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PARADOXES OF PARTICULARITY: CARIBBEAN LITERARY IMAGINARIES

by

Heidi Lee LaVine

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in English
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

July 2010

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Mary Lou Emery

ABSTRACT

"Paradoxes of Particularity: Caribbean Literary Imaginaries," explores Caribbean literary responses to nationalism by focusing on Anglophone and Francophone post-war Caribbean novels as well as a selection of short fiction published in the 1930s and '40s. Because many Caribbean nations gained their independence relatively recently (Jamaica and Trinidad in the 1960s, the Bahamas, Grenada, Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent in the '70s, Antigua and St. Kitts in the '80s) and because some remain colonial possessions (Aruba, Martinique, Guadeloupe, etc.), nationalism and its alternatives are of major literary concern to Caribbean authors. This project considers how and to what extent the writings of such authors as Edouard Glissant, Maryse Condé, and Robert Antoni counter nationalist tendencies with Pan-Caribbean alternatives, arguing that the Caribbean texts under examination propose that we view the Caribbean as a unified region despite substantial differences (racial, linguistic, colonial, etc.) that otherwise tend to encourage separate, nationalist sentiments. Moreover, these Caribbean texts paradoxically *emphasize* discrete identities based on racial pasts and language communities, even as they forward a Pan-Caribbean ideology: uniqueness is, for many Caribbean writers, the fundamental basis for a unified sense of "Caribbeanness." This project dubs the phenomenon the "paradox of particularity," and identifies it as a postcolonial rhetorical strategy in twentieth-century Caribbean fiction.

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Graduate College
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

PH.D. THESIS

This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

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has been approved by the Examining Committee
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to my committee members, Anny Curtius, Marie Kruger, Harry Stecopoulos, and Priya Kumar, for their comments, suggestions and singular flexibility, to my advisor Mary Lou Emery for her constant advice and encouragement, and to Justin for his unflagging support. I would also like to thank the University of Iowa Department of English for generous financial support in the form of the Elizabeth Dietz Distinguished Dissertation and Teaching Fellowship; the University of Iowa's International Programs division for a Stanley Graduate Award for International Research; the University of Iowa Graduate College for summer fellowship funding (which, along with the Stanley grant allowed me to spend an unforgettable month poring through archives in Jamaica); and Prairie Lights for the Sherman Paul grant, which allowed me to purchase many crucial books from abroad.

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INTRODUCTION

> Dividing the world into discrete things, islanding it as a means of understanding, is a peculiarly Western way of navigating a world that seems otherwise without shape and direction. Western thought has always preferred to assign meaning to neatly bounded insulated things, regarding that which lies between as a void. We not only think of our individual selves as islands, but conceive of nations, communities, and families in the same insular fashion, ignoring that which connects in favor of stressing that which separates and isolates.
>
> John R. Gillis, *Islands of the Mind*

> In an anthropological spirit…I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion…The nation is *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations…[I]t is imagined as a *community,* because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.
>
> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*

> Break a vase and the love that reassembles the fragments is greater than the love which took its symmetry for granted when it was a whole. The glue that fits the pieces is the sealing of its original shape. It is such a love that reassembles our African and Asiatic fragments, the cracked heirlooms whose restoration shows its white scars. This gathering of broken pieces is the care and pain of the Antilles, and if the pieces are disparate, ill-fitting, they contain more pain than their original sculpture, those icons and sacred vessels taken for granted in their ancestral places. Antillean art is this restoration of our shattered histories, our shards of vocabulary, our archipelago becoming a synonym for pieces broken off from the original continent.
>
> Derek Walcott, "The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory"

Nationalism, its Critics, and Regional Alternatives

In his now classic treatise on the origins and spread of modern nationalism, Benedict Anderson lays out some clearly defined rules: For their continued existence in

the material, political world, nations rely on an exclusive, bordered web of consciousnesses—a perceived sense of inevitable, disinterested kinship and unity between, often, millions of strangers. Nations are "imagined communities"—fictions of "deep horizontal comradeship" in which a notion of shared experience and an intangible, essential "sameness" constitute the supposedly "natural" emblems of citizenship. When colonialism stretched nationalism across oceans, the subjects of empire were compelled to imagine their collectivity a bit more vigorously, for racial, geographic and cultural differences had all to be subsumed in these transcontinental "conjuring-trick[s]" (111). Of course, Anderson's theory shows us that national identity bases itself as much on perceptions of (external) difference as it does on notions of (internal) sameness, for "[n]o nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind [sic]" (7). Perpetuated by "print-capitalism," (novels and newspapers, which foster a sense of common interests, concerns, afflictions, and, in the case of novels, trajectories) imagined communities rely on *language* as a primary component of nationalist sentiment. Clearly, then, communities created by literary consumption, borderlines on maps, and every other ideology-made-tangible of the modern nation exist in their present form due to the tacit willingness of individuals to collaborate in a group fiction.

But if "the nation" is essentially a cooperative fantasy, a group dream made tangible, does this not suggest that alternate group imaginings are, in theory, possible? If so, need these alternative imaginings fall prey to the same totalizing effacements and "sameness that is difference" ideology latent in British imperial nationalism? While Anderson dismisses postcolonial nationalisms as "derivative discourse[s]," critics such as Partha Chatterjee and Ania Loomba have each suggested that Anderson's assessment

fails to acknowledge the possibility for creative permutations, for formal experimentation that transcends the purely referential. In *The Nation and its Fragments,* for example, Chatterjee indignantly wonders, “If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain 'modular' forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine?” (5). Anne McClintock offers a gendered critique of Anderson’s claims about the inherently oppositional nature of national imaginings, asserting that

> All nationalisms are gendered; all are invented; and all are dangerous—not in Eric Hobsbawm’s sense of having to be opposed but in the sense that they represent relations to political power and to the technologies of violence. As such, nations are not simply phantasmagoria of the mind; as systems of cultural representation whereby people come to imagine a shared experience of identification with an extended community, they are historically practices through which social difference is both invented and performed. (quoted in Saunders 2)

Both McClintock and Patricia Saunders (in her analysis of McClintock) suggest that Anderson’s notion of imagined communities elides very real internal battles and ideological oppositions within nations, and that those battles inevitably take place within a violently gendered context. For Saunders, Caribbean intellectuals work to highlight these battles to counter-hegemonic ends. My project is certainly in conversation with Saunders’, but in considering francophone Caribbean literature alongside that written in English, I aim to show that such resistant imagined communities were occurring simultaneously throughout the Caribbean despite linguistic and cultural differences.

I would be remiss, of course, in glossing over Edward Said’s contribution to literary theoretical critiques of nationalism. In *Culture and Imperialism,* Said quarrels with Anderson’s assertions about “derivative discourses” by considering the relationship between linear, realist novels and the dispersal/reinforcement of Western nationalist

ideologies. Lamenting what he terms "Third World" nationalisms, and praising postmodern authors like Salman Rushdie for their attempts to think beyond the nation, Said suggests that those he terms "Third World" writers like Rushdie, Ngugi and Achebe are perfectly positioned to disrupt the novel's totalizing linearity and decolonize the imagination in the process.

Throughout this project, I consider how and to what extent the writings of such authors as Edouard Glissant, Maryse Condé, Jean Rhys, and Robert Antoni perform these sorts of Saidian disruptions and counter nationalist tendencies with Pan-Caribbean alternatives. I argue that the Caribbean texts under examination propose that we view the Caribbean as a unified region despite substantial differences (racial, linguistic, colonial, etc.) that otherwise tend to encourage separate, nationalist sentiments. Moreover, I contend that these Caribbean texts paradoxically *emphasize* discrete identities based on racial pasts, geographical boundaries, and language communities, even as they forward a Pan-Caribbean ideology: uniqueness is, for many Caribbean writers, the fundamental basis for a unified sense of "Caribbeanness." I call this phenomenon the "paradox of particularity," and identify it as a heretofore unrecognized postcolonial rhetorical strategy in twentieth-century anglophone and francophone Caribbean fiction.

Historical and Cultural Contexts

Because many Caribbean nations have gained their independence relatively recently (Jamaica and Trinidad in the 1960s, the Bahamas, Grenada, Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent in the '70s, Antigua and St. Kitts in the '80s) and because some remain colonial possessions (Aruba, Martinique, Guadeloupe, etc.) nationalism and its

alternatives are of major concern to Caribbean authors. Certainly, the political, social, and colonial realities of lived experience in the Caribbean informed the development of a Pan-Caribbean aesthetic, so it is important to take a moment now to ground the readings that follow in specific historical contexts, as well as to point out how those contexts overlapped. Much of the short fiction that I discuss in Chapter One, for example, concerns the labor struggles that occurred throughout the Caribbean in the 1920s and 1930s, which Leah Rosenberg argues fueled the rise of discrete yet simultaneous anticolonial nationalist impulses. In her 2007 study *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature*, Rosenberg describes these movements as self-consciously unique and revolutionary, but actually "products of a nineteenth-century tradition of cultural nationalisms in the Caribbean" (1). "Between 1845 and 1917," Rosenberg states,

> the Caribbean body politic shifted dramatically with the importation of indentured labor from Asia, primarily India. This importation was designed to bolster the power of the white plantocracy by reducing wages and cutting off Afro-Caribbeans' access to land. In colonies with large numbers of immigrants, Afro-Caribbeans saw themselves in competition with Asians for power and resources. Politics became increasingly governed by a hostile ethnic division, one that in turn informed literature. (2)

These early disputes over labor, which also fractured Caribbean communities along racial lines, thus set the stage for the Depression-era strikes that Reinhard Sander, Alison Donnell and others have also identified as central to the conceptual underpinnings of twentieth-century Caribbean literature. Moreover, Rosenberg suggests, migration, dislocation, and return from the colonial beyond only exacerbated extant tensions. "The rampant unemployment that resulted from these culture clashes and labor disputes combined with the rise of imperialism and U.S. fruit companies," Rosenberg explains,

> to trigger a mass migration of Afro-Caribbeans, mostly men, to Latin America, resulting in Caribbean diaspora communities that concomitantly transformed

> their host countries as well as their homelands…In the 1920s and 1930s, the Great Depression forced many emigrants to return home from abroad, bringing back political skills and demands from their experiences in U.S. and Latin American unions and political associations. Returning Caribbeans were a key factor in the rise in trade unionism and the labor rebellions that spread across the British West Indies in the 1930s…[T]he beginning of the twentieth century saw the emergence of movements that claimed a multiracial and multiclass purview and placed a priority on the formation of national literature (Rosenberg 2-3).

Anticolonial nationalism, then, in Rosenberg's assessment, was at least partially a foreign import, a concept that Anderson would no doubt dub "derivative." Yet in describing Caribbean writers' ambivalence over expanding American imperialism in the region (authors, she suggests, were conflicted as to whether close economic ties with the U.S. would assist fledgling nations in the process of decolonization, or whether American involvement in Panama, Haiti, Puerto Rico etc. suggested that the U.S. would merely become a new colonial master), Rosenberg claims that "[s]ince their inception, anglophone Caribbean literature and literary criticism have been the products of nationalist discourses designed to extend the political rights of Caribbeans" (3).

In focusing my analysis around paradoxes of particularity, I want especially to pick up and extend upon Rosenberg's argument that late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Caribbean literature arose out of distinct, particular cultural contexts, but "sugges[t] a significant regional coherence," articulated through "a shared literary and cultural history" (9-10). However, the regionalism Rosenberg describes is exclusively anglophone. In reading francophone Caribbean literature alongside anglophone fiction, I examine how Rosenberg's insights can be usefully broadened and extended. The anticolonial goals behind the rise of political nationalism, for example, also gave rise to cultural nationalist movements such as *Négritude.* The conceptual brainchild of Senegalese poet-president Léopold Sédar Senghor, Martinican poet-mayor Aimé Césaire,

and Guyanian poet-Assemblyman Léon Damas, *Négritude* forged transnational connections between members of the African diaspora even as labor unrest and movements for national independence posed challenges to those ties. In considering the literary products of these simultaneous phenomena, I make the case that anglophone and francophone Caribbean authors transformed resistant particularities (delimited by race, language, and geography) into a strategy for a more broadly inclusive postcolonial regional cohesion. My reading and treatment of *Négritude*-era texts is informed by T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting's work, which seeks to complicate traditional studies of the movement that focus mainly on the *trois pères*. In addition to carving out a place for women such as the Nardal sisters and Suzanne Césaire in the larger discourse, Sharpley-Whiting claims that Aimé Césaire, Senghor and Damas "received inspiration from Cuban writer Nicolas Guillén, Haitian writers Jacques Roumain and Jean Price-Mars, and deployed as tools of critical engagement Froebnius and Delafosse's ethnology and Breton's surrealism" (96). Transnational, Pan-Caribbean, and interdisciplinary, *Négritude* was also inevitably opposed to French imperial nationalism, "exposing it as a 'murderous humanitarianism'" (Sharpley-Whiting 99). Thus, my first chapter considers how Caribbean responses to and within early twentieth-century group identities based on national and racial particularity sowed the seeds for a regionally inclusive Caribbean literary consciousness.

By the 1950s, the anglophone Caribbean political sphere attempted to catch up to writers' imaginings, and ten British colonies collaborated in the short-lived West Indies Federation.[1] Ratified in 1956 and extant by 1958, the Federation attempted to establish a

[1] For more on the West Indies Federation, see the CARICOM website at: <http://www.caricom.org/jsp/community/west_indies_federation.jsp?menu=community>.

unified system of taxation, as well as infrastructure in the form of airlines and educational institutions. Although the Federation elected its own Prime Minister (Sir Grantley Adams of Barbados), the real power belonged to Lord Hailes, who occupied the position of Governor General and was appointed by and a representative of the Crown. Hailes had veto power over acts passed by the Federation's elected members, thereby helping to ensure that as Britain's colonies moved closer to post-war independence, they did so in a manner consistent with Commonwealth goals. The Federation collapsed in 1962, when Jamaica and Trinidad balked at being assessed the lion's share of taxes. Because none of the participants were independent, and because this form of interisland collaboration was mediated and controlled by British governmental overseers, the Federation served two types of ideologies (both of which worked against independent Pan-Caribbean collaboration): British imperialism and discrete postcolonial nationalisms.

In the French Caribbean, Martinique and Guadeloupe were agitating for greater autonomy through "promotion" to the status of overseas *département.* While this change technically elevates the French Antilles to the same level of participation in French politics as any other region in continental France, serious inequalities in infrastructure, maintenance, salaries, etc. as well as geographical isolation seriously undermine France's claim of equal treatment. The fact that Martinique, Guadeloupe, St. Martin, etc. remain colonial possessions to this day indicates that the political arena lags seriously behind the anticolonial regionalism that Caribbean authors have been imagining since the 1930s. These anticolonial battles and attempts at regional cohesion form the backdrop against which my discussion of Glissant and Rhys unfolds in Chapter Two. Glissant's progressive *antillanité,* which theorizes "rhizomatic" connections between Caribbean

citizens, beyond simple racial, national, linguistic, and geographical markers, implicitly challenges the *Négritude* movement's Afro-centrism, while respectfully acknowledging an ideological debt to it. In my chapter, I argue that Glissant navigates these theoretical waters in his early novel, *La Lézarde,* by paradoxically imagining an isolated, black maroon (or, runaway slave) as the agent of Pan-Caribbean unification.

While the French Antilles and much of the anglophone, hispanophone and Dutch Antilles continued to fight for independence, decolonization and independent postcolonial national self-fashioning was a major preoccupation of the 1960s-1980s. After the West Indies Federation collapsed, Jamaica and Trinidad gained their independence in 1962, Guyana and Barbados in 1966, the Bahamas in 1973, Grenada in 1974, Suriname in 1975, Dominica in 1978, St. Lucia and St. Vincent in 1979, Antigua and Belize in 1981, and St. Kitts and Nevis in 1983. Caribbean expatriates living in London observed these trends with marked interest, and in 1966, the Caribbean Artists Movement[2] formed. In part, the group sought to fill the void left by the demise of the BBC's *Caribbean Voices* radio program as a forum for new Caribbean writing, but in its inclusion of visual and performing artists, it also sought to define and refine a uniquely Caribbean artistic aesthetic (Walmsley 34). Over the course of its brief but influential existence, (the group disbanded in 1972) CAM focused on

> specific change in the thinking and hence the creativity of Caribbean people: from the concept of their history as fragmented to one that is continuous; from a concept of their society as being without indigenous culture or tradition to one which is rich in both; from the self-contempt and dependency of a colonized people to belief in their own creative achievements and ability; from mimetic, derivative cultural forms to authentic and original creativity. (Walmsley 309)

[2] Hereafter abbreviated as CAM.

Despite its regional focus, CAM also staked out points of connection with other transnational literary movements like *Négritude* and "Literary Garveyism" and Negrismo (311-15).[3] With its evolving emphasis on art that could be received and understood by the masses, CAM (particularly through Kamau Brathwaite's influence) championed a form of "creolization" that was also of central importance in the francophone Caribbean world. For Brathwaite, creolization was both an ideology and a methodology aimed at uniting artists and "the folk" in order to effect widespread epistemological Caribbean unification. In his article "The Love Axe/L" Brathwaite championed widespread artistic reconnection with "our grassroot selves" through folk art traditions and vernacular writing (56). Meanwhile, in the francophone Caribbean, Patrick Chamoiseau, Jean Bernabé, and Raphael Confiant advocated a *créolité* that rejected the Afrocentrism of *Négritude* (while nevertheless respectfully acknowledging that "[w]e are forever Césaire's sons") in favor of

> - *a Caribbean solidarity (geopolitical) with all the peoples of our Archipelago regardless of our cultural differences—our Caribbeanness; and*
> - *a Creole solidarity with all African, Mascarin, Asian, and Polynesian peoples who share the same anthropological affinities as we do—our Creoleness.* (894, italics textual)

[3] Walmsley also describes the CAM's interest in and engagement with Black Power figures like Stokely Carmichael and Malcom X. While many in the CAM saw Black Power as rife with important transnational possibilities for the Caribbean, writers like V.S. Naipaul, who felt excluded from the movement on racial grounds, attacked its Caribbean manifestations. "Power?" a brief, poisonous tract is Naipaul's 1970 exegesis (continued later in "Michael X and the Black Power Killings in Trinidad") of the American Black Power movement's impact on and translation within the Caribbean. In a Caribbean context, Naipaul sees the movement as an "infection" comparable to a Trinidadian "carnival lunacy" (135). For Naipaul, carnival is a willful sublimation of a slave past, a destructive fantasy of empowerment, and as such, it "is the original dream of black power, style and prettiness; and it always feeds on a private vision of the real world" (135). Fundamentally, Naipaul sees Caribbean black power movements of the '60s and '70s as a mental illness, a form of persecution mania born out of "that touch of lunacy" without which "the Negro would have utterly despaired and might have killed himself slowly by eating dirt" (134-5). This form of divisive, offensive rhetoric is precisely what Glissant and the *créolistes* sought to replace with racially inclusive linguistic experimentation.

Through a richly vibrant new *mélange* of linguistic experimentation, Chamoiseau et al. offer "Creoleness" as a method for achieving real, political and ideological Pan-Caribbeanness. Like Edouard Glissant before them, the *créolistes* envision a racially, culturally unified Caribbean region rooted and expressed in the diverse particularities of linguistic mixture and literary playfulness.[4] In many ways, this articulation of "creoleness" prefigures Homi Bhabha's influential notion of "cultural hybridity," which suggests points of connections for all members of the colonized world, a form of collectivity composed of multiple particularities. Despite the colonizer's attempt to subsume the colonized under a totalizing "sameness that is difference," (difference here is only intended to distinguish colonizer from colonized through imperfect mimesis) Bhabha suggests that "[t]he trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something *different*—a mutation, a hybrid" (111). These theories inform my final chapter, in which I argue that Robert Antoni and Patrick Chamoiseau experiment with both language and form to suggest formal alternatives to the nation-state. With respect to Bhabha in particular, I argue that, in the contemporary Caribbean, writers champion cohesion through a Bhaba-esque hybridity, which transforms the colonizer's oppressive "sameness that is difference" into a unifying "difference that is sameness."

Methodological Preoccupations

Citing "a still prevalent tendency to fragment the Caribbean into zones of linguistic influence or ideologically determined categories," Michael Dash suggests that

[4] While *antillanité* and *créolité* are often figured by critics as antagonistic concepts, I agree with Shireen K. Lewis' and Beverley Ormerod's respective assessments that these claims of fundamental difference are largely overblown. As both critics emphasize, the major difference between Glissant and the *créolistes* is that Glissant's vision extends beyond the Caribbean and Chamoiseau et al are explicitly concerned with the Caribbean archipelago (Ormerod, "The Martinican Concept of "Creoleness").

the future of Caribbean literary criticism lies in cross-cultural, multilingual studies (*The Other America* 3). Indeed, his otherwise enthusiastic praise of Antonio Benítez-Rojo's *The Repeating Island* is punctuated with a single lament: that except for a consideration of Wilson Harris, Benítez-Rojo confines himself to an examination of hispanophone Caribbean literature. Indeed, a growing body of Caribbean literary criticism engages with literature from multiple language groups, most notably Silvio Torres-Saillant's *Caribbean Poetics: Toward and Aesthetic of West Indian Literature,* and Brent Hayes Edwards' *The Practice of Diaspora.*

Torres-Saillant's groundbreaking analysis of anglophone, hispanophone, and francophone Caribbean literature aims "to articulate a theory of Caribbean poetics by examining recurrent thematic motifs and formal devices that the region's literary artists have drawn from the last six decades" (xi). Torres-Saillant is keen to limn the contours of Caribbean interrelationality, but he is also careful to highlight particularity within Caribbean discourses (so as not to make totalizing, imperialist generalizations). Clearly then, my methodology and argument are greatly indebted to Torres-Saillant. In identifying "paradoxes of particularity" as a Caribbean postcolonial tactic, I am building on his suggestion that racial, linguistic, and cultural barriers need not limit either artists or critics in their attempts to imagine transnational imagined communities. While Torres-Saillant's work focuses on only a single writer from each linguistic region (Kamau Brathwaite, René Depestre, and Pedro Mir) I attempt to engage a broader cross-section of texts within the anglophone and francophone Caribbean. Within the zone of my linguistic competence, then, I offer this project as a contribution to the emerging body of Caribbean criticism that, like Torres-Saillant's own, places texts from multiple language

groups in conversation with one another in order to articulate points of regional commonality. Certainly, my unfamiliarity with Spanish, Dutch, and many Caribbean creoles means that this project cannot be as inclusive as I or any other likeminded scholar to date would wish. But as Dash self-deprecatingly notes,

> Scholars in this field of comparative Caribbean literature all suffer from the same handicap as that of the blind men in the joke trying to feel their way toward an understanding of an elephant. Like those blind men, we all know a little about certain parts of the animal called Caribbean literature and use this limited knowledge to guess at what the whole might look like…[S]o far no one has attempted to write an all-inclusive, comparative literary study of the Caribbean. But it is merely a matter of time before such a work emerges. (xi)

When it emerges, such a work must, I think be the product of multiple scholars. But most crucially in the above passage, Dash suggests that theories of Pan-Caribbeanness are inevitably haunted by asterisks, limitations that vary with the relative achievements and human limitations of each scholar. I am always mindful of these limitations when I invoke Pan-Caribbeanness in this project, and endeavor always to keep the focus on the idealistic and aspirational aspects of Caribbean authors' engagement with regional theories.

It is not enough, though, to discuss cross-lingual literary projects, particularly not one as focused on cohesion as mine, without addressing the issue of translation. In his brilliant study *The Practice of Diaspora*, Brent Hayes Edwards offers "translation" both of languages and of cultures as a useful theoretical model for examining literature of the African diaspora. "The cultures of black internationalism can be seen only *in translation*," Edwards argues (7). Furthermore,

> It is not possible to take up the question of "diaspora" without taking account of the fact that the great majority of peoples of African descent do not speak or write in English. . . . [O]ne can approach such a project only by attending to the ways that discourses of internationalism *travel*, the ways they are translated,

> disseminated, reformulated, and debated in transnational contexts marked by difference. (Edwards 7)

Inevitably, Edwards notes, some things are lost in translation, and while he uses his reading of the Martinican Nardal sisters' journalistic work to illustrate the extent to which women's voices were often silenced within the cultural translation of the *negritude* movement, he also teases out the anticolonial potential inherent in the gaps created by translation. After remarking on the differences between African American writers such as Claude McKay and Senegalese poet Leopold Senghor, Edwards suggests that "*décalage*," a slippery word that "can be translated as "gap," "discrepancy," "time-lag," or "interval,"[5] productively highlights differences between diasporic groups which can be used to complicate totalizing discourses about blackness and "indicates the reestablishment of a prior unevenness or diversity; it alludes to the taking away of something that was added in the first place, something artificial" (13, 14-15). Translation and the gaps that refuse translation, then, work together to both preserve particularity and foster transnational cohesion. Thus, Edwards' "*décalage*," shares ideological similarities with Bhabha's "in between" space of the conceptual "beyond," which serves as the central analytical lens in Chapter Three. Moreover, I use Edwards' consideration of black transnationalism within the context of print capitalism to show how imagined communities beyond nationalism can thrive using the same mechanisms (novels and periodical literature), and thereby avoid being a merely derivative discourse.[6]

This leads us naturally to a consideration of Caribbean writers' engagement with modernism and postmodernism, a choice that some see as the literary equivalent of

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[5] These are Michelle Ann Stephens' translations of "decalage."

[6] Michael Hanchard also praises Edwards for this insight in his article ""Translation, Political Community, and Black Internationalism."

championing the "derivative" form of the postcolonial nation-state. In his 1996 essay, "Is the Post in Postmodernism the Post in Postcolonialism?" Kwame Anthony Appiah, for one, famously blasts "the ['Third World'] postcolonial novelist" for engaging in postmodern celebrations of late capitalism and lambastes postcolonial theorists for "mediat[ing] the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery" (62). Before I address Appiah's assessment of postmodernism, I want to bring in Simon Gikandi's assessment of Caribbean literary modernism, which Gikandi reads as resistantly reappropriative. Conceding that Western modernist techniques and ideologies have "overdetermined Caribbean cultures in many ways," Gikandi nevertheless points to the "historical anxiety and ambivalence and the cultural and narrative forms Caribbean writers have developed both to represent and to resist the European narration of history inaugurated by Columbus and the modern moment" (2-3). Rather than participating in a mimetic discourse, Gikandi argues, Caribbean modernists like C.L.R. James and Alejo Carpentier engaged with and refashioned the forms and ideologies of their times. In my final chapter, I contend that similar claims can be made with respect to Caribbean postmodernist experimentation. With regard to Appiah's second "post," Robert Young's careful and responsible *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* best articulates my own engagement with and investment in postcolonial studies. For Young, postcolonial studies are primarily an ethical endeavor in which the views of those marginalized and oppressed by colonialism *and* Western Marxism are of central importance; the term "postcolonial" itself represents a goal, not a reality. Practitioners of postcolonial studies (or "tricontinental studies," as he suggests we re-dub it) are

> united by a common political and moral consensus towards the history and legacy of western colonialism. [Postcolonialism] presupposes that the history of

> European expansion and the occupation of most of the global land-mass between 1492 and 1945, mark a process that was both specific and problematic…[Colonialism] was not just any old oppression, any old form of injustice, or any old series of wars and territorial occupations. (5)

The unique problem of colonialism, Young explains is that "political liberation did not bring economic liberation—and without economic liberation, there can be no political liberation" (5). Furthermore, Young argues, postcolonial studies is united as a discipline by continued investment in a transformative Marxism. Importantly, "[p]ostcolonial theory is distinguished from orthodox European Marxism by combining its critique of objective material conditions with detailed analysis of their subjective effects" (7). The possibility for non-coercive Marxism can be used not only by and for "tricontinentals" but also by and for those marginalized and oppressed within colonial metropoles. Thus, for Young,

> [p]ostcolonial critique is…a form of activist writing that looks back to the political commitment of the anti-colonial liberation movements and draws its inspiration from them, while recognizing that they often operated under conditions very different from those that exist in the present. (10)

Within the field of postcolonial literary studies, then, I follow Young in contending that Western Marxism and postmodernism are examined, challenged, and reimagined, not celebrated as sacred cows against which all ideological and formal innovations must be judged.

Implicit within Young's argument is the notion that responsible postcolonial critics must foreground particularities of historical/colonial experiences in order to avoid parroting the repressive ideologies of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Relatedly, Ania Loomba suggests that "[w]e need to consider the utility of both Marxist as well as post-structuralist perspectives for thinking about colonialism and its aftermath" (252). For

Loomba, the answer lies not in ignoring postmodernism and its engagement with global capitalism, but in emphasizing particularity within postcolonial critiques. "We need to move away from global narratives," she says, "not because they necessarily *always* swallow up complexity, but because they historically have done so, and once we have focused on these submerged stories and perspectives, the entire structure appears transformed" (249).

In focusing both on the particular literary imaginings of the Caribbean and in emphasizing the "paradoxes of particularity" that these texts offer for consideration, I do my best to follow Loomba's lead and avoid becoming a mere "agent of global capital"(250). As Michael Dash's introduction to *The Other America* makes clear, "postmodern approaches" to Caribbean literary criticism are not only singularly suited to responsible postcolonial critique but also ground us firmly in the language of paradox. Says Dash,

> In championing a poetics of multiplicity and heterogeneity as opposed to exclusivity and opposition, postmodernism put the emphasis on liminality and indeterminacy, perhaps allowing for a proper theorizing of that 'delicate tenuity' that Césaire saw as the Caribbean's defining characteristic. Consequently, the very heterogeneity of the region, which, as Michel Rolph Trouillot has suggested, is an obstacle to theorizing about it as a whole, has become the methodological ground that facilitates recent attempts to establish theoretical models of the Caribbean. (6-7)

While Dash uses postmodernism to theorize the Caribbean's relationship to North and South America and while my project will certainly not profess to theorize the "Global South" as a whole, Dash's arguments apply quite well to any exploration of Pan-Caribbean literary imaginings.

Trajectory

Titled, "Reading Voices: The 1930s and '40s and the Paradox of "Citizenship," my first chapter uses archival research to examine how the increasingly Pan-Caribbean content of the literary radio program *Caribbean Voices,* and literary journals like *Bim* and *La Revue du Monde Noir* articulated the first recognizable idea of "Caribbeanness." Within the anglophone Caribbean, *Bim* and *Caribbean Voices* actively solicited submissions from multiple islands, thereby creating a space in which readers/listeners could consider texts from Jamaica, Barbados, British Guiana, etc. in relation to one another. *La Revue du Monde Noir,* though shorter lived, fulfilled a similar purpose in the Francophone Caribbean. Each of these media sources encouraged contributors to focus on topics that were of central and unique concern to his/her island community. Crucially for my argument, archival research indicates that these concerns often overlapped: authors from multiple islands submitted fiction and essays touching on labor struggles, the plight of the poor, wartime anxieties, and racial inequalities. Thus, in printing that which was nominally unique and particular to individual islands, these widely digested media sources in fact highlighted similarities throughout the archipelago, setting the stage for bolder expressions of a particularity-based regionalism.

As the century unfolded, literary articulations of "Caribbeanness" frequently and paradoxically found expression in the trope of the resistant, isolated, "maroon" (runaway slave). In Chapter Two, titled, "Communities of One: The 1950s and '60s and the Paradox of *Marronnage*," I focus on the Pan-Caribbean maroon narratives of Martinican novelist and theorist Edouard Glissant and Dominican novelist Jean Rhys. After a brief history of *marronnage,* I begin with a consideration of Glissant's "poetics of relation,"

(his belief that Caribbean islands and, indeed, the Americas, have been too long marooned from one another and that this modern day political distance is a result of psychological "marooning" from an African past). In Glissant's fiction, the only character capable of both recovering this past and of uniting the Caribbean is the defiantly isolated maroon (and, occasionally, his male descendants). Set against the backdrop of Martinique's fight to become a semi-autonomous *département* of France and the emergence of Jamaica and Trinidad as independent national entities, Glissant's novel *La Lézarde* (1958) at once celebrates postcolonial zeal for independence, and emphasizes that national autonomy is the first step in a process of regional unification. In the second half of the chapter, I juxtapose Glissant's optimistic texts with Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, in which a white Caribbean woman is both physically marooned and psychologically isolated from others because of her gender and race. While Glissant's black, male maroons succeed in their utopian attempts at Pan-Caribbean unity, Rhys' white female maroon fails to bridge even the most intimate gaps between herself and others. Ultimately, I argue that Rhys' novel lays the groundwork for a more racially and sexually diverse application of Glissant's unifying ideas than he was able, in that contemporary moment, to articulate.

Chapter Three shows how female novelists in the anglophone and francophone Caribbean have picked up precisely where Glissant left off. Titled "*Marronnage* Reprised and Revised: The 1970s and '80s, or Feminist Maroon Imaginaries" this chapter looks at gendered and cultural counterpoints to Glissant's notion of "marooning," through novels that reimagine the history of New World slavery and maroon resistance. I begin with close readings of two novels by Guadaloupiennes featuring striking female maroon

heroines: Simone Schwarz-Bart's *Pluie et Vent Sur Telumée Miracle* (1972), in which an ostracized sorceress attempts to unite her fragmented community, and Maryse Condé's *Moi, Tituba*, *Sorcèriere Noire de Salem* (1988), which imagines a Glissantian link between Barbados, other Caribbean islands, and North America through the benevolent workings of a black female maroon. I argue that Schwarz-Bart and Condé critique Glissant's redemptive, masculine *marronnage* by giving us heroines who imagine a Pan-Caribbean future from a resistant Bhabian space "beyond" colonial and historical hegemony. I also consider how André (and probably Simone) Schwarz-Bart's *La Mulâtresse Solitude* (1972) both recuperates an historical maroon figure (as, indeed does Condé) and imaginatively reconstructs the African past which informs her New World rebellion. Within the anglophone Caribbean, I turn to Jamaican author Michelle Cliff's *Abeng* (1984) and *No Telephone to Heaven* (1987) , which feature a psychologically marooned heroine who imagines not only a unified Caribbean, but also a Caribbean that serves as the racially inclusive bridge between diasporic communities in the Caribbean and North America. Ultimately, I argue that, in identifying female maroons as the unifying agents of cultural transmission, Schwarz-Bart, Condé, and Cliff's experimental fiction not only proposes a feminist, regional alternative to patriarchal nationalism, but imaginatively links colonized Caribbean citizens to broader, nation-less communities of suffering.

In my final chapter, titled "Linguistic Callaloos: Formal Experimentation from the '90s to the Present" I focus even more explicitly on formal and linguistic experimentation by examining Trinidadian Robert Antoni's *Divina Trace* (1991), and Martinican Patrick Chamoiseau's *Texaco* (1992) in relation to literary postmodernism.

Rather than casting a wise maroon as the oracular voice of wisdom, both novels deluge us with a heteroglossic babble of voices, paradoxically suggesting that the potential for Caribbean interconnectedness lies in the collision of multiple, idiosyncratic uses of language. Moreover, I argue that by testing the boundaries of the novel form, these texts gesture toward the possibility of formally innovative alternatives to the nation-state. In Antoni's novel, for example, a fledgling Caribbean nation attempts to come to grips with itself through a series of narratives, interrupted frequently by an assortment of extratextual material—pages from a medical log, obscure drawings, and a mirror. Each narrator speaks in his/her own unique hybrid of English, Spanish, French, Creole, Venezuelan Warrahoon, and even an approximation of "monkey language." The result is a linguistic and formal experiment which offers a new structural model for national self-definition, and a uniquely Caribbean linguistic and formal incoherence as a basis for cohesiveness. Likewise, by channeling the Pan-Caribbean linguistic plurality of *Créolité* Chamoiseau's urban maroon storyteller plays self-consciously with questions of city planning in order to propose structural postcolonial innovations.

Thus, my project makes two major interventions in the related fields of Postcolonial and New World Studies. First, I identify the "paradox of particularity" (in which difference is the defining component of group identity) as a postcolonial tactic in twentieth-century Caribbean fiction. Second, I demonstrate the intense political engagement of experimental modernist and postmodern Caribbean fiction. I argue that by strategically keeping individuality and collectivity in tension with one another, these writers offer a model for postcolonial independence that both preserves autonomy and avoids mimicking the colonial Western nation-state.

CHAPTER 1

READING VOICES: THE 1930S AND '40S AND THE PARADOX OF REGIONAL CITIZENSHIP

> Before World War Two it could not be said with any accuracy and certainly not without contradiction that an English Caribbean literature existed. There were, to be sure, a number of Caribbeans…who wrote in English and whose work was sometimes published in metropolitan countries. But a body of writing substantial enough to qualify as a literature and to compel, or even permit, serious critical attention and analysis simply did not exist. What has been called the explosion of creative writing which took place in the late forties and early fifties owes an important debt to a little magazine in Barbados, one of the smallest of the islands.
>
> John Wickham, *Introduction* to the Kraus Reprint of *Bim*

In light of the critical attention lavished upon the early work of C.L.R. James, Claude McKay, and, to a lesser extent, the BBC's *Caribbean Voices* program since John Wickham made the above statement in 1977, we might be tempted to accuse the venerable Barbadian man of letters of indulging in a bit of quaint hyperbole. Alison Donnell, J. Michael Dash and others have persuasively argued that, at the very least, the seeds of a regional literature were sown in the '30s and pre-war '40s. Leah Reade Rosenberg's recent study of nationalism and Caribbean literature argues that we push that date as far back as 1840. Yet whether or not we wish to quibble with Wickham's suggestion that pre-war Anglophone Caribbean literature was insubstantial enough to excuse its erstwhile critical neglect, contemporary critics vindicate him on one key point: the birth of "little magazines" like *Bim* certainly provided a hitherto unprecedented showcase for young talent in the archipelago. My purpose here, at least in part, will be to vindicate him on another implied point: that the *concept* of a Pan-Caribbean identity, an imagined community between nations/beyond nationalism germinated in the postwar literary boom for which *Bim* and *Caribbean Voices* were a forum.

Of course, as George Lamming, Reinhard Sander, and Alison Donnell have independently noted, *Bim* was only one of several literary magazines to emerge in the Caribbean during the 1940s and '50s. Edna Manley's *Focus*, A. J. Seymour's *Kyk-Over-Al*, C.L.R. James' *Beacon* and Esther Chapman's *West Indian Review* all spiritedly and overtly considered the relationship between politics and a unique, literary "West Indianness," and Chapman's work, in particular, "actively sought to publish across linguistic as well as geographical boundaries from 1934" (Donnell 13).[7] *Bim's* editor, Frank Collymore, in contrast, was at pains to nurture a local literary aesthetic which, while not antithetical to the development of regional politics, was certainly not, according to his cohorts, consciously acting in service of such a movement.[8] And yet *Bim*, more than any of the other literary journals in the Anglophone Caribbean, became the fulcrum of an emerging Caribbean literary identity in the '40s and '50s, due, perhaps in part, to its

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[7] Furthermore, Patricia Saunders argues that Trinidad's *Beacon* group proved "invaluable vehicles for considering the possibilities of national literature as an active medium for challenging the very idea of a national identity within the nation-state" (29). She contends that these Glissantian "irruptions" from within are most identifiable in "barrack yard fiction" and its portrayal of rebellious, commodified women. A more comprehensive study, comparing literary journals throughout the Caribbean would allow scope for a more detailed consideration of how these journals' preoccupations intersected.

[8] See, for example, George Lamming's 2002 comments to interviewer David Scott on Manley, Seymour and Collymore's respective literary journals: "The thing that is interesting there is the *difference*, the profound difference, in both the temperament and intentions of the editors [of these magazines]. For example, when you are dealing with *Focus,* you are dealing with a very conscious expression of nationalist affirmation. And when you're dealing with Seymour and *Kyk-Over-Al* there is in a Guyanese kind of way (but a Guyanese extending into the Caribbean) that consciousness of creating something out of this colonial world…[T]here is none of that in Collymore's relation to *Bim*. This is why there is something rather miraculous about *Bim*. Collymore's relation to *Bim* is 'let us encourage and collect what is the finest literary talent here.' It is not, as I recall, it is not connected to a Barbadian nationalism, or a Caribbean nationalism, or any of that. It is going in fact to become that, in spite of him. Because by the time you get Trinidad contribution coming, by the time Jamaica comes, by the time it's being fed also by *Caribbean Voices*, the things that are coming to it and so on, Collymore finds, really, that he has spawned a regional project, which was not part of his original agenda. Nor was that off his agenda; it was simply an aesthetic relation to literature. And in this sense, unlike Manley, and to some extent, perhaps less so of Seymour, he was a man who was the Trinidad contribution coming, by the time Jamaica comes, by the time it's being fed also by *Caribbean Voices*…Collymore finds, really, that he has spawned a regional project, which was not part of his original agenda. Nor was that off his agenda; it was simply an aesthetic relation to literature. And in this sense, unlike Manley, and to some extent, perhaps less so of Seymour, he was a man who was completely apolitical." (86)

singular longevity but also, as John Wickham notes, to the preoccupations of its contributors. Certainly, says Wickham,

> it took the editors a little while to recognize that the magazine had a West Indian rather than a merely Barbadian role to play for even as late as the sixth number we were still seeing ourselves as a preserver of an essential Barbadianness; but we were saved from insularity, that bugbear of West Indian integration, by the tide of events which was making West Indians of us, by the luck of our earliest contributors and supporters and the rapidly increasing frequency of movement between the territories and London, which Ramchand was saying as recently as 1970 was still the literary capital of the West Indies. So it is that they are all there in the pages of *BIM* when it and they were young: Lamming, Selvon, Naipaul, Walcott, Brathwaite, Mittleholzer, Austin Clarke, Anthony, McDonald, Mervyn Morris, Roger Mais, Eric Roach. (v-vi)

Copious primary source material bears out Wickham's observation. Begun by E.L. Cozier in 1942, *Bim* crept "almost stealthily" onto the Caribbean literary scene (Wickham iv). Priced modestly at one shilling[9], *Bim*'s intended initial readership was, according to Collymore's editorial note in the fourth number "the public of Barbados" (1). He makes a point of asking for submissions "in reasonably good English (or Bajun)," that is local in orientation and subject matter: "Above all, in writing, regard things from your own viewpoint and experience. Why worry to write about the rigours of the Alaskan winter when you can spend the month of February in St. Joseph's Parish? And you don't have to travel all the way to Chicago to find crooks. No…" (1)[10]

While its focus and readership soon broadened[11], a number of indicators in the first few numbers attest to the reader's presumed (Barbadian) insider knowledge. The

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[9] The 2007 equivalent of 1.44 GBP or 3 USD, according to <http://www.oanda.com/convert/fxhistory>.

[10] *Bim* Vol. 1, No.4, April 1944.

[11] To date, I have not been able to locate reliable subscription figures covering *Bim*'s early years. While it appears that the magazine's subscription rates were always low (forcing Collymore, in consequence to scrounge more or less constantly for funds) Collymore's editorial notes and copious outside source material suggest that these figures are relatively unimportant to an assessment of *Bim'*s cultural impact. James Ferguson, for one, notes, "This modest journal may not have had a massive circulation, but it was widely

magazine's name, which John Wickham describes as "a contraction denoting a native of 'Bimshire' (itself a kind of Gilbertian confection in recognition of Barbados' reputed Englishness)," goes unglossed until the magazine's sixth number, printed in 1945, by which point its curious international readership began bombarding Collymore with inquiries (Wickham v). When one such inquisitor, "a foreigner, and Englisman" [sic] has the gall to ask, "Why 'Bim?' Collymore good-humoredly scolds

> At first we were too staggered to reply. We mean…well, after all…we are aware that most Englishmen have very hazy ideas about the West Indies; but not to know that Bim is an inhabitant of Barbados, Little England, Bimshire!
> We confess we cannot trace the derivation of the word Bimshire; but even the derivation of the word Barbados is far from certain. Bearded fig trees? Bearded aboriginies [sic]? We reject both these fanciful suggestions. That Barbados, so conservative, so proud of her traditions and institutions, should have allowed her fig trees to wither away and her aboriginies to perish is wholly unthinkable: and one may search the island in vain to-day either, with or without a beard. Then, too, why do so many foreigners persist in directing their correspondence to The Barbadoes? (1)[12]

For all Collymore's raillery about British "foreigners" and their ignorance, *Bim*'s early offerings contain little that a contemporary British reader would have found exotic. Indeed, the first few numbers are arguably as much devoted to literature about/reflective of British sensibilities, and the drama in World War II's European theater as they are an evocation of singular Barbadian culture. The British subscriber would have chuckled familiarly over E.L Crozier's Wodehouse-esque "Graceful Exit," a short story cast as

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read throughout the Caribbean, influential and published many up-and-coming regional authors" (1), while former *Bim* editor John Gilmore observes, "While Bim was always a "little magazine" in the sense that its circulation was small and it was constantly short of money, enjoying only a very limited income from sales and advertising revenues (and, in its later years, occasional subventions from the government of Barbados), its influence was considerable" (1). These remarks, along with Collymore's explicit mention of readers in South Africa, the United States and Great Britain as well as with the journal's rapidly escalating list of submissions from authors throughout the Caribbean, allow for two reasonable inferences: 1) the magazine was undoubtedly passed along to non-subscribers outside of Barbados at second-, third-and fourth-hand. Therefore, whatever *Bim*'s subscription rates were, the figures don't come close to quantifying its actual readership, and 2) Fledgling literati throughout the Anglophone Caribbean were among these unquantifiable consumers, and responded to Collymore's call for new, previously un-published material.

