

This volume, *Memories of Caribbean futures, Reclaiming the pre-colonial to imagine a post-colonial in the languages, literatures and cultures of the Greater Caribbean and beyond*, is a collection of peer reviewed articles that present a critical perspective on the languages, literatures, and cultures of the Greater Caribbean. The book is part of a two-volume set published annually since 2009, which provides a platform for recent writing from and about the Greater Caribbean in general in one volume and about the Dutch Caribbean in particular in the other. The contributing authors include a wide range of voices old and new from the Caribbean and beyond.

Memories of Caribbean futures

Edited by
Nicholas Faraclas
Ronald Severing
Christa Weijer
Elisabeth Ehteld
Wim Rutgers
Robert Dupey

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Reclaiming the pre-colonial to imagine a post-colonial in the languages, literatures and cultures of the Greater Caribbean and beyond



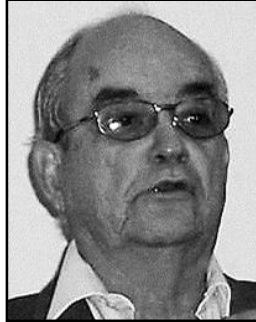
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Dedication



WILFREDO A. GEÍGEL
(1941-2017)

Well-known and well-loved lawyer and Caribbean historian, Wilfredo Geígel dedicated his considerable legal and academic talents, training and skills to social justice for the past, present and future peoples of the Caribbean. As an outspoken member of the governing boards of institutions such as the Institute for Puerto Rican Culture and the Society of Virgin Islands Historians, he was a tireless advocate for the preservation and revalidation of the Indigenous and African heritage of the islands of the northeastern Caribbean. As a lawyer, he defended the rights of citizens to challenge even the largest corporate entities to put people before profits. As an adjunct professor at the Interamerican University in Puerto Rico and the University of the Virgin Islands, he inspired future lawyers and historians to think out of the box and to serve their communities. Licenciado Geígel authored several articles (some of which appeared in these volumes) and three books, titled: *¿Es Puerto Rico una Nación?*, *Is Salt River Columbus' First Landing Site in St. Croix?*, and *El libro y su encuadernación*. An avid amateur bookbinder and cyclist, he crafted exquisite beveled leather book covers and successfully completed the 3-day annual bicycle marathon which covers hundreds of kilometers along the entire peripheral coastal road of Puerto Rico in 2014, 2015 and 2016, up until the age of 75. We are all fortunate to have had him in our lives.

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Volume 2

Edited by

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**UNIVERSITY
OF CURAÇAO**
DR. MOISES DA COSTA GOMEZ



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This book forms part of a two volume set, with this volume focusing on the Greater Caribbean in general, and the second volume focusing on the ABC-islands (Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao) and other parts of the (former) Dutch Caribbean, in particular. Together, these volumes provide a platform for researchers and other cultural workers whose work treats the islands, topics, and/or perspectives that traditionally receive less scholarly attention than others at professional conferences and in academic publications. Special emphasis is placed on ensuring that new voices with fresh points of view find a place in these volumes, alongside contributions by more well established scholars.

This publication received generous support from the University of Curaçao.

The Editors

**RECLAIMING THE PRE-COLONIAL TO IMAGINE
A POST-COLONIAL IN THE LITERATURES OF THE
GREATER CARIBBEAN AND BEYOND**

A RIPPLE IN REALITY: KAREN LORD'S *REDEMPTION IN INDIGO*

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Once upon a time people believed in a mechanical, concrete or objective universe. The idea of a solid universe has long passed for scientists. Today according to Michael Green and John Schwartz's string theory, we are now able to conceive of a four-dimensional universe, worlds with nine dimensions of space and one of time and even worlds with twenty-five dimensions of space and one of time. The old idea of *absolute* space, fixed, concrete or objective, has given way to a fluid and expanding idea of the universe. It did not take an Einstein to let many native cultures know that the universe and everything in it is in a state of dynamic change. African descended peoples have never wholly ascribed to the idea of the Newtonian material universe. African concepts of space-time have embraced the idea of fluidity. For example, the Yourba worldview understands "The living, the unborn, or the Ancestor, passing from one sphere of existence to another – a process [they] call transformative awareness, principally through birth and death – partially dissipate their vitality into this transitional space, replenishing its primordial energies. That flux, that whirlpool of transitional force, constitutes . . . universal consciousness" (Soyinka, 2012: 157). The Yourba *Weltanschauung* and a number of other African peoples' concepts of reality embrace otherworldliness as a palpable, vital reality that is interwoven with the present.

Karen Lord's novel, *Redemption in indigo* published by Small Beer Press in 2010, won the Frank Collymore Literature Award in 2008 as well as the William L. Crawford Award and the Mythopoetic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature in 2011. The novel also was nominated for the World Fantasy Award in 2011. *Redemption in indigo* has been called fantasy and speculative fiction. Identifying the novel in these terms places it in the company of New Age fiction writers and out of the historical context of the Caribbean.

I argue that this novel exists within a tradition of African, African American, and Afro-Caribbean writing rooted in African spirituality. Lord joins a host of other writers dating as far back as Amos Tutuola's *The palm-wine drinkard* (1952) based on Yourba folktales and followed by *My life in the bush of ghosts* (1954) as well as Wilson Harris'

Palace of the peacock (1960), Ntozake Shange's *Sassafrass, Cypress and Indigo* (1982), Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), and Erna Brodber's *Myal* (1988), just to name a few. While critics have, not without reason, labeled Lord's novel "speculative fiction", and fantasy, my reading of her work will suggest it may not be as fantastical as it first appears and certainly falls within a rich African and African Diasporic lineage.

Karen Antoinette Roberta Lord holds a PhD in Theology and Religious Studies with a focus in the Sociology of Religion. She earned the degree in 2008 from Bangor University in the UK. Prior to earning the PhD, Lord was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Toronto, a Master of Science in Physics and the History of Science and Technology, and an MPhil. She taught physics and studied STEM courses throughout her secondary and graduate school education. In an interview she stated that her science background has not hampered her interest in the arts. Her love for writing remained strong and as a result she blends science and art in her fiction. In this paper, I will examine the elements of spirituality in the novel *Redemption in indigo*.

In Melvin Rahming's *critical theory of spirit* he argues that literary criticism is bereft of spiritual considerations; moreover he claims that such terms as magical realism, surrealism and fantasy have not produced a corresponding methodology for the critical analysis of such works. Current theoretical methods, deconstruction, poststructuralist, postmodern, phenomenological, or hermeneutical, do not place spiritual considerations at the center of critical discourse, even when the authors themselves clearly do so within their works. The spiritual disengagement of literary theory has led to the mischaracterization of some spiritual works as fantastical (meaning existing only in the imagination and unlikely). A spiritually focused lens (Rahming) interrogates the intersections of what is considered reality and unreality. In a 2011 interview Lord says, "I think a lot of West Indian fiction (and, to a certain extent, also African fiction) doesn't have that line between 'this is real' and 'this is supernatural.' There's a sort of dual reality going on, and that aspect comes through in a lot of literature: here's what's on the surface, but here is all this other stuff" (1/3 Locus).

The story's setting is in "a time that was, a time that is, or a time that is to come" (p. 1). On the surface the novel appears as the story of Paama, a woman with an extraordinary talent in the culinary arts, and Ansige her gluttonous husband. After ten years of marriage catering to his insatiable appetite, she leaves him and returns to her family of origin. The reader is then introduced to Semwe, Paama's father who has retired to the peaceful village of Makendha, a fictional name for anywhere that you can imagine, Tasi his wife and Paama's and Neila's mother, and Neila, Paama's beautiful and self-centered younger sister.

The reader meets these characters through the intrusive but familiar griot-like narrative voice that addresses the reader directly and moves the plot along. This use of direct address immediately evokes the ambiance of an oral tradition, a tale told by a griot, and

in fact a fairytale employing the formula “Once upon a time...”. It is not difficult to see why some critics and reviewers have identified this novel as a fairytale. Aside from the formulaic opening of “Once upon a time...”, other aspects include the dichotomy of good and evil characters, royalty versus poverty, magic, enchantment, reoccurring patterns and numbers, three, six or seven, talking animals, a trickster, tales of travel, human weakness, like gluttony and ultimate triumph set in a bucolic village and complete with an “all’s well that ends well”, happily ever after ending.

All of the above literary devices could lead one to conclude that *Redemption in indigo* is only a fairytale. The word fairy traced to its Latin roots means fate. Fate or the idea of destiny becomes central to the spiritual reading of the novel. Whereas the characters in the novel are numerous consisting of those already named, plus the Indigo Lord, the poet Alton, the four sisters, the village chief, the village folk so inclined to gossip, Kwame, the children, the spider, and the *djobmi*, including Patience and Chance, the spiritual aspect of the story is that all of the characters are aspects of the one self. Of her fictional characters Lord writes:

. . .before you dismiss them, I ask those who care for the weak to look at Patience and see their own professional distance, so essential for maintaining their own strength amid the trials of many. Look to the trickster to see your eccentricities, pride, and despair and to Paama for your sense of familial duty (p. 181).

Thus we recognize ourselves in her many characters both living and non-living, ancestral spirits and what some would call non-human creatures. Lord successfully “blurs the line between human and animal consciousness” (Rahming). For clarification, Alice Walker’s essay, “Everything is a human being” would be *à propos*.

The conflict in this narrative is over the possession of what is called a chaos stick. While the chaos stick can be read as our own free will, it might also be viewed from a different perspective. Karla Holloway responding to Henry Louis Gates’ use of the Yoruba trickster Eshu in his *Signifying monkey*, comments that Eshu is the one to stir up “serious mess” due to his voracious appetite and his perpetually erect penis (p. 192). If the chaos stick doubles for Eshu/Elegbara one can see why the Indigo Lord is determined to regain his power. Support for seeing the chaos stick as representation for Eshu resides in the other elements of the trickster god’s character. He represents choice and possibility and safeguards the principle of free will. Trouble ensues when the Indigo Lord loses control of the chaos stick. As a result of his ego pride and growing resentment of the humanity he is charged to care for, not only has his power been usurped, the *djobmi* have given it to not just a mere mortal but to Paama, a woman.

Meanwhile Ansige the glutton, the part of ourselves that never gets enough in our materialist culture, travels to Makendah to convince his wife to return to their home. His attempt results in disaster, revealing how his gluttony is a disease, as is his need and desire to be taken care of. During the time that he is in the village he “murders the

village peacock.” This incident might be seen as the author’s acknowledgement of her literary antecedent Wilson Harris (*Palace of the peacock*). Ansige makes a complete fool of himself causing the village folk to shake their heads, laugh and understand his wife’s departure.

Paama’s behavior, however, makes it clear why she is chosen to control the chaos stick. She never ridicules Ansige, never gives the villagers anything about which to gossip, and conducts herself at all times like a proper lady. But do not be fooled; Paama is in many ways a feminist. Lord however avoids the stereotyped characterization that renders feminists man-hating, uncouth and belligerent women who cannot or will not cook. Near the end of the story when the Indigo Lord marvels at Paama’s behavior, saying “Paama is an unusual woman,” Patience replies: “Not as unusual as you might think. There are many women like her, considered by some to be virtuous and loyal, considered by others as foolish and weak” (p. 164). The undead and their *djombi* see her as the former and award her the chaos stick. What impresses the Indigo Lord finally is “Nothing stopped her [Paama] from trying to do what she felt to be right, not even despair. She was willing to learn, and when she felt the lesson was beyond her capacity, she was willing to simply obey” (p. 164).

In order to regain his power the Indigo Lord assumes the name Taran, wears a disguise and enters Makendah as a wealthy and mysterious stranger intent on finding out who has the chaos stick. Lord’s focus on the color indigo is suggestive of Ntozake Shange’s novel *Sassafrass, Cypress and Indigo* three sisters of the Gullah culture with Indigo being the one with the greatest psychic ability and Sassafrass being a consummate cook. The color indigo also represents aspects of the third eye, intuition, perception, and spiritual awareness. The Indigo Lord has indigo skin. He covers himself fully, wears a veil to hide his face and gloves both hands. A showdown takes place when he gives a party and invites Paarma’s family, as he thinks her sister might be the one with the stick. Neila is infatuated with his mystery and with the possibility of marrying a rich man. During a confrontation at the dinner party, Paarma snatches the veil from the Indigo Lord’s face. She discovers that he and Alton are the same. Spiritually she perceives the unity behind all disguises. Paarma has unveiled the truth. Based upon her insight, the Indigo Lord sees that she is the one with the chaos stick.

Although the Indigo Lord tries to take the stick from Paarma, the stick, will not budge. Angered by his failure to unhand the stick from her, he abducts her, enclosing her within a time bubble and falling through a wormhole if you are scientifically inclined or down the rabbit hole if you have a more literary background. The journey with the Indigo Lord is instructive for both characters. The first lesson is in the “Appropriate Use of Power” chapter 14. Power is never to be wielded from the ego. Grace is a state of non-power, a place of surrender. The Indigo Lord has forgotten this lesson of humility and his pride has become his undoing. Paama learns how wealth, the gold spilling freely from the boxes, has destroyed human lives.

The next lesson concerns choices or chances and questions fate. Paama is introduced to the aspect of infinite possibilities. A woman is suffering from a fatal disease and her lover is with her experiencing deep emotional pain. Paama wants to use the stick to save them. Saving people is not as easy as it seems, the Indigo Lord tells her. The sick woman looks at herself in a slice of mirror, then uses it to slice her throat. She would rather die than live with the disfigurement. Her lover would rather die than live without her. Paama is angry because she thought the Indigo Lord knew the outcome and should have told her, but he explains that it is impossible for one to know all of the variables, especially concerning the free will of the human soul (p. 118).

Paama learns that the Indigo Lord likes chocolate cake and to read comic strips, which become important clues at the end of the story. In another lesson Paama watches a sailor, the arch enemy of a man who needs to be rescued, give his life trying to rescue his enemy in distress. Both men perish but the Indigo Lord appreciates the beauty in what humans call death, whereas Paama cannot. She sees death where he sees simply a transfiguration. There is no death. Nothing ever dies. Toni Morrison proclaimed that truth in the novel *Beloved*.

Suffering depression resulting from her understanding of death, Paama asks to be entertained. To comply, the Indigo Lord decides to show her the tricksters who have taught humans lessons by embarrassing them. He calls embarrassment a small death of the ego (p. 128), and introduces her to one of the tricksters skilled in the art of ridicule. The trickster ridicules a naughty child by showing him how ridiculous he looks. When people behave badly it is because they cannot see how foolish they look to others. The *baccou* shows the person to himself or herself. It is from this trickster that Paama learns that Ansige is ill.

Paama learns the Indigo Lord's lesson by recognizing how human beings self-destruct. Ansige is dying the result of his own choices. Seeing his destruction, Paama gives the stick back to the Indigo Lord saying, "Both my heart and my hands return it freely" (p. 161). The Indigo Lord learns a lesson in humility but still is unable to resume his tasks even though he has regained his power. He must now face Patience the most powerful *djombi* and the only one capable of restoring him to his former position of power. The Indigo Lord, also called Chance, thinks that redemption is not for his kind; so Patience offers him rehabilitation. He agrees and asks her how will he be rehabilitated? Her answer comes full circle to the spiritual message encoded in this tale. She says, "You must be born again" (p. 169).

Meanwhile Paama's family has sent a tracker, Kwame, to find her. He finds her at Ansige's funeral, helps her settle her husband's affairs and returns her to Mekhinda. Kwame marries Paama and she gives birth to twin boys, Ajit and Yao. These twins are important because Yao has purple skin and if that is not clue enough, he is partial to "chocolate cake." The indigo *djombi* has indeed been born again.

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NEGOTIATING THE GOTHIC IN AFRICAN LITERATURE: A STUDY OF AMOS TUTUOLA'S *THE PALM-WINE DRINKARD* AND BESSIE HEAD'S *MARU*

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Introduction

Recent studies on the Gothic features in African literature largely focus on a postcolonial discourse of the Gothic, which has come to be widely known as the “African Postcolonial Gothic”, which basically looks at the effects of otherness, and abject experiences of colonial and postcolonial subjects abound. Nevertheless, it is apparent that Gothic elements in African literature are perceivable and overtly applied, whether intentionally or not. This article focuses on bringing out elements of the Gothic in Bessie Head's *Maru* and Amos Tutuola's *The palm-wine drinkard*, by drawing parallels from some canonical Gothic texts such as Matthew Lewis' *The Monk*, Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*, etc. It also attempts to make known the ways in which the distinctive settings, drama, and character-types of the Gothic discourse are domesticated, complicated, and made more subtle in the works of these African writers while examining their general contribution to the Gothic discourse.

The Gothicity of African literature

Gothic elements in African literature bear a resemblance to those of the English Gothic tradition. Some aspects of the Gothic tradition such as supernatural occurrences, monstrous apparitions, distant landscapes, and the woman in distress, in our view, have been a part of African oral traditions for centuries. While exploring the supernatural in African cultural and religious traditions in his book, *African religions and philosophy*, John S. Mbiti states that “Myriads of spirits are reported from every African people, but they defy description almost as much as they defy the scientist's test tubes in the laboratory”. He affirms the existence of the supernatural in African cosmology by stating that “... the spiritual universe is a unit with the physical, and ... these two intermingle and dovetail into each other so much so that it is not easy, or even necessary, at times to draw the distinction or separate them” (Mbiti, 1969: 74).

There are a myriad of horror and ghost tales which are told to children growing up in most African homes. For instance, we can consider the Akan tales of the archetypical Sasabonsam who almost always lives in a forest and exacts revenge on anyone who crosses his path or dares enter the forbidden forest where he dwells. For example, the tale of a young girl who ignores the advice of her mother and chooses to follow a handsome stranger who turns out to be Sasabonsam. Eventually, Sasabonsam reveals his true form to the girl in an obscure distant evil forest, but by then it is too late for her to save herself from being devoured by him. Among the many morals of this story is that children should be obedient and heed their parents' counsel and that they should remain in socially defined sex/gender roles. These tales are told to children in their formative years, most often as a tool of social control.

