, MA: Calaloux Publications, 1990, 284, 283.
- ³⁴⁰ Nichols, Grace. I Is A Long Memored Woman. London, UK: Karnak House, 1983, 23.
- ³⁴¹ Nichols, Grace. I Is A Long Memored Woman. London, UK: Karnak House, 1983, 23.
- ³⁴² Nichols, Grace. I Is A Long Memored Woman. London, UK: Karnak House, 1983, 23-24.
- ³⁴³ Paravisini-Gebert, Lizabeth. "Decolonising Feminism," 7.
- ³⁴⁴ See the women in Bell's work whose children tell them not to have anymore children.
- ³⁴⁵ deCaires, Denise Narain. "Body Talk: Writing and Speaking the Body in the Texts of Caribbean Women Writers." In Caribbean Portraits. Ed. Christine Barrow, Kingston, JA: Ian Randle Publishers, 1998, 256
- ³⁴⁶ Boal, Augusto. "The Theatre of the Oppressed." UNESCO Courier, November 1, 1997, Vol. 50, Issue 11, 0041-5278.
- ³⁴⁷ Schutzman, Mady and Jan Cohen-Cruz. "Introduction." In Playing Boal: Theatre: Therapy, Activism. Eds. Mady Schutzman and Jan Cohen-Cruz. London, UK: Routledge, 1994, 2.
- ³⁴⁸ Include the story of the *restaveks* in Haiti. People primarily women who are sold into slavery.
- ³⁴⁹ West-Durán, Alan. "Suriname." In African Caribbeans: A Reference Guide. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003, 175-176.
- ³⁵⁰ West-Durán, Alan. "Suriname." In African Caribbeans: A Reference Guide. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003, 175.
- ³⁵¹ Miles, Sara, Patricia Jones, et al. Ordinary Women/Mujeres Comunes: An Anthology of Poetry by New York City Women. New York, NY: Ordinary Women Books, 1978, 37.
- ³⁵² West-Durán, Alan. "Suriname." In African Caribbeans: A Reference Guide. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003, 175.
- ³⁵³ Eersel, Eugenie. "Suriname: A Melting Pot." In Caricom Perspectives. 1999, 72.
- ³⁵⁴ Eersel, Eugenie. "Suriname: A Melting Pot." In Caricom Perspectives. 1999, 70.
- ³⁵⁵ Eersel, Eugenie. "Suriname: A Melting Pot." In Caricom Perspectives. 1999, 72.
- ³⁵⁶ Roemer, Astrid H. "Who's Afraid of the Winti Spirit?" In Caribbean Creolizations. Eds. Kathleen M. Baluntansky and Marie-Agnes Sourieau. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1998, 48.
- ³⁵⁷ Wekker, Gloria. "One Finger Does Not Drink Okra Soup: Afro-Surinamese Women and Critical Agency." In Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures. Eds. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. New York, NY: Routledge, 1997, 334-338.
- ³⁵⁸ Wekker, Gloria. "One Finger Does Not Drink Okra Soup: Afro-Surinamese Women and Critical Agency." In Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures. Eds. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. New York, NY: Routledge, 1997, 334.
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- ³⁶⁰ Bush, Barbara. Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 92.
- ³⁶¹ Indian women's experience is another complex factor here. However, time constraints have limited by discussion of their experience.
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- ³⁶⁴ Lamounier, Lucia. "Between Slavery and Free Labour." In From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves. Ed. Mary Turner. Kingston, JA: Ian Randle Press, 188.
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- ³⁷⁵ Sue-A-Quan, Trev. Cane Reapers: Chinese Indentured Immigrants in Guyana. Vancouver, BC: Riftswood Publishing, 1999, 191.
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- ³⁷⁹ Moore, Brian L. Cultural Power, Resistance and Pluralism in Colonial Guyana 1838-1900. Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995, 272.
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- ³⁸³ It is interesting to note that the traditional Chinese household was to be run under the law of a "benevolent and authoritative" father (Bryan 230) as "wives had no property rights nor economic independence" (Bryan 230) and were dependent on their husbands, sons and other male relatives. This was a direct influence of the Confucian moral code. However, according to Brian Moore the Chinese code of conduct was very permissive and anti-Victorian in terms of sexuality. He argues, though there is no clear evidence of this in Guyana, that in other Chinese diasporic communities, "homosexuality was not a stigmatized activity" (273).
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- ³⁸⁵ Brathwaite, EK. History of the Voice. London, UK: New Beacon Books, 1984, 13.
- ³⁸⁶ Bolles, A. Lynn CSA conference paper, St. Lucia, 2000.
- ³⁸⁷ Beckles, Hilary. Centering Woman, 174.
- ³⁸⁸ Beckles, Hilary. Centering Woman, 187-188.
- ³⁸⁹ Shepherd, Verene. Women in Caribbean History, 13.

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- ³⁹² Mair, Lucille Mathurin. Rebel Woman, 8-12 and Verene Shepherd Women in Caribbean History, 60-62.
- ³⁹³ Mair, Lucille Mathurin. Rebel Woman, 13.
- ³⁹⁴ Beckles, Hilary. Centering Woman, 186.
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- ⁴⁰⁰ Bolles, A. Lynn. "Working on Equality." In Caribbean Portraits. Ed. Christine Barrow. Kingston, JA: Ian Randle Publishers, 1988, 64.
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- ⁴⁰² See also George W. Bush's rationale for war with Iraq in 2003. Bush did not gain public legitimacy until he found an entity, amorphous though it may be, to otherize and attack.
- ⁴⁰³ Julia, Lucie. "Sacrificial Flowers." In Sisters of Caliban. Ed. MJ Fenwick. Falls Church, VA: Azul Editions, 1996, 175.
- ⁴⁰⁴ website
- ⁴⁰⁵ Roemer, Astrid H. "Who's Afraid of the Winti Sprit?" Trans. Wanda Boeke. In Caribbean Creolization. Eds. Kathleen M. Baluntansky and Marie-Agnès Sourieau. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1998, 50.
- ⁴⁰⁶ Goodison, Lorna. Baby Mother and the King of Swords. Essex, UK: Longman, 1990, 77.
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- ⁴¹⁶ Goodison, Lorna. Baby Mother and the King of Swords. Essex, UK: Longman, 1990, 82-83.
- ⁴¹⁷ Beckles, Hilary. Centering Woman, 191.
- ⁴¹⁸ Shepherd, Verene. Women in Caribbean History, 61.
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infinite rehearsal

The Haitian Revolution and the Development of Regional Caribbean Consciousness

The Haitian Revolution represents a historical moment that Caribbean artists and intellectuals such as Jamaican dub poet Mutabaruka, Trinidadian calypsonian David Rudder, and Barbadian poet-philosopher-scholar Edward Kamau Brathwaite among others recognize as generative of a latent regional consciousness. This chapter considers the importance of revisiting this event as an opportunity to investigate a history of triumph built on pain, hubris, and contradiction. Caribbean people have, like many others, been affected by the depiction of Haitians as poor, degenerate, black wanderers, who were once listed as one of four HIV risk factors: homosexuals, hemophiliacs, heroin addicts and Haitians.⁴²⁰ This general construction, along with the unfortunate notoriety borne of coups, kidnappings, and other fallout from well-publicized mismanagement, diminish some of Haiti's greatest gifts to humanity—its graphic and literary art, its complicated history and its religion, Vodou.

Through literary texts, readers are able to “know” and “experience,” through these representations, how Caribbean writers ingested and regurgitated this Revolution. These texts (The Black Jacobins (1967) by C.L.R. James, The Tragedy of King Christophe (1963) by Aimé Césaire, and The Kingdom of This World (1949) by Alejo Carpentier), though not written by Haitians, examine how those outside of Haiti ingested this history and redeployed it in their historical time. Because literature is one way to gather and experience information, as well as crystallize history and identity, the Haitian Revolution becomes a gateway to rehearse for other Caribbean revolutions. This was precisely CLR

James's assessment when he characterized Haiti's revolution as a rehearsal for Cuba's revolution and another stage in the development of Caribbean identity. James declares that, "West Indians first became aware of themselves as a people in the Haitian Revolution. Whatever its ultimate fate, the Cuban Revolution marks the ultimate stage of a Caribbean quest for national identity."⁴²¹ The recognition that Haiti's revolution is now more rhetorically successful than actually so—underscores the fact that it is a revolution built on rehearsal. This idea of repetition, which changes in the nuance, can be applied to Caribbean regionalism because Haiti provides a conflicted site and example for continued juxtaposition with current realities. Similar to other discourses, such as gender, today's conversations on race have moved from binaries to continuums, although color is still a formative factor in relation to access and opportunity. In fact, there is speculation that Haiti's current problems are linked to a national image that has been shaped by Haiti's primarily black, rather than mulatto racial composition. Therefore, examining these texts reminds us that race and color are essential to understanding Caribbean nationhood and citizenship from the Conquest to the Haitian Revolution to today.

This chapter focuses on some of the literary, primarily theatrical, manifestations of this revolution and what these representations (a) tell us about the revolution itself; and (b) reveal about how people outside of Haiti internalize and imaginatively recreate this event. The aforementioned texts, representing three linguistic areas in the region, shed light on the Haitian Revolution as a regional beacon. The two plays examine the leaders, Toussaint and Christophe, while the novel chronicles a revolution, told from the point of view of the enslaved Ti Noël, a view mainly from the bottom of the racial and economic ladder. The Haitian Revolution, as illustrated by these three creative texts, covers the

thirty year span (1790-1820), though Carpentier's text covers approximately sixty-years, and the leadership of three of the most famous men in the Caribbean: Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe. In all three creative works, manhood is tied to individual singularity, and these special men—analogue to the Biblical Moses—who are “called” to liberate their people. These are men of undeniable strength and fortitude, though not always wise. Their potency and vigor, fused with a paternalistic philosophy on governance, cements the notion of the nation as a family guided by a stern and knowing father. The revolutionary idea, in this case, is that the father is black. In the novel, Carpentier's heroes are more circumscribed, their singularity unmarked, except when expressly coupled with religion. These spiritual leaders are, nonetheless, men. Thus, the texts themselves evoke a particular strain of Caribbean citizenship, one tied to recuperating black manhood as father, healer, mystic, and provider. Examining these texts allows for an exploration of Caribbean citizenship built on issues of race, and manhood, juxtaposed against the historical “moment” of each text's creation.

On January 1, 1804, Jean-Jacques Dessalines declared the French colony of Saint Domingue the free nation of Haiti. This pivotal moment, in not only Haitian history but Caribbean history, is one of the first and most dramatic moments of and for Caribbean regionalism; primarily, because it exists as a monument of black agency and because it continues to inspire new reassembling and refashioning in the Caribbean space. Two thousand four marked the bicentennial of the most successful slave uprising to date and the creation of the world's first predominately black republic. The Haitian Revolution is an apt example of a centralizing, coalescing event that has allowed Caribbean artists to envision a regional world. It vividly and dramatically addresses issues of in-betweenity,

exile, and transnationalism—the longings between organic, authentic selves and creole, hybrid selves. This moment borne in blood and carried by fire, still embodies, through its act of belligerent emancipation, many cultural, social, and political characteristics present in Caribbean life. The Haitian Revolution has been a disturbing harbinger of the political state of the Caribbean because it has functioned like a template. The leaders of this revolution have been leaders with whom Caribbean countries have “rehearsed,” meaning that there have been rational, noble, and paternalistic men similar to Toussaint; dictators and kings such as Christophe; and hard-to-recover (especially in spaces of liberal humanism) leaders reminiscent of Dessalines—most well meaning, but all seen in some capacity before. First, former slaves fought and declared themselves free from a colonial power; second, this declaration has inspired and fired the imagination of African peoples throughout the world and Caribbean people throughout the region, even in the Dominican Republic, Haiti’s nervous neighbor.⁴²²

Haiti and its revolution have become for the world a site of, to borrow a Wilson Harris title, “infinite rehearsal.” Haiti’s incomplete, *unfinishable* process mirrors the extremes of regional development and continues as Haiti celebrated its bicentennial in the midst of its thirty-third coup. “Infinite Rehearsal,” I argue, explores this political, psychological, cultural, and concrete moment of regional unity—the Haitian Revolution. In his novel *The Infinite Rehearsal*, Wilson Harris, through the character of Robin Redbreast Glass, constructs the space of infinite rehearsal in the following way:

I know that in unravelling the illusory capture of creation I may still apprehend the obsessional ground of conquest, rehearse its proportions, excavate its consequences, within a play of shadow and light threaded into value; a play that is infinite rehearsal, a play that approaches again and again a sensation of ultimate

meaning residing within a deposit of ghosts relating to the conquistadorial body – as well as the victimized body -- of new worlds and old worlds, new forests and old forests, new stars and old constellations within the workshop of the gods.⁴²³ Infinite rehearsal then, is about constant interplay with and integration of the past, while recognizing that utopia is the process rather than the destination. Infinite rehearsal reminds readers and participants (us) that the past pre-figures the present; in fact, the past is the present. Examining the past from various vantage points yields new dynamics, which become prismatic in rehearsal. Moreover, rehearsal is a manifestation of the Amerindian postmodern. Within the framework of Amerindian postmodern is the idea of unfixity, and a decentered, deconstructionalist reading, which finds its ethical and activist moorings from a bond with the past. Therefore, it mandates reading, rereading, and rehearsal of the past. Antonio Benítez-Rojo offers a similar construction in his seminal essay, “The Repeating Island.” In that piece, Benítez-Rojo suggests that the primary method for Caribbean people to move from pragmatism to intuition will be rereading, which he characterizes as necessary because initial readings are entangled with the reader.⁴²⁴ That first reading is at the most personal level and the reader reads him/herself.⁴²⁵ Rereading allows the reader to move from the pragmatic to the political. Using plays from the anglophone and francophone areas and a novel from the hispanophone Caribbean, this chapter explores creative expressions of how Caribbean people replay the Haitian Revolution in different guises and to different degrees (Wilson Harris’s infinite rehearsal). In essence, examining Haiti for the positives and pitfalls, not only within its borders, for the development of a larger Caribbean, but also as a moment of cultural, historical, and political solidarity, granted enslaved people throughout the Caribbean—a state. Subsequently the post-emancipation period gave politicians and

artists an event, a trope and a shining star, albeit a bloody and problematic one, of Caribbean possibility. Therefore, the Haitian Revolution is one of the earliest sites spatially and temporally of Caribbean citizenship.

This moment, important because it is erected on embedded contradictions of multiple, overlapping pasts (African, enslaved, and independent), is a manifestation of Amerindian postmodernism. This theory suggests a prismatic reexamination of the past to build more constructive presents and futures. Caribbean revolutions that followed Haiti's are examples of empowered communities asserting their rights to **be** on their own terms. These revolutions have been forged by people who banded together to create better futures for themselves and posterity. The Haitian Revolution, like those that came later, is, at its core, about "owning" and claiming one's humanity and all the things implied in that assertion. Yet under this lofty, though practical, notion and definition, are hosts of contradictions, internal and external, which make fulfilling the promise of these revolutions an unending and painful struggle. Retracing representations of the Haitian Revolution is another way of remembering, and therefore, internalizing it, which is a critical step in examining the challenges to Caribbean citizenship in an historical continuum. Rooted in these texts are conversations on race, nation, gender, and how these commingle to shape ideas on citizenship.

Caribbean citizenship can be considered an embracing of the dynamics of belonging in five ways: local, national, regional, diasporic, and transnational. The family and immediate community represent the local and smallest, yet crucially significant level of belonging. The national refers to the state, the institutional and political machinery of the nation, rather than an ethnic nation, while regional citizenship encapsulates the outer

reaches of Caribbean geography. Diasporic citizenship operates on several levels: first, including those who have left their national communities and created communities within the region; and second, those completely external to Caribbean geography. The final category, transnationalism, embraces similar demarcations, meaning there can be internal transnationals—those who belong to an ethnic or tribal grouping or nation—for example, Amerindians and Maroons, and the larger **state** apparatus; as well as those outside national boundaries who are citizens to their natal home and their naturalized or adopted state. Enlarging Caribbean [national] identity/ies in the process of articulating Caribbean citizenship becomes one means of exploring shared experiences generated by colonized and globalized realities. In fact, reading Caribbean citizenship in this way allows recognition of the entrenched systems of global capitalism and race discourse that continue to influence the region's development. Examining these previously mentioned texts today, at a moment of corporate public policymaking, reiterates and reinvigorates the act/s of subjectivity—the move, as was the case in Haiti's revolution, of enslaved people to claim their "I", their right to be and act in their interests. Therefore, this chapter primarily focuses on how the idea of rehearsal—the polygonal reading/s of the past—leads Caribbean people to become citizens not just by virtue of their birth, but by actively moving from subaltern to agent.⁴²⁶

Writing Citizenship

The Black Jacobins (1967), James's reworked Toussaint L'Ouverture (1936), is a compelling historical drama that invokes the region's formative liberatory moment—the founding of the world's first black republic by those formerly enslaved. This historical experience has generated many creative works across language throughout the region,

ranging from Aimé Césaire's The Tragedy of King Christophe, and Carpentier's The Kingdom of This World to Derek Walcott's Haitian Trilogy and Edouard Glissant's Monsieur L'Ouverture. The Haitian Revolution is a defining moment in the Caribbean experience because it signals Caribbean people's, specifically those enslaved in Saint Domingue's, determination to be free. "The quest for freedom is as old as the Caribbean itself." From Columbus's initial voyage to today, Caribbean people have been fighting for sovereignty and not just its ornamental elements, the trappings of governance without the real power to shape their own destinies. Michael Dash asserts that Haiti's revolution "was about total transformation."⁴²⁷ Indeed, it was a declaration and affirmation by enslaved black people of their humanity, and a demand for recognition of that humanity by the broader world. This transformative act signaled not so much a move from slave to subject, but the demand for acknowledgement and a demonstration of black subjectivity, something not often experienced in the New World. As Edward Kamau Brathwaite and Edouard Glissant posit, the Caribbean is a place of submarine and transversal relations and connections (connections tied to the submarine geography of the island). And these rhizomatic roots allow James and Césaire to characterize Haiti's heroes as regional heroes. Carpentier's representation, while not nearly as focused on a singular hero, is equally compelling for recognizing the many unnamed witnesses and the culture of the masses, which made the revolution from below. These enslaved masses strengthened the resolve of leaders, because they never forgot their humanity, which was encoded in their culture and religious practices.

France's National Assembly ratified the "Declaration of Man and of the Citizen" on August 26, 1789, proclaiming, "Under a Supreme Being...the inalienable and sacred

rights of man and the citizen.”⁴²⁸ The seventeen articles included: the equality of men; that “political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.” Sovereignty of the nation; liberty, the right to do what one wants, without harming another; as well as laws which prohibit actions harmful to society rather than those designated to restrict personal liberty were focal points of this document. The establishment and maintenance of a police force; taxes; and the “inviolable and sacred” right to property⁴²⁹ rounded out the proclamation which regulated the relationship between citizens and their state. This declaration enshrines personhood (limited to notions of manhood), and constructs property as a right. It also solidifies a particular conception of law and justifies a person’s right to security and resistance from oppression. One clause in the document that I find particularly interesting is the phrase “rights of man and of the citizen,” a distinction that not all men are citizens, but not the converse that all citizens are men. Though the latter is the assumption, the phrase gives pause. Beyond this “glitch,” the declaration is gendered male and thus, the rights of man become the rights of the citizen. This proclamation, influential to the revolutionaries, reinforced the notion of male privilege regarding rights and citizenship, in spite of the concrete contributions of women. So though Caribbean citizenship as a site, solely of maleness, is contested from the outside, in these texts there is still an overwhelming representation of the Caribbean citizen as heroic man.

The tenets of the French proclamation, acknowledged by James and historian David Geggus, freely circulated in Saint-Dominique and were discussed widely by masters, mulattoes, and slaves. In the tripartite French colony, whites ruled as either *grand blancs*,

plantation owners, or petit *blancs*, working whites. Mulattoes, often free and educated, owned land and slaves and challenged exclusionary white privilege. The enslaved population, not just black, but predominately African, constituted the rest of colonial society.⁴³⁰ In the interest of securing larger concessions, the mulattoes, along with their allies in France, organized. Their organization was tasked with fighting the “actions of the National Assembly on behalf of *gens de couleur*. Mulatto leaders including Vincent Ogé, Jean-Baptiste Chavannes (whose eventual execution is witnessed by Toussaint and Dessalines),⁴³¹ and Julien Raymond, ally themselves with the Amis des Noirs, while white deputies from Saint-Domingue seek colonial representation.”⁴³²

The quest for self-representation manifests in another way by three influential twentieth century Caribbean thinkers. CLR James, pan-Africanist, Trotskyite, scholar, and cultural worker, wrote The Black Jacobins, a history, in 1938 with his famous appendix, “From Toussaint L’Ouverture to Fidel Castro,” in 1962. In 1936, James (born in January 1901 in Tunapuna, Trinidad, died May 1989 in Brixton, United Kingdom) published Minty Alley, a novel, and saw his play, Toussaint L’Ouverture, later reworked and renamed The Black Jacobins (1967) produced in London, starring Paul Robeson.

Aimé Césaire, poet, essayist, playwright, co-founder of the Pan-Africanist Negritude Movement, and politician, contributed to the cult of the Haitian Revolution with his play, The Tragedy of King Christophe (1963). At the premier production of the play in August 1964, Césaire had already served as mayor of Fort-de-France, Martinique, for nineteen years and had published his seminal Notebook on Return to My Native Land (1939) while still a student in France. His essay, Discourse on Colonialism, appears in 1950 and precedes the plays A Season in Congo (1966), and A Tempest (1969) among

other works. Césaire was born in 1913 in Basse-Pointe, Martinique.

Alejo Carpentier, Cuban novelist and definer of marvelous realism in Caribbean and Latin American letters, wrote Kingdom of this World (1949) to recover from his disillusionment with a “dying” Europe.⁴³³ Carpentier, born in December 1904, Havana to European émigrés, died in April 1980 in Paris. Known for his novels, The Lost Steps (1953), Explosion in the Cathedral (1962), and Music in Cuba (1946), Carpentier spent a life recuperating Caribbean stories through a non-realist framework. Considering the contours of Caribbean citizenship as drawn by these shapers and (re) definers of Caribbean thought and experience, particularly through the lens of Haiti’s revolution, means exploring political and social decay, experiences and representations of race (as a justification of certain forms of governance), gender—particularly manhood—and the pace as well as the very idea of progress. These issues, all components of Caribbean citizenship discourse, do not stand alone but instead cascade over and through each other, weaving a complicated web of strands through which water rushes over a cliff—exhilarating, death-defying, and prone to instability, but within a certain framework and pattern.

History and citizenship

James and Césaire’s representations of Haitian revolutionary protagonists evoke a kind of Pan-Africanism; they are interested in linkages among African peoples across political, social, and cultural boundaries. This Pan-Africanist paradigm is defined by at least two competing forces: the liberation of blacks globally, and the governing blacks locally, both in the sense of blacks who govern and blacks who are governed. This concept and construction of Pan-Africanism, especially as devised in the plays, is directly

linked to Caribbean citizenship. Belonging to the Caribbean means not only recognizing regional connections, but also a greater connection to black people/s and their conditions globally. This race-based construction of Caribbean citizenship is historically grounded, especially before Emancipation. However, with the advent of indentured servitude, the complexion of the Caribbean changed. Nonetheless, as Rex Nettleford indicates, the Caribbean is a creolized African space; and once people in the region recognize this, they will have taken a great leap in their own self-actualization.⁴³⁴ Therefore, recognizing its African roots is a necessary part of the process on the road to Caribbean citizenship.

Historically, Haiti's leaders from Toussaint, Christophe, and Dessalines, to Pétion were all Pan-Africanists, who saw Haiti as an example and purveyor of black freedom. Pétion provides refuge and resources to Simon Bolivar for the promise of liberating blacks in Spanish America. James's pan-Africanist and visionary Toussaint is poised to liberate Haiti, the Americas, and the black world or more precisely end slavery. In the play, Toussaint declares:

In San Domingo we are an outpost of freed slaves. All around us in the Caribbean black men are slaves. Even in the independent United States, black men are slaves. In South America black men are slaves. Now I have sent millions of francs to the United States. You have heard about this. But it is not to build a fortune for myself so that if anything goes wrong I can escape and live like a rich man. No, Vincent. If this Constitution functions satisfactorily, I intend to take one thousand soldiers, go to Africa and free hundreds of thousands in the black slave trade there and bring them here, to be free and French.⁴³⁵

Historically and fictionally, Haiti and its leaders served and serve as an uneasy beacon of black freedom. Planters in the U.S. Gulf states and in nearby British colonies feared its example.⁴³⁶ The select few led by Toussaint, Christophe, and Dessalines, prefigure

Caribbean leadership styles and are either wholesale or to various registers examples of Caribbean leaders since 1791.

Toussaint and Moïse, Toussaint's adopted nephew and general in the revolutionary army, and voice of the masses of Haitian people, represent the tension between accommodation and revolution in The Black Jacobins. Moïse accuses Toussaint of being a dreamer.⁴³⁷ This dream leads to his overthrow by Dessalines, because he cannot come to terms with the idea that the French state, in particular, and Europeans, in general, are willing to inflict the pain of psychological and physical violence "to win." Toussaint believes, by virtue of Enlightenment philosophies that he and the French share a set of precepts and principles particularly on humanity and liberty. Moïse recognizes that the oppressed and the oppressor do not share the same values regarding humanity and liberty; if anything their views on the subject are antithetical.