[12] "Editor's Blarney," Vol. 2, No. 6, 1945.

radio drama in which the narrator invites us to "tune in" various voices in order to eavesdrop on a catty English village Dorcas Society meeting.[13] Nestled amongst full page ads for spats, tweeds, and walking sticks that boast "We Specialise in West of England Tweeds and Doeskins," and plugs for cricket gear featuring illustrations of white batsmen, s/he would have found Nora Stoute's treacly, "John Millington Synge: An Appreciation." Stoute praises Synge for his romanticism, suggesting that he is the next modern link in a continuum of British greats including Jonson, Goldsmith and Yeats, and grumpily speculates that his critical dismissal is partially the fault of "a little clique that is likely to appropriate him, to refer to him darkly and to make him a god of their jealous devotion" (32).[14]

Many of the war-themed pieces are similarly European in orientation even if the settings are occasionally a bit more exotic. Collymore's "Proof,"[15] for example, a short, psychological espionage story set in Leningrad revolves around a misunderstood telephone call from a Scotsman and lampoons the "harsh, guttural" tones of the Scottish burr. Having once been falsely accused by the KGB of spying for Germany, Collymore's heroine panics when she answers her phone and hears a man's voice speaking "querulously, impatiently…harshly and imperiously" in a language she does not understand (7). After the voice "die[s] away with a snarl," the poor heroine concludes that the KGB has enlisted a German to try and trick her into self-incrimination, but is ultimately relieved to learn that the voice belongs to a friend of her husband's who has merely barked a greeting to her in broad Scots.

[13] Vol. 1, No. 1, December 1942.

[14] Vol. 1, No. 3, December 1943.

[15] Vol. 1, No. 1, December 1942.

Of course, Germans come in for their fair share of abuse as well. The Eastern European academics in E.L. Cozier's "And They Died Laughing,"[16] take revenge on the Nazis who have thinned their numbers by poisoning them with laughing gas. The Teutonic villains of one "Gemini's" short story[17] are more fortunate, since they escape to a submarine after scouting an unnamed Caribbean island in an unsuccessful attempt to seize its air base and lighthouse. After killing a plucky islander who has observed their activities, refused to help them, and boldly declared, "This is a British colony…I do not take orders from Germans," the sinister crew decides against an invasion and takes comfort by "[standing] at attention, facing a large portrait of their Fuhrer, and their blond hair shone palely from the light overhead" (73, 77).

However, the editors appear to have been at pains to emphasize the lighter, more heartwarming (read "maudlin") aspects of the war, for the war-year editions of *Bim* are liberally sprinkled with patriotic interludes and humorous anecdotes. One representative piece called, "Bright Intervals (The Lighter Side of the War),"[18] is a series of jokes, poems, and proverbs dealing with English dilemmas. "Many people are putting up brighter curtains to combat the blackout. Keeping their chintz up!" reads one installment, and another eulogizes British radio host and Nazi sympathizer, Lord Haw Haw by observing, "Here lies that most affected voice,/So seldom listened to from choice,/Till a Blenheim with a well-aimed bomb/Quite upset its cool aplomb,/ And Satan with a sad grimace/ Carried him to a warmer place"(45).

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[16] Vol. 1, No. 2, 1943.

[17] "The Sisters." Vol. 1, No. 3, December 1943.

[18] Vol. 1, No. 1, December 1942.

Another curious submission consists almost entirely of a table of figures sent in by a reader in Durban, South Africa, listing the respective birthdates, year in which power was assumed, years in power and ages of Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler, Roosevelt & Churchill. Each leader's column adds up to the same number (3882) and the reader further notes that dividing 3882 by two gives you 1941. The editor observes, "It is wonderful what some people can do with figures…What [the tables'] potent is I leave to you" (14).[19] Not to be outdone, an advertisement for Macaw Rum screams "HITLER IS TASTING IT NOW, So…LET YOUR RESOLUTION FOR 1944 BE TO TOAST VICTORY IN MACAW RUM" (80).[20]

But lest anyone doubt Barbados' commitment to and investment in the war, *Bim* also bears witness to local sacrifices. One pictorial homage, entitled, "Khaki, white and Blue (Barbadians serving overseas—a few random selections)" publishes the military photos of a racially diverse group of Barbadian servicemen. (58-9). A few pages earlier, we get a "Roll of Honour," listing fallen local soldiers. Their names include both the seemingly patrician (Arthur Pakneham Fitzhardinge Berekely) and the humble (Mark Radford Cuke) (57). Perhaps the most interesting stylistic contribution to this issue is a short, Steinesque piece that appears to chronicle the madness of a shellshock victim,[21] but the story that most overtly begins to move us toward a consideration of that which is uniquely Barbadian *vis á vis* world events, is a tale by E.L. Honeychurch[22]. Entitled

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[19] Vol. 1, No. 1, December 1942.

[20] Vol. 1, No. 3, December 1943.

[21] "The Fall of the House of Utter," by "Edgar Allan Chambers." Vol. 1, No. 1, December 1942.

[22] Vol. 2, No. 5, 1945. This is probably the same person who contributed the story "Cardboard Skeleton" under the name "Ellice Honeychurch" to *Bim*'s 9th issue, published in 1945.

"Waiting," it is the tale of a girl who opts not to marry the man she loves, despite the fact that he will shortly leave to fight in the war, because doing so would require her to leave the beach she loves and to move inland with his parents. The beach is crucial to Ann's sense of wellbeing amidst the turmoil, because it is a hybrid space that obliterates difference as well as distinguishing marks of racial, gender, or national identity (20). Only this beach possesses the requisite liquidity to comfort Ann, and the story thus stakes out the bold and unique claim that war disturbingly heightens perceptions of difference, and that Barbados offers a unique alternative to divisive chauvinism, racism, etc.

Unfortunately, some of the other examples of "local color" that *Bim* featured in its earliest pages struck a cringier tone in attempting to depict the lived experience of racial difference. Two short stories by F.N.K. Mascoll, entitled "Penny Do," and "Excurshun" are a case in point.[23] Both stories are primitivist farces about black life in Barbados, in which the main characters can go scarcely a paragraph without brawling violently. In "Penny Do," a dance hall owner strong-arms a popular orchestra leader into playing swing music at his establishment as accompaniment to a fight between two locals. As it happens, the music inflames the crowd rather than pacifying it, the second major brawl of the day breaks out, and the roof of the dance hall finally caves in on everyone's head. The mob violence continues in "Excurshun," but this time it's the women who really go at it, tearing each other's clothes and lips (yes, lips) off in a fight over a rascally itinerant preacher.

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[23] "Penny Do." Vol. 1, No. 1, December 1942; "Excurshun." Vol. 1, No. 2, 1946. In the second instance, the author's name appears as "Lieutenant F.N.K. Mascoll."

W. Therold Barnes' brief tale of yard life is a little more sophisticated since it grants its two antagonists, old Garry and young Hubert, a degree of political savvy. "De difference between you and me is this," Garry lectures:

> You is uh brother and I is uh heathen. You leave everything to the Lord but I is uh man uh action. The way I figgers it de Lord got enough trouble wid Hitler widout Garry botherin him wid somethin that Garry got brain enough to fix for heself…You play you is Hitler…Nobody en goin stop yuh. But I is Churchill! (18, 19).[24]

Interaction between black and white Barbadian communities also figure prominently, and with varying degrees of sensitivity to racial politics. In stories like "The Snag,"[25] which chronicles a young white child's week spent at his aunts' house in the Barbadian countryside, we learn that the aunt's teenage "yard-boy," Joe resents the fact that he must work for his keep all day while white Mark is free to play at will. Despite the fact that Mark and Joe do spend time playing together, their interaction is not hugely different from that of a master and slave, a fact emphasized by the language Collymore uses to describe their relationship: "Of course Joe had numerous chores to perform and Aunt Jane saw to it that time never hung too heavily on his hands, but when Mark paid a visit it was understood that Mark had the right to claim him for some part of the day" (14).[26] Jan Williams' "The Shilling"[27] proceeds in a similar vein, but gradually Rhysian overtones as the white narrator struggles with white guilt upon realizing the depth of poverty black

[24] "Do Fuh Do." Vol. 1, No. 2, 1946.

[25] Frank Collymore. Vol. 1, No. 2, 1946.

[26] Philip Nanton and John Gilmore both note Collymore's sensitivity to and negotiation of his own racial position in Barbados as "one of the whiter of the non-whites" (Gilmore 1). A light-skinned Anglophile with "a chameleon-like ability to blend in on both sides of the fence simultaneously," Collymore parlayed his unique subject position into an advantageous friendship with Henry Swanzy, the Irish producer of the BBC's *Caribbean Voices* radio program. Both men occupied liminal positions within the white Commonwealth literary scene, and both men used their connections to promote the work of racially diverse Caribbean writers.

[27] Vol. 1, No. 3, December 1943.

islanders endure. As she regards an elderly black woman who must beg for coins in order to survive, she becomes conscious that

> mingled pity and fear always crept up into my throat when I saw her, because she was old and black and poor and so intent on picking up sticks and grass and had no hope; and I grew fearful that one day I, too, should be old, wrinkled and bent, if I lived long enough, and be smiling timidly up into the faces of young people for a smile carelessly thrown when they didn't really see me at all, and were thinking of other things. And I always made myself "see" her and grew to look for her…even loved her a little, in a secret, dispassionate kind of way, that had nothing to do with my life. I fumbled in my purse. I wanted to cry, to turn from her and run and weep and call the wrath of God down on myself and the world that such things should be, although I knew all the time that there was poverty all around me…She couldn't really like me and my kind. We stood for something antipathetic. (1-2)

While Williams' narrator leaves us with a sense of insurmountable impotence, failure and separation, Barnes offers up a slightly more hopeful tale (at least with regard to Barbadian race relations) of a humble water color artist who finds fame, loses his wife to shallow, materialistic society, loses his daughter in a car accident caused by the wife's aristocratic lover, and, finally, loses his desire to draw or live.[28] Just before he dies, he sits out on the Barbadian beach, and presents a mixed race child with the masterpiece of a book he'd intended for his own daughter. As he looks at the "little native girl with a skin of burnished copper…[and] clear gray eyes," he wonders, "From whom had she inherited those eyes and the long straight hair braided in twin plaits…perhaps from some early settler from Devon" (74-5). Regardless of her eyes' ethnic origin, young mixed race Margery inherits the artist's most important legacy, and speaks to a hopefulness that Williams' story cannot. Maudlin though it undoubtedly is, Barnes' tale displays an acute early sensitivity to the struggles of working class people, to the purity of artistic endeavor

[28] "The Book." Vol. 1, No. 1, December 1942.

in a world that tends to value only fame, and to the redemptive, connecting act of sharing art with the living.

In addition to examining the complexities of Barbadian race relations, *Bim*'s contributors attempted to create a sense of "Barbadianness" by recuperating "lost" historical artifacts like characters in a Glissant novel. The first of these endeavors, "Bim and the Jolly Roger," is E. L. Cozier's short historical recap of Barbadian encounters with pirates.[29] Cozier begins by acknowledging that "Port Royal, Jamaica, the island of Tortuga, New Providence in the Bahamas are the place-names most frequently heard in pirate tales"(35). Despite Barbados "geographical disadvantages," and "the fact that the island was discovered at a time when piracy was already beginning to fall into disrepute, when Drake and Hawkins had become gallant courtiers and had died as gentlemen," Cozier notes that Barabados' "unadventurous comparatively honest history" was not entirely unblemished by piracy. He details the career of the notorious Stede Bonnet, and likens the privateer's collaboration with Blackbeard to "a piratical Axis in which Bonnet played the part of Italy with Blackbeard a browbeating Berlin" (36). Cozier also mentions that Barbados and Martinique featured prominently on Captain Bartholomew Roberts' pirate flag, since

> the Jolly Roger in this case consisted of a picture of the pious captain, broadsword in hand, standing on two skulls below which were the letters 'A.B.H.' and A.M.H.' These initials stood for "A Barbadian's Head," and "A Martinican's Head," for having been worsted in an engagement with men-of-war from Barbados and Martinique, Roberts had sworn a sacred oath to sink every ship from these islands without compassion. (37)

Thus, by rhetorically separating mythology from history, Cozier attempts to infuse mild Bimshire's imagined community with a dash of piratical zest.

[29] Vol. 1, No. 2, 1946.

Once he had taken a stab at establishing Barbados' Caribbean credentials, Cozier changed course, using local archives to show how Renaissance-era Bims endeavored to distinguish themselves from the British, and drawing parallels between early and modern attempts at self-individuation. Apparently, the local newspaper, the *Barbados Advocate*, had recently featured several letters by bachelors encouraging Barbadian women to marry men from the island. Cozier's article, "'Twas Ever Thus," reprints letters written to the *Barbados Gazette* in 1732 that show a similar campaign was underway then.[30] The authors are Creole men, and their object is to entreat Creole women to desist in their practice of marrying "foreigners." As Cozier reports, the initial letter is written by "Century Lackwives" and begins "*To our* Lovely Countrywomen, *who are single,* The Barbadian Batchelors, and widowers, *send loving Greeting"* (18). Marriage to a "foreigner," the author(s) caution, can lead to a form of wedlock tantamount to enslavement:

> first, we caution you to put a Value on yourselves, equal to the Usefulness and Dignity of your Sex. You are accused of several great *foibles*….[these ellipses textual] but, as the greatest, your Propensity to the being too soon captivated by, and married to Men that are Strangers….[ellipses textual] We would think it now high Time to be silent, did not the Fear of a more dangerous Foible (committable by you) trembling possess us; which is the throwing yourselves away in Wedlock, captivated by strange Faces, fine Dresses, and deceitful Hearts; as too many of your Sex now enslaved living, or deceased with Grief, unlamented, have lately done. (19)

Ultimately, Century Lackwives hopes that his countrywomen will

> Reflect with Reason: What ails us Creoles, that we should not generally be thought good enough for you? Han't we our right Shape and Make? Do the wives of Creoles shew less Fertility than those of Foreigners? Oh! But, perhaps, our Mood is not so jaunty; the Cock of our Hats, Plait of our Ruggles….are not so fine, or *a la mode de Londres* as theirs!... [ellipses textual]…[ellipses mine] When you wed your Countrymen, you know what you do. You *don't buy a pig in*

[30] Vol. 1, No. 3, December 1943.

> *a poke*…[ellipses mine]We are bold to say it, because it is Truth, that the World cannot boast of more tender, mannerly, or complaisant Husbands, than the Barbadians make in Proportion to their number. Sure you will abate of your Fondness for new, British Irish or *other* Outlandish Faces, when you duly reflect…[ellipses mine]Many worthy Britons and Hibernians come into this island. Choose such, and we will any of us joyfully throw the Stocking, provided your dear Spouses have the good Manners to invite us to the Wedding. But, dearest Creolia's, [sic] for Heaven and matrimony's Sake, be wise!" (19).

While the above article drew metaphorical links between a loveless marriage and slavery, Cozier's final installment in the series, "Inckle and Yarico," delves into the historical record in order to examine the truths and myths surrounding the enslavement of native peoples during the seventeenth century.[31] The article recaps multiple versions of the story of a Carib woman and a British sailor, as told by poets and historians. According to Chapman, the poet, the tale is a pathetically romantic Pocahontas story in which the sailor's crew was set upon by "Indians," and Yarico sheltered, fed, and fell in love with the hapless Inckle. In return, the ungrateful sailor sold her into slavery in Barbados, where she delivered his son by the side of a pond. Cozier steps in to problematize the romance, while acknowledging the horror and truth of the native slave trade, noting that

> the action of the Indians was wholly justifiable. The period was the height of the slave trade. Unscrupulous slavers—and they were all unscrupulous, it goes without saying,-- would short circuit the long trip to Africa by putting in to Dominica or one of the other still unsettled islands or even the Atlantic coast of America to capture what Indians or Caribs they could and sell them in the markets. There was, at the time, of this occurrence, a state of open war between the Caribs of Dominica, from where Yarico is supposed to have been taken, and these sailor bandits." (29)

Cozier then goes on to say that, while Inckle behaved like a cad, we cannot fairly judge a rude seventeenth century sailor's conduct by modern standards (30). He then reproduces a postscript appended to the poem by an historian named Poyer, which attempts to

[31] Vol. 1, Number 3, December 1943.

resuscitate Inckle's reputation and tarnish Yarico's. Clearly, the young woman was no damsel in distress, Poyer argues because

> It does not…appear that the lady possessed any remarkable share of delicacy, since it is reported by Ligon, who was personally acquainted with her, and received many offices of kindness at her hands 'that she would not be wooed by any means to wear clothes.' Nor does she seem to have been much affected by the ingratitude of her perfidious betrayer. "Her small breasts with nipples of porphyrie" were irresistible attractions and she soon consoled herself in the arms of another lover. In short 'she chanced to be with child by a christian servant, and lodging in an Indian house, amongst the other women of her own country, and being very great with child, so that her time was come to be delivered, she walked down to a wood, and there, by the side of a pond, brought herself a-bed; and presently washing her child in three hours time came home with a lusty boy, frolic and lively. Who would suppose that this is the same unfortunate female of whom so much has been said and sung by moralists, poets and historians?" (30).

Cozier doesn't allow Poyer to have the last word, however, concluding ultimately that while the "true" story is not as romantic as Chapman styles it, it is also not as antipathetic as Poyer would have us believe.

And yet beyond myth and history, beyond depictions of racial (dis)harmony, Edgar Mittelholzer offers a third way of imagining community in Barbados: an aesthetic model sketched carefully by an outsider. In "Of Casuarinas and Cliffs,"[32] the best written article published in *Bim* to this point, the Guyanese novelist describes Barbados as reminiscent of the colors in a Degas painting, and toys with multiple painterly and literary descriptions of the eponymous casuarinas and cliffs. Barbadian scenery, he assures us, inspires rich narrative possibilities in him. A visit to a fabled bit of shore, for example, nets this response:

> I was up at five-thirty and went out on the beach where fishermen pointed out to me the Well Pit. Just a small patch of water that looks more blue-green than the blue-green water around it. A few jutting rocks mark the spot, too, and foam. The fishermen said that boats had been known to have been sucked down there

[32] Vol. 2, No. 5, February 1945.

> and never seen again. And when I asked how deep the Well Pit was they told me that its depths had never been fathomed, making me think at once that here would be just the setting for some tale with a tragic end. Imagine your central character plunging into this rough, foaming pool and being never seen again. But plunging would be too melodramatic. And swimming out would be too much like the sentimentality of Miss Florence Barclay in her novel, *Boy*. It would have to be some other way. (55)

Thus, the Barbadian narrative, as supplied by the raw materials of the natural world, will be gripping, non-romanticized, and, as he goes on to suggest, distinctly Caribbean. Admittedly, there are naysayers who

> say that Barbados is too much like England and too little like Barbados to be typically West Indian. One clever fellow even told me that English schoolboys ought to be sent to Barbados so that they might learn something about the English, while another fellow amended this by adding: "You mean learn something about the English as the English used to be. In the seventeenth century." For me, however, I have no argument to brew. I'm content that, paintable or not, English or truly West Indian in spirit, the island (as you may have observed) did give me a little to write about. (55)

Clearly then, by the end of World War II, *Bim* has arrived at a point where it not only self-consciously seeks to imagine itself as an independent community, but is also taking its first tentative steps toward imagining a transnational Caribbean community, united by a common literary aesthetic. By the December 1945 issue, Frank Collymore openly considers the relationship between literature, the individual postcolonial nation and the transnational, political region in his light-hearted "Editor's Blarney," noting

> We were, however, gratified to learn quite recently that the town of Charleston, N.C., was colonized by Barbadians in the year of grace, 1670. Although no mention is made, as far as we are aware, of this fact by any local historian, yet we are assured that all Charlestonians assimilate this information at a tender age from their school books; and no doubt, in their solemn moments, refer to Barbados as the dear old Mother Country. Strange to think how national proclivities survive: even at that remote age we were seeking an outlet for our surplus population. And so, to-day, when West Indian Federation looms hazily on the shifting background of world politics, we should like to take this opportunity to state our conviction that the preservation of individuality must always be of paramount importance, and it is only by developing our inherent bimness to the utmost that

> we can hope to do our bit in the formation of a successful and vital commonwealth. We dislike mass production. (1)

Thus, while Collymore cautions against an overt mingling of the literary and the political in a trans-national Caribbean context, his comments suggest an awaRené ss that such a tendency is already underway. Put another way, why caution readers against a trend that doesn't exist? Indeed, despite Collymore's gentle remonstrances, the magazine quickly blossomed into a hybrid, Pan-Caribbean space. By 1948, the cover price had changed from "one shilling" to "Thirty-six cents," and the traditional cover, which had once merely reproduced the table of contents, now listed authors' names grouped by island affiliation. Yet again, Collymore found himself constrained to explain the magazine's title to a new, more broadly transnational crop of readers, and to offer a rueful acknowledgment that perhaps "Bim" was no longer the *mot juste* for the evolving periodical. "Alas," he admits, "we are losing our insular self-sufficiency. A glance at the contents of this volume will discover the names of many contributors who dwell beyond these shores, far beyond even our lone dependency, Pelican Island." (1).[33]

While stories and articles about other islands certainly graced *Bim*'s pages before 1945, the early offerings tended to describe Trinidad, Dominica, Guyana, etc. as foreign locales for which residents of Bimshire would likely require some sort of cultural Baedeker. Dick Stokes' "Dominica Trek,"[34] for one, seeks, self-evidently, to chronicle a hike to Boiling Lake, which he cautions his readers is sulphorously satanic, and not for the faint of heart. But while one might expect that Stokes' narrative would also give some consideration to the lives of the native Dominicans who guide him on the trek and

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[33] Vol. 3, No. 9, 1948.

[34] Vol. 1, No.2, 1943.

who serve as his constant companions, he is instead preoccupied with speculations about the island's colonizers, supposing that "Here the French chevaliers once brought their fair Ma'amselles for bath and breakfast" (25). Depending on whose account you favor, Trinidad is either the home of murderous coconut vendors who seek vengeance on their enemies with a "sinister Latin delicacy,"[35] or the wealthy yet agriculturally barren ying to Barbados' fertile but impoverished yang.[36]

Dominica, Martinique and St. Lucia each come in for their fair share of scrutiny from E. Gomier, the author of "Pages From a Diary."[37] Nestled between ads for a shoe store in British Guiana and the *Trinidad Guardian*, Gomier's travel narrative recounts an apparently white Barbadian tourist's adventures during a sea tour of several Caribbean islands. As she island hops, Ms. Gomier observes some of the people who get off the ferry at Dominica, and

> I realized that this mode of living, primitive as it appeared, was their whole big world. Their thoughts traveled no further than Roseau, for "Masquerade." Many, perhaps, had lived all their lives in their "ajoupas," minding their bearded, burly fishermen and black babies, their pigs and goats, without venturing further than the group of houses or the wood beyond. (29)

This is a strange inference since she has encountered her fellow travelers on an inter-island ferry, and her observations are prompted by the initial reflection that the women descend from the boat with the ease borne of long practice. She does not understand the patois, and has no friends in Portsmouth, so the streets by night look "eerie." As she

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[35] "Quien Sabe?" by P.K. Roach, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1943. Probably the same Patrick Roach who wrote a 1974 book entitled, *The Bridge Barbados*.

[36] "Trinidad and Barbados," by S.G.S. Vol. 1, No. 3 December 1943.

[37] Vol. 1, No. 4, April 1944.

prepares to board the *Toutai* in Portsmouth harbor, and indeed, throughout the entire trip, this woman imagines that she is seeing the land through the colonizer's eyes:

> As we neared Portsmouth we could just barely distinguish in the distance the humps of Les Saints and Marie Galante. Perhaps we were seeing these tiny isles as Sir Frances Drake might have seen them in his sojourns around Dominica, where he frequently anchored "for refreshing."…[The *Toutai*] might have been waiting on a band of Buccaneers. Whilst we lowered sail, the latest news of the world was shouted to us from punts paddling around, and for a moment I imagined I was about to leave, not on the dear old *Toutail* [sic], but one of Her Majesty's frigates, which had set sail some thirty days ago, from another Portsmouth. (30, 85)

While these travelogues all display glaringly apparent racial, colonial, and national biases, *Bim*'s fiction offered more nuanced, thoughtful musings on Caribbean transnationalism. G. A. Holder's fascinating short story, "The Choice"[38] is an excellent example for our purposes, since it considers not only the sacrifice and adventure involved in regional imaginaries but also the paradoxically particular position of the ambitious, post-war Caribbean citizen who, in order to do something for "the people," must also fashion oneself into a rugged individualist. In Holder's tale, Dennis Farrell, an ambitious young black man whose family has been financially ruined, is fed up with Bathsheba, the quiet Barbadian fishing town in which he spent many summers as a child. Torn between his physical desire for Elsa, who is lighter skinned than he, and a burning wish to make something of himself and become politically active, Dennis wallows in existential distress. Elsa is keenly aware of his turmoil, and realizes that Dennis believes he must choose between a settled family life in Barbados and a life of political engagement elsewhere. She senses that "something was pulling him away from her, some strange mixture of intellectualism and independence of spirit" (18). For his part, Dennis is a less

[38] Vol. 1, No. 4, April 1944.

astute reader of Elsa's mind, but his assumptions about the future that awaits her if he leaves is quite instructive:

> He wondered what would become of her. How would she get along when her ailing mother died? Dennis thought of her with no one to take care of her. How would she live? He was horrified at the thought that she might have to live in the same way as those girls he saw in town sometimes who at once attracted and repelled him by the voluptuous promise of their bodies, by the unnatural brightness of their eyes, by the taint of death in their manner of living. Hers would probably be on a higher scale, but it would be a difference only in degree, not in kind. Besides, the scale would go down inexorably; once you started that sort of thing it was impossible—unless she got married. It hurt him… But there was that other part of him which rebelled against this surrender. He wanted to be free of those ties which take away a man's independence, free to develop all his powers to the full and at the same time have the feeling that he was contributing to the general welfare of people like himself. 'An intense individual life is possible only in a highly organized society.' He had read that somewhere, long ago, and it had stuck in his mind. Well, he would be killing two birds with one stone. (67, 71)

Clearly, prostitution or marriage are the only two possibilities Dennis envisions for Elsa, and though he regrets the loss of her to one fate or the other, he is unwilling to sacrifice his prospects and sense of independence for what he perceives to be her welfare. Ultimately, he tells Elsa that he has resolved to leave the island (and her) in order to work as a journalist for the Jamaican paper, *The Harvester.* Yet Elsa surprises him by responding that she, too, has accepted a job with the paper, as her brother is already employed there. Ultimately, the would-be uplifter of "his people" must acknowledge that despite his chosen pose of individuality, the ravages of colonialism bind him rather unwillingly to a life of communal service:

> 'It's strange,' he said lightly, 'it's strange that a fellow like me, the most scapegrace and bereft of ties should—'
> 'Impatient of ties, you mean,' she interrupted and he smiled quickly.
> 'The most scapegrace and impatient of ties, if you say so, the most rugged individualist of this God-forgotten age, should talk of my own people. Queer, don't you think?' He cocked a quizzical eye at her.

> 'So you are not so free after all,' she countered. He grew serious at once, and there was a trace of sadness in his voice.
> 'We are none of us free, Elsa. The past won't let us.' (71)

The volumes that emerge during 1948 and 1949 are a riotous profusion of Pan-Caribbean offerings. Poetry by Collymore, Geoffrey Drayton, Harold Telemaque, Walcott and a host of others evoke casuarinas, sampans and palms that are also, symbolically, "freedom trees," linking Caribbean islands and lives through their root systems.[39] Barnes' short story "War Memorial," vindicates a Trinidadian sculptor who alone is capable of aesthetically rendering the resilience and vitality of the post-war Caribbean.[40] "West Indian literature" was now a well-enough established idea that Bryan King's essay "What Poetry Means to Me," seeks not to justify its existence but to argue for specific critical paradigms when evaluating its visceral aesthetic pleasures.[41] Ultimately, King argues that even if a West Indian poet chooses to address non-Caribbean subject matter, the poetry is nonetheless thoroughly West Indian:

> What can we expect in the writings of these poets? In the West Indies it should be more natural to write epics about the voyages of Columbus than about the route marches of Hannibal. But if Hannibal excites their imagination and Columbus doesn't, it should not be for me to dictate their subjects. It should be more natural to write an Ode to the Frangpanni than an Ode to the Daffodil, but if they found it difficult to find rhymes for Frangipanni, we should be ready to extend our sympathy. We must remember that no one would think of criticising Keats on the ground that he wrote an Ode to a Grecian Urn, but left unsung the glories of a Wedgewood China teapot. If our West Indian poets are to mean something to us we must then be ready to give them a free hand to mean something to themselves. While demanding that they should have style, let us not try to cramp it by insisting that their style should be original or even distinctively West Indian. We must be careful to judge them by aesthetic standards, rather than by their contribution to the ideal of West Indian nationalism. Patriotism cannot be

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[39] "Freedom Tree" by Harold Telemaque and "Triptych," by Frank Collymore," Vol. 3, No. 9, 1948; "Travelogue," by Derek Walcott and "The Ancient Carib," by Geoffrey Drayton, Vol. 3, No. 10.

[40] Vol. 2, No. 8, 1946.

[41] Vol. 2, No. 7, 1946.

> enough, They must be poets too. But if they are true poets, true West Indians, and true to themselves, they won't be able to escape producing something which is poetry—West Indian poetry—which has a special meaning for us. Thus they will *compel* us to remember poetry and enhance for us the brightness of our own West Indian world. (46)

But, as it happened, *Bim*'s readers would not often be compelled to hunt for a "West Indian" form distinct from content, for its contributors continued to imbue their work with both. By 1950 the magazine had become so Pan-Caribbean in its orientation that it ran special issues featuring the poetry and paintings of Haitian artists. It published Haitian and Martinican French language poems without translation and critical studies like Andre Midas' "The Literary Movement in the French West Indies."[42] At this point, Frank Collymore happily conceded that

> our title, *Bim*, ("inhabitant of Barbados," C.O.D.) has become, to say the least, outworn, now that our contributors are representative of the British Caribbean. The situation becomes still more complicated with this issue: [the profusion of French language material] will do something we hope to interest our readers in the literature and art of the Latin Caribbean; but *Bim* will serve. (1)

Here, perhaps, in *Bim'*s evolving multilingual Pan-Caribbeanness, we can see a version of Brent Hayes Edwards' resistant, untranslatable "*décalage,"* or "gaps," in action. By leaving entire pieces untranslated, *Bim* was perhaps both assuming that a significant portion of its readership would understand without assistance *and* tacitly affirming the value of linguistic difference by allowing those works to exist outside of translation for others. Thus, at many levels, *Bim* paradoxically fostered Pan-Caribbeanness by highlighting diverse particularities.

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[42] Vol. 3, No. 12, 1950.

"This is London calling the West Indies": *Caribbean Voices* Spreads the Word

If Collymore's *Bim* opted to retain a geographically particular moniker despite its increasingly Pan-Caribbean content, the BBC's *Caribbean Voices* program adopted a name that left listeners in no doubt about its interest in forwarding the development of a regional literature. From its inaugural episode on March 11, 1945, which aired at 23.00 GMT, each *Caribbean Voices* broadcast typically featured one or two short stories or a selection of poems. By April 1947, the program had expanded to include critical commentary by producer Henry Swanzy and a selection of Caribbean expatriates in which they evaluated fiction that had recently aired on the program.[43] Broadcast throughout the Anglophone Caribbean and Britain as part of the BBC's General Overseas Service, *Caribbean Voices* quickly became a space from which new Caribbean literature was widely disseminated, and in which its literary merits were seriously analyzed.

Of course, in deflecting emphasis from specific, Caribbean nationalisms, the BBC as a parent entity, was decidedly *not* attempting to attack nationalism as a construct. Instead, as Glyne Griffith notes, London saw an opportunity to use the airwaves in service of its own nationalist agenda, subtly pushing Caribbean solidarity in an attempt to reinforce the idea of a unified British commonwealth amidst massive anti-colonial labor unrest (4-5). But as we will see, London hadn't reckoned on the Irish Swanzy's

[43] By 1948, Arthur Calder-Marshall, British novelist and author of the pro-Trinidadian labor union travelogue, *Glory Dead,* had begun contributing a series of regular criticisms to the broadcast. Some of Calder-Marshall's comments, such as those expressed in his Feb. 1st, 1948 talk, "What I Hope to See From the West Indies," gave general advice to aspiring Caribbean authors, while some of his other interventions addressed specific literary texts, and aired immediately after those texts were broadcast. For more on Calder-Marshall's relationships with Henry Swanzy, *Caribbean Voices*, and the British literary scene, see Bill Schwarz's *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*, and Griffiths.

sympathy for aspiring writers whose people "had had a raw deal, really"[44] nor on the distinctly anti-imperial tone the Caribbean contributors' literary solidarity assumed. Swanzy clarified his own views on Caribbean nationalism and literature in a piece submitted to *Bim* several years after *Caribbean Voices* went silent:

> Although the birth of Caribbean literature in the English-speaking Caribbean is linked imaginatively to the struggle of labouring forces in the region and to the agitation for political independence, the narrative of nationalism, which generally speaks of a coherent and unified ontology, is not typically represented in the literature of the region. The literary narratives tend to speak of incoherence, fracture, dislocation and marginality, even as the literature came to be pressed into the service of various nationalist efforts in the region in order to forge a viable unum out of the contentious pluralisms of a fragmentary pluribus. In other words, there was a sense in which the burgeoning Caribbean literature would come to publicly symbolize that Caribbean peoples were capable of self-determination, even though the precarious and fragile nature of ontological strategies explored by much of the literature would never quite make it on the agenda of nationalist narratives concerned with unity and progress." (Swanzy, quoted in Griffith 2)

Acutely aware of the totalizing forces Western nationalist models exerted on literatures, cultures, and people, Swanzy emphasizes the importance of not reducing Caribbean diversity to single markers of identity, and suggests that a regional, Pan-Caribbean literary identity serves as a valuable counter-discourse to European imperialism.

From the start of Swanzy's tenure at the show's helm, he and Frank Collymore cultivated a symbiotic, correspondence-based relationship. Collymore was Swanzy's "man on the scene," so to speak—a trusted collator of Caribbean literary talent. Swanzy, in return, offered greater exposure to Collymore's protégés, and, despite the program's notoriously tight budget[45], paid authors and readers a modest stipend for their work.[46] In a

[44] Quoted in Schwarz, pg. 201.

[45] The budget was so tight that producers were forced to re-use the same reel-to-reel tape from one week to the next. Thus, the program was never able to preserve an audio record of their broadcasts. Extant transcripts of *Caribbean Voices* programs are housed in the Henry Swanzy Collection at the University of Birmingham, and in the West Indies Special Collection at the University of the West Indies' Mona campus.

note appended to the University of the West Indies' *Caribbean Voices* transcript collection, Swanzy cautions researchers that

> The copies [typewritten transcripts of each broadcast] were intended mainly as reference points, in case there were enquiries from listeners. They were sent down every week by my secretary, Miss McGlone, in rough form, just as they had been used in the studio production. The corrections were often made in the studio itself, primarily for timing, but sometimes to secure clarity of hearing, and occasionally to fit in with the voice and personality of the reader.[47]

While Swanzy ruefully acknowledges that "this is clearly not the best way to treat a literary work, which is meant to be seen by the eye," he excuses himself on two fronts:

> the main purpose of the programmes was to encourage writers, and to make them known, especially among themselves. In many cases, the complete version of the stories or poems were sent later by the writer to the little reviews, especially to *BIM*, under the editorship of Frank Collymore in Barbados.[48]

Thus, Swanzy viewed his program as a literary appetizer of sorts, whetting the public's appetite for the heartier fare *Bim* provided. Furthermore, he overtly sought to create a new, imagined community of Caribbean authors, both by bringing published writers like Barbadian George Lamming and Guyanese Edgar Mittelholzer into contact and by offering professional opportunities to amateur artists.

Like Collymore, Swanzy actively solicited literary pieces highlighting the uniqueness of various Caribbean communities, but like *Bim*, *Caribbean Voices* received submissions from diverse sources on strikingly similar topics. Poems claiming to describe island-specific natural beauty were ubiquitous, and used similar language in

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This research is based on the materials housed in Jamaica.

[46] Authors and readers were paid at a rate of a guinea per aired minute, "a substantial sum in those days" according to Gilmore and Nanton.

[47] From "Note by the Producer: 1946-1954," an undated letter filed with the UWI collection's indices.

[48] Ibid.

praise of various locales. In one 1947 broadcast alone, poets from Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Guyana eulogized their respective islands' azure waters, pristine mornings and scarlet sunsets.[49] Far more interesting, though, are the number of programs which, while claiming to focus on a specific island or community, actually figured its audience as a unified, Pan-Caribbean group.

A March 25, 1945 tribute to Jamaican poet Constance Hollar, for example, began with a eulogy, in which Una Marson bemoaned "the loss that we in the West Indies have sustained" (1). Speaking from the BBC's London soundstage several thousand miles away from Jamaica, Marson chose to couch her grief in language expressive not of nationalist possessiveness, but of regional inclusiveness. Barbadian Cameron Tudor's rhetorical strategy accomplishes something similar in a June 3, 1945 program with a nationally particular focus: literature from and about Trinidad. "Tonight," Tudor begins,

> *Caribbean Voices* will touch the fringe of Trinidad. A glimpse—no more—of the island will be given, a fleeting impression…a passing glance from the eyes of a visitor~~— a series of visitors~~ a composite visitor. Mostly it is pre-war Trinidad that is revealed, possibly a Trinidad which is as far away from us now as pre-war Britain. But put yourself in the position of a newcomer. What would you do? Why, open a guide book of course!" (1)

Despite asking his listeners to assume the role of virtual tourists, Tudor sets his British and Caribbean audience up for an encounter, not with an exotic locale, but with the familiar past. Moreover, his interesting textual redaction in the second sentence figures listeners not as varied, successive, and therefore unconnected, but as "a composite visitor," sharing the journey from their respective armchairs. After Tudor's introduction, an unidentified speaker gives a humorous précis on Trinidad's climate, noting that it is

[49] "The Waiting Room," a "portmanteau program. Sun. 5th Oct. 1947 pgs. 1-11. This broadcast featured poems by Barnabas Ramon-Fortuné, J.R. Bunting, Lena Kent, Frank Collymore, William S. Arthur, Daisy Myrie, Karl Sealy, and Joseph Penco.

"warm and humid, but the nights are cool, and the air in the hills is bracing and invigorating" (1). The reader goes on to note that "there are two seasons, the dry and the rainy. Both Trinidad and Tobago are at their best in the late European winter and early spring" (1). As the aforementioned poems on various islands' natural beauty show, warm days, cool nights, and bracing mountain air would certainly sound familiar to any West Indian listener, but these seasonal references also emphasize that *Caribbean Voices'* British devotees are the *true* foreigners on this jaunt. Thus, in describing that which is nominally particular to Trinidad, Caribbean listeners are drawn into a common fantasy: while they agree to imagine that they are tourists to an unknown, foreign locale, the very air of pretense emphasizes how contrived that exoticism really is.

Later that month[50], *Caribbean Voices* devoted an episode to excerpts from the journal of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's nephew, Henry, chronicling his travels to the West Indies, and focusing particularly on his impressions of Barbados. Coleridge prized Barbados for its "finished cultivation," describing it as

> without competition, the most delightful island of the Antilles…The old motto of neither Carib nor Creole, is not true, for a Barbadian is probably the most genuine Creole of the West Indies, yet in spite of that, there are many peculiarities in this island which go a great way in justifying the appellation of Little England. (2, ellipses mine).

Thus, while Coleridge finds much to remind of home in Barbados, he nevertheless awards Barbadians the title of "the most genuine" (read "authentic," and therefore non-British) Creole. The program's narrator (whose name is not included on the transcript) interjects, "[This is] the inevitable sentiment which excites the deprecatory pride of the Barbadian and—the good-humored derision of other islanders" (3). After a description of several local landmarks, Coleridge's remarks become more general, and he falls to

[50] Sunday/Monday, June 24/25, 1945.

musing about the Caribbean islands as a group. Ultimately, he suggests, these small colonies

> are practical republics, and present as faithful a picture of the petty states of old Greece as the change of manners and religion will allow. There is the same equality amongst the free, the same undue conception of their own importance, the same restlessness of spirit, the same irritability of temper which has ever been the characteristic of all little commonwealths" (7).

Whatever we may think of Coleridge's weird comparisons, this episode is yet another example of how *Caribbean Voices*' literary offerings transformed an ostensible focus on national particularity into a meditation on regionally-shared experiences vis a vis the colonizer.

Like *Bim*'s authors, many contributors to *Caribbean Voices* focused, sometimes cringily, on Caribbean race relations. Whether unfortunate or astute, however, these pieces almost invariably suggested some sort of common experience in the midst of racially particular or divisive moments. Frederic Cassidy's poem, "Negro Dance,"[51] for one, rhythmically evokes a dance hall scene. In the final stanza, Cassidy intones

> Suddenly they quicken to the clap-clap-clapping
> Of an ebon-headed fellow with his white eyes snapping,
> As he joggles to the centre while a ring forms round
> All slapping to the tapping on the sounding ground.
> The big teeth glisten as he pants and grins
> And all join the rhythm of his shining shins. (ll.13-18)

The depiction is bad enough, but after Cassidy's poem, the unnamed narrator observes, "What West Indian hasn't seen <u>that</u> picture" (2, emphasis textual). While both the poem

[51] Sunday/Monday May 27/28, 1945, pages 1-12. In light of the poem's subject matter, it is worth mentioning that Cassidy was a distinguished lexicographer, inducted into the Jamaican Hall of Fame in recognition of his expertise "on Anglo-Saxon English Composition, Jamaican English, Pidgin and Creole Languages" <http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/hallfame/jhofdrcassidy.shtml>. While I am not so foolhardy as to venture a pronouncement on his precise racial background, photos of Cassidy suggest that he was either Caucasian, or very light skinned. The poem was read on-air by Laidman Brown, a (white, British) member of the BBC's Repertory Company. Since Swanzy stated that he was at pains to match contributor and reader on as many points of identity (national, racial, gendered,) as possible, Brown's participation is potentially a suggestive indicator of Cassidy's subject position.

and the commentary are potentially quite racially offensive, they nevertheless locate a form of Caribbean unity in the particular space of this Jamaican dance hall. For Cassidy, this is a "Negro Dance," not a Jamaican dance. For the narrator, this is a West Indian scene, not a Montegan scene.

Frequent *Caribbean Voices* reader and contributor, Pauline Henriques, offers another musing on the complexities inherent in identifying oneself as both black and West Indian. In her "Review of *First Poems* by George Campbell,"[52] Henriques asserts that "we Jamaicans" have an "emotional temperament" (1). She notes Campbell's emphasis on "negro consciousness," observing,

> Well that is certainly not European—though I wouldn't go so far as to say that race consciousness was not originally a European export—a reinterpretation by the Negro of the nationalism of Mazzini, and Garibaldi, and the 19th century Liberalism of Gladstone. Does race consciousness exist among Africans before the European makes them conscious of their race? I wonder (2).

Ultimately, Henriques claims that "this intense race-consciousness…This wearing one's race on one's sleeve like a badge (almost like the Jews in Europe) is typical of the American Negro—but I wouldn't call it typically West Indian" (3). Her main objection to racial concepts of identity, it transpires, is that she sees how they can pull emotionally at black West Indians. Fearing the sorts of racist inscriptions found in the Cassidy poem, Henriques prefers calm logic: "Well, there you are—that is the end of my emotional picnic. I pull myself together, take a couple of aspirins, and try to assess these poems away from the West Indian undercurrent" (3). After quoting several more excerpts, she concludes, "You see I have escaped from the spiritually turbulent emotional Jamaican to George Campbell the poet" (5). In a few sentences, Henriques conflates race, nation, and region, and appears to suggest that because racial identification isn't "typically West

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[52] Sunday/Monday, July 14/15, 1946.

Indian," a regional identity offers an alternative to the dangers posed by white discourse on blackness.