Deliberating on the importance of Amos Tutuola's works to the kind of literature which serves as a tool for social control, Ato Quayson argues in *Strategic transformations in Nigerian writing* that:

While Tutuola was heavily indebted to the themes, motifs and tales of the Yoruba storytelling tradition, his work has no direct parallel in that tradition. The hallucinatory realms he elaborates and in which he places a superhuman hero in one quest or another are not mentioned by any of the critics of Yoruba storytelling traditions. It appears that the tales Tutuola sets down are an uncommon type of cautionary tales told to children which seem never to have crystallized into a definable genre. These normally involve the most frightening aspects of life outside the village community. Such cautionary tales often draw on traditional travel narratives and on the experiences of hunters in the forests (Quayson, 1997: 45-46).

It needs only to be mentioned that the social control function of most African novels or stories exists not only to ensure obedience but also to instill a sense of responsibility in order to forestall transgressions of society's norms. It is at this point that traditional travel narratives or tales with the journey motif become important as a tool for social control as they facilitate a revealing expedition into personal introspection and self discovery. It is noticeable in Tutuola's *The palm-wine drinkard* that the Drinkard's quest for the palm-wine tapster enables him to develop as a responsible character by the time he returns to his home, although this journey takes him beyond the limits of society. The travel narrative is one of the basic tropes of the 19th century Gothic, as exemplified in Charles R. Maturin's (1820) *Melmoth the Wanderer*, where Melmoth, the protagonist, rambles the world trying to exchange his 'Faustian bargain' with anyone who will be ready to take it upon themselves. However, no one is prepared to take up his offer, and he eventually vanishes from the face of the earth.

Lily G. N. Mabura in her ground breaking work, "Breaking Gods: an African postcolonial Gothic reading of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple hibiscus* and *Half of a yel-*

low sun”, outlines some stock features and conventions of Gothic fiction found in African literature, including “apparitions, curses, and other notions of evil; an atmosphere of overwrought emotions, fear, and doom precipitated by various notions of evil, ancient prophecies, or the sublime and supernatural; and women in distress – female characters that are often terrified, oppressed, and driven to psychological disintegration by a powerful tyrannical male who embodies patriarchal oppression” (Mabura, 2008: 205). To these, basic Gothic qualities such as ambiguity and ambivalence can be added. Mabura, citing Fred Botting (1996), explains that Gothic fiction has a certain quality of “nostalgic relish for a lost era of romance and adventure, for a world that, if barbaric, was [. . .] also ordered [and that in] this respect Gothic fiction preserves older traditions” (Mabura: 205). She argues that because most African literature have a predilection to ‘preserve and reclaim older traditions and cultures,’ they are imbued with the elements of the Gothic and demonstrate ‘varying degrees of commitment’ to a Gothic-like genre as well as to its stock features. While this is true, in our opinion, she does not convincingly support some of her claims with textual evidence as she makes an effort to connect Adichie’s works with the Gothic tradition.

Gothic conventions of setting, plot, and characterization have retained a remarkable cultural resiliency while also evolving over time. The old house or haunted castle, central to the early Gothic as a representation of the unconscious mind, are represented in a variety of ways in modern African texts, which present a setting that is a closed world that possesses the qualities of isolation, mystery, and claustrophobia. For example, in *Maru*, Margaret’s home is in an old and dilapidated library, situated on a hill quite far from the main village, with scorpions and other creatures crawling about. Again, most parts of the plot in Tutuola’s *The palm-wine drinkard* are played out in distant, obscure forests, where the Drinkard and his wife feel hemmed in.

In some African novels, the beleaguered heroines and brooding, tormented villains of early Gothic have evolved from stereotypical figures into a wide range of characters that nevertheless must confront and battle with either external or internalized representations of evil, the unknown, or the grotesque. The themes of malevolence and pandemonium have moved from being represented as peripheral and objective in the early Gothic of the 18th century to increasingly subjective and psychological representations throughout the 19th and into the 20th centuries. This tendency is observable in some African novels, as in Bessie Head’s *A question of power*, where the main character, Elizabeth is driven into psychotic agony by her lover. However, the fact that representations of evil and the grotesque still take the supernatural forms of ghosts, phantoms, monsters or highly autocratic male figures say much about the value these figures still have in the popular imagination.

Among the African writers that Mabura identifies as having made use of Gothic elements, Bessie Head seems to be unsurpassed in this genre. Other writers, such as Mongo

Beti, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ayi Kwei Armah, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie have also been known to cast Gothic shadows over their writing on many occasions. For instance, Mabura describes Achebe's grotesque description of the evil forest in *Things fall apart* (1959), where the village of Umuofia is surrounded by a large forest imbued with both good and evil. On one hand, the village is host to the sacred python, revered shrines, and sacred caves like that of Chielo the priestess of Agbala. On the other, it is the Evil Forest, a cursed landscape where individuals who die of evil diseases are buried, and it is also the dumping ground for twins (who are considered evil) and the location for ritualistic killings such as the oracle-stipulated murder of Okonkwo's adopted son, Ikemefuna (Mabura: 205).

One particular element of the Gothic tradition which is clearly seen in Bessie Head's *Maru* is known as "the woman in distress". This element has its antecedents in the Female Gothic (Gothic tales written by women) which often aims to socialize and educate its female readers and is usually conservative in its perspective. The Female Gothic tradition consists of women writers such as Ann Radcliffe (*The mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794), Clara Reeves (*The old English baron*, 1777), Sophia Lee (*The recess*, 1785), Mary Shelley (*Frankenstein; or, the modern Prometheus*, 1817), Charlotte Bronte (*Wuthering heights*, 1847) and Christina Rossetti (*Goblin Market*, 1862). The concept of the Female Gothic was coined by Ellen Moers in *Literary women* in 1977, which laid the foundation for a new way of thinking about women and the Gothic genre. Moers claims that the Female Gothic refers to the work of women writers which have elements of the Gothic, from the eighteenth century (1977: 90). Some critical works such as Winter's (1992) "Sexual/textual politics of terror", and Wolff's (1983) "The Radcliffean Gothic model" suggest that the Female Gothic also expresses female independence, as well as criticism of patriarchal, male-dominated structures.

Reading Amos Tutuola's *The palm-wine drinkard* as a Gothic Text

The story of *The palm-wine drinkard* is about the eldest of eight children. His work, as he puts it, is to drink palm-wine. He is an expert who can drink 225 kegs of it a day. He cannot even drink plain water anymore. The Drinkard is supplied by Tapster who unfortunately falls to his death from a palm tree, and because nobody can tap palm-wine as well as Tapster, the narrator sets off for Deads' Town to find his posthumous incarnation. On the way, Drinkard finds a wife, uses all kinds of juju and meets incredible characters such as the Invisible-Pawn, the Hungry-Creature and the Faithful-Mother in the White Tree. Inside the White Tree there is a kind of hotel-cum-hospital with a great ballroom. Scale is immaterial in the forest: all kinds of grotesque things happen to the Drinkard on his quest. It is a daunting and haunting journey until the Drinkard and his wife reach Deads' Town, where they meet with the Tapster. Finally, while the Drinkard clutches his gift of a miraculous, all-providing Egg, they are hounded out of Deads' Town by the Dead Babies.

Several Gothic elements can be observed in *The palm-wine drinkard (TPWD)*. These tropes include death, shape changing, entrapment, monstrosity and distant scary settings. Firstly, Gothic literature is obsessed with death. We find portents of death, unnatural deaths, and a series of deaths, all of which contribute to an atmosphere of horror. Death in Gothic literature is associated with the supernatural. In Gothic literature, death is horrific because it is often not quite the end. This thwarts the human wish for certainty. The Dead Babies in *TPWD* occupy a liminal space; they are at once both alive and dead. They also symbolize a return of the dead to settle scores with the living or to terrorize them, and as such they will have to reach Deads' Town before it can be certain that they are really dead.

The subject of death has often been ignored or repressed in the novel. It is what is unknown, and poses a threat to the Drinkard and his wife, who become the "alives" i.e., undead, when they reach Deads' Town. The impact of death is not really felt and we don't really see sentimental scenes or notice any of the characters mourning a dead person, as in the case of the death of the Tapster; rather, the more gruesome, inexplicable aspects of death are explored. The corporeality of the body is emphasised with gory descriptions of distortions of body parts, such as the people in Deads' Town who walk backward when moving forward with their heads turned to their backs.

In *TPWD* we also encounter shape changing which is the metamorphosis of one being into another being, usually a transformation from a human into a monstrous creature. This trope is quite predominant in *TPWD*, and a typical example is the full-bodied gentleman who, as the story describes, is only a skull who borrows body parts from the forest to become a handsome young man in order to lure young women into the forest to prey on (pp. 18-31). At one point in the story, the Drinkard, with the help of his juju, transforms himself into a big bird to escape sudden death with his wife (p. 40). In the episode of the 'Red People in the Red town' (p. 73), we encounter another fantastic transformation, when the folk of the Red town shape-shift into two red trees in an attempt to flee from the Drinkard, thinking that he is a menace to them (p. 81). It is interesting to note that transformations as a characteristic of the Gothic entail an eerie sense of terror which derives from the transgression from the normal to the supernatural. In English Gothic literature, transformations of characters into other beings can be found in the vampire myth which is given much prominence in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. A good example of such shape-shifting characteristics in African literature can be seen in Martin Owusu's *The story Ananse told*, where the Hunter's wife is actually the stuffed head of a prized antelope.

Entrapment and imprisonment, that is, the sense of there being 'no way out' contributes to the claustrophobic psychology of the Gothic space and the resultant urge to break free from this Gothic space/location. The notion of claustrophobia is closely tied up with that of entrapment. Although it is most often regarded as a consequence of physical entrapment, it can also be generally attributed to a character's sense of helplessness, or

a feeling that one is caught up in some sinister plan or destiny over which one has no control. There are two types of entrapment: physical and mental or psychological.

A recurring type of physical entrapment in the Gothic is that of the protagonist being trapped in a maze of some kind and trying to escape, but inevitably returning to the same spot again and again. In *TPWD*, the Drinkard and his wife find themselves physically ensnared on more than one occasion. At one point, they are not allowed to eat much in the presence of the Half-bodied baby called Zurrji', which means "one who can change into another thing very soon" (p. 32). The Drinkard's wife conceives this baby through a swollen thumb, and they cannot abandon it. They must put up with it and with its gluttonous obsession until they are freed from it by a supernatural trio of Drum, Song and Dance (pp. 31-38), who symbolise a source of deliverance and resistance in African cosmology. Another example of such entrapment can be seen in the episode of the Dead Babies. As the Drinkard and his wife are escaping from the Dead Babies, they are captured by "...a very huge man who had hung a very large bag on his shoulder..." They are thrown into the large bag, in which they become fellow captives with some other wild and horrible/frightful creatures. Next, the huge man makes them (including the Drinkard and his wife) his slaves, until a fight with the other creatures leaves the Drinkard in a swoon. His loss of consciousness eventually becomes their gateway to freedom as the Drinkard's wife revives him (the Drinkard) with a plant which she sees the other creatures use to revive themselves (pp. 102-106).

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Psychological entrapment is manifested in the form of inescapable, agonizing tensions within a character's mind. The final episode of *TPWD* exemplifies this form of entrapment, where the Drinkard is faced with the dilemma of either punishing or feeding the people of his town after they had smashed and destroyed the magic egg which was given to him by the Tapster in Dead's Town (pp. 120-124).

The element of monstrosity is also one of the most important gothic tropes in *TPWD*. The monster and the notion of monstrosity serve a useful critical and moral function in the Gothic tradition as a composite term for a collection of negative and socially unacceptable features. As overt displays of vice, monsters present and caution readers against excessive indulgence in improper behaviour – thus, emphasizing the values and benefits of morally upright and honourable conduct and evoking repulsive reactions to such bad behaviour. A monster in Gothic literature symbolises deformity and irregularity. In literary terms, monstrosity involves works that cross the boundaries of reason and morality, articulated through excessive and viciously improper scenes and characters. The episodes of the Half-bodied Baby (p. 31); the Red Fish and Red Bird in the Red town (p. 78); and the hungry creature who always cries for food (p. 107), are stark manifestations of the Gothic trope of monstrosity in *TPWD*.

The Gothic location is the final trope which we will focus on in *TPWD*. The Gothic text is set largely in distant and gloomy landscapes, which isolate the individual in a mystical atmosphere. The setting helps in the development of the themes in the Gothic text and

it very often symbolises chaos and disorder; it is a place where all kinds of unimaginable things exist and take place. Hence, it is only when characters in a Gothic text return to normal society from the distant and vast Gothic landscape that we find order again. In *TPWD*, when the Drinkard decides to venture out and look for his Tapster in Deads' Town, he has little knowledge of how to get there. He journeys through miles of dark, gloomy, frightening forests, and encounters multiple dangers.

One instance of the Gothic location is found in the episode involving the Faithful Mother in the White Tree, who rescues the Drinkard and his wife and gives them a period of respite to recover from the injuries that they had suffered at the hands of the creatures in the Unreturnabl' Heaven's Town (pp. 59-72). It is interesting to note that one can only get into the Faithful Mother's domain by entering a white tree that has hands and eyes, and thereafter, one becomes dazzled by the magical appearance of the Faithful Mother's 'big' home. The uncanny means by which the Drinkard and his wife get into the Faithful Mother's abode heightens the Gothic effect. The same can be seen earlier in *TPWD*, when the Drinkard decides to follow the Skull which turns into a Complete Gentleman to rescue the lady who will eventually become his wife. Generally, the whole setting of *TPWD* is pervaded by a frightening, distant landscape, which together with other Gothic elements, helps to create an African Gothic text.

Reading Bessie Head's *Maru* as a Gothic text

In Head's *Maru*, Margaret Cadmore, as Masarwa woman, is treated as an ethnic outsider in Dilepe, a village in a powerful Tswana chieftdom. She learns to fill the blankness of her identity with creative and loving deeds. Her unspoken love for Moleka, the first man she meets in her new home in a remote village of Botswana, is not fulfilled. However, the future chief of this remote Tswana village, the eponymous Maru, recognises her inner beauty and originality, and proposes to her a love and commitment she cannot refuse. Unlike *TPWD*, *Maru* lacks the supernatural elements that characterise the Gothic, such as transformations and shape changing, or a focus on death (of which there is slight mention made with regard to Margaret's biological mother) and the afterlife. This, however, does not detract from the fact that there are some Gothic tropes which can be observed in *Maru*.

In the first place, there is the Gothic trope of the woman in distress, in which the female characters in Gothic novels often encounter events that leave them in constant depressive moods, fainting, terrified, screaming, and/or sobbing. A lonely, preoccupied, and subjugated heroine is often the central figure of the novel, and her sufferings are presented as arising out of oppression from an influential tyrannical male. Normally, the woman is made to marry someone she does not love, as in the case of Isabella in Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764) and Elizabeth in Bessie Head's *A question of power* (1974). This Gothic trope is well exemplified by the relationship between Maru and Margaret. Margaret can be seen as an example of the woman in distress. This is because

from the onset of the story, she is an outsider, which makes it particularly difficult for her to be accepted by the people around her. She is a Masarwa, who is trying her best to fit into Tswana society. She is also a woman in the extremely patriarchal society of Dilepe village.

Moreover, Margaret is amorously pursued by two of the most influential men in the village; Moleka, whom she wilfully loves but is not able to marry, and Maru, who is the one who manipulates events to find his way into her life. To Maru, Margaret is not a wife but instead a prize in the rivalry and power struggles between him and Moleka. He explicitly confirms this when he states that: "I only married you because you were the only woman in the world who did not want to be important. But you are not important to me, as I sometimes say you are" (p. 6).

Thus, it is appropriate that the opening (but chronological ending) scene of the novel is of Maru preparing flower beds to grow yellow daisies, "because they were the only flowers which resembled the face of his wife and the sun of his love" (p. 1). Indeed, Margaret is no different from the daisies which Maru cultivates and transplants, as they move and settle far away from Dilepe Village. The reason is that ornamental plants like daisies are cultivated and used for purposes deemed fit by the one who cultivates them, and like the daisies, Margaret does not have the freedom to grow as she wills. This implies that Margaret's autonomy has been viciously curtailed, and that Maru has a hand in this curtailment. Just as he controls the daisies which he cultivates, prunes and waters to his whims and caprices, so does he cultivate and prune Margaret to his satisfaction, leaving her no room to make a choice.

It is said of Maru that: "He really made people do everything he said they would do, and could create such a tangle of events with his spies that it was simpler and less harassing to carry out his order" (p. 67). He is a manipulator and he achieves whatever he sets his mind to do: "... nothing was personal to him. In the end, the subjection of his whole life to his inner gods was an intellectual process. Very little feeling was involved. His methods were cold, calculating and ruthless" (p. 68). Maru is obviously the tyrannical, self-seeking male who does everything in his power to frustrate the aspirations of Margaret and Moleka to live together as a married couple.

Female Gothic works usually present a female protagonist who is pursued and ill-treated by a villainous patriarchal figure in unfamiliar settings and terrifying landscapes. In her work *"The character in the veil: imagery of the surface in the Gothic novel"*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick explains that for women in the Gothic novel, life always begins with a blank. The mother, if known, has disappeared temporarily, or is unknown and dead, while an aunt or foster-mother may substitute. While achieving a considerable degree of terror and chills, the Female Gothic usually eschews the more overt and graphic scenes of violence and sexual perversion found in the literature of horror, often opting for the "explained supernatural" – a genre of the Gothic in which the laws of everyday

reality remain intact and permit an explanation or even a dismissal of allegedly supernatural phenomena. In contrast to *TPWD*, *Maru* does not portray graphic scenes of violence. The only hint of violence is seen in the stand-off between Maru and Moleka over the retrieval of a mattress from Margaret's home (pp. 54-55). Although Maru is the eponymous character, he does not come out as the hero of the novel. It is rather Margaret who emerges as the protagonist or the heroine. Thus, considering its Gothic characteristics and its female author, *Maru* shares much with Female Gothic texts.

Secondly, the romance paradigm as a Gothic trope is also evident in *Maru*. The Gothic narrative very often is a mirror and subversion of the romance paradigm. The romance framework involves a (relatively) young hero undergoing a transformative experience in overcoming the obstacles that stand in the way of his attaining the heroine of his dreams, the young lady. In Head's *Maru*, this is exemplified by the character of Moleka, who falls in love with Margaret, but is not able to achieve his aim of marrying her, as he is manipulated through Maru's cruel intervention into giving her up.