Toussaint, to his detriment, believes he is French. French colonial policy was one of assimilation, which meant making African and black people, post-the Haitian Revolution, culturally French. Equally important as a regional Caribbean text is James's delineation of leadership and the types of leaders produced by the Caribbean condition. There are three paths to power: the one taken by the benevolent, just, and eventually bamboozled Toussaint, who just wanted Haiti to be a French colony in blackface; the path of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who will become the first Emperor of Haiti, and Moïse's vision, which advocated on behalf of the suffering masses.

Finally, there is General Moïse L'Ouverture, who, as the voice of the people, speaks out against appeasement with the French and argues for full emancipation from France:

Maybe you wrote to him and threatened him. But this brutality against the former slaves goes all over San Domingo. I will have no part of it, I will speak against it and act wherever I see it or hear of it. The person responsible for it, Governor L'Ouverture, is you. I have said it and I shall continue to say it, court –martial or no court-martial. The county does not know where it stands. Is slavery abolished forever? Or is a French expedition coming to restore slavery? The ex-slaves don't know, the ex-slave owners don't know. I have told you to declare the island independent. Expel all those who do not want to accept it. Assure the ex-slaves that slavery is gone forever. That is what they want to know. Break up those accursed big plantations. As long as they remain freedom is a mockery. Distribute the lands carefully among the best cultivators in the country. Let everybody see that there is a new regime. That is what I have said and that is what I will stand or fall by.⁴³⁸

The dilemma that Moïse poses for the region is psychological and material—is this full independence possible? Critical to full independence is breaking the physical and psychological hold of the plantation followed by redistribution of this plantation's wealth. Moïse represents the will of the people, the position conditioned by community rather than the isolation felt by the leaders. Can the self, torn between Western materialism and “complete” freedom, be reconciled?

Such meditations on power highlight the ambiguous nature of the relationship between Toussaint and Moïse as regional, deeply embedded contradictions, which implicate and inform constructions of self and constructions of the state. For example, if the region follows Toussaint's model, as constructed by James, it will always be trapped in a cycle of dependency, with leaders who are unable to break their own psychological dependence on the former system. The alternative model articulated by Moïse is one of total independence—an independence that may not be possible given the region's internalized image, which is one of dependency. Understandably, it was difficult, if not

impossible, for Toussaint to imagine a country (or for him a colony) not linked to France. How would they survive? Similarly, leaders today find it hard to conceive of total self-sufficiency, in part, because their small island nations cannot service their small populations and because they are fully invested and limited (mentally, politically, and economically) by the continued stranglehold of corporate capitalism around the globe. Yet, the discussion remains, and while Moïse seeks new solutions, Toussaint reminds us of the desperate material realities and actively searches for these new solutions.

Dessalines represents another path, one constructed by James and Césaire as the most abhorrent. Dessalines is a model of Caribbean despotism:

Tomorrow, the Emperor will issue a proclamation. The time has come. We are going to kill every white man and woman on this island. They will never be able to restore slavery here because we are going to get rid of all of them. Not one is going to remain. You fools are not ready for that. Look at what we have had to suffer from these people. Man, woman and child, not one of them is going to be left alive. No more slavery here. The proclamation I shall issue tomorrow, signed by me—Dessalines, Emperor of Haiti. I have learnt to sign my name, Dessalines. I will learn to sign Emperor. All will be killed. All.⁴³⁹

Internalized oppression now manifests through oppressors in blackface disregarding the notion of brotherhood fostered by the oppression. The script remains the same, but the players are black. This repetition is systematic, it is another infinite rehearsal; illustrating that until revolutionary consciousness can accompany revolutionary acts, there is bound to be a mimicking of colonial patterns. Dessalines' despotism is a rehearsal for despots to come, supported by external interests and their own egos. These scripts are enacted at a global level through “friendly coups” and the support of dictators by countries such as the U.S. The rehearsal will continue until the framework is disassembled and broken.

Here the island in the larger world, though alone, isolated, and “self-determined,” is still conditioned by the outside forces with which it is forced to barter.

James is pained in both the play and the history to place Dessalines in his historical frame. Yet, even this is not enough and James reluctantly concludes in The Black Jacobins, a history, that though General Leclerc, Napoleon’s brother-in-law, “ha[d] resolved to exterminate as many blacks as possible; [and] General Rochambeau attempts to complete this extermination”⁴⁴⁰ and tilled the soil with blood—these events are still not justification for Dessalines’ action. Additionally, the British, securing their regional interests, made it plain that they could not do business with Haiti if French whites were allowed to survive, because they feared the attachment of newly freed people to their former masters. Despite these mitigations, Dessalines’ act, for James, was unforgivable.⁴⁴¹ This: “massacre of the whites is a tragedy for blacks and mulattoes” because it shows a lack of humanity and foresight, and primarily because “it was not policy, but revenge and revenge [no matter how historically contextualized] has no place in politics.”⁴⁴² Joan Dayan, in Haiti, History and the Gods, further contextualizes Dessalines’ “viciousness.” She informs readers that Dessalines has been the only Haitian leader to be deified and incorporated into the Petwo (Petro) gods of the Vodou pantheon:

Dessalines, the most unregenerate of Haitian leaders, was made into a *lwa* (god, image or spirit) by the Haitian people. The liberator...was the only “Black Jacobin” to become a god. Neither the radical rationality of Toussaint nor the sovereign pomp of Christophe led to apotheosis. Yet Dessalines, so resistant to enlightened heroics, gradually acquired unequalled power in the Haitian imagination.⁴⁴³

Dessalines made a direct link between blackness and Haitianness, declaring that “Haitians, whatever their color[,] would be known as *blacks*, referred to ‘only by the

generic word *black*.”⁴⁴⁴ It is both Dessalines’ acts of unrepentant violence for the liberation of **black** people, and his claiming of blackness as integral to Haitian and Caribbean identity—these gestures of self-determination and actualization—that transcend or mitigate his brutality. Despite this, the violence Dessalines unleashed through his policies and the abuses of his ministers on the Haitian people rather than his slaughter “without guns of 3,000 whites,”⁴⁴⁵ leads to his brutal end conspired by blacks and mulattoes. In 1806 at Pont-Rouge [Red Bridge], after two and a half years in power, “one officer shot [him], another stabbed him three times, [yet another] filled him with bullets from two pistols. Then he was stripped naked, his fingers cut off.”⁴⁴⁶ Once he was turned over to the masses, they “stone and hack [him] to pieces. His remains—variously described as ‘scraps’ and ‘shapeless remains,’ ‘remnants,’ or ‘relics’—were thrown to the crowd.”⁴⁴⁷ Dessalines’ brutalization and dismemberment dismantles his nation, mimicked his own brutality as he had mimicked French savagery. The lesson of Citizen Dessalines and his death is one of annihilation—an erasure of the enemy, which depending on degree, may lead to an erasure of the self. Frankly, Dayan’s recuperation of Dessalines is a difficult one, not so much to accept, but to reason, and something all the writers examined in this chapter find it difficult to execute. It may be as Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert argues, that because there are new (post-1990) ways of understanding the revolution, these representations seem contained by their historical moment.⁴⁴⁸

However, I would contend that in the early to mid-twentieth century, as now, there is still a need to construct “positive and complicated” examples of Caribbean citizens **and** black manhood, though not limited to manhood; thus, there must be complex constructions of self-actualization. Césaire and James provide several Caribbean governance models,

focusing on the most noble and understandable ones. Nonetheless, all of these examples, including the contradictions of violence, nation, race-hatred, and pride embodied by Dessalines, manifest in Caribbean states and should be given attention.

Haiti's coming into being straddled seventeenth century Enlightenment thought through the revolutionary foment of the eighteenth century. In this historical moment of creating a nation and rehabilitating a people, the early leaders of Haiti focused on recuperating blackness in an eighteenth century world that aligned and maligned it with all things negative and subhuman. Thinkers such as Carl Von Linné, George-Louis Leclerc, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and Thomas Jefferson shaped Enlightenment race discourse that was invested in classification and justification of white supremacy and marked by philosophies linking "physicality and notions of race." Linné claimed that Europeans were "fair, sanguine, [and best of all] governed by laws; [while] Americans [the native variety] and Africans were not only ugly but governed by customs and caprice."⁴⁴⁹ George-Louis Leclerc's lengthy weather theory linked temperature to the development of "bile in the kidneys" which, in his estimation, explained the origins and perpetuation of black skin: the hotter the climate the darker the people, with Africans ranging from "very black [to] perfectly black [to] absolutely black."⁴⁵⁰ Hume and Kant further the biological argument by attaching black skin to black inferiority and inhumanity. Hume concludes that all non-white races are inferior to even the most "barbarous" whites like the Germans, who "still have something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government or some other particular."⁴⁵¹ Especially denigrated are "negroes...among whom none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity. In Jamaica, they talk of one negroe [sic] as a man of parts and learning; but it is likely he is admired

for slender accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly.”⁴⁵² Kant’s artistic fusion of weather theory, biology, and basic inferiority illustrates that,

The Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the trifling. Mr. Hume challenges anyone to cite a single example in which a Negro has shown talents, and asserts that among the hundreds of thousands of blacks who are transported elsewhere from their countries, although many of them have even been set free, still not a single one was ever found who presented anything great in art or science or any other praise-rise. [He elaborates,] Father Labat [, colonial priest,] reports that a Negro carpenter, whom he reproached for haughty treatment toward his wives, answered: ‘You whites are indeed fools, for first you make great concessions to your wives, and afterward you complain when they drive you mad.’ And it might be that there were something in this which perhaps deserved to be considered; but in short, this fellow was quite black from head to foot, a clear proof that what he said was stupid.⁴⁵³

It is in this climate that the French Revolution and Haitian Revolution come into being.

It is a time of enslavement, the rise of the capitalist machine buttressed by the noble rhetoric of liberty, equality, and fraternity for citizens—who could only be men. Those invested with personhood were described as “rational, thinking and contributing” members of humanity. The irony is that this racial rehabilitation of blackness continued well into the twentieth century when these plays are written. Therefore, not only are the historical figures of the Haitian Revolution invested in deploying a noble blackness embedded in the iron fist of manhood, but it is also a project shared by Pan-Africanists James and Césaire. “In 1848, after Emancipation, in the French West Indies, [the French pursued a policy which] allowed adult male ex-slaves to become simultaneously free *and* French.”⁴⁵⁴ The most negative characterization of this policy would be that it called for colonies of mimic men, to invoke Naipaul’s term, a legion of French imitators in black

face. Challenging the assimilationists' policy, Negritude as a philosophy developed in the twentieth century. Founded in 1930s Paris by students in the French colonial fold, Negritude as characterized by Léopold Sédar Senghor is "a rooting [of] oneself in oneself, and a self-confirmation; confirmation of being."⁴⁵⁵

In his play, James represents soldiers and servants debating the meaning of liberty, fraternity, and equality as well as the best forms of governance. Mars Plaisir, Toussaint's faithful mulatto servant, who is eventually imprisoned with him in the Jura Mountains, defines the three guiding principles of the French Revolution, "Liberty, slavery abolished; Equality, no dukes...everybody equal...And fraternity, everybody gets together and be friends, nobody taking advantage of anybody, everybody helping everybody else."⁴⁵⁶ James contrasts these black workers with "the white slaves in France" and the issues of making liberty democratic, which means uniting across race into class alliances. This conversation contrasts a variety of governing forms. Toussaint, justifying his alliance with the Spanish, explains, "We are Africans, and Africans believe in a king. We were slaves and we believe in liberty and equality. But we are not republican."⁴⁵⁷ This alliance quickly dissolves when the French abolish slavery in 1794; Toussaint believes in making the most advantageous decisions for black people. That is certainly James's representation. In the history The Black Jacobins, James spends time on Toussaint rejecting the monarchist model. There seems to be a consensus that African people only know and want kingship—a divine right of messianic leaders, which both Césaire and James depict. Dessalines believes the British king can confer freedom and security, Christophe is unsure, and Moïse's response is, "We have escaped from the French King. Do we now give ourselves over to the English king?"⁴⁵⁸ The sense of

negotiation and trying to make a place in the world—who and how to form alliances—is part of the framework. In effect, the discussion behind this is about negotiating across boundaries and truly embodying collectivity.

Several scenes indicate that the outside world is not interested in the “aspiration of a people to govern themselves”—the external construction of [Haitian] freedom, is only conditionally on the march. James’s example of U.S. intervention through the historically grounded character, Tobias Lear, American Consul in Saint Domingue, illustrates a system of interference that is hardly new today and deeply entrenched. Lear meets with British and French generals to discuss “this fantastic Negro, this Toussaint L’Ouverture—now, God help us, Governor of the Colony.”⁴⁵⁹ The plot to topple Toussaint is one that foments racial discord and is designed to install Pétion.⁴⁶⁰ European and American policy is effectively about putting “blacks in their place,” a statement attributed to Bonaparte,⁴⁶¹ whose real objection was that L’Ouverture controlled the purse.⁴⁶² We see threads of James’s representation in the contemporary globalized world in the new and repeated refrains of Bush II, who simultaneously touts and undermines truly democratic practice. A good example is his administration’s attempts to undermine the Venezuelan government for charting an independent course and in their support for global corporations whose bottom-line interests are at odds with the aspirations of freedom loving peoples. This signals another moment of rehearsal or repeating. Toussaint, and later Christophe, subject to paranoia, squeeze those around him exemplified by the kangaroo court that executes his nephew Moïse.⁴⁶³

In these governments, there is no room for disagreement (although allowed by Césaire’s Pétion) and Moïse declares, “If to be against your policy is to be guilty of

treason, then I am guilty, the most guilty man in San Domingo.⁴⁶⁴ Though Toussaint shares with Madame Bullet that he will send Moïse abroad instead of enforcing the capital punishment verdict, events happen quickly and that alternative is impossible. Moïse calls Toussaint a dreamer who dreams of an impossible fraternity. Responding to Toussaint's declaration that he will sign Moïse's death warrant later, Moïse taunts, "Yes, Toussaint, you shall sign it later. You will use your pen like a sword. But you will see, that until you use your sword like a man—until you cut yourself off from the symbols of colonialism and slavery and be truly independent, you will remain just an old man with a dream of impossible fraternity. Pitiful old Toussaint—and his dream."⁴⁶⁵ Toussaint's dream of fraternity is as much a commentary on him as it is on the dreamer of the 1960s namely, Martin Luther King, Jr. While James is ultimately sympathetic to Toussaint, the play's strongest moments of critique occur in scenes between Toussaint's and Moïse's vision, especially in those depicting the leader as dreamer.

The Haitian Constitution excises French interference with the phrase, "The constitution swears allegiance to France. For the rest, we govern ourselves."⁴⁶⁶ Yet, Toussaint is conflicted and in the same conversation with French army Colonel Vincent claims that Haiti is not ready for independence and looks to France for "the guidance of an elder brother."⁴⁶⁷ The question is identical in Césaire's play: what is the pace and price of progress? There is a connection between the discourse of progress and claiming the personhood and humanity needed to be both a subject and a citizen. Independence is a difficult concept for Toussaint, mainly because he is emotionally and culturally tied to France, while for Moïse, it is the ultimate claim of the person, the acting subject.

Nonetheless, undergirding this discussion is the more essential question about the concrete skills needed to build a nation and a unified people. Which leads to yet other questions about definitions of “unskilled” labor and the nature of freedom? Should freedom only be granted to those with technical skills? This is the argument of slave holders, that blacks lack the skills to build and run a country. This attitude is evidenced today in the continued rhetoric that posits the inability of Haiti and other Caribbean nations’ to govern themselves because of a fundamental misunderstanding of democracy and freedom. Of course, the corporate capitalist power structures and external Western interests are camouflaged in such a discussion. The political goal of both James and Césaire is to reveal this naturalized skeleton, as Toussaint reveals that his change is not radical, as Vincent characterized it, but about building skills on Haiti’s terms, because he recognizes that not even the best white man can understand the stakes.⁴⁶⁸ Toussaint reiterates, “We want to be protected by France. We want to learn from France. France will send capital and administrators to help us develop and educate the country.”⁴⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the ghettoization of Caribbean states and resources that started with colonialism and was entrenched with Haitian independence is a direct manifestation of the endurance of the plantation model and its application to current regional conditions. In particular, this cycle of dependency continues to be most visible in the rest of the French Caribbean, since those territories suckle at the breast of the French treasury.

Structurally, James creates two primary juxtapositions: black and white, and owners and workers. He foregrounds these tensions by dividing the stage in four sections, one which features an ever-present crowd and music. James’s elaborate directional notes, include those for the people comprising the crowd, which is that they

“say little but their presence is powerfully felt, at all critical moments. This is the key point of the play and comments cannot, must not, be written. It must be felt, dramatically, and be projected as essential action in the down stage areas.”⁴⁷⁰ James’s desire for an emotive but unscripted crowd highlight some of the contradictions of his overall effect. The crowd, which represents the masses, for a Marxist like James, is ever present. They cannot be forgotten and are always visible. However, in this encomium to Toussaint, because he is our hero, they as character and historical actors are silent. The prologue toggles between the divide of black people, enslaved and forced to work, their condition tied directly to their race and their class, and white injustice in a series of snapshots or tableaux, each scene related to information furnished in The Black Jacobins, a history. For example, in the play’s opening song, “Eh! Eh! Bomba! Heu! Heu! /White man—vow to destroy/Take his riches way/Kill them/Every one/Canga Li” in both translated and untranslated versions is recounted in the play and can be found on page eighteen of the history. The barber’s story, in which a slave accidentally unravels a customer’s curls and is slapped to the ground, is on page thirty-three; the tale of the thief recounted on page fifteen is of a slave who steals a white neighbor’s chicken and is caught and hauled off to be whipped. The slave’s owner encourages the neighbor to witness the man’s punishment. As they all exit, the master calls another slave to take the sack with the chicken to the kitchen and remarks, “Madame and I will eat some fried chicken tonight.”⁴⁷¹ Amidst these tableaux, interspersed among the slaves are the leaders, the singular men called to serve -- Henri Christophe, Dessalines, and Toussaint.

Toussaint’s owner, and later a love interest, Madame Bullet, in a scene which James later said he would remove because it interrupts the flow, is singing an aria from

Don Giovanni, which in the early moments of the production is contrasted with the similarly themed slave's song. However, this aria, from Mozart's opera about a debauched sinner receiving his comeuppance, is repeated throughout the play,

I demand revenge of you, your heart demands it, your heart demands it/remember the wounds in that poor breast, /Recall the ground, covered, covered with blood, /Should the fury of a just anger, of a just anger/wane in you.../I demand revenge of you, your heart demands it, /your heart demands it/ Remember the wounds, recall the blood, /I demand revenge of you, your heart demands it, / I demand revenge of you, your heart demands it.⁴⁷²

The bloody revolution recalled the blood of the annihilated Amerindians, the degraded and mutilated Africans, Maroons, and mulattoes, and eventually confirmed white fear that, given a chance, blacks would retaliate through blood letting for previous and current white atrocities. Indeed, armed massacres initiated by French example⁴⁷³ and supported by British trade interests⁴⁷⁴ were part of the war and are exemplified by Dessalines' reign of terror. The crowd, on stage as a constant witness, represents the historical Haitian population and the greater Caribbean crowd simultaneously.

Of the two plays, James's is the one to give a significant voice to women.⁴⁷⁵ He recognizes the centrality of women in the Haitian struggle and in larger representations of Caribbean citizenship. In his text, centered on the heroic, if ultimately tragic Toussaint, women are active participants in battles and bedrooms: the character of Marie-Jeanne, based on the historical Marie-Claire Heureuse, wife of Dessalines, and Madame Bullet. Throughout the play, Marie-Jeanne unwillingly entices white men into her bed, first as mistress to Monsieur Bullet, her master, and then for the liberation cause to French General Hédouville, who "loves" her and wishes they had met under different circumstances. Responding to Hédouville's claims of love, Marie-Jeanne reminds him

that, “I am nobody, I was a slave.”⁴⁷⁶ This interaction and her claims of personhood exemplify the core of this character. Although doubly despised as woman and slave, her identity is reclaimed through her participation in the Revolution. Marie-Jeanne, more than the character of Madame Bullet, is an agent. Toussaint’s devotee, she despises Dessalines until he asks her to teach him to read, making theirs one of the most intriguing relationships in the play. He desires her, but she abhors him, and she sees being with him as another form of enslavement. To his offer of marriage and material wealth, she responds, “I prefer to be what I want to be. You don’t own me...Nobody owns me. Slavery is finished.”⁴⁷⁷ Marie-Jeanne is clear on the place of blacks and mulattoes in the French cosmos and within the play is able to coerce Pétion and the mulattoes to fight with Dessalines. She betrays Toussaint because she believes in her husband’s philosophy of armed resistance and white annihilation:

I fell in love with you, Dessalines. I trusted you completely. Here in San Domingo, people don’t trust one another. For the first time in all my life, a man, my husband, meant something to me. In every battle in the bush, I was a person next to you, watching over you, ready to give my life for yours. Life meant nothing to me without you: Nothing. And just then, when I heard you plotting Toussaint’s capture, I thought for a moment you had betrayed me, but I understand now.⁴⁷⁸

Though Marie-Jeanne is an example of literacy, color, and power,⁴⁷⁹ her historical counterpart dies in poverty after living for a hundred years. Born into a free and comfortable family in 1748, Heureuse, educated by Catholic clergy, eventually becomes Dessalines’ mistress and mother to at least four of his children, including fraternal twins.⁴⁸⁰ Their children and relationship are later legitimated, making Heureuse Empress of Haiti until Dessalines, in Dayan’s words, is dismembered. Christophe shelters her

until his suicide, leaving Heureuse and her surviving children to scratch out a living.⁴⁸¹

The fictional Marie-Jeanne is a warrior woman whose sexuality has been used against her and in service of the new nation. Her citizenship, like those of other enslaved people, is embodied—marked on and in her body, literally internalized through the sex act.

Marie-Jeanne’s articulation of personhood and female subjectivity can be contrasted with the recuperation of black manhood in the eighteenth **and** twentieth centuries. The need for black people to have “a shining black prince” is constant as Ossie Davis, actor and activist, said about Malcolm X. James’s man is the noble and restrained, (for his time), Toussaint. James set Toussaint apart—not only is he literate, he is able to read Abbé Raynal’s words himself, “as if for the first time...a courageous chief only is wanted.”⁴⁸² Though his dress is “commonplace he is tidy and neat,” unlike savage Dessalines. Toussaint sees to the safety of the Bullets, which is in sharp relief against Dessalines, who wanted to kill them. However, James’s investment in Toussaint’s specialness has had detrimental consequences because it prevents the development of a more complex character.

According to Nana Wilson-Tagoe, “Because he [James] writes history mostly from the point of view and perspective of Toussaint’s impact and achievement, he is unable to investigate the meaning of the paradox [between wanting freedom and wanting to be French].”⁴⁸³ Paul B. Miller concurs in his article, “Enlightened Hesitations: Black Masses and Tragic Heroes in C.L.R. James’s *The Black Jacobins*,” arguing that James’s genre shifting has meant the history has been written as a tragedy, which forces James to create a classic tragic hero, alone and removed from the masses.⁴⁸⁴ Miller elaborates that, “the question of genre [illustrates that] James’s problems stem from the literary

framework employed by historical study.”⁴⁸⁵ While Miller’s critique here is on the history, The Black Jacobins, I believe it is notable that James’s quest for “a hero” undermines the crowd, or the people, in his creative work as well. His need for a singular hero, who recuperates black manhood and governance, is at the expense of a richer notion of the/a polity.

Women’s roles, as portrayed in Césaire’s work are limited to the supportive but knowing queen, Marie-Louise, who is referred to only as “Madame Christophe” and who councils her husband against rashness, “as a good wife should.” Women in this representation of the world are backdrops for the nation, their own personhood and citizenship relegated to marriage and procreation. The state, at its most patriarchal, needs a solid foundation and has determined that “women with permanent husbands” and as breeders will be used for the new nation as they were for former masters.⁴⁸⁶ Similarly, Césaire’s Christophe, a Garvey predecessor, foreshadows a strident and strong example of black, Caribbean manhood.

Césaire’s play is as sympathetic a depiction of Henri Christophe, King of Haiti, as James’s play is of Toussaint. Christophe is a benevolent, overzealous and slightly misguided father figure. Césaire renders “the tragedy” of Christophe by charting his megalomania—his quest for the patrimony of all black people—a noble, refined heritage that allows them to glory in their black skin. Ultimately, Christophe is unable to convince his court and his subjects of his vision. He is a messianic leader, who is shown in splendid isolation. Césaire employs a series of binaries to dramatic effect beginning with the “Prologue.” There, through a cockfight which pits the roosters, Christophe and Pétion, against each other the primary characters are fighting for prominence from the

outside. It is notable that this discussion of governance and manhood begins with two cocks, a phallic colloquialism. These binaries manifest in three areas: Christophe (North/monarchy) versus Pétion (South/republic); manhood conflated with humanity and respect versus weakness conflated with enslavement of a spiritual and mental kind; and form over substance.