A year and a half later, Trinidadian Willy Richardson offered a timely parable, warning against attempts at racial/colonial mimicry. His short story, "The First Dance,"[53] is the tale of the Boyd family's attempt to break into the "coloured aristocracy" of Trinidad. Mr. Boyd's plain, snobbish, London-educated daughter, Jean, suggests throwing a private dance at their home. "The real idea," she confides, "is that it would be the social event of the year. We would not invite anybody who didn't have a secondary education except of course, they had money or were light skinned enough to lend tone to the dance" (2). She also stipulates that they must only have "the elite. You know doctors, lawyers and civil servants. And we will have to be careful not to have any colour bar" (2). Her father agrees, but insists that all invitees arrive clad in "formal wear. I don't want anyone coming to dance here in a zoot suit" (2). He tries to prohibit calypsos, but Jean insists that they must "pander to the local taste" since "Trinidadians are not cultured enough to appreciate the Boomps-a-Daisy" (3). Jean's Elite Club decides to post someone at the door with "a nice gift of discrimination. Charlie Arnold…was known to be able to tell a nice girl from a not so nice girl without lifting his head. By the perfume alone. He could detect a Bouquet d'Afrique undisguised by more exotic brands without seeing the owner" (4, ellipses mine). Jean and Mr. Boyd are pleased with the evening, but no one else is. There is no alcohol, and, as one "Elite" notes, "No sober man can possibly enjoy a dance unless he has definite moronic tendencies…One girl said to her partner 'It's very respectable.' He answered her with a

[53] Sunday, December 28, 1947, pgs. 1-6.

laugh, 'Hell must be respectable too'" (5, ellipses mine). The dinner is dainty to the point of stinginess and there is no closing calypso, which causes one man to want to "tell [Mr. Boyd] what he thought of him" (6). It ends with the satirical pronouncement, "Outside the moon was full and brilliant, and entirely unaware that the Boyds had arrived" (6). The natural world, not to mention people with appropriately discriminating tastes, are unimpressed with the Boyd's attempts to "pass" as both British and, by extension, white. Richardson thus suggests that those overly squeamish of being associated with societal markers of West Indian blackness—vigorous, lively calypsos, or a fondness for a good, sociable drink—deserve the misery to which their pretensions resign them.

While Richardson's first parable can be read as an attempt to allay insecurities like those expressed by Henriques, his second is undoubtedly a far more alarmist, although equally amusing "allegory of the West Indies"[54] (Swanzy 5). Titled "The Argument," it is the story of men with "blurred faces" arguing in "a shabby room" and drinking rum (5). "The argument always excited us," Richardson's narrator confesses.

> It put us against each other, each person insistent to be heard, and although each person had something to say, something loud and vehement, yet there was a feeling of friendship when we were in the argument even though we accused each other with savage, denunciatory labels. 'Stooge,' 'Fascist,' 'Communist,' 'Uncle Tom,' and sometimes all four together would be heaped on one head, with other invective. We could take personal abuse. What we couldn't take was analysis. We did not want to know why we put forward the arguments that we did. (6)

The interlocutors, known as W, X, Y, Z, and I (this last is the narrator), argue about self-government. W quotes *Julius Caesar*, observing "The fault dear Brutus, lies not in our stars but in ourselves that we are underlings," and he is chided not for the sentiment but "for being so silly as to quote poetry,…for being so silly as to read poetry at all" (6, ellipses mine). X, an authoritative orator, quotes pages of Marx from memory, confident

[54] Sunday, April 23, 1950.

that "The will of the people is the only rule by which we can guide ourselves. And the will of the people must be interpreted by those who know the will of the people" (6). "I" remarks ruefully that "We had all of us read Marx, but except for 'X' none of us had got past Chapter II of *Das Kapital*" (6). "Y," a civil servant, objects that Marx "was a man like any of us. As a matter of fact his wife was always complaining that she wished Karl would stop writing about Capital and start making some of it" (6). At this point, the argument takes off in earnest. X rages that Y is a "bourgeois reactionary," too invested in the status quo to work for meaningful change, to which Y responds, "What do you expect me to do, chuck my job and get on to the nearest soap-box to preach revolution?" (6). Z tries to infuriate everyone by assuming a superior air and adopting a lazy drawl (6). He suggests each man's ambition is simply "I want to be Governor" (7). Thus, as soon as one man rises to power, his erstwhile supporters immediately begin attacking him (7). "I" listens to them all talking at once, quoting poetry, joking, going on Marxist rants, etc until it all sounded like "Executive council—opium of the people—Honey sharing—Federations first—get into the sea—Christs upon the barricades—of, by, for the people—rum talking—" (7). After taking all of their arguments in, "I" is initially hesitant to voice his own opinion, thinking that no one will really listen to him so he contents himself with literally flapping his own gums:

> I felt that I might be just as effective if I merely clapped my lips together and let the loud popping noises float towards their vacant faces. The thought had no sooner struck me than I did precisely that…Of course I was wrong. As soon as the first pop was out…[I knew that] I had merely been projecting my own solipsistic habits. Their reflexes were functioning normally. (7, ellipses mine)

The men begin arguing about the definition of truth, using a siren heard vaguely in the distance as a test case. Did the siren <u>really</u> go off? W says that truth is beauty, the sound

is not beautiful, ergo there is no siren, then insists that nevertheless he did hear it; X slams him for being "undialectical" because he can offer "no supporting facts…it might have been a lovesick manicou for all you know…But by the use of dialectical materialism I can assure you that it was a siren" and so forth (8, ellipses mine). "I" hears the siren again, but "I slumped back in my chair, dismissing it with a wave of my hand. It did not exist. We had so many problems to discuss—Customs Union, Foreign Policy, Industrialisation and Culture" (9). The room begins to fill with smoke and the men begin to discuss "that inevitable subject, cricket" (9). Someone suggests singing a calypso and then they see a crowd gathering outside. It's starting to get hot in the room so they go outside to ask, "Where's the fire?" The crowd laughs, "and we looked at each other in wild astonishment, realising for the first time that our house was burning furiously. Even our clothes were on fire, and we had not known it all that time. We might have been burnt to death while we sat arguing about truth" (9). Richardson's parable ends with them doing the stop, drop, and roll in the grass while their house, presumably, burns to the ground.

By 1947, not only the literature, but the critical commentary focused overtly on the evolution and achievements of a budding Caribbean literary consciousness. In the course of a roundtable discussion between Swanzy, Gordon Bell, John Figueroa, and "Squadron-Leader Ulric Cross of Trinidad," (all of whom served as both readers for and literary contributors to the program), the conversation focused on literary offerings by little-known authors whose pieces aired in March.[55] Mittelholzer's offerings, "The Paw-Paw," and "Of Casuarinas and Cliffs," are pushed to the side, not for any lack of merit, but because their author is so much better known in the West Indies than some of the

[55] April 27, 1947, pgs. 4-9.

other writers" (4). Thus, the critics reiterate the program's goals of cultivating new talent and of introducing listeners to a wider variety of Caribbean literature than that which was most easily available on booksellers' shelves. Furthermore, Jamaican John Figueroa begins with a proposal which clearly establishes his own preference for a regional rather than a national subject position. "Well, speaking as a West Indian who does a bit of writing now and then," Figueroa coyly offers, "I think we ought to leave the two Trinidadians, Telemaque and Richardson to the end, because without wishing to make comparisons, I fell that they—how shall I say it? Provided us with a greater amount of interest and pleasure, and it would be interesting to ask why" (4). Cross agrees, "not only because of local patriotism," and observes pacifically that "the growing Caribbean literature is not the property of any one small island or community" (5). Figueroa and Cross then light into Arthur's poem, "Sugar," an extended description of and address to the canes which undergird Caribbean economies. Figueroa is unimpressed with the effort, avowing, "I do not think the description of the sugar field or the factory was poetry—neither in metre nor in language nor in conception. It seemed to me rather too much like a list…"(5). Cross chimes in that "His images are simply not West Indian images at all," and when pressed by Bell to explain, gripes, "well, he talks of a 'moving glacier,' but I doubt if he has ever seen one, it just isn't a West Indian image" (5). Figueroa supports him with this dubious speculation: "Of course, if he had known a glacier, he could have used it West Indian or not West Indian, if it perfectly expressed what he wanted. But how does he know that it does?" (5). Here we see a clear contrast of ideas: Cross wants verisimilitude of West Indian imagery and experience in the works, while Figueroa, despite his own description of himself as a West Indian poet,

could care less about these choices. He is not invested in Caribbean literature departing from established literary conventions so much as in cultivating poetry that is "authentic," perhaps "universal," and certainly "serious" in its import. Only then, Figueroa suggests, will Caribbean literature be properly acknowledged by European critics, and only then will it have "arrived," so to speak.

Bell interjects at this point, observing that "On your premise one could just as easily condemn "Greenland's Icy Mountains" or "Tiger, tiger, burning bright," or indeed the whole of Milton's *Paradise Lost* or Dante's *Inferno*. Poetry is not a matter of geography, surely" (5). When Figueroa questions Arthur's mention of a "coach and four" ("Does he really know a coach and four?") Bell ripostes, "But the coach and four was actually a feature of wealthy planter life" (5, emphasis textual). Thus, Bell argues for a middle ground between Cross' position and Figueroa's: Caribbean poetry can represent imagery conjured up by the imagination or by the trappings of colonial encounter. Its imagery is not necessarily a marker of its "authenticity." Figueroa and Cross then, rather grumpily, move on to a dissection of Arthur's metaphors, with Cross complaining, "he used the metaphor of an eagle swooping down on its prey. Personally, I'd much rather he had used our common West Indian 'chicken'" (6). Ultimately, after much prodding by Bell, the other two concede that Arthur's poem had its moments, Figueroa praising the phrase, "postillion of fate' and Cross singling out the phrase "A little while ago they stabbed the sunlit air" as "extremely good" (6).

In an attempt to lighten the mood, Figueroa shifts to subject matter on which all the men can wax effusive. He praises Telemaque and Richardson for "a beautifully clean relation between form and content with images that were genuine and particular but

going deep and setting up echoes in the mind" (7). Richardson's short story about a calypsonian whose performances never quite live up to his ambition made a particular impression on Figueroa because of the precision of his word choice: "I remember 'scuttle,' exactly the sort of borrowed but vivid word we would use in the West Indies, and the authenticity of that green and yellow dress with blotches worn by Irma. How West Indian!" (7). Yet when Figueroa criticizes the piece for not being clear enough in its use of flashback, Swanzy interjects, agreeing with Bell that the editing for radio could have been done more clearly and explaining that they tried to alert the audience to the calypsonian, Warrior's, interior monologue by having these words "spoken quietly right up into the 'mike.' But it didn't quite come off" (7). The men squabble over the story's moral, with Cross priggishly asserting that "the moral of course was that the arrows of death caused him to change his mind," Swanzy demurs that it was "wider and subtler than that," and Bell offers that, "His passion for his craft was stronger than that for Irma," Figueroa ends by venturing, "He would not 'swing' his calypso so as to please the audience" (7), and Swanzy again objects, arguing that the moral is more broadly, regionally inflected. Bell chimes in here, praising Telemaque for "sound[ing] a new note in West Indian poetry," and Figueroa agrees, noting "It's the old story 'Shakespeare in order to be universal had to be English" (8). Cross bizarrely praises Telemaque for his "technique in repetition. 'heaviness…heaviness…,' 'shells…shells.' A very difficult thing to do" (8), then suggests that the poet should have written "'fleshly soft' instead of 'soft as flesh." Bell objects, "I don't think fleshly is such an elegant term" and Figueroa adds, "Certainly not" (8). Bell once again pulls the discussion back to a consideration of what, if anything is uniquely and broadly "West Indian" about Telemaque's verses,

singling out the last two stanzas of one poem with the observation "personally, I would use [them] on the title page of any book I was writing on the West Indies" (8). Those stanzas, reproduced in the transcript and re-read on the air, give Cross the West Indian chickens whose absence he so bemoaned in Arthur's poem:

> In our land
> We do not breed
> That taloned king, the eagle,
> Nor make emblazoning of lions;
>
> In our land
> The blackbirds
> And the chickens of our mountains
> Speak our dreams. (8)

This figuration of the Caribbean poet, not as a Keatsian nightingale, but as a homely pullet, clucking out the collective dreams of a region meets with approval from all. Glamour, it appears, is less important than the regionally specific *image juste*, and Swanzy returns again and again to Telemaque's lines in later editorials, seeing in them a fitting expression of the program's purpose.

Several months later, in a program titled "Critics' Circle No. 5"[56] Figueroa, Bell, Fernando Henriques, and Swanzy launch immediately into a conventional, aspecific dissection of "universal" poetic standards: whether or not the poems recently broadcast utilized alliteration effectively and, quaintly, whether or not nature poetry should include a moral (2). When Swanzy asks Henriques to add his two cents, Henriques complains, "I don't quite agree on this method of criticism. West Indian poetry is suffering from very much more than the poor use of rhymes or words: its fundamental fault is that it is derivative" (2). The others pooh pooh him, arguing that his concerns should be tackled "in some special programme later, perhaps" and that this critique has, in fact, been

[56] Sunday, October 12, 1947, pgs. 1-9.

leveled by them, “many times in these critical airings” (3). Then the topic becomes far more interesting. In responding to Telemaque’s poetry and the question of whether reader and poet must both have had the same experiences in order for a poem to be understood, Bell says, “So far as the Caribbean is concerned, I think this point shows our dual problem: first, it is very difficult to experience the background of even the best metropolitan writers: and secondly, what is sometimes overlooked, that they cannot always experience our background and build on to what is so frequently an apparently rather shallow reaction to tropical nature” (5). This comment suggests not only that British metropolitans like Swanzy are hopelessly divorced from a profound understanding of Caribbean literary portrayals of the natural world, but perhaps also speaks to the alienating experience of the Caribbean artist transplanted in London. Ultimately, Swanzy suggests that style not substance is key to rendering the literature accessible to an audience, arguing that, for radio success, poems “must be easy and declamatory” (5). Arthur’s poem, “Negro Lass,” he cites as an example and observes that Arthur “is among the directest and most ‘unliterary,’ and therefore almost the most literary, of the people writing in the Caribbean” (6). Straightforward language (none of those archaic thees, thous, and forsooths) and an “unliterary,” “realistic” style, are thus constitutive elements of Caribbean poetic style, according to Swanzy.

When the discussion shifts to a consideration of prose, however, direct phrasing and an uncomplicated style earn certain authors demerits. In reference to Jan Williams’ *These Are the Fields* (which is unfortunately not part of the extant transcripts), Bell complains, “I personally cannot see any merit in it at all. It is mere reporting, and we all know that life can be sordid, and we don’t want the artist to tell us that but the

sociologist" (6). Henriques responds, "Surely it has got some merit? Even as reporting, people in Jamaica don't know what happens in Trinidad—a Trinidad they never hear of"(6). When Bell complains that Williams' sordid and depressing subject matter would be better represented by "an article with photographs or a report," Henriques demurs, "No, the forerunners of change are always artists" (7). The most interesting idea to emerge from this interchange is Henriques' notion that literature can and should act as an informational bridge between islands, sharing news not typically available as World War II drew to a close.

Ever the anguished editor, Swanzy ends the conversation with a quick detour into a consideration of the voices performing the literature on the air. When considering Gibbs' complicated "High Bush Back of the House," for example, Swanzy explains,

> The problem is whether to use English actors, who have trained voices but do not know the atmosphere, or West Indians who know the atmosphere, but are not trained. I still think it better to use the latter, in the hopes that they will learn through experience, but I should like to have the opinion of listeners on this important point. One of the secondary problems is that a good reader can give a false value to a bad piece of writing, and that is as much a danger to the young Caribbean literature as a bad reader ruining a good piece" (9).

This closing appeal for a dialogue with his listeners raises several provocative points. As a producer, Swanzy was as concerned about the regional verisimilitude of the performances as he was about the aptness of the literary imagery. Moreover, his interest in matching texts with readers does *not* extend to the national level: a West Indian reader from Trinidad giving voice to a story about a Jamaican cab driver is close enough for Swanzy.[57] Finally, Swanzy suggests that, in order to convey an apt impression of a piece's literary merit, reader and text must be equally competent. Swanzy's concern here

[57] For more on the casting of readers, see Griffith.

is not only that contributors not be short changed by an uninspired reading, but also that the developing Caribbean literary canon be judged fairly and responsibly.

Swanzy received an overwhelming response to his appeal for audience input, and sought both to summarize and respond to listeners' comments in a January 11, 1948 editorial called, simply, "Talk." "Some of you must have got rather tired by now of hearing my ~~didactic, Oxford~~ Un-Caribbean voice poking its slightly supercilious nose round the treasures of your Caribbean foreshore," Swanzy ruefully acknowledges,

> and not yet openly nipped by a good, sound, Caribbean native, I mean a crab. But I hope, (for I am afraid of crabs) that there may perhaps be less of it, I mean the Oxford voice, less of it in 1948, when we start next month with a longer programme, as I will tell you later on in this talk. But the ~~Voice~~ critic is anxious to have a last sniff at the departing sound waves of 1947, and so, to begin with I hope you will be able to listen a little about the excursions that we took into new West Indian literature in the year that has just gone by" (1).

Tellingly, Swanzy's editing reveals his understanding that readers objected not so much to his "Oxford" voice (after all, he was an employee of the BBC), but to the fact that his commentaries and tone were recognizably "un-Caribbean." His refusal to claim for himself the title of "the Voice," on a show dedicated to Caribbean voices, also suggests a desire to shift the focus from his own British subjectivity to that of the literary Caribbean.

Swanzy proceeds to provide listeners with several demographic breakdowns: 28 short stories/sketches, 13 poetry shows, 5-6 Critics' Circles, "and a few special programmes like the talk by the late Harold Stannard to the Guiana Cultural Convention" aired on the program over the course of 1946 (1). In about fifty broadcasts, eight short stories were contributed by Jamaicans, twelve by Trinidadians, and three by Barbadians. Of these stories, Swanzy notes, only three were written by women. Referencing the secretarial gatekeepers who weeded out some submissions before they ever reached his

desk, he wonders, "how many little waves or voices failed to get past the barrier in Kingston or in London" (2). Ultimately, what the program did air, in Swanzy's estimation

> shows that there is quite a healthy lot of sea running in the Caribbean--, not yet a tidal wave of culture, but certainly enough to leave several valuable pieces of sea treasure…This amount of work, even the rejected work, is absolutely essential for the development of the quality that we are all looking for, and hoping for, from the New World." (2, ellipses mine)

He goes on to nominate Willy Richardson for "the Caribbean Pulitzer Prize for 1947, if only there was such a thing" (2), and confers an honorary mention upon "Wilfred Redhead from Grenada," whose contributions are not among the extant transcripts (3). Swanzy awards the poetry Pulitzer "or perhaps in this case, a crown of wild olives" to Telemaque (4). He quotes again the chicken stanza that the Critics' Circle lauded "because I believe that it is destined to live, whether a Caribbean literature develops or not, and which I already see at the head of books about the Islands" (4). He gestures at connections between Barbadian poets Vaughn, Collymore and Mavis Carter and French Caribbean work. The aforementioned Barbadians "seem, in some way…to have as their model some of the French Antilles writers, whose greatest expression was the sonnet writer Heredia" (5, ellipses mine). He thinks that "the Jamaican contribution has not ~~by any means~~ been up to the quality or even the quantity of other islands" because of their close link with "the negro writers in America," and urges Jamaicans to look for inter-Caribbean connections rather than attempting to forge bonds that take their work outside of a Caribbean context (6). He wonders why more writers aren't sending submissions, and speculates that "perhaps it is because they object to that Oxford voice" or "to our production," reiterating his desire to have more Caribbean readers. Swanzy then seeks to

disabuse listeners of the idea that he only wants “topographical poetry” (6). “We only ask for this local writing because literature, all literature, is nothing if not concrete and particular (as opposed to science which is abstract and general…” (6-7, ellipses mine). He concludes, “we hope to widen and deepen the scope of this series, to make more and more people aware of what is being done in the Caribbean, to encourage the development of the slightest talent, and slowly to distil little by little, the final essential gold” (7).

To this end, Swanzy’s interjections in subsequent broadcasts obsessively emphasized the Pan-Caribbean aspects of various authors’ work (6). In a June 27, 1947 broadcast devoted to Harold Telemaque’s poetry, Swanzy typically insists that the young poet, “illustrates very well the achievement, and the predicament of the Caribbean writer” (1). He praises Telemaque for “not add[ing] the rather prosy moralising which so many West Indian writers seem to think necessary to add depth to a natural picture of the scenery” (7), and advises, “This need to discover tradition is the trouble of all pioneers: you don’t always realise it, but you are making your own tradition, and later poets will benefit by reference to you” (3). The next year, in considering Louis Simpson’s poem, “Jamaica” Swanzy dares to ask, “Do you think he has been reading Walcott? Or do you think that both he and Walcott are examples of a simultaneous expression growing throughout the Caribbean?” By 1950, his doubts are laid to rest. Gleefully, he announces the partial fulfillment of this literary pioneer work, by observing how Caribbean poets had begun to reference one another instead of European models. In analyzing poems by St. Vincentians Daniel Williams and Owen Williams as well Barbados’ William Arthur, Swanzy sees a clear poetic tradition emanating out of groundbreaking work by nineteen year old Derek Walcott. “We come on the most modern manifestation of Caribbean

unity," Swanzy crows, "poetry, and poetry influenced for the first time by a West Indian writer, rather than a European or an American" (1).[58]

Before we switch our focus to the French Caribbean, and by way of transition, one more example of the program's efforts at literary/cultural translation is warranted. Even more quickly than *Bim*, *Caribbean Voices* began disseminating literature including yet another traditional signifier of particularity: untranslated or only partially translated French phrases. Edgar Mittelholzer's essay "Carnival Close-up," for example, is a veritable riot of colors and sound. Punctuating his observations on Port-of-Spain with fragments of conversation heard on the street, ("Cela ne fait rien" and "Work? You making joke, boy? Today is Carnival, oui!" (1)) Mittelholzer notes the presence of a variety of colonial agents. "Everywhere I looked," he claims, "a sprinkling of khaki figures met my eye. American soldiers with cameras. White-clad sailors, too—with cameras. Marines—with cameras. Puerto Rican soldiers stamped and whirled like any of the rebels and devils" (3). The occupation continues with the Carnival lorries and their sponsors: "Andrews' Liver Salts…Top-Notch Rum…Rediffusion…Coca-Cola…The S.S. Alcoa Pageant…Jive Roosters…West Indian Artists" (2, ellipses textual). A Bakhtinian *mélange* if ever there were one, Port-of-Spain's heteroglossia requires no translation in Mittelholzer's text.

R.B.E. Brathwaite's "The Backslider,"[59] liberally laced with both standard French and Trinidadian patois, does make some concession to an Anglophone audience by translating several key patois passages. The story's trickster hero, Ti-Mel, promises his wife that he will stop drinking, and sets out on a long journey at night. His friend,

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[58] Sunday, November 26, 1950.

[59] Sunday, May 11, 1947, pgs. 1-7.

Jeanville, worries that he will meet with supernatural foul play, but Ti-Mel scoffs, "Pah peh pour moi, Jeanville," he replied, "moin ca matre zombies, do not fear for me, Jeanville, I am master of the Zombis" (2). On a lonely stretch of road, he encounters a "light brown mulatresse with a touch of olive" on the road (3). When the evil Diablesse (for of course, it is one) asks him where his wife is, he cagily replies, "'My girl has left me and gone to the Americans…with emphasis on 'girl' to indicate the common-law nature of his past attachment" (3). Actually, of course, his wife Lullut is unglamorous, and knows that her husband has been powerfully seduced by the product-enhanced women around him. At this point, dialect thickly pervades the narrator's language: "He half turned towards her. 'Pouf!' disparet pwah, she had vanished in a flash of fire and the smell of sulphur" (4). Marie L'Amour (the Diablesse) has handed him a baby before vanishing, and the child gets heavier and heavier just like the demon babies in Amos Tutuola's Nigerian folk tales. Ti-Mel stumbles home, mutters the Magnificat, and the baby disappears. His wife awakens and throws holy water in his face and, in a burst of inspiration, "Ti-Mel now resolves to plead guilty to drunkenness rather than to making love to a zombi woman" (6). When Lullut demands to know what he meant by shrieking "Marie L'Amour's baby!" he tells her he has had a vision that his wife will have a baby to be named Marie. "'An what bout Marie Lamour?'" "'Lamour, Lullut,' he playfully drawled, 'ou ca pallay franswa. You are talking French, moin tay palay creole, I was speaking patois. Moin tay di 'lamoo,' I said 'love'"(7). She falls into his arms, and the curtain falls. Ultimately, Ti-Mel's humorous escape is a function of multi-lingual word play and the particularity of Trinidadian creole.

In 1949, *Caribbean Voices* gave a forum to Andre Midas,[60] (whose essay also appeared in *Bim*) allowing him to introduce Anglophone listeners to highlights from an already thriving Francophone Caribbean literature. The Martinican critic acknowledges that "it's only in the last few years that we've been able to pick out writers from Martinique or Guadeloupe, though we could count on a certain number of works (travellers' tales, folklore, novels) written by West Indians in France itself" (4). He goes on to mention a number of literary reviews (*Luciole* (Glowworm)*, Jeune Antilles, Caravelle, Tropiques,* (all Martinique) and *Renaissance, and La Revue Guadeloupéenne*) that, like *Bim* and *Caribbean Voices*, offer a forum for budding local talent. He goes on to provide a short précis on several young French Antillean poets, emphasizing connections between the British and the French Antilles. Daniel Thaly, for example, who was born in Dominica, moved to Paris, then Martinique (and, in 1954, lent his poetry to Phyllis Shand Allfrey for inclusion in her English-language novel, *The Orchid House*). Midas ends by offering *Caribbean Voices*' audience some reading suggestions: René Maran, *Batoula*; Clement Richer, *Ti-Coyo and His Shark*; René Clarac, *Bagamba, the Brown Negro*, and *The Spanish Woman of Vera-Cruz*; Raphael Tardon, *Island Blue*, *Starkenfirst*, and *Schoelcher's Struggle*; Joseph Zobel, *Diab'la, The Motionless Days, Laghia de la Mort*; Daniel de Grandmaison, *Go to Macouba* (all Martinique). Serge Denis, *Our Antilles*; Gilbert de Chambertrand, *Titine Grosbanda* (Guadeloupe). As many of these texts were unavailable in English translations at the time, Midas presumably attributed a fairly high proficiency in French to his Anglophone listeners.

[60] "The Literary Movement in the French West Indies." Sunday, April 24, 1949.

His interest in cross-cultural, multilingual literary connections is echoed in Wycliffe Bennett's piece "The Poetry of Jamaica."[61] Despite the national focus, Bennett calls W. Adolphe Roberts , "the most un-English of Jamaican poets" who "brought the villanelle from France to the Caribbean" (3).[62] He mentions Vivian Virtue's "translations from Spanish and French poetry," and concludes, intriguingly, that they "will doubtless be ranked among the best in English poetry" (4). Finally, in discussing Caribbean poetry broadly, Bennett says, "Already, the region has made important contributions to world poetry. The Cuban born Jose-Maria de Heredia excelled in his adopted tongue to become one of the great sonneteers in the French language. His namesake and cousin, Cuba's greatest poet, is represented by his famous "Niagara" in the *Oxford Book of Spanish Verse"* (5). Thus, Bennett's commentary on "Jamaican poetry" brings us back overtly to a paradox of particularity: in attempting to describe that which is nationally and culturally particular, Bennett identifies conceptual links between multi-national, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual Caribbean artists. Thus, by 1950, both *Bim* and *Caribbean Voices* had fostered a notion within the Anglophone Caribbean of a paradoxically particular regionalism.

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[61] Sunday, November 12, 1950.

[62] In his *Introduction to West Indian Poetry*, Laurence A. Breiner describes Roberts as "the first Anglophone poet to conceive the Caribbean from a hemispheric perspective. Throughout the period of growing nationalism and race consciousness in the 1940s Roberts urged a vision of the Caribbean as an American Mediterranean, cultural successor to the Greek archipelago" (64).

"To know each other better": Pan-Caribbean

Sensibilities in *La Revue du Monde Noir*

While *Bim*'s Pan-Caribbean and multilingual content evolved in the half decade following World War II, literary papers and journals affiliated with the francophone Caribbean had been preaching regional, *Négritude*-based unity since the early 1930s. Begun in October 1931 and concluded six editions later in April 1932, the short-lived *La Revue du Monde Noir* ["The Review of the Black World"] was an early, powerful, and widely distributed voice for transnational, transcultural, multilingual imaginings. Published in Paris by two Caribbean expatriates, Martinican intellectual Paulette Nardal and Léo Sajous, a Haitian dentist who was particularly knowledgeable about Liberia, the journal contained English- and French-language submissions from writers/readers in the Caribbean, the United States, Africa, France, and Britain. The bilingual Nardal performed most translations, and each poem, story or article was printed side by side in both English and French. From its opening number, the editors made their focus and ambition clear:

> Donner à l'élite intellectuelle de la Race noire et aux amis des Noirs un organe où publier leurs œuvres artistiques, littéraires et scientifiques… Créer entre les Noirs du monde entier, sans distinction de nationalité, un lien intellectuel et moral qui leur permette de se mieux connaître, de s'aimer fraternellement, de défendre plus efficacement leurs intérêts collectifs et d'illustrer leur Race, tel est le triple but que poursuivra *LA REVUE DU MONDE NOIR*. Par ce moyen, la race noire contribuera avec l'élite des autres races et tous ceux qui ont reçu la lumière du vrai, du beau et du bien, au perfectionnement matériel, intellectuel et moral de l'humanité…Pour la PAIX, le TRAVAIL. et la JUSTICE. Par la LIBERTÉ, l 'ÉGALITÉ et la FRATERNITÉ. Et ainsi, les deux cent millions de membres que compte la race noire, quoique partégés entre diverses Nations, formeront, au-dessus de celles-ci, une grande DÉMOCRATIE, prélude de la Démocratie universelle. (1-2)[63]

[63] "Ce que nous voulons faire/Our Aim." *La Revue du Monde Noir*, October 1931. 1-2.

> [To give the intelligentsia of the blak [sic] race and their partisans an official organ in which to publish their artistic, literary and scientific work. The triple aim which *La Revue du Monde Noir* will pursue: to create among Negroes of the entire world, regardless of nationality, an intellectual and moral bond that will permit them to know each other better, to love one another fraternally, to defend more effectively their collective interests, and to glorify their race. By these means, the Negro race will contribute along with the thinking minds of other races and all of those others who have received the light of truth, beauty, and goodness, for the material, intellectual and moral perfection of humanity. The motto is, and will continue to be: For PEACE, WORK, and JUSTICE. By LIBERTY, EQUALITY, and FRATERNITY. And thus, the two hundred million members of the Negro race, though scattered among Nations, will form, over and above the latter, a large BROTHERHOOD, the forerunner of a universal democracy.][64]

Clearly then, the journal's founding mission was to cross boundaries, both national and racial, if not those of class.[65] While Nardal softens the French *"èlite"* to "thinking minds" the second time she uses the term, her desire to foster the creative endeavors of a black "intelligentsia" seem, at first blush, rather out of step with her populist, transnational reappropriation of French republican "liberty, equality, fraternity."[66] Certainly, her bilingual *salons* in the Rue Clamart, at which guests quaffed tea in the British manner, talked Pan-Africanism, and brainstormed the future content of *RMN*, would have done little to dispel the whiff of snobbery clinging to the journal's mission statement. However, within the context of 1931 Paris—its pretentious, often exclusive artistic and literary *salons*, its "Colonial Exhibition" that celebrated France's dominance throughout the world—Nardal and Sejous' desire to emphasize the existence of a black

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[64] All translations from the French presented here are Nardal's unless otherwise noted.

[65] For more on *RMN*'s national and racial boundary crossing, see Brent Hayes Edwards' *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*, Carole Sweeney's *From Fetish to Subject: Race, Modernism and Primitivism, 1919-35*, and Gary Wilder's *The French Imperial Nation State: Négritude and Colonial Humanism Between the Two World Wars.* Edwards discusses the journal in the context of his feminist rereading of the Négritude movement, Sweeney considers the journal's political proclivities in relation to other black, Parisian publications like *La Dépêche Africaine* and *Légitime Défense*, and Wilder is primarily interested in how the Négritude movement functioned as a rejection of French republicanism.

[66] Brent Hayes Edwards also notes this translational difference.

èlite can be read as a simple assertion of racial and regional equality. As T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting explains, in addition to being the only *salon* “hosted by Martinican women” the Nardal sisters’ “transracial, ethnically diverse and gender-inclusive salon certainly demonstrated a progressiveness that the Left Bank salons set up by white American women expatriates who had fled the puritanism of American culture failed to acquire in the 1930s” (53). Furthermore, as Brent Hayes Edwards shows, Nardal faced constant challenges to her capabilities (and those of Caribbean women in general) from those most intimately connected to the *Négritude* movement (Aimé Cesaire and Etienne Laro were overtly dismissive of Nardal, her literary endeavors, and the contributions women made to Pan-African political thought) (Edwards 124-5). Thus, in *RMN*’s final number, Nardal defiantly declared

> Pourtant, parallèlement aux efforts isolés cités plus haut s’affirmaient chez un groupe d’étudiants antillaises à Paris les aspirations qui devaient se cristalliser autour de la Revue du Monde noir [sic]. Les femmes de couleur vivant seules à la métropole moins favorisées jusqu’à l’Exposition coloniale que leurs congénères masculins aux faciles succès, ont ressenti bien avant eux le besoin d’une solidarité raciale qui ne serait pas seulement d’ordre matériel : c’est ainsi qu’elles se sont éveillées a la conscience de race. Le sentiment de déracinement …aura été le point de départ de leur évolution. (29)[67]
>
> [However, parallel to the isolated efforts above mentioned, the aspirations which were to be crystallized around “The Review of the Black World” asserted themselves among a group of Antillean women students in Paris. Until the Colonial Exposition, the coloured women living alone in the metropolis have certainly been less favoured than coloured men who are content with a certain easy success. Long before the latter, they have felt the need of a racial solidarity that would not be merely material. They were thus aroused to race consciousness.]

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[67] “*Eveil de la Conscience de Race/*Awakening of Race Conscience.” *RMN* 6, April 1932. 25-29. Edwards also cites this passage in support of his argument that “black internationalism in Paris has a historical origin among migrant communities of women of African descent” (125).

Here, Nardal locates the roots of her journal's transnational endeavors in the literary efforts of Caribbean women expatriates, conceptually and geographically exiled (in the manner that Saunders identifies as central to antinationalist imaginings) from the men at the center of the *Négritude* movement. And despite the journal's investment in Pan-Africanism, a careful look at its contributors and content shows that contributions from the francophone *and* Anglophone Caribbean provided the publication's backbone. Claude McKay (whom Nardal explicitly described as a link between the Caribbean, Harlem, and France) contributed two poems, "To America" and "Spring in New Hampshire."[68] A feature called "The Negroes' Letter Box" printed editorials, inquiries, and suggestions for future topics of discussion from readers in Réunion, Senegal, Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana and the United States.[69] Etienne Léro, the Martinican writer and early proponent of *Négritude* submitted a short story, serialized in two parts, before becoming disenchanted with what he perceived as (white French republican) assimilationist tendencies on the part of Nardal and Sajous. His "Evelyn" is the tale of a resilient if hapless Martinican girl who supports a young local poet's creative efforts by her own hard labor and self-denial. Although she knows that by doing so she will eventually lose him, Evelyn slowly amasses enough money to send her poet to France, where, the narrator intimates, his talent and zeal cannot fail to make him a hero within the transnational black community. Thus, Laro locates racial unity in the masculine literary achievements of the French Caribbean (although he is kind enough to acknowledge that women may be allowed to play a burdensome, selfless, secondary role in these transnational imaginaries). French Guyanese poet and novelist René Maran

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[68] *RMN* no. 1. pg 38, and *RMN* no. 3, pg. 34, respectively.

[69] *RMN* no.3, 1932, pgs. 57-9.

contributed a short poem, "Othello," which, like Aimé Cesaire's *A Tempest* reimagines Shakespearean creations in a Caribbean context.[70] Nardal's sister, Andrée, contributed an homage to Caribbean dance traditions in her essay, "Etude sur la Biguine Créole / Notes on the Biguine Créole (Folk Dance)."[71] Arguing that Josephine Baker's enormously popular burlesque version of the dance had sapped it of its original "langorous grace," she gently and implicitly suggests that the French metropole has not cornered the market on cultural sophistication (or, to echo Brent Edwards' terminology, that something valuable and elemental is lost in cultural translation).

The Nardals' cousin, Louis-Thomas Achille contributed a piece comparing the visual art of Haitian, African, and American artists, making rather uncomfortable, totalizing observations about black racial aptitude for artistically portraying the natural world.[72] Indeed, articles on Haitian arts, culture, and history account for a large proportion of the journal's content. The fifth number featured a special section on Haitian poets Phillipe Marcellin, Jacques Augard, and Carl Brouard, suggesting that Haiti's comparatively long, storied national history had now allowed sufficient time for a literary renaissance to flourish there (of course, given the journal's relentless Pan-African slant, this emphasis on the national functions as a pointed jab at continued French colonialism in the Caribbean). Jean Price-Mars' "Le problème du travail en Haïti / The Problem of Work in Haiti," and Guy Zuccarelli's "Une Etape de l'évolution haïtienne / A

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[70] *RMN* No. 2, 1931, pg. 33.

[71] Sharpley-Whiting notes that Andree Nardal published an essay titled "The Beguine of the French Antilles" in Nancy Cunard's *Negro: An Anthology* under the pen name "Madiana," and speculates that this moniker is "an allusion perhaps to the original name given Martinique by the Carib Indians—Madinina" (54).

[72] *RMN* no. 2, 1921, pg. 53-6.

Stage in Haiti's Evolution" both adopt social scientific approaches to the country's developmental woes. American occultist W.B. Seabrook's treatise on Haitian Voodoo[73] is both excerpted in the third number and discussed in a separate article by René Menil, and Guy Zuccarelli continues the "conversation" in "La Religion des Vaudous / A Lecture on the Voodoo Religion."

While Belinda Jack, faults the *RMN* for its overtly West Indian focus (and therefore for failing to become as truly Pan-African in orientation as it had hoped to be), this "shortcoming" is probably attributable to the journal's premature demise. The magazine folded in April 1932, after its major subsidizer, the Ministry of the Colonies, pulled its funding over suspicions that the journal had ties to Garveyism, communism, and other "unsavory" transnational political movements. But though it may have failed to live up to its grandest ambition, Paulette Nardal, for one, believed that *RMN* succeeded in jumpstarting a truly "West Indian" literature—a transnational, multilingual endeavor inspired and fostered by black Caribbean expatriate women. In her parting screed, Nardal insists

> Il y a peine quelques années, on portrait même dire quelques mois, certains sujets étaient tabous a la Martinique. Malheur a qui osait y toucher : on ne pouvait parler d'esclavage ni proclamer sa fierté d'être descendante de Noirs Africains sans faire figure d'exaltée ou tout au moins d'originale…A cause de la policé officielle d « assimilation, » il y a un sens générale de déracinement et d'exile. Pourtant, la littérature antillaise en dépit de leur formation latine, une âme negre…(25)
>
> [A few years ago, we might even say a few months ago, certain questions were simply tabooed in Martinica. Woe to those who dared to approach them! One could not speak about slavery, or proclaim pride of being of African descent without being considered as an overexcited or at least an odd person…Because of the official [French] policy of "assimilation," [in the colonies] there is a general sense of uprootedness and exile [in the Antilles]. Nevertheless, Antillean

[73] "Les Bonnes feuilles" / Pages Taken from "Magic Island," pg. 29-32.

literature has a real Negro soul, in spite of the authors' Latin education.]

After claiming a Pan-African sensibility not only for Martinican authors, but also for writers throughout the French Caribbean, Nardal goes on to assert that prior to 1914 at the very least, "West Indian" writers produced purely imitative fiction—literature that enriched and belonged to European literary canons. Interestingly, the term that she translates as "West Indian" is "Antilles" in the French version—a word that, heretofore, she has translated as "Antillean," or French Caribbean. Here again, Edwards' emphasis on "translation" as an anticolonial transnational tactic proves extremely useful, for now, in speaking of the literature of the region, Nardal takes care that her Anglophone readers will understand that her references are broadly Pan-Caribbean in nature. Fundamentally, she argues, a common racial heritage has assisted in the emergence of an independent, Caribbean literature, and expatriate Caribbean women have been the "organ" by which such vigorous regional imagining has emerged. Yet although this new branch of literature has its origins in a particular racial heritage, Nardal concludes that Caribbean literature need not develop in a completely separate fashion from white, Western models:

> Should one see in the tendencies here expressed an implicit declaration of war upon Western culture and the white world in general? We want to eliminate such ambiguity so as to leave no doubt…We have no intention of discarding [white, Western culture] in order to promote a return to I know not what obscurationism. Without Western culture, we would have never become conscious of who we really are. But we want to go beyond this culture in order to give to our brethren, with the help of white scientists and all the friends of Blacks, the pride of belonging to a race whose civilization is perhaps the oldest in the world. (32)

While this was precisely the sort of language that caused Etienne Laro to brand her an "assimilationist," an important point emerges from Nardal's article: she was among the earliest writers to herald the advent of a Pan-Caribbean literature, and located its inception in the transnational, multilingual space of an expatriate magazine. That her

male colleagues came to agree with her is born out in a bevy of articles published in francophone, Négritude-oriented journals that succeeded *RMN* .[74] Indeed, Aimé and Suzanne Césaire's influential journal, *Tropiques,* picked up explicitly where Nardal left off. Published in Fort de France from 1941-1945, *Tropiques* figured Martinique as the hybrid hub of *Négritude*, and championed a non-derivative aesthetic "cannibalism" as an alternative to white literary discursive traditions (Sharpley-Whiting 83). In the journal's final number, Suzanne Césaire places the Caribbean islands firmly at the center of *Négritude*, and envisions a future in which a writer from this center will crystallize the archipelago's racial and cultural hybridity, historicize the political and colonial inequalities of West Indian *métissage,* and use it as the basis both for transforming race relations and achieving political freedom for colonized spaces.[75] Like Paulette Nardal before her, Suzanne Césaire saw *Négritude* as a racially plural process in which Caribbean islands and citizens played a defining role.

So where does all of this leave us? Because they are, by nature, serial, collaborative, multi-vocal endeavors, and because they can be diffused to the masses, literary media are uniquely capable of nurturing the range of talent necessary for the creation of a new imagined literary community. What sets *Bim, Caribbean Voices,* and *La Revue du Monde Noir* apart from their contemporaries, in this case, was their devotion to the development of an explicitly Pan-Caribbean literary imaginary. Furthermore, all three organs saw fracture, particularity, and uniqueness as paradoxically appropriate

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[74] See, for example, Leonard Sainville's "literature antillaise," published in the single issue *L'Etudiant Noir*, March 1935 and Rene Menil's "Généralités sur l'écrivain de couleur antillais" in *Legitime Defense,* 1932.

[75] "La Grande Camouflage." *Tropiques* 13-14, September 1945. Reprinted and translated in Sharpley-Whiting (135-140).

concepts in these attempts to "forge a viable unum out of the contentious pluralisms of a fragmentary pluribus," and envisioned a literary unity movement that would stand in opposition to the Western nation state's propensity toward totalizing elisions. As we move into chapters two and three, we will see how these seemingly incompatible characteristics of isolation, rebellion, and collectivity coalesce in the literary trope of the maroon, and how such authors as Edouard Glissant, Jean Rhys, Michelle Cliff, Simone Schwarz-Bart and Maryse Condé adopt and adapt *marronnage* as a strategy for continuing to articulate the paradoxes inherent in Caribbean identity.

CHAPTER TWO

COMMUNITIES OF ONE: THE 1950S AND '60S AND THE PARADOX OF MARRONNAGE

> Sometimes I dream of islands, all the islands around us…It seems absurd that they should have separate existences, similar islands in the same sea. They ought to be joined together.
>
> Edouard Glissant, *La Lézarde*

> Caribbeanness, an intellectual dream, lived at the same time in an unconscious way by our peoples, tears us free from the intolerable alternative of the need for nationalism and introduces us to the cross-cultural process that modifies but does not undermine the latter. What is the Caribbean in fact? A multiple series of relationships. We all feel it, we express it in all kinds of hidden or twisted ways, or we fiercely deny it, But we sense that this sea exists within us with its weight of now revealed islands.
>
> Edouard Glissant, *Le Discours Antillais*

As Jan Rogozinski explains in his *Brief History of the Caribbean*, runaway slave, or Maroon[76] communities existed on most Caribbean islands in the early days of their European occupation. However, once the colonizers began wide-scale clearing of island forests for sugar plantations in the 18th century, Maroon communities dispersed or were destroyed, with a few noteworthy exceptions. Precolonial Dominica and Saint Vincent became havens for some resistant Maroons as did the mountainous slopes of Jamaica, Guadeloupe, Haiti and Cuba (Rogozinski 153). On both Haiti and Jamaica, Maroon communities boasted several thousand members well into the nineteenth century, and proved such strong antagonists to the colonial authorities that both the French and British governments eventually signed treaties with them. In Jamaica in particular, the resistant

[76] Opinions differ on the cultural and linguistic source of the term, "Maroon." Several sources suggest that the term is of Spanish origin, either deriving from *cimarron* (fugitive), or *Maron* (Moor). Others, like Fernando Henriques claim that while "the derivation of the word is obscure," it became widely understood to mean "any slave who defied the laws of the island by freeing himself" ("Peoples in Perspective: The Maroons." *Caribbean Voices*. June 23, 1946).