The main obstacle in the Gothic romance usually takes the form of a 'senex iratus' ('angry old man'), often the young lady's father, who thwarts the suitor's desires of a marital union with her. The hero is then sent into exile but he subsequently returns home to wed her. This does not happen to Moleka. While borrowing from the romance, the Gothic is also its perverse opposite or double. So, we observe in *Maru* that Moleka is prevented by Maru from realizing his desire to marry Margaret, and that the latter, by extension, represents a father figure to Margaret because of the way he dominates and manipulates her into marrying him. The Gothic typically ends not in marriage, but in an aberrant situation where the hero (in this case, Moleka) does not attain his desired union with the heroine. The marked absence of any possibility of a blissful union with a young lady negates the issue of genuine love and courtship of the romance.

Another characteristic of the Gothic found in *Maru* is the concept of the hero/villain. The hero/villain is not intrinsically wicked, but he is promethean and rebellious. He is constantly pushing the boundaries of societal and ethical constraints; the hero/villain is the archetypal over-reacher, a figure unable to accept human limitations. This Gothic trope is exemplified by Maru, with regard to how he navigates and manipulates the events in Dilepe village. He feels that by marrying Margaret, the perception of the villagers about the Masarwa would change, despite the manipulation he resorts to in order to achieve his goal. The danger of the hero/villain lies not merely in his evil deeds, his malevolence or even his defiance of conventional moral and legal restraints, but in his function as a medium through which the reader may indulge in the same transgressions. It is significant that Head never articulates what it really is that Maru has done wrong. By leaving these transgressions deliberately unspoken, Bessie Head invites the reader to visualise what Maru could possibly have done and by doing so, effectively become Maru. Ultimately, however, the otherness of the hero/villain results only in alienation

and distancing, as can be seen when Maru decides to renounce his claim to the chieftaincy of Dilepe village and move faraway with Margaret, leaving the people of Dilepe stunned by his elopement with Margaret (p. 121).

Landscape also plays an important role in defining *Maru* as a Gothic novel. In early Gothic texts, such as in the novels of Ann Radcliffe, protagonists (often young, sheltered and naïve girls) undertake journeys to far-off, remote, exotic lands which are portrayed as realms of peril, overindulgence, and the breakdown of the controls and restrictions of the domestic and “civilized” space. Thus, these exotic lands – often stereotypical patriarchal societies, whose inhabitants are portrayed as volatile, treacherous, and governed by uncontrolled passions – become a symbol for the inner landscape of restriction, exposure to the other, lure, the finding of a new balance, and a return from self searching.

In terms of psychological processes, the Gothic journey and the projection of internal significance onto an external landscape might be read as various forms of depiction and resolution – the ebb and flow of life processes such as: aging and the life cycle; desire and sexuality; tensions between two opposing selves; and the quest for self understanding. For instance, Margaret’s posting to the “remote inland village,” Dilepe, enables her to come to terms with the discrimination and prejudice which she encounters daily, especially during an encounter with the head teacher and some other teachers at the Dilepe School, where she has been posted to go and teach. At the school, she is labelled as not fit for the job because she is Masarwa (pp. 35-40).

One can also identify the missing mother as a Gothic trope in the above-mentioned novel. The typical mother in a Gothic text is either absent or dead. If the mother is alive and well, such as Lucy’s mother in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, she is associated with the incapacity to carry out her maternal duties. The typical Gothic mother has to be killed or must die in order for the social and domestic instability that underpin the Gothic text to flourish. The suppression of the mother allows the progression of the narrative in the Gothic mode. The missing mother also serves as a social commentary where her absence and silence highlight the repression of women within an overwhelming patriarchal regime like that of Dilepe village in *Maru*. At the same time, the missing mother is a signifier for the stranglehold of men over the legal and physical self-agency of the women in Gothic texts. Margaret suffers the same fate in Head’s *Maru*, where her biological mother dies at the time of her birth. Her foster mother, Margaret Cadmore, the wife of the missionary whose name she bears, also leaves her to return to England. From then onward, she is completely alone, and has no one to turn to in times of need. Indeed, the absence of her foster mother opens Margaret up to threats which she had never encountered: “It was hard to imagine life without her. The future looked lonely” (p. 16). Finally, the Gothic trope of entrapment can also be identified in *Maru*. As already mentioned, entrapment can be generally attributed to a character’s sense of helplessness, or a feeling that one is caught up in some sinister plan or destiny over which one has no

control. Margaret is first of all caught up in a situation of abject othering, because she is of the San people of the Kalahari desert who are derogatorily referred to as the Masarwa by the Tswana, who consider them to be the lowliest of human races. This is evidenced by the narrator's assertion that: "Of all things that are said of oppressed people, the worst things are said and done to the Bushmen – the San or the Masarwa" (p. 7). Thus, Margaret becomes entrapped in prejudicial notions about her people. These prejudices inevitably affect her relationship with Moleka and lead to her eventual capitulation to Maru, which seems at first to be the best option for her, but which actually plunges her deeper into physical entrapment. Thus, it is quite obvious that the perceptions and stereotypical behaviours of the people of Dilepe village become an inescapable prison for Margaret.

Conclusion: the Gothic in African literature

The emergence of the Gothic in African literature may be a way of reconstructing the otherness that has been projected on Africans by the West. It could be seen as a way of telling the world about a more mysterious and barbaric cosmos than the one that the Western world locates on the African continent. The Gothic may also be a way to invest Africa with a living history, and to frame stories of hardship enacted in an African landscape. Politically, Gothicism in African literature may be a means of rebelling against the western canon. Projecting the African Gothic, together with its own idiosyncratic characteristics which have roots in African folklore, defines the genre to suit African conceptions and cosmology. In asserting its own pendant function, the Gothic in African literature seems to claim some sort of political independence for itself without being restricted by western literary boundaries. The Gothic in African literature may well have played a part in the process which has reversed views of otherness, especially with regard to Africa.

It is evident from our Gothic readings of *Maru* and *The Palm-wine drinkard* that Bessie Head and Amos Tutuola engage in sometimes subtle yet marvelously sublime Gothic discourse in their novels. Such Gothic readings of African literature can provide fertile ground for the exploration and critical analysis of transgressive social behaviours or perceived societal disorders on the continent, in the diaspora, and beyond. Such an approach can assist literary critics in coming to terms with perceptions about the supernatural, oppression and otherness anywhere on the planet. Finally, such Gothic readings can help critics and readers alike to understand the violence and cruelty which people perpetrate on one another and the sense of mortality that prompts such actions to become phantoms which continue to haunt us.

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SEISMIC POETICS IN YANICK LAHENS'S *FAILLES*

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At 4:53 pm on January 12, 2010, Yanick Lahens, celebrated Haitian Francophone author and resident of Port-au-Prince, is at home with her nephew Noah when the earthquake strikes, as she describes to the reader in her *récit* entitled *Failles*, which appeared in October of that year, published in Paris with Sabine Wespieser éditeur. The hybrid tale of reconstruction she crafts, a narrative mosaic of characters, genres, and stories, begins and ends with the *mise en abîme* of a love story. The fairy-tale romance of an enduring affection for the city itself opens the first chapter, entitled “Il était une fois une ville” (Lahens, 2010a: 11). The first chapter, like the last one of the book, closes upon the image of a rendezvous between two young lovers in the heights of the Pacot quarter. It will be revealed in the interim that the couple’s nascent passion has been overtaken by events; it was first kindled in what has since become a phantom capital city, palimpsest to the topography of ruin that now overlays it. The story of Nathalie and Guillaume is a tale born of disaster, but sparked by resilience. Their romance, along with the *récit* that enfolds it, bears the stamp of cataclysmic disaster. The fault lines that craze the surface of *Failles* form an integral part of its construction, bringing into view a pathway of stepping stones that lead forward to survival across the metaphorical divides that fissure the Haitian landscape. The aftershocks of memory and invention organize themselves into islands that pattern the Caribbean imaginary, framing an urgent call to action that will set Haiti on a new track, away from its quixotic reality and exotic reputation as a country steeped in history and culture, but perpetually dancing its way through misfortune.

Lahens employs the novelistic subgenre of the *récit* to chronicle her brush with death and encounter with catastrophic social collapse. The *récit* represents an extensively theorized form of writing increasingly popular in France and the Francophone world since the early twentieth century, thanks in no small part to André Gide’s influential recourse to the genre in his 1902 work, *L’immoraliste*. Typically, the *récit* stands as a short, direct, and personal account akin to the novella, undiluted by extraneous characters or events. Over time, the genre has suffered both from being too broadly and too narrowly defined, sometimes used interchangeably with the term *roman*, at others recruited to stand in opposition to its sibling as a short narrative more concerned with the art of relating the story than with the enactment of events. Gérard Genette’s seminal series of

investigations into the *récit*, including primarily his initial 1966 foray “Frontières du récit” in *Communications*, his ground-breaking 1972 analysis “Discours du récit” in *Figures III*, and its 1983 update and sequel *Nouveau discours du récit*, stands as a monumental exploration of the term, which, bracketed by the two others members of its triadic formulation, *histoire*, the storyline, and *narration*, the act of narrating, refers to the resulting narrative itself, considered in its discursive aspect.

Lahens’s *récit*, inasmuch as it reflects its billing by presenting the aspect of a discursive narrative, may thus be held to reflect the tremor that initiated it as a structural incorporation of a seismic activity within its own account. This places the *récit*, rather like the love story it enfolds, within a temporal dislocation—an anachronism of sorts. The couple’s fledgling romance is terminally interrupted, overtaken by events in their author’s life, just as their relationship is about to venture into intimacy; their premature end coincides with the impasse reached in Lahens’s novelistic project. The building where the two were to have their first tryst has since collapsed in the real world. When the couple first appear in the topsy turvy world of *Failles*, they do so *in absentia*, as their story lies buried under the landmark Lahens had chosen for it, destroyed by the quake along with Lahens’s inner world: the future lovers have been consigned to oblivion beneath the author’s “*décombres intérieurs*” (Lahens, 2010a: 20). The end of the characters’ lives does not, however, coincide with that of their existence. They belong to the ruins of their author’s inner space, to be re-membered and resuscitated piecemeal, living anew, as precariously as vicariously, in the achronological world of the *récit*, before finally moving beyond its frame into their own 2013 novel, as yet unwritten.

As Nathalie and Guillaume emerge from their spectral existence into the makeshift landscape of *Failles*, they escape the specters of despair that have haunted them, to become nearly as good as new, “presque comme des êtres de chair” (Lahens, 2010a: 20). The romance itself may now proceed, but will do so by fits and starts, gaining little traction in its intermittent returns to the fractured surface of the *récit*. The final return to their story in *Failles* will, however, punctuate the end of the latter text by opening a potential timeline leading toward the future. The couple’s passionate new tryst overwrites their disastrous former assignation, now securely reassigned to an anonymous building in the Pacot heights and to an equally unknown, but hopeful prospect of fulfillment. Like the romance it enfolds, the *récit* is an improvised narrative. Unlike the former, *Faille*’s quaking structure echoes calamity with the voice of a latter-day Cassandra, self-reflexively predicting its own implosion; trapped in a temporal antinomy, it heralds the temblor from which it was generated.

By granting the last word to the romance, the *récit* seeks to extricate itself from a vicious cycle of misfortune. If Lahens’s first person narrator admits to doubting the efficacy of her writing, she is certain that the world about her must change:

“Le moment historique demande autre chose. Un projet de société. Une autre manière de faire de la politique, de produire, et de tisser de nouveaux rapports entre les gens” (Lahens, 2010a: 156).

Genette’s achievement in enshrining the modern use of the term *récit* in the field of narratology has its counterpart in Maurice Blanchot’s philosophical description of the subgenre in his writing, principally in the 1959 work, *Le livre à venir*. Blanchot subverts readerly expectation in his exemplary reading of Odysseus’s encounter with the Sirens in Book 12 of Homer’s *The Odyssey*. In an analysis that foreshadows Lahens’s narrative art, account becomes event, past becomes future, and repulsion becomes attraction. These are the interrelated preconditions for the *récit*’s coming into existence:

Le récit n’est pas la relation de l’événement, mais cet événement même, l’approche de cet événement, le lieu où celui-ci est appelé à se produire, événement encore à venir et par la puissance attirante duquel le récit peut espérer, lui aussi, se réaliser. (Blanchot, 1959: 14)

Consequence becomes precursor and the protagonist Ulysses becomes Homer the author, at least within the verbal space of the *récit*. Blanchot thus depicts a reversible environment in which History’s linear and hierarchical structure is constantly and consistently usurped, and in which hope is conjured from the embrace of despair. Circe’s prediction of Odysseus’s encounter with the Sirens and her admonitions to him will cause the Sirens’ song to be cast on deaf ears, and their trap to fail. Author of his own destiny, Odysseus alone will listen to the song, but in a trap of his own devising, strapped fast to the mast of his ship.

Blanchot likens *Le temps retrouvé*, the final volume of Marcel Proust’s masterpiece *A la recherche du temps perdu*, and published posthumously in 1927, to the transformative potential of the song of Odysseus’s Sirens. In this work, Proust finds confirmation of his vocation as a writer, an affirmation that Blanchot characterizes as both absurd and essential, denoting the integration of time into the space of the imagination, where metamorphosis can occur both at once and little by little: “*aussitôt quoique peu à peu*” (Blanchot, 1959: 22). The temporal dislocation to which the fault lines of Lahens’s *récit* grant access may be viewed from the direction of Blanchot’s formulation as an operative principle of metamorphosis at work within the environment of the text.

[...] ce lointain et cette distance qui constituent le milieu et le principe des métamorphoses de ce que Proust appelle métaphores, là où il ne s’agit plus de faire de la psychologie, mais où au contraire il n’y a plus d’intériorité, car tout ce qui est intérieur s’y déploie au-dehors, y prend la forme d’une image. (Blanchot, 1959: 23)

In an article penned for the French center-left daily *Libération* in the days following the city’s annihilation, “*Haïti ou la santé du malheur*”, Lahens, will view Haiti’s metamorphoses as a Protean attempt to escape a steady rain of disasters. While acknowledging

the devastation wrought by the tremor, she takes the earthquake to be a metaphor for Haiti itself, a country that has on so many occasions had to overcome adversity by starting over. The piece appeared on January 19, 2010, and was picked up by Haiti's own daily, *Le Nouvelliste*, on January 30. In it, Lahens questions why Haiti should always fall prey to calamity. But for the courageous solidarity and dignity of the Haitian people, she maintains, the apocalypse would be at hand:

Il ne manquerait que les trompettes de l'Ange de l'Apocalypse pour annoncer la fin du monde si le courage, la solidarité et l'immense patience des uns et des autres n'étaient venus nous rattacher au plus tenu de l'essentiel... (Lahens, 2010a: 69)

Citing Camus's comment on World War II in a 1950 letter to Serge Leber, "*Nous avons maintenant la familiarité du pire. Cela nous aide à lutter encore*" (Camus, 1950), she explains that experience of the worst life has to offer helps one to soldier on.

Lahens's choice to include the article in *Failles* is a strategic move that will ultimately help the ramshackle construction of the *récit* to cohere around a central message, but the very robustness of the article's conceptual frame, and its election of Camus as its *éminence grise* makes it appear at first blush as a piece more attuned to a French than to a Haitian audience, an impression soon corrected by its subsequent appearance in *Le Nouvelliste*. This is familiar territory for Lahens. Her literary background has been heavily influenced by her French education, her literary career has taken off in Paris, and even her own appearance, as she ruefully admits in *Failles*, is so foreign that she is not always taken for Haitian in her own country:

«Tu es américaine?

Non

Tu es martiniquaise?

Non

Tu es africaine?

Non

Alors tu es de l'Oxfam?» (Lahens, 2010a: 106)

Yet at this moment in time, Lahens could not identify more completely with the plight of her countrymen and women. Despite her nod to the French author, her focus remains fixed solely on Haitian remedies for Haiti's dilemma. From her perspective, chance has willed it that Haiti should stand at the crossroads of history, betrayed by the crosswinds of postcolonial ambitions and agendas, it has failed to establish rights of citizenship for its people. Her own clarion call is addressed not to outside aid, but to the "*créativité lumineuse*" (Lahens, 2010a: 72) that Haitians summon to transform and transcend their suffering, to a return to health that can be snatched from the heart of misfortune.

The article is remarkable in that it is written for a major French newspaper at the invitation of Parisian editor Sabine Wespieser, who will ultimately publish *Failles*, yet the tone is

quite hostile to both French and American involvement at a moment when international aid is ramping up at full throttle, a phenomenon Lahens will liken to the drug trade, to a dependency on cocaine: “un *crack* qui s’appelle l’aide internationale” (Lahens, 2010a: 150). Lahens will agree to write the article for *Libération*, but turns down a television appearance on French television, TV5’s “La Grande Librairie.” She also refuses an invitation from the University of Potsdam in Germany, and one from the organizers of the PACA Prize (Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur), for which she is a finalist. Her place, she decrees, is at home in Port-au-Prince, in protective solidarity with Haiti. Her ascent to literary stardom is halted by the apocalyptic arrival of the earthquake, which introduces a hiatus in the round of interviews and awards, and a metamorphosis, in Blanchot’s sense of the term, of her own writing, which mirrors her ambitions for change in Haiti, seen through the prismatic timeframe of the *récit*, where past is both prologue and afterword.

Lahens reveals in *Failles* her great affection for the star-studded Caribbean night, where the sky warps time and space, seeming to bend down and place the stars within reach. On the night of January 12, she does not gaze even once at the night, saying, “*Il m’aurait paru tellement déplacé, faux et arrogant au-dessus du malheur*” (Lahens, 2010a: 29). In this sentiment she echoes Derek’s Walcott’s bleak admonition “save the starlight for victories, we can’t afford it” (Walcott, 1979: 48). His 1979 poem “The star-apple kingdom,” according to Edward Baugh in his 2006 work on the poet, is written about post-colonial Jamaica and modeled in part on Michael Manley’s ultimately flawed vision of democracy for the island. In another context the Great House that overlooks parish Trelawny might have evoked King Christophe’s ill-fated palace of *Sans-Souci*, a magnificent pastiche of Frederick II’s residence, where Christophe would dispense justice under a star-apple tree, and which was ruined in the 1842 8.1 magnitude earthquake, along with much of Cap-Haïtien.