Pétion is compared to a soft and indulgent mother while Christophe is a stern father.⁴⁸⁷ Mothers in this play are sites of reproduction, mild reproachment, or silence; thus comparing Pétion to a mother is not to connote nurturing, but to underscore his ineffectiveness, especially vis á vis Christophe. One unnamed cock dies in the cockfight and given all the references to infirmity, it is easy to believe that it was Pétion's cock; but in reality, it was the cock called "Christophe," as it is he, who dies at the end of the play. Pétion's **lack** as a man, or lack of manhood, continues as Hugonin relates that Boyer, Pétion's successor, has already usurped him in his mistress's bed: "Well, I trust you've heard of Mademoiselle Joste, Pétion's mistress. Young Boyer has shown himself a gifted joustier [and has] unsaddled Pétion,"⁴⁸⁸ and according to the historical record, Boyer marries Joute Lachenais.⁴⁸⁹ Pétion pays France the indemnity—another sign of his weakness because Christophe says a "man wouldn't do that [but] Pétion, the drag ass," did.⁴⁹⁰ Christophe equates republics, and Pétion's in particular, with weakness because, "Napoleon has no respect for republics and Haiti has two."⁴⁹¹ Napoleon's empirical manhood model and European models in general, continue to influence; and since Napoleon respects only violent manifestations of strength and textually, the gendered female Pétion, is incapable of that, Christophe's kingdom becomes a path to salvation. Vastey concurs,

We too need a kingdom to gain worldwide respect...The whole world is watching us, citizens, and the nations think that black men have no dignity. A king, a court, a kingdom, that's what we've got to show then if we want to be respected...⁴⁹² A Black king its like a fairy tale, isn't it? This black kingdom, this court, a perfect replica in black of the finest courts the Old World has to offer.⁴⁹³

Black kingship and the desire for respect prefigures many a strong-arm dictator in the Caribbean and the African Diaspora. Black kings mimicking, not African forms of kingship, but European ones, echoes Frantz Fanon's black skin, white masks, which can be restated as black kings, white crowns. Christophe proclaims at his coronation with a self-placed crown upon his head and his

hand on the Gospels: I swear to preserve the integrity of the territory and the independence of the kingdom; under no pretext to suffer the return to slavery or any measure prejudicial to the freedom or the civil and political rights of the Haitian people, to govern with a sole view to the interest, the happiness and the glory of the great Haitian family of which I am head.⁴⁹⁴

This passage highlights the paternalistic manifestations of citizenship. Christophe is not only head of the national family, but along those lines, he engenders, impregnates and fertilizes the national body. Governance and the familial model are correlated to each other, "Papa Christophe is a precursor to Papa Doc," and the model of, as Jeannette Allsopp characterizes it, "the caudillo" or strongman is rationalized.⁴⁹⁵

While James compares Toussaint and Moïse, Césaire parallels Haiti's republic with its co-existing kingdom. Christophe's quest for control leads to his rejection of the presidency, which "is without flesh or bones, the scraps of leftovers of power."⁴⁹⁶ The leadership debate continues over which governance models to use. Monarchy in The Tragedy of King Christophe is intertwined with manhood, while republicanism, the domain of the "soft" Pétion, is about principles versus the person⁴⁹⁷ or the personality.

Problematic, though factual, race discourse has mulattoes aligned with ostensible rule of law and Enlightenment notions of citizenship, despite Pétion's eventual declaration of himself as president for life,⁴⁹⁸ while blacks are caricatures of the imperial and monarchist models. Pétion, though positioned as a democrat who believes in the transparency of the nation and accountability of the government, is not heroic. Instead, strength and the valorizing of black manhood, which links humanity with monarchy, is celebrated in Césaire's play.

Ideas regarding manhood, monarchy, progress, and the rights of men versus the duties of black men are highlighted in Christophe's conversation with his wife. She is the first and only woman to have more than two lines in Césaire's play, and as "good wife and mother," she warns Christophe to be wary of pushing the people too fast and too far. His angry response, which historically he enforced through proclamations such as Code Henri,⁴⁹⁹ has resonance in the twentieth century diaspora:

I ask too much of men? But not enough of black men, Madame. If there's one thing that riles me as much as slaveholder's talk, it's to hear our philanthropists proclaim, with the best of intentions of course, that all men are men and that there are neither whites nor blacks. That's thinking in an armchair, not in the world. All men have the same rights? Agreed. But some men have more duties than others.⁵⁰⁰

Christophe's speech reiterates that citizenship is, will be contextualized by race because rights and duties are distinguishing factors. Black citizenship and subjectivity are saddled with the need to prove "black worth." Césaire as Pan-Africanist and proponent of Negritude believes this credo. Implicit in this idea is black citizen as activist, always walking the historical path to justice [?]. In the play, in a drawing room, discussion occurs on the paths of history between subjects of Christophe's court. The second lady:

Do you mean that King Christophe employs the means of slavery to attain the ends of Freedom?” According to Vastey, Christophe is fighting for “the day when no little black girl anywhere in the world, will be ashamed of her skin, when no little black girls’ color will stand in the way of her dreams.”⁵⁰¹ These words clearly echo Martin Luther King, Jr.’s, “I Have A Dream” speech of August 1963, which predates the play’s first performance by one year.

In Césaire’s rendering, Christophe’s tragic flaw is not that he was king or sought power, but that he could not effectively communicate this vision to his subjects. Though Christophe’s abuses—Brelle entombment and the rise of the Royal Dahomets—are chronicled, when contrasted with his larger mission of black empowerment, these cruelties are coded as understandable. Another manifestation of his communicative lack is a misunderstanding, the national religion, Vodou. When Césaire’s character hears the drums, he exclaims, “Our persecutors are dogging our heels, and my people dance!”⁵⁰² Though according to Michel-Rolph Trouillot,⁵⁰³ he is highly superstitious and a believer of sorts by the end of his life, embracing every device that might help him regain his strength and ward off death, Christophe is initially contemptuous of Vodou. In the end, Hugonin, the buffoon who morphs into Baron Samedi, “the head of the Gede family of raucous spirits of the dead,”⁵⁰⁴ explains that some “countries [are] given to commotion, to convulsions, and ours is one of them that’s its nature.”⁵⁰⁵ [original punctuation] Given Vodou’s sense of duality, there are several ways to read this. First, convulsions as an indication of rehearsal; second, Vodou as a commotion that disrupts linearity relating to the idea of infinity. In other words, the rituals of Vodou are one way to link to the infinite; these rituals offer a Legba-inspired gateway through which to enter the

conversation. Vodou is both about rehearsing ritual and ritual, itself, is a type of rehearsal and in the Vodou paradigm, a convulsion.

Metellus, a representation of one of many Maroon leaders, continues to fight the black kingdom and the black republic because his dream of Haiti has been

defiled...Haiti is a disfigured mother not the earlier vision...we were going to build a country all of us together! Not just to stake out this island: a country open to all islands! To black men everywhere. The blacks of the whole world. Then came the politicians cutting the house in two...making her crude and pitiful puppet. Christophe! Pétion! Double tyranny, I reject them both.⁵⁰⁶

Metellus wants to be shot “like an incomparable dream”⁵⁰⁷ and he is. Killing Metellus on the battlefield while simultaneously believing a peaceful world is possible, Christophe sends an emissary to Pétion and the Senate.⁵⁰⁸ Pétion reminds the Senate that his government tolerates an opposition and says that he believes Christophe’s offer of reconciliation would mean those in the South would become subjects of the kingdom.⁵⁰⁹ Christophe accepts the mulattoes’ refusal to unite by returning North, but lamenting “poor Africa” first and “Poor Haiti” second.⁵¹⁰ This seems more a twentieth century recognition and, in 1960s diasporan parlance, a call for unity—Pan Africanism.

When not fighting Pétion and Maroon leaders, King Christophe clashes with the people declaring that, “Haiti’s enemies are internal...indolence, lethargy, lack of discipline.”⁵¹¹ Code Henri (1812) mandated fieldwork and other draconian measures reminiscent of France’s Code Noir, which Haitians viewed as a reimposition of slavery. To Christophe’s mind, he was (re) building a nation and a people. His monumental building projects—first, his palace, Sans Souci, and second, the fortress, Citadel La Ferrière—are nation building projects; Christophe justifies them as a way of inspiring and educating his people. Césaire’s vision is of Christophe bequeathing a tangible and

recognizable patrimony of Haitian pride, success, and determination.⁵¹² Citadel La Ferrière emerges as one way to inspire awe, and as Baron de Vastey, Chancellor of the Kingdom, remarked, “These two structures, erected by descendants of Africans, show that we have not lost the architectural taste and genius of our ancestors who covered Ethiopia, Egypt, Carthage, and Old Spain with their superb monuments.”⁵¹³ Sans Souci and Citadel La Ferrière were viewed by workers as embodying punishment and enslavement. The paradox of these ruins, specifically the Citadel, is that they are considered “the eighth wonder of the world, and [are] said to have cost the lives of some 20,000 workers during its construction.”⁵¹⁴ Ironically, these pharaonic constructions serve as transformative beacons of the truly revolutionary capacity of Haiti. The inconsistency between contemporary beacons to Haitian/Christophe’s audacity and monuments based on slave labor is biblical. Christophe’s symbols dually signal possibility and rationalization of authoritarian rule. Subsequent Haitian leaders, including President Faustin Soulouque (1847-49), who became self-crowned emperor, Faustin I (1849-59), and President Vilbrun Guillaume Sam, dictator in 1915, who like Christophe, “spread the rumor that he was immune to ordinary lead bullets and could be killed only by a silver one, and who was finally hacked to pieces.”⁵¹⁵ Christophe’s abuses of his court and subjects are part of the universal tragic flaw of all despots before him and since. However, his installation of the Royal Dahomets, predecessors of the Tonton Macoutes, entrenches brutality and his reign of terror. After his stroke, the Citadel **becomes** Christophe, his zemi,⁵¹⁶ and the keeper of his bones.

Though Césaire has no “crowd” in his play, the voices of the people are in some ways more evident in this text than in James’s with an overt debate on class signaled by

Christophe's monumental enterprises. The peasants proclaim, "we threw the whites into the sea not to slave for other people, even if they are as black as we are,"⁵¹⁷ and Christophe counters with, "Freedom cannot endure without labor."⁵¹⁸ Césaire layers the paradox—there is dissent from the top: how to govern, monarchy or republic? From the bottom, the contradiction unfolds around intra-race class contentions, illustrating that black success built on black oppression⁵¹⁹ will lead to another revolution. Not only does this shaping within the play allow the playwright to have these conversations, but it shows the world closing in on Christophe raising the stakes for this tragic hero as he is increasingly isolated.

The question of disposition of land is ultimately that of class. Pétion has proposed selling public lands to individuals. Christophe scoffs at this idea believing that it will lead to a country of tiny plots of peasants buying land, which Haiti is. This distribution of land, Dantes Bellegarde argues, makes Haiti the most democratic country because "Three-quarters of the territory belongs with full rights of ownership, to the Haitian peasants."⁵²⁰ Herve and Nicole Fuyet and Guy and Mary Levilain, authors of "Decolonization and Social Classes in *The Tragedy of King Christophe* by Aimé Césaire," loathe to critique Césaire because they are white and not fully cognizant of the oft mentioned "social and cultural forms and also because the context of the play is morally and historically very peculiar...we will thus have to be very cautious in our analysis."⁵²¹ Despite their hesitation, they manage to make interesting comments. They note that, "Christophe[, the character,] attempts to mask a class struggle by posing the problems of color and *négritude*."⁵²² They argue that Negritude, because it obfuscates the real necessities in the decolonization process, which "does not mean a simple shift of

power, an “Africanization” of the ruling class that would leave unchanged a structure serving the interest of the local elite and neo-colonialism,”⁵²³ is an outdated concept. The tension here is that the Fuyets and Levilains read Césaire’s play as a history, rather than an artistic representation. While analyzing Césaire’s depiction or lack of characters from the masses instead of focusing on a central heroic figure, they discuss the historical Christophe as if he, not Césaire, was the founder of Negritude.

The discourse of “Progress” is another site in which issues of manhood and black humanity commingle. One year after his coronation, Christophe asks, “Do we or don’t we need our own national poetry?”⁵²⁴ This question about art is another aspect of his larger conversation on progress and is clearly part of Césaire’s agenda. Christophe speaks of “a nation as a slow growing tree [that does not] have time to take it slow”:⁵²⁵

You don’t have to invent a tree, you plant it. You don’t extract fruit, you let it grow. A nation isn’t a sudden creation, it’s a slow ripening, year after year, ring after ring. Ha, that’s a good one! Sow the seeds of civilization, he says [referencing Wilberforce’s letter]. Yes, unfortunately, it grows slowly...Let time do its work...“Time, time! But how can we wait when time is holding a knife to our throats? ...how can we wait when the fate of a people is at stake? Ridiculous!”⁵²⁶

Christophe faces the dilemmas of the development paradigm: at whose pace to develop. In response to Hugonin’s observation that “each people has its own pace,” Christophe curses, “Damnation! Other peoples had time to build step by short step over centuries. Our only hope is to take long steps, year by groaning year,”⁵²⁷ and thereby expresses the idea of catching-up with and maintaining the pace of not just a global community but the first world. Like the echoes of globalization with colonialism, there are echoes with the development paradigm. How, to recall Samir Amin is the region to delink, retreat into

the self, in global economies and cultural exchanges? Is there any space for development at one's own pace in such a world? The obvious answer is no. Thus, the challenge becomes finding delinking spaces in the cracks or ruptures of globalization.

In Césaire's presentation of infinite rehearsal, the Master of Ceremonies, an *ougan*-like figure, or leader of a Vodou community, and the commentator, sometimes appearing as the Hugonin character, are the voices of both the people and history respectively. The former functions as Césaire's connection to the crowd and popular perspectives. The latter oversees the cockfight and explains the action to the audience. Though neither of these characters is listed in the character manifesto in Ralph Manheim's translation, they are important enough to be credited by Césaire. These characters are connections to the audience (the living) and the ancestors. The Master of Ceremonies involves the crowd in the play and those at the play, which engages the living. Simultaneously, Césaire scripts death rituals, enacted by Hugonin, a character who participates and comments on the action. In the end, as Christophe shoots himself, Hugonin reveals that he is Baron Samedi, the figure charged with ushering the dead to the world of the ancestors.⁵²⁸ The play ends with lavish funerary rites and the hope that Christophe's brand of strength, in Vastey's words, will find a home, "Upright against the mortar. Turned Southward...Not lying down. Standing. Let him make his own way amid hardship, rock and the industry of human hands."⁵²⁹

Christophe, who historically denounced Vodou, as a character invokes the power of thunder, as did "his Bambara ancestors...to speak, to make, to construct, to build, to be, to name, to bind, to remake."⁵³⁰ In the end, Césaire's Christophe is linked with the religion of the Haitian masses; an African based one, and invokes those gods in his final

moments of strength during the mass celebrating the Catholic Feast of the Assumption. Césaire puts Christian gods in direct combat with those born on Haitian soil. As the new Archbishop speaks, so, too, does Christophe--canonizing Toussaint and Dessalines. Seeing an apparition of Corneille Brelle, whom he had entombed alive because Brelle spoke out more than the nation required, he collapses believing someone has put “Bakula Baka” [a baka is an “evil spirit inhabiting the body of an animal”] on him.⁵³¹ This leads to his paralyzing stroke, which he sees as a betrayal of nature, “Is there anything worse than surviving yourself?”⁵³² Christophe’s stroke signals his earthly end. His generals desert him and the masses revolt.⁵³³ Nonetheless, his display of the strength necessary for the times, “I regret nothing. I tried to put something into an inhospitable land,”⁵³⁴ is regarded as the price to pay for black liberation. Though this type of hubris and messianic, top-down strategy falls apart because the people are not invested in his vision, which ultimately contributes to his downfall, Césaire’s rendering is not only sympathetic but also, ennobling. Christophe is presented textually as an example worth emulating. In fact, the Fuyets and Levilains claim that Césaire is one emulation of Christophe, “One hears in Martinique that Christophe is Césaire; this is only partially true. It is rather the whole play that would be a Césarian psycho-drama. Like Christophe, Césaire is aware of his failure but only partially of what caused it.”⁵³⁵ Unlike Christophe, Césaire has had opportunities to refashion himself through rehearsal and rereading. Ironically, Christophe’s Citadel stands as Haiti crumbles—politically and ecologically. The Citadel remains an inspiration and indeed a monument to greatness, a source of black pride.

Both The Tragedy of King Christophe and The Black Jacobins offer similar lessons on developing regional awareness in the Caribbean. Both texts foster regionalism

by addressing the large and overarching issues of liberating the process of identity formation in hostile spaces, and evolving a form of governance and leadership that are grounded in global realities. These texts emerging from globalization's predecessors—colonialism and neo-colonialism—mirror the struggles for liberation grounded in larger global economic and political contexts. The competing constructs articulated by Toussaint, Moïse, Dessalines and Christophe reflect some of the paths taken and asked for the juxtaposition of these paths with contemporary realities, especially as seen in The Black Jacobins with the invocation of black power, language and discourse. These plays offer no closed or single solution; rather they indicate that the solution will be ever evolving, even as core problems remain the same. Most of these texts portray Caribbean subjects as actors, as people fully invested in transforming the material and psychological conditions of their lives. The many challenges to the emergence of regional consciousness will involve organizational structure and distribution of resources, obstacles present at every level of administrative citizenship.

Césaire and James's plays are meditations and reflections of Caribbean citizenship, leadership, and race. James places the fallacy/ies of Toussaint's faith—his belief in the "goodness" and reasonableness of the French empire, while Moïse is never under such illusions and the path to independence is clear—not dependent on France, self-sufficient, leaving France and its empire behind. Moïse is anticipating what Samir Amin refers to as delinking as one strategy of retreating to build strength. Dessalines operates at the edges of both plays, more so James's than Césaire's, but still shadows the action. In contrast, Carpentier, who, like Césaire, was a member of The Society of King

Christophe's Friends, an intellectual fraternity,⁵³⁶ constructs a generally praised version of the Haitian Revolution and, of the most celebrated leaders, mentions only Christophe.

Carpentier's unconventional vision, based on an emerging articulation of the marvelous reality, is not as overt in its linking of a black Caribbean past with pan-African present. Carpentier's search for alternatives to Europe meant a construction of Haiti, through Vodou and its manifestation of Caribbeanness. Carpentier highlights the African origins of his Caribbean characters. In many ways, while the other two depictions were pan-Africanist, Carpentier's is the most Caribbean—centered in and concerned with the cultural formations in the region. Carpentier's writing could be construed as reactionary since he responds to his classification of post-war European decay.

Carpentier, according to Barbara Webb's Myth and History in the Caribbean, believed that,

Haiti represented the 'magical crossroads' of the New World history and culture...In Caribbean discourse, Haiti is often portrayed as the site of a revelation of consciousness...Carpentier saw Haiti as the antithesis and antidote to European cultural domination.⁵³⁷

Out of this and his experience with surrealists in France, "Carpentier returned to the Americas to formulate his own concept of the marvelous,"⁵³⁸ which, steeped in a Caribbean past, is in keeping with Wilson Harris's representations of the region. To effectively chronicle the marvelous, Carpentier, like Harris, confronts linear formations of space and time. These writers scrutinize history as theme and discipline by refashioning and rewriting Caribbean stories, which defy narrow notions of reality.

Jeannette Allsopp posits that Carpentier's vision of history is influenced by Oswald Spengler, who in The Decline of the West, characterizes the historical process as

“a dynamic, living thing, something which is in constant formation;” it is always becoming.⁵³⁹ J. Jebodhsingh reiterates, arguing that Carpentier creates a cosmic vision of the Haitian Revolution, “subsuming the socio-political nature of [it] within the larger metaphysical drama, with Afro-Haitian dynamism and European sterility [as] constant leitmotifs”⁵⁴⁰ a theme and a process, which Carpentier explores in Kingdom of This World (1949) and Explosion in the Cathedral (1962). Yet Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert in her 2004 article, “The Haitian Revolution in Interstices and Shadows: A Re-reading of Alejo Carpentier’s The Kingdom of This World,” disagrees with any grand and noble reading of Carpentier’s text. In her opinion, his novel never manages to move “beyond its time.”⁵⁴¹ Paravisini-Gebert’s challenge focuses primarily on what she terms Carpentier’s exoticism and fetishism of Vodou and his emasculation through omission of revolutionary leaders.

Other critics such as Allsopp and Jebodhsingh counter, arguing that Carpentier recalibrates the vision of the Haitian Revolution by shifting the gaze to leaders most connected to the masses, namely Macandal and Boukman. Today, the Revolution has come to simultaneously signify hopelessness and audacity. Despite its failings, Carpentier’s text “remains the only sustained literary rendering of the Haitian Revolution in the Spanish Caribbean.”⁵⁴² One, its existence, and two, its representation from a “mass” point of view make it a valuable text. I have engaged in an infinite rehearsal of my own with Paravisini-Gebert’s criticisms, many of which I find valid. However, in spite of her critique, Carpentier’s novel seduces me and I believe can still serve the regional integration project, primarily through an Amerindian postmodernist reading that features the strategy of rehearsal.

Rehearsal implies perfecting through repetition, rather than repeating. The difference is that repetition is knowing and purposeful. In rehearsal, choices are enacted: do it this way or try that way. When a method ceases to work, it is shifted, sometimes just through nuanced shifts in perception. Paravisini-Gebert's quoting of Joan Dayan's call for "representations that remain open, incomplete, contestable, and sometimes unsatisfactory in terms of 'literary' values: order, lyricism, eloquence or beauty,"⁵⁴³ accordingly, it is seeing the past through prismatic nuances that leads to change and is ultimately the legacy of Kingdom of this World. As with the other texts on the Haitian Revolution, this novel uses these events to construct notions of Caribbean citizenship juxtaposing an essential [Mandingo (meaning stereotypical black buck)] manhood with a limp European essence.

Alejo Carpentier's personal desire for an identity that challenged the Europe he knew intimately lead to somewhat conflicted expressions of Caribbean citizenship. Though born in Cuba, he was educated and lived in Europe from age twelve to adulthood⁵⁴⁴ and while he describes himself as Caribbean, particularly Cuban, writing a Caribbean novel or "recording" Caribbean history, his representations of the region are embroiled in his socialization. The Kingdom of this World opens and closes with epigraphs from the two founding fathers of Spanish dramaturgy—Lope de Vega and Calderon, who wrote during the seventeenth century. In the first inscription, the Devil asks, "where are you sending Columbus/ To renew my evil deeds? Know you not that long since I rule there?" The novel's final quotation, Calderon's, "I had fear of these visions/ But since seeing these others/ My fear has grown greater."⁵⁴⁵ Parts two and three include epigraphs from eyewitnesses, Karl Ritter's account of the sack of Sans Souci and

Laure Junot, Duchess d'Abrantes and friend to Pauline Bonaparte. The Duchess recounts that she told Bonaparte, "she would be queen out there; [and] that she need not fear snakes, for there are no snakes in the Antilles; [and] that the savages are not to be feared."⁵⁴⁶ These European voices reiterate the fear and uncertainty that Haiti and the New World generated. The playwrights relate the apprehension that America has always represented—a deal made with the devil and embodied in Columbus' conquest. A pact, that "visions" and imaginings garnered unease, but none compared to the horror of the reality. The eyewitness accounts, a clear counterpoint to Carpentier's non-realist mission, still manage to foreshadow the action. It is a foretelling not so much of [H]istory, Glissant's characterization of the master narratives of the past, but of the stories that shape the past. Could the Duchess's advice to Pauline Bonaparte be any more ironic? Haiti, while perhaps not a natural habitat of the actual snake, is the most symbolic snake site in the Caribbean. It is the territory of Damballah, a god, and Vodou, a cosmology, that terrorizes as it heals—that eludes classification and confinement, and is another instance in which Pauline becomes a worshipper of the snake—the phallus and Damballah, the snake god, while in Haiti.

Images of European decay are depicted in the exile community and in Pauline Bonaparte, sister of Napoleon and wife of General Leclerc. Unlike Christophe's death and burial, in which he is forever soldered with the blood of bulls embedded in the mortar⁵⁴⁷ of what he built, Leclerc's is pathetic. Her husband's death, in contrast to Christophe's, is painful, though quick, his "body [was] shaken by ominous chills. His eyes were yellow...The death of Leclerc, cut down by yellow fever, brought Pauline to

the verge of madness. Now the tropics seemed abominable, with the relentless buzzard waiting on the roof of the house in which someone was sweating out his agony.”⁵⁴⁸

By her husband’s death, Pauline Bonaparte, the only European female character to receive this much attention in the novel, is likened to blacks because of her Corsican blood. Under the guidance of Henri’s future valet and her servant of the body, who she enjoys teasing, Bonaparte ostensibly embraces Vodou over Christianity taking “an amulet to Papa Legba, wrought by Soliman, which was destined to open the paths to Rome for Pauline Bonaparte.”⁵⁴⁹ Paravisini-Gebert notes that Bonaparte “fills the vacuum left by Dessalines’ [omission and instead] of his military feats, [readers are treated] to Pauline Bonaparte’s sexual exploits.”⁵⁵⁰ I would reiterate that Dessalines is the most difficult revolutionary to make sympathetic and given Carpentier’s agenda of vilifying and exposing the debaucheries of a dying Europe against the essence of a generative and renewing America, his choice maintains a certain logic. America, as represented in Kingdom of this World, is not without its own violence, but Dessalines’ actions primarily characterized as “unreasoned” could not be part of the recuperative violence of Macandal, whose struggle and violence were linked not only to the *lwas* but to the **just** cause of liberation.