Maroon became a symbol for postcolonial independence.[77] A June broadcast of the *Caribbean Voices* program, featuring material written by Jamaican Fernando Henriques makes the even bolder claim that Jamaican *marronnage* is central to any attempt at a Pan-Caribbean imaginary. "The real history of the West Indies remains to be written," Henriques writes. However, one "dramatic episode which captures the imagination…was the Maroon war in Jamaica in 1795-6" (1). Henriques quotes letters, journals and official proclamations from a number of contemporary British sources to show that colonial authorities were threatened enough by the Jamaican Maroons' guerilla attacks on plantations and sympathetic appeal to the slave population that "nearly a quarter of a million pounds was spent in 40 years in attempts to subdue [them]" (1). The Maroons' popularity among the slaves and their superior knowledge of the mountainous terrain forced the British to proffer an official treaty—the only time the British agreed to such an action with rebels in the Caribbean (2).[78] The pact allowed Cudjoe's Maroons to remain autonomous and unmolested in the mountains and appointed a British "superintendant of the Maroons" to act as a form of ambassador and go-between. The British insisted, however, that their own legal system be allowed to mete out punishment in the event of

[77] While Maroon leaders Nanny, Cudjoe and Quaco are all celebrated historical figures in Jamaica, it is Nanny who, in 1975 was named a national heroine and who now graces the Jamaican $500 bill.

[78] After the pact was signed, the Maroons agreed to give an official demonstration of their fighting skill and tactics. Henriques quotes Henry Long's account of the Maroon's performance before the governor: "They sounded horns and all joined in a most hideous yell, or war-hoop… they fire stooping almost to the very ground; and no sooner are their magazines discharged, than they throw themselves into a thousand antick gestures, and tumble over and over, so as to be continually shifting their place; the intention of which is to elude the shot as well as to deceive the aim of their adversaries, which their nimble and almost instantaneous change of position renders extremely uncertain" (2-3, ellipses mine). Then they "began in wild and warlike gestures, to advance towards His Excellency, endeavouring to throw as much savage fury into their wild looks as possible. On approaching near him, some waved their rusty swords over his head, then gently laid them upon it; whilst other clashed their arms together in horrid concert" (3).

disputes between the two groups,[79] and this arrangement ultimately led to the treaty's undoing. As Henriques explains, the first superintendant of the Maroons, one Major John James, came from

> a wealthy farming family, and it is said that the family was known for its nepotism, which must have been fairly bad to be noticed in the Jamaica of that day. He had succeeded in endearing himself to the Maroons by behaving as one of them. He used apparently to run races with them barefoot and organise hunting expeditions with them" (3).

Eventually, the Maroons began to question James' impartiality and commitment to his job, and asked for a replacement. The situation deteriorated and

> the magistrates of St. James's Parish wrote to the Governor, Lord Balcarres, the following letter of July 18th, 1795:
> "My Lord, we are very sorry to find that a serious disturbance is likely to break out immediately with the Maroons of Trewlawny Town. They have obliged the superintendant to leave the town. They have threatened the destruction of the 2 plantations nearest them… [ellipses mine] The women are sent into the woods; and between this and Monday they propose to kill their cattle and their children, who may be an encumbrance… [ellipses textual] The immediate cause of this disturbance was the inflicting of the punishment of the flogging of 2 Maroons, who had been convicted by the evidence of 2 white people of killing 2 tame hogs" (4).

Observing that "the Maroons felt that their honour as a nation had been attacked," Henriques states that the Maroons declared war on the British (4). While the Maroons were initially successful because they "relied entirely on the use of ambush…The regular troops, until they knew better, went into battle with drums beating and flags waving in the European style" (6, ellipses mine). Then the British brought in "a squad of ferocious dogs" from Cuba "which were used there to recapture runaway slaves. On arrival in

[79] The treaty states, in part, "That if any white man should do any manner of injury to Captain Cudjoe, his successors, or any of his or their people, they shall apply to any commanding officer or magistrate in the neighborhood for justice; and in case Captain Cudjoe or any of his people, shall do injury to any white person, he shall submit himself, or deliver up such offenders to justice" (2).

Jamaica their first act was to maul a woman on the beach at Kingston and to force General Walpole to beat a retreat to his carriage" (6).

Eventually a second truce was reached in which the Maroons received a parcel of land of the government's choosing, and agreed to "give up all runaways, and on their knees beg His Majesty's pardon" (7). Impatient at the slowness of their surrender, the governor again ordered dog attacks, but "Sometimes the 18th century had a conscience," according to the narrator, and the British public squawked. "Eventually the Maroons were all captured. Those who had surrendered and those who had not joined in the rebellion were left in peace and their descendants are still with us in Jamaica. The others were exiled to Nova Scotia in Canada, the Assembly voting some £25,000 for the purpose of their settlement there. But the climate proved too much for them and they were removed eventually to Sierra Leone" (7).

As literary histories like Marie-Christine Rochman's *L'esclave fugitif dans la littérature antillaise* demonstrates, these experiences occurred throughout the islands, and the literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries seized upon the maroon as a powerful symbol. Rochman contrasts pre-Abolition novels by white creole authors (such as the French translation and retelling of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, distributed throughout the francophone colonial world and altered to whitewash the harsh realities of slavery) with novels by Martinican intellectuals Edouard Glissant, Patrick Chamoiseau, and French ex-patriot André Schwarz-Bart (which adopt the maroon as a resistant, particular anticolonial hero). Glissant's novels get the most lengthy treatment, since he is one of the Caribbean's foremost champions of recuperating *marronnage* as a postcolonial

aesthetic, and is one of the most skilled practitioners of the novelistic reimagining that Said, Chatterjee and Loomba advocate .

Equally suspicious of Western nationalist and humanist discourses that seek to obscure differences in lived experiences beneath slogans like "*liberté, fraternité, egalité*," Glissant champions a Caribbean counterdiscourse in which diversity is never sacrificed to the desire for unity. As he makes clear in the passage which constitutes this chapter's third epigraph, Glissant sees "Caribbeanness" as a group fiction with revolutionary potential: not only does it offer an innovative form for narratives of self-definition, but it also ideologically reunites Caribbean islands that have been too long marooned, psychologically speaking, from one another and from a common historical past. Of course, Glissant notes, "[t]his dream [of Caribbean unification] is still absurd on the political level" (*Caribbean Discourse* 222). However,

> [t]he passion of intellectuals can become a potential for transformation when it is carried forward by the will of the people…If at present Caribbean countries experience or are subjected to social, political, and economic regimes very different from each other, 'artistic vision' creates the possibility of cementing the bonds of unity in the future. (223, 235, ellipses mine)

Thanks to this collaborative creativity, in a Glissantian Caribbean, the isles' insularity transforms from "a form of isolation, a neurotic reaction to place" into a "dialectic between inside and outside…reflected in the relationship of land and sea" (139, ellipses mine). Thus, for Glissant, even the natural world's geographical contours bespeak a Caribbean relationality, in which land and sea are no longer distinct entities, but strands in a common discourse, overlapping and extending upon one another.

In investigating fiction's contribution to the construction of a Pan-Caribbean identity, it is perhaps singularly appropriate, then, to consider two novels that signal the

importance of the natural Caribbean world in their titles: Glissant's *La Lézarde*[80] and Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea.* At first glance their differences might seem more striking than their similarities. Certainly Rhys and Glissant make unconventional subjects for comparison: He, a black, francophone Martinican dedicated to making Pan-Caribbean *antillanité* a political reality, and she a white Anglophone Dominican whose intense psychological portraits of lonely waifs are more often read in terms of the personal rather than the political. And yet, these two swirling, non-realist narratives share a number of striking preoccupations: both novels examine the importance and feasibility of personal and historical memory recovery in a Caribbean space; both consider the potential for community across boundaries in this space (Glissant concerns himself primarily with national/political boundaries and Rhys with racial and gendered ones, although both novels consider all these elements to some degree); both investigate madness in gendered contexts and in relation to memory and the politics of community; both figure the natural world of the Caribbean in female terms and conflate female characters with the land (although to different ends); and both novels, I will argue, construct a form of maroon aesthetic as a way of resisting ideological, colonial domination.

The difference, of course, is that Glissant's utopian, Pan-Caribbean *marronnage*, and indeed his "poetics of relation," described above, are largely products of imaginative endeavors between men. Women, in Glissant's early novel, are routinely relegated to supporting roles, attempting to contribute to the process of historical recovery, but ultimately useful only insofar as their bodies become metaphors for the Pan-Caribbean space their male partners envision. Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, we find that Glissant's

[80] Translated by J. Michael Dash as *The Ripening* in order to emphasize the fecund promise Glissant sees in Martinique, the Lézarde is a river whose name literally translates as "crack."

male maroons and historians attempt to repossess the feminized space of Martinique and the wider Caribbean through gendered acts of imaginary recovery. This is precisely where I find a consideration of Jean Rhys' novel productive: In Antoinette Mason's autobiographical musings, Rhys offers us an alternate form of memory retrieval on the part of a figurative maroon, racially and sexually different from Glissant's, who is linked imaginatively through language, imagery, and events in the novel to the isolation and rebellion of actual, historical maroons. In reading Rhys alongside Glissant, we can begin the process of formulating a more racially and sexually diverse application of Glissant's unifying ideas than he was able to articulate in the 1950s.[81] Moreover, even within a Caribbean context, Rhys' novel points to the need for further decolonizing of the imagination—the creation and acknowledgement of a space for women in this project of Pan-Caribbean unity.

The Fertile Figurehead of Feminized Martinique

Set in the immediate aftermath of World War II and in the year preceding Martinique's designation as a semi-autonomous overseas *département* of France, Glissant's novel, *La Lézarde,* unfolds in a post-Vichy Martinique, still reeling from the economic isolation caused by Allied trade embargoes. As Europe begins the bewildering process of refashioning itself, a motley group of young, political activists perceives an opportunity for greater Martinican self-determination, and campaigns tirelessly to elect a

[81] In his later novels, Glissant's *marronnage* becomes much more explicitly gender-inclusive. As Valerie Loichot notes in her article "Naming of the Father," Glissant's subsequent novels *Le Quatrième siècle, Tout-Monde,* and *La Case du Commandeur,* all of which continue the stories of *La Lezarde's* central characters Mycea, Mathieu and Papa Longué, accord Mycea a central role in maroon imaginaries, and productively feminize Papa Longué. My point here, however, is to describe the gendered limitations of Glissant's early work in order to better contextualize the feminist innovations of Rhys, Condé, Schwarz-Bart and others.

new breed of political representative: a man who would "deman[d] a kind of autonomy," and who dazzles more than the local populace with "his brilliant eloquence, the concentrated force of his formulations, with their obscure yet mysteriously transparent poetry" (*La Lézarde* 22).[82] In an attempt to derail the election and quash any bids for national independence, the French government sends a colonial agent, one Garin, to act as a spoiler. Garin is a Martinican, an insider and "a renegade," all of which render him dangerous to the young activists' cause and a traitor in their eyes. Tacitly, the group agrees that Garin must die. Their leader, a frail historian named Mathieu, recruits Thaël, a shepherd from the mountains to do the deed, and the novel follows the development, enactment, and ramifications of their assassination plot. Yet despite the novel's putative Martinican-nationalist focus, Pan-Caribbean overtones reverberate constantly: the sea is a transnational connective tissue uniting the "frontierless kingdom" of beach upon beach, and the narrator mourns the isolation that renders this connection intuitive rather than obvious. In *Le Discours Antillais,* Glissant refers to this geographically-inflected concept as cultural *marronnage*, or "marooning." This terminology resonates on a number of levels in his work: first, it evokes the sense of undesirable, unnatural separation between Caribbean nations that Glissant sees in the 1950s-era Caribbean; second, it performs Caribbean detachment from a common history by evoking a negative psychological condition rather than its "original meaning (cultural opposition [in the form of the resistant, runaway slave])"; third, and most importantly, in emphasizing this definitional substitution, it suggests that the rebellious maroon can be recuperated as " a hero who could act as catalyst for the group" (*Le Discours Antillais* 87).

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[82] As Dash notes in his introduction to the novel, Glissant's description of this charismatic leader as well as his depiction of the enthusiastic young people who embraced his message of change bear a striking resemblance to circumstances surrounding Césaire's election to the mayoralty of Fort-de-France.

In his introduction to the English translation of *La Lézarde*, J. Michael Dash describes Glissant's swirling, non-linear narrative technique and opaque, non-realist prose as an attempt to "discover the language of the maroon…a tactic for articulating such an idiom, which in its exploration of internal discourse gestures toward a kind of literary 'marronnage'" (14). In other words, Glissant's unique, disorienting prose performatively evokes the maroon's complex, paradoxical subject position: simultaneously hermit and oracle, Glissant's maroon speaks to and for his community in a language so particular that it highlights his isolation from them (and theirs from one another). Thus, in drawing attention to the unsettling reality of Caribbean *marronnage*, Glissant's maroon poetics are a kind of Deleuzian "symptom" within the French language, combating the alienating aspects of a colonial tongue with eruptions of historical resistance and inter-island relationality. In constructing a Pan-Caribbean aesthetic paradigm around the resistant, isolated figure of the historical maroon, Glissant seeks both to celebrate and move beyond this icon, suggesting at the level of form and content that modern Caribbean nations must end their psychological marronnage from each other and from a common African past. Fittingly, then, three of *La Lézarde*'s male protagonists, who play key roles in the island's initial steps toward postcolonial nationalism, are either literally or symbolically Maroon.[83] Thãel, the impossibly young

[83] For more on the importance of the maroon in Glissant's novels, see Barbara Webb's *Myth and History in Caribbean Fiction,* Richard Burton and Fred Reno's *French and West Indian,* Michele Praeger's "Edouard Glissant: Toward a Literature of Orality,"and Marie-Christine Rochman's *L'esclavage Fugitif Dans la Litterature Antillaise*. Rochman's book, described above, is a fascinating overview of the maroon in Caribbean fiction, and she usefully situates Glissant's maroons in a literary historical context. Both Webb and Burton are primarily interested in theorizing the "rebel fugitive's" iconic importance in relation or as an alternative to the slave who did not attempt to flee the plantation. Because the character of Mathieu Béluse is descended from non-rebel slaves (we learn his genealogy in the novel's "prequel," *Le Quatrième Siecle)* both Webb and Burton read Mathieu as a non-maroon and as a helpful antagonist to Papa Longué. In reading Mathieu as an "honorary" maroon, this paper thus stakes out a distinctly different position on the topic. Praeger reads Glissant's "linguistic marronnage" primarily as a method for effecting the triumph of

shepherd from the mountains, and Papa Longué, the dying "keeper of the secrets of the night and of time" are the lineal descendents of Maroons. While Thãel paves the way for political autonomy in Martinique by assassinating the traitor, Garin, Papa Longué repeatedly attempts to communicate the importance of cultural memory in struggles for national independence and regional unity. Even the frail, citified Mathieu, in his historical excavations as town archivist, becomes a psychological maroon, ironically distanced from his fellow compatriots through his solitary forays into the past. In recovering the town's forgotten slave history and African roots,

> [h]e had disturbed the solemn order of legends and troubled the deep sleep of the spirits. He had wanted to go back to the very beginning, to the black spring when an entire community celebrated their gods in night-long ceremonies. Now, there he was, the only survivor of these festivities, among his forgetful brothers, his soul harrowed by new furies. (37)

Collectively then, this trio of male maroons unequivocally establishes that, while colonizers and traitors must be neutralized in the fight for independence, cultural amnesia is just as deadly an enemy to the formation of a group imaginary. Furthermore, this passage and a similar one focused on Papa Longué show us the paradox within Glissant's aesthetic: While Thãel, Papa Longué, and Mathieu embody a glorified maroon resistance, they are actively working to end their heroic isolation (from other Martinicans, from the wider Caribbean, and from cultural memory) and to create a politically viable community in which group imaginings of the present and future evolve from memory of a previously obscured past. Nowhere do we see the pathos of this paradox more clearly articulated than in Papa Longué's pensive deathbed scene when he sees

> an immense forest in a faraway country where he had been born. His grandfather was speaking to him and he felt as if the trees, the stumps in the night, the

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oral tradition over Western culture. Thus, while she focuses on the relationship between colonizer and colonized, I am interested in the implications Glissant's maroon aesthetic has for intercolonial relationality.

> quivering of the leaves, the rustling of the entire forest, took shape when his ancestor spoke, as if he had walked among his words, rediscovering a smell that he had never in fact forgotten…But there came a force pulling from the dark, a hard wooden hand, a thick net of lianas snaking over all that, and Papa Longué was snatched away, his grandfather's words were turned into screams of grief, there was the stench of foul sea water, a massive rolling motion rocked his body…and Papa Longué found himself in this new country, sick with nostalgia; now he could see his grandfather clearly, an old slave marked with fetters (that is exactly what it was), and the family's whole tradition, escape in to the great forests, contact with the spirits, the appeal to the starving and luxuriant forest, the sons and sons of sons walking night and day in that memory, and the people who came because of illness or suffering or hate, because of love, and they never realized that in their hearts it was the forest calling. Papa Longué saw how the country had benefited, grown and been transformed, he saw that no one thought any more about the great forest, he uttered a cry, he put his hand to his mouth and shouted again and again, but there was no reply: the time of the forest was over. He said to them; 'You must make your way back to the forest.' (144-5)

Papa Longué's fear that his inherited memories of Middle Passage, slavery, and Maroon history will die with him is at once well founded and soon allayed. At the same time that Papa Longué lies dying, Thãel and his fiancée Valérie bemoan his imminent demise and their own disconnect with the far more recent past. When Valérie learns that she and Mathieu are distantly related, her surprise leads Thãel to swear, "We shall find [our links to one another] again…even a way back! We will go back to the very beginning. Mathieu is doing the research" (144). Thus, Thãel, the biological descendent of maroons, affirms his commitment to recuperating lost cultural connections, and explicitly identifies Mathieu as Papa Longué's heir in *marronnage* and the fight to transcend its isolation.

So far, so good. But anyone familiar with *La Lézarde* has already noticed that, in a novel liberally sprinkled with female revolutionaries[84], the above analysis remains conspicuously mum on women's involvement in this act of collective imagination.

[84] In addition to Mathieu, Thael and their more peripheral male cohorts (Gilles, Pablo, Luc, and Michel), the group of young revolutionaries includes the "mysterious" Margarita, the "stubborn" Mycéa, and the "passive" Valérie.

While Glissant's work in the 1980s and 1990s grants women access to the project of cultural memory reclamation, his early iterations of a progressive, unifying *antillanité* were decidedly products of masculine collaboration, constructed in opposition to a passive, feminized Other.[85] Let us consider each woman's role in turn along with the ends to which Glissant employs female imagery in describing the landscape in order to determine precisely who is a major player in this project.[86] To begin with, Papa Longué is not alone in his ability to prophesy. Like the wise old seer, Margarita correctly foresees not only danger for Thãel but also Valérie's eventual death by dog. Thus, even though her visions extend forward and not backward in time, we might reasonably expect to see Margarita hailed as a major player in Martinique's visionary project, an heiress to Papa Longué's insight and a colleague in Mathieu's historical excavations. In fact, Margarita's companions alternately disregard and ridicule her portents of disaster, dismissing them as treason, slander, or madness. In the midst of "those hallucinations that come with Lent," Margarita rushes to the politically sympathetic policeman, Alphonse Tigamba, and confides her premonition that Thãel is in danger. Pleading

[85] Glissant's definition of the word "maroons," included in a glossary at the end of *Le Discours Antillais* is particularly suggestive in this context. After briefly observing that maroon communities existed in Cuba, Haiti, and French Guiana, Glissant continues, "In Jamaica, the epic struggle of the Trelawny and Windwards maroons was waged by exceptional leaders: Juan de Bollas, The Great Traitor; the most inspired of all, Cudjoe, The Moutain Lion; Quaco, the Invisible Hunter" (268). Conspicuously absent from this list of great Jamaican maroon leaders is Nanny, rebel general extraordinaire and sister of Cudjoe and Quaco. Her erasure from Glissant's mini historical lesson clearly suggests that for him, maroon history is a masculine discourse.

[86] To date very little critical attention has been devoted to the gendered nature of Glissant's *antillanité* (as expressed in *La Lézarde* or in his theoretical works). Ben Heller's "Landscape, Femininity, and Caribbean Discourse," and J. Michael Dash's "Writing the Body: Edouard Glissant's Poetics of Re-membering" both briefly consider Glissant's gendering of the landscape. Both critics read Glissant's depiction of feminized landscape as progressive and non-essentialist. Valerie Loichot's "Negations and Subversions of Paternal Authorities" is an excellent reading of how Glissant's later novels destabilize the paternalism of History (with a capital "H"), but none of these works dwell at length on the masculine *marronnage* of *La Lézarde*.

indirectly for Alphonse's assistance in protecting the young maroon, Margarita traces her fears back to an argument between Thãel and Mathieu, during which

> it…had nailed her, Margarita, to the sand, and she had felt as if an army of misfortunes had begun to advance from behind the horizon, she had very nearly raised her hands to her face (at least she remembered quite clearly having started to make such a gesture) as if to avoid the sea's horizon, that thin threatening line in the distance. (58, ellipsis mine)

Angered by her information and the awkward position in which it places him, Tigamba shouts, "I have listened to it all but I am not interested!" Their conversation ends with Tigamba staring at her stonily and with Margarita weeping "rigid, geometric tears—like a statue in a religious procession," feverishly trying to convince herself that "she was not letting anyone down, he was like a brother…if the others were to find out, they would not forgive her" (59). Although Tigamba belatedly acts on her tip, he regards her prophecy as an irritant rather than a gift. Not even the other women provide her with much comfort. As she lies on the ground between Mycéa and Valérie, "creating with her body a neutral zone between Mathieu's intended and Thael's fiancée," Margarita is "disturbed by unformed thoughts, flashes of revelation, and scattered premonitions" (155). We learn later that she has foreseen Valérie's death, yet she does not immediately attempt to share her thoughts with Valérie, who is caught up in a verbal thrust and parry, nor with Mycéa who has manipulated her visions. "Besides," she thinks dejectedly,

> each time she had tried to intervene in the course of events, she had had no effect…Events followed their own momentum, without paying attention to her, Margarita. She had no influence. She could convince no one. And Margarita thought that things would never go the way she wanted them to. Her whims would never be indulged. (155-6)

Here, not only do Margarita's friends ignore her, but, in the narrator's representation of her own thoughts, the text also reduces her insights to capricious "whims," recounting her

concerns in a whiny, self-indulgent litany[87] (we will have occasion to consider this narrator in more detail shortly). But as the novel draws to its tragic close, Margarita's assessment of her situation proves as accurate as her premonitions. When a presentiment about Valérie's impending death sends her running after the girl and Thãel "like a distant wreckage in the wake of a beautiful sailing ship," Tigamba restrains her, asking tauntingly "'What premonition? Papa Longué is dead, are you going to succeed him? You inherited his gift? You can see into the future? Is that so?'" (187). Although he acknowledges that her earlier warning proved accurate and timely, Tigamba refuses to take Margarita as seriously as the old man, her final warning goes unheeded until it is too late, and Valérie indeed meets with a grisly fate. To an extent, then, the narrative critiques the revolutionary band's dismissal of Margarita's insights, but her failure to articulate her visions at the decisive moment (after Tigamba ignores her) likewise comes under scrutiny.

Of course, Papa Longué endured his fair share of skepticism, as his dying words attest. Early in the novel, Valérie interprets his visions as metaphorical (and therefore tries to ignore them), and even Mathieu briefly questions the extent of the old man's legacy while ultimately affirming its value (171-2). However, if we compare the status accorded Papa Longué's visions by novel's end with the ignominy in which Tigamba

[87] The narrator also passes independent judgment on Margarita a number of times. Early in the novel, he distinguishes her derisively from the other women as "Margarita (the mad one)" (45). Pablo, Thael and Mathieu are all variously accused of madness (by one another), but for the men, this accusation is either tossed off as joke or transformed into a positive rather than a constraining quality. When Tigamba says to Pablo, "Your words have driven you mad," Pablo the poet deflects the label from himself, and embraces the idea as a creative spur, replying, "Oh? The madness of language, an inspired thought!" (36). Likewise, Mathieu grandiosely claims to have within himself "that which is me, which is greater than me…Madness, madness of the spirit!" (39). And when Thael and Valérie discuss Mathieu's historical work and its goal, Valérie flippantly calls it "hopelessly insane. But no matter, we will invite Mathieu to the wedding" (144). Dash persuasively argues that Glissant ties madness and "verbal delirium" to "a culture of survival in Martinique," so there is no inherent stigma attached to madness in this novel ("Madman" 41). However, Margarita's warnings are dismissed precisely because she is "crazy," suggesting that that which is creative and vital in male characters translates as instability in Glissant's female visionaries.

shrouds Margarita's, the difference is striking. During their last meeting, the revolutionary band breaks into a spontaneous, ecstatic song and dance in which the living memory of Papa Longué and his legacy are celebrated. As they dance, the narrator observes:

> We became like a rushing river, like a mountain with thick forests, like intoxicating sunlight….Eh! Damiso eho!...The verses improvised by Lomé came rushing out and the friends sang along. 'Papa Longué, the healer, is here. He told us we would be happy…Wake for Papa Longué this afternoon. The voice that never dies. (179, ellipses mine)

In contrast, when Margarita tells the assembled company at this same meeting that she has "a funny feeling" about the future, Gilles shouts "Keep it to yourself!" (172). In the above passage, the group "makes their way back to the forest" in the tradition of maroon communities, attempting to change the course of the future in accordance with Papa Longué's dying wish, but will not even listen to Margarita's premonitions. While Papa Longue's voice reverberates eternally, Margarita lapses back into silence as she did on the beach. Clearly, Papa Longué's maroon vision will play an important role in the imagined community that his heir, Mathieu, will construct, but Margarita's insights will not have a place in this creative endeavor. Although the novel affirms the validity of Margarita's visions and thus perhaps gently critiques her exclusion, the narrative also suggests that Mathieu and the others have succeeded at their most important task: following the trail of Papa Longue's living memory to an independent Pan-Caribbean future.

But are there, perhaps, less ambivalent women visionaries in the novel, linked imaginatively or biologically to the maroons? Mycéa, Mathieu's companion, appears ideally qualified to infiltrate the maroon boys' club. Brave enough to venture off on her

own soul-searching journey, admired by all, and living in close proximity to the leader, Mycéa is also a direct descendant of the same maroons from which Papa Longué sprang.[88] Yet for all Mycéa's feistiness and courage, and despite the fact that she has conspired closely with Mathieu throughout the novel, she ends as little more than Mathieu's nursemaid, willingly devoting her life to the care and maintenance of his frail body. The narrator waxes poetic about this work, remarking that, in the future, it would be necessary for all Martinicans to face the sordid realities of poverty and hardship and "to identify and tend the wounds. With patience and tenacity, like Mycéa…" (169). But while the narrator sees her ministrations as a charming metaphor for gritty political action, Mycéa herself will remain a supporting member of the cast, inspiring and tending the "real" visionaries. The narrator ultimately acknowledges that "none of us understood the torment suffered by Mycéa" as she patiently tends the querulous Mathieu, chiding him for "mak[ing] me feel I am in school, listening to a lecture in morals" (173-4). Ultimately, the narrator blithely asserts that Mycéa, like Margarita, is made for (profound) silence, symbolic of the struggle in which her male cohorts are engaged, but herself more object of that struggle than participant in it. Consider, for example, the passage in which Mycéa wanders, zombielike, through the night

> without hearing anything but the astonished silence of her heart, a silence which had become fully formed and which had become the soulless soul of her flesh… She becomes part of this volcanic rock, and perhaps because she did not feel (nor suffer), because she walked vacantly and mechanically, for the sole purpose of advancing into the realm of fatigue, perhaps she begins to share the fate of the rock, of the sandy soil…And perhaps, Mycea, emptied of her being, in the silence so closely akin to her inner self, perceives the magnetic force of the ocean, violently eager to seduce and carry off and which would indeed carry off everything (the hills, the black furrows, and the dusky odour of logwood, the dark grey dogs) if on the other side of the island the calm sea did not use all the powers of seduction to hold everything in place. And the island is in a state of

[88] Mycea's heritage is clarified in *Le Quatrième siècle.*

> equilibrium between these two forces, an enduring patience that is stretched between the black, angry rocks of the ocean (to the east) and the gentle murmuring of the beaches of the sea (to the west), a fundamental integrity which finds in its inner resources the reason to endure, unaware of the fact that it is at stake in this conflict. And Mycea embodies this precarious integrity, cast into the night like an unbending thread with no hope of either changing course or return and who is aware of the conflict raging about her but does not participate in it. (50-1)

In this lengthy but crucial passage, Mycéa channels and embodies the land Mathieu et al wish to repossess and the *antillanité* so precariously maintained by the sea. Her involvement in imagining a Pan-Caribbean community is symbolic, inspirational, and therefore important, but in figuring her as the corporeal part of Martinique's revolutionary "body politic,"[89] "aware of the conflict raging about her but not [a participant] in it," she is inevitably that-which-is-possessed, the object of masculine desire. To be fair, as Valerie Loichot makes clear, in Glissant's later fiction she assumes a far greater and more nuanced role in effecting *antillanité*, becoming both a reflection of subsequent narrators ("Mycea, c'est moi," the narrator of *Tous-Monde*, observes) and the inheritor of a name that is not traditional patronymic.[90] Likewise, as Loichot also notes, Papa Longue is distinctly feminized in the later novels, when, in conversation with Mycea, he "giv[es] birth to [words] and was pushing them toward her like a river gushing out" (quoted in Loichot 106). I certainly do not wish to trivialize or devalue this evolution of Glissant's ideas. However, it is important to note the difference between his early and more recent portrayals of women in order to understand the contemporary ideological context in which Jean Rhys and the female authors discussed in the following chapter

[89] This evokes a term Patricia Joan Saunders uses in her study of Caribbean women writers.

[90] Her surname, Celat, (or *cela,* "that") is a name that her male ancestor adopts *after* her female ancestor calls their child "Ceci" ("this"). Loichot performs a close reading of the anti-paternalistic implications of this decision.

were writing. I contend that these women posed useful challenges to Glissant's early articulations of *antillanité*, which in no way detracts from the insights of his later work.

With this understanding, then, we return to the third female member of Mathieu's band, Valérie, who is perhaps the most grievously passive character in the novel. Like Mycéa, Valérie embodies the inspirational qualities of Martinique's landscape. Not only does she have Papa Longué's beloved "forest…in her heart," but also her face "melt[s] into the green depths" of the plain whenever Mathieu looks at her (145, 84). Mathieu's subsequent attempts to physically conquer her, and his snidely possessive language ("Let's walk together then, dream of mine") suggest, unfortunately, the affirmation of the tired binary between triumphant male conqueror/submissive, effeminized land. Furthermore, Valérie becomes a symbol of Thael and Mathieu's as yet non-existent imagined community, showing that Glissant's vision of Caribbean nationalism/*antillanité* is based largely on the artificial "naturalization" of gendered nationalist discourse:[91]

> [Valérie] was indeed a child of this world, sweet and aloof, with her uncomplicated laughter, the perfect union of those conflicting forces that haunted him and which were inextricably fused within her…she remained simple; Thael thought that their children would take after both of them: strong and innocent like her, unaware of the drama of the beginning and the first cry of defiance; observant and clear-sighted as he had become since his descent from the mountains. They would create the people of tomorrow and Valérie would know how to raise them…The only true wealth, Thael thought, was that of a country which had freely chosen a set of values in keeping with its essential nature… Yes, Valérie had within her both the grandeur of the mountains and the endurance of the plains. (140-1)

Like Mycéa, then, Valérie is useful primarily as a figurehead for (and breeder of) the imagined community that she is too "simple," "innocent," and "uncomplicated" to

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[91] See Joanne Sharp's "Gendering Nationhood: a feminist engagement with national identity" (98). Sharp argues that repeatedly linking nation and gender leads to the perception that such connections are "natural." Glissant's additional gendering of the natural world that Mathieu wishes to reclaim only strengthens my claim that this is precisely what occurs in *La Lézarde*.

imagine herself. She is both "Mother Martinique" personified and an intuitive, immature infant. Tellingly, Dash reads these sorts of rhetorical moves as a progressive break away from the submissive image of the "terre-femme" and toward "a notion of [the feminized land's] shaping power on those who inhabit it" (*Introduction 7).* This is a curious assertion given Glissant's relentless language of conquest and submission: the feminized river is literally and metaphorically a "fertile crack" which Mathieu and Thael work to "take possession of," to "discover," and to "recover" from Garin, whose home sits astride its banks. Indeed, as Dash and nearly every critic is fond of noting, the river itself becomes one of the central characters around which the action swirls and a metaphor for the narrator's aesthetic. Both Dash and Ben A. Heller read this gendered rhetoric as inherently feminist. For Heller in particular, the novel's structure and language evoke a fluidity and "female language" reminiscent of Luce Irigaray's controversial 1975 assertion that femininity is an inherently fluid challenge to innate male concreteness and of Nancy Chodorow's notion of female relationality. Indeed, for Heller and Dash, the following sensual description of the Lézarde River is evidence of the novel's celebratory embrace of liberated female sexuality as a basis for a postcolonial Martinican future:

> In the midmorning [the Lézarde River] is exultant and unrestrained, it sheds its clothes and basks in the warm sun like a naked girl, heedless of passers-by on the banks, she bathes in an eternal present of water passing over water, and soon like a woman fulfilled and ripe with pleasure, the river, its flanks broadened, its belly burning over the icy depths of its bed, lazily seeks repose in the full cry of midday. Yes, this is the place: a piece of galvanized iron roofs encircled by the river; barren and motionless in the centre of the circle which surges with fertility (32).

Thus, "from an historical perspective," Heller concludes, "one can say that Glissant is advocating a passage from a…concept…that obeys a masculine emphasis on difference and opposition, to a dialectical relation with the other which partakes more of a feminine

world view, or at least a that world view as it is articulated by some contemporary feminist thinkers" (407).

Yet even if we ignore Heller's problematic invocation of Irigaray and Chodorow's essentialist theories, we cannot ignore the fact that the entire novel is refracted through the consciousness of a first person narrator: an unnamed man who, as a child when the events in the novel occurred, was designated by Mathieu's band as their collective storyteller. This man makes no secret of his intention to construct his narrative "[l]ike the Lézarde. With rushing water, meanders [sic], sometimes sluggish, sometimes running freely, slowly gathering the earth from either bank…picking up the earth around it" (175, ellipses mine). Thanks to his repeated narrative interruptions, the reader is frequently reminded that both the text's stylistic fluidity and the sexualized descriptions of the river's fecund postcolonial promise are the expression of a masculine desire, refracted through a male gaze.

Furthermore, even if we were to grant Dash and Heller their reading of the river as a powerful female force within the novel, the only characters capable of appreciating its power and potential are men: Glissant's narrator and his male maroons. As Papa Longué lies dying, for example, he is attended by a group of "old women" who frustrate him with their inability to perceive the river's unifying message. As he looks at them, Papa Longué realizes, "these women understood nothing, saw nothing, they were in a deep pool of water ('It's the Lézarde,' he thought,'The river is in flood'), they spoke to him, not hearing that he was screaming, they continued to make feeble gestures" (145). Drowning in their own obliviousness, these women are clearly incapable of helping Papa Longué reconnect the people of Martinique with their history. Instead, they are a

symptom of *marronnage* and a barrier to the dying maroon's attempts at imagining community.

But while the river becomes an important metaphor for Martinican self-determination, the novel continually reminds us that it empties into the sea, figured herein as a paradoxical, asexual space of deeper political affiliation. "The sea is always an envelope," the narrator explains, "something extra, that which is outside everything and which forms a definite border, but which has a shaping and defining power at the same time" (40-1). Paradoxically both outside and internally constructive, the sea, like Glissant's isolated maroons, unifies "all the islands around us…It seems absurd that they should have separate existences, similar islands in the same sea. They ought to be joined together" (152). Clearly, then, regional unification is the as-yet-unachieved end toward which the river and Martinican independence are bent, and once again, a male maroon must wade into the surf in order to assist in the choppy political process. Gilles and Pablo, two of the young men on the fringes of Mathieu's group plunge recklessly into the sea, and return "triumphant, their bodies glistening with a kind of light," but their bravado quickly fades when they realize that Mathieu, the honorary maroon, is too physically weak to join them (40, 41). And the women? They recline tamely on the beach "admir[ing] the daring of the two swimmers…and treated [the men] to strong drinks as if they were warriors returning from the fray" (40). Thus, the group breathes a sigh of relief when Thaël, the maroon from the mountains, joins them, and each one attempts "to become a link in the chain which would soon bind him to the sea" (41). For his part, Thaël

> stepped forward to meet the waves with unconcealed timidness, with hope of liberation, fulfillment, pleasure. Humbly, he admitted to the inability of his entire

> being…to stay afloat, to conquer the liquid mass. Silently he worshipped the eternal blue, this domain where there was no place for him (unless the place had been mysteriously marked for him from the beginning), this clarity in which he would leave a blot, this absolute which would repel him, that is unless he mastered both balance and feeling in the decisive clarity of complete surrender. With stiff arms and legs, but a light heart…he discovered the sensation of being physically stretched out, incapable of controlling his muscles. By the thrill he experienced, when the fragile bands of foam gently pressed against his ankles, he realized he would forever be a prisoner of this force. (41-2, ellipses mine)

Afloat in the paradoxically liberating and binding sea of regional politics, Thaël proves effortlessly and joyfully adept at his job. Indeed, by drowning Garin in the Lézarde's delta, he ensures victory for the island's progressive candidate, and seems poised to become a major player, not only in Martinique's drive for independence but in its regional telos.

What, then, are we to make of the fact that the novel ends with the group's political success rather than with the damper that the 1946 departmentalization law constituted? Since the law has, up to the present day, successfully thwarted the goals for which Glissant's maroons sacrificed so much, and since Pan-Caribbean political unity has proven equally elusive, does the novel constitute some sort of revisionist fantasy which we ought to dismiss as cavalierly as Glissant's men dismiss mad Margarita's prognostications? In a word, no. Glissant and his maroons remind us that a paradoxically free and binding Caribbean unity remains a possibility. "The sea is a little like politics," peripheral Pablo observes. '[I]f we pay attention to it, we are sure to win. Just when we are about to go under, you will see, we will be able to grasp reality. That is the way of the sea: one minute you are sinking, the next you are afloat. Why? Because you did not give in!" (40) As we turn our attention now to Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, we will consider how Rhys's recuperation of a "mad," isolated Caribbean woman

can be read as a productive critique of Glissant's early vision, illustrating the violence of gendered imperial nationalisms that Saunders and McClintock critique.

The Nation as Nightmare

> "Is it true," she said, "that England is like a dream? Because one of my friends who married an Englishman wrote and told me so. She said this place London is a cold dark dream sometimes. I want to wake up."
>
> "Well," I answered annoyed, "that is precisely how your beautiful island seems to me, quite unreal and like a dream."
>
> "But how can rivers and mountains and the sea be unreal?"
>
> "And how can a millions of people, their houses and their streets be unreal?"
>
> "More easily," she said, "much more easily. Yes a big city must be like a dream."
>
> "No, this is unreal and like a dream," I thought.
>
> Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*

While Glissant's vision is arguably hopeful and encouraging about the prospect of future regional unification, Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* offers no such optimistic message. Published in 1966, but set in the years following the 1838 emancipation of slavery in Jamaica, Rhys' narrative uses language and imagery evocative of the maroon experience to *mourn* female impotence, blaming British chauvinism (both in the gendered and nationalist senses) for interfering with the unifying process of memory recovery. Thus, while the novel strikes a decidedly negative tone, emphasizing the destructive gaps between Caribbean racial, cultural and linguistic groups, this very negativity and the British men on whom Rhys pins the blame, suggests that, for her, a Caribbean alternative to nationalism is as desirable as it is unlikely. Ultimately, then, I am suggesting that while Rhys' Antoinette fails to bridge the gaps between herself and others, her novel gestures at the vital importance of offering a Pan-Caribbean counterdiscourse to Western nationalism, and that, like Glissant, she places a form of

maroon-like resistance at the center of this literary imaginative endeavor. Unlike Glissant's early work, Rhys centers her narrative around the insights of a marginalized "madwoman," offering us the sort of nuanced critique of nationalism that Margarita is never able to articulate.

As Anderson noted in his description of national identity, widespread cooperation is key to maintaining the fiction of national sameness. But as his own formulation of the inherently oppositional nature of group identity construction makes clear, within any group there is always a recalcitrant individual who refuses to play along. Indeed, as McClintock and Saunders show, subgroups of such individuals, multiply marginalized and excluded from imagined communities on gendered, racial, and geographic grounds usefully expose the grand "lie" of British colonial "deep horizontal comradeship," and pose explicit challenges to sweeping national narratives. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a text peopled with just such disruptive misfits: Caribbean women who form an ironic collective of "maroons," and who dare, despite threats of incarceration and allegations of madness both to confront the British with the flimsiness of their identity and to construct an oppositional identity of their own. Like her aunt Cora and mother, Annette, Antoinette Cosway's subject position as a white Creole woman of the planter class equips her uniquely to expose the lie of British colonial nationalism—the illusion of a fundamental "sameness" between the isle of Great Britain and the isle of Jamaica. Christophine, the liminal, Martinican obeah woman, and her tiny, magical counterpart Tia, repeatedly challenge Antoinette's own attempts to identify with the English or to forge a Pan-Caribbean comradeship across race and class boundaries. In pointing out the limits of Antoinette's own vision (that is, the relentlessness with which she attempts to fit

into a national construct despite a certain degree of awareness about the artificiality of such groups) Christophine and Tia prove every bit as dangerous to the illusion of British colonial nationalism as does Antoinette herself. Here, then, is a novel that disrupts the notion of "a solid community moving steadily up (or down) history," a literary fiction that descries British colonial nationalism not as a benign fantasy, but as a sordid lie.

In the novel's opening sentences, we learn that Antoinette and her mother are multiply marginalized in Jamaica, rejected by white Creoles for transplanting from Martinique, and mocked by post-Emancipation black Jamaicans for having slipped from a position of enslaving, economic power. Before two pages have elapsed, Antoinette has channeled an exterior, adult, racially ambiguous[92] consciousness to represent several different groups as "they":

> They say when trouble comes close ranks, and so the white people did. But we were not in their ranks. The Jamaican ladies had never approved of my mother, 'because she pretty like pretty self' Christophine said. She was my father's second wife, far too young for him they thought, and, worse still, a Martinique girl…She still rode about every morning not caring that the black people stood about in groups to jeer at her, especially after her riding clothes grew shabby (they notice clothes, they know about money). (17, 18)

Antoinette's "we" is a tiny island of particularity; she, Annette, and the sickly infant, Pierre, are not suffered to imagine themselves part of any Jamaican social stratus. After the poisoning of Annette's horse, one of her last tangible connections to an affluent slaveholding past (in addition, of course, to Coulibri, Christophine, Godfrey, and Sass), Annette moans "Now we are marooned" (18). This telling phrase contains more truth than Annette is perhaps aware: not only are the Cosways isolated and abandoned like

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[92] Several critics have commented on Antoinette's shadowy racial identity. For a representative sampling see Elizabeth Dalton's "Sex and Race in *WSS*," Martina Ghosh Schellhorn's "The White Creole Woman's Place in Society," Carine Mardorossian's "Shutting Up the Subaltern," Gayatri Spivak's "Three Imperial Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" and Lee Erwin's "'Like in a Looking Glass:History and Narrative in *WSS*."

desert island castaways, they are also likened to the rebellious sixteenth century refugee slaves who fought the British for survival from the shelter of Jamaica's mountains.[93] As Mary Lou Emery notes in *Jean Rhys at "World's End,"* this heritage is at once another marker of racial ambiguity and an association with rebellious defiance (not passive dejection). Traded to "Rochester," by her stepfather for the privilege of laying claim to British domesticity, Antoinette is eventually forced to endure her own Middle Passage exile from her homeland, further reinforcing her ideological connection, within Rhys' text, to enslaved Africans.[94]

Once her mother has rejected her in favor of the looking glass, Antoinette tells us that she "spent most of her time in the kitchen which was in an outbuilding some way off. Christophine slept in the little room next to it" (20). Antoinette's haunting of an even more liminal physical space coincides with her search for a new companion with whom to share her isolation. Yet this ultra liminality (a little room *next to* the outbuilding) is a space Christophine has occupied all the while that Annette was riding in the hills and languishing in the manor house. And Jamaica is no more "home" to Christophine than it is to Annette, for her skin and clothing mark her as irrevocably Other:

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[93] In *A Brief History of the Caribbean,* Jan Rogozinsky tells us: "The islands initially offered a natural refuge for runaway [slaves]. Areas of dense brush and broken terrain marked every island…Thus most islands sheltered Maroon bands during the early years of settlement…After about 1700,…[o]rganized Maroon communities survived only on the unsettled Carib islands of Saint Vincent and Dominica and in the mountains of Jamaica, Hispaniola, Guadeloupe, and Cuba. On the British islands, Maroon communities prospered only on Jamaica" (153). If, as Peter Hulme argues in "The Locked Heart: A Creole Family Romance," Antoinette's Jamaica bears a stronger resemblance to the Dominica of Rhys' childhood than to Jamaica itself, this passage locates Maroons on two of the four Caribbean islands featured prominently in *WSS*: Dominica and Jamaica.