Later in *Failles*, the moon will rejoin the stars, and a shooting star will traverse the Caribbean night, signs that the time of trauma and overriding need for solidarity is receding. The fractured and polyphonic voices of disaster that have brought new direction and creativity to Lahens’s writing have played their part, and will now accelerate her momentarily interrupted ascent to stardom. Her romance novel *Guillaume et Nathalie* will appear in 2013, and in 2014, still publishing with Sabine Wespieser, she will win acclaim for her latest novel *Bain de lune*, since translated into English as *Moonbath*, which wins the coveted Prix Fémina, one of the five major literary prizes in France.

The expedient of reading *Failles* and its place in Lahens’s career as a writer through the lens of her earlier article is one that the *récit* itself proposes by incorporating the text as one of its chapters. *Failles* itself, however, is often surprisingly light-hearted; tragedy and comedy rub shoulders as reality and narrative collide in unexpected ways. Lahens is able to lament the premature fate of her characters Nathalie and Guillaume even as she engages in the gruesome task of recovering bodies from the rubble that has claimed

the lives of those around her. The juxtaposition of composition and decomposition, while grotesque, is far from gratuitous.

A seismic poetics is identifiably at work in Lahens's 2010 contribution to the genre of the disaster narrative, and it depends as much on humor as it does on solemnity. *Failles* is a hybrid tale, a work part chronicle, part lyrical description, part romance novel, part newspaper article, part traumatic writing and part, no doubt the major part, testimonial account. It is both comically fragmented and desperately dismembered, reflecting the reality it emulates. The mutilated body of the text, like the one displayed across five canvases at the exhibition of the Haitian painter Killy's work at the Ateliers Jérôme, creates aesthetic pleasure, but also an awareness of its own insufficiency to effect radical change.

Lahens's reaction to disaster is to align her writing processes with the traumatic events foregrounded in her work. The tattered fabric of threatened existence propels the artistic texture of its portrayal into rapid transformation, forming a kaleidoscope of words and images like that which assails the author at the moment of the quake. When time stands still, then fractures into chaos, writing assumes a mimetic aspect that is both protective and proactive. The *récit* assimilates the figures of catastrophe into the Caribbean imaginary instantly, but also over time, according to Blanchot's formula. It is a counterintuitive embrace that is immediately successful as a powerful strategy of resistance at the aesthetic level but potentially flawed as an agent for social and political renewal.

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The celebration of Valentine's day provides the *récit* with an alternative viewing platform from which to observe its own creative processes. On the streets of Port-au-Prince, Thanatos and Eros rival for the attention of young people in quest of romance: "*Le 12 janvier a engendré un savoir sans pareil sur la mort. Un savoir que quelquefois seule la jouissance peut approcher. Mort et jouissance sont si proches dans cette nuit...*" (Lahens, 2010a: 126). As the night dissolves into laughter, dancing, flowers, and chocolates hold at bay, for a while at least, the terrors of January, but the celebration is also a manifestation of the invasive forces of globalization that sap Haiti's cultural resiliency.

In *Failles*, chapters align in disconnected chains that appear to describe a chronological arc, but bring discontinuity and uncertainty to the narrative trajectory. In this way, the *récit* engages in the high risk strategy of escaping the clutches of history, but at the expense of jeopardizing the future. As Daniel Just attests in his article on Blanchot's ambitions for the *récit*, "The politics of the novel and Maurice Blanchot's theory of the *récit*, 1954-1964", the stakes are considerable and the outcome considerably less than certain:

This might be a necessary, but nevertheless a paradoxical, transaction in the heart of the récit: to erase history (facts, shared communal past) in

order to expose intersubjectivity (the fact of togetherness and communality). Indeed, a rather dubious project to silence stories and a history in order to get them back renewed. (Just, 2008: 137)

In the paradoxical environment of the *récit*, wagers are raised and risk proportionately downplayed. Parody quickly emerges as a driving force of the narrative as genre distinctions are overcome, and high seriousness is tempered with levity. To return to Blanchot's language, the quest for the essential self brings absurdity in its wake.

While sitting in her living room with her nephew, the author sees a frog; it comes out of nowhere and jumps into a flower pot: "*Une grenouille sortie de nulle part saute dans le bac d'une plante*" (Lahens, 2010a: 21). Quite unaware of the premonitory import of this bizarre event, she goes over to investigate, calling for her nephew Noah to come look. It is at this moment that she hears a roaring sound, that of a different beast entirely, "*un grondement sourd, le rugissement d'une bête*" (Lahens, 2010a: 22), and a split second later, a vast swathe of the city is obliterated by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake. She blanks out for a moment, and finds herself sheltering in a doorway, where, for the long seconds that the tremor lasts, she is assailed by a stream of thoughts and images. Her home and family emerge from the earthquake relatively unscathed, books spill from a bookcase down the basement stairs in disorder. Stepping through her front gate, she finds herself in a different reality, surrounded by the horror of death, bodies lying in the street, buildings collapsed, people screaming for help. Everyone sets out to the rescue. Reality has been transformed, and the *récit* to come has already taken shape, according to the principle "*aussitôt quoique peu à peu.*" Noah, Lahens's nephew, in an unwitting and ludicrous nod to Caribbean chaos theory and Antonio Benítez-Rojo's *The repeating island*, remains persuaded that the home's generator is the true culprit, its vibrations generating a butterfly effect in addition to its electrical output.

Intertextual incongruity also surfaces in the form of contemporaneous promotional piece written by Lahens for *Libération* in the month in which *Failles* is published: "*Haïti, sans l'exotisme du malheur: la semaine de Yanick Lahens.*" The appearance of this fluff piece, in ironic mimicry of the darker world of the *récit*, announces that the rising star is back in town, and that she is assured of running water. The article goes on to detail Lahens's activities for every day of her week back in Paris. In the more spontaneously chaotic montage of *Failles*, on the other hand, individual chapters feature only parts of Lahens's weekend. Her Saturday mornings spent with friends ruminating about the social and political climate in Haiti in the light of current events involve broad-ranging discussions that are not, however, safe from the playful eye of the author. Rooted in the tradition of the *lodyans*, (Lahens, 2010a: 81), which translates poorly from the creole into "audience", the discussions hark back to an oral narrative that explains in comic vein to its listeners the world around them.

Lahens does not find humor everywhere in her *récit*. The article for *Libération*, “*Haïti ou la santé du malheur*”, enters the divided world of *Faïlle*’s proliferating narrative shards to take its place as the moral center for the work. The term *faïlle* figures prominently in the article as a recurring focal point of Haiti’s serial misfortunes:

Hasard géologique qui nous a fixés sur la faille dantesque des séismes, hasard géographique qui nous a placés sur la route des cyclones en nous sommant, en sommant le monde de repenser à chacune de ces catastrophes, les causes profondes de la pauvreté. (Lahens, 2010a: 69).

Betrayed on all sides by geographical coordinates that have placed Haiti at the heart of unstable geological and geopolitical forces, the country is also fractured from within, as Lahens attests in her ensuing discussion to the rift that has historically separated the poor from the elites in Haitian society along racial lines that date back to the years following independence in 1804:

Je ne connais pas de faille historique et sociale plus grande que celle-là en Haïti. C’est elle qui fabrique l’exclusion depuis plus de deux siècles. [...] Elle structure notre manière d’être au monde. Elle façonne notre imaginaire, ordonne nos fantasmes de couleur de peau, de classe. (Lahens, 2010a: 77).

The somber tone of this commentary sets it apart from the anecdotes that surround it. By placing the *Libération* article at the center of her writing as a model of sustained critical reflection, Lahens provides a kernel of hope that radiates through the splintered storylines arranged around its core, countering an apparent narrative disarray that mimics the earthquake’s mockery of the earth that created it.

In *Faïlles*, Lahens succeeds in grounding her writing within an ephemeral microclimate of massive disruption, from the epicenter of fracture, at the intersecting axes of the geological and the geopolitical. The narrative design that structures her *récit* as an instantiation of seismic and social upheaval serves an immediate purpose, in generating a text that confines time to the moment of the quake and its immediate aftermath, and freezes the frame on the image of the earthquake as a metaphor for Haiti. The moment is propitious for a metamorphosis of the island that would obliterate a past replete with missteps and misfortunes. This bold narrative venture, as Just cautions us, and as Lahens herself suspects, is uncertain of success over the longer term. Its message of humor and hope, envisioning a new start for Haiti, while inspirational, is nonetheless situational, depending as it does on the transformative potential of a single, hugely destructive event.

Although Haiti is still far from recovered from the 2010 earthquake, it has since had to contend with the loss of life and damage caused by Hurricane Matthew in 2016. The window of opportunity to rebuild community spirit and solidarity, cracked open by the earthquake, is unlikely to remain so indefinitely. And the end, history may have the last laugh about Lahens’s finely-balanced wager for the future in *Faïlles*. The notoriously

oblivious and fickle reading public attracted by the never-ending Siren song of disaster narratives, is likely to remain deaf to its implications and move on from Lahens's principled and strongly-voiced appeal for fundamental change in Haiti, preferring the grisly spectacle of literary phoenixes rising from fresher ashes.

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CHRIST IN AFRICA: A LOOK AT THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA BASED ON *THE TEMPEST*, *ARROW OF GOD*, AND *DEVIL ON THE CROSS*

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Christianity at present has an estimated 2.2 billion adherents, almost a 32% of the world's population. Some groups have hybridized it with their own religions, for example the Zulu in South Africa. Because of its invasion, colonization, and finally its liberation from European empires, Africa experienced the arrival, propagation and hybridization of Christianity with African cultures. A great way to explore the role of Christianity in Africa is by looking at literature by African authors and literature about Africa. Through both of these literatures, one can explore the conscious and unconscious effects Christianity on Africa. In this article, William Shakespeare's *The tempest*, Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the cross* will be used to do this, mainly by analyzing and comparing the manifestations of power, acceptance of it and resistance to it in these three texts. Before engaging in the discussion, it is pertinent to point out that there is relatively limited historical scholarship about the influence of Christianity on African cultures. African historian Terence Ranger states that

“[a]n oddity of most recent historiography of early mission Christianity is that it has greatly overplayed the manifest political and economic factors in its expansion and greatly underplayed the cultural and the religious...[Even the formal church historians have] hardly discussed the impact of missionaries and their African catechists on the cultural imagination of Africa” (p. 36).

As Christianity expanded throughout the continent, so did conflict. Most missionaries saw African religion and culture as heretical or blasphemous. Jean and John Comaroff, professors of African and African American Studies and of Anthropology at Harvard University, exemplify this in their account of Christian Missionary Samuel Broadbent who believed that African “Native Dance[s]” used for rainmaking were “a critical impediment to the spread of the gospel; almost every missionary was compelled to act against it” (p. 4). One of the fundamental tenets of most Christian sects is monogamy, which was received with resistance by many ethnic groups who tradition-

ally practice polygamy. Despite resistance from both sides, once Africa was formally liberated from the European metropolises, Christianity had already embedded its roots deeply into African culture.

The more power a religion has the more influence it has and the more it can expand. The only way for a religion to get power is through the number of followers it has. On some occasions that power gets abused, as for example in Shakespeare's classic play *The tempest*. Though this play does not specify its setting, it is assumed that it takes place at an island in the Mediterranean Sea. In the play, we find a character by the name of Prospero, the Duke of Milan. It must be noted that even though the play never depicts Prospero as a Christian, he is the Duke of Milan, which is a Christian city. Besides being royalty, Prospero has the ability to use magic to bend nature to his will. At the beginning of the play, he creates a storm and a desperate mariner screams, "All lost! To prayers, to prayers! All lost! (Shakespeare, 1.1.52). A second instance where Prospero uses his power is to ensure no one in the boat is hurt. He states "The direful spectacle of the wreck, which touched, The very virtue of compassion in thee, I have with such provision in mine art, So safely ordered that there is no soul – No, not so much perdition as an hair, Betid to any creature in the vessel" (1.2.33-38). Here he plays the role of a pseudo-sadistic savior. Another instance where Prospero abuses his power is when he undoes the witch Sycorax's spell referring to it in this egotistical and boastful way: "It was a torment, To lay upon the damned, which Sycorax Could not again undo. It was mine art, When I arrived and heard thee, that made gape, The pine and let thee out" (1.2.343-347). Sycorax and her son Caliban are often seen as symbolic of the peoples colonized by the 'Christian' imperial powers in Europe. After freeing Ariel from Sycorax's imprisonment he opts to keep him as a servant until he finds a way to leave the island. When they arrived in Africa, the Christian colonizers with their new technologies and the Christian missionaries with their claim of being chosen by God felt a Prospero-like power over those whose land and souls they came to conquer.

Similar to Shakespeare's *Tempest*, Achebe's *Arrow of God* also demonstrates abuse of power by those who claim to be the shocktroops of Christianity. This novel's plot recounts how an Igbo community confronts Christian missionaries and colonialism. In this novel we encounter Mr. Goodcountry, the leader of the European descended Missionaries and Oduche's teacher. Being in a position of power, he uses his influence as means to weaken the traditional python-god Ulu's power. A first example of this is when he instructs Oduche, the son of Ezulu, to kill the sacred python "[did] not God tell Adam to crush its [serpents] head after it had deceived his wife?" (Achebe: 49). Even though the python is not killed, Mr. Goodcountry's orders successfully exacerbate the tension between Ezulu and his enemies. In addition, he has convinced Oduche to carry out his bidding in the name of Christianity, suggesting that the influence of Christianity is overtaking that of traditional religion.

The power wielded by the missionary is again apparent when, despite the fact that Ezulu had devotedly followed the sacred yam ritual for the Feast of the New Yam, the yam harvest is in danger of failure. Mr. Goodcountry informs the people that if “Ulu who is a false god can eat one yam the living God who owns the whole world should be entitled to eat more than one” (p. 216). In this particular situation, we see how the missionary takes advantage of the villagers’ desperate plight to win them over with little effort, portraying himself as the savior of the people and at the same time replacing Ulu with the Christian god.

In the previous examples we have seen how two characters who are identified with the imperialistic politics and religion of Europe abuse their power to influence or control others, but there are also those who use Christianity to excuse their abuses of power, as is the case in Ngũgĩ’s *Devil on the cross*. This novel looks at various characters’ attitudes and opinions about the impact of modernization on Africa. In this novel Ghitahy or Rich Old Man, as Wariinga calls him, is a character who openly invokes Christian religiosity to justify the atrocities he has inflicted on others. Throughout the novel, he presents himself as a true man of God who wants to set the appropriate example for others.

Ghitahy’s hypocrisy is so pervasive that he declares that the suffering of others is God’s punishment. When speaking with Wariinga he tells her that God punishes people’s wrongdoings using Mwireri’s case as an example when he states “But after eating and drinking his fill, he started abusing God and showing his scorn for the people of his class. He refused to abide by God’s laws on Earth... where is Mwireri today? (Ngũgĩ: 252). It is interesting to point that Ghitahy’s argument about God’s punishment of Mwireri is related to what he had done to the people of his own class, as if the Christian god were somehow concerned more with class than with wrongdoing. He does not see Mwireri’s leaving Wariinga pregnant as wrong, since she is not of the same class as he is.

When Ghitahy tries to lure Wariinga to be his lover, she asks him why he does not want to marry her, to which he replies: “stop pretending you don’t understand. I am a man of Church. I just want you to be mine. I’ll find my own ways of coming to visit you... Please, save me! Save the honour of my name!” (p. 253). On the one hand he desires Wariinga, but on the other he must appear to be loyal to the Church. By avoiding marriage, he can get the best of both worlds. In the end, Ghitahy’s abuse of power causes his downfall, as he is murdered for his actions.

These three novels present characters that abuse the power in the name of Christianity. Prospero uses Christianity to intimidate and keep control over those around him, Mr. Goodcountry uses Christianity to win political battles for control over people’s beliefs, and Ghitahy uses Christianity to excuse and justify his mistreatment of others.

These texts present situations where acceptance of Christianity is based on literal salvation rather than a spiritual one. In *The tempest* this can be seen in the relationship

between Prospero and Caliban. Near the end of the play Prospero instructs Ariel to release Caliban from his spell. Instead of providing Caliban his freedom he proclaims Caliban, who is the son of a “witch, and one so strong, That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs” (Shakespeare, 5.1.310-311) for his own. In this situation Caliban has no other option than to accept Prospero’s proposal, knowing that any resistance at this point could end in his demise. Prospero, already in a position of power can impose his ideas on others because he knows that the only option is to accept them. It is also interesting to point out that Prospero truly believes that he is acting righteously and with kindness. By claiming Caliban as his property, the son of Sycorax and the Devil, he is cleansing Caliban’s soul and removing all of the darkness that possesses him.

While Prospero thus forces his will on one individual, Mr. Goodcountry makes a whole village accept Christianity. In *Arrow of God*, the opportunistic Mr. Goodcountry, waits for the perfect situation to proclaim his god as the people’s salvation. An instance of this can be seen when he is teaching Oduche. Knowing that he is son of Ezulu, Mr. Goodcountry sees the conversion of Oduche to Christianity as an ideal gateway for conquest of the rest of the village. By convincing him to kill the sacred python he does not only weaken Ulu’s power as previously discussed, but also recognizes that Oduche favors Christianity over Ulu. Once Ulu’s foundation is weakened, Mr. Goodcountry only has to wait for an unfortunate event, such as the threat of famine, to use as leverage. Mr. Goodcountry’s success is made possible by several factors. First, there is tension among the followers of the Ulu religion. The only possible way for a religion to keep its power is through unity, without this the whole structure crumbles, as the author shows in the novel. The second factor is desperation. When the villagers are desperate, worried about their crop and the possibility of famine they are offered a way out. In this type of situation survival instincts are triggered and Christianity becomes the only alternative, not out of desire, but rather out of fear and necessity.

Christianity has already been assimilated by the Kenyans depicted in Ngũgĩ’s *Devil on the cross*. Throughout this novel, many characters see their Christianity as a means to access the commodities linked with capitalism. An example of this can be seen in the character of the thief Mwireri. In a meeting to crown the king of thieves, he states that “believe in God and in Christianity. Kenya is a Christian country, and that’s why we are so blessed” (p. 78) believing that stealing from others is a God given privilege. It is captivating to point out that he exhorts other thieves to steal in their own country and not in the country of others, “every robber should go home and rob his own mother! That’s true democracy and equality of nations... amen” (p. 171). This advice is not received well by most thieves, because they are averse to any discussion of equality, since to them it is a communist notion antithetical to Christianity.