Citizenship manifests primarily through spirit-u-ality. Vodou as a spiritual practice is the adhesive that cements this society and community. Vodou means spirits and congregants are in service to the spirits or *lwas*. Vodou implies a reciprocal relationship between *lwas* and practitioners and falls into three levels of citizenship mentioned previously, Vodou reflects familial structures with leaders of “societies” or congregations the *ougan* (male) or the *manbo* (female).⁵⁵¹ The *ougans* are stern parental figures, given

unquestioned authority and “unconditional devotion...It is to be hoped that [they are] not abusive parents, but the social world of Haiti is harsh, and family life is never easy.”⁵⁵² Since Vodou is centered on the veneration of ancestors, it is fundamentally about family ties and linkages. Societies can be comprised of several families in a neighborhood congregating with a particular *ougan* or *manbo*, into *lakous*, or extended family compounds, especially in rural areas.⁵⁵³ In the cities, instead of blood, a Vodou community comes together through initiation.⁵⁵⁴ Vodou nations are no longer ethnic, but a “means of classifying the variety of spirits by the kind of rites that are offered to them.”⁵⁵⁵ According to Joseph M. Murphy in Working the Spirit, the variety of African – derived rites in Haitian religious life is understood by believers through the concept of ‘nation.’ The African origins of different spirits, dances, and drum rhythms are remembered as those of different ‘nations,’ ...Each vodou community will have arrived at its own constellation of nations to be invoked...[the most common being the] Rada, Petro (Petwo), Dahomey, Ginen, Congo, Nago, Ibo and Wongol.⁵⁵⁶

Murphy claims that “the Haitian revolution is very much alive in vodou ceremony and symbolism and it is this revolutionary spirit which gives vodou its critical force and fearsome image.”⁵⁵⁷ Thus, within Vodou there are ritual constructions of the family, the nation and resistance and through practice and rehearsal of these rituals the interplay between the living and the dead fomented. This energy accesses the past through spirit, dance and songs—the praying of possession/possessed bodies—the spirit and the body enter into infinite rehearsal through these rituals. The disjointed body becomes a gateway for an amalgamated consciousness.⁵⁵⁸

Vodou is the ultimate marker of Haitianness. It is a religion born of spiritual and cultural fusion of several African nations in Haiti. It is the ultimate expression of enslaved people coalescing across language and in experience. Carpentier represents those who fully embrace this religion, such as Ti Noël, Boukman, and Macandal, representing what is truly generative and empowering about Haiti's example and contribution to the Caribbean and the world, especially a lacking Europe. Haiti's religion is confined to that space as Ti Noël notes while exiled with his masters and other planters who fled Haiti for Cuba that Spanish churches have "a Voodoo warmth...a power of seduction in presence, symbols, attributes, and sings similar to those of the altars of the *houmforts* consecrated to Damballah, the Snake god."⁵⁵⁹

Paravisini-Gebert convincingly claims that Carpentier creates an otherizing, mystical, sensational version of Haitian Vodou and constructs the peasants of Haiti as passive subalterns of destiny. She effectively argues that Carpentier's use of the Haitian peasant and Vodou reinscribe Haiti and by extension Haitians as fetishized and exotic:

Carpentier stands in that slightly ambiguous terrain...committed on the one hand to an alternative depiction of Haitian history that emphasizes the people's enduring faith in Vodou and the *lwas*, yet not unwilling to fetishize aspects of that faith in his text in his quest for the magic-realist unveiling of that history required by the new literature he envisioned—a literature whose inspiration was to be found not in an autochthonous Caribbean tradition but in a more authentic version of literary Modernity than that proposed by European Surrealism.⁵⁶⁰

Additionally, Haiti's heads of state are barely discussed, except for Christophe who is caricatured. Paravisini-Gebert believes that while Carpentier links Dessalines to Vodou, he does it in a way, which "underscores the connection between Dessalines' ferocity and...his adherence with a militant blackness," which she claims makes him the most

radical figure of the revolution. In Carpentier's defense, while Dessalines may have been radical, he has been the most difficult leader of the revolution to reclaim. The Haitian people, whose veneration of the cult of Dessalines, hit an apogee in the 1940s⁵⁶¹ and, as Paravisini-Gebert argues, was widespread enough that Carpentier would have been made aware of it during his 1943 visit, did not revere Dessalines in life. In fact, they were part of the crowd that dissected him. As mentioned in the analysis of James and Césaire's work, try as they might, those writers could not redeem Dessalines' violence. On this point, Jeannette Allsopp, quoting Lloyd King, remarks that, "Toussaint Louverture, Dessalines and Henri Christophe are assigned relatively uncomplimentary roles, because of their record of hostility to voodoo [sic]."⁵⁶²

While Carpentier obliquely refers to the revolutionaries most associated with the liberation of Saint Dominigue, he devotes most of his energy envisioning the worldview of magic-spiritual leaders—Macandal, Boukman, a Jamaican, and Christophe, originally from Grenada or St. Kitts, king and builder of the ruins Carpentier visited in 1943. Carpentier's Haitians, those who dynamically belong to the soil, are, for the most part, Vodou acolytes. He depicts this religion, linked to the soil and the ancestors, in a [highly] mystical way [which most religions are]. Vodou is literally transformative: Macandal, Mama Loi, Boukman, and eventually Ti Noel are able to shape-shift. These lycanthropic powers fuel the fire of Carpentier's emphasis on magic and its traces to the highly problematic The Magic Island. While the depiction of Macandal and Boukman veer toward the romantic, they are, like Dayan and Paravisini-Gebert's renderings of Dessalines, unswervingly loyal to the black liberation cause.

Spiritual-political leaders, particularly Ti Noël's hero, Macandal, are represented as virile, noble, African warrior kings, whose, "precious seed distended hundreds of bellies with a mighty strain of heroes."⁵⁶³ In this instance, as with Césaire's Christophe, Macandal is the nation's progenitor, implanting literal and figurative Haitianness. His African leadership style exists in opposition to European norms. Macandal, as king, led his generals in battle, unlike the kings of Spain and France who "send their generals to fight in their stead."⁵⁶⁴ The opening and closing chapters of the novel juxtapose a waning, literally waxed and debauched Europe with a throbbing, mysterious Africa in the Caribbean. Yes, the throbbing harkens back to the mystic, magic island, which is why Paravisini-Gebert's arguments are salient. Ti Noël awaits his master, M. Lenormand de Mézy, who visits the barber and observes that the wax heads in the barber's window are like the pickled calves heads in the neighboring butcher's window. "In a morning rampant with heads," M. Lenormand de Mézy quits the barber,

his face now bore a startling resemblance to the four dull wax faces that stood in a row along the counter, smiling stupidly. On his way out M. Lenormand de Mézy bought a calf's head in the tripe-shop, which he handed over to the slave...Ti Noël clasped that white, chill skull under his arm, thinking how much it probably resembled the bald head of his master hidden beneath his wig.⁵⁶⁵

And Ti Noël,

in a kind of mental counterpoint silently hummed a chanty...that even though the words were not in Creole [heaped] ignominy on the King of England...He had little esteem for the King of England, or the King of France, or of Spain, who ruled the other half of the Island, and whose wives, according to Macandal, tinted their cheeks with oxblood and buried fetuses in a convent whose cellars were filled with skeletons that had been rejected by the true heaven which wanted nothing to do with those who died ignoring the true gods.⁵⁶⁶

These two examples highlight Europe as waxen, waning, and headless—its future and its present entombed with fetuses in the cellars of virginal and/or celibate orders. Europe has its own pagan blood rites and rituals. In the second passage, Ti Noel makes it clear that he has “little esteem” for kingship in a European mold. These kings who had no strength, who were associated with skeletons and the unborn dead did not impress him because, like Christophe to come, they ignored the true gods.

In death, unlike the European example which come to an end, where death equals the end of possibility, African-connected heroes triumph over and are full of strength and life. The one-armed Macandal, burned alive, though witnesses swear he escaped; Black people gather to witness Macandal’s execution. He had been captured and sentenced to being burned alive, however chaos breaks out and the crowd is distracted. In the fracas, soldiers throw Macandal into the fire, head first, but

when the slaves were restored to order, the fire was burning normally...there was no longer anything more to see. That afternoon the slaves returned to their plantations laughing all the way. Macandal had kept his word, remaining in the Kingdom of This World. Once more the whites had been outwitted by the Mighty Powers of the Other Shore.⁵⁶⁷

Paravisini-Gebert characterizes this as yet another example of Carpentier’s otherizing of the Haitian masses because,

even in his depiction of Makandal’s execution the novel, which is intended to signal the extraordinary power of the slaves to maintain their faith in Makandal’s survival despite the reality before them...the slaves may be deluded by faith into believing that Makandal survived. The planters and soldiers of the text—and most importantly, Carpentier and his readers—know he has not.⁵⁶⁸

To this, I would agree that Carpentier sets himself, the soldiers and those (readers) who **know** as part of a dying society. This is similar to the distinction between science, the

knowable universe (man as god) and alchemy, an unknowable universe (man with god), in which linear characterizations are a death, while a multiplicity of readings foster life. Carpentier, as the creator or writer of this representation, is implicated by his lack of faith and understanding of what the New World has produced. Like these white characters and the readers, Carpentier as writer knows the facts, but these facts have taken them nowhere. Yet, he too, implicated by his socialization and contextualization, may have found it difficult to embrace the uniqueness of this personality that he ultimately values. Let us remember, Carpentier is escaping from Europe, literally on the run. Jeannette Allsopp argues that

neither Toussaint, Christophe nor Dessalines had access to the leadership of the powerful institution of voodoo [sic]....Carpentier's point that none of the three espoused the indigenous religion of their African ancestors which underpinned Haitian culture, and in that sense they betrayed the very cause for which they were fighting.⁵⁶⁹

I would assert that Carpentier ultimately illustrates that Vodou, and perhaps by extension Afro-Caribbean religions generally, is a way to reclaim the enslaved person's sense of self and humanity in the face of overwhelming obstacles. It claims a way of being in the world, and is a more dimensional construct than one simply designed to evoke the magical. It is about believing that the facts are not automatically true or real.

Boukman, head on a pike, continued to live through transformation. Even the maligned and paralyzed Christophe actively chose "his own death...would never know the corruption of his flesh, flesh fused with the very stuff of the fortress, inscribed in its architecture, integrated with its body, bristling with flying buttresses...the whole mountain, had become the mausoleum of the first King of Haiti."⁵⁷⁰ Carpentier's text, while as male-centered as the others, more generally constructs Caribbean citizenship and

manhood in opposition to European norms. His overarching emphasis on this dichotomy, though using male figures, is not the same salvation of black manhood seen in James and Césaire. Nonetheless, these three representations of the Haitian Revolution are limited by testosterone-heavy constructions of masculinity. Apart from James's excellent and enlightened, especially in light of an absence of other models, portrayal of Marie-Jeanne, there are no other counterpoints to the Revolution as a [white/black] phallus orgy.

Paravisini-Gebert's criticism of Carpentier, in that he otherizes Haiti and never takes the characters beyond the realm of fascination; because he is locked into this idea of history as circular, he cannot move beyond embedded structures of governance. Therefore, he characterizes Henri Christophe as the white master in blackface, who will be followed by mulattoes who "repeat" the same behavior. That is one reading; to which I would also add that neither James nor Césaire in their representations could move beyond these points. To her point that Dessalines, the only revolutionary to truly challenge the entrenched system, who Carpentier substitutes with a chapter on the excesses of Pauline Bonaparte. First, the representation of Pauline Bonaparte as the alive, but dead ultimate European zombie is exactly Carpentier's point and second, that of Dessalines as hero is something that James and Césaire have difficulty celebrating.

I find Dayan's depiction of Dessalines fascinating. However, it is clear, in global constructions of black male savages, why Dessalines remains a difficult figure to embrace politically or in a political project on citizenship, especially the more middle-class the voice. And though the Haitian masses embrace Dessalines in death, it is not until the advent of twentieth century post-colonial struggles, especially those in Africa, that Caribbean writers confront, in their lifetimes—through their experience—issues of

armed struggle and the notion of annihilating one's oppressor. Perhaps I am an apologist for Carpentier and perhaps in keeping with Paravisini-Gebert's criticism—he is time bound—but there were very few examples challenging, through violence at the level of that perpetrated by Dessalines, entrenched power structures. Conceivably if Carpentier had ingested (really understood it from the inside—*become* it) rather than imbibed Vodou, he would have embraced a worldview that allowed him to conceive and inscribe a more challenging text in that regard.

The representation of the Revolution from Ti Noël's perspective is one of hopelessness for Paravisini-Gebert or one of the demonstrations of revolutionary consciousness for J. Jebodhsingh. Carpentier's Ti Noël, the name taken from a Maroon leader, is no revolutionary, according to Paravisini-Gebert,

despite his share of active participation in the Revolution, [he] never sheds his oppression through the texts. [Thus,] the name [and spirit] of Ti Noël has been misappropriated in this instance; [and] his lack of agency only underscores Carpentier's insistence on imposing a structure of hopelessness on the narrative of a Revolution whose meaning should not have been thus circumscribed.⁵⁷¹

Jebodhsingh, after equally harsh criticism of Carpentier's representation of history, concludes that Ti Noël is in fact, an example of the lonely witness-participant:

He is ultimately a powerful symbolic character intended as a source of didacticism and inspiration to Caribbean people. Ti Noël represents the black West Indian man who has experienced a sort of spiritual odyssey with his history to eventually undergo a major psychic transformation: from relatively passive slave to revolutionary, consciousness of the necessity of commitment to political responsibility. Having experienced the major phases of his country's history, he finally achieves revolutionary consciousness.⁵⁷²

Echoing Jebodhsingh, the Fuyets and Levilains, though discussing Césaire's tragedy, make a point that is applicable in this instance. Using Hegel's master-slave construct, they maintain,

the master will use the slave as an extension of his own body to transform nature through labor. He ceases to transform nature and... just enjoys it. The development of the master's consciousness is stopped at this point. [However,] the slave's choice to live is the first phase of liberation. Labor will be the second [because] by confronting the object, the slave explores its structure and his labor.⁵⁷³

Ti Noel and the enslaved in Saint Domingue chose to live; likewise, people of the Caribbean have chosen life. However, in the globalized marketplace in which work is uncertain and there is competition for the lowest waged jobs without security, the second frontier of consciousness has to be rearticulated. This issue of class is not overtly addressed in this text, but is embedded in it: class within the society—mulattoes and blacks; and class within the global order—third and first world or developing and developed.

The Black Jacobins, The Tragedy of King Christophe, and Kingdom of this World are three representations of Haiti's revolution, which build regional Caribbean consciousness through the method of rehearsal (rehearsed readings). These readings (rehearsals), which, in turn, reflect prismatic shifts in meaning and interpretation, result in critical engagement which can deepen with every iteration, unlike cyclic, repetitious readings of history, which yield more passive engagement with and less dimensional understanding of the past. Using nonlinear strategies and/or plays, the Haitian Revolution becomes one event of the past that signaled Caribbeanness as well as a way of rehearsing the past to develop new experiences and notions of Caribbean citizenship

which will lead to another Caribbean revolution, another complete overhaul (hopefully with more positive results), en route to Caribbean unification.

⁴²⁰ Kurlansky, Mark. *A Continent of Islands*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1992, 191.

⁴²¹ James, CLR. "From Toussaint L'Ouverture to Fidel Castro." In *The Black Jacobins*, 393.

⁴²² Haiti invaded and occupied the Dominican Republic in 1822 until 1844. For this reason and the continual "encroachment" of Dominican space by Haitian workers, has created a tense relationship. One often manifesting in blood, for example the 1937 slaughter of Haitian workers by Dominican leader, General Trujillo—who didn't want Haitians "darkening the population, which officially did not recognize black people;" and the recent use of the Dominican Republic by the forces that ousted Aristide.

⁴²³ Harris, Wilson. *Infinite Rehearsal*. London, UK: Faber and Faber, 1987, 1.

⁴²⁴ Benítez-Rojo, Antonio. "The Repeating Island." In *Do the Americas Have a Common Literature?* Ed. Gustavo Pérez-Firmat. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990, 90-93.

⁴²⁵ Benítez-Rojo, Antonio. "The Repeating Island." In *Do the Americas Have a Common Literature?* Ed. Gustavo Pérez-Firmat. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990, 86-87.

⁴²⁶ Spivak, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. Eds Bill Ashcroft, et al. London, UK: Routledge, 1995, 24-28.

⁴²⁷ Dash, Michael. "The Disappearing Island: Haiti, History and the Hemisphere." The Fifth Jagan Lecture and the Third Michael Baptista Lecture at York University March 20, 2004. York, Canada: CERLAC, 2.

⁴²⁸ "Declaration of Man." <http://www.hrcr.org/docs/frenchdec.html> August 15, 2004.

⁴²⁹ The representatives of the French people, organized as a National Assembly, believing that the ignorance, neglect, or contempt of the rights of man are the sole cause of public calamities and of the corruption of governments, have determined to set forth in a solemn declaration the natural, unalienable, and sacred rights of man, in order that this declaration, being constantly before all the members of the Social body, shall remind them continually of their rights and duties; in order that the acts of the legislative power, as well as those of the executive power, may be compared at any moment with the objects and purposes of all political institutions and may thus be more respected, and, lastly, in order that the grievances of the citizens, based hereafter upon simple and incontestable principles, shall tend to the maintenance of the constitution and redound to the happiness of all. Therefore the National Assembly recognizes and proclaims, in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being, the following rights of man and of the citizen: Articles: 1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good. 2. The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression. 3. The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. No body nor individual may exercise any authority which does not proceed directly from the nation. 4. Liberty consists in the freedom to do everything which injures no one else; hence the exercise of the natural rights of each man has no limits except those which assure to the other members of the society the enjoyment of the same rights. These limits can only be determined by law. 5. Law can only prohibit such actions as are hurtful to society. Nothing may be prevented which is not forbidden by law, and no one may be forced to do anything not provided for by law. 6. Law is the expression of the general will. Every citizen has a right to participate personally, or through his representative, in its foundation. It must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law, are equally eligible to all dignities and to all public positions and occupations, according to their abilities, and without distinction except that of their virtues and talents. 7. No person shall be accused, arrested, or imprisoned except in the cases and according to the forms prescribed by law. Any one soliciting, transmitting, executing, or causing to be executed, any arbitrary order, shall be punished. But any citizen summoned or arrested in virtue of the law shall submit without delay, as resistance constitutes an offense. 8. The law shall provide for such punishments only as are strictly and obviously necessary, and no one shall suffer punishment except it be legally inflicted in virtue of a law passed and promulgated before the commission of the offense. 9. As all persons are held innocent until they shall have been declared guilty, if arrest shall

be deemed indispensable, all harshness not essential to the securing of the prisoner's person shall be severely repressed by law. 10. No one shall be disquieted on account of his opinions, including his religious views, provided their manifestation does not disturb the public order established by law. 11. The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Every citizen may, accordingly, speak, write, and print with freedom, but shall be responsible for such abuses of this freedom as shall be defined by law. 12. The security of the rights of man and of the citizen requires public military forces. These forces are, therefore, established for the good of all and not for the personal advantage of those to whom they shall be intrusted. 13. A common contribution is essential for the maintenance of the public forces and for the cost of administration. This should be equitably distributed among all the citizens in proportion to their means. 14. All the citizens have a right to decide, either personally or by their representatives, as to the necessity of the public contribution; to grant this freely; to know to what uses it is put; and to fix the proportion, the mode of assessment and of collection and the duration of the taxes. 15. Society has the right to require of every public agent an account of his administration. 16. A society in which the observance of the law is not assured, nor the separation of powers defined, has no constitution at all. 17. Since property is an inviolable and sacred right, no one shall be deprived thereof except where public necessity, legally determined, shall clearly demand it, and then only on condition that the owner shall have been previously and equitably indemnified.

<http://www.hrcr.org/docs/frenchdec.html> August 15, 2004.

⁴³⁰ Geggus, David. "The Haitian Revolution." *The Modern Caribbean*. Eds. Franklin W. Knight and Colin A. Palmer. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989, 22-23; CLR James, *The Black Jacobins* (history), 33-34.

⁴³¹ James, CLR. *The Black Jacobins*, 74.

⁴³² Dayan, Joan. *Haiti, History and the Gods*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998, 271.

⁴³³ Allsopp, Jeannette. "History Re-Interpreted in Carpentier's *El reino de esta mundo*." In *History and Time in Caribbean Literature: Proceedings of the XI Conference on Spanish Caribbean Literature April 1988*. Ed. Claudette Williams. Institute of Caribbean Studies, Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies, 1992, 21.

⁴³⁴ Nettleford, Rex. *Caribbean Cultural Identity: The Case of Jamaica*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1978/2000, .

⁴³⁵ James, CLR. *The Black Jacobins* (Play). In *A Time and A Season: Eight Caribbean Plays*. Ed. Errol Hill. Trinidad and Tobago: School of Continuing Studies, the University of the West Indies, 1993, 418-419

⁴³⁶ Gaspar, David Barry and David Patrick Geggus, Eds. *A Turbulent Time*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997, viii.

⁴³⁷ James, CLR. *The Black Jacobins* (play), 428.

⁴³⁸ James, CLR. *The Black Jacobins* (play), 427.

⁴³⁹ James, CLR. *The Black Jacobins* (play), 446.

⁴⁴⁰ James, CLR. *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1938/1989, 370-372.

⁴⁴¹ James, CLR. *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1938/1989, 373-374.

⁴⁴² James, CLR. *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1938/1989, 373. Joan Dayan supports the claims of a vengeful Dessalines by quoting him, "We have rendered to these true cannibals, war for war, crime for crime, outrage for outrage; yes, I have saved my country; I have avenged America." Dayan, *Haiti, History and the Gods*, 4.

⁴⁴³ Dayan, Joan. *Haiti, History and the Gods*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995, 17.

⁴⁴⁴ Dayan, Joan. *Haiti, History and the Gods*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995, 24.

⁴⁴⁵ Dayan, Joan. *Haiti, History and the Gods*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995,

⁴⁴⁶ Dayan, Joan. *Haiti, History and the Gods*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995, 17.

⁴⁴⁷ Dayan, Joan. *Haiti, History and the Gods*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995, 17.

⁴⁴⁸ Paravisini-Gebert, Lizabeth, 126

⁴⁴⁹ Linné, Carl von. "The God-given Order of Nature." In *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*. Ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1997, 11-13.

⁴⁵⁰ George-Louis Leclerc. "The Geographical and Cultural Distribution of Mankind." In *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*. Ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1997, 21-23.

- ⁴⁵¹ Hume, David. "Of National Characters." In Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader. Ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1997, 33.
- ⁴⁵² Hume, David. "Of National Characters." In Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader. Ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1997, 33.
- ⁴⁵³ Kant, Immanuel. "On National Characteristics." In Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader. Ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1997, 53, 57.
- ⁴⁵⁴ Burton, Richard D.E. "The French West Indies à l'heure de l'Europe." In French and West Indian: Martinique, Guadeloupe, and French Guiana Today. Eds. Richard D.E. Burton and Fred Reno. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1995, 2.
- ⁴⁵⁵ Senghor, Leopold Sedar. "Negritude: A Humanism of the Twentieth Century" (1966). In I Am Because We Are: Readings in Black Philosophy. Eds. Fred Lee Hord and Jonathan Scott Lee. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995, 45. Negritude is often criticized as essential because it places black difference on the level of biology rather than situated in social factors. (Richard DE Burton, "Negritude, Antilliante, Creolite, 141)
- ⁴⁵⁶ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 354.
- ⁴⁵⁷ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 395.
- ⁴⁵⁸ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 405.
- ⁴⁵⁹ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 401.
- ⁴⁶⁰ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 401.
- ⁴⁶¹ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 421.
- ⁴⁶² James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 421.
- ⁴⁶³ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 425.
- ⁴⁶⁴ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 426.
- ⁴⁶⁵ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 428.
- ⁴⁶⁶ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 417.
- ⁴⁶⁷ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 417.
- ⁴⁶⁸ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 418.
- ⁴⁶⁹ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 417.
- ⁴⁷⁰ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 384.
- ⁴⁷¹ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 385.
- ⁴⁷² James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 388.
- ⁴⁷³ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 446.
- ⁴⁷⁴ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 448. and the history, 371.
- ⁴⁷⁵ According to Vèvè Clark's study of the approximately 63 plays written on the Haitian Revolution from 1796-1975, about four of them are written by women and two deal with the daughters of Toussaint and Christophe, 240, 255-56. In "Haiti's Tragic Overture." In Representing the French Revolution. Ed. James A.W. Heffernan. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1992.
- ⁴⁷⁶ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 410.
- ⁴⁷⁷ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 414.
- ⁴⁷⁸ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 441.
- ⁴⁷⁹ James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 415-416.
- ⁴⁸⁰ I make note of their twins, Jacques Bien-Aimé and his sister Célestine Dessalines born in April 1793, because twins and the idea of doubleness—la marasa, the twins—are crucial parts of the Vodou worldview. <http://www.4dw.net/royalark/Haiti/haiti2.htm> January 12, 2005. According to Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, Marasa Twins "are endowed with special powers and hold a privileged position...They are invoked and greeted after Legba [and] are often depicted s three, because twins represent abundant life, and triplets mark exceptional fertility." Creole Religions of the Caribbean, 116-117.
- ⁴⁸¹ <http://www.4dw.net/royalark/Haiti/haiti2.htm> January 12, 2005.
- ⁴⁸² James, CLR. The Black Jacobins (play), 387.
- ⁴⁸³ Wilson-Tagoe, Nana. Historical Thought and Literary Representation in West Indian Literature. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1998, 28.
- ⁴⁸⁴ Miller, Paul B. "Enlightened Hesitations: Black Masses and Tragic Heroes in C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins*." In MLN 116 (2001) The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1085.
- ⁴⁸⁵ Miller, Paul B. "Enlightened Hesitations: Black Masses and Tragic Heroes in C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins*." In MLN 116 (2001) The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1085.