[94] Curiously, however, when Antoinette lies awake in fear on the night Coulibri burns, plotting a rebellious fight to the death with her stick, she wishes for "a big Cuban dog to lie by my bed and protect me" (37). As Fernando Henriques explains in his historical account of Jamaica's Maroons, vicious Cuban dogs were key to British authorities' eventual triumph over Maroon rebels. That Antoinette fantasizes about employing such a form of protection against the former slaves who threaten her home constitutes one noteworthy false note in her claim to a Maroon identity.

> [Christophine's] songs were not like Jamaican songs, and she was not like the other women. She was much blacker—blue-black with a thin face and straight features. She wore a black dress, heavy gold earrings and a yellow handkerchief—carefully tied with the two high points in front. No other negro woman wore black, or tied her handkerchief Martinique fashion…though she could speak good English if she wanted to, and French as well as patois, she took care to talk as they talked. But they would have nothing to do with her and she never saw her son who worked in Spanish Town. She had only one friend—a woman called Maillotte, and Maillotte was not a Jamaican. (20-1)

Thus, Christophine, whom Annette describes to Antoinette as "your father's wedding present to me—one of his presents" endures and negotiates one of the most ostracized positions of all within the novel: Christophine, like the exoticized, naturalized Antoinette, (in her maturity) is not even automatically granted membership within the human race because of her status as human property. The two certainly form a significant alliance as Carine Mardorossian notes, but even that alliance is limited by Antoinette's fears of obeah and by language: although Christophine's phrases pepper Antoinette's consciousness just as surely as do others' (her mother, Aunt Cora, white Jamaican women) Christophine's willful patois is set off in quotation marks and credited to her, as we see in the novel's opening passage, cited above. In contrast, other voices merge with Antoinette's own, uncredited because of the standard semantics. Thus, Antoinette and Christophine's alliance is limited, and each woman inhabits a realm of solitary maroon-dom that the other cannot fully share.

Recognizing this, Christophine attempts to fracture Antoinette's isolation by fostering a friendship between the white Creole child and her only friend's daughter, Tia. Tia, too, occupies a somewhat liminal position, and her heritage is shrouded in mystery. We know only that her mother, the only woman willing to befriend Christophine, "was not a Jamaican." Like Christophine, Tia exercises a mystical control over nature, (at least

in Antoinette's childlike eyes) for "fires always lit for her, sharp stones did not hurt her bare feet, I never saw her cry…and after we had eaten she slept at once" (23). Of course, these factors are less magical than they are markers of class division; Tia's feet are likely toughened by a lifetime of poverty-enforced shoelessness, she lights fires adeptly and sleeps immediately because, though she is able to play for extended periods of time, she likely assists her mother with household chores (the text gives no indication that Maillotte shares Christophine's power to command free assistance from the local girls). These material differences do not register at a practical level for Antoinette, although the thoughtless racial slur she utters (which provokes Tia into the taunts that end their friendship) do show that she is not above playing lady of the manor. When Tia claims a right to Antoinette's pennies (toys to her, riches to Tia), Antoinette adopts her mother's haughty, resigned tone: "'Keep them then, you cheating nigger,' I said, for I was tired, and that water I had swallowed made me feel sick. 'I can get more if I want to'"(24). Tia responds by bluntly exposing the lie of affluent, planter class Jamaican identity Antoinette has attempted to construct:

> That's not what she hear, she said. She hear we all poor like beggar…Plenty white people in Jamaica. Real white people, they got gold money. They don't look at us, nobody see them come near us. Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger. (24)

Afterward Antoinette returns home, sick with hatred that she must wear Tia's dress and perform the lower social identity to which Tia's words consign her. And it is this fundamental class/race division created by the lingering reality of colonial slavery that causes Tia to separate herself from Antoinette and cast her lot with the howling mob intent on burning down Coulibri:

> Then, not so far off, I saw Tia and her mother and I ran to her, for she was all that was left of my life as it had been. We had eaten the same food, slept side by side, bathed in the same river. As I ran, I thought, I will live with Tia and I will be like her. Not to leave Coulibri. Not to go. Not. When I was close I saw the jagged stone in her hand but I did not see her throw it. I did not feel it either, only something wet, running down my face. I looked at her and I saw her face crumple up as she began to cry. (45)

Ultimately, Tia forces Antoinette to be aware of the barrier that prevents them from imagining together a community based on shared activities and interests. To imagine such a community is to pretend that British colonialism is not a historical reality, affecting the two of them in qualitatively different ways. In order to imagine herself united with Tia, as she does when leaping from the top of Thornfield Hall at *this* novel's close, Antoinette must confront the national myth that says "All residents of British colonies are citizens of Britain, members of a transcontinental community (particularly if they happen to be descended of European stock)." Tia's rock scars Antoinette with the knowledge (however slow to develop consciously) that some large, sinister fiction has constructed a barrier that overrides her own individual imagining. This is precisely what Antoinette realizes in full when she retells the story of Coulibri's sacking and its aftermath to her British husband later on in the novel: "My head was bandaged because someone had thrown a stone at me," she says, erasing Tia's name from this version of the tale and thereby allowing her name to reverberate for the reader in this narrative gap. "Aunt Cora told me that it was healing up and that it wouldn't spoil me on my wedding day. But I think it did spoil me for my wedding day and all the other days and nights" (133). While Tia's rejection emphasizes the difficulties inherent in cross-racial Jamaican imaginaries, it also shocks Antoinette into the realization that she can never identify

enough with her English husband to satisfactorily uphold the myth of a unified British commonwealth.

Almost from the moment their marriage begins, Antoinette begins chipping away at “Rochester’s” stolid, masculine, colonizing Britishness.[95] On the way to Granbois (on “one of the Windward islands”) “Rochester” begins to equate the exoticism of the colonized landscape with his wife, and temporarily communes with a black porter in an exchange that could have jumped straight from the pages of Eve Sedgwick’s *Between Men*:

> The first man was not a native of the island. ‘This a very wild place—not civilized. Why you come here?’…There was a soft warm wind blowing but I understood why the porter had called it a wild place. Not only wild, but menacing. Those hills would close in on you. (68, 69)

Like the Jamaican Windward Maroons, Antoinette is soon launching stealthy assaults on her British lord. When she offers him a “shamrock-shaped leaf” full of mountain water, “Rochester” notes, “Looking up smiling, she might have been any pretty English girl…[but] her eyes…are too large and can be disconcerting…Long, sad, dark alien eyes. Creole of pure English descent she may be, but they are not English or European either” (71, 67). Already, the threat she presents causes him to figure her as an alien Other, although, as far as he knows, the “same” national blood flows through their veins. Further along the path to Granbois Antoinette begins describing the island’s natural properties, observing, “The earth is red here, do you notice?” (71). “Rochester” testily snaps back, “’It’s red in parts of England too.’ ‘Oh England, England,’ she called back mockingly, and the sound went on and on like a warning I did not choose to hear” (71).

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[95] For other essays that examine components of the link between imperial and sexual colonization in *WSS,* see Mary Lou Emery’s *Jean Rhys at “World’s End,”* Deborah Kelly Kloepfer’s “The Unspeakable Mother,” Veronica Gregg’s “*Jean Rhys’s Historical Imagination* and Carine Mardorossian’s “Double (De) colonization and the Feminist Criticism of *WSS*.

But Antoinette is just beginning to unsettle her husband's dogged national consciousness. "Rochester" instantly retreats to a defensive posture, casting Antoinette in the role of deluded naïf:

> She often questioned me about England and listened attentively to my answers, but I was certain that nothing I said made much difference. Her mind was already made up. Some romantic novel, a stray remark never forgotten, a sketch, a picture, a song…and her ideas were fixed. About England and about Europe. I could not change them and probably nothing would. Reality might disconcert her, bewilder her, hurt her, but it would not be reality. It would be only a mistake, a misfortune, a wrong path taken, her fixed ideas would never change. (94)

Of course, as his revelations immediately after this passage show, it is "Rochester" who is becoming unhinged by the fixity of his ideas when confronted with the reality of his own tenuous imagined community (he confesses that he has nearly succumbed to a homicidal passion on several occasions. And wonders if Antoinette "ever guessed how near she came to dying"). The conversation quoted in this section's second epigraph shows further how Antoinette questions the reality of England, foreshadowing Anderson's "real world" notion that a metropolis teeming with people constitutes a dream, a fiction, an imagined construction upon which the project of empire rests. While "Rochester" chafes and begins to crack under the strain of Antoinette's Caribbean songs and "childlike" questioning, Antoinette herself begins to show the strain, and makes a few tentative steps toward claiming an imperial identity with her husband. She sings along with "Rochester's" British ballad, dons clothing made from "the Paris of the West Indies," and wears these dresses coyly off her shoulder (as Mardorossian observes, this is a direct imitation of her favorite childhood painting, "The Miller's Daughter" ("Shutting Up the Subaltern" 1076)). And here it is that Amelie and Christophine step in to remind

her not to get caught up in illusions of British identity. After Amelie sings her the white cockroach song, Antoinette sobs to "Rochester":

> A white cockroach. That's me. That's what they call all of us who were here before their own people in Africa sold them to the slave traders. And I've heard English women call us white niggers. So between you I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all" (102).

Like "Rochester," Antoinette takes a pot shot at the woman who shatters her illusion, and like "Rochester" it involves a stubborn unwillingness to acknowledge British culpability for the slave trade. However, Christophine puts the finishing touches on Amelie's handiwork after listening to Antoinette speculating about starting over in England:

> I will be a different person when I live in England and different things will happen to me…England, rosy pink in the geography book map, but on the page opposite the words are closely crowded, heavy looking. Exports, coal, iron, wood. Then Imports and Character of Inhabitants…"England," said Christophine, who was watching me. "You think there is such a place?"
>
> "How can you ask that? You know there is."
>
> "I never see the damn place, how I know?"
>
> "You do not believe that there is a country called England?"
>
> She blinked and answered quickly, "I don't say I don't *believe,* I say I don't *know*…Besides I ask myself is this place like they tell us?…I hear it cold to freeze your bones and they thief your money clever like the devil…Why you want to go to this cold thief place? If there is this place at all, I never see it, that is one thing sure." (111-12)

Immediately after this conversation, Antoinette returns home and confronts her icy husband with the lie of benevolent British nationalism. "You can pretend for a long time, but one day it all falls away and you are alone," she tells him. "[The time of Emancipation is] forgotten, except the lies. Lies are never forgotten, they go on and they grow…I am not a forgetting person" (130, 131, 133).

"Rochester's" narrative begins to deteriorate as he swigs rum, decides that his wife's sanity must pay the price for her inconvenient, revelatory memory, and retreats

into childish fantasies that simultaneously confess his awareness of the constructedness of Western nationalism and his inability to let go of that construction:

> I drank some more rum and, drinking, I drew a house surrounded by trees. A large house. I divided the third floor into rooms and in one room I drew a standing woman—a child's scribble, a dot for a head, a larger one for the body, a triangle for a skirt, slanting lines for arms and feet. But it was an English house. English trees. I wondered if I should ever see England again. (163)

In this telling passage, England becomes a childish sketch of a manor house, an infantile, unrealistic representation. Of course, Rhys also exposes *Jane Eyre* and Thornfield Hall as edifices that prop up a notion of British nationalism at the expense of Brontë's outlandishly caricatured Caribbean woman. Here, Antoinette's imprisonment and exile become a tangible monument to "Rochester's" flimsy imagined community, and both the narrative and her actions within it effectively "burn down the house" of that construct.

Clearly, then, this is a narrative that casts grave doubts on the value and staying power of national identity, and suggests that Caribbean dissent is possible. Yet does it offer any indication that, if the colonized can reappropriate nationalist discourse, the seeds of a Pan-Caribbean alternative exist for the nurturing? Early in the novel, Antoinette overhears a catty conversation by members of the white, Jamaican elite suggesting that, thanks to her father's embrace of "old customs," she possesses a number of mixed race half-siblings (29). These multiple acts of rape are what ultimately resurface to injure Antoinette irrevocably in her husband's eyes, for her half-brother, Daniel, cites their father's ill treatment of his mother as one motive for his poisonous letter to "Rochester." Yet despite Mr. Cosway's sins and Daniel's treachery, despite Tia's rejection and her husband's dominance, Antoinette's unnamed, unknown brothers and sisters link her, however fragilely to the Caribbean isles from which she is physically

separated (Daniel alone has lived in Jamaica, Barbados, and Dominica). More tangibly, she is connected by blood and affection to her mixed-race cousin, Sandi, with whom she catastrophically refuses to become a rebellious runaway (refusing, in the process, to more explicitly identify herself with Maroon history). Then, of course, there is Christophine, who nearly persuades "Rochester" to "leave the island—leave the West Indies," and confide Antoinette to her care (158). Despite the differences that have divided her from Antoinette in the past, a common opposition to "Rochester's" domineering British masculinity could serve as a basis for a unified future: Christophine envisions a multi-island, Pan-Caribbean lifestyle for the two of them, spent roving from "Martinique…to other places" (159). Although "Rochester" overrules this plan, Christophine's hypnotic arguments and his grudging respect for the rebellious "fighter" in her points to another possible, though unactualized life for Antoinette—a life spent reclaiming her rebellious runaway identity in company with another such rebel. Finally, in reimagining Antoinette's suicidal plunge as a return to Tia (and a rejection of "the man who hated me…calling [me] Bertha" Rhys also offers us the chance to read her death as a form of return. While Daniel Cosway refers to "jump[ing] over a precipice" as "fini batt'e," or "finish to fight" Antoinette's attempt to rejoin Tia is not so much the end of a fight (a rebel hanging up her gloves in defeat) but a final act of resistance, a death in which she goes down swinging (97).

Thus, while the realities of British imperial nationalism and male dominance did not allow Jean Rhys to imagine a triumphant, unifying end for her rebellious heroine, she nevertheless makes a horrifying case for the desirability of such a thing. As we will see in Chapter Four, several Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean authors took up the

challenge, constructing narratives in which Glissant and Rhys' maroon aesthetic becomes the basis for a feminist, racially-inclusive regionalism.

CHAPTER THREE

MARRONAGE REPRISED AND REVISED: THE 1970S AND '80S, OR FEMINIST MAROON IMAGINARIES

> We were a little apart from the world, little streams dammed up by school and protected from violent suns and torrential rains. We were safe there, learning to read and sign our names to respect the flag of France our mother, to revere her greatness and majesty and the glory that went back to the beginning of time, when we were still monkeys with their tails cut off. And while school was leading us toward the light, up there on the hills of Fond-Zombi, the waters were intersecting, jostling, foaming, the rivers were changing their courses, overflowing, drying up, going down as best they could to be drowned in the sea. But however much care it took of us, and our frizzy little pigtailed heads, school could not stop our waters from gathering, and the time came when it opened its sluices and left us to the current.

Simone Schwarz-Bart, *The Bridge of Beyond*

> The Caribbean that has developed in scholarly discourse over the past forty years or so sometimes seems to have a life of its own, at times bearing only a cursory relation to the events of today. Yet the words, ideas, and discourses of these archetypes of "Caribbeanness," if you will, have such power to shape the way the region now imagines itself that they have become mythic: to invoke these archetypes to explain particularities in Caribbean life is often enough.

Belinda Edmondson, Introduction to *Caribbean Romances*

In the decades following *Wide Sargasso Sea*'s publication, a host of erstwhile Caribbean colonies secured their independence and began to grapple in full with the challenges of national self-definiton: Guyana and Barbados in 1966, the Bahamas in 1973, Grenada in 1974, Suriname in 1975, Dominica in 1978, St. Lucia and St. Vincent in 1979, Antigua and Belize in 1981, and St. Kitts and Nevis in 1983. Yet in the midst of the postcolonial nationalist fervor that followed, novelists like Simone and André Schwarz-Bart, Maryse Condé, and Michelle Cliff embraced and amended Glissant's maroon aesthetic as a counterdiscourse to chauvinism (both in the nationalist and gender-

inflected senses of the term).[96] Within the Anglophone Britain (and, indeed, among expatriate communities in Britain and the U.S., the early 1970s marked the full flowering of the Caribbean Artists Movement.[97] Organized in 1966 by Kamau Brathwaite, John LaRose, and Andrew Salkey, this transnational Caribbean group sought to unify diasporic and exiled artists, and, outside the geographical boundaries of the Caribbean, to conceive of the Caribbean regionally (Walmsley xix). Indeed, as Anne Walmsley explains, even as it "bridged the transformation of Britain's West Indian community from one of exiles and immigrants to black British," CAM both defined and was defined by "its West Indianness and its strong sense of being pan-Caribbean" (xviii xix). This developing Pan-Caribbean aesthetic articulated "[t]he fragmentation of which Caribbean artists were so conscious—in their history, in their scatter of island and mainland communities, each itself divided—found some wholeness within the membership of CAM" (Walmsley 308). Sharing some of the same unifying, transnational preoccupations as *Négritude* and the Black Power movement, CAM and its journal *Savacou* showed that movements aimed at ending isolation between Caribbean citizens continued to flourish in the tradition of *Bim*, *Caribbean Voices*, and Glissant's relational poetics.

Like Glissant, the Schwarz-Barts, Condé and Cliff people their novels with defiant maroons who resist not only French and British imperialism but the nationalist impulses that threaten to divide island communities post-independence. Like *La Lézarde,* these novels by Caribbean women paradoxically emphasize the particularity and isolation

[96] Interestingly, given the historical setting of the Schwarz-Barts' novel *A Woman Called Solitude*, the OED traces the etymology of "chauvinism" to Napoleonic France. Apparently, one Nicolas Chauvin, a soldier notoriously devoted to Bonaparte and the French national cause, became the poster child (at first celebrated and finally derided) for "patriotism of a bellicose sort."

[97] Hereafter referred to as the CAM

of these unifying maroon figures, whose rescue from the historical margins constitute a crucial step in creating a new Pan-Caribbean imagined community. However, unlike in Glissant's fiction, the heroic maroons in these pages are women, sometimes fictional composites like Cliff's bi-racial Clare Savage or Schwarz-Bart's magical Télumée[98], sometimes historical figures, noted and dismissed, like Condé's Tituba or Andre Schwarz-Bart's Solitude, and sometimes icons effaced from Glissantian footnotes like Queen Nanny. Thus, in each of these novels, female maroons are the means of uniting their communities with a lost past (in true Glissantian fashion), and are *themselves* a crucial part of that heretofore marooned history. In short, then, these narratives function simultaneously as an endorsement of Glissant's Pan-Caribbean poetics of relation, and as a critique of his (rather perplexing) marginalization of women in this border-crossing theoretical endeavor. Ultimately, in these pages, Clare, Télumée, Tituba, Solitude and Queen Nanny stand in as matriarchs of transnational, multiracial communities of sufferers, whom survival and endurance rather than geography unites.

"Out at Sea Amid the Currents": Simone Schwarz-Bart's *The Bridge of Beyond*

For Guadeloupean[99] author Simone-Schwarz Bart, western nationalism, as manifested in France's treatment of its overseas *départements*, is an ideological monstrosity. While paying lip service to the revolutionary motto of *liberté, egalité,*

[98] In her introduction to the English translation of *Pluie et vent sur Telumée Miracle,* Bridget Jones notes that Telumée, though fictional, was inspired by an elderly woman, Fanotte, who hailed from Simone Schwarz-Bart's home in Goyave.

[99] Although born in Charente-Maritime on the west coast of France, Schwarz-Bart was raised in Goyave, Guadeloupe, and, after travelling widely in Europe and Africa, eventually settled there with her husband, André.

fraternité, the France Schwarz-Bart sees is a racist tyrant, whose current policies toward Guadeloupe, Martinique, and French Guiana are modern extensions of the Sun King's Code Noir, and Napolean's reinstitution of slavery. In her 1972 novel *Pluie et vent sur Télumée Miracle*[100], translated into English in 1974 as *The Bridge of Beyond*, Schwarz-Bart traces five generations of a small Guadeloupian community's history from the abolition of literal slavery in 1848 to the contemporary plight of economic "wage slaves." While Glissant's novel traces the passing of the maroon torch from Papa Longué to Mathieu and Thael, this novel is equally focused on lines of descent, and the transmission of survival skills from one generation to the next (as, we will see, is Condé's *Moi, Tituba).* Crucially, however, *The Bridge of Beyond* follows the lives of the Lougandor women, Minerva, Toussine, Victoire, Télumée, and Sonore, each of whom is isolated physically and psychically within her maroon community and each of whom becomes an important, nearly mythological symbol of redemption, freedom, and connection.[101]

As the novel opens, Minerva (one of the founders of a post-emancipation maroon colony called L'Abandonée) becomes pregnant with a child whose name, Toussine, and heritage as the daughter of "a Negro from Dominica," renders her a virtual Pan-Caribbean mélange (evoking Haiti's Toussaint L'Ouverture, and Toussine, a town in French Guiana). As Toussine grows, her beauty is so evident that "old folk said she in herself was the youth of L'Abandonée" (4). Thus, from a young age, Toussine comes to embody not only her own isolated community of erstwhile maroons but also multiple

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[100] Literally, "Wind and Rain on Telumée, the Miracle Woman."

[101] Just as Glissant's swirling prose aesthetically evokes marronnage, Schwarz-Bart's novel gestures stylistically at maroon isolation. Jones notes that, at the level of both form and content, "the whole movement of the book parallels the path of the maroons…The characters find the worthwhile things of life remote from the plains and towns where French dominance imposes assimilation" (viii).

island communities. Her "natural" mate (whom the text suggests is ideally suited to her by virtue of his preoccupations and largeness of mind) is Jeremiah, a generous fisherman, whose captivation with Toussine is at first mistaken for his unorthodox "patriotism": "Real fishermen, those who have taken the sea for their native country, often have that lost look," his friends observe (4). When he comes to court Toussine, Minerva recognizes and responds to Jeremiah's rootlessness, joyfully dubbing him a "scrap of her own country, the man sent by St. Anthony[102] in person especially for her daughter" (6). Thus, even though his friends are initially mistaken about the reason for Jeremiah's unmooring, these revelations about his character underscore the multiple ways in which a traditionally discrete sense of nationalism is alien to and unsettled by Toussine and her partner.

During her marriage to Jeremiah, Toussine becomes a bit of a maroon even within the community because of her self-sufficiency and happiness. As the proud owner of her own tub, she does not have to take her laundry to the communal washing spot, and so, "because of the richness and joy she felt in return for so little," becomes pariah (10). "She could withdraw at will into the recesses of her own soul," the narrator[103] continues, "but she was reserved, not disillusioned. And because she bloomed like that, in solitude, she was also accused of being an aristocrat stuck-up" (10). Yet although the solitude continues (and, indeed, intensifies) Toussine's contentment is of short duration. After a fire destroys their home and their daughter, Meranée, Toussine and her remaining family take up residence in an abandoned house, which, like the community as a whole, is called

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[102] Patron saint of travelers and lost things.

[103] Subsequently, we learn that the narrator is Toussine's granddaughter, the novel's eponymous heroine,Télumée.

L'Abandonée. Built in the days immediately following emancipation by a white Creole as a refuge for himself and his black lover, the house (and, by extension, the community to which it gave its name) is a multi-racial imaginative construction, a "human fantasy" erected as a challenge, in the narrator Toussine's estimation, to the divisive realities of the time (12). Shut up in a microcosmic world of reclusive mourning, Toussine, "the little stranded boat," becomes even more marooned, and when the neighbors want a status report, a man must climb a tree and surveil her home from a distance. After her children (including new daughter, Victoire) are grown and Jeremiah dies, Toussine (who has been dubbed "Reine Sans Nom"[104] by the community) abandons L'Abandonée, preferring the even more profound solitude of the woods and the company of "a famous witch," the medicine woman, Ma Cia (15). By this point, Toussine/Queen Without a Name has assumed mythic proportions for the people of L'Abandonée. The weight and profundity of her experience cause the neighbors to think of her as "not a woman, for what is a woman? Nothing at all, they said, whereas Toussine was a bit of the world, a whole country, a plume of a Negress, the ship, sail, and wind, for she had not made a habit of sorrow" (14). Interestingly, the neighbors and Télumée appear to interpret Toussine's departure as a hopeful regeneration, a rejection of sorrow rather than of the community who now adopts her as a symbol. It seems, moreover, that, in shaking off sorrow, she is doing something that the others—an implied community of sufferers—have not done.

However, Toussine's story is, from a narratological perspective, chiefly important as the prologue to Télumée's own. Born to Toussine's daughter, Victoire, and to Angebert, a solitary traveler who decides to settle in L'Abandonée because it "seemed

[104] Literally, "Queen Without a Name"

like the back of beyond," Télumée is the solitary daughter of people who strike even their maroon neighbors as singularly solitary. She is thus a paradoxical symbol: the ultimate maroon within a community.

After a wandering Carib arrives in L'Abandonée and steals Victoire's heart, Télumée is exiled to her grandmother's cabin in Fond-Zombi where she becomes the protégée of both Toussine and Ma Cia, the witch.[105] Interestingly, this place name (literally Zombie Bottom, Zombie Back, or maybe even Behind the Zombie) also evokes, to my ear, the French "fondre"/"se fondre" (to blend or mix). Thus, built into the etymology of Télumée's new home is a paradox of coalescing and isolation, of mixture and marronnage that further underscores her role as a solitary unifier within the novel.

Lest we gloss over this crucial point, Schwarz-Bart peppers her description of Télumée's journey with language emphasizing both Fond-Zombi's isolation, and the collectivity that her narrator-heroine nevertheless embodies. In order to reach Fond-Zombi, Télumée must cross "a floating bridge over a strange river" called "the Bridge of Beyond." Acting as her granddaughter's guide to this new territory, Toussine/Queen Without a Name

> led me slowly across that deathtrap of disintegrating planks with the river boiling below. And suddenly we were on the other bank, Beyond: the landscape of Fond-Zombi unfolded before my eyes, a fantastic plain with bluff after bluff, field after field stretching into the distance, up to the gash in the sky that was the mountain itself, Balata Bel Bois. Little houses could be seen scattered about, either huddled tougher around a common yard or closed in on their own solitude, given over to themselves, to the mystery of the forest, to spirits, and to the grace of God. Queen

[105] Like Condé's Tituba, Telumée inherits information about medicinal herbs from a benevolent female elder (much as Glissant's Mathieu inherits Papa Longué's knowledge of a buried African past. Also like Mathieu, Telumée and Tituba use their knowledge to assist their respective communities in anticolonial political struggles). Despite the fact that she is not Ma Cia's lineal descendent, Telumée tells us that her isolation and promise convince the elderly medicine woman to "initiat[e] me into the secrets of plants. She also taught me the human body, its centres, its weaknesses, how to rub it, how to get rid of faintness and tics and sprains. I learned how to set people and animals free, how to break spells and turn sorcery back on the sorcerers" (13).

> Without a Name's cabin was the last in the village; it marked the end of the world of human beings and looked as if it were leaning against the mountain…As soon as I crossed the threshold I felt as if I were in a fortress, safe from everything known and unknown… (27-8)

Thus, Fond-Zombi, like Télumée and Toussine, is a veritable paradox of particularity: it is a mythic, fairy-tale-like community defined by solitude/separation, and Télumée occupies a space on the very farthest edge of that world. However, even that cabin at the furthest reaches of "Beyond" is a community space. Télumée notes that "the room seemed suddenly immense, and I sensed there were others there for whom Queen Without a Name was examining me, then kissing me with little sighs of contentment. We were not merely two living beings in a cabin in the middle of the night, but, it seemed to me, something different, something much more, though I did not know what" (28-9).

From this new home, Télumée (as we will see) grows into a symbol of her community's promise-filled future, inspiring and eventually articulating the need to rebel against capitalist/colonial oppression. Thus, Télumée's "Beyond" is essentially the sort of resistant, productive "Thirdspace" Homi Bhabha sees as crucial in a world of "posts" (-nationalism, -modernism, -feminism, -colonialism, etc.). "It is the trope of our times," Bhabha claims

> to locate the question of culture in the realm of the *beyond*…The 'beyond is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past…What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These 'in-between" spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. (1-2, italics textual)

Thus, Bhabha suggests, real political transformation (in terms of constructing both an actual postnational space and the liberating revolution of thought that is such a space's

precondition) requires something more than Mathieu's focus on recuperating "originary and initial subjectivities." Instead, the act of dynamically refashioning a society beyond the "sameness that is difference" of the traditional colonizer/colonized binary or the oppositional self-definition of western nationalism requires narratives, like Schwarz-Bart's, which are invested in "the articulation of cultural differences." But crucially, neither Bhabha's essay nor Schwarz-Bart's novel suggest that we reject or supplant Glissant's attempt to bridge the gap between the Caribbean present and a lost African past. Rather, like Télumée's Bridge of Beyond, their work offers a strategy for effecting the sort of de-marronage that Glissant has in mind. "Being in the 'beyond,'" Bhabha continues,

> is to inhabit an intervening space, as any dictionary will tell you. But to dwell "in the beyond" is also, as I have shown, to be part of a revisionary time, a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity; to reinscribe our human, historic commonality; *to touch the future on its hither side*. In that sense, then, the intervening space "beyond" becomes a space of intervention in the here and now. (7, italics textual)

To be "beyond," for Bhabha, is thus to effect a humanist unification of past, present, and future, using an "articulation of cultural differences" to paradoxically connect a new imagined community to its "historic commonality" in "the here and now" through the shared act of imagining a post-fill-in-the-blank future. From her home over the Bridge of Beyond, Télumée both inhabits and embodies Bhabha's historical and cultural swirl. As the lineal descendant of generations of unifying maroon women and the chosen repository of the witch, Ma Cia's, herbal/magical knowledge, she alone has the power to use this inheritance and the hope of future joy in order to achieve political change in the present.

Yet because her gifts and way of life seem completely natural to her, Télumée is among the last to fully understand the role she has been assigned. As she grows into adulthood and begins a(n initially) happy life with her childhood sweetheart, Elie, Télumée is initially perplexed at finding herself a virtual priestess and blessed symbol to her community. "My little cabin was never empty," she confides, and

> it seemed to attract the women like a lonely chapel. They had to go in, look it over, warm it with their presence, and leave some gift, if only a handful of coco plums or peas. Mostly, they didn't even feel any wish to speak, but just touched my dress with a little sigh of pleasure, then looked at me smiling, with absolute trust, as if they were in the aisle of our church, looked down on their favourite saint, who lit up the darkness of their souls and sent them forth to live in hope. They paid me a few vague compliments about what I stood for, there in Fond-Zombi, and left with airy dancers' steps, as if everything—life, death, even just walking along the street—was henceforth only a ballet that they must perform as beautifully as possible. And then the rumor spread through all Fond-Zombi, even to beneath the clear waters of its rivers, that good luck had descended on my body and into my bones, and that my face too was transfigured by it. (88)

While this homage is partly due to her matrilineal maroon inheritance, we can infer that it is also a result of the knowledge she gained working for a pittance as a domestic in a former plantation house (a life that she ultimately rejects, despite its poor but significant financial benefits). There, Télumée learns to regard slavery not as a long-dead historical skeleton in the French colonial closet, but as a living intruder in the Caribbean present. This realization leads Télumée to imagine a new sort of country made up of a community of sufferers, a Bhabhian "beyond" space unifying past cruelties with present-day oppression. "For the first time in my life I realized that slavery was not some foreign country, some distant region from which a few very old people came, like the two or three who still survived in Fond-Zombi," she opines. "It had all happened here, in our hills and valleys, perhaps near this clump of bamboo, perhaps in the air I was breathing" (39). Common experience (and a direct correlation between imperialism/slavery and

contemporary capitalist inequalities) makes all sufferers compatriots to Télumée, a point which she repeatedly emphasizes by referencing the fable of the rootless Man who Tried to Live on Air.[106]

After her relationship with Elie sours and Télumée becomes his punching bag rather than his lover, her ability to embody this community of sufferers grows even more profound. Gripped by paranoia, Elie tortures Télumée because of the very marronnage that has earned her a privileged status in the community, yelling, "You're trying to get away from me, runaway Negress with no forest to go to" (108). Now a virtual zombie marooned under a tree, Télumée finally learns what she means to her fellow sufferers when a village woman exhorts her and the other residents of Fond-Zombi thus:

> Do we know what we carry in our veins, we Negroes of Guadeloupe—the curse of being a master, the curse of being a slave…something stops this little Negress from touching land, and she may go on a long while, a long while voyaging like that…Télumée, dear little countrywoman…you will come to shore. (111)

Queen Without a Name echoes this sentiment shortly after on her deathbed when she tells her granddaughter

> Listen—people watch you, they always count on there being someone to show them how to live. If you are happy, everyone can be happy, and if you know how to suffer, the others will know too. Every day you must get up and say to your heart: 'I've suffered enough, and now I have to live, for the light of the sun must not be frittered away and lost without any eye to enjoy it. (119)

After her grandmother's death, Télumée rallies, and in a move that reaffirms her marronnage, removes herself to an even more remote backwater than Fond-Zombi among a group of "motley rejects of the island's thirty-two communes" called the Brotherhood of the Displaced (128). This anti-capitalist group

[106] In this fable, a man travels through many lands, and must learn to "ride" his sorrow rather than letting it ride him.

> disliked money, and if anyone slipped a coin into their hand they would look offended and drop it on the ground. Their faces were impassive, with eyes that were impregnable, powerful, immortal. And a strange force unfurled in me at the sight of them, a sweetness made my bones grow weak, and without knowing why I felt I was the same as them, rejected, irreducible. (128)

The most prominent among them is a man who "knows all the languages in the world, languages as they ought to be spoken" (135). Here, among this hybrid, polyglot group, Télumée recovers her mythical status and begins a life with Amboise, an activist who has lived in and rejected France. One night, during a drum circle in which Amboise, the drummer, inhabits "an instant of perfect solitude," Télumée enters the circle alone and articulates a paradoxically communal particularity:

> Suddenly I felt the waters of the drum flow over my heart and give it life again, at first in little damp notes, then in great falls that sprinkled and baptized me as I whirled and bounded and surged, and I was Adriana, down and up, and I was Ismene of the great pensive eyes, and I was Olympia and the rest, Ma Cia in the shape of a dog, Filao, Tac-Tac taking off with his bamboo, and Letitia with her little narrow face, and the man I had once loved and crowned, I was the drum and Amboise's helping hands, I his little hunted watchful dove's eyes. And now my hands were opening on all sides, taking lives and refashioning them as I pleased, giving the world and being nothing, a mere wisp of smoke hanging in the night air, the drumbeats issuing from beneath Amboise's hands, and yet existing with all my strength, from the roots of my hair right down to my little toes. (145-6)

This moment, in which Télumée's dance embodies and emboldens her community, is the prelude to the novel's major showdown, in which the personal and the political collide. When the workers strike at the sugar plantation, Amboise is selected as the strikers' spokesman because he was "the only one who could find, in the French of France, words that would both win over the hearer and express the Negro's determination" (153). Despite his eloquence and resolve, Amboise is killed and the strikers are put down, leaving Télumée to retreat alone with her adopted daughter. As the novel draws to its close, however, we learn that she is only biding her time, and that the

legacy she passes on to little Sonore will resonate in a politically transformative way through future generations. Thus, Schwarz-Bart's novel feminizes the revolutionary Glissantian maroon, creating for and through her a postnational imagined community of sufferers.

But before we move on to discussion of another feminist refashioning of Glissant, we should, in fairness, interrogate Schwarz-Bart's idealized portrayal of her maroon heroines. In other words, in figuring the Lougandor women as hopeful community symbols, are the people of L'Abandonnée and Fond-Zombi effectively trapping them mascot-like, in yet another discourse over which they have no control? If so, is there a qualitative difference between Glissant's essentialist feminizing of Martinique's landscape (and simultaneous marginalization of female revolutionaries) and Schwarz-Bart's mythologizing of solitary women? Is the trope of the rebellious female maroon inevitably less emancipatory (at least as regards the position of the agent of change herself) than that of her male counterpart? Indeed, Télumée herself is self-reflexive enough to observe somewhat ruefully, "My mother's reverence for Toussine was such I came to regard her as some mythical being not of this world, so that for me she was legendary even while still alive" (2).

Critics are fond of pointing out the fairy tale-esque qualities of Minerva and Toussine's stories—the unrealistic romantic perfection of Minerva and her partner Xango's devotion, of Toussine and Jeremiah's love, as well as the archetypal importance these Lougandor women assume. But for Nana Wilson Tagoe and Gil Zehava Hochberg, Télumée and her progenitrixes are not simply passive elements in a master narrative. Rather, in *Historical Thought and Literary Representation in West Indian Literature*,

Tagoe argues that, as the novel's narrator, Télumée's participation in the idealized portrait of her ancestors constitutes an act of strategic mythmaking on her part. If, Tagoe argues,

> the stories of Minerva and Xango and of Toussine and Jeremiah appear unreal and even slightly sentimentalized, it is because Télumée transforms them into myth as a way of creating an ideal and model of possibility against which the ambiguities, uncertainties and vagaries of the Negro's history can be related…Télumée's memory creates a perfect atmosphere for mythologizing, for harking back to the beginnings of visibility for Negroes, times when they could create not only communities, customs and rituals but also make new myths for themselves out of the uncertainties and paradoxes of their lives. L'Abandonée itself mirrors these paradoxes in the narrative, becoming at once a place of refuge and the marginalized space of the displaced and rejected…The mythologized history of Télumée's foremothers mirrors these paradoxes but at the same time represent the model, the possibility that exists with the uncertainties. (234-5)

Read in this way, Télumée's storytelling method is a hopeful, forward-looking attempt to unite past and present by articulating and emphasizing the paradoxes of autonomy and inscription, sameness and difference that characterize her community of sufferers. Similarly, Hochberg suggests that

> in *Pluie et vent*, Schwarz-Bart stresses the liberating potential associated with the maternal ability not only to remember but also to *invent* stories about the past, both the immediate and the mythical, as a way to transcend the horrors of women's daily existence. Imagination, storytelling, and magic, rather than "real memory," seem to be the means through which women in her novel strive to displace, or at least to survive, history. (6)

Thus, what emerges from Tagoe and Hochberg's respective work is this: while Toussine and Télumée are, at one level, the subject of and occasion for communal storytelling, they also actively participate in the creation of those narratives themselves. Furthermore, if we consider Hochberg's point in conjunction with our ongoing discussion of Glissant, then another important implication of Schwarz-Bart's novel is that it offers a feminist alternative to Glissant's hopeless women (who are dismissed by Mathieu, Thael, and

Papa Longué as incapable of comprehending the old storyteller's tales or of digging successfully through the historical archives). And while we should not ignore the fact that Schwarz-Bart was, like Glissant, an educated, well-travelled, economically-privileged Caribbean citizen, Bridget Jones maintains that this novel is at least an overt attempt to "build bridges of understanding with the humblest and most deprived people in a society" (iv). Distanced "by education from people who belong to an oral culture in Creole, and whose view of the world has been cramped by poverty or illiteracy and bounded by mountain walls or island shores," the Caribbean writer is inevitably maroon, according to Jones. However, unlike novels which have traditionally amplified "the voices of the emancipated young men, exiles and intellectuals," Jones observes that "[i]t has taken a woman author to give a hearing to the voice of the mothers and grandmothers" (iv). In essence, she argues, both the female novelist and her heroine attempt to connect the many stratified layers of Caribbean society—those created by language group, educational background, gender, and island affiliation. While the latter point is well-taken, Jones fails to acknowledge the fraught history of attempts by Caribbean artists to connect with and represent "the folk." The CAM, as noted above, while initially a forum for "highly educated, artistically aware West Indians," vigorously debated whether or not artistic productions could viably effect political change at a grassroots level within the Caribbean (Walmsley xvii). While Kamau Brathwaite advocated for the use of vernacular-based "nation language," others, like Aubrey Williams, questioned the efficacy of the written word. Suggesting that due to high rates of illiteracy, "the visual arts, being the simplest and most direct" should lead the charge in any attempt at mass communication (99). Citing affinities between his own work and

"pre-Columbian civilizations of the New World," Williams suggests, in Walmsley's retelling, that "such work could be automatically appreciated by people of the Caribbean" (100). While these are but two examples of positions within a much larger debate, Brathwaite's sensitivity to orality and "nation language" suggest that, at a minimum, some Caribbean writers were actively at work attempting to minimize if not eradicate what Jones terms the inevitability of their *marronnage* from the masses.

"Drinking from the madwoman's gourd": Simone and André Schwarz-Bart's *La mulatresse Solitude*

While both the original 1972 French and the translated 1973 English edition of *La mulatresse Solitude*[107](including my own copies) list André Schwarz-Bart as the novel's sole author, tantalizing circumstantial evidence suggests that the book was a collaboration between the literary couple. Not only had the Schwarz-Barts worked together in the past on similar material (the 1967 novel *Un plat du porc aux bananes vertes*)[108] but, according to Michelle Hunter, an array of promotional material and bibliographic records list Simone as co-author.[109] Such a collaboration would certainly explain how, in this work,

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[107] Literally, *Solitude, the Mulatto Woman,* translated by Ralph Manheim as *A Woman Named Solitude*.

[108] Translated as *A Dish of Pork and Green Bananas.*

[109] Hunter recounts the evidence thus: "Critics often attribute full authorship of this novel to André Schwartz-Bart, so it is not always given equal credit to Simone. In her essay on *La Mulâtresse Solitude*, Charlotte Bruner acknowledges this "collaboration" (236) as she points to the work's publication history. In its publicity, Simone is mentioned as a collaborator who is part of the couple's shared purpose of "telling the history of Guadeloupe in a cycle of novels of historic reconstruction." However, the Seuil edition names only her husband. When it is translated into English the year of its original publication, Simone finally attains credit as co-author. Simone is further attributed credit in Herdeck's *Caribbean Writers: A Bio-Bibliographic Critical Encyclopedia* (1979). Mention of the joint authorship of Solitude also appears in Le Dernier des Justes, in the list of Andre Scwarz-Bart's forthcoming works. The publisher's note reads "in collaboration with his wife, Simone, André Schwarz-Bart has embarked on publication of a sequel in the form of a novel" (Bruner 238, note 4; my translation). <http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Schwarz.html>. Accessed 5/12/09.

André Schwarz-Bart's prose achieves a style that Arnold Rampersad and Jean Gaugeard both agree is distinctly "West Indian."[110] Thus, because there is compelling evidence to suggest that, at a minimum, Simone's influence haunts the pages as well, I will refer to the novel as the couple's joint product

Unlike the other novels under discussion in this chapter, this work of historiographic metafiction begins in the Glissantian "prehistory" of 18th-century Africa, recounting Solitude's mother's life there, her capture, and parts of her Middle Passage experience. Solitude's mother, Bayangumay grows up in the modern-day Senegambian region, "in a calm and intricate estuary landscape where the clear water of a river, the green water of an ocean, and the black water of a delta channel mingled" (3). From the first, Bayangumay, like Simone Schwarz-Bart's Lougandor women, is a paradoxical conflation of the particular and the collective: according to tradition, she is held to be the reincarnation of her grandmother (and all the grandmothers whom her grandmother reincarnated). However, despite this reputed multiplicity, Bayangumay feels like an individual and an alien in her community, given to straying

> off in silence and wander[ing] about on the fringes of the village, asking herself how it came about that she felt so strongly, so ardently, so exclusively Bayangumay. How was it possible that she should look upon the land of men as though she had never seen it? That at every moment it seemed so prodigiously

[110] In his Introduction to the English translation, Rampersad writes: "In examining Schwarz-Bart's prose effects, Jean Gaugeard wrote in the journal *Lettres Francaises* of "*un style antillais"* (a West Indian style) with which Schwarz-Bart must have made himself familiar in preparing to write this book. And indeed in the restrained tone, elegant and yet compliant, dream-like but still immediate and vivid, sometimes limpid as water, sometimes as effulgent and yet forbidding as a tropical storm, one sees the author's place among a group of writers who have responded in not altogether different ways to the history and geography, as well as the cultural dilemmas, of the Caribbean. Darker and more tortured (certainly less comic) than the "magical realism" often identified in the work of some of these writers, Schwarz-Bart's prose nevertheless shares certain characteristics of this highly imaginative, often whimsical, folk and myth laden, but always ultimately serious literary style. On a broader scale, if an Antillian style does exist it probably flourishes in the works of writers such as the poets Derek Walcott of St. Lucia and Trinidad, and Aimé Cesaire of Martinique and the novelists Wilson Harris of Guyana, Alejo Carpentier of Cuba, Jacques Roumain of Haiti, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez of Colombia" (xxiii-xxiv).