The master of ceremonies replies “[w]e do don’t want Chinese (Communism) ways in our country. We want Christianity...” (p. 87). This argument ultimately gets Mwireri murdered, not because he advocates stealing, but because he wants equality among robbers.

A critique of this hypocrisy can be seen in the conversation between Wariinga and the Devil, where the Devil asserts that “today children are taught to shut their eyes and block their ears so they’ll never see the needs of the people or hear their cry” (p. 185). He adds that people of the elite Kimeendeeri class will build churches where their workers/slaves go to seek salvation to find solace in their lives as their souls will be saved for the sacrifices done on earth. The Devil thus demonstrates how the Kimeendeeri class is using Christianity to make their workers accept exploitation. Meanwhile, the workers themselves have accepted Christianity as means to cope with the day-to-day hardships inflicted upon them by those in power, in the hope that one day their souls will rest in eternal glory.

In these three texts we see various ways in which power is abused in the name of Christianity. In *The tempest* Caliban is left with the choice of living under dogmatic oppression or dying. In *Arrow of God* the villagers face a similar choice, through their fear of famine. Contrary to *The tempest* in this novel there is no coercive imposition, instead the violence is more discursive. Finally, in *Devil on a cross* we encounter a series of characters who have ostensibly accepted Christianity, but only to use for their personal gain. These corrupt characters’ relationship to Christianity is similar to that of Prospero and Mr. Goodcountry, whereas the relationship of the powerless to Christianity is similar to that of Shakespeare’s Caliban and Achebe’s Igbo villagers.

The three texts there also demonstrate resistance to the abuse of power in the name of Christianity. In *The tempest* Caliban tries to resist Prospero multiple times before finally succumbing to him. A first example of this resistance can be seen when he learns Prospero’s language in order to curse him. The only way that religion can live is through language, because individuals cannot believe in something that cannot be signified. Once Caliban understands Prospero’s language he can recognize the Duke’s intentions of taking control over the island. If Caliban has more people on his side, maybe Sycorax will have stronger magic. This leads Caliban to try to rape Miranda, not for the act itself, but rather to populate the island with his people. This can be perceived as another type of resistance because if Caliban is able to populate the island he might have more people to share his beliefs, thus creating a majority.

Similar to Caliban in *The tempest*, Ezulu in *Arrow of God* plays a prominent, but less confrontational role of resistance. He draws the strength to resist Christianity by placing strong faith in his own religion, as he never questions or doubts Ulu. An example of this resistance can be seen when he addresses the people, saying “Men of Umuaro, why do you think our fathers told us this story? They told it because they wanted to teach us that no matter how strong or great a man was he should never challenge his

chi” (p. 96). Just as is the case with the Christian god, there is no human being that can challenge Ulu or any other of the traditional gods without being struck down. Another example of resistance occurs at the end of the novel when Nwaka tries to convince Ezulu to eat the yams and not to follow the ritual. Nwaka is even ready to accept the blame for this sacrilege, but Ezulu refuses. Even after the people accept the Christian religion Ezulu remains loyal to his own.

In *Devil on the cross* we find various types resistance. After driving the thieves from a meeting, the Ilmorog Worker’s Leader gives a speech about the “Doctrines of Imperialism” (Ngũgĩ: 210) where he states that the thieves who are abusing Kenya are protected by religious institutions that justify their thievery as God’s will, while convincing their victims into accepting being robbed today in the hope of achieving happiness in the afterlife. Another figure of resistance found in this novel is Jacinta Wariinga. Her resistance is quite interesting because she uses Christianity’s own doctrines against its most prominent advocates. At the beginning of the novel when Boss Kihara is trying to seduce her by telling her “[a]sk and you shall be given; seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you: For everyone that asketh receiveth...” (p. 23). Wariinga asks him “[a]ren’t you a member of the Church of Heaven? Do you ever read the Bible? When you go home, read Romans, Chapter XIII, line fourteen” ‘Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil he lusts thereof...’ (p. 23). Wariinga thereby demonstrates that Boss Kihara has no understanding of the Bible that he so freely quotes. We can see here that Wariinga is aware that some individuals use Christianity to their own ends.

The thief Nditika pretends to resist abuse of power in the name of Christianity by abusing power in the name of African tradition instead. At first he urges his peers to “join hands to do three things: to grab, to extort money, and to confiscate. The Holy Trinity of theft: Grabbing, Extortion, and Confiscation” (p. 177). Here he uses Christian religion to re-package immoral behavior as “holy” and something that should be applauded. As he continues his discourse he proposes internal organ harvesting in order to live as many lives as possible and reproductive organ harvests to maximize the number of women he can be with. When his wife asks him if she could have more than one reproductive organ he lashes out at her because, according to him, she only needs one because she is with him. She then asks him why he needs more, at which point he slaps her, stating that “here in Africa we must practice African Culture” (p. 181). While Nditika wants his wife to follow the Christian tradition of monogamy, he should be able to be with as many women as possible, because he should be free to practice his culture.

Two of these texts present different instances of resistance which yield similar results. In *The tempest*, Caliban takes the direct confrontational route, which is quickly suppressed by Prospero, rendering him powerless. In *Arrow of God*, Ezulu tries to resist Christianity by immersing himself in his own religion and staying completely loyal to

it, only for it to be rejected by the people in the end. In *Devil on the cross*, however, Wariinga has learned to use Christian doctrine against those who might abuse it and in the end finds herself liberated from the shackles of any institution.

In conclusion, William Shakespeare's *The tempest*, Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the cross* all depict in one way or another the relationship between Africa and Christianity. In *The tempest* Prospero succeeds in his colonial theft of land and labor in places such as Africa by deploying the magical power of religious belief to both justify plunder and make those who suffer it more willing to accept it. In *Arrow of God* the myriad ways in which Christianity and its proselytizing minions have perfected the art of hegemonic abuse of discursive power in Africa and elsewhere are exposed. Finally, *Devil on the cross* presents the tragic result of colonial plunder and Christian hegemony in neo-colonial Africa. In place of the former colonial administrations, the corporate masters in the metropolises now carry out their plunder through an indigenous African class of thieves who continue to use Christianity to both justify their rule and get people to accept it. In all, these three texts provide readers wonderful opportunities to gain insight into the impact that Christianity has had on Africa.

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THE EKPHRASIS POETIC LANGUAGE OF ANDRE BAGOO IN *BURN* AND *AFTER CARAVAGGIO, CHRIST ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVE*

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Andre Bagoo resides in Trinidad. He is a poet and journalist at the Trinidad newspaper Newsday. In 2012, *Trick Vessel*, his first collection of poems, was shortlisted for the Derek Walcott Writing Prize and Launch at the Bocas Lit Fest 2012 (Haynes, 2012). The poetry book *Burn* is his second publication and appeared in 2015.

Burn is organized into forty different types of poems related to the Caribbean and other countries, with no formal structural division. The volume has poems that connect memories and art in a descriptive juxtaposition. Bagoo attempts to analyze and link aspects of his poems to different art forms such as performances, films, and music, and other artists collaborate with him in doing so. Each poem consequently becomes a memorable artifact expressed through mental images and layers of hidden emotions, where the experience of memory and image come together in symbolic patterns.

Between memory and present perceptions, Bagoo identifies artistic images expressed descriptively in his work as ekphrasis poetry. The Poetry Foundation defines ekphrasis as, “vivid description of a scene or more commonly of a work of art. Through the imaginative act of narrating the reflection on a painting or sculpture the poet amplifies and expands its meaning.” Bagoo also evokes identity and space within communities in his ekphrasis poems. In this article, I attempt to explore the current poetic language of Andre Bagoo through ekphrasis poetry in two of his poems ‘Burn’ and ‘After Caravaggio, Christ on the Mount of Olives’ from his poetry book *Burn*.

The poem ‘Burn’ is written as a remembrance of Al Brathwaite’s exhibit titled ‘The lime installation’ at Alice Yard in Woodbrook, Trinidad in June 2014. Alice Yard is a non-profit project space and residence of the founders Sean Leonard, Nicholas Laughlin and Chris Cozier. Alice Yard is a space where creative artists can present their work in venues such as poetry readings, art exhibits, performances, music, and dialogue about future projects. ‘Burn’ explores the verbal and written response to the interpretation of artworks and visual images.

This poem relates to a work by Brathwaite at the exhibition where two hundred and eighty-six charred limes are displayed, one for each of the men and women burnt at

the stake during an episode of the religious conflict in 16th century England, where Queen Mary, or Bloody Mary ordered 286 Protestants to be burned at the stake (Arnold, 2011). In the exhibition, the names of each victim are engraved on the limes. “Time takes so long, I wait here, in a box that closes itself for the eyes to open” (Bagoo, 2015: 11). “In a box” conveys how the voices of these victims of religious bigotry have been silenced. The two hundred and eighty- six men and women are finally remembered in these artistic works for what happened to them. Their screams have waited for centuries to be remembered at this event.

The brown guinea owls in the poem are also called barking owls. The owls make a noise like a desperate woman screaming in the night. “They come to rifle me, all two hundred and eighty-six of them, brown as guinea owls/They mull me, bullets holes on smoke-white walls, spiral sieve of my mind/” I smell a pyre” (Bagoo, 2015: 11). Two victims’ names are unknown and not engraved on the limes, giving the Bagoo the imaginative space to propose that these missing names belong to a man and a pregnant woman who gave birth while on the stake. This symbolic memorial created by Al Brathwaite uses burnt fruits, because they contain the seeds that have ensured the continuity of the Protestant church.

‘Burn’ is connected to another poem in the book, titled ‘After Caravaggio, Christ on the Mount of Olives.’ Eventually, the power of the Roman Catholic Church in England declined. At this moment in time, the majority of the citizens were illiterate, and only a small minority of influential people could read. Moreover, all Catholic masses were performed in Latin, which the people didn’t understand. The Protestants, on the other hand, were making Christian teachings available in English. The Pope was in need of new methods to bring worshipers back to the Catholic faith. In order to do so, he had to figure out how to teach the essential doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. At the beginning of the 17th century, Michelangelo Caravaggio was asked to paint religious scenes related to the spirituality of the Roman Catholic Church to increase its members again. His hope was to convey by images what was not being communicated through language, an interesting parallel to ekphrasis in its juxtaposition of image and word.

‘Christ on the Mount of Olives’ was painted in 1604 by Michelangelo Merisi Caravaggio. Caravaggio's painting depicts the scene in the Gospel of Mathew 26, where Jesus and his disciples went to the Mount of Olives outside of Jerusalem on the night Jesus of Nazareth was arrested by the Romans. Jesus left the disciples to pray to his father and returned to find the disciples sleeping. He awakened Peter with an anxious reproach, “What, would none of you stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake, and pray that you may be spared the test, for the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” The Roman soldiers arrived with Judas, and the pointing finger of Jesus seems to indicate their approach. The other hand pointing down symbolizes his disapproval. In the Roman Catholic Church, hand gestures in religious images are significant.

The ray of light in the painting signifies joy, happiness, and illuminating spiritual forces. The other subjects in the painting are Saint John who seems to pretend he is sleeping and Saint James, who smiles as Jesus speaks to them. In the painting, the image expresses a mix of desperation and hope, conveyed in the following lines from the poem by Bagoo:

...Peter lingers
Like a czar, covering his crotch from
A smiling James (the other brother, John
Pretends to be asleep but his wrinkling
Forehead tells us he is not) and only
Peter's finger is disturbed when
Left-handed Christ (a deliberate
Touch?) make a cow boy gesture (Bagoo, 2015: 32)

'Christ on the Mount of Olives' was painted for Cardinal Benedetto and it was housed in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin before World War II. The museum was destroyed by fire after Berlin was captured by the Allies in 1945. The Monument Men were able to rescue some of Caravaggio's paintings in the salt mine belonging to the museum but arrived too late for others.

Christ on the Mount of Olives (1604) by Michelangelo Merisi Caravaggio



The themes in Bagoo's poems acknowledge the personal history of real individuals and depict real and important historical events. Tobago, Bagoo's home island, is also remembered in his poetry as being the place where the first lionfish in Trinidad and Tobago was spotted on a reef on February 25, 2012. The poem that he wrote about

this ominous event titled ‘Confirmed report of a single lionfish spotted at Tobago’ in *Burn* is linked as well to a poetry film (Ashby, 2015).

In typical Caribbean fashion, the work of Andre Bagoo crosses borders. He mixes poetry with film, Catholic with Protestant, old with new, writing with performance, to create new ways of looking at the world.

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CONSIDERACIONES DE LAS IDEAS DE MICHEL FOUCAULT EN LOS POEMAS, “NOSOTROS”, “SEPA USTED” Y “AL FRENTE” DEL LIBRO *MUNDO ABIERTO* DE HUGO MARGENAT

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La comunicación implica un intercambio verbal entre el hablante y el oyente basado en un dominio de las competencias lingüísticas de su lengua. Se desarrolla en un contexto, en una situación determinada en cuyo interior, existen conocimientos, sentimientos y puntos de vista con los que están relacionados el uno y el otro. Es lograr interpretar lo que otro dice, esto es mucho más que el significado de sus palabras. Es decir, que el receptor reconozca la intención del emisor y no solamente el significado literal de lo que se dice. La relación del hablante y el oyente está compuesta, en lo esencial por un conocimiento de signos y por una serie de reglas que sirven para combinarlos. Utilizando estos elementos, el ser humano puede expresarse y ser comprendido por los demás. Las palabras que emplea y cómo las maneja, son el producto de la sociedad en la que vive. Con relación a estos aspectos, en sus estudios sobre el funcionamiento del poder en la sociedad, el teórico francés, Michel Foucault, establece que cada época cultural tiene un código fundamental que él llama *episteme*. Se refiere a un tipo de poder en el que se adquiere el saber. Es decir, lo que se dice y lo que no se dice en esa cultura, sobre cuya base se elaboran, se piensan e interpretan los objetos o lo real.

En su libro titulado, *Las palabras y las cosas*, este pensador señala que los códigos fundamentales de una cultura, los que organizan su lenguaje, sus valores y sus prácticas, fijan previamente para cada sujeto las órdenes empíricas con las que se relacionará como parte de determinada cultura. Establece también que el lenguaje es sinónimo de discurso y qué a través de éste, se elaboran los signos con los que se pueden nombrar y significar las cosas y designarlas con otros nombres a través del uso de la figura retórica de la metáfora (Foucault, 1968: 51). De esta manera, a través de la literatura se recurre al lenguaje para descifrar los signos relacionados con las actividades del ser humano en la cultura. Esto es, que se considera a la obra literaria como un signo que da paso a un proceso semiótico. En este proceso en el que los sujetos crean el signo

literario se tiene en consideración el contexto social e histórico que determina el sentido de estos signos.

Es decir, para este autor, el discurso es la representación del pensamiento y como tal es estructurado por él. De la misma forma expresa que la autonomía del lenguaje consiste en la función apriórica que tiene en la constitución del saber humano y en la formación de objetos. Sin embargo, considera esta misma autonomía en lo que respecta al lenguaje de la literatura. En la obra literaria, el lenguaje mantiene una mayor libertad porque gira sobre sí mismo. De hecho, su obra titulada, *Las palabras y las cosas*, nace de un texto de Jorge Luis Borges. Establece Foucault, surge “de la risa que sacude, al leerlo, todo lo familiar al pensamiento, al nuestro: al que tiene nuestra edad y nuestra geografía, trastornando todas las superficies ordenadas y los planos que ajustan la abundancia de seres, provocando una larga vacilación e inquietud en nuestra práctica milenaria de lo Mismo y lo Otro” (p. 9).

En los textos de los poetas, se encuentra la autonomía propia del lenguaje. El lenguaje en estos textos no está obsesionado por su capacidad para representar la realidad, sino que toma distancia con respecto a ella porque sólo así puede experimentar el ser puro del lenguaje. Por otro lado, tampoco el lenguaje literario queda preso en esa forma racional y lógica del lenguaje en el discurso. Según esto, se plantea que existe una ontología en la literatura bajo la presencia reiterada de la palabra en la escritura. El lenguaje se desdobra y desliza sobre sí mismo, haciendo sus opciones y sus trazos, cuando llega a nosotros siempre nos comunica algo. Para este autor, el saber y el poder se articulan en el discurso. En éste, hay un campo de fuerzas sociales que inciden en nuestros actos de habla. Hablamos para alabar al sistema o para maldecirlo. Nuestro discurso está relacionado a sus efectos de poder. Esto se aplica a cualquier discurso, ya sea el filosófico, el literario, el político y el científico, entre otros. La literatura es una forma del saber humano en la que un escritor puede expresarse en plena libertad a favor o en contra del sistema o de alguna estructura de poder. De la misma manera, marginal al sistema, un poeta tiene la libertad y el poder de cuestionarlo.

Considerando estos aspectos, en este artículo se pretende realizar un análisis de los poemas: “Nosotros”, “Sepa usted” y “Al frente” del libro, *Mundo abierto* de Hugo Margenat. Se establecerán las relaciones de poder que aparecen en estos tres poemas. Para este análisis se considerarán las líneas principales del funcionamiento del poder en la sociedad de Michel Foucault. Además, se utilizarán aspectos relacionados con la hermenéutica para analizar estos textos. De acuerdo con el *Breve diccionario etimológico de la lengua castellana* (p. 295) la palabra hermenéutica, se deriva del griego *hermenéutikos* y se refiere a lo que es relativo a la interpretación. También, se relaciona con la palabra *hermenéus* que significa lo mismo que intérprete, explicador o traductor. En este sentido, se puede exponer; que es el arte de explicar textos orales, escritos y obras artísticas. De la misma forma, este concepto, se puede relacionar con el

dios griego Hermes que era el encargado en el Olimpo de llevar los mensajes a sus destinatarios. Además, una vez con ellos, era el que debía descifrarlos.