- ⁴⁸⁶ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 56-57. This policy is remarkably like those in many, often fascist nations, including the latest Republican marriage initiative in the US, which “encourages” women to marry their children’s father to be eligible for government benefits.
- ⁴⁸⁷ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 48.
- ⁴⁸⁸ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 72.
- ⁴⁸⁹ Bellegarde, Dantes. “Alexandre Pétiou: The Founder of Rural Democracy in Haiti.” In Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 3, No. 3, December 1953, 171.
- ⁴⁹⁰ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 17.
- ⁴⁹¹ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 18.
- ⁴⁹² Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 18.
- ⁴⁹³ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 21.
- ⁴⁹⁴ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 28.
- ⁴⁹⁵ Allsopp, Jeannette. “History Re-Interpreted in Carpentier’s El reino de esta mundo.” In History and Time in Caribbean Literature: Proceedings of the XI Conference on Spanish Caribbean Literature April 1988. Ed. Claudette Williams. Institute of Caribbean Studies, Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies, 1992, 24.
- ⁴⁹⁶ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 12.
- ⁴⁹⁷ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 12.
- ⁴⁹⁸ The Senate elected Pétiou in March 1807 after Christophe rejected the presidency and was re-elected in 1811 and 1815. His 1816 Constitution “reorganized the legislative body, established a life term for the Presidency, giving the head of State the right to nominate his successor; as well as providing free elementary education for boys, redistributing national lands and creating a landed peasantry; and supporting Simon Bolivar independence dreams.” In “Alexandre Pétiou: The Founder of Rural Democracy in Haiti.” By Dantes Bellegarde. In Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 3, No. 3, December 1953, 170-172.
- ⁴⁹⁹ List characteristics of this code. Code Henri (1812) mandated fieldwork and other draconian measures reminiscent of France’s Code Noir, which Haitians viewed as a reimposition of slavery.
- ⁵⁰⁰ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 41.
- ⁵⁰¹ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 54.
- ⁵⁰² Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 43.
- ⁵⁰³ Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. Silencing the Past. Boston, MA: Beacon, 1995, 59-60. “Christophe’s reliance on transformative rituals, his desire to control both humans and death itself are epitomized in his last moments. Having engaged unsuccessfully in various rituals to restore his failing health and knowing that he had lost the personal magnetism that made his contemporaries tremble...a paralyzed Christophe shot himself, reportedly with a sliver bullet.”
- ⁵⁰⁴ Olmos, Margarite Fernández and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert. Creole Religions of the Caribbean. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2003, 113.
- ⁵⁰⁵ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 17.
- ⁵⁰⁶ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 30-31.
- ⁵⁰⁷ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 31.
- ⁵⁰⁸ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 33.
- ⁵⁰⁹ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 35.
- ⁵¹⁰ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 36.
- ⁵¹¹ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 18.
- ⁵¹² Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 43.
- ⁵¹³ Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. Silencing the Past. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995, 36.
- ⁵¹⁴ Clark, Barrett H. quoted in Vèvè Clark. “Haiti’s Tragic Overture.” In Representing the French Revolution. Ed. James A.W. Heffernan. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1992, 250.
- ⁵¹⁵ Clark, Vèvè. “Haiti’s Tragic Overture.” In Representing the French Revolution. Ed. James A.W. Heffernan. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1992, 247.
- ⁵¹⁶ A zemi is the Taino term for gods, but more commonly “the idols and fetishes representing them, which were made from the remains of ancestors or from natural objects believed to be inhabited by powerful spirits.” In The Tainos: Rise and Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992, 13.
- ⁵¹⁷ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 48.
- ⁵¹⁸ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 49.

- ⁵¹⁹ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 71.
- ⁵²⁰ Bellegarde, Dantes. "Alexandre Pétiou: The Founder of Rural Democracy in Haiti." In Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 3, No. 3, December 1953, 171.
- ⁵²¹ Fuyet, Herve and Nicole and Guy and Mary Levilain. "Decolonization and Social Classes in *The Tragedy of King Christophe* by Aimé Césaire." In Weapons of Criticism: Marxism in America and the Literary Tradition. Ed. Norman Rudich. Palo Alto, CA: Ramparts Press, 1976, 359.
- ⁵²² Fuyet, Herve and Nicole and Guy and Mary Levilain. "Decolonization and Social Classes in *The Tragedy of King Christophe* by Aimé Césaire." In Weapons of Criticism: Marxism in America and the Literary Tradition. Ed. Norman Rudich. Palo Alto, CA: Ramparts Press, 1976, 363.
- ⁵²³ Fuyet, Herve and Nicole and Guy and Mary Levilain. "Decolonization and Social Classes in *The Tragedy of King Christophe* by Aimé Césaire." In Weapons of Criticism: Marxism in America and the Literary Tradition. Ed. Norman Rudich. Palo Alto, CA: Ramparts Press, 1976, 363.
- ⁵²⁴ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 40.
- ⁵²⁵ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 40.
- ⁵²⁶ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 86.
- ⁵²⁷ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 87.
- ⁵²⁸ Cosentino, Donald. Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou. Los Angeles, CA: University of California, 1995, 430.
- ⁵²⁹ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 94.
- ⁵³⁰ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 26.
- ⁵³¹ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 78-79.
- ⁵³² Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 80.
- ⁵³³ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 84-85.
- ⁵³⁴ Césaire, Aimé. The Tragedy of King Christophe, 86.
- ⁵³⁵ Fuyet, Herve and Nicole and Guy and Mary Levilain. "Decolonization and Social Classes in *The Tragedy of King Christophe* by Aimé Césaire." In Weapons of Criticism: Marxism in America and the Literary Tradition. Ed. Norman Rudich. Palo Alto, CA: Ramparts Press, 1976, 368.
- ⁵³⁶ Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. Silencing the Past. Boston, MA: Beacon, 1995, 32.
- ⁵³⁷ Webb, Barbara. Myth and History in the Caribbean, 17-18.
- ⁵³⁸ Webb, Barbara. Myth and History in the Caribbean, 18.
- ⁵³⁹ Allsopp, Jeannette. "History Re-interpreted in Carpentier's El reino." ?" In History and Time in Caribbean Literature: Proceedings of the XI Conference on Spanish Caribbean Literature April 1988. Ed. Claudette Williams. Institute of Caribbean Studies, Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies, 1992, 22.
- ⁵⁴⁰ Jebodhsingh, J. "The Writer as Historian: Poetic Truth or Factual Truth in El reino de este mundo?" In History and Time in Caribbean Literature: Proceedings of the XI Conference on Spanish Caribbean Literature April 1988. Ed. Claudette Williams. Institute of Caribbean Studies, Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies, 1992, 40.
- ⁵⁴¹ Paravisini-Gebert, Lizabeth, 126.
- ⁵⁴² Paravisini-Gebert, Lizabeth. "The Haitian Revolution..."115.
- ⁵⁴³ Paravisini-Gebert, Lizabeth, "The Haitian Revolution..." 121.
- ⁵⁴⁴ Jebodhsingh, J. "The Writer as Historian: Poetic Truth or Factual Truth in El reino de este mundo?" In History and Time in Caribbean Literature: Proceedings of the XI Conference on Spanish Caribbean Literature April 1988. Ed. Claudette Williams. Institute of Caribbean Studies, Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies, 1992, 32.
- ⁵⁴⁵ Carpentier, Alejo. The Kingdom of This World. Trans. Harriet de Onís. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949/1957, 7.
- ⁵⁴⁶ Carpentier, Alejo. The Kingdom of This World. Trans. Harriet de Onís. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949/1957, 55.
- ⁵⁴⁷ Carpentier, Alejo. The Kingdom of This World. Trans. Harriet de Onís. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949/1957, 120.
- ⁵⁴⁸ Carpentier, Alejo. The Kingdom of This World. Trans. Harriet de Onís. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949/1957, 96, 101.
- ⁵⁴⁹ Carpentier, Alejo. The Kingdom of This World. Trans. Harriet de Onís. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949/1957, 101.

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- ⁵⁵⁰ Paravisini-Gebert, Lizabeth, 125.
- ⁵⁵¹ Murphy, Joseph. M. Working the Spirit: Ceremonies of the African Diaspora. Boston, MA: Beacon, 1994, 15-16.
- ⁵⁵² Murphy, Joseph. M. Working the Spirit: Ceremonies of the African Diaspora. Boston, MA: Beacon, 1994, 26.
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masquerade: total ritual theatre

In the development of an indigenous culture in the Caribbean (and no West Indian Federation can be really without it) no element is of greater potential importance than a West Indian theatre, for the theatre is the meeting place and the nursery of the arts. At the same time the initial obstacles are formidable. The three essential elements in the theatre—the playwright, the actor and the audience—must exist together if the theatre is to be a living reality in the life of the people.

--Review of *Henri Christophe* in West India Committee Circular, February, 1952⁵⁷⁴

This chapter examines the Caribbean Arts Festival (Carifesta) as a potentially unifying event for artists and audiences as well as theatre and theatrical method as a way to foster unity on stage and facilitate intra-group dynamics. These methods are prospective sites for enacting the concerns of Amerindian postmodernism, solidifying regional consciousness and identity, and making concrete plans for a regional governing apparatus.

The development of Caribbean theatre spans a wide trajectory. Some colonies enjoyed theatre reproduced from colonial centers, while others had few formal staged productions. Bridget Jones characterizes francophone Caribbean theatre as “an arena of privilege [underwritten] by French political and administrative decisions [and which highlights] the paradoxical strains of dependency and difference.”⁵⁷⁵ The drama, produced in these *départments*, began with imitation of French dramaturgy. The theatre buildings themselves were versions of theatres in France,⁵⁷⁶ which hosted visiting “operas, operettas, melodramas, etc.”⁵⁷⁷ Surviving Creole drama, those plays that

encompassed local color and themes, emerged in the mid-twentieth century and often privileged French norms through using Creole languages in local situations.⁵⁷⁸ Overtly political theatre arrived on the scene, via regional touring productions⁵⁷⁹ generally from France in the 1970s, and was “use[d] as a tool to raise awareness and campaign for independence.”⁵⁸⁰ The 1980s “decentraliz[ing] measures...meant that each *département* was simultaneously a ‘region’ [which restructured] budget disburse[ments] through a regional office of cultural development.”⁵⁸¹ This has enabled consolidation of theatre infrastructure and collaboration on theatre projects across the francophone Caribbean, especially between Guadeloupe and Martinique.⁵⁸² Thematically, French Caribbean playwrights have been interested in history, memory, language, and their privileged status in the greater Caribbean; and like their regional compatriots, these artists have developed variations on ritual and total theatre forms.

Vèvè A. Clark argues that Haitian theatre suffered a similar malaise, being largely imitative until the 1950s. Reliance on French practices “and conformity to an already mastered mode of representation...encased the problems in a womb of acceptability for implied theatergoers of the era.”⁵⁸³ The mid-twentieth century heralds the adaptation of “experimental... dramatic theories [and] Marxism...mixing them with homegrown popular performance modes existing still in storytelling, Vodoun, and Carnival.”⁵⁸⁴ Thus, Haitian New Theater is in line with the larger developmental process of Caribbean theatre because it “shares with other performance perspectives within the contemporary Caribbean an interest in adaptation, satire, and allegory as well as a commitment to the use of indigenous and international performance techniques.”⁵⁸⁵ Similarly, Dutch Caribbean theatre has evolved its own total theatre and ritual forms. Suriname’s Doe

Theatre is one example that employs local language, ritual, and improvisation.⁵⁸⁶ Actor and director Henk Tjon, and writer and journalist Thea Doelwijt, developed this theatre in 1973, which lasted until 1982 when military repression made the climate unfriendly. Doe Theatre addresses Suriname's particularities through a pioneering method, which trained "actors [by]drawing from the Parblaka burial rites of the Amerindians, the Wajang shadow plays of the Javanese, the Hindu Ramleela and Beera performances, and the Winti religion that African maroons had preserved almost intact."⁵⁸⁷

Self-actualized drama in the anglophone territories emerged in the 1930s as black people responded to economic and political upheaval through writing and drama. Errol Hill, progenitor and chronicler of anglophone theatre, makes the following key assertions about drama: (a) to exist it must be performed; (b) language of a play must be speakable; (c) drama is action and the action must be realized; (d) drama must be a religious experience to succeed; (e) and, drama should be a social and communal act.⁵⁸⁸ These assertions, intertwined with four critical components of drama, are: heard languages based on speech, actors, stage technicians, and an audience.⁵⁸⁹ Foundationally, drama is about orality and contact. Formal and European Caribbean dramas have been part of the backdrop since the seventeenth century; until the mid nineteenth century, folk (black) drama centered around the celebrations of Cannes Brulees, John Canoe, and religious rituals.⁵⁹⁰ Keith Noel argues that the rituals brought from Africa and India "though unique could hardly be considered drama"⁵⁹¹ because they are not **self-aware**. Noel asserts that drama goes beyond the rote aspects of ritual.

Theatre development, in terms of indigenous forms and productions, was aided and abetted by "the establishment in 1947 of the University College of the West Indies

whose extramural tutors helped to encourage the writing and publication of plays...the notion of popular theatre and the use of the vernacular.”⁵⁹² Independence in the Commonwealth Caribbean also marked an upsurge in theatrical production. At that moment, theatre helped form the nation by cementing and consolidating aspects of cultural and national identity. Theatre validated the “new day” in the Caribbean using Creole languages, forms, and themes. Drama, as national and nationalistic production, has developed into political, community-based theatre, first identified with the Teatre Nuevo Movement in Cuba.⁵⁹³ This discussion focuses on concretizing the how of political theatre in light of disillusionment and the overall pressures of globalization.

As stated in the opening epigraph, [traditional] theatrical production needs three elements—the playwright, the actor, and an audience—and recognizing the synergy of this triad has meant the development of particular forms. One form, not discussed here, is Carnival, derived from pre-Lenten festivals and other street theatre. (Consult Errol Hill, Gordon Rohlehr, and Keith Q. Warner for more in-depth discussion of Carnival and calypso.) Edouard Glissant boldly claims, “There can be no nation without a theatre.”⁵⁹⁴ He contends that theatre is an opportunity to use, through **reflection**, the lessons and **experience** that folklore **illuminates**.⁵⁹⁵ Therefore, it is through a reflective theatre that harnesses and represents indigenous experiences that a person, native, citizen can come to terms with her nation and the larger world.⁵⁹⁶ For Glissant this means utilizing the emotional and conceptual frameworks generated in the Caribbean.⁵⁹⁷ The epigraph reiterates, as does Hans Robert Jauss,⁵⁹⁸ that making meaning depends on the author, text, and audience. This central concept of an audience who participates physically and/or emotionally is linked to the impact, as elucidated by quantum physics, of the witness. In

the context of quantum physics, there must be a witness on “the thing” for it to exist, “Quantum theory doesn’t describe the world that way [the idea that big things are made of little things]. Big things aren’t made of little things; they’re made of entities whose attributes aren’t there when you don’t look, but become there when you do look.”⁵⁹⁹ This notion of the witness-participant, who makes meaning can be understood as guiding the process of coming into a regional consciousness.

Section one of this chapter considers the first component of the triad, the artist and opportunities for greater regional interaction. The potentials presented by a “roving” Caribbean Arts Festival are enticing and enormous. The second section examines Rawle Gibbons’ calypso drama, The Calypso Trilogy, and Michael Gilkes’ ritual drama, Couvade. This section, associated with the most traditional role of the witness-participant, explores the various developments of indigenous aesthetics from reggae and calypso to dancehall. Finally, Theatre of the Oppressed,⁶⁰⁰ as developed by Brazilian Augusto Boal, is put forth as an example of theatrical methodologies for use beyond the stage. It is theatre technique as a form of action, building community capacity by facilitating consciousness-raising. This is the most personal, therapeutic, and potentially skill-building component for the witness-participant.

CARIFESTA

Georgetown, Guyana hosted the first Caribbean Arts Festival, more commonly known as CARIFESTA (Carifesta), in 1972. Since then, there have been seven Carifesta celebrations throughout the region.⁶⁰¹ Carifesta, built on at least two previous regional festivals, (Puerto Rico 1952, for the Federation Festival of Arts, Trinidad 1958, for the launching of the anglophone Federation),⁶⁰² intends to be a regional arts showcase that

“fosters a Caribbean personality.”⁶⁰³ According to the 1996 report, “The Future of CARIFESTA,” the festival’s primary focus is to “depict the life of Caribbean people, illustrate their similarities and differences, create an enabling environment for art and artists, and awaken a regional identity through literature.”⁶⁰⁴ In recent years, the festival has faltered from, among other things, an identity and economic crisis and disinterest on the part of the public and the artistic community.⁶⁰⁵

The Caricom Secretariat’s Task Force on Carifesta commissioned consultant Keith Nurse to assess the festival’s viability. His 2004 report, “Reinventing Carifesta: A Strategic Plan,” proposes a structural business and export paradigm for energizing future Carifestas. Nurse notes several weaknesses: Carifesta’s institutional vagueness as an appendage of Caricom with no authority or decision-making power of its own. Host countries that manage each festival individually through “an ad-hoc management structure that emerges at the hosting of the festival and disbands after completion...with institutional absence between hostings;” and the fact that countries determine who they send to the festival leading to “conservative and repetitive content.” Next, beyond the host country, Carifesta is not covered in the media and “is not accessible to the Greater Caribbean or the wider world.” Finally, a sense of history is lacking:

Carifesta suffers from a lack of data, information, strategic analysis and institutional memory. There is such limited documentation of the history and impact of the festival that there has been little to no basis to see the idea of CARIFESTA to key stakeholders like governments, media, sponsors, cultural enterprises and artists.”⁶⁰⁶

Among Nurse’s amelioratives are the establishment of a permanent Carifesta directorate, marquee or “super concerts to generate a profit,” the subcontracting of cultural entrepreneurs to organize film, book, theatre, and music fairs “and other activities

including workshops and exhibitions [to] facilitate trade and export opportunities, media exposure and collaborations among artists.”⁶⁰⁷ While Nurse effectively lays out a plan to market Carifesta through a “festival tourism model” and other economic concerns, the cultural and artistic impact receives cursory attention.

Rawle Gibbons quotes Lloyd Braithwaite’s assertion that “the position of the artist reflect[s] the position of society,”⁶⁰⁸ a scenario played out in and at Carifesta. Indeed every artist functions in such a reflective capacity. What does this mean, though, for a dispirited Caribbean seeking to build nations, and for my purposes, a regional nation, that artists are either consigned to only “popular quick sellers” or to leaving and writing for [people in] the Caribbean from someplace in the West? What do the artists reflect in this event? Both artists and cultural workers are “forced” to live in the diaspora, the transnation or to make local, indigenous forms translatable and packaged for export or the tourist market, a type of cultural off-shoring (often conducted in tourist export zones—all inclusives) itself. Thus, packaged and produced for consumption, the particulars of location (the Caribbean) become a selling point and not much more. Extending this notion of commodification, Derek Walcott rightly raises the question, “what is the society doing to house the artist, to make him feel he should remain” rather than just trotted out on festival occasions?⁶⁰⁹ Caribbean governments have a history of bringing artists out for political and economic gain. Thus, many are leery of the larger implications of these festivals as well as life and livelihood beyond them.

Yet 1972, like Federation in the late 1950s, marked another era--buoyed by hope (Ghana’s independence leader Kwame Nkrumah died and Jamaica elected Michael Manley among other notable events) when Caribbean territories were still in the thrall of independence. Forbes Burnham, Guyana’s Prime Minister, made a call for a regional arts

festival in 1966, reiterated it in 1970, and realized it by August 1972. According to Kaie, first the journal of the National History and Arts Council and eventually an arm of the Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture, the Prime Minister “stressed that nations that had achieved political independence and were on the march to economic independence, needed to develop a tradition of artistic independence.”⁶¹⁰ To this end, Burnham:

pledged that his government would ...create the atmosphere which would encourage artists to cease being émigrés...for recognition. [Instead, they] would give meaning to the aspirations of the new nation. He dreamt of literature inspired by the peculiar temperament of West Indians, of painting inspired by tropical jungles of Guyana and the beautiful waters of the Caribbean, of sculpture visualising the forms of our forefathers in the dim and distant past; of Makonaima and the legend of Kaieteur, of research into the language and art forms of the Amerindian peoples and of borrowing from the European forms without slavishly following their trends. [Finally,] he also dreamt of a Caribbean nation ‘instead of a group of islands masquerading as independent states and believing that they can survive in this twentieth century world.’⁶¹¹

This festival, marketed as Burnham’s dream, invigorated attendees and participants. The standing-room only and sold out shows⁶¹² indicated that despite its top-down nature it spoke to an unmet need and connected with the general public. This need for larger Caribbean connections through reflection, seeing the self in various artistic manifestations, seriously discussing these reflections, evoked a latent regional consciousness, which was recognized by the participating states and populations. Burnham stressed artistic freedom and expression, something that would be in short supply for Guyanese dissidents by the late 1970s, and subsequent Carifesta participants who depend on government patronage. Nurse maintains that in part, the sagging

Carifesta model is a result of governments choosing the representative talent. He is right. Carifesta, as he argues, must remain a venue for critical, experimental, and entertaining cultural production if it is to reflect Caribbean societies while encouraging their growth.

Subsequently, Carifesta 1972 was not simply a watershed moment in terms of Burnham's political acumen, regional consolidation around the notion of unity, but it also highlighted the deep fissures of ethnicity, misunderstanding, and resources sharing beneath the celebratory mask. Co-mingling with the festival's lofty goals were Guyana's internal conflicts. Before the event, Carifesta had been pitched as unifying for Guyana and the region,⁶¹³ a sentiment Burnham reiterated during the opening ceremonies: "[this] is one manifestation of ...the concept of the Caribbean nation and the right of the Caribbean to speak to the world not as a satellite or the appendage to other nations, but as one single nation."⁶¹⁴ However, beneath the surface bubbled the contradictions of Guyana's ethnic cleavages. Though, as reported in the Sunday Chronicle, Dr. Cheddi Jagan, the Opposition Leader, was "on-board" by August 1972, it was not without some trepidation. Dr. Jagan's remarks encouraged Caribbean artists to work in service of the people and "break out of the [colonial] mould...in the same way that the black people in the USA with their jazz and blues and spirituals voiced their suffering, hopes and aspirations, so the artist must use their creative abilities."⁶¹⁵ Dr. Jagan's welcome and supportive speech downplayed tensions that had been brewing for more than a year leading up to the event.

The Guyana Council of Indian Organizations (GCIO) called for a boycott of Carifesta over fiscal mismanagement. The GCIO wanted trade unions and other civic organizations to withhold support citing the government's use of the Indian Immigration

Fund to build Carifesta infrastructure. This fund was established in 1864 to finance Indian immigration to British Guiana (BG) through various taxes to landowners and for licenses, such as marriage certificates. By 1869, the government was unable to pay the repatriation passages of Indians, and instead offered them land, which they accepted.⁶¹⁶ The fund, however, remained until after Independence when Burnham chose to spend it to build the National Cultural Centre. This fund, somehow, came to symbolize the Oppositions' claims that making "Carifesta a priority project [given the financial] circumstances of the country," was clear malfeasance. The government's response, through Minister of Culture, Mr. Elvin McDavid, and as reported by the Guyana Graphic newspaper of December 21, 1971, was, "since the Opposition had already expressed its support for the festival...he found it contradictory that they should now question the expenditure of the festival in terms of a priority project." The GCIOs efforts failed, receiving no support from the Trades Union Congress or local Churches.⁶¹⁷ Additionally, the Oppositions' argument carried weight as issues of funding perpetually surfaced. In spite of internal funding issues, Rickey Singh reported that "Britain, Canada and the U.S., have, in turn been made to appreciate the importance being attached by the Prime Minister to Carifesta,"⁶¹⁸ while Germany donated a "tropicalized" piano and planned a local fundraiser.⁶¹⁹ Despite these manifestations at the official levels, artists were making more positive efforts to participate across racial divisions. Noted choreographer and dancer, Gora Singh, along with a troupe of high school students, participated in an "Evening of Indian Music," which focused on Per Ajie, "the first indentured woman to set foot on Guyana soil." Though Raschid Osman's review of the evening was mixed, noting that the venue was filled to "three-fourths" its capacity, but he expected a larger

audience to come the following evening.⁶²⁰ These political, economic, and foreign policy maneuverings aside, artist participants also commented on Carifesta.