> new to her? That she recognized nothing in the world where she had lived long ago, in her previous existences?" (6)

Despite her doubts, Bayangumay manages to hide her transgressive thoughts, and stakes out a unique identity as both an autonomous individual and a reverent traditionalist. While she makes no secret of her love for handsome, young Kimobo, even running off with him for three days of chaste companionship, Bayangumay obediently returns in time for her arranged marriage to an elderly friend of her father. Repeatedly likened to pure, clear water, both before and after initiating the liaison with Kimobo, Bayangumay manages to please her husband by gestures of "perfect submission" while pleasing herself by simultaneously "[holding] her head high" (25). This combination of diffidence and audacity leads Kimobo to observe, "You've been drinking from the madwoman's gourd" (19).[111]

Ultimately these character traits assist in her survival as she is sold into slavery, endures a horrifying Middle Passage (in the course of which she is raped by a French sailor and conceives Solitude), and becomes a preternaturally aged "madwoman" on Guadeloupe's du Parc plantation (where she is known as Man Bobette). From the white plantation manager, Mortier's perspective, Bayangumay/Man Bobette is only useful because her light-skinned mixed-race (and therefore extremely valuable) daughter's health is dependent upon her disdainful mother's presence. When not nursing Solitude, Mortier keeps Man Bobette "tethered and above all isolated because of the bad example she set by her unseemly behavior" (71). Thus, both Man Bobette and her aptly named daughter are ineluctably maroon from the beginning of the narrative.

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[111] Unbeknownst to him, Bayangumay's madness must be catching. At one point, the narrator describes Kimobo himself as "solemn as a madman and as calm as a man about to die" (22). Another case of "Rochesterian" denial, perhaps?

Eventually, Man Bobette becomes literally and officially maroon by fleeing to the mountains with a peg-legged friend. Before her mother leaves, however, Solitude overhears a conversation between Man Bobette and her travelling companion that unsettles her ideas of national and racial belonging. "Here we learn that our country is bigger than our village," the peg-legged man says. "[H]ere even those who have a village learn to forget it. Peace, I say, for my country is no longer in my village" (64). When Man Bobette asks him where his new country can be found, Solitude observes

> the old man put down his fingernail on the black skin of his forearm in a gesture that she had seen dozens of times in the course of her short life. It was the *color sign*, which for the whites, blacks, and mulattoes of the du Parc plantation summed up all things here below. 'This is my country,' he said simply. (64-65)

All of this leaves little mixed-race Solitude in a liminal, homeless position. She must choose a country to adopt, it would seem, and the old peg-legged man has constantly referred to mulatto girls as traitors and turncoats. Neither traditional geographical boundaries nor strict racial categories can offer her citizenship, so Solitude is on notice, at a very young age, that she must search out a different sort of boundary-crossing community.[112] Initially, she fantasizes about becoming more visually appealing to her

[112] Schwarz-Bart further unsettles traditional racial binaries by describing the uneasy, racially ambiguous position of the plantations' working-class, white managers and overseers: "[The du Parc] herd consisted of some thirty Africans and a handful of European niggers, as the white field hands were sometimes called. The du Parc fortune had its origin in a contract signed in 1700, whereby the Compagnie de Guinée undertook to supply eleven thousand tons of black flesh. At the time the du Parcs were small slave traders at Basse Terre. Having got wind of the affair, they invested and made a good thing of it; coat of arms and title of nobility followed. Mortier Père had been a poor peasant from Beauce region. Groaning under the weight of the *corvée*, he had not let himself be discouraged by the sinister reputation of contract labor in the colonies: eighteen months of slavery on the same footing as the Africans, in return for the ocean crossing and freedom at the expiration of the contract. The hitch was that no great effort was made to keep the *engagés* alive for more than eighteen months, whereas the African slaves, an inalienable capital often amortized in less than two years, had a good chance of lasting as much as six or seven. Mortier Père had horrendous tales to tell. True, he was speaking of a heroic, long past era, when niggers were rare and the Caribs were already beginning to die out. Nevertheless, his stories terrified the son, who swore to die in the skin of a landowner" (68-9). Thus, as with Rhys' "white cockroach" Cosway family, the novel emphasizes how economic conditions (inevitably fluid and changeable) can impact racial categories (and therefore expose the lie of such categories' fixity and inherency), particularly within a colonial, capitalist framework.

mother and the other slaves, attempting to mask herself with "with black muck from a brook" in a sort of Fanonian reversal (72). Such behavior, and the fact that she "admire[d] her reflection in the water," is evidence of a latent and perhaps inherited insanity to Polycarpe, the mulatto overseer who catches little Solitude in the act and informs on her to Mortier. This reportage, by one person of mixed race on another, emphasizes the singularity of Solitude's choice to attempt to align herself with blackness (at least in the minds of those characters within the novel whose skin color gives them the option of escaping the most rigorous field labor). Later on, the same overseer reports that "the little girl was well behaved but had an absent, thoughtful look that boded no good" (73). Eventually, this absence in young "Two Souls" (as she is dubbed because one of her eyes is dark, the other green) is attributed to full-blown zombification, which renders her unfit for the big house. Polycarpe also interprets the onset of her stammer (coterminous with her mother's flight) as "a sign of malice, her way of running away like her mother" (74). Thus, little Two Souls is always figured as a runaway, long before she becomes a literal maroon heroine. Like Rhys' Antoinette she must contend with being labeled hereditarily mad and with her own ambiguous racial identity.

The similarities to *Wide Sargasso Sea* become even more apparent when Solitude/Two Souls/Rosalie (her socially-acceptable "Christian" name) becomes a "favorite" and a "pet" to little Mistress Xavière, Mortier's sickly daughter (79). A sort of cross between Tia, Christophine and the parrot Coco,[113] Two Souls begins

> eating sherbet with [Xavière], scratching the soles of her feet at siesta time, listening to her stories and responding with a bit of kitchen gossip or a little song

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[113] A conflation that becomes even more marked when Two-Souls becomes the guardian and cabin-mate of Xaviere's macaw, and after her purchase by the chevalier, when she is dressed "*a la pimpante"* in "a bright yellow madras which gave her the absent exotic look of a parrot" (95).

> in patois, which the mistress learned eagerly, as though, moved by a love intermingled with contempt that had come to her with her wet nurse's milk, she longed in some secret recess of her heart to be a little savage herself (79).

In her fetishized, imperfectly understood desire to be black, Xavière, too, is reminiscent of Rhys' Antoinette. And although Xavière is not physically cruel to her "pets" as the other whites are, Two Souls is often more enraged by the little girl's "gentle" cruelty:

> For instance, when one of her pets had displeased her, she would say: "I shall sell you to M. Chaperon." This Chaperon was a planter who had shut up one of his slaves in a hot oven, and the masters had got into the habit of threatening their slaves with this bogeyman. Two-Souls knew that Mlle. Xavière had no intention of selling any of her pets to M. Chaperon. But when she heard these words, spoken lightly, in a tone both gentle and sad, she hated Mlle. Xavière more than all the other whites in the big house. Sometimes she told herself that her mistress had drunk from the madwoman's gourd…But most often, as she considered Mlle. Xavière's pale and gently sad features, she murmured to herself with secret rage "Land of white women, land of lies." (80-1)

This mantra, which runs like a secret, parrot-like refrain through her head, complements Man Bobette's dictum ("Land of white men, land of madness"), also present in her thoughts as a counterdiscourse to the white colonial lies labeling both women mad (77). Paradoxically, though, it is the liminal position Two Souls occupies within the plantation house that pushes her closer toward shaping a workable new form of group identity—a transnational community, not of sufferers, but of maroon rebels. Because her mother has joined a maroon band, Two-Souls "knew she was being discreetly watched, on the supposition that she might somehow be in communication with her mother. Some of the mulattoes, especially Man Loulouze, even insinuated that she was the runaways' accomplice" (81). This supposition, which further alienates her from her fellow mulattos, causes Two Souls to romanticize the maroon condition, imagining that the glowworms flying against the backdrop of La Soufriere (the maroons' mountain stronghold) are "the runaways' campfires, and she dreamed of Bobette, the heroic black woman" (84). After

a period of model behavior, Two Souls embraces the spirit of rebellion, and remorselessly poisons the chickens in her care. Unlike the benevolent Tituba and Télumée, Two-Souls revels in her "glorious exploit," and "looked for another opportunity to be *wicked*, something even more delicious, something that would hit humans, black, yellow, or white regardless" (86). Thus, Two Souls' form of rebellion is to some degree deracinated; the enemy, at least, cannot be facilely identified by skin color or gender.

Outwardly, Two Souls' rebellion appears to others as a form of zombification, which the people around her read as a disconcerting, robotic emptiness[114] but which Schwarz-Bart's narrative voice describes as a prevalent, shadowy condition.[115] Crucially, this condition persists, even after the Republic is established on May 7, 1795, and the slaves are emancipated. But the mock-up of revolutionary France that replaces the old colonial system in Guadeloupe doesn't offer a realistic outlet for or validation of Solitude's brand of rebellion; she "soon discovered that there was no room for a zombie in this new world they called the Republic. She did her best to imitate the movements of life, but floods of water kept flowing from her eyes" (98). Eventually, of course, when the black population is forced into labor despite being hailed as "citizens" and "agricultural workers," of a new and improved French colony, Solitude and the others see the mock freedom of French citizenship for the "slavery lite" that it is, both for black Guadeloupians and for Guadeloupe as a whole (101-4). The parody of "La Marseillaise"

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[114] "She reminded one of a mechanical toy, one of those dancing dolls that twist and turn on a few tinkling notes, then suddenly stop still when the spring is unwound," they observe (96).

[115] "At that time there were all sorts of Shadows on the sugar islands: dead blacks revived by magic, living blacks who moved into the bodies of animals, and many many more whose souls had gone off no one knew where. These last were commonly known as zombies. They worked like oxen, and when their work was done they stood still, like oxen. Zombies were simply humans whose souls had deserted them; they were still alive, but the soul was gone" (88-9).

that Solitude's fellow "agricultural workers" sing reinforces the idea that, in addition to the other lies exposed in the novel (of madness as a gendered construct, of white benevolence, etc.) we can include the lie of inclusive, liberated French nationalism:

> Allons enfants de la Guinée,
> Le jour de travail est arrivé,
> Ah, telle est notre destinée,
> Au jardin avant soleil levé,
> C'est ainsi que la loi ordonne.
> Soumettons-nous à son décret,
> Travaillons sans aucun regret
> Pour mériter ce qu'on nous donne.
> A la houe, citoyens, formez vos bataillons
> Fouillons avec ardeur, faisons de bons sillons.
>
> Rise, children of Guinea,
> The day of labor is at hand.
> Ah, such is our destiny:
> To the garden before sunrise,
> For that is the law.
> Let us submit to its decree,
> Let us work without regret
> To deserve what is given us,
> To the hoe, citizens, drawn [sic] up your battalions.
> Let us dig with a will and make good furrows. [116] (104)

Thus, Guadeloupe's new proletariat feels distinctly disenfranchised. And as the narrative makes clear, the maroons, who begin launching major assaults on the new administration, are also engaged in an explicitly anti-French nationalist struggle: "Leaving Pointe-a-Pitre, the guillotine haunted the country side. It climbed the steep, desolate hills in pursuit of citizens who did not understand their new duties. Many took refuge from liberty, equality, fraternity in the deep dark woods, where they rested from their new-style torments (109). Transplanted revolutionary republicanism is rendered further suspect for Solitude and the maroon band she joins by the fact that many of their number are eventually conquered and killed with the assistance of black republican "traitors,"

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[116] Authorship of the song is attributed to "a certain Dosse of Matouba" (104).

infected by the false promises of national citizenship. Only small bands survive, including that led by the Pan-Africanist, Sanga, and the group is relentlessly hunted by French generals on the grounds that they have "rejected the 'beneficent laws of the great nation'" (112). Rejecting both France and a Guadeloupe held to be an extension of it, Sanga's maroons inhabit a mountain region, "Little Guinea, as they called their small enclave in the white man's country" (112). The camp is eventually overtaken by the French, and the military discovers an object as indecipherable to them as the annotated steamship manual which Conrad's Marlow finds in the Congo. Sanga, we learn,

> owed his prestige to a book which he displayed to the peasants. That one book, he said, contained the entire doctrine—a ruse by which he appropriated the magic of the masters. When General Desfourneaux finally destroyed the camp, a small vellum-bound volume was found among the tattered corpses. All sorts of African ornaments had been traced on its pages with vegetable inks. The book was *Les Rêveries du Promeneur Solitaire* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. (112)

In appropriating this work of French Romanticist thought, then, Sanga has taken a philosophical treatise on the paradoxically disturbing freedom to be found in the solitary contemplation of nature, covered it with African totems, and applied its principles both to the understanding of the French mind and to his group's own marronnage.

After the loss of Sanga and his book, Solitude rises to prominence among the survivors because of her own brand of magic: like Télumée and Tituba, she has become a distinguished medicine woman, valued by the others for her knowledge of healing plants and herbs (125). But unlike Télumée, she finds it impossible to appropriate and embody the diverse attributes of her Pan-African maroon community. Compare, for example, Télumée's ecstatic dance within the drum circle, to Solitude's attempt at something similar:

> Certain Congo gestures sank into her so deeply that they became hers, she imitated them with an innate grace, an ease which may have been the consequence of old habit, of the thousands of times she had looked at a particular person in a particular hut on the du Parc plantation, long long ago. But despite her efforts, the African dances remained alien to her…And another difficulty was that no two of these women were alike; each had her own gait, her own dance steps, her own special way of pronouncing the saltwater phrases. Some were small and black, others had freckles all over their faces, still others were long and smooth and red, like trees whose bark had been stripped…each seemed to find ground for superiority in her origins, whether Ibo or Mane or Beni, Fanti, or Nganguélé, whether she had come from the kingdom of Mossi or of Bornu, for a land of plains, savannas or lakes, or from one of those numerous green islands somehow contained within the big Congo Island. (125-6)

Thus, Solitude's attempt to appropriate is frustrated by the plethora of uniqueness that she cannot fully incorporate. These differences define the group, but also show how a community can be formed on the basis of particularity and in opposition to the Western imperial nation-state. Furthermore, she sees the "numerous green islands somehow contained within the big Congo Island" as analogous to the Caribbean context she and her group inhabit. And while she resists becoming the symbol of this diverse group, "somehow" connected within a region, she nevertheless recognizes that a form of group identity (opposed to traditional national constructs and coalescing paradoxically around an articulation of the differences within that group) is developing around her.

Ultimately, Solitude's fierceness in battle, her long list of successes against the French loyalists, and her uncanny skill with a machete, renders her legendary against her own will. Because she is pregnant when she is eventually captured and hung by the French the day after giving birth, (in front of "a considerable crowd," many of whom "had come all the way from the British islands to celebrate the occasion") the narrator invites us to view the event as a unifying, Pan-Caribbean moment. For not only have the colonizers gathered from around the region, but also Solitude's supporters, a diverse

group of "black faces and various lighter shades; all kinds of mouths and noses, creased foreheads" (172). We are reminded that these supporters and Solitude's child will survive her, and, in the novel's famous epilogue, we, the potential modern-day tourists to Guadeloupe, are invited to view the site of Solitude's last stand as a Pan-Caribbean, intercontinental space of connection. Such tourists will see

> a hillock overlooking the sea and the neighboring islands of Martinique, Désirade, and Montserrat, each of them, like Guadeloupe, surmounted by a volcano…If he is in the mood to salute a memory, his imagination will people the environing space, and human figures will rise up around him, just as the phantoms that wander about the humiliated ruins of the Warsaw ghetto are said to rise up before the eyes of other travelers. (178-9)

Here then, inspired by the story of a rebellious female maroon, modern men and women are invited to imagine a Glissantian link (of spaces and people) beyond the traditional constraints of national boundaries and historical epochs. And in evoking European Holocaust victims, the Jewish Schwarz-Bart, like his wife Simone's heroine in *Pluie et Vent,* evokes an imagined community of sufferers, unique yet united. The fact that the Centre des Arts in Point-à-Pitre (not far from Solitude's statue on the "boulevard des Héros," erected in 1999) chose to reprise playwright Paskal Vallot's adaptation of the novel in May 2009, as the cultural center's final performance before closing for major renovations, testifies to the continued resonance of this story in the contemporary Caribbean.[117]

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[117] Vallot's play is, in fact, only the latest of several salutes to Solitude. Her statue has graced the "boulevard des Héros" in Point-a-Pitre since 1999, and in 2007 the Parisian suburb of Bagneux (sister city to Grand-Bourg, Guadeloupe) placed a sculpture in her likeness in the Place de la Liberté. Sculptor Nicolas Alquin called it " le premier mémorial au monde dédié à tous les esclaves résistants » [the first memorial in the world dedicated to all the rebellious slaves"] <http://www.comite-memoire-esclavage.fr/spip.php?article547&id_document=530#documents_portfolio>. Also in 2007, a delegation of academics, writers, and activists, including Césaire, Condé, and Glissant petitioned the French presidential candidates to add Solitude to the Pantheon <http://olympedegouges.wordpress.com/category/1-lettres-aux-candidat-e-s-par-louis-georges-tin/>.

"A pain that never loses its grip": Maryse Condé's

Moi, Tituba

The connection between black and Jewish persecution, a mythically heroic female maroon, and imaginative challenges to historical effacements are all issues taken up in Maryse Condé's 1986 novel, *Moi, Tituba, Socerière Noire de Salem,* as well.[118]An imaginative reconstruction of the life of Tituba, the black woman accused of trafficking with the devil during the Salem witch trials, then consigned to a historical footnote, this novel attempts to recuperate Tituba from the margins and reinscribe her in a politically dynamic, Bhabian "beyond." Indeed, in a 1992 interview with Ann Armstrong Scarboro, Condé claimed that the project of talking back to the racism of historical records, of creating a sort of anti-history both for Tituba and for Caribbean maroons could only be realized through the medium of fiction. "For me," she says,

> *Tituba* is not a historical novel. *Tituba* is just the opposite of a historical novel. I was not interested at all in what her real life could have been. I had few precise documents: her deposition testimony. It forms the only historical part of the novel, and I was not interested in getting anything more than that. I really invented Tituba. I gave her a childhood, an adolescence, an old age. At the same time I wanted to turn Tituba into a sort of female hero, an epic heroine, like the legendary "Nanny of the maroons."[119] (201)

Perhaps because officially recorded history has traditionally been the enemy of black Caribbean women,[120] then, Condé makes her Tituba a proud Barbadian woman, whose

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[118] Translated by Condé's husband, Richard Philcox, in 1992 as *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem.*

[119] the magical obeah woman who commanded the Windward Maroon army in the 18th century. The longest sustained study of Nanny is Karla Gottlieb's *The Mother of Us All.*

[120] Angela Y. Davis concurs with Condé's assessment of the pernicious treatment black women receive in historical accounts, and argues that in this novel, Tituba's spirit forcefully and insistently recuperates her place in a lost history of Caribbean studies, of women's narratives, and of the American (broadly defined) slave trade. For Davis, "Condé's fictional re-vision of [Tituba's] story" is a "transcendent revenge" because this "retelling of a history that is as much mine as it is hers allows her to save herself without taking on the historical characteristics of the colonizers and the slaveholders she detested" (ix).

travels between the continental United States and the Caribbean serve as an imaginative link between the Americas. By using Nanny as her model, moreover, and making her central to this narrative, Condé redresses Glissant's erasure of historical female maroon heroes from his own novels and footnotes (mentioned in Chapter 2). The narrative, moreover, occupies a space beyond history, articulating and redressing the gaps in historical narratives that Bhabha sees as a timely anticolonial tactic.

While historians and literary critics have debated Tituba's ethnicity[121], Condé's narrative opens by situating Tituba's birth within the context of the slavetrade's brutality (and its practitioners' relentless religiosity). Her mother, Abena, she tells us, "was raped by an English sailor on the deck of *Christ the King* one day in the year 16** while the ship was sailing for Barbados. I was born from this act of aggression. From this act of hatred and contempt" (3). In commencing Tituba's story here, in an act of colonial violence (unlike Schwarz-Bart's Solitude, whose story begins with her mother's African childhood rather than with the similar act of Middle Passage rape Bayangumay endures) Condé suggests that the historical record is a witness to and embodiment of imperial aggression and erasure. She also puts us on notice, in this very first sentence, that shared histories of suffering will be important to her anti-historical narrative.[122]

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[121] See, for example Elaine Breslaw's *Tituba, Reluctant Witch of Salem: Devilish Indians and Puritan Fantasies,* and Veta Smith Tucker's "Purloined Identity: The Racial Metamorphosis of Tituba of Salem Village," both of which examine the various racial categories to which Tituba was consigned. But it is Angela Y. Davis who best articulates Condé's point in offering us a mixed-race, Ashanti-English heroine: "This is one possible version of Tituba…As an African American feminist, I offer my profound gratitude to Maryse Conde for having pursued and developed her vision of Tituba and her revenge. For, in the final analysis, Tituba's revenge consists in reminding us all that the doors to our suppressed cultural histories are still ajar" (xi).

[122] I am not the first to note Condé's valorization of a "community of sufferers" in this novel. In "Breaking the Metronome: Community and Song in Maryse Conde's *Moi, Tituba…Sorceriere Noire de Salem*," Holly Woodson Wadell makes two major arguments that will be important to my own. First, she suggests that Condé anachronistically references Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (as when John Indian lectures Tituba on having a black skin but wearing a white mask) in order to reverse the dialectic of alienation that

Even before her birth, Tituba, like Télumée, symbolizes a condition larger than herself. When he learns that Abena has been raped by a white man, her new husband, Yao, feels "that this child's humiliation symbolized the condition of his entire people: defeated, dispersed, and auctioned off" (5). If the gentle and loving Yau's instincts on this matter are to be trusted (and Conde's narrative gives us every reason to believe that they are) then Tituba's symbolic plight makes her the perfect candidate for an equally symbolic foray into cultural heroism. Violently engendered, racially métisse, and a walking testament to colonial aggression, Tituba, with her culturally rootless name[123] is the Caribbean's hybrid history in microcosm.

After her mother is hanged and Yau commits suicide, Tituba is turned off the plantation and takes up residence with a maroon medicine woman, "whose name, Yetunde, had been creolized into Mama Yaya" (9). Under Mama Yaya's tutelage, Tituba learns the secrets of medicinal roots, planting cycles, transmogrification, and communing with the dead. The two live in relative isolation from those in the living world, but after Mama Yaya's death, Tituba retreats, out of necessity, even further from all but the spirits. Forced to hide on an inhospitable corner of the plantation after the land is sold, Tituba builds a home "on the edge of the River Ormond" where she lived happily because "I was never alone, because my invisible spirits were all around me, yet they never oppressed me with their presence" (11). Here, marooned from the living world, she continues her

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Fanon calls typical of the black condition (as opposed to that of the Jew, who, though oppressed, is spared double alienation from self and race by virtue of his/her whiteness). Wadell argues that Conde's portrait of the Jewish merchant emphasizes his (and his religious community's) multiple alienations that functions as a repudiation of Fanon's portrait. She further suggests that the novel creates a community of sufferers that points the way toward broader psychological healing, although her ultimate aim in this article is to discuss the role of song in forwarding this healing (160).

[123] Tituba tells us that her adoptive father, Yao "probably invented" her name "to prove that I was the daughter of his will and imagination" (6).

tutelage under Mama Yaya, attaining new heights in pharmacologic and horticultural experimentation: "Under her guidance I attempted bold hybrids," she explains, "cross-breeding the *passiflorinde* with the *prune taureau*, the poisonous *pomme cythère* with the surette, and the *azalée-des azalées* with the *persulfureuse*" (11). Clearly then, Tituba's benevolent medicinal knowledge (which she will use to assist multiple characters throughout the novel) is assisted by bold experiments in Caribbean hybridity.

Thus, like Glissant's Mathieu, Tituba is not born maroon, but becomes one through her relationship with Mama Yaya and through her solitary scientific inquiries (eventually, as we will see, she like Solitude and Man Bobette joins what proves for her to be the ultimate paradox: a Barbadian maroon community). Indeed, Tituba's maroon status is certified when the handsome John Indian refuses to join her in her isolated retreat. "I'm not a bush nigger, a maroon!" he scoffs derisively. "I'll never come and live in that rabbit hutch of yours up in the woods" (17). Reluctantly, Tituba agrees to join him in Bridgetown, which has become a hybrid space in which "flags of all nationalities" fly (16). Of all the things she must leave behind, she struggles most with the idea of leaving the River Ormond, a fetid "pond," which is nevertheless almost as symbolic in this text as is the Lézarde in Glissant's novel. While Glissant's river is a sinuous, dymanic (and relentlessly feminized) metaphor for Martinique's political potential and evolution, Condé's Ormerod is the site of Tituba's *marronnage*, and a metaphor for her difficult, ultimately triumphant destiny. Consider Mama Yaya, for example, who, on observing Tituba's interest in John Indian, observes sadly that the girl's life will be "like a river that can never be fully diverted from its course" (15).

Chafing under the strain of sharing John Indian's enslavement to bitter old Susanna Endicott,[124]Tituba is startled to observe that, because of her skin color, the white women of Bridgetown "were striking me off the map of human beings. I was a nonbeing. Invisible. More invisible than the unseen, who at least have powers that everyone fears" (24). Because she has lived as a maroon for so long, the injustice and inhumanity of the situation strikes her more forcefully than it does John Indian, who has long since modified his conduct in order to survive and thrive as best he can. As an "invisible" black woman, Tituba is privy to the cattiness of white female gossip, and realizes that she is doubly in thrall (to white society and to John Indian). Thus, the novel suggests that, as a female maroon, she is best placed both to recognize the full horror of enslaved Africans' position, and to take redressive action (for unlike Télumée, Tituba is determined to do more than symbolically embody the hopes of oppressed Caribbeans). However, rather than kill her enemy, as Glissant's Thael does Guerin, Tituba is perhaps more merciful, rendering her tormentor, Susanna, humiliatingly incontinent. John Indian, however, misreads her restraint (just like the Puritans, as we will see) and tells Tituba that he fears her "because I know you are violent. I often see you as a hurricane ravaging the island, laying flat the coconut palms and raising the lead-gray waves up to the sky" (30).

But destruction of the island is decidedly not on Tituba's agenda. Marooned in Boston after Susanna Endicott sells John Indian to a harsh preacher (thus forcing Tituba either to lose the man she loves or to voluntarily share his exile) she interrogates nationalism's heady pull. "How strange it is," she muses

> this love of our own country. We carry it in us like our blood and vital organs. We only need to be separated from our native land to feel a pain that never loses

[124] Although Tituba is not Susanna's "property," as John technically is, she must become a virtual slave in order to formalize her relationship with him and share his cabin.

> its grip welling up inside us…and those cheerless surroundings that I had lost suddenly meant so much that tears streamed down my cheeks…What kind of a world was this that had turned me into a slave, an orphan, and an outcast? What kind of a world that had taken me away from my own people? That had forced me to live among people who did not speak my language and who did not share my religion in their forbidding, unwelcoming land? (48-9)

The exile that Tituba describes is not paradoxically pleasurable, as it is for George Lamming, but instead produces a visceral sense of liminality and nationalist sentiment. Barbados is not only the lost familiar, for her, but a stand-in for her own sense of self. And although her homesickness renders her vulnerable to nationalist longing, as the novel progresses these moments become increasingly inflected with broader, transnational concerns. As she faces the uncertainties of a witch trial, for example, Tituba uses the skills Mama Yaya has taught her to return home in her mind, and quickly moves from an ecstatic celebration of Barbados' beauty to a realization that her own American troubles (and those of her Jewish lover, Benjamin Cohen d'Azevedo) are an extension of the suffering in the archipelago:

> I am back on the island I thought I had lost! No less rust-colored, her soil! No less mauve, her sugarcane, sticky with juice. No less satiny the emerald belt around her waist! But the men and women are suffering. They are in torment. A slave has just been hung from the top of a flame tree. The blossom and the blood have merged into one. I have forgotten that our bondage is not over. They are lopping off our ears, legs, and arms. They are sending us up in the air like fireworks. Look at the confetti made with our blood!... An empire of suffering and humiliation had been staked out there. The wretched herd of slaves continued to turn the wheel of misfortune. Grind my forearm, mill, with the sugarcane so that my blood colors the sweet juice.
>
> And that wasn't all!
>
> Every day other islands round about were being opened up to the appetite of the white man and I learned that in the colonies of South America our hands were now weaving long cotton shrouds. (102, 121)

Thus, Tituba's sentimental attachment to Barbados transforms into a broader sympathy with an imagined Pan-Caribbean community of sufferers. But despite being an exile, a

slave, and an accused witch, Tituba resolves to liberate the imaginations of the women around her (white and Puritan though most of them are), in an attempt to change the course of the narratives currently oppressing them. As an antidote to the Christian dogma that terrorizes the female Parrises, she regales Elizabeth, Betsey and Abigail with West Indian folktales, stories that "filled their imagination with wholesome magical adventures" (40). She tells them tales "of Anancy the Spider, people who had made a pact with the devil, zombies, *soukougnans,* and the hag who rides along on her three-legged horse" (42). Eventually, Elizabeth cautions Tituba about the content and power of her storytelling. "Don't tell all those stories to the children," she begs. "It makes them dream and dreaming isn't good for them" (43). Tituba responds, "Why shouldn't dreaming be good? Isn't it better than reality?" Particularly in light of the diseased fictions causing mass hysteria in Salem, Tituba fights to free her enslaved people (both Afro-Caribbeans and womankind) through the only vehicle available to her: a communal imaginative and literary act.[125]

Of course, Tituba's devotion to alternate literary imaginings resonates with metafictional awareness of her own literary historical subject position. After the trial, for example, she experiences a distinct presentiment of her own future historical neglect[126]:

> As I stumbled forward, I was racked by a violent feeling of pain and terror. It seemed that I was gradually being forgotten. I felt that I would only be mentioned in passing in these Salem witchcraft trials about which so much would be written later, trials that would arouse the curiosity and pity of generations to come as the

[125] Tituba further underscores the distinction between pernicious historical lies and productive creativity in the immediate aftermath of her fictional and sensational confession. This imaginative tale, she hopes, will liberate her. However, in implicating other women, thereby giving credence to the witch hunters' lies she feels increasingly trapped. True, she resisted the temptation to name "innocent" women (women who had done her no harm—or less harm---than the menacing characters she accused) and her willingness to play along (at Samuel Parris' and Hester's suggestion) probably saves her life. However, Tituba makes it clear that these diseased acts of the imagination are not the sort in which she wants to participate in the future.

[126] Thus showing herself as adept at prognostication as the male maroon, Papa Longué

> greatest testimony of a superstitious and barbaric age. There would be mention here and there of 'a slave originating from the West Indies and probably practicing 'hoodoo.' There would be no mention of my age or my personality. I would be ignored. As early as the end of the seventeenth century, petitions would be circulated, judgments made, rehabilitating the victims, restoring their honor, and returning their property to their descendents. I would never be included! Tituba would be condemned forever! There would never, ever, be a careful, sensitive biography recreating my life and its suffering. (110)

Thus, precisely because she knows what is at stake in the moment of narrative decision/elision, Tituba repeatedly asserts her right to give her imagination free rein in a debate on the subject with "Hester," a version of Hawthorne's beleaguered heroine, with whom she shares a prison cell. When Hester sneers at the patrilineal origin of Tituba's name and inquires about whether or not Tituba's culture (it is unclear whether she is referring to Barbadian culture or to a broader African system) allows women to break free of male-assigned monikers, Tituba responds, "Perhaps in Africa where we came from it was like that…But we know nothing about Africa any more and it no longer has any meaning for us" (96). Thus, Tituba defends a New World project of unfettered imagination and (perhaps paradoxically given her subject position) rejects the Glissantian "Old World" notion that *only* through the recuperation of a lost history can a productive new story be told.[127]

The novel's multiple historical anachronisms (the abovementioned reference to her historical neglect, her feminist discussion with Hester, and her dying reference to Billie Holiday's "strange fruit," among others) provide a different take, then, on the maroon's obligations to history (or perhaps on history's usefulness as a tool for Pan-

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[127] Incidentally, Condé opts to provide Hester and little Pearl with an alternate ending as well—suicide by hanging (Tituba, too, will eventually hang, although not by choice). Her decision to reimagine Nathanael Hawthorne's character's end could, perhaps, be read as a repudiation of sorts of Hawthorne's ancestor, the judge who presided over Salem's witch trials.

Caribbean unity). Instead of bringing history alive in the present, Tituba focuses on making maroon resistance politically relevant to transnational sufferers in the future. When she returns to Barbados, she recognizes that her island is now politically motivated and ready to channel a maroon spirit of resistance, into broad-based activism:

> No less rust-colored the earth. No less green the hills. No less mauve the sugarcane, sticky with juice. No less satiny the emerald belt around its waist. But the times have changed. The men and women are no longer prepared to put up with suffering. The maroon disappears in a cloud of smoke. His spirit remains. Fears fade away. (136)

But Tituba has her work cut out for her, for when she joins Christopher's maroon camp, she learns that these men are not the simplistic heroes of myth (Glissantian or otherwise). While transformation, not revenge, is her aim, Christopher's group exists in a tenuous balance between the desire to burn down plantations and to continue their relatively unmolested existence in the hills. Tituba's spirit family is singularly unimpressed with Christopher and his band, calling them "bad people who spend their time killing and stealing," and " a bunch of ungrateful wretches who leave their mothers and brothers in slavery while they themselves live a life of freedom" (152). Christopher, himself, shows that he is capable of pettiness and narcissism when he gloats that the islanders have immortalized him in song but not Tituba (he is wrong about this, as about so many other things). Thus, put off by Christopher's simultaneous vengefulness and lack of compassionate radicalism, she ultimately decides to leave the group and return to a truly solitary marronnage in her old cabin. "Those of you who have read my tale up till now must be wondering who is this witch devoid of hatred, who is mislead [sic] each time by the wickedness in men's hearts?" she acknowledges.

> For the nth time I made up my mind to be different and fight it out tooth and nail. But how to work a change in my heart and coat its lining with snake venom?

> How to make it into a vessel for bitter and violent feelings? To get it to love evil? Instead, I could only feel tenderness and compassion for the disinherited and a sense of revolt against injustice. (151)

Yet, when she discovers her pregnancy (the child is Christopher's), the spirit of rebellion does indeed rise in Tituba. She decides that none of the options available to her unborn daughter (slavery, life in a male-run maroon camp, or a life "in hiding as an outcast and a recluse on the edge of a secluded valley") are acceptable. She briefly considers trying to rally Christopher and his "troops," but rejects this idea because of "his confession of weakness, even more than his inglorious behavior toward me" (159). Just as she has decided to foment rebellion alone, she becomes responsible for a young rebel, Iphigène, who claims to be the son of the iconic maroon hero, Ti-Noel. From Iphigène, Tituba learns that she is every bit as legendary as the male maroon heroes. To this boy, Tituba "recounted my life, bits of which he already knew, since I had become a legend among the slaves, far more than I could possibly have imagined" (160). They agree to fight together by forming a gender-inclusive band of their own, but as her pregnancy progresses, Tituba is forced to leave the organization to Iphigène. When she learns that he plans to torch the plantations (which will result in the deaths of innocent women and children), she realizes that the violent tactics of male maroons are entirely incompatible with her own philosophy. From Iphigène, however, she learns that Christopher's maroons are not nearly as rebellious and resistant to white society as she had imagined. The boy scolds:

> You don't realize what the maroons actually represent. There is a tacit agreement between them and the planters. And if they want the planters to let them enjoy their precarious freedom, they have to denounce every plot and every attempt at a slave revolt they hear about on the island. So they have their spies everywhere. Only you can disarm Christopher. (163)

Thus, Tituba realizes that in embracing a maroon identity for herself, she is not only fighting against white, imperial oppression, but is also recuperating maroon defiance from the parody into which men like Christopher have let it lapse. Ultimately, we can infer that Christopher turns traitor, because a few days after her talk with him, she and Iphigène find themselves surrounded by the English, and marched to the gallows. As she mounts the steps, we get a final, telling anachronism: "I was the last to be taken to the gallows. All around me strange trees were bristling with strange fruit" (172).

Thus, in referencing Holiday's lament against lynching, Condé's heroine, the long-forgotten "black witch of Salem," conjures up an historical, Bhabhain continuum between past, present, and future, between the suffering of slaves in the colonial Caribbean, of the Puritans' victims and of Jews in the New World, and between heroic maroon resistance and 20th-century American Civil Rights activism. Ultimately, for Condé, only a female maroon could embody and therefore transcend the suffering within a transnational community.

Secret Histories: Michelle Cliff's *Abeng* and *No Telephone to Heaven*

Whereas historical records are potentially harmful lies in Condé's novel, Michelle Cliff sees them as witnesses from which secret, suppressed truths may be elicited (by force, if necessary). Even rocks have a story to tell, as Cliff's omniscient narrator reminds us, meaning that there is no such thing as "prehistory": "The island rose and sank. Twice. During periods in which history was recorded by indentations on rock and shell. This is a book about the time which followed on that time. As the island became a

place where people lived. Indians. Africans. Europeans" (3). In the introductory note that follows, Cliff's narrator explains that "*Abeng* is an African word meaning conch shell. The blowing of the conch called the slaves to the cane fields in the West Indies. The *abeng* had another use: it was the instrument used by the Maroon armies to pass their messages and reach one another" (xi). Thus, Cliff puts her reader on notice that this novel on contemporary Caribbean reapropriation and resistance is always already ideologically linked to maroon history. Like Glissant, Cliff is obsessed with secret histories and their recovery for revolutionary purposes, although unlike in Glissant's fiction, the maroons who undertake this recovery task in Cliff's tales are women. As she tells the story of twelve year-old Clare Savage and her ancestors, Cliff also tells the story of Nanny, Queen of the Maroons (without superimposing another fictional-historical figure on top of her, as Condé does). In Cliff's hands, Queen Nanny becomes a transcendently important foil for Queen Elizabeth, "a white queen,…the whitest woman in the world" whose image adorns public and private walls as well as currency.[128] Cliff lingers over the differences between British and Jamaican pounds, observing wryly: "There were two basic differences: Jamaican money bore the word JAMAICA, and the sovereign crest of the island—an Arawak Indian and a white conqueror: only one of these existed in 1958" (5). Perhaps because she locates her novel in the colonial '50s, Cliff does not mention that which would be obvious to any modern Jamaican reader: in 1994, the same year as the British Queen's visit, $500 notes were introduced into circulation,

[128] Patricia Mohammed's fascinating article, "Taking Possession: Symbols of Empire and Nationhood" describes how, in 1994, protesters at the University of the West Indies, Mona campus sprayed "Nanny a fi we Queen" at the university's entrance ahead of Queen Elizabeth II's visit there. It would seem, then, that Cliff's resistant championing of Nanny over Elizabeth continues to be culturally relevant, nearly fifty years after Jamaican emancipation.

bearing the image of Queen Nanny, and colloquially referred to as "nannies."[129] Today, Nanny, the resistant black Jamaican maroon commander, thus reappropriates the currency of which she was once a unit, and leaves her mark on the system of exchange once used to bind her and Clare's ancestors to slavery.

While the narrator reveals the island's secret history to us, the characters (particularly Clare) are often unaware of these stories. Thus, in filling the gaps left by the official historical narrative, the narrator repeatedly speaks from Bhabha's "Thirdspace," weaving together the past, the present, the future, and the forgotten. The fact that Cliff's characters do not have access to much of this information (or are visibly moved upon acquisition of it) serves as a constant reminder to the reader that the narrative comes to us from "beyond." An early example of this strategic distance occurs when Clare and her father embark on an outing to reconnect with their family history. As her father gives her a tour of the Savage family's old plantation and its great house (located, tellingly, at Runaway Beach), Clare notices its distinctive wallpaper (white women wearing red—dare I hope, maroon?--dresses), and discovers that it tastes salty. To Clare's father, Boy, the paper is evidence of his great-grandfather's status (a wealthy landowner who could afford to import luxuries from Europe), and its saltiness denotes the neglect into which the property has fallen now that it is out of Savage hands. Clare senses that there is more going on, but doesn't know several key things. First, while she "assumed that the women who had lived in the great house had been as white as the women on the paper," the narrator tells us the story of Inez, the young Maroon-Miskito woman whom her great-great-grandfather kept forcibly as his mistress. With the help of a lesbian obeah woman

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[129] See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamaican_dollar> and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nanny_of_the_Maroons>.

named Mma Alli, Inez bides her time, reclaims ownership of her violated body, and finally, on the eve of emancipation, runs away to intercede with her Maroon relatives on the Savage slaves' behalf. Infuriated both by Inez' defection and by the imminent loss of his slaves, the "justice" burns them alive in their outbuilding homes. Clare notices the grooves and marks left by the vanished buildings, but has no idea of the violent history behind them:

> Lest anyone think the judge's action—which became the pattern of foundation stones and thin dirt gullies Clare saw that afternoon behind the great house, rectangles remembering an event she would never know of—lest anyone thing the judge's behavior extreme or insane or frenzied, the act of a mad white man, it should be pointed out that this was not an isolated act on the eve of African freedom in Jamaica. (40)

Thus, while we know more than Clare, the narrator reminds us that there are stories we will never know either (although the evidence of these stories is clearly visible). Even told from "beyond," some gaps remain resistantly unfillable in this text. However, we do learn the secret history behind the salt Clare tastes on the great house wallpaper. "The bones of dead slaves," we are told

> made the land at Runaway Beach rich and green. Tall royal palms lined the avenues leading to the houses of the development. Breadfruit trees, branches fat with their deep green lobed leaves, created shades around the stucco bungalows. The breeze from the sea came through the windows of the houses and made the walls taste of salt. (40)

The natural world isn't merely quaintly fecund, then, it is refulgent with the suppressed stories of Jamaica's colonial past. When he isn't feeding his daughter stories of his ancestors' glory days, Boy Savage invents the history of Jamaica, imagining a geological link between it and the rest of the Caribbean archipelago. "Perhaps, he said to his daughter,

> the islands of the West Indies—particularly the Great Antilles, which were said once to have been joined—were the remains of Atlantis, the floating continent Plato had written about in the *Timaeus*, that sank under the sea. It had been an ideal place, too good for this world. "But then there was a great and powerful earthquake, and the continent came back up again—and was first joined in a chain and then was split apart into islands." He stopped; then thought further. "Or maybe the islands were an undersea mountain range, and emerged when Atlantis went under the Mediterranean. When the volcano erupted in Crete." He paused again. "Some say that Crete and Atlantis were one," still trying to forge some connection between the pieces of knowledge he possessed, and how he wanted things to be. (9)

Unlike Tituba, whose Pan-Caribbean imaginings attempt to right historical wrongs, Boy's connective fictions expose the prejudices and neuroses he harbors about his own family's hybridity. Before we learn more about the Savage family, the narrator cuts away to a reworked Genesis tale, claiming two female progenitors for all Jamaicans, one a slave, the other a maroon:

> In the beginning there had been two sisters—Nanny and Sekesu. Nanny fled slavery. Sekesu remained a slave. Some said this was the difference between the sisters. It was believed that all island children were descended from one or the other. All island people were first cousins. (18)

This secret history of Jamaica and its residents contrasts with the carefully constructed and oft-repeated mythologies created to obfuscate inconvenient truths. But in closely juxtaposing the story of Nanny and Sekesu with the Savages' fable, the narrator alerts us to the fact that Clare (literally, as her name implies a "light" Savage) is both a lineal and an ideological descendant of Queen Nanny. The Savage family has a wealth of personal mythologies calculated to preserve the image of the clan's whiteness (despite the very obvious racial mixtures). After they lose their fortune, their emphasis upon their own racial purity intensifies haughtily, as the following lengthy but crucial passages illustrates with precision:

> According to their arrogance, the Savages saw themselves as blameless for any downward turn in their fortunes. They managed to relinquish responsibility for their lives. This arrogance, and their failures, bred a paranoia among the Savages, which was passed down through the family as a "logical distrust" of anyone not like them. And there were so few like them. The definition of what a Savage was like was fixed by color, class, and religion, and over the years a carefully contrived mythology was constructed, which they used to protect their identities. When they were poor, and not all of them white, the mythology persisted. They swore by it. It added a depth to their conversation, and kept them interested in each other. If the conversation turned to the knotty hair of a first cousin, it would be switched to the Savage ancestor who had been the first person to publically praise *Paradise Lost.* If the too-dark skin of a newborn baby was in question, it would be countered with the life of the Savage who had "done his duty" onboard the *H.M.S. Victory* with Nelson at Trafalgar. If someone spoke about cousin so-and-so being mistaken for "colored," someone else would bring out the snuffbox carved from the Rock of Gibraltar, given to a titled Savage—a lady-in-waiting, it was said, at Queen Victoria's Court. In this way, the Savages were hard put to explain the changes in their complexions, eyes, hair, and why so many of them had freckles. They were emphatic in their statement that James Edward Constable Savage, the puisne justice and advisor to the Crown, had been one of the only Jamaican landowners never to impregnate a female slave or servant—that is not to say, of course, that he never raped one. To cope in their minds with the absence of his wife, and his resulting needs, the Savages talked of a dark Guatemalan mistress, part Indian, with some Spanish blood, who appeared to them as the personification of the New World. They wanted to forget about Africa. (29-30)

Thus, the Savage family employs a complex mythology of Europeanness to ignore/trample over present realities as well as past indiscretions. Through Cliff's narrator, however, we are able to read the obvious but determinedly obfuscated biological markers that testify mutely like the fossils, salt, and trees. It comes as no surprise, then, when we learn that Boy, himself, is not as lily white as he claims to be. While his dissolute grandfather, Jack, is white, his exotic-looking grandmother, Isabel, is "high yellow" passing for white (Boy's mother Caroline, an actress by trade, believes that she is pulling a fast one when she secures a part as a "high yellow" in the chorus line of *Shuffle*

Along.[130] However, the narrator informs us that "in fact, that is exactly what she was. Through her mother, Isabel" (41)). When she becomes pregnant by the poor Italian laborer who delivers ice to her apartment, Caroline invents a wealthy Latin lover for her family's benefit ("someone she would describe as a stage-door johnny, a man who courted her in tails and with small bouquets of Parma violets, but who actually was an iceman from Sicily, who serviced the boarding house in Hell's Kitchen where she lodged"), a mythology of class, if not race, to render her transgression acceptable (41).