El artículo de Wilhelm Dilthey (1900) titulado, *El surgimiento de la hermenéutica* se basa en la tesis de la progresión regular en la historia de la hermenéutica y presenta una descripción de sus reglas. Se esboza también el conflicto en torno a estas reglas y la lucha entre las distintas orientaciones a propósito de la interpretación de obras esenciales. Es decir, de la necesidad que se imponía de fundamentar estas reglas, surgió la ciencia de la hermenéutica como teoría del arte de la interpretación de monumentos de la escritura. De acuerdo con Ricoeur (2008: 40) el problema más importante de la hermenéutica es el de la interpretación. Este filósofo establece que los textos escritos deben tener cierto grado de independencia respecto de la intención del autor, de la situación de la obra o de la remisión a un lector original. En este tipo de texto, el discurso debe hablar por sí mismo. Este elemento, presenta entonces un problema de interpretación ya que la relación escribir-leer es similar a la relación hablar-escuchar en una situación de diálogo.

Es decir, un texto debe ser interpretado porque no consiste en una mera secuencia de oraciones, visualmente de la misma longitud e inteligibles por separado. Para Ricoeur (p. 71) un texto es un todo, una totalidad. La relación entre el todo y las partes. Este reconocimiento del texto como un todo, tiene un carácter circular, ya que la suposición de un cierto tipo de todo se da en el reconocimiento de las partes.

Por esta razón, un texto, como un individuo, puede ser considerado desde diferentes aspectos. Establece, Ricoeur (p. 72) que un texto, al igual que un cubo, o un volumen en el espacio, tiene un relieve. Sus temas no están todos a la misma altura. La reconstrucción del todo presenta una perspectiva parecida a la de la percepción. Es decir, es posible vincular la misma oración en formas diferentes a otras oraciones ya que en el acto de lectura se manifiesta un tipo de parcialidad que confirma el elemento conceptual de la interpretación. De acuerdo con este autor, por esta razón, existe un problema de interpretación debido a la naturaleza misma de la intención verbal del texto. Esta intención es distinta de la suma de significados individuales de las oraciones individuales. Por eso, la plurivocidad que se atribuye a los textos es diferente de la poliseemia de las palabras individuales dentro del lenguaje ordinario. Esa plurivocidad característica del texto, genera una pluralidad de lectura y de interpretación.

De la misma manera, en cuanto a los procesos para validar nuestras conjeturas, Ricoeur (p. 72) señala que esa validación debe aproximarse más a una lógica de la probabilidad que a una lógica de la verificación empírica. Asegurar que una interpretación es más probable que otra, es diferente a comprobar que una conclusión es verdadera. Es decir, validación no equivale a verificación. La validación es una lógica de la probabilidad cualitativa. Para este autor, un texto es un cuasi-individuo, al que la validación de una interpretación que se le aplica ofrece un conocimiento científico del texto. Un texto es un campo limitado de interpretaciones posibles. La lógica de la va-

lidación, permite que los investigadores puedan moverse entre los límites del dogmatismo y el escepticismo (p. 73). De la misma manera, el significado de las acciones humanas; de los eventos históricos y los fenómenos sociales pueden ser entendidos de diferentes maneras. Además, como lo sugiere la lógica de la interpretación de textos, existe una plurivocidad específica en el significado de la acción humana como puede apreciarse en un poema.

Señala Ricoeur (p. 105) que en la poesía no se limita la realidad humana sino que ésta se recrea a un nivel mítico del discurso donde la ficción y la redescrición de esa realidad se toman de la mano. De esta forma, la poesía engendra un mundo propio a través del uso que se le da al lenguaje. De esta manera, el sentido literal del lenguaje debe desaparecer para que emerja su sentido metafórico. En el caso de la metáfora, redescrición es guiada por la acción de las diferencias y de las semejanzas a nivel del enunciado. De esta aprehensión es que surge una nueva visión de la realidad, la cual se resiste al uso cotidiano de las palabras. De esta forma, se abre el camino a la revelación de una dimensión nueva tanto de la realidad como de la verdad. Es decir, el lenguaje poético no dice lo que las cosas son literalmente, sino, como qué son. La metáfora es el procedimiento lingüístico que lleva al lenguaje la semántica implícita del símbolo. Lo que en el símbolo causa confusión como: la asimilación entre las cosas, la asimilación entre nosotros y las cosas, además de las correspondencias sin fin entre los elementos; se resuelve en el enunciado metafórico. En otras palabras, el símbolo, es decir, se deposita

en la metáfora. Este tipo de enunciado debe su bidimensionalidad al poder de unir lo semántico a lo pre-semántico en el interior de la experiencia humana.

Por otra parte, desde un punto de vista enmarcado en los debates de los filósofos postestructuralistas y los marxistas, emerge el pensamiento de Michel Foucault, quien aborda la problemática filosófica desde la perspectiva del lenguaje. Este pensador fue un estudioso de los mecanismos de poder y del saber, no contra los contenidos o conceptos de una ciencia sino contra las consecuencias del Poder que está relacionado con el discurso científico y a su funcionamiento en las prácticas educativas, cárceles, escuelas, entre otros. En estos tipos de análisis ve al sujeto acosado por poderes que más institucionales son elementos de rupturas epistémicas y más bien simbólicas. Es decir, “más que un poder hay relaciones complejas del poder” (p. 42). Estas relaciones de poder son las que los aparatos del Estado ejercen sobre las personas, pero que también son las que se dan del padre de familia sobre su mujer y sus hijos, el poder ejercido por el médico y el poder que hace valer el dueño de la fábrica sobre sus empleados. Visualiza al sujeto cubierto con una serie de capas. Lo considera víctima de las prácticas alucinantes relacionadas con las formas de saber, poder y sexualidad establecidas por la sociedad occidental moderna. Piensa en la modernidad como un periodo de creación de formas de represión que organizan, vigilan y castigan los deseos y demandas de los sujetos.

En el libro *Las palabras y las cosas*, discute aspectos sobre los temas de lingüística, el mercantilismo y de historia natural. Señala que estos discursos cambian a través del tiempo por medio de cambios repentinos de una *episteme* a otra, según el concepto que él mismo introduce. Entiende que es una estructura formal que organiza las ideas de poder y saber y que además disciplinan al individuo. En *La arqueología del saber*, analiza el enunciado, la unidad básica del discurso, que considera ignorada hasta ese momento (p. 106). Establece que los enunciados dependen de las condiciones en las que emergen y existen dentro del discurso. Utiliza el concepto *arqueología* para diferenciar su manera de contar o escribir la historia de la tradicional (p. 177). Señala que el poder está estrechamente relacionado a las formaciones discursivas. Además, indica que tanto el poder como el discurso forman la disciplina que proyectan las organizaciones políticas modernas dentro de las que se mueven los individuos en la sociedad. De la misma forma, en *Vigilar y castigar* de 1975 luego de describir una ejecución pública efectuada en 1715, expone dos formas de castigo como ejemplos de lo que él llama “tecnologías políticas del cuerpo” (p. 36). La primera tecnología de castigo es la que consiste en la represión de la población mediante la tortura y las ejecuciones públicas. La segunda forma es el castigo disciplinario y para el autor, es la forma de castigo practicada en la actualidad. Esta forma de castigo, les da a los profesionales tales como: guardias y psicólogos, el poder para determinar la duración de la detención del prisionero (p. 186).

Este teórico sugiere que en la sociedad moderna existe un tipo de “prisión continua” (p. 36). Establece que todo está estructurado mediante la vigilancia de unas personas por otras en busca de una normalización generalizada. Para este pensador, es importante elaborar una definición sobre el poder que no haga alusión exclusiva a lo gubernamental, sino que reúna la multiplicidad de poderes que fluyen en la sociedad. Es decir, no existe un poder en la sociedad, sino que se manifiestan múltiples relaciones de autoridad situadas en distintos niveles, apoyándose mutuamente y manifestándose solapadamente. Ésta se construye a partir de otros poderes y de los efectos de éstos, independiente del proceso económico (p. 32). Por ejemplo; entre alumno y maestro y en el interior de una familia hay relaciones de autoridad que no se relacionan directamente con el poder estatal. Estas relaciones de autoridad, condicionan y posibilitan el funcionamiento de ese poder sobre la base en la que se sostienen.

Para Foucault, el hombre moderno es un ser moldeado por dispositivos disciplinarios, científicos, psicológicos, médicos y por códigos morales y legales (Foucault, 2003). Éstos funcionan por encima del individuo y del reconocimiento consciente. De esta manera, se acerca al concepto estructural del signo al establecer que se refiere a un poder estructural donde los individuos son elaborados como signos en su sentido significante, pero en cuanto a poderes y acción. En este aspecto, rechaza la idea de un poder centralizado en manos de la aristocracia o la burguesía ya que el poder envuelve muchos flujos internos y externos que acosan al individuo.

Es decir, para Foucault, el problema del poder no se puede reducir al de la soberanía. Para él, existen relaciones de autoridad que no son proyección directa del poder soberano, sino que más bien posibilitan el funcionamiento de ese poder. Por ejemplo: en una relación de pareja, entre un doctor y su paciente o entre un maestro y su alumno, existen relaciones de autoridad. Para que el estado funcione como lo hace, es necesario que se manifiesten esas relaciones de dominación ya que, a través de ellas, se posibilita el funcionamiento del poder soberano.

En este sentido, el escritor puertorriqueño, Hugo Margenat, marginal al sistema en sus poemas; “Nosotros”, “Sepa usted” y “Al frente”, como en la mayor parte de su creación poética, denuncia el colonialismo, la pobreza, el discrimen social y la marginación de los jóvenes, entre otros problemas sociales que aparecen en sus textos. La obra literaria de este autor emerge en uno de los periodos más polémicos y controversiales de la historia de Puerto Rico. Sin lugar a dudas, cada uno de estos acontecimientos se refleja directa o indirectamente en su poesía. Parte de ésta, gira en torno a una temática política y social que describe las atrocidades del colonialismo, la guerra, el discrimen racial y la represión que se vivió en el país en la década del 50. El doctor Hernández (p. 31) señala que la lírica de Hugo Margenat “es una poesía que afirma el sacrificio y el heroísmo de nuestros patriotas, que también señala la marginación de los jóvenes y que además anticipa la rebelión de los sesenta”. Ante estos conflictos es que Hugo Margenat, a través de su obra, levanta su voz de protesta para denunciar el racismo, la pobreza, el colonialismo y la desigualdad social.

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Los versos de nuestro ilustre poeta salen a luz pública para la década de los años cincuenta. Fue época difícil, de mucha incertidumbre en la que cualquier manifestación de oposición era mal vista y solía ser aplacada mediante el despliegue de los mecanismos represivos de la época. Entre los hechos históricos importantes acaecidos para esta época este inicio del programa Operación Manos a la Obra de 1947-48. (Hernández: 32) Este programa, atrajo miles de fábricas a la isla, lo que aminoró la pobreza, pero representó la implantación de un modelo de dependencia económica bastante cuestionable. La implantación de este programa atrajo la inversión de capital norteamericano, garantizándole una mano de obra barata y leyes de exención contributiva. Para este autor, el complemento de esta política económica fue la emigración copiosa de puertorriqueños a los Estados Unidos. Esto provocó el abandono del campo y el desarraigo social de muchos puertorriqueños. De la misma manera, señala este autor que, en esta época, la ley 53, mejor conocida como la “Ley de Mordaza” criminalizaba cualquier oposición o disidencia. Proscribía el independentismo y hasta portar la bandera de Puerto Rico. Esta ley sirvió para crear un ambiente de represión en el que no se respetaban los derechos civiles de los ciudadanos (p. 2).

Durante esta época, también se adoptaron medidas represivas por parte de la administración de la Universidad de Puerto Rico. Medidas totalmente contrarias a los valores de la libertad de expresión y de la discusión de ideas que deben permear en nuestro

primer centro docente. De acuerdo con lo que presenta el profesor, Orlando Hernández en el artículo titulado, “Hugo Margenat: poeta de nuestra contemporaneidad”, luego de que el rector, Jaime Benítez, no autorizara una conferencia de Albizu en el recinto, se tomaron “serias medidas represivas en contra del estudiantado, pero específicamente con los que habían solicitado dicha autorización” (p. 32). Por otra parte, durante los años de 1950 al 1953 se desata la Guerra de Correa. En este conflicto participaron muchos puertorriqueños como parte de las fuerzas armadas de los Estados Unidos.

De acuerdo con Hernández (p. 34) la Segunda Guerra Mundial y la Guerra de Correa le cambiaron la vida a miles de puertorriqueños. Los combatientes que no murieron regresaron con traumas tanto físicos como psicológicos que afectaron a las familias puertorriqueñas. De la misma forma, este autor establece (p. 35) que con la insurrección del 30 de octubre de 1950, que se conoció como el Grito de Jayuya y el tiroteo en el Congreso de los Estados Unidos en el 1954 revelaban el hecho de que el problema colonial de la isla no se había resuelto, a pesar de que la oficialidad pregonaba todo lo contrario. En esta época llena de conflictos y de transformaciones para la isla es que salen a la luz pública los escritos de Hugo Margenat. En general, fue una época de lucha en la que se afirmó nuestra nacionalidad como pueblo. Esta afirmación de lo puertorriqueño, estableció las bases para el surgimiento de nuestra literatura moderna. La crítica examinada sobre la obra de Hugo Margenat, demuestra que ha sido estudiada con más discernimiento por parte de los críticos literarios que la creación poética de otros integrantes de la generación del 60. A pocos días de su deceso, el 7 de abril de 1957, Adelaida Lugo Suárez, en el artículo titulado, “Hugo Margenat: Rápida apertura de conciencia”, señala que en su artículo recoge, “algunos signos del poeta, demasiado grande para sus años” (p. 28). Indica que, al poeta, como si hubiese sentido su repentina partida, dejó escrupulosamente organizada en tres cajas su creación literaria. De esta manera establece que el “*Hugo de Lámpara apagada*, 1954, e *Intemperie*, 1955, no es tan sólo poeta de dos libros, sino plural artista, auténtico creador de páginas inéditas que llenarían varios libros” (p. 28).

De la misma manera, Juan Antonio Corretjer, en una reseña periodística titulada, “Laurel negro. El ‘Mundo abierto’ de Hugo Margenat”, enaltece la manera en la que el poeta a través de sus versos asume una posición de protesta frente a los problemas políticos y sociales que se percibían en la sociedad puertorriqueña de aquella época y establece la diferencia entre la poesía innovadora que presenta Margenat en oposición al tipo de poesía que predominaba para esos momentos.

Por otra parte, en clara oposición a estas posturas, el profesor Efraín Barradas (1977) indica que no está de acuerdo con el planteamiento de Alfredo Matilla e Iván Silén de catalogar a Margenat como uno de nuestros poetas mayores. Sin embargo, estos autores dedican su antología de poesía puertorriqueña a Hugo y lo presentan en su libro junto a Pales Matos y Julia de Burgos como uno de nuestros mejores poetas del siglo

XX. Por el contrario, aunque el profesor Barradas reconoce que Margenat “fue un escritor con mucho talento y que a sus escasos 23 años había logrado mucho, pero no tanto como sus seguidores aseguran” (p. 79). Argumenta que tiene buenos poemas, pero que la mayor parte de su obra “son mera hojarasca” (p. 79). Por esta razón establece que su producción literaria no está en la misma categoría que la obra de escritores como Palés Matos, Julia de Burgos y Luis Lloréns Torres, entre otros. De acuerdo con Medina López, en su libro, *Hugo Margenat: poeta agónico*, la obra de Margenat, volvió a ser objeto de atención en el artículo titulado, “XX aniversario: Hugo Margenat y los poetas de Guajana” de Vicente Dalmases de 1982.

Asimismo, en el 1983, sale a la luz un estudio realizado por Antonio Agulló Albert, titulado “Un acercamiento al tema del dolor en *Mundo abierto* de Hugo Margenat”. En este estudio el autor expresa que no considera oportuno intervenir en la polémica suscitada por las palabras de Efraín Barradas sobre la obra de Hugo Margenat. Sin embargo, considera necesario precisar que las mismas son un juicio de valor relacionado con la recopilación de poemas que aparecen en las *Obras completas* de Margenat. Para Agulló dicha recopilación no obedeció a ningún criterio selectivo. En el mismo aparecen poemas escritos en una etapa temprana del poeta y otros documentos inéditos que “por alguna razón, no fueron incluidos por su autor en los poemarios que publicó en vida” (p. 103). Con relación a las palabras de Barradas, señala también que lo que hace perdurables a los poetas no es tanto la cantidad de obra escrita, sino la calidad de la misma. Establece que “a veces, la intuición inspiradora de una sola” (p. 104) sería suficiente para apreciar en ella la “aportación creadora de la generación representada” (p. 104). Es decir, no se puede juzgar la labor poética de un escritor por la cantidad de poemas escritos sino por la calidad de los mismos.

De la misma forma, en 1994, Rafael Acevedo, en “La poesía comprometida de Hugo Margenat”, al referirse a las *Obras completas* editadas por Torres Santiago, señala: “En ese libro nos topamos con un poeta que, a los 24 años, tenía una obra amplia y madura” (p. 21). Más adelante, en su reseña establece que los versos de Margenat tienen “las cuestiones existenciales fundamentales (vida, muerte, amor, diría Miguel Hernández) se hallan presentes, junto a un imaginario social radical sobre el que se sustentan los asuntos antes dichos” (p. 21). Finalmente señala que la poesía erótica de Margenat es la parte la que lo convierte en “un poeta importante” (p. 21).

Más tarde, en el 1999, el poeta Ramón Felipe Medina, publica el libro titulado, *Hugo Margenat: poeta agónico*. En las palabras iniciales del libro el autor expresa que pretende llamar la atención de los diversos lectores hacia la “obra del poeta joven de mayor importancia en la literatura puertorriqueña, desde sus inicios a mediados del siglo XIX” (p. 13). De acuerdo con este autor, ningún poeta dentro de nuestra literatura ha “producido entre los diecisiete y los veintitrés años, una obra tan lograda como la que ya tenía Hugo Margenat” (p. 13). En este libro, el autor propone acercamientos a aspectos poco analizados del imaginario de Margenat como el erotismo y la religiosidad.

Una amistad iniciada hace más de cincuenta años entre ambos poetas es el elemento particular que tiene este trabajo.