The artists of the British-based Caribbean Artists Movement (CAM) looked favorably upon Carifesta '72 as a dynamic moment of possibility, which they participated in and planned. In Anne Walmsley's cultural history of CAM, The Caribbean Artist Movement 1966-1972, she recounts the impact of Carifesta on the group's members, particularly Kamau Brathwaite, who described the event as "Emancipation Day come true."⁶²¹ Critically, Brathwaite also believed that the stress on entertainment relegated writers to the sidelines. Instead of access to a large audience, the writers were confined to the public library because, "there was too much preoccupation by the organizers—with the immediate and emotional impression of the people, rather than a concern for a more lasting and meaningful impression."⁶²² Correspondingly, the same sense of possibility pervaded regionally. Aimé Césaire, Negritude proponent and mayor of Fort-de-France, Martinique, raised the money for the Martiniquan contingent in 1976.⁶²³ In the July 1972 edition of The Black World, which featured Edward Brathwaite's scathing critique of James Baldwin's performance in a discussion on race with Margaret Mead, entitled "Race and the Divided Self,"⁶²⁴ there is an extended advertisement cum article from the Carifesta Publicity Committee. In the piece, published one month before the event, the promoters characterize Carifesta as a Cultural Carnival, which is "a vision of people creating a spiritual oneness among themselves through coming together [and which] has moved from merely a dream to [being] on the lips of millions in the region whether they speak Spanish, English, Portuguese, Dutch, French or one of the many, musical *patois*."⁶²⁵ A year later, in the premier issue of the diasporic journal Shango: The

Magazine of the Caribbean, which “attempts to deal with the aspirations of the...approximately five million Caribbean people in North America,”⁶²⁶ edited by Selwyn Cudjoe, Carifesta '72 triumph continues. Cudjoe's excitement is palpable as he describes the various exhibitions and workshops from over thirty countries. He recounts that,

the range of presentations were [sic] enormous...the vitality and creativity of the culture, rich in its Africanness which seems to pervade every aspect of the life...these elements in a few short weeks was [sic] to see the visible cultural ties that bind the West Indies in terms of its common heritage and to understand it as a resource that could be utilized for national awakening and self development.⁶²⁷

Cudjoe captures the dynamic and interactive space, recalling the “impromptu discussion of U.S. Caribbean Studies programs.”⁶²⁸ Carifesta continued to encourage intellectual debate especially on the role of the artist and other favored Caribbean themes. Gordon Rohlehr's seminal, “The Creative Writer and West Indian Society” was part of Carifesta '72, while Edouard Glissant's influential, “The Quarrel with History,” debuted at Carifesta 1976.⁶²⁹ These early Carifestas were particularly fruitful for artistic and intellectual exchange between artists and among the attending public. Indeed the revival of Carifesta, not just as festival tourism, but as a dynamic cultural event, will reignite some of the vigor and dynamism that it had and which now other festivals like Jamaica's annual Calabash Festival claims. These festivals function as showcases for a range of artistic work, particularly theatrical production.

Total and Ritual Theatre

Errol Hill proposes that regional drama must reflect a people's experience and emerge from indigenous models.⁶³⁰ The performing arts as expressed through drama heighten the expression of one's experiences. Theatre **embodies** the reflection of a

people's experiences and gives drama the weight and depth of human experience. Native Caribbean theatre practices included *areyto*, a "total" theatre, in which "complex theatre-dance forms incorporate music and full-dress costume to recount the historical, religious, and cultural repertoire of the society⁶³¹," and which were performed in Cuba and the Dominican Republic; and a ritual theatre, the *cohaba*, was a "priestly ceremonial dance that included hallucinogenic drugs."⁶³² These two traditions are part of the pre-Columbian landscape of Caribbean theatrical history, and, according to Judy Stone, total theatre appeals to the folk, a broad audience, while ritual theatre retrieves Caribbean coping mechanisms through the overt use of ritual forms.⁶³³ Glissant characterizes these two essential theatrical forms as "the profane and the sacred."⁶³⁴

Total theatre is "the only truly West Indian theatre," which incorporates "lavish costumes and the major performing arts into a loose musical."⁶³⁵ While often musical, "Derek Walcott's total theatre is atypical of the region in that its prime element is minutely crafted language."⁶³⁶ Total theatre uses festival forms and characters, like those in the festival pantheon: Carnival (Midnight Robber, Jab Molassi, etc.), Jonkunnu, Cropover, and Hosey to make its point.⁶³⁷ Total theatre is festival on stage, full of wit, recognizable characters who emerge from local folklore and realities, music, and audience participation. Folklore characters ranging from Anancy-like tricksters, to folk heroes such as porknockers--prospectors of the Guyanese interior--populate these productions.⁶³⁸ The rubric of total theatre encompasses developments such as Calypso Theatre, Carnival Theatre, the Jamaican Pantomime, and Bufo Theatre in Cuba and the emerging theatres based on reggae and dancehall aesthetics. Total theatre is a vehicle for

social commentary similar to the musical forms of calypso and reggae that are embedded in it.

Similarly, ritual theatre employs the rituals and even the festivals that have emerged from Caribbean realities in order to probe the psyche of Caribbean people. Ritual theatre not only uses the ritual for content, but as form. Innovations facilitated by the Caribbean Lab, an arm of the Jamaican School of Drama, led to the development of ritual theatre.⁶³⁹ Mastery of this form lies in “extracting the theatrical essence of any ritual while retaining the interplay of the ritual.”⁶⁴⁰ Moreover, these rituals are part of a pan-Caribbean heritage that Rawle Gibbons argues “can speak with absolute faithfulness to an audience in any part of Caribbean.”⁶⁴¹ Ritual is one way to facilitate an experience, which through familiar actions, creates awareness. It is witnessing the everyday in profound terms that allows a space for consciousness raising. The productions are often “intensely intellectualized experiments in the creation of a mentally stimulating theatre peculiarly West Indian, not only in form, but in every aspect of its genesis and presentation.”⁶⁴² Both total and ritual theatre reiterate the shared aspects of the Caribbean experience, building on the latent Amerindian trace and traditions that emerged out of plantation survival strategies and the retentions of Africans, Indians, and other Asians.

The two plays I examine are Calypso Trilogy (1999) by Rawle Gibbons, Trinidadian playwright and producer, and Couvade (1972) by Michael Gilkes, Guyanese poet, playwright, and Wilson Harris scholar. Calypso Trilogy, though defined by Judy Stone as ritual theatre, functions more as total theatre, primarily because of the Carnival tropes and spectacle it utilizes. It is important to recognize that because of total theatre’s ritual roots there is bound to be overlap, as is the case in Gibbons’ play. Calypso Trilogy is, in its playwright’s words, “a challenge for the theatre (not for the first time) to place

itself in the mainstream of popular entertainment.”⁶⁴³ Louis Regis characterizes Gibbons’ play as a calypso drama, one that “originates in a complex of social contexts and serves a multiplicity of social roles.”⁶⁴⁴ Regis claims that “the trilogy bridges the academic and the artistic in that it dramatizes the history of the calypso but highlights story-lines suggested by calypso fictions, narratives, and commentaries...The trilogy imaginatively reconstructs calypsonians from their calypsos rather than from their biographies.”⁶⁴⁵ Gibbons fulfills Hill’s theatrical criteria, especially speakableness, religiousness and the social and communal act, since he utilizes people’s language, the “spirit”uality of their experiences and reproduces a social and shared experience.

Gibbons’ trilogy historicizes the twentieth century development of calypso, a music originating in the Caribbean that is characterized by, “a satirical song in rhymed verse, which comments on any recognized figure/s or aspect/s of Caribbean social life, performed by a male singer with much body gesture and some extemporization directed at the audience.”⁶⁴⁶ The play is divided into three units, which serve as demarcation points. The first, “Sing De Chorus,” traces life in the 1930s and 1940s using “classic calypsos” and is set in the Port-of-Spain barrack yard of La Cou Kaiso, “famous for its calypso tent.”⁶⁴⁷ The second play, “Ah Wanna Fall,” is set in the postwar era, and “Ten to One,” the final play, takes place in the 1950s and 1960s. From this vantage point, the audience meets the most famous and infamous practitioners of the calypso art form: Spoiler (Theophilus Phillip), Invader (Rupert Grant), Kitchener (Aldwin Roberts), and Sparrow (Slinger Francisco); as well as young hopefuls, their families, and all the characters of the barrack yard—tricksters, buffoons, jamenttes (colloquial for “bad woman” or “yard woman,” sometimes prostitute), and badjohns. Through these characters and their music, the action chronicles the economic, political, and cultural

history of Port-of-Spain and calypso. Gibbons' scope is operatic and his work is comparable to an *opéra comique*.⁶⁴⁸

Notwithstanding, this is no opera; the trilogy is, as Regis states, calypso drama. In his definitive history on the subject, Calypso and Pre-Independence Trinidad, Gordon Rohlehr provides greater contextualization of the historical backdrop, noting that calypso dramas evolved as innovation in calypso performance in the 1930s. These performances began as duets between two calypsonians because the “duet [would] extend the dramatic potential of the Calypso, by allowing for contrast, dialogue, and the dialogical development of the plot.”⁶⁴⁹ Rohlehr argues that this form is a microcosm of Trinidad's cultural resilience, “The process by which Trinidad has absorbed such powerful external influences and still retained sufficient energy to affirm its own distinct yet multi-valent, self-hood, has been a complex one.”⁶⁵⁰ The three forerunners of this form were Attila (Raymond Quevedo), Lion (Hubert Raphael Charles), and Beginner (Egbert Moore) and they “produced a full Calypso Drama involving a number of calypsonians each of whom would sing the part of a character.”⁶⁵¹ Besides structuring the plays and generating the action, the call and response component of African-derived musics incorporates an audience by having them participate in the action—Hill's communal theatrical experience. When calypsonian character Attila asks, “You want to hear ‘Country Club Scandal,’ yes or no?”⁶⁵² the audience's response determines the action. In that scene and others that follow, the audience is invited to sing along from their seats or to join the performers on stage.⁶⁵³ Spectators participate in the action through these invitations and with a series of asides and other moments of breaking the fourth wall. This imaginary construct normally demarks the world on stage from that of the patrons; however, in

Gibbons' text there is constant interaction as with Ming's rounds through the audience to collect money so that Spoiler can support his family and avoid incarceration.⁶⁵⁴ Such engaged interfacing fosters patron investment in the lives of the characters and ultimately their own lives, since the characters are reflections of their histories. In the case of Ming's collection, it concretely illustrates the initial undervaluation of calypsonians by the society and may even remind members of the public about their own domestic juggling and perhaps have them wishing that someone would take up a collection on their behalf. Though relayed comically, Spoiler's fund drive demonstrates the proverb, "Hand wash hand, mek hand come clean." This simple break in the barrier between actor and audience reiterates the communal nature of Trinidadian society. The economic hardships of the artist and other characters, may have viewers making the connection, by the end of the play, about the global phenomenon of poor places, going with literal and metaphorical "hat in hand" to richer countries, although such an analysis more than likely comes with further reflection rather than in the frenzied interactive space of the theatre.

Calypso shapes the plays linguistically and structurally. It is not only the form and language of the barrack yard, the club, dancehall, and street, but also the courtroom and The University of Woodford Square, an outdoor teaching and debating space established by Eric Williams', Caribbean scholar and Trinidad Prime Minister.⁶⁵⁵ Calypso emerges in counterpoint to the imposed colonial language, and in essence becomes the language of life, which, like the society it represents, includes broader contradictions and indicates the creolized nature of Trinidad and its speech. The drama reiterates that kaiso, a synonym for calypso, is more than singing; it is a way of life; it is a worldview, a way of knowing the world.⁶⁵⁶ In another scene, Tants, also known as Doris,

the owner of Tantie's Teashop, in a space she rents from Mr. Wright, and Dr. Paul, her resident customer, admirer, and organic intellectual, discuss the need for rhyming language in her sign denying credit, "In God We Trus', In Man We Bus'." Tants laments, "Rhyme? Is a calypso? I ask you to make a sign? All I want is a little proper English. That is too much, Dr. Paul?" He responds, "Well, you see, sometimes in order to get the message across you does have to bend the rules a little, Doris...if you know what I mean."⁶⁵⁷ In History of the Voice, EK Brathwaite makes the distinction between English and the structures of language that influence "speaking and *thinking*."⁶⁵⁸ In this essay, Brathwaite asks, "how do you get a rhythm which approximates the *natural* experience, the *environmental* experience?"⁶⁵⁹ Tants and Dr. Paul's conversation captures some of Brathwaite's concerns. First, calypso music and its language embedded in picong, or satirization, and social critique is a critical language, which constantly challenges and comments on societal norms. "Music," Brathwaite contends, "is the surest threshold of the language from which it comes."⁶⁶⁰ Moreover, a critical language is an engaged and invested language. Not only is conversation between Tants and Dr. Paul about "trus" [credit], but it is also about language and how communities interact—their conversation poses questions in a language that is always interrogating even under the cover of humor. Therefore it emerges from specific environmental and material conditions which marks its territory.⁶⁶¹

Brathwaite elaborates that "nation language" is a submerged language, one that captures natural and environmental experience, and is not dialect, nor is it influenced by the pentameter, but "by the African aspect of our New World/Caribbean heritage."⁶⁶² Undoubtedly, nation language is a submerged language of a latent consciousness; and as

such is an instrument in not only recuperating the past and representing the present, but also of forging a future. Two crucial components in Brathwaite's definition of nation language are its physicality and its all-encompassing dimension. The movement of the tongue to form dactyls, the breath, as well as its sound, the actual noise and vibration of the utterance, physically distinguishes these languages from the physicality of other languages.⁶⁶³ Likewise, its cosmic nature, which Brathwaite calls "total expression, demands griot and audience to complete the community: the noise and sounds that the maker makes are responded to by the audience and are returned to him. Hence we have the creation of a continuum where meaning truly resides."⁶⁶⁴ As a result, Gibbons' use of total expression in total theatre serves as a continual ebb and flow between structure and content, all while representing the history of a musical tradition and posing the ontological questions of "who are we and how we live." Gibbons' facility in this area demonstrates his light touch in bringing complicated histories and questions to the fore.

French Creole in the early calypsos in addition to various registers of Standard English and Trinidadian Creole, such as those spoken by Spoiler, Spoilese, and his wife, Imelda's, backwards talk, are some of the languages on display. Though the French Creole in most songs is limited to individual words or phrases, "History of Carnival" and "In My Own Native Land"⁶⁶⁵ use it in their refrains. However, in the French Caribbean, the issue of Creole language as nation language is under duress with many (e.g., Glissant and Arion) arguing that "the growing hegemony of the French [European] language itself must also be considered since Creole has reached a state of exhaustion and has become more French in its daily usage."⁶⁶⁶ As Frank Martinus Arion describes it, one of the languages of the "Dutch" Caribbean, Papiamentu "is still struggling to gain an official

status. The anti-Creoleness forces have managed to get the Dutch government ...to openly manifest its intention to subsidize only those projects that benefit or at least do not threaten the position of the Dutch language.”⁶⁶⁷ These developments and challenges illustrate that for every text such as Calypso Trilogy, there are forces, undergirded by the rhetoric of good intentions, which will constantly try to frustrate further engagement and strategic deployment of nation language/s.

Nonetheless, these elements of language in Trinidad and other Caribbean countries are a unifying element for most sectors of the society. In this trilogy, every character, except the tourists, speaks Creole,⁶⁶⁸ a phenomenon that both Arion and Glissant highlight.⁶⁶⁹ Mr. Wright, the white calypso promoter, Jean, a white beauty queen and Lula, an East Indian, speak this nation’s language. Beneath this ‘talk’ and the employment of various linguistic registers is the idea of metaphor. One illustrative example is the exchange between Figs, a calypsonian and “idler,” and Ribero, a Portuguese club owner. Ribero questions Figs about the promotional language for Spoiler’s fundraiser—a charity event to help Spoiler fulfill his role as family provider and which Ribero’s club will host. Figs decides to market the event as a “fountain of youth” dance. When Ribero voices his concerns that such exaggeration is on par with perpetrating a hoax, Figs replies, “Hoax? Ribero, Ribero, This is Trinidad, Carnival Country! Anything could happen! You have no sense of metaphor or what?” In a country built on linguistic trickery and turn of phrase, Figs’ exaggerations are expected and accepted because the metaphorical terrain is elastic enough to encompass these fictions. Figs’ comment not only indicates that language should be hyperbolic, but also creates a

space for realizing this fantastic possibility because in Carnival country anything can happen.

In addition to linguistic tricks, several trickster and masking characters are features of the drama. Gerald Aching investigates the social, national, and personal power of masking as “representational sites of national and regional cultural identities [in which the mask is deployed], as in the Yoruba tradition, not necessarily to hide but to protect.”⁶⁷⁰ Denaturalizing power relations means asking and answering the questions: hiding from what or protection from what? Masking is part of the calypsonians’ linguistic and performative repertoire because they often had to hide indirectly, through metaphor and other linguistic masquerades, the objects of their vituperation. Individually, these musicians masked themselves—all until recently having performance sobriquets. Calypsonians were wandering wordsmiths “stigmatized as lazy...because their nomadic existence gave them the reputation of shiftlessness,”⁶⁷¹ especially in the early days when they had to criss-cross Trinidad to earn money on the competition circuit.⁶⁷² Two such characters, though only one is a calypsonian, in “Ah Wanna Fall,” are Ma Popo, a grandmother from Toco, and Ming, Figs’s friend and fellow idler-calypsonian, each masking to exercise power, seemingly harmless, over the other.

Ma Popo walks three days, arriving in Port-of-Spain to have a literal “las’ lap,” while in Toco, family and friends are busily planning her funeral. In response to Tina, her granddaughter’s inquiry about the folks back home, Ma Popo responds, “I tell you everything they good. I leave them preparing for funeral.”

Tina: Lord in heaven! I just know was some bad news. Who dead?

Popo: Done the braying, chile. Nobody ain’t dead.

Tina: But you say they having a funeral.

Popo: I say 'preparing.' It ain't happen yet, so don't start no wailing.

Tina: But who, Ma Popo? Who Dying?

Popo: Chile, me. I going and dead....

Tina: You sure? You see a doctor?

Popo: Doctor? I never went to one in my life, them and priest, and I not going by none to dead. The old people singing in my head nights in a row, that is how I know.⁶⁷³

Later, decked out in her finery, Ma Popo becomes her youthful alter ego, Bernice, and meets Ming, who is masquerading as calypsonian Kitchener. Ma Popo's mask is about using youth and beauty to find and capture prey, a man. Ming's, similarly, is to find a woman using Kitchener's reputation and talent. Their masks are eventually removed with Ming's confessing his identity to avoid the amorous advances of the denuded Bernice.⁶⁷⁴

The literal masks used in the masquerade extend linguistic masking, and reveal and conceal the power dynamics central to plantation societies. Carnival as a sanctioned moment of masking creates a site and moment of reversal and an inversion of power. However, to invoke the power or the use of the mask outside of the sanctioned space is to destabilize power configurations. These trickster figures, though in the play for comic relief, are also part of the Carnival landscape and the calypso drama. Trickster figures, generally emerging from folklore, come into being from experience and, as Glissant would argue, invite people into more critical engagements of the world around them.

In addition to incorporating the folkloric and linguistic aspects of the Trinidadian scene, the plays address the commodification of calypso. Gibbons includes references to the Andrew Sisters cover of Lord Invader's "Rum and Coca Cola;" and Decca Records' recognition of the calypso art form, paying ten dollars per song and recording calypso stars as if they were "Rudy Vallee and Bing Crosby."⁶⁷⁵ Tourists believe that Jamaica is

the land of calypso and Trinidad the land of the hummingbird or hibiscus. They are not sure; and as one tourist remarks, “Who cares? Hey, can you guys do a real Harry Belafonte calypso? I mean, like the genuine thing?”⁶⁷⁶ This commodification not only leads to misrecognition of the entire region, with islands easily substituted for each other in the tourists’ mind, but this also highlights the continued masked and unmasked plantation. Gibbons’ intent here could have been twofold—first, to illustrate that to the larger world the Caribbean is one indistinguishable lump; and second, to remind the audience that, though there are many similarities readily visible to external eyes, internal differences will not be easily camouflaged.

As cultural history and entertainment, this calypso trilogy is very effective. The plays tackle issues as far-reaching and wide-ranging as life: world wars, migration, work, colorism, economic competition, domestic arrangements, censorship, corruption, and education. Dr. Eric Williams, Trinidad’s Premier, and his famous March 1961 address, “Massa Day Done,” at the University of Woodford Square are featured during the opening of “Ten to One,” the final play in the trilogy. The plays address the politics and economics of calypso and federation and vividly portray how calypsonians have moved from artists who scratch out a living on the fringes of society to actually negotiating the terms of their work and moving into mainstream acceptance. Gibbons explores women as calypso subjects and as singers. In “Sing de Chorus,” he highlights Lady Iere’s calypsos as well as women’s depiction in calypso.⁶⁷⁷ Finally, the play ends with Sparrow in a conversation with the black women of the “Ten to One,” jamenttes, mothers and shopkeepers that he ridiculed in his songs.⁶⁷⁸

Race relations, discussed in a comparative fashion, juxtapose Trinidad with the United States. The calypsonians survey Trinidad's move from crown colony to independent state, white flight, and other hardships. Tants' inability, as a black woman, to secure a loan versus Lulu's ability to marshal family resources, which allows her to buy *Oriental Delites*, formerly Tantie's Teashop, from white Mr. Wright⁶⁷⁹ is simultaneously subtle and overt. Though both scenes are short, the reasons for this discrimination are clearly stated and made visible. Inter-ethnic conflict while affecting economic possibilities is preferable to the lynching of blacks in Alabama and the "Mock Democracy" in the U.S.⁶⁸⁰

The legal battle to decriminalize calypso has artistic and economic repercussions and is a thread throughout the plays, beginning with "The Theatre and Dancehall Ordinance of 1934," in "Sing de Chorus," which, in Gordon Rohlehr's estimation, was "simply part of a [larger legislative policy] aimed at policing thought in the Colony."⁶⁸¹ Under the guise of enforcing safety codes, the Ordinance prohibited,

(1) profane, indecent or obscene songs or ballads [to be] sung or spoken; [it further disallowed any] (2) stage play or song [which] shall be presented or sung which is insulting to any individual or section of the community, whether referred to by name or otherwise; (3) no acting or representation calculated to hold up to public ridicule or contempt any individual or section of the community shall be represented or performed; (4) no lewd or suggestive dancing...; (5) all performers [must] be decently attired; (6) no violent quarrelsome or disorderly conduct shall be permitted...⁶⁸²

Calypsonians, linked to criminal elements or coded as criminals by the colonial government, were prone to encounters with the constabulary. Some justifiable encounters include Imelda's quest to get Spoiler before the magistrate, so that it is

mandated that he provide economically for his family. The plays parallel the personal developments in calypsonians' lives with the political and economic landscape. The laws that prohibit their economic livelihood, such as the 1934 Ordinance, encoded their "criminality" and capitulated their "scratch and hunt" existence. In the first play, the 1934 Ordinance was the prominent face of governmental repression, while the second play highlights the often nuisance (harassment) employed by the law, and the third shows, through Sparrow's example, calypsonians recognizing their own worth challenging the status quo. Sparrow's realization of himself and his art as commodity allowed him to bargain and perform on his own terms.⁶⁸³

Another issue discussed through the calypsos is federation with Spoiler's song, "Father Christmas," which mentions the Federal flag.⁶⁸⁴ Sparrow's two calypsos in the final play, "Ten to One," are "No More Rock and Roll" and "Federation." Like Spoiler's song, "No More Rock and Roll" refers to Eric Williams' statement, "one from ten leaves nought" about Jamaica's withdrawal from the Federation. The rest of the song is about Caribbean cultural production, specifically the internationalization of calypso, which has "rock and roll suffering bad". In the song's final verse, Sparrow describes calypso as "a little like the Blues." He rationalizes that because of calypsos' triumph Americans have reason to sing the Blues. Likewise, because the Federation has ended, West Indians will be singing the blues too. "Tell me, you people look very smart, what's one from ten? Well where I come from one from ten leaves nought."

Sparrow's "Federation" has him wondering on behalf of "people" why "Jamaica run from the Federation," and in the end he surmises that if you believe in democracy, well, then "Jamaica have a right to speak she mind." Sparrow ties democracy with

disunity, because Jamaica uses a referendum, a democratic mechanism, to withdraw. Sparrow reiterates that though Jamaica has the “right” to speak; their use of democratic mobilization to destroy the Federation is traitorous: “But if they know they didn’t want federation/And they know they didn’t want to unite as one/Tell the Doctor you not in favour, don’t behave like a/ blasted traitor/How the devil you could say you ain’t federating/no more?”⁶⁸⁵ More importantly, the text illuminates the in-fighting and jealousy that marked the split, as well as the politics of the calypsonian, Sparrow.