Raised by his Jamaican relatives on a steady diet of Savage supremacy, Boy embraces Calvinist theology, and assumes what he believes to be his rightful place among God's spiritual Elect, those fortunate souls "who no matter what they did or did not do were the only saved souls on earth" (44). The notion appeals to Boy's unabashed elitism and to his distaste for "that sort of ascetic devotion" that "was for the unsaved, the unexceptional, who might hope to be scribbled in the margins of the great book" (45). Boy refuses to be marginal, but rather than fight to recuperate his ancestors' stories within the official Savage history, he bends his efforts toward burying them deeper.

Clare's schoolmistresses present her with an equally whitewashed version of Jamaican history, emphasizing England's progressive politics (the teachers "hastened to say that England was the first country to free its slaves"), and piratical romance, and deemphasizing the importance of maroon rebellion (30). Her education is typically colonial, consisting of British fiction taught to establish English values, customs and climate as the norm against which the colonized other must judge her difference (while simultaneously learning that she is a part of the great empire. The effect of course, is to

[130] According to Wikipedia, her colleague in the chorus would have been another exotic beauty, Josephine Baker: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shuffle_Along>.

inspire a sense of worship for all things British along with an acute sense of one's own deviation from that British norm):

> England, that place she knew from her father's stories and her teachers' lessons. Where everyone was civilized and no one had to be told which fork to use. England was their mother country. *Everyone* there was white, her teachers told her. Jamaica was the 'prizest' possession of the Crown, she had read in her history book. And she had been told that there was a special bond between this still-wild island and that perfect place across the sea. (36)

Clare goes on to speak of her own racial identity crisis in terms of Dickens' Pip, and wonders what decision she would make if forced to choose between blackness and whiteness. "The idea of a benefactor captured her," she is forced to admit, but

> she wondered who her benefactor would be. The convict or the unmarried woman. The Black or the white. Both perhaps. Her father told her she was white. But she knew that her mother was not. Who would she choose were she given the choice: Miss Havisham or Abel Magwich? She was of both dark and light. Pale and deeply colored. To whom would she turn if she needed assistance? From whom would she expect it? Her mother or her father—it came down to that sometimes. Would her alliances shift at any given time. The Black or the white? A choice would be expected of her, she thought. (36-7)

Although Clare has been co-opted by her father as his favored child (she is taken along on his business trips around the island, he speaks to her, according to his own explanation, as he would have spoken to a son, and she receives books while her sister receives dolls), and although her mother is distant the fact that "Black" is capitalized while "white" remains lowercase throughout the text, indicates, perhaps, that Clare has already made her decision.

Despite her father and her teachers' best efforts, Clare stumbles onto the existence of one alternate history, and ferreting out its whys and wherefores becomes a major adolescent obsession. Intrigued by Anne Frank's story, Clare reads everything she can about the Holocaust, trying to understand why the Jews were killed, why outsiders didn't

act more quickly to save them, and what degree of responsibility her father, a Jamaican GI, bears because of his indifference to their fate. When Clare asks Boy what he would do if a new Hitler sprung up on Jamaica, Boy replies, not very comfortingly, "Hitler could never come to power in Jamaica" (74). Confident in his whiteness and assuring Clare of hers (although she knows that her racial identity is not so simple) Boy suggests to Clare that the Jews had either brought the Holocaust upon themselves (by antagonizing Hitler) or that they are some sort of cosmic test for God's true Elect. Meanwhile, Clare sees clear evidence of racial discrimination against blacks and darker skinned mulattos at her school and in her community, and wavers between full acceptance of the truth she witnesses and an outright rejection of her father's easy assurances. Here, though, the narrator steps in and explains to us that "She was a colonized child, and she lived within certain parameters—which clouded her judgment" (77). Relatively privileged and insulated because of her light skin and her family's putative whiteness, Clare "could not be expected to identify" with those who suffered discrimination (78). Indeed, the narrator tells us, historically

> The sufferer was not expected to be human. The sufferer would not give himself or herself over to suffering were he or she human. Human suffering was the fault of no one but the sufferer. The sufferers were responsible for their own miserable lives. The Arawaks—who had named Jamaica, Xaymaca, land of springs—existed no longer. One old book written by a Dominican missionary said that the Spanish had fed the Arawaks to their dogs because they found them less than human. The name Arawak meant "eaters of meal," a reference to cassava—the staple of their diet. When he left on his journeys across the curve of the globe, Columbus carried with him several books in which the white Christian European imagination had carved images of the beings in unknown and unexplored lands. Dog-headed beings with human torsos. Winged people who could not fly. Beings with one foot growing out of the tops of their heads, their only living function to create shade for themselves in the hot tropical sun. People who ate human flesh. All monsters. All inhuman…Imagined inhabitants will have few—if any—individual characteristics. They will have bizarre features by which they are joined to one another, but none which are specific to themselves. Their

> primary feature is their difference from white and Christian Europeans. It is *that* heart of darkness which has imagined them less than human. Which has limited their movement. The fantasies of this heart infected the Native tribes of North America with smallpox and with syphilis. Destroyed the language of the Mayans and the Incas. Brought Africans in chains to the New World and worked them to death. Killed nine million people, including six million Jews, in the death camps of Europe. This is one connection. These are but a few of the heart's excesses. (78-9)

Thus, the narrator suggests, Clare's darker compatriots, their African ancestors, native peoples, and the Jews of Europe all suffered because of chimeras of the imagination—racist fantasies darkening the hearts within white (and perhaps not so white) bodies. While she appears to possess the latent ethical humanism necessary to fight such imaginary savagery (and to accept her own citizenship within this community of sufferers), her father is clearly guilty of the same fantasies that condemned Anne Frank.[131]

And yet, the historical complexities do not end there, for even Columbus, the agent and emblem of European colonialism, has a secret history which *Abeng*'s narrator does not scruple to keep from us. Acting on behalf of "los Reyes Catolicos," the narrator says, Columbus "discovered" Haiti and the Dominican Republic in 1494, "the year the Jews were officially driven out of Spain, following centuries of persecution" (66). These monarchs, we learn, "are credited with unifying the Spanish realm on the Iberian peninsula, financing the discovery of America, enforcing the expulsion of the Jews, and soon after, the Moors, and initiating the slave trade between Africa and the Americas"

[131] Clare's teachers concur with Boy: "The suffering of the Jews was similar, one teacher went on to say, to the primitive religiosity of Africans, which had brought Black people into slavery, she explained, but did not explain how she had reached this conclusion. Thus, both types of people were flawed in irreversible ways. And though the teacher could have stopped at this, she went on to stress again he duty of white Christians as the "ordained" protectors of other peoples. And the class of Black, Brown, Asian, Jewish, Arab, and white girls listened in silence" (71).

(66). And yet, the narrator claims, Columbus "may well have been a Jew himself" (66). "At least some scholars are convinced of this," we are told because

> He came from Genoa—perhaps entering Spain as a Marrano, that group of Sephardic Jews forced to hide their religion—and their identity—behind a pretense of Christian worship. There are Catholic churches in Spain with menorahs on their altars. His surname in Spanish was Colón; in Hebrew, Cohen. It is thought by some scholars that the logs aboard his flagship *Santa Maria* were kept in Hebrew. This man, whose journeys had such a profound effect on the history and imagination of the western world, is a relatively mysterious figure in the records of western civilization. He left behind him a reputation for dead reckoning—was he in search of a safe place for Jews—a place out of the Diaspora? So many veils to be lifted…So many intertwinings to be unraveled. (66-7)

Thus, Cliff's narrator unites European conquistadors, the Jewish and African diasporas, attacks on native peoples, and marronnage (perhaps even through an implied etymological link to Columbus' Marrano heritage?) in a tight web of Bhabian interconnectivity.[132] No wonder 12 year-old Clare struggles to make sense of it all.

Fortunately, one teacher has the courage to tell some of the stories buried by the official curriculum. This man, Lewis Powell, constructs an alternative, Jamaican literary education for his pupils out of colonial detritus. Having flitted at the fringes of the Harlem Renaissance, Mr. Powell writes his own poetry on the backs of the daffodil posters sent by English officials (meant to accompany lessons on Wordsworth), thereby transforming them for his own purposes. In the process of meeting Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston and others, Mr. Powell comes to learn about the complex politics of Négritude (particularly about the deep-rooted prejudices separating black West Indians from African Americans:

[132] While the OED suggests that the Spanish term "marrano" derives from the word for "hog" or the Spanish/Arabic words "mahran" and "haruma" ("forbidden" or "taboo," and thus constituting a term of abuse in its earliest iterations), Cliff's usage of the term gestures at her own imaginative folk etymology: one linking the Marranos of Spain to the Maroons of Jamaica.

> British West Indians, as most island people were called, had to stick together in Harlem, even among the intellectuals involved in Renaissance and Nationalist circles. It seemed sometimes that Black Americans didn't really trust Black West Indians—all were of course of African descent, but each group had been colonized differently. The differences between them ranged from food to music to style to their way of being in the world. Lewis heard his people called all manner of things—the Americans said that the West Indians were too uppity and didn't know their place. They called them Black Jews—half in admiration, Lewis felt, half in scorn. (85)

While Mr. Powell recognizes and scorns the divisive prejudices espoused by some black nationalists, he ultimately falls in with the transnationalist thoughts of his friends Wilfred A. Domingo and A. Philip Randolph, whose brand of black (inter)nationalism arises out of opposition to racist American nationalism:

> Why should Black people die for America and Europe, they argued, when they were already dying for America in America? Americans had lynched and raped and burned their bodies in the country they had lived in for hundreds of years—the country they had built themselves. It was a simple and powerful argument but it did not stop thousands of Black men from enlisting in Black regiments and proving their courage and loyalty to what was said to be the American way of life in overseas combat, where many of them were killed. Just as many were killed at the same time in the various groves and forests of the United States. (87)

Because of his respect for these black transnational figures and for Marcus Garvey, Mr. Powell teaches an alternate curriculum (a curriculum, interestingly enough, that Clare's mother Kitty finds far less ambitious than the one she imagines teaching). Mr. Powell "spoke to them about Black poets as well as white ones. Langston Hughes collided with Lord Tennyson. Countee Cullen with John Keats. Jean Toomer with Samuel Taylor Coleridge. He read McKay alongside Wordsworth" (89). For Mr. Powell, teaching black literature becomes an endeavor in transnational, cross-cultural translation:

> He had them recite "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" and transform the rivers named by Langston Hughes into the rivers of Jamaica—these were the rivers which would make their souls grow deep. These were the rivers they knew and should

> know. They had no business with Mississippi or Congo or Nile or Euphrates. Better to be content with Black. Plantain Garden. Salt. Yallahs. Cobre. Minho. Martha Brae. Great Spanish. White. The history of Jamaica was held in these waters. And so were the lives of these children. (90)

At the end of all this, the *pièce de resistance* of Mr. Powell's school year is the recitation of Jamaican poet Walter Adolphe Roberts' "The Maroon Girl," by which vehicle he hopes to teach the country people something of their past and heritage. The children's' relatives

> were taken by the poem. They could recognize the poet's images and his words. They knew hibiscus, mountains, forests, orchids. They knew of the legend of the Arawak—sometime ago a young brown man had come to their area to dig for relics left by the Indians. The Arawaks had been pure and peaceful; there were no weapons to be found among their leavings. These people had also heard of the Maroons—but like the people in the Tabernacle in Kingston, the people in this country church did not know of the wars the Maroons fought. Their minds now cast separate images of the Maroon Girl in the poem. They saw her naked or clothed, quiet or fierce—they saw her cinnamon, as the poet wrote; or imagined her skin the nutmeg color of Zoe, who read the poem with "great seriousness" and "great nobility," as Mr. Powell had coached her. (91)

The text of the poem is included in the novel, and describes the Maroon Girl as filled with "the clean /Blood of the hunted, vanished Arawak," but also notes that it "Flows in her veins with blood of white and black" (90). Imagined by the poet alone "on a lonely forest track," the Maroon Girl becomes an overt symbol, a conflation (both on the page and in the minds of Mr. Powell's audience) of Caribbean people, and a resistant repository of the historical record: "She is a peasant, yet she is a queen/…She stands on ground for which her fathers died;/Figure of savage beauty, figure of pride" (91). Because she is "savage," of course, she is linked to Clare, the novel's "light savage," whose mother, Kitty "could have been the Maroon Girl in the poem," and had, in fact "been the Maroon Girl at the school in her thirteenth year, and *that* was the poem she had taken to heart" (127, 129). However, the group formed by the reading of Roberts' poem

is a different sort of imagined community from those discussed elsewhere in this chapter—constructed of stories told to fill the gap of ignorance. Nevertheless, like in Glissant's novels, Cliff's resistant maroon is a unifying symbol, a guardian of lost history, and a boundary-crossing figure (though unlike Glissant's Mathieu or Papa Longue, Cliff's maroons are female, and multi-racial).

Clare doesn't fully begin to embrace her maroon inheritance, however, until the day she learns of a legendary wild hog, Massa Cudjoe by name, whom Clare and Zoe determine to hunt (or, more specifically, whom Clare determines to hunt, and whom Zoe eventually persuades her to forget about). Not only is the animal named for a famous maroon leader (Nanny's brother), but Clare and Zoe imitate maroon practice by endeavoring to track him. According to the narrator, pig hunting was an important maroon tradition:

> There had been thousands and thousands of wild pigs, until the planters began to shoot them, and the Maroons stalked them for food. The Maroons turned the hunting of the wild pig into a ritual, searching for the animal only at certain times of the year and arming themselves with nothing but machetes and spears. It was a man's ritual—the women took part when the pig was brought back to the settlement. The women had devised a method of curing the meat without the use of salt. The parts they did not cure they buried in a deep pit filled with red-hot charcoals and covered the meat and the coals with earth. The result was called "jerked pork"—and was considered a great delicacy. (112)

Thus, when Clare and Zoe set out to stalk Massa Cudjoe, they are clearly appropriating the tasks of the male Maroons (and attempting to finally supplant Cudjoe with Nanny). And yet Zoe ridicules Clare for playing maroon, asking Clare how exactly she plans to kill Massa Cudjoe if they do manage to find him:

> Wunna gwan crouch down and shoot him inna de eye? Inna de head? Wunna plan fe cover wunnaself with him blood fe mek ceremony? Mek one litter with palm leaves and carry him body down de hillside? T'rough de bush? Wunna

> mus' 'ink wunna is African, gal . Wunna mus't'ink wunna is Maroon smaddy. (117)

Although Clare sullenly replies, "No," it's clear that not only she, but also the narrator have linked her to the maroon people, and when Clare shoots her grandmother's valuable bull, she is sent away, maroon-like, for having "been caught in rebellion" (150).

Sent to live with Mrs. Beatrice Phillips (whose house is located near a landmark hanging tree for runaway slaves), she encounters Mrs. Stevens, who had sex with a black man, gave birth to a mixed race daughter, and now lives in quiet "insanity." She never washes, and so is caked in a dark layer that makes her racially ambiguous. She flits about the house like a shadow (just like a mad Bertha Mason) and warns Clare that "Only sadness comes from mixture." However, this declaration prompts Clare to gently rebuke the older woman, and to claim her own mixed ancestry for the first time (164). The next day, after dreaming of wounding Zoe by throwing a pebble at her and drawing blood (as Rhys' Tia does to Antoinette) Clare has a moment of epiphany, realizing that "it didn't really matter that there was not another living soul to tell it to. She was not ready to understand her dream. She had no idea that everyone we dream about we are" (166).

Thus, solitary mixed-race Clare Savage is yet another female maroon who comes to represent a boundary-crossing, politically-emancipatory, anti-nationalist Caribbean community. In *Abeng*'s sequel, *No Telephone to Heaven*, Clare is a full-blown revolutionary, working with maroon-esque guerilla fighters to overthrow the modern tyranny of capitalist/corporate oppression. Ultimately, she dies, like Nanny, Tituba, and Solitude, as a warrior on behalf of her people, in an attempt to ambush a movie set that is making an historically inaccurate mockery of maroon history (206).

All four of these narratives, articulated from a Bhabian space in the gaps of colonial history, reverberate with the possibility for Pan-Caribbean cohesion. As we move into the final chapter, the focus will shift from the rebellious space of articulation to the spaces and forms created by formal novelistic experimentation.

CHAPTER 4

LINGUISTIC CALLALOOS: FORMAL EXPERIMENTATION FROM THE '90S TO THE PRESENT[133]

> It was as though through the sensory overload she had managed to tap some source deeper than my conscious mind, deeper than reasoning and touching and actually tasting, because I know now that although I was not listening, I was hearing every word. I was taking it all in, together with every comma and period and grammatical, market, scribbling it all down verbatim on a piece of paper already crowded with words: every inflection and tonal variation recorded indelibly on the black surface of my collective unconscious.…First it was only isolated words: short phrases, fragments of a language which I knew belonged only to her. And as the years progressed and I continued to listen I began to hear whole passages, coming to me from somewhere out of my childhood—from somewhere out of that vast storehouse of words and images constantly disassembled and reassembled and surfacing again mysterious, new—so that now at the end of ninety years of blind hearing I can sit here and listen to the whole story, complete, autonomous, told to me in a voice which does not belong to me, but to her. Before my ears. In my own eyes.
>
> Robert Antoni, *Divina Trace*

> Our primary richness, we the Creole writers, is to be able to speak several languages: Creole, French, English, Portuguese, Spanish, etc. Now we must accept this perpetual bilingualism and abandon the old attitude we had toward it. Out of this compost, we must grow our speech. Out of these languages, we must build our own language.
>
> Patrick Chamoiseau, Jean Bernabé, Raphael Confiant, "Éloge de la créolité"

In their 1989 manifesto, "Eloge de la Créolité," Patrick Chamoiseau, Jean Bernabé, and Raphael Confiant formally entered the debate on Glissant's revolutionary maroon poetics. The begin their manifesto by boldly offering "Creoleness" as a fitting encapsulation of multi-racial, transnational Caribbean identity: "Neither Europeans, nor Africans, nor Asians, we proclaim ourselves Creoles…a sort of mental envelope in the

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[133] In Antoni's novel, callaloo is both a Caribbean stew composed, like a gumbo, of a hybrid mix of ingredients, and a person of mixed race.

middle of which our world will be built in full consciousness of the outer world. These words…proceed from a sterile experience which we have known before committing ourselves to reactivate our creative potential, and to set in motion the expression of what we are" (886). Creoleness, then, is distinctly Caribbean, but this brand of regionalism exists "in full consciousness of" (rather than in Glissantian connection with) the broader world. Perhaps most provocatively of all, despite *Bim,* and CAM, despite Césaire and Condé, Chamoiseau et al. claim "Caribbean literature does not yet exist. We are still in a state of preliterature: that of a written production without a home audience, ignorant of the authors/readers interaction which is the primary condition of the development of a literature" (886). Thus, for the authors, literary productions that neither reach nor enrich a local readership are at best a dormant "preliterature," or more likely a form of colonial loot. For the *créolistes* are acutely aware that Caribbean imaginations have long been colonized along with the land:

> [O]ur truth found itself behind bars, in the deep bottom of ourselves, unknown to our consciousness and to the artistically free reading of the world in which we live. We are fundamentally stricken with exteriority…We have seen the world through the filter of western values, and our foundation was 'exoticized' by the French vision we had to adopt. It is a terrible condition to perceive one's inner architecture, one's world, the instants of one's days, one's own values, with the eyes of the other. All along overdetermined, in history, in thoughts, in daily life, in ideals (even the ideals of progress), caught in the trick of cultural dependence, of political dependence, of economic dependence, we were deported out of ourselves at every moment of our scriptural history. This determined a writing for the Other, a borrowed writing, steeped in French values, or at least unrelated to this land, and which, in spite of a few positive aspects, did nothing else but maintain in our minds the domination of an elsewhere. (886)

For these writers, then, literary products pre- *Négritude* form part of a derivative discourse. Writing in European styles and forms, such authors are little better than "clockmakers of the sonnet and the alexandrine" in the *créolistes'* assessment, "zombies"

divorced from both creativity and Caribbean culture (887). While they acknowledge that *Négritude* offered alternatives to these mimetic identities, they bemoan what they perceive as the cultural "exteriority" of a Pan-Africanist orientation. Both Europeanness and Africanness, then, are unworkable as constructs through which to approach a Caribbean identity, although in championing Négritude, Cesaire made it possible to imagine a Creoleness beyond but indebted to this transnational construct (888). While adherence to Négritude ideals was a necessary stage in the process of imaginative Caribbean liberation, the authors envision a version of what Homi Bhabha later called "hybridity" beyond discrete racial categories, one articulated initially by Glissant (although the *créolistes* do not feel that he goes far enough or speaks concretely enough to the present):

> With Edouard Glissant we refused the trap of Négritude, and spelled out Caribbeanness, which was more a matter of vision than a concept. As a project it was not just aimed at abandoning the hypnoses of Europe and Africa. We had yet to keep a clear consciousness of our relations with one and the other: in their specificities, their right proportions, their balances, without obliterating or forgetting anything pertaining to the other sources conjugated with them; thus, to scrutinize the chaos of this new humanity that we are, *to understand* what the Caribbean is; to perceive the meaning of this Caribbean civilization which is still stammering and immobile;…to plunge in our singularity, to explore it in a projective way, to reach out for what we are…these are Edouard Glissant's words. …[T]he paths of penetration in Caribbeanness were not marked out. We went around them for a long time with the helplessness of dogs on board a skiff. Glissant himself did not really help us, being taken by his own work, by his own rhythm, and persuaded that he is writing for future generations. We received his texts like hieroglyphics in which we were able somehow to perceive the quivering of a voice, the oxygen of a perspective. In his novel *Malemort* (Sevil 1975), however, (through the alchemy of language, the structure, the humor, the themes, the choice of characters, the preciseness) he suddenly and singularly revealed Caribbean reality. (890)

This long but crucial quote is frequently used to figure *antillanité* and *créolité* as conceptual rivals, with Glissant's vision floating somewhere in the conceptual ether and

the *créolistes* demanding a more concrete, phenomenological approach to regionalism.[134] Ultimately, though, this excerpt shows that Glissant's resistant, maroon aesthetic (which initially kept him ideologically marooned from Chamoiseau) nevertheless proved the model for the particular "alchemy of language" that *créolité* championed. Chamoiseau, Bernabé and Confiant suggest that the experience of being colonized unites the people of the Caribbean beyond boundaries of nationalism or race, and they suggest that the recuperation of an extant but long denied "Creole" aesthetic, "an open specificity" which "escapes, therefore, perceptions which are not themselves open" is the true path to non-derivative literary, cultural, and political self-determination (892). Creoleness thus "express[es] a kaleidoscopic totality, that is to say: *the nontotalitarian consciousness of a preserved diversity*…Creoleness is an annihilation of false universality, of monolingualism, and of purity. It is in harmony with *Diversity*…For complexity is the very principle of our identity" (892).

Within the context of this paradoxically particular conceptual enterprise, I turn now to a work of polyglot, riotously inventive Creoleness. Writing in the final decade of the twentieth century, after twenty-five years of rapid Caribbean decolonization, Trinidadian novelist Robert Antoni's *Divina Trace* is the postmodern story of Corpus Christi, a fictional island struggling to define itself through a tangled web of Christian, Hindu, African and Western scientific/mythic discourses. There are seven narrators in all, most of them members of the well-to-do Domingo family and each speak in an idiosyncratic, Creolized blend of English, Spanish, French, Trinidadian creoles, etc. But

[134] Caribbean written language had lost track of "[o]ur ways of laughing, singing, walking, living death, judging life, considering bad luck, loving and expressing love were only badly considered in literature, or in the other forms of artistic expression. Our imaginary was forgotten…Our refused bilingual richness remained a diglossic pain" (891).

at the novel's center (quite literally as well figuratively) we are treated to a Joycean diatribe from Hanuman the Monkey God, who retells the *Ramayana* legend in his own radically unique "monkey language." The result is a unique linguistic callaloo, a Caribbean stew of voices, all participating through particularities of language in the business of fashioning a radically new community narrative.

The novel opens with our narrator, the nonagenarian Johnny Domingo, sitting at his grandfather's desk, which has been

> lugged as a trunk of purpleheart wood by six Warrahoon Indians out of the misty jungles of Venezuela, floated down the Orinoco and towed across the Caribbean behind three rowing pirogues, my grandfather calling the cadence stroke by stroke in a language nearly forgotten—I can still hear him, sitting behind this desk, looking out of this window at this moon above the same black glistening sea. (3)

In this passage, Domingo links his story to the story of a long-dead relative as well as to an indigenous, linguistically mysterious, collaborative hybridity. The story of the desk and its ill-fitting chair assume mythic status in the novel (the old man tells the story of its river voyage repeatedly), but we also learn that the chair's incompatibility with the desk is due to the impracticality of its imperial form, and the attempted translation of that form into the indigenous Caribbean:

> I sit here in this library, at this desk of purpleheart in this Windsor chair—this absurd miniature Warrahoon-Windsor chair, carved from the same trunk of wood according to the diagram Barto had found in the *Oxford Dictionary*, but the little Warrahoon had sized the chair to fit himself and not my grandfather, with its legs too short, its arms pressing uncomfortably into my sides, its saddle-seat shaped as though it were intended for the buttocks of a large boy. (26)

Here, the formal gaps or *décalage* that occur during the translation of Windsor into Warrahoon-Windsor render the resultant hybrid an uneasy fit for the Trinidadian descendent of European ancestry. But this is only the first of multiple refashionings and endeavors at mythmaking within the novel. The primary story, retold in radically

different and contradictory ways by each narrator is that of Magdalena Domingo, the young woman alternately figured as virgin, whore, saint, and temptress, who gives birth to a "frog-child" under contested circumstances.[135] Magdalena is racially plural and ambiguous, for, according to Johnny's Granny Myna, she "looks no different from all the little half-coolie, half-Creole, half-Warrahoon, half-so-and-so little callaloos running round in Suparee,[136] and Grande Sangre, and Wallafield" (36). In the years since her death, local legend has conflated Magdalena with a wondrous ambulant statue of the Black Madonna, which has occupied the church of St. Maggy since time immemorial.[137] Johnny tells us that, as children,

> We used to tell stories among ourselves, about how the Black Virgin was Mother Maurina's own illegitimate child by an old coolie-yardman in the convent we called Toeteelo (named for his huge toetee, which we would hide behind the oleander hedge to get a look at each time he went to the big silkcotton to weewee); and how Mother Maurina had raised Magdalena in a convent closet, then made up all the Black Virgin business when she found her daughter pregnant for her own father (the same Toeteelo); and finally how Mother Maurina had brought her story to life by building the mechanical walking statue. But we never imagined that the stories we concocted bore even the slightest resemblance to reality. (39)

[135] Tellingly, in one version of the story, Granny Myna kills the frogchild by drowning/boiling him in a pot of callaloo (17-18).

[136] Suparee is the name of a village near Maraval Swamp, Magdalena's favorite haunt. Interestingly, Father Martin Sirju contends " In the parish records of 1871 one Fr Cornelius O'Hanlon wrote: "For the East Indians, the Black Virgin, is really 'Suparee', the name of a seed which is used in their religious ceremonies, and also the name of a powerful saint in India. But Suparee's mother, in India, is a still more powerful saint who never fails to help in the hour of need. When their ancestors came to Trinidad, the Indians heard of the 'Saint' in Siparia and found that she had all the qualities of their Suparee-Mai and were convinced she was the same one. Indeed they refer to her as 'Suparee-Ke-Mai', rather than La Divin." <www.catholicnewstt.net/joomla/index.php?view=article&catid=42%3Aviewpoint&id=452%3Aviewpoint 030509&tmpl=component&print=1&page=&option=com_content&Itemid=68>. Thus, Magdalena is linked by her fondness for place to a culturally hybrid Caribbean religious figure (which explains why debate about the "real" story of Magdalena assumes so much importance for the residents of Corpus Christi. And, indeed, Maraval Swamp, where young Johnny also releases the frogchild from its bottle, is a hybrid combination of mangrove, banyan and samaan (24).

[137] About such seemingly impossible chronological problems (Magdalena transforming into a statue that had existed long before she was born) Johnny assures us that "fate is always inclined to favour slight coincidences, soft anachronisms" (34).

Indeed, the sovereignty of any given narrative or mythology is repeatedly undercut throughout the text (the result being that all the characters' seemingly contradictory versions of "reality" intertwine, for the text and this fledgling Caribbean nation are both joyously creole, wide enough to contain multitudes). Johnny's grandfather, Papee Vince, for example, regales young Johnny (through the refracted lens of Johnny's elderly memory) with tales of a transnational past spent island hopping after immigrating from England, managing sugar plantations on Corpus Christi, and gathering folk medical knowledge along the way. "[A] little whiteepokee such as I was," Vince confides, "does not experience all that, without learning a little something of the art of Medical Science" (31). Vince goes on to assure Johnny that Magdalena's child was, indeed, a hybrid creature, "born a man, but above he cojones he was a frog," as his grandmother puts it (7). However, at the same time he insists on the truth of his story, Papee Vince undercuts his own narrative authority by claiming that "yardfowl has no business fighting cockfight…Neither am I any one of those fetusologist fellows, or who ever the hell kind of people they have to make a study of these things in particular, such that I ga have the knowledge sufficient to look you in the face and say, well yes, such and such, and so and so" (30). Nevertheless, he claims the authority of his own wide, Pan-Caribbean (and British) experience in asserting a knowledge of diversity, variety, etc. Ultimately, he suggests that the act of separating truth from fiction relies on one's skill as an interpretive reader of stories. "I am no cokeeye slymongoose, to sit in this hammock professing to decipher fact from fiction fa you, he tells young Johnny. "Yardfowl don't pass collection plate when he preach to guineahen. Because son, these days story selling like tanyafritter. It filling you belly fast as windball. In the end, as with everything else

on this good earth, you must decide fa youself" (31-2).[138] Thus, consumers of fiction, or the reading public that Brathwaite, the *créolistes* and Antoni hope to reach, are put on notice: in this imagined community, as fictional and as broadly experienced as any national imagining, master narratives and privileged strands of discourse do not exist. Each reader and each Caribbean citizen finds him/herself in the same position as Johnny, piecing together meaning from a host of competing, diverse, and equally viable narrative options.

The black medicine woman, Evelina interjects here to challenge both Granny Myna and Papee Vince's assessments of Magdalena. Evelina's stories, like Papee Vince's are Caribbean hybrids, "stories about the old Domingo Estate, stories about the forest and Papa Bois and La Gahoo, or stories about the French Creoles and Africa and obeah" (63). Her religious beliefs are a similar "mixture of Granny Myna's Catholicism and her mother's obeah, itself a mixture of the same Catholicism and a Yoruba religion" (64). In Evelina's retelling of the crapochild's birth, Magdalena was a white woman, who turned to black stone in the moment of her death, after looking her monstrous child in the face:

> Magdalena only turn she eyes to look in he face when she turn to boulerstone. *Black* boulderstone…because dis is how dis diab-crapochild pronounce he birth to all de world, and how else could we have dis statue perfect so in every feature

[138] Antoni further emphasizes both the cultural particularities of storytelling and the community created from sharing those practices by inflecting Papee Vince's story about Magdalena with linguistic references to the *Arabian Nights.* Vince, as Scheherazade explains that, after fleeing from her would-be rapist, the Police Chief, Gomez, Magdalena is protectively "swallowed up by this tribe of shouting, crapo-hunting scoutboys. In no time a-tall *she* is stripped down naked too…there is she swimming in the waist-deep swampwater, with the band of shouting scoutboys splashing like boynymphs in the water round her. Off in the cool shade of the huge samaan tree, looking like some bloody mythological figure heself—lying there on he back in he merino vestshirt, he head propped up against the samaan trunk, white jacket and Captain's hat hanging from the tree above him, blowing in the breeze with the thousand-and-one boyscout shortpants, the jerseys, the washykongs, the twenty-foot-long strip of white muslin—there watching over Magdalena and the boys, smoking he thin Cuban cigar through the gold cigarette holder. With that same Chief of Police, not far distant, back again on the back of he horse, watching too, grinding he teeth" (45).

> down to the Warrahoon middletoe cut out from both she foot, up to de red coolie-mark pon she forehead, when she is a *white* woman? White white and beautiful and fair as morning sweet self—never mind what foolishness you hear bout she being a callaloo mix up with coolie and Creole and Warrahoon and every kind of blood with blood, Papamoi! (71)

Thus, Evelina claims that, only in death did Magdalena come to be reinscribed as a Pan-Caribbean symbol. As a living woman, she was something much more singular.
All of these differences strike the adolescent Johnny forcefully, but what really makes him reel is Evelina's casual assertion that Johnny's own father delivered the frog-child (not the Warrahoon Brito Salizar, as both Granny Myna and Papee Vince claimed), and that Gomez arrested the elder Domingo for Magdalena's murder. Johnny marvels at this erasure of his father from the other two stories, and wonders if his two (now dead) elderly relatives were trying to protect young Johnny and his father's memory because they believed that the elder John Domingo had, in fact, been responsible for Magdalena Divina's death. As far as language is concerned here, it is striking that Johnny repeats, in his own fairly standard English, the gist of the tale Evelina tells in her particular creole mash-up. Thus, if the reader has missed key details in Evelina's version, our narrator makes sure to translate for us.

Eager to recuperate Evelina's version from any potential translational gap, Johnny struggles to make sense of the competing narratives to which he (and we) is/are now privy, comforting himself by acknowledging, "It was only Evelina's voice in the dark. But it was also Granny Myna's voice, and Papee Vince's voice: a collection of voices merging and separating, and occasionally falling into rhythm with my own quick breathing" (82). Once again, the novel's postmodern, heteroglossic narrative destabilization results in a Creolized paradox of particularity: the narrative voice is both

collective and composed of multiple uniquenesses. Immediately thereafter, singularity and plurality merge, for Johnny in an epiphanic moment that he remembers from behind his hybridly Caribbean desk:

> And as I listened to old Monsignor, as I heard Evelina praying her old African prayer, I whispered a word of my own in my own language, in my own way: *Yes.* And at that moment I felt a flood of emotions which I cannot honestly describe, a rush of ideas which I cannot truly recount, only to tell you that if there *is* such a thing as personal revelation, then that is the closest I have ever come to one in my life. Only to tell you that even as I sit here behind this desk of purpleheart, in this imitation Warrahoon-Windsor chair, seventy-four years later—even as I look through this window at this moon above the same black, glistening sea—I can still feel a slight surging in my chest. (92)

As Johnny doesn't get more explicit about this epiphany, I contend that the plurality and uniqueness of language can reasonably be held to be at the center of it. Johnny's story, which Antoni implies is also the Caribbean's story, can only cohere uniquely and non-derivatively in a paradoxically particular Creoleness, and in the untranslatable gaps between these unique discourses.

At this point, Western science, in the form of Johnny's father, Dr. John Domingo, enters the narrative. When perusing his father's medical books, Johnny happens upon a description of anencephaly, the text of which begins in italics, just as his own private thoughts have appeared heretofore in the narrative. However, when he (and we) turn the page, the medical tome's text erupts fully into the text itself (complete with a picture of an amphibious, anencephalitic fetus: "*The eyes bulge and the forehead is deficient, the eyelids are thick and oedematous and the tongue*…I turned the page:" [followed by a significant bit of white space on the novel's 97th page, prompting us to turn the page just as Johnny did] (97). The next page is numbered 770 and is a facsimile reproduction of the medical text, beginning where the last page left off ("protrudes. The neck is short and

the head appears to sit upon the shoulders"). Thus, the novel's 98th page is a postmodern palimpsest, allowing the intrusion of multiple narratives to unsettle it (and using the formal experimentalism of postmodernism to offer a challenge to totalizing, non-Caribbean discourse).

Johnny's reaction to seeing the familiar face in the medical text is one of unsettling horror. Rather than being comforted by a scientific explanation for his family's (and the island of Corpus Christi's) legend, he begins to believe even more strongly in the conjuring power of the imagination:

> The very same face which had haunted me for three years without ever having seen it—as though *my* imagination had conceived him, and carried him, and borne him into the world and given him life. The very same face which had haunted me for three years and will never disappear now because there he *is*…After seventy-four years I can sit here at the same desk in the same Windsor chair with my eyes closed, and I can reach now to the same shelf for the same worn-out old journal, and I can find the page by touch, by feel. Because it is as though my imagination has conceived the book too. (99)

In a way, of course, Johnny's imagination has done precisely that, for it is the heteroglossic babble of his tale (and the "extratextual" material that interrupts it) that conjures his island and people into being for us.

As Papee Vince and Evelina's stories succeed Granny Myna's, we quickly accustom ourselves to the notion that no given version of Magdalena's story can be relied upon as gospel in this narrative. However, it isn't until we get to Dr. Domingo's tale that we are reminded our narrator, Johnny, is himself holding out on us at times. Dr. Domingo gives us information about Johnny's pilgrimage to release the frogchild from his "obzockee glassbottle" that Johnny has not heretofore divulged (even though he has already returned to that moment many times by this point in the novel. Dr. Domingo lets it slip that he was shocked when Johnny returned from secretly freeing the frogchild

"[b]ecause boy, when you start in about how this crapochild swim way, about how Magdalena come to you by the water to give you she story sheself and take up she child again—or whatever else it is you tried to tell me because after a time the words couldn't come out fast enough…" (101). Thus, Johnny's version comes out in fits and starts, suppressed details erupting, at certain points, from the mouths of the relatives he ventriloquizes.

When Dr. Domingo asks, "Is you reality any less real than my own?," Johnny cannot respond because he is so unsettled by the revelation that, according to Dr. Domingo, Magdalena was a virgin when she gave birth. His italicized thoughts continue, "*But* you *believe him! You believe him because daddy's language of medical science understands everything clean clean. So the best way to forget that frogchild and this Magdalena and the whole confusion fagood faever, is to become a doctor like daddy and learn to speak that language*" (109). Medical/scientific language is thus an amnesiac discourse for Johnny, who longs to put the teeming, heteroglossic story of Corpus Christi behind him. Despite Johnny's hopes for medical language, however, Dr. Domingo claims, " [b]ut boy, there are some things in this story which speak louder than he [sic] hardest of facts, and unfortunately these are the things I can never give you" (111-12). One of these "things" unsettling the scientific narrative is the doctor's contention that, while anencephalitic children are generally stillborn, and are certainly so brain-damaged as to be incapable of speech or cognition, some claimed "this crapochild was intelligent. That he could answer with nods of he head questions addressed to him in three and four different languages. That by the end of those three days he had learned to speak them too" (120). "Of course," the doctor goes on to say, such tales are

> nonsense. What I will tell you is this: this crapochild may have looked like an anencephalic monster, but he had the functioning brain of an ordinary, healthy infant. And that is only the beginning. Anencephalics are born with they eyes open, but they are born blind: the optic nerves are absent. This child could see. He eyes always looked you straight in the face, and they would follow you hard hard wherever you went in the room. (120-1)

While the doctor dismisses the idea that Magdalena's child was a multilingual savant, the child's inscription as such within some facets of the public consciousness (and the subsequent revelation that Magdalena herself spoke several languages fluently) rearticulates the broad-based, multi-lingual, multicultural symbolic appeal of this particular mother and child.

At this point, the novel begins to drive home more explicitly the idea that a Creolized imagined community can serve as a model for regional cohesion. As he listens to his father's assertion that the frogchild's was a miraculous virgin birth, Johnny realizes that the tale is a Pan-Caribbean one:

> Now I could not help by listen. Now I could not help but hear my father's voice. The same voice speaking to me above the same loud insects, above the same water beating against the same rocks. And I remember sitting here in this Warrahoon-Windsor chair, and wondering even then how it is that these insects cannot drown out this voice? How it is that these waves cannot outlive this story? And I remember thinking even then that the reason is because this story does not belong to this voice. To these voices. *This story belongs to that moon. To that black sky and that black sea. This story belongs to the same foul smell of the swamp when the wind blows.* (119, italics textual)

The swamp to which he refers is a particular, multicultural tangle of "mangrove banyans" and samaans, a syncretic callaloo of the Caribbean, and the story reverberating heteroglossically in his head belongs to that geographical space.

Mother Maurina reinforces the sense that these stories are both formally and conceptually Pan-Caribbean. After claiming that Magdalena was actually her own daughter, the product of an affair with Johnny's grandfather, Maurina shares a recent

dream with her grandnephew, in which Magdalena is transfigured into a unifying, Creole symbol of reverence for people of diverse cultures and language groups throughout the island. "[A]nd now," she murmurs

> I see many others coming to pray to the woman and the child each with they black prayerbooks holding in their hands and I see that they are all of every race and religion kneeling down together to open up they prayerbooks each praying to the woman and the child in they own separate tongue in they own special kind of ritual and she can understand them all, and I see the woman accept them every one. (160)

Mother Maurina then exhorts Johnny to carry this story "cross the sea" so that others beyond the island will come to worship Magdalena (a figure she sees as relevant to other Caribbean lives on other islands as well). This exhortation prompts Johnny to ponder the broader implications for group imaginaries composed of individual consciousnesses as inevitably multi-vocal and collective as his own. While the (occasionally interrupted) passage that follows is staggeringly long, it perfectly articulates Antoni's Pan-Caribbean Creole agenda. What follows are Johnny's thoughts following his dream-like conversation with Mother Maurina in the church of St. Maggy:

> I had actual physical proof that all this was nothing more than a figment of my imagination…and I sat back calmly and took up the piece of paper again, telling myself once more: *It is only a dream. A dream.*
>
> And like the sleeper who is conscious of his dream, I felt some vague control over it, though I knew I possessed none whatsoever. I knew well enough that any idea of authority or even subtle influence was mere illusion…And though I could achieve some sense of momentary calm, reassuring myself that none of this was real, that I did not exist—neither to this woman nor even to myself—I felt sure that in some way I *did* exist. That I must. Because my dream *was* real—more real that [sic] reality itself. Even though I had long stopped listening. (156-7)

Here, in a polyglot swirl of voices, Johnny locates his reality in the Bhabian "beyond," within the reality of a group dream that resists the fiction of authoritative, totalizing discourse. He continues,

> I know now, many years later, that I was hearing what Mother Maurina was saying. It was as though through the sensory overload she had managed to tap some source deeper than my conscious mind, deeper than reasoning and touching and actually tasting, because I know now that although I was not listening, I was hearing every word. I was taking it all in, together with every comma and period and grammatical marker, scribbling it all down verbatim on a piece of paper already crowded with words: every inflection and tonal variation recorded indelibly on the black surface of my collective unconscious.…First it was only isolated words: short phrases, fragments of a language which I knew belonged only to her. And as the years progressed and I continued to listen I began to hear whole passages, coming to me from somewhere out of my childhood—from somewhere out of that vast storehouse of words and images constantly disassembled and reassembled and surfacing again mysterious, new—so that now at the end of ninety years of blind hearing I can sit here and listen to the whole story, complete, autonomous, told to me in a voice which does not belong to me, but to her. Before my ears. In my own eyes. (156-8)

In this passage of mingled disorientation and clarity, Johnny sets himself up as a scribe of the many voices he hears, becoming a Caribbean version of Hanuman (not receiving the words of Valmiki only, in this version, but of the many characters in the drama). In this new capacity, Johnny lets his imagination loose on the page, and tells us the suppressed portion of his version of the night he released the frogchild into the swamp. For Johnny, the experience was a revelation, in which he acknowledged that his story/imagination is collective, multi-voiced, and multicultural:

> in that frogchild I had seen for the first time… the other I. Not the imagined I but the I of my imagination: the imagining I. The third eye in the middle of my forehead through which I saw myself—the Hindu tilak in the centre of my consciousness with which I heard myself, my essential self, God within—the other I which I had thought for thirteen years was contained in me, intrinsically and inextricably bound up in me, but which I realized now did not belong to me at all…now I realized that anything could happen in this dream of my life, in this dream of my dream. Anything, and I would have no choice but to believe. To surrender myself to this primal power…Now I realized that not even my own imagination belonged to me…now I realized I had not reached the end, but only the beginning: my story had opened up of itself into something I'd never expected it to be. (170-1)

Finally accepting the inevitability of his role as a Caribbean Hanuman, Johnny sees the boundless possibility in Creolized Caribbean imaginaries, and acknowledges that he must now "surrender myself up to this monkey of my imagination and let him speak, even in his own impenetrable monkey-language" (172).