Han sido varias las generaciones de poetas y críticos que han evaluado diversos aspectos de la obra de Hugo Margenat. Lo han estudiado desde diversos ángulos y han propuesto nuevas lecturas que enriquecen nuestra comprensión a su obra. En el 2008, la revista *Exégesis* rindió un homenaje a la labor poética de Margenat. Un grupo de estudiosos e investigadores de nuestra literatura trabajaron diversos aspectos de su obra y presentaron sus ponencias en un Congreso. Entre estos investigadores podemos mencionar a los profesores: Félix Córdova, Orlando Hernández, Félix Joaquín Rivera y Raúl Guadalupe.

En resumen, a través de la crítica estudiada se observa admiración y asombro ante una creación literaria con tanta madurez. Al producir a tan temprana edad poemas con elementos filosóficos-religiosos orientales, es considerado por muchos, un poeta extraordinario y diferente. Por esta razón, su labor poética es considerada en diversos libros y estudios literarios. De acuerdo con lo que expone Antonio Agulló en, “Un acercamiento al tema del dolor en *Mundo abierto* de Hugo Margenat”, se aprecia la maduración de un “proceso en el que los temas fundamentales y los elementos formales logran una integración adecuada y se manifiestan a través de una expresión innovadora” (p. 104) en la poesía puertorriqueña. El libro comienza con una introducción elaborada por Adelaida Lugo Suárez. Luego, aparecen “Unos apuntes” redactados por el autor. En esta parte Margenat expresa en qué consiste la labor de un poeta y define el concepto de Poesía. Más adelante, aparece una cita de Francisco Matos Paoli, seguida de una emotiva dedicatoria del libro “a la juventud rebelde e inquieta” (p. 29). Los poemas del libro están distribuidos en seis partes.

En este estudio nos concentraremos en tres poemas de la parte titulada, “Las horas de la tierra”. En estos poemas se aprecia una intensa preocupación social y política por parte del autor. Margenat, se caracterizó por expresar un amor entrañable a su país. Este amor el poeta lo traslada al paisano puertorriqueño, a la gente común y corriente del pueblo ya que era los mas que sentían el peso aplastante de las injusticias sociales. En el poema, “Nosotros”, el autor plantea la denuncia de las condiciones de vida paupérrimas en la que se encontraba la mayor parte del pueblo puertorriqueño. El poema se puede dividir en dos estrofas. La primera comenzaría con los siguientes versos:

La luz de la tierra
rota en mil espejos
se viene vaciando
en una pupila color de rosa.

En esta estrofa, el autor además de expresar la realidad de la sociedad puertorriqueña para ese momento, se queja de que en cierta manera esa masa, ese pueblo, consciente lo que le está pasando porque sienten dolor, temor y miedo.

rozando la uña levantada
de un adiós temeroso,
de una caricia tímida,
de un dolor que sin decir que duele

Es decir, los pobres y miserables, viven angustiados, aterrados por el dolor de una vida llena de privaciones y sufrimientos, Margenat, en la segunda estrofa se identifica con el dolor y con la indignación de su pueblo. Deja de ser un mero espectador para convertirse en uno más entre esa multitud y de esa manera buscar una solución a estos problemas.

Vamos nosotros detrás,
mirando e hilando
todo lo que se quedó afuera solitario,
arrastrándonos hacia dentro
entre pies descalzos,
en multitud,
bebiendo angustias de existencias verdes,
arrastrando caras de cuaresma.
Vamos nosotros los insignificantes
de la calle,
los sucios, los haraposos, los pillos,
comiendo, comiendo, comiendo largos alborotos,
largas miserias, largos rencores”.

De acuerdo con el contenido de esta estrofa se puede establecer que la consciencia política y social del poeta lo convierte en portavoz de los pobres y marginados. De la misma manera, en el poema “Sepa usted”, el poeta presenta una queja en contra de la presencia del Ejército y de la Marina norteamericanos en la isla. Cuenta también con un elemento histórico cuando alude al bombardeo de Jayuya por aviones de la Guardia Nacional en octubre del 1950.

Más adelante, en la última parte del poema, resalta el sentido heroico de la Revolución de Jayuya y visualiza la transformación de la patria a través de la revolución.

“No olvides que la luz no puede ser ocultada y a su calor la patria suspiró transformándose como un rojo beso en el abrazo azul y desnudo del aire”. De la misma forma,

en el poema “Al frente”, el autor en cierta manera incita a la sublevación del pueblo ante la injusticia a la que está sometido.

Rojo amigo,
iremos delante, en la primera fila,
para recibir con los ojos abiertos,
la primera lluvia de balas.
Y no caeremos

Es decir, el “rojo amigo”, es el amigo que lucha y se rebela. Además, en esa lucha armada se debe estar alerta, con los “ojos abiertos”. En esta lucha se puede vencer porque no “caeremos”. Más adelante en el poema, se entiende que con el uso de la palabra se concientiza a los tristes y deprimidos de que conseguirán la libertad y la igualdad social a través de la lucha armada.

Llevaremos la Palabra
a las calles angustiadas.
Llevaremos el sol
en cada beso
como en cada verbo
una noche sublevada.

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A través del poema el autor también menciona la situación colonial en la que ha estado la isla por siglos. Denuncia de esta manera el sufrimiento centenario por el que ha pasado su pueblo.

Romperemos la tristeza
como un canto de alegría
que va rompiendo la monotonía de un dolor.
Siglos con dolor de cadenas.
Ya no es posible seguir cayendo
Sin levantarse,

En los últimos versos del poema, estimula al pueblo a la lucha de la que él también formara parte. Señala, además, que se deben emular los héroes del pasado ya que indirectamente menciona la acción de un combatiente la Masacre de Ponce que escribió el nombre de su ser amado con su sangre.

Ya no es posible seguir cayendo
Sin olvidar escribir sobre el pavimento

la sonrisa de un nombre amado.
Ya no es posible

Luego de estudiar estos tres poemas, se puede establecer que en su contenido tienen elementos que se pueden identificar con las categorías del poder establecidas por Michel Foucault. Este poder visto a través de lo que él llama relaciones de poder. Estas relaciones son aquellas que pueden estar inducidas por grandes poderes del Estado o de dominación de clases, pero que sólo pueden funcionar si en la base existen pequeñas relaciones de poder que relacionan al individuo con personas en instituciones que en determinadas situaciones ostentan el poder como lo son: médicos, padres, maestros, policías y soldados, entre otros. En el poema, “Nosotros” estas relaciones de poder se manifiestan a través del estado de indiferencia de aquellas personas que económicamente están más o menos bien en oposición a los menos favorecidos. Es decir, que estas personas, que Margenat señala que tienen una “pupila color de rosa”, en cierta manera auspician las injusticias y atrocidades cometidas por el Estado. Mientras haya personas que estén “bien”, no tiene mucha importancia el que exista gente insignificante, pobre, haraposa y hambrienta. De esta manera, el Estado mantiene su hegemonía sobre la población.

Por otra parte, en el poema “Sepa usted”, el malestar que siente el poeta está en contra del Ejército y de la Marina norteamericanos. La presencia de esta institución representa una afrenta para su pueblo. En su poema indirectamente menciona la ley del Servicio Militar Obligatorio, que imperaba para la década del cincuenta. En esa época, los jóvenes varones de dieciocho a veintidós años tenían que formar parte de las fuerzas armadas norteamericanas. De lo contrario, estaban propensos a perder muchos beneficios y privilegios por parte del Estado. En este sentido, es que institucionalmente, pero de una manera muy solapada, es que se ejerce poder sobre la población. En este punto hay que establecer que para Foucault estas relaciones de poder son siempre reversibles (1968: 41).

Finalmente, en el poema, “Al frente”, como en los poemas anteriores, se observa que existe una relación de poder ejercida por el Estado. El poeta, utiliza sus versos para protestar contra la injusticia y el sufrimiento de su pueblo. En estos poemas se manifiesta las relaciones de poder de acuerdo a como las define Michel Foucault. Este tipo de relación se logra en estos textos mediante el uso magistral del lenguaje que logra Hugo Margenat en sus poemas. Es decir, el poeta, utiliza el lenguaje poético para clocarse al margen del sistema imperante en la década del cincuenta y este lenguaje le brinda la libertad y el poder de cuestionarlo.

Los que estudian la labor poética de este joven escritor se percatan de la consciente preocupación que tenía el poeta por la suerte de los menos favorecidos socialmente. Afecta a su sensibilidad, ver una sociedad lacerada por los prejuicios sociales, raciales y económicos. Muchos de los cuales persisten actualmente. Por esta razón, su poesía

no pierde vigencia; gusta, no pasa de moda. A través del uso que este poeta le dio al lenguaje, transformó su protesta social en poesía. Por ello, sus versos estarán presentes en la historia de la poesía puertorriqueña.

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**RECLAIMING THE PRE-COLONIAL
TO IMAGINE A POST-COLONIAL IN THE
LINGUISTICS OF THE GREATER CARIBBEAN
AND BEYOND**

EXPRESIONES COLOQUIALES EN ESPAÑOL

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Introducción

Las expresiones coloquiales se caracterizan por tener un tono informal que permite a su vez una interacción familiar y subjetiva entre los interlocutores (Briz, 2010). Estas expresiones proporcionan al investigador campo fértil para el estudio de las propiedades asociadas a estas (Narbona, 1991; 1992). La expresividad es una de las características propias del registro coloquial, utilizada por los hablantes de una lengua para expresar su subjetividad (Sancho Cremades, 2001-2002).

La intensificación es una propiedad constante en las expresiones coloquiales: a través de esta estrategia el acto de habla se ve reforzado, así como el interés de lo que se dice y se cuenta (Narbona, 2015). En otras palabras, la intensificación refuerza la verdad de lo expresado – cf. oraciones exclamativas (Sancho Cremades, 2008). Así, lo *mucho* se convierte en *montón*, lo *bonito* en *chulería* y lo *bueno* en *brutal*. En este trabajo, examinamos varias expresiones intensificadoras del español coloquial latinoamericano, especialmente del dialecto puertorriqueño. Algunas de estas se construyen a través de morfemas intensificadores, elativos o el adverbio *más*; mientras que otras tienen una sintaxis más elaborada, bien con el verbo *ser/estar* + oración consecutiva, léxico semánticas, etc. (Padilla-Reyes, Gutiérrez-Rexach & González-Rivera, 2016). Se provee además un análisis formal para algunas de estas construcciones.

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Definición del registro coloquial

El lenguaje coloquial es aquel uso social del lenguaje en situaciones cotidianas de comunicación – eg. charla en un bar con amigos –, que no está vinculado a ningún nivel de habla exclusivo o determinado, y en el que además el vulgarismo y los dialectalismos aparecen en función de las características del hablante (Briz, 1996: 26). Una característica del lenguaje coloquial es la inmediatez comunicativa. Un ejemplo del registro coloquial son las oraciones (1) – (2):

(1) ¡Menudo frío hace aquí!

(2) Este reloj me ha costado un ojo de la cara/un cojonal.

En (1) el hablante ha utilizado una oración exclamativa para describir la temperatura en una situación y lugar determinados. En lugar de decir ‘Hace mucho frío aquí’, el hablante utiliza el adjetivo *menudo* que, seguido de un sustantivo, en este caso *frío*,

enfatisa el significado de este – cf. *¡Menudo enredo!*, Real Academia Española –, y refleja a la vez la actitud de este: asombro, sorpresa, etc. En el ejemplo (2), por otro lado, el hablante utiliza las expresiones ‘un ojo de la cara’ o ‘un cojonal’ para indicar que el reloj le ha costado caro.

Las expresiones coloquiales están determinadas por varias características, entre estas, las sociolectales, es decir, edad y género; así como las dialectales o de procedencia geográfica. Las correspondientes oraciones en (3) – (5) del español peninsular, se expresarían en el dialecto puertorriqueño como (4) – (6):

(3) ¡Eres un calzonazos!	España
(4) ¡Eres un mamalón!	Puerto Rico
(5) ¡Eres un pagafantas!	España
(6) ¡Eres un manilo!	Puerto Rico

Según la Real Academia Española, *calzonazos* es aquella persona que se deja gobernar o dominar por su pareja. Su uso se suele restringir a los hombres que son dominados por su pareja (cf. *mandilón*) (Figura 1).

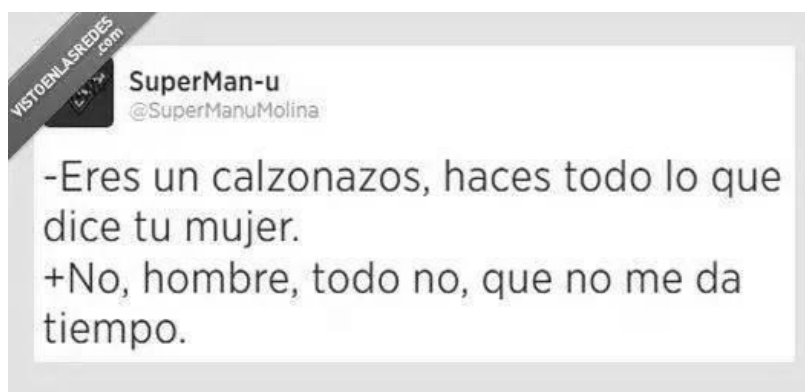


Figura 1 Calzonazos¹

En el dialecto puertorriqueño, varias son las expresiones para describir tal situación: *mamalón*, o se usa la expresión *estar sentado en el baúl con la llave adentro*:

- (7) A Pepe su mujer lo tiene sentado en el baúl con la llave adentro.

En el caso de *pagafantas*, palabra compuesta de *pagar*_{verbo} + *fantas*_{sustantivo}, se refiere a aquel hombre que busca tener relación sexual con una mujer, quien solamente lo ve como un amigo – ie., por más que le compre la bebida gaseosa Fanta, o cualquier otra cosa para conseguir un determinado fin, no consigue nada más que una amistad (o en inglés *friend zone*) (Figura 2).

¹ Tomado de: <http://fercereto.blogspot.com/2015/08/los-calzonazos.html>



Figura 2 Pagafantas²

El registro coloquial trasciende los dialectos de una lengua y su interpretación, en ocasiones, requiere del conocimiento social, contextual y situacional en el que se generan tales expresiones lingüísticas. A continuación, proveemos varias expresiones del español latinoamericano, en la que el predicado intensifica el sujeto que modifica. Como mencionamos anteriormente, la intensificación es una de las propiedades de las expresiones coloquiales, entre otras características.

(8) Esa canción está una guanábana.	Colombia
(9) Esa canción está una rechimba.	Colombia
(10) Esa canción está una bestia.	Ecuador
(11) El juego está una mierda.	Perú
(12) El juego está una poronga.	Argentina

El registro coloquial produce además una nivelación sociolingüística; es decir, no importa el nivel socioeconómico, nivel educacional, entre otras variables sociales, todos los hablantes hacen uso de las formas coloquiales. Algunos ejemplos de nivelación lingüística en el español puertorriqueño son las siguientes, formas que son compartidas por todos los hablantes en el habla cotidiana:

(13) <i>pa' ti</i>	por	<i>para ti</i>	
(14) <i>to'l mundo</i>	por	<i>todo el mundo</i>	
(15) <i>mah ná</i>	por	<i>más nada</i>	<i>No quiero saber máh ná de ti.</i>
(16) <i>namáh</i>	por	<i>nada más</i>	<i>Eso namáh (solamente) comeré.³</i>

² Tomado de: <http://paraquenameolvide2.blogspot.com/2015/10/quien-no-haya-sido-un-pagafantas-que.html>

En el habla coloquial también inciden rasgos situacionales, que Briz (2010; 2016) resume de la siguiente forma:

- a) Hay una mayor relación de igualdad social y funcional entre los participantes; es decir, hay un mayor acercamiento entre estos que, por lo general, son familiares, amigos, etc.
- b) Hay una mayor relación vivencial o proximidad. La información que se intercambia resulta de saberes, conocimientos y contextos compartidos – o lo que se conoce en inglés como *common ground*.
- c) Existe una mayor cotidianidad temática; en otras palabras, los temas que se discuten pertenecen a la vida cotidiana.
- d) Hay un espacio interaccional más cotidiano – ie., el espacio de la situación es cotidiano: eg., un bar, la fila de un supermercado, un encuentro en la calle, etc.
- e) El fin es más interpersonal o de carácter subjetivo.
- f) Hay un mayor grado de planificación sobre la marcha lo que promueve la espontaneidad de las expresiones.
- g) El tono es más informal, por lo tanto, hay mayor coloquialidad.

Se puede, por otro lado, establecer dos tipos de coloquialidad: lo prototípico y lo periférico. Lo prototípico corresponde propiamente a la oralidad, mientras que lo periférico a la escritura. Con el desarrollo de las redes sociales, lo escrito no solamente se reduce a conversaciones a través de cartas, sino que la comunicación electrónica en plataformas como *Facebook*, *Twitter*, los diferentes chats y correo electrónicos reflejan la coloquialidad en el habla. Los memes son otra fuente de discurso coloquial entre un grupo de participantes que comparten código común. Recientemente, circuló el meme en la figura 3 en las redes sociales, en el que se hace referencia al gesto manual de los italianos, muy característico de su habla coloquial y cómo este puede ser susceptible a un análisis lingüístico.

³ La forma *namáh* de *nada más* trasciende el dialecto puertorriqueño y se encuentra en el dialecto andaluz, entre otras variedades del español (cf. Gutiérrez-Rexach & González-Rivera, 2014).

El intercambio anterior cumple con la mayoría de las características del registro coloquial señaladas por Briz (2010; 2016): informalidad, subjetividad, cotidianidad, proximidad e igualdad social y funcional. Hay otras características que son corolarios de estas, a saber, el doble sentido, la chacota, el insulto, las palabras obscenas, entre otras, y que son fácilmente identificables en el texto anterior: *pendejo*, *maricón*, *Kentucky Fried Chicken* en clara referencia al estado sureño de Kentucky en los EEUU, etc.

Nociones análogas

Existen otras nociones análogas al lenguaje coloquial, que nos permiten clasificar ciertas expresiones como tales. Entre estas, la expresividad o subjetividad, que ya mencionáramos; la intensificación y el realce lingüístico (cf. Sancho Cremades, 2001-2002). La intensificación puede ser de dos tipos, a saber: de cantidad o de cualidad. En (17) a través del uso adverbial *muy* y *bien*, se intensifica cuantitativamente el ser puertorriqueño:

(17) No es muy puertorriqueño, sino que es bien puertorriqueño.