Trinidad was granted the capital site over Jamaica and Barbadian Sir Grantley Adams’s appointment as Premier proved too much for Jamaicans. William Alexander Bustamante, Chief Minister (1944-1955) and eventually Prime Minister (1962-1967) of Jamaica, was able to marshal his forces by his “appeal to the tribal public via the single repeated watchword: ‘Freedom.’”⁶⁸⁶ And thus, through referendum, which is capitalized, Jamaicans take their “grumbling” to the ballot box. Sparrow’s final assessment is:

Federation boil down to simply this/ It’s dog eat dog survival of the fittest
Everybody fighting for Independence/Singularly, Trinidad for instance
We go get it too so don’t bother/But I find we should all be together
Not separated as we are/Because of Jamaica.⁶⁸⁷

Sparrow advocated continuing the federal process in spite of Jamaica’s “small mindedness.” He also recognizes that the “singular” quest for independence as with Trinidad is another manifestation of “dog eat dog survival of the fittest.”

In “A Scuffling of Islands: The Dream and Reality of Caribbean Unity in Poetry and Song,” Gordon Rohlehr chronicles calypso commentary on this issue. He argues that from the earliest inception of this idea, calypsonians, through their music--Attila’s, “Expedite Federation” (1933), and Tiger’s, “Advice to the West Indies” (1939)⁶⁸⁸ --

commented on Federation. Rohlehr analyses Sparrow's, "Federation" (1962), by juxtaposing it with King Fighter's "Warn BG"(1958), castigating British Guiana's lack of foresight; and with Louise Bennett's poem, "Capital Site," which he describes as an elegy. Rohlehr examines Bennett's nuanced and pained response to the Federation's failure to Sparrow's song that lays the blame squarely on Jamaica, "[this song] marks Sparrow's last unequivocal vindication of the politics and policies of Dr. Williams in the final year of colonialism."⁶⁸⁹ He continues, "Sparrow's "Federation" does not attempt to understand Jamaica's position. [Instead dismissing it] as incomprehensible and a betrayal of 'the Doctor.'"⁶⁹⁰ The federation examples indicate the political and social voice of calypsonians as well as the importance Gibbons attributes to this issue using several federation themed calypsos throughout the plays.

Gibbons' play illustrates the wide topical spectrum that the total theatre can depict. These plays include the essence of Carnival and the calypso in terms of characters and themes. Weighty issues from racism, basic economic survival, and federation not only reflect the national Trinidadian, experience, but also engage audience members with their own image. While Gibbons' play is extroverted and full of the joy of Carnival, Gilkes' Couvade is more about the internal, psychological expression of identity.

Couvade: a dream-play of Guyana is a theatricalized ritual enactment associated with childbirth and indigenous (often coded as primitive) peoples. In the Guyanese context, couvade is an "Arawak word meaning sleeper of the tribe."⁶⁹¹ The sleeper, father of the unborn child, "voluntarily subjects himself to an ordeal to ensure the birth of a strong healthy child."⁶⁹² Couvade was Michael Gilkes' commissioned contribution to the

first Caribbean Festival of Arts (1972) in Guyana. The play plays on at least two levels, the realistic world and the dream world. The play is about Lion/el, an artist, intellectual, and teacher, and Pat/ricia, his sometimes “pat” wife, who, in a matter of weeks, will deliver their first child. Their child will be “the composite man,” the quintessentially “mixed-up,” Creole person that **is** the Caribbean. As an aside, Lionel and Pat’s child will be mixed race, but the Creole, composite person is not necessarily racially mixed but culturally, psychologically, and psychically amalgamized. However, the effort to bring this composite child--strong and healthy into the world--wrecks Lionel’s ability to deal with “reality” or reality’s ability to deal with him. Visitations from Amerindian and African ancestors via two spiritual figures—the Native American shaman and the Ashanti priest, result in Lionel’s trauma. Besides messages, these two, through voice, drums, and dreams, leave Lionel with images of a composite Caribbean essence. Tormented and eventually consumed by his inability to reproduce these dream-visions in his artistic work, Lionel is hospitalized. At its core, this play is about history, land, and perception—artistic and “generic.” On the other hand, it is about those forces shaping the perception and comprehension of a culture as a whole: of its history, topography and the political relationship between the two. How do the public see and know history? What is it to them? What are their perceptions of land, nation, and belonging?

Lionel’s struggle is not just the artist’s struggle to create a new vision, but also a father’s struggle to secure a more favorable world for his child. It is also a citizen’s struggle. This character is a generative manifestation of “father”—creator of art, child, and symbolically, a consciousness (perhaps eventually a nation). Lionel is middle-class, creating abstract art that his working class wife cannot understand, that his brother-in-

law, Eddie, does not want to understand, and that his friend, co-worker, and intellectual equal, Arthur, laments as too racially ambiguous. It is interesting to note that Lionel's role as teacher, a molder of minds, garners no action in the play. Lionel's teaching is the crass source of income that enables him to paint and his critique of the teaching curriculum offers some insight as to why there is no classroom action. In reference to what he teaches his students, Lionel retorts that "We study the beauty of abstract fruit in a bowl...or [through competitions paint] portraits of Cuffy," Guyana's national hero.⁶⁹³ Lionel's critique of the educational system indicates its bipolar nature—either European or African heroes and themes, but not a truly integrated theme building on the multi-dimensional past of Caribbean realities. The objects of art are aesthetic—fruit in a bowl, art for art's sake; or an ennobled, heroic past disconnected from the present.

The play's movements, Lionel's labor, begin with the invocation of the shaman who opens and closes the drama, chanting, "in the dream-time we had power/Power, power, let us again have power/Power, power, we will again have power."⁶⁹⁴ The shaman blesses the sleeper with, "sleep couvade and dream our dream."⁶⁹⁵ This power, overtly connected with an [Amerindian] past, unleashes the action—Lionel's artistic angst and the quest for El Dorado, an encounter with the past, and with the birth of the child, a future. What dream does Lionel dream? The images of his dreams are forever out of reach. His vision is one El Dorado, while the porknockers, Guyanese gold mining folk figures associated with the interior, who search for material wealth is another. Nonetheless, these parallel El Dorados are connected because they are both Lionel's dream—the capacity of the imagination to show the region itself. In other words, the capacity of the imagination to give the Caribbean a concrete vision of its composite

nature, as well as its desire to share and cultivate its resources that will merge the two textual El Dorados—psychic, imaginative, and material—into one. Here, El Dorado, though envisioned differently, is a mutual space in the Amerindian postmodernist sense. Mutual spaces are those shared with the enemy, which allows, through comparison and contradiction, interplay with one's self and the enemy. In his review of the play, this is something poet John Agard recognized:

the dream of Couvade, sleeper of the tribe, is a regeneration of tribal consciousness, every newborn child becoming a vessel of the tribe's cosmic and physical legacy. Unraveling the tangible roots of myth beneath sociological reality, Couvade is the gateway of space, timelessness, the all-embracing tao, where the ancestral vibrations live in the being of new men, where the physical metamorphosis of the trickster politician into the Amerindian shaman dramatizes the imperfect voice of a purer echo.⁶⁹⁶

The text provides a familiar space of—language, dreams, myth—through which viewer-participants tap into their “adversarial selves” and witness old traumas and new possibilities.

In the final scene, the priests—Indigenous and African—bless the baby, indicating that Lionel's ritual sleep and the ordeal it engendered has worked on some level. His labor has birthed a composite person, his son. Lionel's mixed (Amerindian, African, and European), though phenotypically African heritage soldered with Pat's mixed East Indian and African heritage is the commingling of many backgrounds. Errol Hill, who wrote the “Introduction,” believes that the meager East Indian presence is problematic in a play about forging an integrated identity. His position is “since the action of the play takes place in Guyana where there is a high population ratio of East Indians, one might expect that the cultural influence of this ethnic group would play a

more prominent role in the drama.”⁶⁹⁷ While this is true and Gilkes relegated East Indian culture to a “Shiva-like” dance in a dream sequence, this absence tells of the ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural challenges that are present and that are yet to emerge. Once again (as was the case in Chapter Two with Eugenie Eersel’s “The Plantation”), the challenges of race, ethnicity, and inclusion abound and highlight the need to find the mutual spaces of the Amerindian postmodern. These challenges center primarily on inclusion and integration beyond fashion and food. It means delving deep to first, experience one’s self and second, one’s enemy or the ethnic “Other.”

Struggles with the role of art and/in politics is an important component in the play. In scene two (of two) in “The Sleepers” after the shaman’s invocation, Lionel and Pat discuss this issue. Pat claims that Lionel and his “intellectual friend” always have this discussion after fortifying themselves with liquor, given “all the empties.” In response to Lionel’s soliciting her opinion of his art, Pat defers to Arthur, responding, “When Arthur comes you’ll have to ask him. He is the art critic. Eddie and me could shake hands, I don’t really understand all this intellectual business.”⁶⁹⁸ The binary between Pat’s intellectual and emotional response to Lionel’s work is interwoven with her working class origins. She and her brother Eddie, an insurance salesman, cannot access Lionel’s art and are more occupied with the “realities” of material life—working, children, and other “real life” concerns. Pat chastises Lionel,

You and he [Arthur] talk a lot about Art and Politics, but you don’t seem to know much about real people. Sometimes I wonder if you yourself really understand all the fancy, high-sounding ideas you talk about. Politics is about people and it’s people you paint for, isn’t it? (She goes over to the paintings). Look at this. Couvade. You and your Amerindian myths. Who would want to spend their money on that, and this, this latest one?⁶⁹⁹

Indeed Couvade is a play that requires the audience to work. As Edouard Glissant reminds us,

literature is not always an object of pleasure or reassurance...A generous tendency in our works tempts us to place ourselves from the outset “within reach” of those who suffer social and cultural alienation...But an elementary statement of our need, if it is valuable in our daily struggle, can also prevent us from seeing the deeper structures of oppressing which must nevertheless be brought to light. This act of exposure, paradoxically, is not performed each time in an open and clear way...[there] are a number of our folktales, the power of whose impact on their audience has nothing to do with the clarity of their meaning. It can happen that the work is not written for someone, but to dismantle the complex mechanism of frustration and the infinite forms of oppression.⁷⁰⁰

Others like Selwyn Cudjoe still crave clarity and accessibility. Commenting on the play’s Carifesta ’72 debut, he remarks,

I was tremendously impressed by the potential of Couvade [which] attempts to talk about fashioning the national consciousness of Guyana and draws upon the two major ancestral roots; the African and the Amerindian...While the first half of the play does well to establish these points the second part is taken up with a whole lot of metaphysical trivia, dream sequences and the like, which apparently would be better left for some other forum.⁷⁰¹

Cudjoe’s remarks uncannily and ironically echoes Pat’s unease with commenting on Lionel’s work. It is too metaphysical. The challenge is presenting an “intellectual,” “metaphysical” drama in such a way that it is not alienating, full of “dream sequences and the like.” However, this is the point of ritual theatre, to take the ritual act, in form and content, and recapitulate on stage as another manifestation of a spiritual experience. In other words, since many rituals are sacred it is bringing that sacredness to the stage. Ritual theatre is about an inward and metaphysical journey. This, of course, is not to

intimate that Gilkes' play could not use refinement, as Errol Hill's lukewarm comment—that the play will improve with each performance—indicates.⁷⁰²

Couvade as ritual and as play is about sacrifice and power. Sacrificing Lionel means surrendering notions of normative reality for his son's strength as a composite person in that reality. Lionel's sacrifice is noteworthy at the level of the artists' sacrifice and harkens to the earlier discussion of Carifesta, exile, and Caribbean artists. What have Caribbean artists sacrificed to live, work, and be "understood?" Many have been exiled in some way—either physically, mentally, or both. The play raises questions about who holds power—the power to define reality and thus, change the power of the dreamtime. Gilkes uses the dreamtime as one way to access the power of Amerindian postmodernism. The dream in the play is simultaneously a place of power for the ancestors, the spirits and spiritualists, and a nightmare navigated by Lionel, his family, and friends, as they deal with the consequence of his madness. The dream (time) signifies the dream of Caribbean integration in terms of race, class, and power sharing possibilities.

These forms—total and ritual theatre—have their origins in indigenous Caribbean space and reflect the lived experiences of this geography. They have also concretized the latent tendencies of the Caribbean personality by bringing the submerged elements of ritual and the past to the fore: in the barrack yard and the dreamtime. In these spaces, the contentions of race, class, national, and ethnic strife are reflected and thus invite the engagement critical of necessary conversations on the state of the nation and moving beyond the morass of ethnic, economic, and race fissures. Despite these fractious rumblings and eruptions, both texts seek and sanction unity and coherence. In constructing political theatre that fosters a unified or harmonized self the history of

Trinidadian calypso unfolds and ancestors commune with their progeny across space. Lionel occupies the dream-time and real-time simultaneously. Transcending time through fiction is a familiar teleportation. However, Lionel's journey of occupying several spaces is the more chaotic, though familiar reality (especially for the transnational), and those who live in more than one place.

In Carnival and the Formation of a Caribbean Transnation, Philip W. Scher defines the transnation as a space "embedded in the process of constant negotiation... [that allows for] active and ongoing interaction with the home nation in several spheres. Economic ties, ideological ties and cultural ties must all be active."⁷⁰³ In addition to ongoing negotiation, a pivotal component to Scher's transnational identity is the imagination that "emerges from the experiences [that come from] some relationship to a home nation-state from which [one] draws concepts of oneself, history and culture."⁷⁰⁴ Indeed this is a critical part of Lionel's process and the ritual of couvade. Lionel, like the Amerindians in Pauline Melville's The Ventriloquist's Tale, is always negotiating space—the academic and the everyday, the mythic and the mundane and the past, present and future. The home from which Lionel draws imaginative sustenance is unstable not clearly defined. In fact, it is more imaginary than most and manifests most coherently in his paintings. Similarly, the couvade ritual, a ritual based on labor-like agony and the power of a dynamic sleep negotiates the spaces of agonizing reality and oblivious dream states. Couvade is emblematic of the space of the transnational belonging to two states and juggling them both for a more holistic self.

These examples of total and ritual theatre are vehicles for raising a community's self-awareness through reflection by illuminating experiences, such as the very ordinariness of one's life in one's language given validity, as Glissant recommends.

These reflections, especially the joyful, emotive possibilities made manifest in total theatre forge the biological links of Sylvia Wynter's Aesthetic 1, the aesthetics of social cohesion. This aspect of the debate includes both the capacity of transcending consciousness and the pleasure of the journey.⁷⁰⁵ Aesthetics 1 continues to challenge the inherited and privileged spaces of Aesthetics 2—projection of “the tastes and values of a middle-class westerner.”⁷⁰⁶ Wynter's valorization of Aesthetics 1 is Glissant's call to avoid “reenactment [and] the lure of repetition.”⁷⁰⁷ To this I would add, avoiding the lure of imitation. In this regard, Wynter characterizes Aesthetic 2 as a form of propaganda with naturalized and opaque rules. Wynter, Glissant, and others (e.g., Errol Hill, Rawle Gibbons, Derek Walcott, Michael Gilkes, Sistren, and the like) recognize that theatre which fosters a Caribbean nation arises from Caribbean experiences and realities. This theatre of recognition will not only reveal Caribbean people to themselves but also expose the piped-in, satellite-saturated programming from the West as another arm of imperialism and control through cultural encroachment.

Wynter's particular contribution is her linking this imaginative, psychic, and emotional experience (the third part of the triad) to biological function. Using the internal reward system (IRS) she asserts that each “culture-specific internal reward system is symbolically coded in terms that can dynamically induce the mode of psycho-affective feeling by which the social cohesion of each order is then ensured.”⁷⁰⁸ To offset this, her deciphering practice denaturalizes what has been naturalized and thereby questions the very order of things.⁷⁰⁹ Her Cultural Imaginary, “the collective [culture-specific] values that provide for unitary meaning,”⁷¹⁰ in this case, the festivals and characters of total theatre and the rituals of ritual theatre, are part of the deciphering aesthetic. Wynter's deciphering aesthetic builds on native Caribbean forms and on the

synaptic pleasure of brain waves in both engaged and subliminal delight. In further cultivating the link between theoretical work and biological “rushes,” there is need for innovation built on old patterns and pleasure points, like music.

In concert, Kwame Dawes, another poet-philosopher, building on the work of Edward Brathwaite, constructs what he calls the “reggae aesthetic.” While Brathwaite has used the jazz paradigm⁷¹¹ and others have used blues as a theoretical frame,⁷¹² Dawes uses reggae as an indigenous framework, which like Glissant’s folktales, comes from the lived experiences of Caribbean, specifically Jamaican people. Like these aforementioned thinkers, Dawes believes that the aesthetic, relational poetics of pleasure,⁷¹³ offers a way to understand culture⁷¹⁴ and, by extension, understand the self, defined as both an individual and a collective or national self; Walcott’s “either I am nobody or I am a nation.”⁷¹⁵ What Dawes’s 1999 project, as elaborated on in his book Natural Mysticism, highlights is the continual quest, by Caribbean and oppressed people, to use aesthetics in service of, as Bob Marley might say, emancipating themselves from mental, spiritual, and physical slavery. Ultimately, Wynter and Dawes advocate using contextualized “beauty,” “pleasure,” and “entertainment” in a liberation poetics.

Liberation Theatre Methods

As part of fulfilling the promise to make meaning and move to action within the trinity of author/playwright, text, and audience the final focus of this chapter is on theatrical methodology and personal/community development. Sistren’s collaborative methodology, which is based on personal testimony, improvisation, role-playing “through games, songs and culturally specific techniques”⁷¹⁶ along with strategies taken from

Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed are two ways forward to build the self from the deepest places within, while also building community. Using theatrical methodologies in this way is, in effect, about cultivating agents—citizens who make changes at the individual level expanding outwards from there.

Sharon Green's observations of the Sistren Collective as they cope with the pressures of globalization are instructive to the larger issues at hand. Both Green and Sistren's former artistic director, Honor Ford-Smith, cite the forces and problems associated with external, international funding requirements and the internal, domestic function and aspirations of the Collective.⁷¹⁷ Green's particular observation of dispirited national populations is of particular importance to me because when people are hopeless it is hard to engage in action. Her article recognizes the commodification of culture in this particular moment of globalization. Carl Stone, quoted in Green's text, maintains that, "the end of the decade [the 1970s] saw a pattern of demobilization, political apathy and withdrawal into cynicism and hopelessness as many lost faith in political causes and lowered their expectations."⁷¹⁸ Thus, the combination of psychic national hopelessness with the economic and cultural penetration by Western conglomerates has facilitated the development of a culture that moved "from stories to tell in the 1970s to stories to **sell** in the 1990s" (emphasis mine) as Eugene Williams of the Jamaican School of Drama notes.⁷¹⁹ The penetration of video technologies with foreign content has led to a decline of certain folk knowledge that was a critical building block of Sistren's methodology and is part of Sylvia Wynter's Aesthetics 1. Given this, Sistren has found it difficult to stay relevant to their "grassroots" audience **and** to their funders. This critical lack has led to a sense of inadequacy and obsolescence for Sistren. Green's overall assessment is that,

“grassroots theatre can still be relevant if it continually reinvents itself...and shifts while remaining rooted to its guiding principles and context.”⁷²⁰

What does it mean to be relevant, shifting, **and** rooted? In part, it means finding the bone flute, that instrument of death and beauty that allows witness-participants (in theatre, the audience, or groups using theatrical methods) to find and utilize mutual spaces. Within this mirrored, multi-leveled space, one sees the enemy and one’s self, even when the enemy and the self are the same. The opportunity is to produce effective political drama now that, as Augusto Boal would say, we have lost our illusions but not our dreams.⁷²¹ One of the recurring problems noted by Honor Ford-Smith of Sistren and other groups doing this type of work is lack of funding. Regarding this point, I would like to return to the discussion on transnational citizenship. To my mind, it will be those in the transnation that will be the *fundamental* builders of the artistic arm of this integration initiative. Caribbean transnationals are supportive of Carnival-style events and certainly, as mentioned in the introduction, they respond monetarily and materially to natural disasters. Indeed Scher argues that “the transnation is a unique kind of imagined identity in that it must incorporate the kinds of narratives that lend it coherence”⁷²² and one such narrative is Carnival. While this festival is a narrative of coherence, natural disasters, though intermittent, independence day functions and more village-oriented projects such as library book drives and scholarships for particular schools are other narratives. Thus, funding these arts projects could be another cohering narrative for transnationals whose concrete consciousness of their various homes manifests in participation in both places. The challenge, similar to the challenge within the region, will be to educate these populations on not only the importance of regional integration but also having them realize that connection with projects, which may not be as

personally gratifying as Carnival or as ennobling as a school fund. It will be to return to Anthony Payne and Paul Sutton's definition of regional integration, working on behalf of a greater good which, must, from time to time, prevail over more localized concerns.⁷²³ Again the most encouraging aspect of the transnation is that transnationals have often had to cultivate larger definitions of regional sensibilities; they have had to think beyond their natal land and are to some extent, more predisposed to regionalism.

The creative arts allow us to imagine and concretize transformative realities. They reflect the banality of our lives while allowing us to transcend the drudgery and survival-centered nature of life. Once these possibilities are visible on a personal level, the next step is to make the vision real for others. "Real," of course does not mean realistic, but rather deeply felt. As Haitian writer Jean Claude Fignole puts it, "the first entrance to self-consciousness is neither word, memory, or hope. It is ACTION."⁷²⁴ Through this physical and emotional method, that through improvisation, testimony, game- and role-playing, through this type of ACTing, there can be action.

Similar to Caribbean philosophers and cultural producers, artists from Harlem, Nairobi, and São Paulo such as LeRoi Jones, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Augusto Boal recognize and promote the use of theatre in the struggle of oppressed peoples. In his manifesto, "In Search of Revolutionary Theatre," Jones, before he became Amiri Baraka, contended that revolutionary theatre, especially coming out of a 1960s, urban, U.S. context must:

- (a) foster change;
- (b) expose the dead inner self of victims who have been taught to hate themselves;
- (c) valorize "true scientists" –the "knowers, diggers and oddballs" and "trust that the holiness of life is the constant possibility of widening the consciousness;"
- (d) accuse, because it is the theatre of victims;
- (e) be anti-

western; (f) make dreams a reality because it is a political theatre; (g) supporting Wittgenstein's idea that "ethics and aesthetics are one," this theatre of World Spirit, must use art **as** method; (h) be contextual—because "it is shaped by the world, natural and social;" (j) use the imagination which is "a practical vector for the soul" from the word imagination [we get] image, magi, magic and magician;" (k) destroy whatever the oppressors believe is real. All together integrating these aspects will transform society because it transforms consciousness by taking people who are now "victims [and] people[ing them] with new kinds of heroes...not weak Hamlets debating whether or not they are ready to die for what's on their minds, but men and women (and minds) digging out from under a thousand years of "high art" and weakfaced dalliance. We must make an art that will function as to call down the actual wrath of world Spirit."

Jones's position, critical for its moment and still largely necessary today, falls into binaries. Though his desire to merge the use of the imagination with "the holiness" of life is the constant possibility of widening the consciousness, his language remains locked in the vocabulary of victimhood. Nonetheless, Jones's desire is to unite science and alchemy, to trust true scientists **and** the holiness of life. As he argues, it is using art as method that enables these connections. The wonderful aspect of this quote is Jones's recognition of the artist as engaged citizen, but moreso is his quest to create political thinkers.

Kenyan writer and playwright Ngugi wa Thiong'o, writing in the early 1980s, also recognizes this tremendous force. He articulates the possibilities of art around the concept of "the stakes." Since images are not neutral and art is a mirror reflecting specific realities and particular perspectives on those realities,⁷²⁵ he poses three questions to determine if an artist is "free." First, what is the artist's lens? Does the artist represent the point-of-view of those who are struggling? Second, is the artist "free" from self and

state censorship? Thirdly, can the artist be free in colonial and neo-colonial structures?⁷²⁶

In wa Thiong'o's estimation art must be in service of liberation of the nation and the individual psyche. To this end, he is specifically concerned with the didactic possibilities of art. Quoting Amilcar Cabral's "national liberation is an act of culture,"⁷²⁷ wa Thiong'o explores the idea of education. He asserts that education is a process of integration which connects a person (1) to his/her physical environment and to other people; and (2) cultivating a worldview "by imparting a certain outlook or attitude to the two relations [which] are informed by moral, aesthetic and ethical values embodied by a culture."⁷²⁸ Here Ngugi wa Thiong'o's deals with intent. He does not recognize art that is not in service of the larger community and the greater good. However, wa Thiong'o, through his liberation of the "individual psyche," believes that this process must be simultaneous and democratic, since the artist has to be free from state and self censorship. In this instance, his observation indicates that if these criteria are followed the artist liberates himself as he liberates his community.