In the section that follows, Magdalena appears to his 13 year old self, and tells her version of the story in the form of a Caribbeanized Ramayana. To Johnny, she appears to have "umber burnt-black skin, and her tale incorporates a plethora of Caribbean images as well as Christian symbolism. Kali-Mai and Shiva, for example, emerge from a "conch egg" and have "Flesh sapodilla sweet, sweet mango doodoo" (174). The poem's traditional author, Valmiki, is "St. Valmiki" here, and as he sits praying under a samaan tree, he breathes "Sanctussanctussanctusdominusdeus!" (175). As Valmiki listens to his childhood self reveal this version of Rama and Sita's tale (just as the elderly Johnny does, thereby creating parallels between author and scribe—the scribe is one part of the author, and each scribe is part-author), he sees himself wandering in the woods. While in the Ramayana Valmiki sees a pair of birds killed by a hunter, this Valmiki sees "a manquenk and a diablesse" done in by a Warrahoon (175). He berates the man in froglanguage, "Yo-yuga yo-yuga da-bamba" (176). This froglanguage inspires the shloka verse form he adopts to tell the entire tale (a "shackshloka[139], he decide, I ga call dis nonsense" (176)). Kali instructs him to "Compose fa me now de whole history of Rama and Sita in dat shackshola,/All de world to speak you language,/All to hear you story sing" (176). Two important points emerge from this section: first, we learn that the story which follows is told in a unique new language inspired by the death of Caribbean mythological

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[139] This Caribbeanized form of the traditional shloka could also resonate with the overtones of the "shack-shack" or "chac-chac," a Caribbean shaker made of wood and used as an instrument, particularly during Carnival celebrations. This idea of a carnivalesque verse form is another potential link to Bakhtin.

figures, not birds, as in the traditional *Ramayana* tale; second, this original, poetic language is paradoxically both particular and potentially universally resonant, Kali suggests. The fact that what follows is not a series of impenetrable "yo-yugas" but a recognizable Creole mixture suggests that, through whatever interpretive or translational intercession, the story is, indeed, broadly accessible within a Caribbean context. And as we will see, this *Ramayana* is broadly representative of the Caribbean not just in its linguistic/poetic forms, but in its content. Even traditional Sanskrit acquires Caribbean overtones due to Antoni's transliterative choices. When Valmiki begins meditating in order to interpret the story which is being revealed to him, Antoni's Magdalena (through Johnny's inscription) says that "He begin to bakhti he bajans" (176). While a "bajan" (more commonly transliterated "bhajan") is a traditional song and bahkti/bhakti/bakhti is a devotional, meditative practice, both words and their spellings evoke Bakhtin's heteroglossic voices and the Bajan (Barbadian) people/language on the page. In order to "publish abroad" his tale, Valmiki enlists the aid of two close friends (one, like Johnny and his father, a doctor), teaches them his epic, and sends them island-hopping like "Masmen to play mas" on a task of transnational literary dispersal. As Magdalena's story (retold by Johnny) reveals, each of the characters in this novel has his/her analog in the *Ramayana* legend: Mother Maurina becomes Rama's sequestered first wife, Sumitra; the multiply desired and wronged Sita is, of course, Magdalena herself; Barto is her proud and confused husband/surrogate father, Rama, ruler, in this version, of a "cocoaestate"; Granny Myna is "de jelljell Kaikeyi," Sumitra's younger sister and Rama's second wife, who stirs up all the trouble; Evelina is the faithful nursemaid; Papee Vince is Rama's loyal brother-in-law, Lakshman; Gomez is Ravana the ravisher; and Johnny himself

(perhaps doubled by his father before him) assumes the role of Hanuman, the monkey god, prodigious scholar and author/scribe.

Like the repeated/reworked/overlapping stories in the novel, Magdalena's *Ramayana* is, like the traditional narrative, composed in part of repeated and reincorporated tales. She reminds us that the heroic rescuer, Hanuman, is a version of an older monkey from "A myth already ancient when dis, de *Ramayana* is first told," who rescues the monkey king Sugriva's wife, Tara, from her abductor. Thus, Magdalena's Valmiki, like the epic poet, "create a hero fa both, two tales to tell together!" (184).

Antoni's Hanuman decides that he must launch an attack on Lanka (a stand-in for England, another island with "an imperial-castle complex" (185)) and "Tall goldguilded towers, great glassglistening scrapers" (182), and asks the Ocean "How best to cross de sea to Lanka?/Den did Ocean rise up from midsea,/She firecoral shining jewels,/Scallop seafan hair softfoaming, mantawing mermaidbreast,/Noble rivers following behind, Caronee and Ganga and Congo" (189). When the Ocean recommends building a bridge, Hanuman employ Nala the monkey, who manages to unite the entire Caribbean and link them to Lanka as well (they are unified so that they can launch an attack on the imperial island together): "on de seventh day de bridge of Adam is finish complete,/Crosscrossing de whole Caribbean Sea,/ Island to island, cay to cay,/ Stretching all de way to Lanka!" (189-90).

The next section is Hanuman's tale, told entirely in "monkey language." There are multiple languages and Caribbean references in this Joycean jumble, and also several metareferential moments.[140] This section, perhaps the most written-about aspect of the

[140] For example, Antoni anticipates his readers' frustration with this long passage in monkey language, by observing cheekily, "So here both you lemur, long-lorising in you Lascaux, bored to you bones with dis

novel, includes a piece of reflective paper, which serves as a mirror to the reader (who must view him/herself as a fellow monkey with Hanuman/Johnny, or a missing link: "Ayes close now you page-searching, by touch, again by smell, you simian fossil potto, simian primate missinglink: (mirror page) SEEING IN DE PAGE you own monkeyface ee-eeing, quick out you dreamsleep walcott!...Macaca sinica dis literary cacashit!" (205). Here, Hanuman directly addresses the Caribbean poets in his audience, the "dreamsleep walcotts" eager to participate in this act of collective regional imagination.

Such poets are necessary are essential to Hanuman and Antoni's project, as he makes clear after Magdalena takes up her *Ramayana* tale again, and reveals that the author Valmiki has died in true Derridean (or, perhaps more properly, Spivakian) fashion. This leaves Hanuman, the scribe, alone in a postcolonial world wondering, before he begins to fashion an independent narrative of his own how Valmiki

> attain he de authority of his master?/…Hanuman did hear Kaikeyi speaking./Lakshman, Manthara, Kusha and Sumitra,/Sita she own voice she storytelling!/ And as Hanuman continue, he listening forward,/ Same voices now speaking reverse:/Sita, Sumitra, Kusha and Manthara,/ Lakshman, before to end begin Kaikeyi./ Only when Hanuman inform dem each,/ With he mirror-form simple enough,/ Clear as you face you recalling from de sacred book,/ Red as de roukou red in you palmhand palm,/ Did Hanuman begin to dress he story in Valmiki shacksloka./ But soon de monkey did pause again,/ Something now more to consider:/ How might he story be publish abroad?/ Where are dere monkeys enough to read it?/ Where, in truth, are dere monkeys patient to trudge,/ Dis mudthick-mudswamp of monkeylanguage? (215-16)

Here, in pondering the possible forms Caribbean postcolonial independence might take, Antoni's Hanuman lays bare the experimental formal structure of *Divina Trace*. Clearly, he draws connections here between his novel's postmodern, metafictive experiments with

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book sudden gone baboon!" (198). Shortly thereafter, he pokes fun at his own insecurities over securing a publisher for a work of such experimental form: "Allday at you writingdesk, lefthandinyoupans, who ga publish dis monksense? Garillaorgy! *Francoisi Review?* (199). Portions of this novel did, indeed, appear in the *Paris Review*.

form in order to suggest that fledgling Caribbean nations must also move experimentally beyond Western models of the nation-state. Such a project will only be possible, he argues, if Brathwaite and the *créolistes'* desire for a mass audience develops.

In the novel's closing chapters, Antoni shifts the tone of his argument, from exhortational to cautionary. Even in a technically postcolonial world, he warns, the danger of American capitalist co-optation poses a very real threat, and he urges Caribbean visionary poets to take note. The Hanuman section, for example, includes a calypso, which suggests that American imperialism is in danger of supplanting British tyranny:

> *Jane and Kimba, Biss Bigfoot and Kongarina,*
> *Stinkingtoetree ee-eeing,*
> *Bet you life is Chiquita dey craving!*
> *And when de silkfigs take all,*
> *Dey can have it, mono fa mono,*
> *Because Bali gone, Sugriva takeover now!*
> *Aye say limes gone, Yankees takeover and how!* (201, italics textual)

Doctor Domingo echoes these concerns in his final narrative intervention when, "during [a] fractured moment, in a flash of insight…I came up with the definition of the Caribbean which I'd been searching for. A definition found in all of our literature, and written between the lines of every tourist pamphlet. *It is whatever America wants you to be"* (303). Here, Antoni suggests, like the *créolistes*, that print-capitalism fosters participation in a derivative discourse as surely as Western nationalism does. This definitional aside immediately precedes Dr. Domingo's anecdote about an elderly black man who comes to him for treatment, complaining of a severe pain in his "bamsee" (the doctor eventually discovers that the man has swallowed a prosthetic eye—perhaps also a false "I"—which has lodged itself inconveniently). When he attempts to insert his

proctoscope, the old man says, "Doctor, I beg you, please don't push dat imperial cannon you holding up inside me. Not to say I too manmen to take a little plugging in de softend like a buller. But Doctor, contrary to de doctrines of History, contrary to de chronicles of all de schoolchildren's Economics books, dis little black backside ain't big enough to accommodate de Royal Navy!" (285). This final humorous anecdote (which becomes one of the doctor's stock case studies on the lecture circuit, and an attempted discussion of which is mysteriously supplanted by a slide of the anencephalitic child in the medical text during one such lecture) turns into a swipe at British imperialism and the idea that the British have buggered West Indians (particularly black West Indians) as the historical and economic record shows. Interestingly, he leads into the telling of this tale with the words, "Boy, let me give you a little story while we here, showing you just what kind of story this story you telling has become" (284). Apparently, it has become a cautionary tale against literary and political mimetic reflections of imperialism.

Ultimately then, Antoni's own postmodern formal experiments are also explicit meta-models for anti-colonial Caribbean self-definition.

The Space of Language: Urban Maroons, and Cohesion through Créolité

> [Y]ou say "History" but that means nothing. So many lives, so many destinies, so many tracks go into the making of our unique path. You dare say History, but I say histories, *stories*. The one you take for the master stem of our manioc is but one stem among many others.
>
> Patrick Chamoiseau, *Texaco*

Written in a *créoliste* amalgam of standard French and Martinican creole, Patrick Chamoiseau's 1992 Prix Goncourt-winning novel serves as a natural francophone partner

to *Divina Trace*'s formally experimental Pan-Caribbean figurations. Like Antoni, Chamoiseau foregrounds the components of his novel's construction to both contribute to an innovative, creolized Pan-Caribbean imaginary, and to warn Caribbean writers against the dangers auguring against their efforts. Throughout his narrative, however, Chamoiseau takes care to gloss the creole terms, suggesting that he envisioned an audience beyond Martinique, and that his narrator, like Antoni's Johnny, is charged with the task of ensuring that *décalage* is minimized as much as possible.

After an epigraph from Glissant, which playfully encourages the "nèg-bouk" (translated by Réjouis and Vinokurov as "city-blackman") to do his speaking from the urban sphere, the novel opens with a timeline, divided into different "ages" of "milestones in our attempts to conquer the city" (3). As the narrator makes clear, staking a claim to l'En-ville" (the inner space of the city, both at a geographical and a conceptual level) is vitally important to this articulation anti-colonial Creolized struggle. The narrator suggests, too, that this endeavor is something that will call slaves from the plantations and the maroons down from the hills:

> To escape the night of slavery and colonialism, Martinique's black slaves and mulattoes will, one generation after the other, abandon the plantations, the fields, and the hills, to throw themselves into the conquest of the cities (which in Creole they call '*l'En-ville'*). These multiple assaults will end with the fractious creation of the district of Texaco and the ominous reign of a boundless city. (3)

For Chamoiseau, conceptual collaboration also involves geographical spatial convergence, and he summons a new generation of "urban maroons"[141] to join the project.

[141] Ashley Dawson in "Squatters, Space and Belonging in the Urban City" calls Esternome an "urban maroon."

Each "age" in the timeline lists significant events in Martinique's history (dates on which Africans were forcibly brought to the island, the date marking the extermination of Caribs and Arawaks, the abolition of slavery, the collapse of the plantation system and the introduction of indentured workers from Asia and the Middle East. The timeline also takes note of Césaire's publication of the *Cahier* and his election as mayor of Fort-de-France, as well as significant events in the lives of fictional characters within the novel. This imaginative historical and literary reconstruction emphasizes, in Chamoiseau's hands, the formal building blocks of the dwellings Martinique's citizens inhabit (the age of straw, of asbestos, and of concrete). Furthermore, the novel's emphasis on a newly acknowledged Caribbean "inner architecture" (to quote the language Chamoiseau used in the "Eloge") to advocate a Pan-Caribbean *créolité* establishes that his linguistic games are inevitably tied to larger questions of fictional form. Indeed, as Maeve McCusker notes in "No Place Like Home? Constructing and Identity in Patrick Chamoiseau's *Texaco*,

> The organization of the novel reflects the heterogeneous practices employed by the Creole people. The novel is jerrybuilt from fragments drawn from diverse sources (notebooks, letters, spontaneous interjections), an assemblage of bits and pieces of narrative built into a disorderly montage of interconnected lives. In a sense, the text becomes a sort of building-site in itself, drawing attention to its own 'constructedness' rather than to any sense of continuous development. (54-5)

While McCusker's point is largely well-taken, I contend that the novel's clear *créoliste* agenda constitutes an argument in favor of developing a collaborative Pan-Caribbean aesthetic, whether or not that development ought properly to be described as "continuous."

As with Antoni's Johnny Domingo, Chamoiseau's initial narrator is presented at first as a reluctant, humble scribe. Here, however, the "Word Scratcher" is not only

Hanuman but “Oiseau de Cham,” a playfully metafictive reformulation of Chamoiseau’s own name. His link to the Hindu monkey god, however, is established in the learned character Ti-Cirique’s first badinage with the “shamefaced Word Scratcher”:

> At the task of writing, more than a few might have seen…me, *Universal Man*, rise above the oxygen in the horizons, exalting the depths of man’s raison d’être, the why of death, of love, and of God, in a French more French than that of the French, but not at all like you do it, you small pea lost in the pod of the monkeying of your Creolity or in Texaco’s decrepit asbestos walls. Forgive me, Oiseau de Cham, but you lack Humanism (9).

Not only is “humanism” partially an anagram of Hanuman, but it is offered as something that the Word Scratcher’s “monkeying” language games lacks. Like Johnny Domingo, then, Chamoiseau’s meta-scribe will either have to acquire the ability to channel master narratives mimetically, or alternatively, Ti-Cirique is unwittingly articulating an implied truth: that the Word Scratcher has no need to pen Valmiki’s master narrative, but is instead already engaged in non-derivative self-fashioning.

The novel’s real drama begins when a city planner (the “Christ”) enters the squatters’ enclave of Texaco. Like Rhys’ Antoinette, Antoni’s Johnny Domingo, and Schwarz-Bart’s Solitude, he is struck in the face by a stone in an episode described as “an eternal instant” (22). The mystery of who threw the stone becomes part of the settlement’s lore because “[t]he answers to this question were so abundant that the real truth forever slipped through our fingers” (10). From here, we get various characters’ versions (as in Antoni’s novel) of the city planner’s arrival, presented under mock-gospel headings like “THE CHRIST’S COMING ACCORDING TO IRÉNÉ”). In Iréné’s assessment, the man “was just walking, nose in the wind, dazed, scrutinizing our shacks and their assault on the timorous cliffs. There was some repugnance in his stride…this strange visitor was coming to question the usefulness of our insalubrious existence. So

Iréné looked at him as if he were a bag of flies dressed up as a man" (11). Of course, Iréné is a fisherman, so we are on notice immediately that this gospel is also a fish story.

The rebellious widow Sonore's version begins with Marie-Sophie telling a bit about her parentage, specifically her father's inscription into the French army:

> Annette Bonmitan, born Sonore, was Julia Etoilus's daughter. Her papa, a lay blackman, holder of an incomprehensible certificate and a teacher's position in the commune of Marigot, destroyed his career in some French World War I trench where none of us had sent him. I could tell the love story (in Cinemascope) between the instructed layman and the lady Etoilus who was ignorant even of the blank spaces between the twenty-six letters of the alphabet, but a detour would be risky. (14)

Rather than get sidetracked into a clichéd tale of mismatched lovers (a Pygmalion story in which Eliza does not absorb her Higgins' pabulum), Marie-Sophie determines to stick to Sonore's gospel. Of course, she does pursue various other side stories in recounting Sonore's tale, but humorously remarks afterward, "but it's not for me to say" (15). Sonore, we learn, has taken up residence in Texaco as an act of defiance against her late ne'er do well husband and against the government unemployment agencies that fail to compensate her. "Fighting back in her own way," Marie-Sophie claims, "she had come to fence off a piece of land and erect a house in the shade of the Texaco oil company" (16). On her behalf, Ti-Cirique, "a Haitian man of letters who peeled books, just settled in one of the Quarter's hutches," mails off letter after letter on her behalf, asking Césaire ("the mayor of Fort-de-France," a "poet and littérateur" for assistance (16). He peppers the letters with quotations from figures like Racine, Hugo, and Baudelaire, but finally induces a favorable reply (a job offer) for Sonore, when he sends a letter quoting one of Césaire's pet poets, Lautréamont (17). What else did he expect from one of the *trois pères* of Négritude?

The Quarter gossip and interpreter of body (as well as spoken language) is Marie-Clemence, an elderly woman who "exposed the intimacy of lives to the sentinel of curiosity" and "became our beneficial glue, dispensing just enough bitterness to make life passionate" (20). As Marie-Sophie tells it, Marie-Clemence pretends to a great prescience about "the Christ's" coming, realizing his salvific potential from the moment she saw him:

> So, coming out bright and early to empty her tub, she glimpsed our Christ when that fisherman of mine, Iréné, was still waking up. At that moment of truth her fantasy begins: seeing the bony silhouette, she affirms finding herself in the situation of the prophet John the Baptist, who in the River Jordan saw the son of the Good News appear. The truth is that Texaco's Christ was not yet Christ. He was coming there in the name of the city council to *renovate Texaco.* In his scientific language that really meant: to *raze* it. Furthermore, Marie-Clemence was probably busier cleaning out her tub than taking hold of this vision of a make-believe silhouette attended by a dove (she's really going too far with the dove—since nobody's ever seen one in these parts). And it's even less probable that the fellow was crowned by the usual lightning which accompanies all events of world salvation. Letting her tell her story out of respect for her age, we still praised the exaltation of her melancholic brain at the arrival of the one who—from having heard me out and without any hallelujahs—would become our Savior. (20-1)

Thus, while questioning the strict veracity of Marie-Clemence's version (as Johnny Domingo does with the multiple narratives he channels), Marie-Sophie's skillful and humorous ability to read between the lines of official discourse grants her a level of textual authority disrupted not by her limitations, but by the fragmented construction of the text.

Furthermore, Marie-Sophie suggests that a collaborative conspiracy between an ardent griot and a willing listener defines and navigates the reality of lived experience. Another crucial talent Marie-Clemence possesses is an uncanny ability to disseminate information in an almost atmospheric fashion: "In no time she could scuttle around to

sixteen households. She could make the thirty-three coolie winds going through the partitions pregnant with messages. She could release silent tocsins into deep dreams, hang whispers to shutters, make her tongue echo in keyholes, transform a room's quiet into buzzing bees" (21). The result is that all the residents of Texaco instinctively react to "the Christ" as an oppressor forcing them to live under an occupation:

> Some children shed untimely tears. The men became stiff and silent. Some women howled, coarser ones became torches of Creole insults. Our first impulse was to leave our homes, then return to them and proceed with the measures learned from multiple police raids: wrap anything fragile, hide the money in our deepest pockets, swaddle our papers in blankets, spread the children into all of the houses since the police might hesitate to break into an innocent home. (22)

Accustomed to "the catastrophic agitation of booted panting, threats, and orders," the people of Texaco cannot understand the urban planner's quiet presence. Thus, the Quarter's diverse, multinational mix of "jobbers…longshoremen, muscles working in sheds and stores, dreamers from nowhere whose only identity was the label of their favorite rum,, exiled Caribbeans, fallen mulattoes, travelers who led in Texaco one of their seven lives…blackwomen red like the Vert-Pré soils from endless fights…matadoras with long lashes…" wait nervously for the force of the law to descend upon them (22, ellipses mine). Of course, corporations, like the Texaco oil company on whose property the group is rebelliously camped, are significant imperial forces in this novel, sometimes occupying from a distance, and therefore vulnerable to having their space reappropriated. In fact,

> Texaco, the oil company which used to occupy that space and which had given its name to it, had left aeons ago. It had picked up its barrels, carted off its reservoirs, taken apart its tankers' sucking pipes, and left. Its tank trucks sometimes parked there, to keep one foot on the dear property. Around that abandoned space are our hutches, our very own Texaco, a company in the business of survival. (24)

Thus, Marie-Sophie suggests that in co-opting the imperial corporate name and the space, the residents of the Quarter also reimagined the concept of a multinationally oppressive “company” into a diverse, creolized co-operative, fighting on “our field of battle and resistance” where “we kept up the fight to be part of City, a century-old battle” (25).[142]

Charged by the Quarter with sweet-talking “the Christ,” Marie-Sophie tells the urban planner, a student at “the Institut de Géographie a the Paris Fourth District campus, under the direction of Professor Paul Claval,” Texaco’s history, and views it as “the decisive battle for Texaco’s survival,” “with my word for my only weapon” (26-7). For Marie-Sophie, the very mythification and poetic license that storytelling allows constitutes her weapon’s main strength. “ Little fellow,” she confides in the Word Scratcher, “permit me to tell you Texaco’s story…That’s probably how, Oiseau de Cham, I began to tell him the story of our Quarter and of our conquest of City, to speak in the name of us all, pleading our cause, telling my life…And if it didn’t happen like that, that doesn’t matter” (26-7, ellipses textual). Thus, as Marie-Sophie describes her conversation with the urban planner, she also highlights the fact that her narrative is a shrewd anticolonial tactic. Language and narrative here function as both weapons in a counter-hegemonic battle for self-definition, and also as a means of highlighting the formal building blocks of this resistance.

Furthermore, in telling the history of Texaco’s struggle for autonomy and self-definition, Marie-Sophie claims a paradoxical relationship between her particular family

[142] In the section that follows, Marie-Sophie begins her “sermon,” “not on the mount, but over some dark rum” (29). She reveals that “what saved me was to know early on that City was there. City, with its brand new chances and sugarcane-less and béké-less destinies for sale. City, the place where toes aren’t the color of mud. City that fascinated us all” (33). As a place that seemed divorced from the plantation, Marie-Sophie romanticizes the possibilities that “City” purports to offer. She imagines an economy in which she can purchase a future that doesn’t involve field labor or white overseers.

history and the collective history of her hybrid community. "To understand Texaco and our fathers' rush toward City," she explains, "we'll have to go far, deep down my own family tree, for what I know of collective memory is only what I know of my own. Besides, my memory is only faithful when it tells the history of my old flesh" (34). This history, intercut with excerpts from her notebooks (which take the form of first person revelations in her father's voice, and which carry reference information from the Schoelcher Library) is meant as a counterdiscourse to the official historical record:

> I am not going to reinvent a History lesson you've already learned; the old men of Doum reveal stories beneath History most essential for understanding us, stories no book speaks of…Their heads were full of the forgotten wonders: the First Land, the Great Land, its tongue, its gods…They hauled a load of common pain on their shoulders. They took care of the yaws but left alone the sweet languidness that carried the dead to the First Land. That way they thwarted the unjust prosperity of these plantations in the heat of pain. The men of strength would say *No children born in chains,* and the women would only open withered wombs to the suns of life. They would say *No harvest*, and rats would begin gnawing on the roots, winds would devastate and dryness would burn the cane, rain would turn everything to mud all the way up to the hills. They would say *No strength to slavery*, and the ox livers would turn to rot, so would those of mules and horses. The dead animals would block the mills all around and obstruct the delivery of bagasse, starving the flame of the sugarworks' seven boilers. (35, ellipses mine, italics textual)

In this passage, Marie-Sophie suggests that History with a capital "H" is itself an invention (which she refuses to "reinvent" or repeat faithfully through her own storytelling). Furthermore, the work of wise medicine men (men who, like Papa Longué, retain knowledge of Africa), is primarily a form of anticolonial sabotage, which remains unreadable as such to the white plantation owners and overseers. Then, Esternome's voice pervades Marie-Sophie's hinting darkly at the horrors of the white men's dungeons, and observing that too exact a description of what went on within them would perhaps exorcise some of the attendant dreadfulness (thereby allowing room for white repentance

and relief of their consciences): "Allow me not to go into details about the dungeon, Marie-Sophie," he pleads, "because you see those things are not to be described. Lest we ease the burden of those who built them" (36). Thus, Esternome suggests that words have healing properties as well as combative ones, as his daughter suggested earlier. Marie-Sophie's grandfather, Pol, was the stuff of legend, an African man who "had something special about him," and managed to survive a deadly snake bite (36). When the plantation owner heard of this miracle and enquired as to his knowledge of poisons, Marie-Sophie's grandfather spoke in an African tongue. Mistaken for "a witch's song," this language earns the man a stay in the white man's torture chamber, which nevertheless fails to break him. Like Tituba, this man with knowledge of healing herbs, falsely accused of sorcery, gets the last laugh, merely repeating his inscrutable musings and saying nothing of poison. Ultimately, the other black people hear his language, (rendered particular by the cruel dislocations of slavery) emanating from the dungeons and find the key to interpret it: "Until the end of his life the man had wondered how birds could be and how they could fly" (38). Crucially, these translingual communications blend in a discourse about freedom.

In the official excerpts from Marie-Sophie's journals, Esternome tells her about his work, particularly how he learned his craft as a builder (clearly an important profession in a novel so focused on its own construction). "From the Caribs," he says, "I learned the roofing technique while taking advantage of the land around me…Craft is good memory" (42). Thus, M. Laborieux, suggests that work is a form of storytelling and cultural transmission (sometimes, as in his interaction with the Caribs, of intercultural transmission). He first becomes fascinated with building construction as a

child, roaming around the "Big Hutch," and taking in "the forgotten attic where a geometry of girders tied the knot of the Big Hutch. This view of the frame probably determined the course of his life, his destiny, and finally mine" (44). Of the structure's power to confer authority (exposing the façade of colonial power by locating the sign of that power in a literal façade), Marie-Sophie reveals:

> The Big Hutch rose in the center of the outbuildings, sheds, and straw huts. From it poured the fields, gardens, the coffee-sown lands climbing the slope of trees (with precious wood). It dominated the whole, seemed to inhale all. The oxen's exhaustion, the slaves' despair, the cane's beauty, the mills' soft hiss, this mud, these smells, the rotten bagasse existed in order to feed its magnificent airs of power. The men, catching sight of it from every nook and cranny of work, acquired the furtive looks that we would come to have at the Cities or their cathedrals. The manager and the chiefs walked with increasing nobility upon approaching its steps, their injurious throats became oily smooth, and they took their hats off under the porch. The Béké himself didn't get so much respect. In the fields, cut out of the distant façade, his silhouette seemed frail or feeble—but by the Big Hutch, on its doorstep, he was invincible. (44)

Structural control and the occupation of space, then, are key to white authority in the Caribbean, a lesson that Esternome the builder learns and eventually appropriates as a tactic of resistance.

Initially though, Esternome is proud of his privileged position in the plantation house, and takes the white man's side, even defending him against a "maroon of a bad sort" who gravely wounds the master in the woods (45). Rather than help the maroon to finish off the white man, Esternome "seized the musket and fired Boom!...The maroon looked at him with the most painful surprise" (45, ellipses textual). Thereafter, Esternome's allegiances change, something that the narrative reflects through its construction by cutting to another interjection from Marie-Sophie's notebooks. This time, Esternome tells her

> With their words, they would say: *l'esclavage*, slavery. But we would only hear: *l'estravaille*, travail. When they found out and began to say *Lestravaille,* to speak closer to us, we'd already cut the word down to *travail*, the idea of plain toil, ha ha ha, Sophie, the word cut across like a weapon. (47)

Here, Esternome Laborieux's first and last names clearly resonate throughout his linguistic explanation (laborieux means both "hard-working" and "tedious"). Furthermore, collaborative language is clearly figured as a means of anticolonial resistance. Eventually, in gratitude for having saved his life, the white man frees Esternome (a concept that the young man had a hard time wrapping his mind around.). "Of all of the Béké's explanation, he remembers (for eternity) only this rag of a sentence: *you will be free to do or not to do what you want and to go wherever you so desire*…and on the list of his furniture, livestock, and slaves, the Béké had inscribed beside his name: *Libre de savane*. " (48) This "savannah" or unofficial freedom, we learn, freed the erstwhile owner as well (from the "act of notary, tax, or mandatory food pension" attendant upon fully legalized emancipation). Yet regardless of who claims or participates in discourses of freedom, the novel suggests that some people have the gift of freedom despite technical enslavement. Such a person, according to Esternome, "never was a slave. You could, Marie-Sophie, wear chains on your feet but imagine good game flying over your head. And more than one so-called free blackman carried under his hair the massive chains of the miserable congos. If there were maroons in the hills, so too there were maroons in the middle of the plantation itself" (52). Crucially, Chamoiseau's insistence on the existence of conceptual maroons allows him to transplant's Glissant's resistant agent of change into the colonial sphere of the plantation, reappropriating it from within. These Papa Longué-esque sorcerers, or Mentohs, spoke a unique language which

inspired rebellion, reappropriation and political refashioning. After listening to a Mentoh speak, Esternome

> Established the Mentoh at the beginning of our nettlesome conquest of the country. To take (the Mentoh would have made himself understood with words too slippery for conscious recollection—here I suspect my Esternome rebuilt his memories a bit so as to appease his stories' need for contraband,) to take with the utmost urgency what the békés had not yet taken: the hills, the Southern drylands, the misty heights, the depths and the ravines, and then besiege those places that they created, those places in which no one could foresee our ability to unravel their History into our thousand stories. (54)

Here, memory is a remodeled structure, fashioned from the reappropriated building blocks of colonial oppression, and a simultaneous de-constructor of official, totalizing narratives.

From the "master artisan" Sweetmeat, Esternome learns the craft of construction and its relationship to the anti-colonial fight. Sweetmeat is an itinerant craftsman, having plied his trade in Guadeloupe, the "Mexican Gulf" and "on a Dutch island" (56). The two men philosophize about the colonial idea" as Esternome learns

> the art of the equilibrium of masses and the balancing of weights, the art of calculating the right slopes, the art of shingles and tiles held together by copper. Theodorus Sweetmeat would add his Norman knowledge to the teachings offered by the African huts and Caribbean longhouses. Bit by bit, his science of buildings grew more particular. (57)

Here then, the seeds of a different kind of political structure---a hybrid informed by African, Caribbean and European knowledge---is imagined as one Caribbean wanderer collaborates with another. The City in which this construction takes place is a zone of dreams and possibility to former slaves, because it offers a variety of occupational choices, the ability to participate in the system of exchange rather than being a unit of it, and because the hybridity of the place offers at least a chance of some sort of belonging (66-7).

However, when people of mixed race capitalized on the opportunities City offered them by getting involved in politics, the potential mimetic danger of attempting to reappropriate colonial spaces surfaces for the first time. Reduced to little more than parodies of French Revolutionaries, their absurdity causes Esternome to question the rhetoric of French republican liberty, equality and fraternity, and to wonder what sort of "History" Martinicans will make (if championing ideals arising out of imperial Europe):

> After midnight, the politicized mulatto (though he was extremely white-skinned, he was nicknamed Chabin because his heart was negro) would turn down the lamp's oily flame, lock the door, ask for quiet-now, and carry his wrinkled lampoon around the tables like it was a holy wafer. It was an unsigned pamphlet of about thirty-two pages printed in Paris. The politicized mulatto never droned out anything else but the title: '*Regarding the situation of free colored people in the French Antilles*.' For him, this text of Genesis contained terrible things feared by the planters, the france-whites, the kings, the servicemen, and the rest of the world. The voice of mulattoes rose in it for the very first time, demanding equality with the whites, singing universal liberty. Since then, from deep down the galleys, from under the hangings, or in the midst of chains, in the English isles or the heights of good France's tribunals, it hadn't ever stopped. What is it, the politicized mulatto would lecture, is it paper or History marching? He wanted to hear *It's History marching*, which everyone replied, except for that delirious Theodorus who just before his last delirium bellowed: *What history, but what history? Where's the blackman in all of that?* He meant "the slave," Esternome explained to me, because in those bad days both words carried the same luggage. (72)

Dying of syphilis with the tract clutched in his hand, Sweetmeat (Theodophilus) is nevertheless clearsighted enough to discern that a bid for freedom on European principles is not radical enough, and takes no steps toward writing the counter-history of black struggles for equality and freedom in the Caribbean. Therefore, he alone resists parroting French imperial rhetoric. His dead friend's views affect Esternome's understanding of City, which he readily perceives is thoughtlessly dependent on the economy of slavery:

> Esternome my papa was not a poet (of the chimerical kind who is moved by words handled like mirrors and by pain), but in this bric-à –brac he could see a kind of power. He understood that here the misery of the great plantations

> ended…He also understood (though with confusion: Esternome did not have brainy clarity) that the plantation's wealth had created this town by passing through quickly, feeding with the crumbs left in its track thousands who knew nothing of the field slaves and couldn't give a damn. (74-5, ellipses mine)

Esternome understands that despite all the work available to people of color in City, there were "but few opportunities" for them (77). "City was the province of store-békés and boat-owning france-békés. The mulattoes…fought hard in order to widen the crack they had made. But it was already clear, despite their great speeches and the tap on the shoulder, that, like fireflies, they only made enough light for themselves" (77). As a way of fighting back, Esternome develops construction techniques using "mortar [filled] with ashes from the bagasse which bound better than all the strong glues put together" (77). In contrast, the mulatto builders construct houses for Europeans that look like European homes. However, Esternome "witnessed how the spirit of the blackworkers undid and reinvented the dwelling. So, easy-here, easy-there, Saint-Pierre moving 'this way and that way.' ' In a special aesthetic,' I think he wanted to say" (77-8). Thus, Esternome's original technique using Caribbean materials makes for a strong, enduring construction, unlike the mimetic structures put together by others.

Esternome attempts thereafter to connect with the "land slaves" [143] who eye freedmen with suspicion. He recognizes that his City clothes and manners separate him from the others with "their ways of speaking with war cries and a milling of gestures…their imperial Creole, rich, tortuous, swift, or otherwise murmured in the depths of the throat with motionless lips" (78). In City's market, where enslaved and "free" mingle, the slaves become successful mimics, not of the white planter class, but of freedmen: "[The land slaves] imitated [the free] so much that without the prohibition

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[143] Referred to as "land slave (or slave in chains)," "land slaves (or blackmen-like-dogs," and "land slaves (or the no-good blacks)" (79).

against wearing shoes, more than on slave in his Sunday attire promenading after mass would have been taken for a free blackman" (79). One of the enslaved with whom Esternome forms a bond is Bonbon, a man trying to earn enough money to purchase his freedom (and who "participated—money is money—in hunting maroons")(79). The maroon hunter helps put Esternome's uneasiness about City into words:

> Tall City. Massive City. City from whose memory they were excluded. For them City remained impenetrable. Smooth. Waxed. What to read in this wrought iron, these painted wood shutters, these enormous cut stones? These parks, these gardens, of which all these city people seemed to master the secrets? Bonbon once said to him, and he was right, that City was a Big Hutch. The Big Hutch of all Big Hutches. Same mystery. Same power. This made Esternome my papa a tad bit sick. (80)

Here, City is both imperialist construction and text to be read. Interestingly, the maroon hunter's insights do not clash ironically with his profession in Chamoiseau's text (where maroons are often figured as hooligans or revolutionary dilettantes. Esternome believes, for example, that "the land slaves were marching toward freedom by paths more unkind than those the maroons took" (81). In contrast to maroons, who dip in and out of freedom struggles (in his estimation), the fighting and its attendant risks constantly threaten the slaves:

> [The land slaves'] battle held the risk of being thrown in the deepest of ditches where, without resistance, you took whatever you had coming. The maroons would break from the confrontation, but the land slaves would remain in formation, standing over mud as best they could, a bit like those waterlilies of the blind marshland, you had to hold on, hold on, and moor the bottom of your heart in the sand of deep freedom, without noble gestures, just like a dry seed arrives on the beautiful alluvial lands riding the rain. (81)

Esternome concludes that battles such as the land slaves prove willing to wage are necessary for true independence since "I who received it know that Freedom is not given,

must not be given. Liberty awarded does not liberate your soul" (83). Knowledge of and affinity for the land is the first step in a true freedom fight, in Esternome's estimation, but

> my papa Esternome did not know that History, accelerated by the milatoes[144], was going to lift everyone from the moorage of the earth. That, transformed into mad prey, we would all fly at the full desire to become French. So much so, that when during the week he would find [working class blacks and mulattos] dream of 1789, of the apparitions of the Republic in that great land of France, when he would listen to them read, in a religious voice, *Le Courrier des Colonies* where someone named Bissette denounced the planters, would hear them name Victor Schoelcher in a rite of invocation, and finally, right before raising a bowl of wine, suddenly exclaim: *The Monarchy is condemned, Liberty is coming! Liberty is coming!...It will come from the great traditions of France!*—he, my Esternome, would get up, yes, would declare in a vacillating French and in a silence which in the end became rarer and rarer: No, gentlemen and Directeurs, freedom will come from the land slaves, from the conquest of that land…Then all, him included, would plunge into their wine which they drank like the békés, into their music from all over the world, and into this way of dancing like the france-whites, holding hands on a drumbeat but without a drum of course. (82-3, italics textual)

As crucial as the content of Esternome's speech is, the fact that he delivers it in "vacillating French" is equally important to the transformative potential that he articulates, whether or not the crowd has subtle enough ears to hear the message.

By novel's end, Marie-Sophie and the Quarter are under constant attack from City, forced to rebuild their homes time after time with each successive "age" of more permanent-seeming materials. And despite the fact that the group manages to win an audience with the great Césaire himself, asking him to intervene on their behalf for water, electricity, and land rights, the poet-politician "lifted up his hands meaning to say he couldn't do much, that Texaco was outside the city limits, that it was all very complicated" (368). Césaire's *Cahier*, which he anxiously wonders if she has read (she has) proves far less useful than her own notebooks to the anticolonial world Marie-Sophie and her Word Scratcher fashion through linguistic collaboration. After her death,

[144] Marie-Sophie's phonetic rendering of her father's pronunciation of "mulatto."

as the people of Texaco cohere around her living words, Oiseau de Cham voices his hope that *Texaco*, its self-conscious constructedness and language of connection will "be sung somewhere, in the ears of future generations" (390). The important lesson that hopes will linger is "that we fought with City, not to conquer it…but to conquer ourselves in the creole unsaid which we had to name—in ourselves and for ourselves—until we came into our own" (390).

Thus, both Antoni and Chamoiseau offer us models for Pan-Caribbean cohesion, founded on collaborative linguistic *créolité*. While suggesting the need for a relational aesthetics that avoids simple mimesis, both authors champion (with due caution for the inherent pitfalls) reappropriation of European modernist and postmodernist techniques. Building off the regional imaginings of *Bim, Caribbean Voices, La Revue du Monde Noir,* Edouard Glissant, Jean Rhys, Maryse Condé, the Schwarz-Barts, and Michelle Cliff, they demonstrate the revolutionary potential inherent in collaboration and formal experimentation.

A Final Word

While the types of inter-lingual, cross-cultural, transnational collaborations described throughout this thesis have yet to translate into a sustained, viable political alternative to discrete postcolonial nationalisms within the Caribbean (and, often, within individual island communities), the authors discussed above show us what the Caribbean region stands to gain from bold formal experimentation at a political level. As Homi Bhabha, bell hooks, Edward Soja and others have shown, resistant, reappropriative "Thirdspaces" beyond the confines of divisive binaries are both productive and

ubiquitous, creating an alternative center out of the formerly liminal in multiple corners of the globe. A regionally unified Caribbean "beyond" nationalism, in the Bhabhian sense, would thus participate in a rebellious yet established discourse, a unified collectivity of unique and hybrid voices, and would champion the notion that multiple particularities can paradoxically form the basis for cohesion rather than division, or a grudgingly "tolerant" co-existence.

By refusing to elide the many differences within and between Caribbean communities, and, instead, emphasizing those differences as a paradoxical basis for a regional identity, the Caribbean authors discussed herein implicitly suggest that transnational imagined communities offer a viable alternative to the oppressive binaries of the western nation state (the oppositional, me/not me mentality that Benedict Anderson exposes as an inherent component of national identification). While the paradoxically particular forms of Caribbean regionalism discussed above do not go so far as to postulate an imagined community "coterminous with mankind," Glissant's rhizomatic *antillanité*, Condé and Cliff's communities of suffering, and Chamoiseau and Antoni's heteroglossic *créolité* show us how the imaginary boundaries of nationalism can be crossed as a first step toward such a goal. Set against the backdrop of American hysteria over "border security," and our now-perpetual engagement in a "War on Terror," Caribbean artists' championing of uniqueness, hybridity, and diversity poses an important and relevant challenge to forms of nationalism that figure racial, cultural, lingual, and religious "otherness" as suspect and dangerous.

Indeed, while artists have historically been at the forefront of political innovation, other forms of cultural expression also bear witness to potential inherent in attempting to

reconcile multiplicity and collectivity within a postcolonial national context. Sport, for example, routinely functions as a vehicle for chauvinism (both in the gendered and patriotic senses of the term). National anthems, from "God Save the Queen" to "Jamaica, Land We Love" place even children's sporting events within an overtly nationalist context (and in the case of islands like Martinique and Guadeloupe, reinforce and attempt to legitimize a colonial context as well). Yet as critical studies such as Clem Seecharan's recent musings on West Indian cricket suggest, sport can also challenge nationalism from within. Seecheran shows how, in the Caribbean, cricket has been transformed from a symbol of western colonial nationalism into a model for postcolonial, transnational regionalism. The multinational West Indian cricket team renders nationalism porous for players and fans, Seecheran suggests by unifying in membership the best players from the archipelago, crossing boundaries of nation, race, etc. By offering previously marginalized Indo-Guyanese players like Rohan Kanhai to pioneer a uniquely "West Indian" style of gameplay, cricket has allowed players to transcend some of the totalizing elisions and binaries that sport often reinforces. This ideology, in which a group is paradoxically unified by differences is precisely what Glissant, Cliff et al propose in their literary experimentation, offering us a revolutionary alternative to nationalism that is at once, idealistic, humane, and practical.

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