Similarly, Augusto Boal, in his development of Theatre of the Oppressed (based on Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed), relentlessly reviews empathy. Using Aristotle's criteria, he defines empathy as "the emotional relationship which is established between the character and spectator and which provokes, fundamentally, a delegation of power on the part of the spectator, who becomes an object in relation to the character: whatever happens to the latter, happens vicariously to the spectator."⁷²⁹ He continues,

Through empathy the children will abandon their own universe, the need to defend what is theirs, and incorporate, empathically, the Yankee invader's universe, with his desire to conquer the lands of others...Empathy functions even

when there is a conflict of interest between the fictitious universe and the actual one of the spectators. That is why there is censorship: to prevent an undesirable universe from being juxtaposed to the spectators' universe.⁷³⁰

It is clear that empathy can work in this way; however, there is also the empathy of the mirrored experience. Therefore, it [the function of empathy] would depend on the source or the intent of the artist. The two examples, Calypso Trilogy and Couvade, from total and ritual theatre, depend on empathy. Fully ingesting Caribbean regionalism across linguistic and national borders depends on empathy. However, action does not. Boal's distinction of Aristotelian forms is critical because they are so pervasive in the West and in the Caribbean. That is why Boal's methodology is particularly effective in workshop settings and moving from theory to practice. They allow witness-participants to journey from inner turmoil, which might manifest in community trauma and repression, to a more known-self (what motivates or impacts this/my particular self) to a citizen (a community participant who knows from the inside out how to interact with other levels of a polity).

Boal's overarching goal is to move spectators to become active subjects in their own lives so that they are invigorated through various mechanisms, theatre and government, to change their lives. The central tenets of Boal's poetics of the oppressed, built on mastering a variety of languages (written, spoken, and imagistic—theatrical, photographic, Creole, etc) concurrently are: (a) embodiment; (b) bodily expression; (c) theatre as a language and (d) as conversation or “discourse.” For the first, Boal recommends, “knowing the body [through] a series of exercises by which one gets to know the limitations (social distortions) and possibilities (rehabilitative capacity) of **one's** body” (emphasis mine). Second, “the body [becomes] expressive [through] a series of games by which one abandon[s] other, more common and habitual forms of expression.”

Third, “the theatre as language...that is living and **present**, not a finished product displaying images from the first.” Fourth, theatre as discourse means using “simple forms in which the spectator-actor creates “spectacles” according to his need to discuss certain themes or rehearse certain actions.”⁷³¹ Boal’s technique has potential for the Caribbean because it can be used to create a theatrical space, as demonstrated by Carnival cultures, that produces total and ritual theatre. Categories three and four contain a series of theoretical subsets. For example, theatre as language is comprised of three degrees: (1) Simultaneous Dramaturgy—spectator intervenes in the action from position in the audience; (2) Image Theatre—the spectator constructs his position of a particular question, from imperialism to sanitation, by arranging the actors in specific tableaux. The “spect-actor,” as this person would become in Boal’s evolution, has to arrange three poses: actual, ideal, and most important, transitional;⁷³² (3) Forum Theatre—the spectator/participant “has to intervene decisively in the dramatic action and change it. This begins by performing an entire scene uninterrupted, then “staging that scene exactly as it had been the first time, but now each spectator-participant would have the right to intervene and change the action, trying out his or her proposal for change.”⁷³³ Similarly, Boal’s fourth stage, theatre as discourse has several categories: newspaper theater, invisible theatre, photo-romance, breaking the repression, myth theatre, and analytical theatre.⁷³⁴ Boal’s constructs, similar to Sistren’s method, particularly the use of games and improvisation, concretizes the theoretical work of Amerindian postmodernism and recognizes the basic work of liberation poetics.

These arguments made by Jones in 1965, Boal in 1974, and wa Thiong’o in 1983 are nearly identical to those made by Caribbean intellectuals. In fact, in the 1990s,

Glissant posited the link between nature and culture in forming one's present. Glissant termed it the writers' duty to make such connections, which would allow witness-participants to recognize the structures at play in their lives.⁷³⁵ In this there seems to be a dramatic connection between the structures produced in and by colonialism, neocolonialism, and the lasting effects of these structures. Whether in the first world, as with Jones's case in the 1960s or the "third-world" in the 1970s, 1980s, or 1990s, the same language is invoked because the structures and experiences of oppression, regardless of time, are fundamentally the same.

Feminist theorists and activists Lib Spry and Berenice Fischer have noted some limits and challenges to Boal's method. Spry rearticulated Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) methods in Canada, by using a community vernacular to express commonly used ideas more effectively than Boal's oppressive binary vocabulary of oppressor/oppressed.⁷³⁶ Spry finds Native American feminist philosopher Starhawk's power relations continuum of "power-over, power-within and power-with," a more proactive paradigm with which to address issues of power, control, and agency. For her it has emerged⁷³⁷ as a useful way to construct and engage with power structures. Spry moves from Boal's binary of the continuum points—(a) "I want to change my life" to (z) "I want to maintain the status quo." At "z" there are

supporters of the way things are to agents of power-over. [This she defines as] those who structurally have less power than the "I" but who can use their emotional power to pressure the protagonist by guilt or by assuming the voice of the antagonist (e.g., child over parent).⁷³⁸

Fisher offers similar critiques; her most pressing are TO's dependence on a homogeneous audience with "an already developed consciousness."⁷³⁹ Outside of such a community,

TO “runs the risk of *reproducing* rather than *representing* oppression.”⁷⁴⁰ Boal’s method privileges “political action over political reflection” a failing, to Fisher’s way of thinking⁷⁴¹ and mine too.

The concerns Spry and Fisher mention indicate the challenges of localizing these theatrical methods and devising place-based continuums. Caribbean implementation of these methods means dealing with the heterogeneous audiences in the region. In that regard, Sistren’s method, which utilizes cultural forms—games and music from the space—is a way to counteract this possibility. Using the cultural forms, also seen in Gibbons’ play, is one level of community around which to coalesce. Continually recognizing the possibility of cooption and thus the necessity to incessantly refine the process are other aspects of the imbedded power of the theatre process as well as the power embedded in the systemic structures under challenge.

Earlier in the twentieth century, CLR James made the same argument in relation to the role of Caribbean artists in building a Caribbean nation. James recognized that not only do artists who believe in that Caribbean nation have to offer their vision in the public sphere, but they also need to use popular forms to connect their art to the people and to a larger public discourse. James believed when the creative/intellectual artist reaches the popularity of the calypsonian, specifically the calypsonian Sparrow, that the artist, in a sense will have “arrived.”⁷⁴² He opines,

My conclusion, therefore, is this. At this stage of our existence our writers and our artists must be able to come home if they want to. It is inconceivable to me that a national artistic tradition, on which I lay so much stress as an environment in which the artist must begin, it is inconceivable to me that this can be established by writers and artists, however gifted, working for what is essentially a foreign audience.⁷⁴³

James addresses a critical theme in this context, that the development of a liberating national consciousness is predicated on the artist's connection to the audience's home. A national audience reinforces a liberating national consciousness and the artist must have a connection to the audience—s/he must speak the people's language, primarily their vernacular. To do this, the artist must “live” among the people. A benefit of globalization has been the development of transnational writers who can “earn a living” elsewhere, but still spend a substantial amount of time in the Caribbean, hearing the voices and living the experiences of their potential audiences. Although when questioned by Rickey Singh about this in 1972, Brathwaite responded,

There are in fact, two kinds of writers in the Caribbean. First, there are those who claim that in order to survive they had to move to the metropolitan centres. They developed the migration complex, and the myth grew up that the West Indies was a philistine society where culture was dead...while there remained those in our midst who have emigrated spiritually.⁷⁴⁴

Though I do not believe that CLR James could have foreseen such transnational possibilities, these linkages are now working for regional artists, who find audiences and inspiration at home and abroad. On the other hand, I agree with James about the development of national consciousness and locally grounded voices and situations. To that end, the work of this chapter comes from artists working and living in the Caribbean now or from work they produced when in that space.

As cultural historian, Brian L. Moore⁷⁴⁵ writes, “cultural consensus [as conceived by colonial elites] was a long-term goal, achievable only after a prolonged and sedulously administered process of propaganda, religious proselytization, education, and practical example.”⁷⁴⁶ Moore's insight reminds those interested in this debate, that colonialism metamorphed into neo-colonialism and is now globalization. Thus, as the name and the

nuance change, but not the structure, Caribbean people must effectively build on their rituals and all that has sustained them in the face of the on-going and multifaceted battle for personal and political revolution. Therefore, it will need to be addressed on multiple fronts and engaged in multiple ways. This means that, like the colonial elites, Caribbean people interested in a Caribbean union have to use a “prolonged and sedulously administered process” of reeducation through formal and informal channels in the classroom, at the theatre, and in work spaces. Advocates of Caribbean regionalism must continue to bridge the gaps embedded in the aforementioned triad of playwright, actor, and audience, across narrow interests and moving beyond linguistic and geographic boundaries.

⁵⁷⁴ Hill, Errol. “The Emergence of a National Drama in the West Indies.” In Caribbean Quarterly. Vol.18, No. 4, 1972.

⁵⁷⁵ Jones, Bridget. “Theatre and Resistance? An Introduction to some French Caribbean Plays.” In 83.

⁵⁷⁶ Jones, Bridget. “Theatre and Resistance? An Introduction to some French Caribbean Plays.” In 85.

⁵⁷⁷ Jones, Bridget. “Theatre and Resistance? An Introduction to some French Caribbean Plays.” In 85.

⁵⁷⁸ Jones, Bridget. “Theatre and Resistance? An Introduction to some French Caribbean Plays.” In 85.

⁵⁷⁹ Jones, Bridget. “Theatre and Resistance? An Introduction to some French Caribbean Plays.” In 86.

⁵⁸⁰ Jones, Bridget. “Theatre and Resistance? An Introduction to some French Caribbean Plays.” In 86.

⁵⁸¹ Jones, Bridget. “Theatre and Resistance? An Introduction to some French Caribbean Plays.” In 87.

⁵⁸² Jones, Bridget. “Theatre and Resistance? An Introduction to some French Caribbean Plays.” In 87.

⁵⁸³ Clark, Veve A. “When Womb Waters Break: The Emergence of Haitian New Theater (1953-1987).” In Callaloo. Vol. 15, No.3 (1992), 780.

⁵⁸⁴ Clark, Veve A. “When Womb Waters Break: The Emergence of Haitian New Theater (1953-1987).” In Callaloo. Vol. 15, No.3 (1992), 778-779.

⁵⁸⁵ Clark, Veve A. “When Womb Waters Break: The Emergence of Haitian New Theater (1953-1987).” In Callaloo. Vol. 15, No.3 (1992), 783.

⁵⁸⁶ Stone, Judy. Theatre. London, UK: Macmillan Press, 1994, 155 and Gibbons, Rawle, “Theatre and Caribbean Self-Definition” In Modern Drama Vol. 38, No. 1, 1995, 56.

⁵⁸⁷ Gibbons, Rawle, “Theatre and Caribbean Self-Definition” In Modern Drama Vol. 38, No. 1, 1995, 56.

⁵⁸⁸ Hill, Errol. “The Emergence of a National Drama in the West Indies.” In Caribbean Quarterly. Vol.18, No. 4, 1972. 9-11.

⁵⁸⁹ Hill, Errol. “The Emergence of a National Drama in the West Indies.” In Caribbean Quarterly. Vol.18, No. 4, 1972. 9-11.

⁵⁹⁰ Noel, Keith, ed. Caribbean Plays for Playing. London, UK: Heinemann, 5

⁵⁹¹ Noel, Keith, ed. Caribbean Plays for Playing. London, UK: Heinemann, 5.

⁵⁹² Nettleford, Rex. Caribbean Cultural Identity: The Case of Jamaica. Los Angeles, CA: University of California, 1978.

⁵⁹³ Brazilian Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed is perhaps the most widely known version of these practices that emerged from theatrical movements in the region.

⁵⁹⁴ Glissant, Edouard. Caribbean Discourse. Trans. Michael Dash. Charlottesville, VA: The University of Virginia Press, 196.

- ⁵⁹⁵ Glissant, Edouard. Caribbean Discourse. Trans. Michael Dash. Charlottesville, VA: The University of Virginia Press, 197.
- ⁵⁹⁶ Glissant, Edouard. Caribbean Discourse. Trans. Michael Dash. Charlottesville, VA: The University of Virginia Press, 196.
- ⁵⁹⁷ Glissant, Edouard. Caribbean Discourse. Trans. Michael Dash. Charlottesville, VA: The University of Virginia Press, 197.
- ⁵⁹⁸ Jauss, Hans Robert. "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory." In Critical Theory Since 1965 Eds. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1986, 164.
- ⁵⁹⁹ Herbert, Nick. "Interview with Dr. Jeffrey Mishlove," Thinking Allowed Transcript. <http://www.williamjames.com/transcripts/herbert.htm> October 12, 2003
- ⁶⁰⁰ According to Lib Spry in her paraphrase of Boal "If [I] had had the chutzpa, [I] would have called it the Theatre of Liberation." In "Structures of Power: Toward a Theatre of Liberation." In Playing Boal: Theatre, Therapy, Activism. London, UK: Routledge, 1994, 174.
- ⁶⁰¹ Guyana, 1972 (August to September); Jamaica 1976; Cuba 1979; Barbados 1981; Trinidad and Tobago 1992 and 1995; St. Kitts and Nevis 2000; and Suriname 2003 (1 week in August).
- ⁶⁰² Nettleford, Rex. Caribbean Cultural Identity: The Case of Jamaica. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978, 152.
- ⁶⁰³ Nurse, Keith. "Reinventing Carifesta: A Strategic Plan." Caricom Secretariat, Georgetown, Guyana, 2004, 13.
- ⁶⁰⁴ Quoted in "Reinventing Carifesta: A Strategic Plan." Keith Nurse. Caricom Secretariat, Georgetown, Guyana, 2004, 13.
- ⁶⁰⁵ Nurse, Keith. "Reinventing Carifesta: A Strategic Plan." Caricom Secretariat, Georgetown, Guyana, 2004, 4.
- ⁶⁰⁶ Nurse, Keith. "Reinventing Carifesta: A Strategic Plan." Caricom Secretariat, Georgetown, Guyana, 2004, 3.
- ⁶⁰⁷ Nurse, Keith. "Reinventing Carifesta: A Strategic Plan." Caricom Secretariat, Georgetown, Guyana, 2004, 5-7.
- ⁶⁰⁸ Gibbons, Rawle. "Theatre and Caribbean Self-Determination." In Modern Drama. 38, no.1, 1995: 52-59.
- ⁶⁰⁹ Nettleford, Rex. Caribbean Cultural Identity: The Case of Jamaica. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 154.
- ⁶¹⁰ Dolphin, Celeste, ed. "A Vision of CARIFESTA." In Kaie Vol., No. 8 December 1971, 5.
- ⁶¹¹ Dolphin, Celeste, ed. "A Vision of CARIFESTA." In Kaie Vol., No. 8 December 1971, 5.
- ⁶¹² Cudjoe, Selwyn R. "Carifesta '72: An Historic Occasion." In Shango: The Magazine of the Caribbean. Vol. 1, no.1 1973, 5.
- ⁶¹³ "Carifesta is aimed at unifying Guyanese." Guyana Graphic, December 21, 1971, pg. 1.
- ⁶¹⁴ "Carifesta and C'bean nation" In New Nation. Saturday, August 26, 1972, pg. 1.
- ⁶¹⁵ "Dr. Jagan calls for 'grassroots culture.'" Sunday Chronicle. Sunday, August 27, 1972, 1.
- ⁶¹⁶ <http://beerbhajan.com/Guyana.htm> March 14, 2005.
- ⁶¹⁷ "TUC says 'no' to Carifesta boycott call." Guyana Graphic, Monday, May 29, 1972, 1. and "Churches to back Carifesta." Guyana Graphic, Wednesday, August 23, 1972, 8.
- ⁶¹⁸ Singh, Rickey. "Carifesta Problem—Foreign Aid Sought." Guyana Graphic. Thursday, June 8, 1972, 1.
- ⁶¹⁹ "Germany gives piano for Carifesta." Guyana Graphic. Saturday, June 17, 1972, 1.
- ⁶²⁰ Osman, Rachid. "Colorful Indian Show at Centre." Guyana Graphic September 4, 1971, pg. 1.
- ⁶²¹ Walmsley, Anne. The Caribbean Artists Movement 1966-1972. London, UK: New Beacon Books, 1992, 278.
- ⁶²² Singh, Rickey. "Too much emphasis on entertainment." Guyana Graphic, Saturday, September 2, 1972, 1 and 4.
- ⁶²³ Nettleford, Rex. Caribbean Cultural Identity. Kingston, JA: Ian Randle, 1978/2003, 117. "Despite its organic administrative attachment to metropolitan France... Aimé Cesaire... took the initiative and raised funds for a contingent to participate in CARIFESTA 1976."
- ⁶²⁴ Brathwaite takes Baldwin to task for allowing Margaret Mead to "lead him through a series of changes until he is forced to acknowledge his American materialistic heritage as represented by Mr. Ford. And he is forced into this position, which he doesn't really hold, because of a 'radical' disinclination to 'go back'

and accept the value of his (African and) alternative ancestral heritage.” (61) Edward Brathwaite Black World July 1972.

⁶²⁵ Carifesta Publicity Committee, “Carifesta.” In The Black World. July 1972, 77-78.

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conclusion: c'est fini!

Long ago, they were supply fleshed.
But then, all meat fell away
from the bone. Some teeth
and hair remained.
Someone should examine their story.
After all, it's not that they dwindled
into dust altogether. Besides,
these bones could make more than music.
They're a fire-tried instrument.

Mahadai Das, "Bones"⁷⁴⁷

Bones have been a guiding metaphor in this project—the bones of the Amerindians and their use of bone flutes and bone rituals. Concrete manifestations of the physical presence of the culture, bones and other Amerindian artifacts have left traces of the original inhabitants throughout the Caribbean or to living descendants in a few areas. As Mahadai Das indicates, “these bones could make more than music. They’re a fire-tried instrument.” This project was borne of my desire to turn Wilson Harris’s work into a soap opera. Yes, I am that heretical. I wanted Harris’s ideas to have broad, wide-ranging appeal, not to diminish their complexity, but to disseminate them through larger frames of access—such as television, film, theatre, the Internet, and other sources of popular and technologically transformative culture. Though I certainly have not come close to serializing Mr. Harris’s concepts, I believe Amerindian postmodernism makes inroads into disseminating his critical ideas through its four-pronged strategy. Harris’s work on the Carib bone flute has led me to explore this fire-tried instrument, which predates European invasion, but which like El Dorado, has been remade and refashioned by Amerindians and other inheritors of the Caribbean landscape. Based on the ideas of Amerindian, African, and other native peoples, who recognize the harmonizing effects of

order and disorder, the theoretical framework of Amerindian postmodernism advocates multivalent readings that encourage unity and cohesion through confrontation with local and global causes of disunity.

The guiding questions for this project on Caribbean regionalism have been: What are the different ways to think about the link between art and activism? How do questions of identity in a globalized world affect manifestations of action? And how to move beyond representation as action to more collective concrete notions of action? Answering these questions has meant investigating the core of a people's identity that is situated in their rituals, language, and past. Caribbean peoples share the commonalities of European colonization; imported labor—enslavement and indentured; and plantation systems which led to neocolonial development patterns—economically and politically—across four European linguistic groupings and innumerable Creole languages. Given these factors, the Caribbean has been a fragmented space whose commonalities, as characterized by Edward Kamau Brathwaite, are submarine. To forge ahead, recognizing new colonial manifestations called globalization, which have reduced the world in real time, means uniting across fragments or at least patching the cracks of this disjointed history and geography. Derek Walcott has said repairing broken pieces is an indication of love of the whole, “Break a vase, and the love that reassembles the fragments is stronger than that love which took its symmetry for granted when it was whole.”⁷⁴⁸ Political and economic attempts at regionalism, particularly in the anglophone Caribbean, have had a patchy and tortuous history. Therefore, this dissertation has examined the regional debate through art, particularly literature and theatre, to more concretely unite the fragmented, latent, submarine connections of the Caribbean.

The benefit of this strategy has been largely one of disguise and deferral. Literature enables reader-participants to engage with ideas and concerns through an intermediary—the creative text. This means that though the issues are pressing, they do not carry the same survivalist weight that a governmental or policy report does. These creative texts provide the room for discovery, engagement, and problem solving and facilitate the integration process as defined by Anthony Payne and Paul Sutton, who characterize political integration as a process through which countries and citizens accept that the greater regional good may occasionally predominate over local and national concerns.⁷⁴⁹ This definition acknowledges that integration is a painful process, which will not always be superficially evident to “me.” To my mind, to truly integrate this belief at the personal, often economically-straitened level, involves using artistic deployments in ways that embed at the core of one’s being and imbue citizens with the overall notion that working through differences, which are tremendous, terrifying, and often traumatizing, is the only way forward.

To that end, I developed, based on Wilson Harris’s philosophical contextualization of the Carib bone flute, what I call, Amerindian Postmodernism, a framing that acknowledges the Amerindian trace and the commonalities between the often obliterated native and the enslaved African. These commonalities emerge from a shared relationship and characterization to and with the natural environment and foster integration through access to these rhizomatic latent roots. Amerindian postmodernism is constructed around four guiding principles: enlarging visionary capacity; reclaiming stories languishing in [H]istorical ruptures; rehearsing, or prismatic rereadings, of the past, and concretizing these into action through theatre and/or theatrical methods. These

principles seek to create mutual spaces, where “enemies” can congregate around shared bias/es, to unite, science, European quest for order, with alchemy, unification of order and disorder through transformation. One—science—privileges [ultimate] discovery and the other—alchemy—recognizes that all-knowing is impossible—thus, uniting contradictory elements. To this end, Amerindian postmodernism distinguishes itself from 1960s manifestations of postmodernism because of its direct and material link to the past. This link provides its ethical core, which supports the development of critical and engaged citizens at the five levels of citizenship—local, national, regional, diasporic, and transnational. Thus, Amerindian postmodernism and developing critical, engaged, and active citizens are inseparable components of making El Dorado increasingly tangible because these tools allow participants to represent and engage with various realities and problems.

Balancing disciplinary boundaries has been one impediment to this project—historical, political, and artistic contextualization across the region has been an exhaustive process (how to balance the analysis between sociological imperatives and information with the literary analysis?). While in my introduction, I expressed that I chose cultural studies because it necessitated crossing disciplinary boundaries, in practice, that has been a huge undertaking. The basic issue has been one of balance: is each discipline adequately represented? Is the information harmoniously presented? Is the audience informed? Who are **my** readers and what do I want them to know? Another challenge to concretizing these ideas is money—not just the money to complete a dissertation—but the money to fund arts-based, social change projects. Yet another challenge has been coming to terms with this dissertation as a theoretical undertaking

rather than praxis-based project. Given this theoretical focus, I have rethought and am rethinking the Amerindian framework at each stage—trying to think through as many possibilities as time allowed. Time. This project has been too many years in the making and therefore, there was a challenge to maintain critical currency, reading new studies and critical analyses of concern. Finally, entrapment—the constant vigilance to push myself and my arguments, in particular my habitual lapsing into imposing top-down solutions in my writing and thereby, reinforcing the hierarchies I seek to challenge. I believe this happens primarily from the theoretical nature of this work, a tendency, which with concrete engagement may be mitigated. Consequently, I have and am constantly reclaiming an oppositional space in my own psyche, while maintaining a spiritual belief that another world is possible and not being debilitated by one set of political shifts that may have blinded me to more positive political changes. The battle between paralyzing co-option and hope is constant, critical work!

I am excited by the possibility of putting this research into action in two specific ways: first, by continuing my relationship with CaribNationTV and other Caribbean-centered broadcast services for continued dissemination of the works and ideas discussed. Second, through a grant to conduct fieldwork in the Caribbean, via an interregional reading group to engage with and assess how local citizens respond initially to notions of Amerindian postmodernism, the texts, and secondarily to the issues of regional integration through the texts. I would pick four linguistic sites, for example—Cuba, Curaçao, Guadeloupe, and Guyana. There, with the help of local contacts, universities, civil groups, who would lead the discussions, I would form small multi-racial, inter-generational, coed, “reading” groups. I say “reading” because some of these texts are

ripe for performance, so the witness-participants would not necessarily have to be literate with written languages. It is here that some of the theatrical strategies would be most useful. The texts chosen will be short and already translated. For example: Kingdom of this World, The Tragedy of King Christophe, and the poetry used in “Soulsister Sycorax,” such as “The Plantation,” and “Sacrificial Flowers,” which are already translated into the European languages used in the Caribbean. Who will fund these lofty goals? To my mind, those in the transnation and the diaspora are key to changing Caribbean realities. Harnessing the economic and political power of Caribbean people and their descendants in the first world for a better region is one big and critical next step. The problems with donors are indicated by the Sistren situation and the reality of limited governmental resources means that those in the diaspora and the transnation, people with a more concrete connection than the diaspora, will be the most obvious venues for funding. As indicated in my introduction, though this is a comprehensive project, the framework of Amerindian postmodernism and the possibilities it engenders for building a new, self-sustaining, and self-defined El Dorado on and through the bones of an indigenous trace to invigorate the Caribbean and its people—throughout the region and the world—will mean developing new, stronger *coumbites* .

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⁷⁴⁹ Anthony Payne and Paul Sutton, Charting Caribbean Development, 174.

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