(18) Mira si es tonto...

A través de esta estrategia (la intensificación), el acto de habla se ve reforzado, así como el interés de lo que se dice y se cuenta (Narbona, 2016). Así las palabras a la izquierda se reinterpretan en el habla coloquial como su contraparte al lado derecho:

(19) mucho	→	montón, mogollón
(20) bonito	→	chulería
(21) bueno	→	brutal, chévere

En otras palabras, se refuerza la verdad de lo expresado (cf. oraciones exclamativas). El realce lingüístico, en el que se destaca una parte del enunciado, es propio del lenguaje coloquial (Vigara Tauste, 1992). En este el hablante refleja su propia actitud ante un hecho sorprendente:

(22) ¡Qué te den por el culo!

(23) ¡Cabrón!

(24) Dale a Juana con la matraca.

(25) ¡Qué cojones!

(26) ¡Ave María Purísima!

Estas propiedades hacen que el tipo exclamativo pueda clasificarse como un subconjunto de las oraciones coloquiales (Gutiérrez-Rexach, 1996; Bosque, 2017; Villalba, 2016; entre muchos otros). Las oraciones exclamativas ponderan algo que afecta al interlocutor – ie., hay una actitud de asombro, sorpresa, entusiasmo, etc., ante un hecho que le afecta al interlocutor de alguna manera y que éste toma por verdadero (contenido proposicional). Por lo tanto, son expresiones que denotan asombro o sorpresa sobre aquello que se predica o se da alguna información, lo que a su vez refleja el es-

tado mental del locutor ante un estado de cosas (expresividad). Algunas expresiones exclamativas son:

- (27) ¡Uy, qué feo ese muchacho! → ese muchacho es feo
(28) ¡Qué imbécil eres? → eres un imbécil
(29) ¡Cuánto me gusta esa muchacha! → esa muchacha me gusta (mucho: cantidad)
(30) ¡Si seré tonto yo! → yo soy tonto (a un grado x)
(31) Me sorprende lo tonto que es. → es tonto (a un grado x)
(32) ¡La de estupideces que dice! → dice muchas estupideces
(33) Sí, claro, ¡menudo genio estás tú hecho! (ironía; cf. Andueza, 2011)

Diversos tipos de expresiones coloquiales

En esta sección mostraremos algunos ejemplos de expresiones coloquiales en el español puertorriqueño. Algunas de estas se construyen con morfemas intensificadores:

- (34) So animal, no ves que no tengo dinero.
(35) So bestia, ¿qué te pasa?
(36) La cerveza está carísima.
(37) Eso es súper mega interesante.
(38) Eso está mucho muy bueno.

Hay otras expresiones que se construyen con elativos, también conocidos como superlativos.

- (39) Esto está bien cabrón.
(40) La comida te quedó bien buena. (cf. La comida te quedó muy buena)
(41) bien cabrón (muy cabrón)
(42) bien bueno (muy bueno)
(43) bien bicha (muy bicha)
(44) bien arrebatá'o (muy arrebatá'o)

El adverbio *más*, con valor extremo, es común en el habla coloquial:

- (45) Tú eres más...
(46) Juan miró más a Natasha...
(47) ¡Qué vestido más lindo! (vs. ¡Qué vestido tan lindo!)

Algunas expresiones coloquiales tienen un operador cuantificacional. En los ejemplos a continuación, este operador es *lo*:

- (48) Lo rica que está ella.
(49) Lo buena que te quedó la comida.

El verbo ser o estar + oración consecutiva permite construir expresiones coloquiales del tipo:

- (50) Está que trepa paredes.
(51) Está que (se) sube por las paredes.
(52) Está como agua para chocolate.
(53) Está a punto de caramelo.

Así como hay expresiones léxico-semánticas, que suelen ser determinadas dialectalmente:

- (54) Este carro está peposo.
- (55) Esta comida está brutal (de buena).
- (56) Esta canción está chévere.

Por último, hay otras frases y secuencias comunes en el habla coloquial puertorriqueña:

- (57) Tiene una cara de profesor encojoná.
- (58) Está el listo que hace orilla.
- (59) Está la gente que hace orilla.
- (60) Un cojonal de gente vino a la fiesta. (un chorro, un montón)
- (61) Este tipo vio un chorro de películas. (un cojonal, un montón)
- (62) Esa mujer canta a to' jender.
- (63) Le metió al carro a to' fuele.
- (64) Un pichón de elefante
- (65) Un pichón de abogado
- (66) El idiota del decano
- (67) Un idiota de decano

Algunas de estas construcciones han pasado por un proceso de gramaticalización en el que ha ocurrido una fijación en la estructura gramatical, un incremento en la frecuencia de uso de las expresiones, una convencionalización de inferencias pragmáticas contextuales, así como una subjetivación del hablante.

Análisis formal de expresiones coloquiales

Las expresiones coloquiales admiten análisis lingüísticos formales que bien nos permitan describir su sintaxis, su semántica y su pragmática. En Padilla-Reyes, Gutiérrez-Rexach & González-Rivera (2016), por ejemplo, se provee la denotación de expresiones como (62) – (63) en términos de grado, medida y cantidad de la siguiente forma:

- (68) [[Tenemos expresiones coloquiales a to' jender]]
 $\exists g[\mu(e) = \{\text{cantidad}\} \ \& \ g > \max(C_{\text{cantidad}}) \ \& \ p(e)(g)]$

El examen de estas expresiones nos permite identificar los posibles significados asociados a estas, que bien pueden ser útil para la enseñanza del español, además de su valor puramente lingüístico. Consideremos las expresiones *un montón/un cojonal/un chorro*. Este tipo de expresiones admiten lecturas distintas en las oraciones siguientes:

- (69) Cristina caminó un montón/un cojonal/un chorro.
 - ‘Cristina caminó por mucho tiempo’ TIEMPO
 - ‘Cristina caminó muchas veces’ CARDINALIDAD
 - ‘Cristina caminó una distancia larga’ DISTANCIA
 - ‘Cristina caminó con mucho esfuerzo’ ESFUERZO
- (70) Génesis saltó un montón/un cojonal/un chorro.

‘Génesis saltó por mucho tiempo’	TIEMPO
‘Génesis saltó muchas veces’	CARDINALIDAD
‘Génesis saltó muy alto’	ALTURA
‘Génesis saltó una distancia larga’	DISTANCIA
‘Génesis saltó con mucho esfuerzo’	ESFUERZO

(Padilla-Reyes, Gutiérrez-Rexach & González-Rivera, 2016)

El caso del adverbio *más* (cf. 45-47), por otro lado, admite también un análisis formal en cuanto a su denotación y su sintaxis. En términos generales, podríamos analizar sintácticamente la diferencia entre *más* y *tan*, siguiendo la propuesta de Pastor & Armstrong (2016) para el análisis de *bien*, de la manera siguiente:

(71) ¡Qué muchacha más guapa! SFoc [Foc más_i [SGr [t_i [SAdj guapa]]]]

(72) ¡Qué muchacha tan guapa! SFoc [Foc [SGr [Gr tan [SAdj guapa]]]]

Semánticamente, el adverbio *más* se analizaría como una expresión de grado que toma el grado de un predicado y lo coloca sobre las expectativas del hablante:

$[[\text{más}]] = \lambda G_{s,ed} \lambda x_e \lambda m_{s,st} \lambda w. \exp((\text{stmax}(w))(m(w)) = D \ \& \ G(x)(w) > \max(D^C))$

El grado $G(x)$ en w supera las expectativas syss el grado de $G(x)$ en w es superior al grado máximo encontrado en el conjunto de grados esperados.

Un último ejemplo que proveemos es el de las expresiones binominales cualitativas, cuya sintaxis puede diferir (cf. 66-67):

(73) el idiota del decano → idiota como persona

Inversión del predicado

[SD el [FocP [SD idiota] [Foc' R+Foc(de) [SRel [SD el decano] [R' tR tSD]]]]]

(74) un idiota de decano → un idiota como decano (en su función de decano)

No inversión del predicado

[RP [NP un idiota] [RELATOR=de [NP decano]]]

[RP [NP un idiota] [RELATOR=como [NP gobernador]]]

(cf. Den Dikken, 2006; González-Rivera, 2010; 2011)

Conclusión

Las expresiones coloquiales tienen un tono informal que permite a su vez una interacción familiar y subjetiva entre los interlocutores (Briz, 2010). Proporcionan además al investigador campo fértil para el estudio de las propiedades asociadas a estas (Narboña 1991, 1992): recursos prosódicos, sintaxis, semántica y pragmática – e.g., la ironía –, entre otras propiedades.

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THE MYTH-DISCOURSE-IDEOLOGY AXIS AND THE HISPANIC DIALECT COMPLEX

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Introduction

In this article, I explain how the operationalization of language mythology by the action of repeated discourse has generated a system of powerful shared beliefs, in the form of a standard language ideology. Speech communities proceed to standardize their language in search of functionality and stability, not objectionable as such, but as that process requires the selection of just one variety an intervarectal conflict arises because the rest of the varieties are then deemed to be not only *nonstandard* but *substandard*, which generally drags their speakers into social marginalization.

Our first objective is to search for the origins of these language myths and the second is the analysis of developments within the resulting dialectal conflict. As to the first, a proposal is made that the origins may be found with the establishment in some communities of organized patriarchal religion as far back as the “Neolithic Revolution”, when a special variety of language, considered, ‘purer’ than ordinary speech was chosen as an essential instrument of a caste of religious elites. This primitive link between religion and language could be qualified as *language divinization* and led to the historical development of what would become considered to be sacred, ‘perfect’ languages or their varieties and to a set of language myths of purity, divinity, homogeneity and the like. The resulting standard language ideology is the present-day manifestation of this process. The second aim of this paper is to demonstrate how standardization has unfolded in the Hispanic World with special interest on the expected attrition of nonstandard varieties and the emergence of *regional* standards on both sides of the Atlantic.

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Language and religion, myths, discourse and ideologies

The emergence of sacred/elite varieties of language has been a marker of communities with patriarchal religions, since the settlement of hunter/gatherers during the so called “Neolithic Revolution”. The accompanying *divinization* of language has been posited as the first phase in identifying a specific form of speech as a purer variety of language suitable for use by the symbolic elites, in this case a religious hierarchy (Chela-Flores, 2017). In fact, language divinization is better understood as one of the

set of *myths* related to the diverse social functions that make hierarchical society possible.

As the emergence of patriarchal religion implied the intervention of symbolic elites as intermediaries between the people and the causes of inevitable crises and natural threats, language became an instrument of alleged communication with powerful beings or deities – as no other explanation was available then – in search for consolation or solutions. This led to the use of a “divine” variety, available only to the privileged strata of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. This variety was also present in the rituals created for giving shape and permanence to the veneration of the deities. This gave rise to a social situation in which the speech of the population was deemed to be a degenerate form of language.

Gradually as some of these patriarchal communities became more complex, the formal speech of the symbolic elites also became a sign of temporal power, and its use expanded to the economic and political elites as well. However, the divine dimension of this variety of language remained in the consciousness of speakers as a myth. Watts analyzes the rise of myths as the process whereby “Beliefs about a phenomenon [language in our case] are socially constructed... in every individual’s cognition through [their] discursive repetition in institutionalized settings such as social interactions (or social practice)” (p. 587). He then states that “the basis of our explanations we use to make sense of the world *lies in narrative*, the communal stories representing an accepted ‘*true*’ *state of affairs*” that is, in what I wish to call ‘myths’ (pp. 587-588; the emphasis is ours).

This definition, adequate to explain the rise of many myths, does not completely apply to language myths, because there is no narrative implied here, as there would be in most myths, for instance, in Greek mythology or in the many versions of the origin of the world or of humankind. Furthermore, myths are transferred generationally, and thus, they are social constructs, but not fabrications designed to deceive, as they have an element of reality, however remote it may be. The set of language myths attributes divinity, purity, homogeneity, perfection, superiority, legitimacy and neutrality to the elite variety. The contact of these myths with reality lies only in the link of language with patriarchal religion (Chela-Flores, 2017) described above.

The acceptance of language myths in their various forms persists and their continued presence in the form of present day standard language ideology shows their resistance to being dispelled. Myths act as generators of ideologies - powerful sets of beliefs - through their discursive instantiation in diverse semiotic media. The initial mythical phase translates itself into something more persuasive, taking on an aspect of ‘truth’ as the repeated discourse anchors its general message. The set of language myths described above may be thought of as based not necessarily on divinity, but instead on homogeneity, because that sums up most people’s unrealizable ideal of an unchangeable, perfect language. Even Labov, the father of modern social dialectology,

referred to this problem rather succinctly: “It is hard to avoid the conclusion that language, as the instrument of communication, would work best, if it did not change at all ... We all seem to be suffering from a *linguistic disease*” (2001: 5-6).

Language is inherently vulnerable to change and Labov opened the path to a fuller understanding of that aspect of its nature. Our contention is that the standard variety ideology can be traced back in time through diverse phases in the history of humankind including sacred languages (Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Classical Arabic and Hebrew) and is in the final analysis a descendant of the early use of a “pure” variety of language in patriarchal religion, which gave rise to a set of language myths. In the following sections we deal with the intervarectal conflict derived from the fact that the first phase of the process of standardization requires the selection of just one of the varieties in the dialect complex (or much more rarely two, as in the Norwegian case). The remaining varieties are then deemed to be not only *nonstandard* but *substandard*, which generally relegates their speakers to the social margins.

Non-standardness under the pressures of standardness will be analyzed first, especially in the context of the Hispanic dialectal complex on both sides of the Atlantic. Secondly, the phenomenon of regional standardness will be analyzed, with special attention given to anomalies in Continental Caribbean Spanish varieties.

The problem of non-standardness under the pressure of standardness: the cases of European and American Spanish

Dialectal studies and research are marked by what I have called “the dichotomic temptation” (Chela-Flores, 2001). For example, Spanish dialectal scholarship divides the numerous varieties of the language in Spain and in the Spanish-speaking Americas into conservative on the one hand and innovative or radical on the other. The difference between the two is based mostly on the lenis realizations of postvocalic consonants among the radical speakers, although they also exhibit some characteristic realizations in prenuclear positions of a strengthening kind (for instance the labiodental [v] allophone of /b/ in some American varieties and in Southern Spain (see Chela-Flores, 1987).

A division has also traditionally been made between European Spanish and American Spanish (including USA Spanish). This dichotomy has to some extent been replaced by an equally dichotomous distinction between Atlantic Spanish, which includes the varieties of the American lowlands together with the ones spoken in Andalusia and the Canary Islands, contrasted with the conservative varieties of northern and central Spain and the highlands of America from the Plateau or Altiplano of Mexico into the rest the continent. This is a more realistic dichotomic division of the Hispanophone world.

The way in which language myths have left their mark in the Hispanic world contrasts to some extent with the impact of these myths on the global French-, Portuguese- and

English-speaking communities. The cohesiveness (both actual and perceived) of the Spanish varieties is the strongest of the four languages and this has been noted by Crystal 2003 with reference to English (quoted by Moreno Fernández, 2012: 235). In a revealing paper, Moreno Fernández uses perceptual and attitudinal data to demonstrate the perceived similarity of Spanish varieties. But the results also indicate that the Spanish speaking world is a polycentric (or pluricentric) linguistic dominion initially tolerating several standards, and finally accepting their co-existence willingly, with a tacit understanding that there is no ‘perfect’ language or variety.

It is evident that languages develop many of their varieties around regional centers, but this fact does not automatically lead to polycentricity in the case of other standardized languages such as French. The cohesiveness of Spanish dialects derives in no small part from its speakers’ flexibility towards intervarectal distinctness. Lipski adds another factor when he points out that Spanish variation “falls into a small number of categories of phenomena with a robust cross-linguistic pedigree” (2012: 72).

At present, the situation in the vast Hispanic world is symbolized by its Association of 23 Spanish Language Academies (ASALE), each theoretically, at least, with equal rights. Thus, any decisions about the development of the language, its use and official publications are made consensually. The struggle to attain this state of affairs lasted a couple of centuries. At the foundation of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language in 1713, the myth of the ‘pure’ or ‘perfect’ variety held sway, following the example of the French Academy which was founded in 1635. This variety, wrongly called Castilian (*castellano*), based on the central and northern varieties of Spain became the norm to be followed there and in the colonies, a move that regulated the development of the language, or attempted to do so, for long after the independence of the Spanish-speaking American empire.

Portuguese, English and French speakers’ reaction to language myths and the standard language ideology they gave birth to, was initially similar to that of the Spanish, in the sense that the standard variety was chosen because it was linked to the ruling classes and therefore to the European centers of power and prestige. Therefore, for a long time, the American versions of these languages were considered as substandard.

Even after their separation from Spain, the Academy-sanctioned standard variety of Spanish exerted such pressure on the newly independent American republics that their official language continued to be called Castilian and not Spanish until the second half of the 20th century, when the language was finally called Spanish with the name of the country, attached to it, such as for example, Mexican or Venezuelan Spanish (*español de México* or *español de Venezuela*). Unfortunately, however, the use of the term *castellano* has not been completely eradicated from American educational systems (Chela-Flores, 2016, section V). This Latin American option was not selected by their also newly independent northern neighbor, who chose to continue speaking ‘English,’

as did the independent West Indian republics, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, all members of the Inner Circle of English native speakers (Kachru, 1983: 48 *et passim*, although he did not include the West Indies).

The Standard Form (SF) of a language is always based on one variety as indicated above, but the SF is the result of a process, whose first stage is the determination or selection of the variety, followed by its codification and stabilization and 2) that it is a *social* variety distinguished from other dialects by its *grammatical* forms (Trudgill, 2011: 9), but with no native speakers.

The seeds of the intervarectal conflict between a standard Hispanic variety exerting pressure on the rest of the dialectal complex, were planted in 1469 with the dynastic union between Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon, speakers of central and northern Iberian languages. “Language is the companion of empire” as the Sevillian linguist and lexicographer, Elio Antonio de Nebrija, told his queen in 1492, twenty-three years after Spain began its rise to imperial heights. The union of Castile and Aragon gave birth to a stronger state that was not yet a nation, but which had a quasi-common language variety because of the similarity between Castilian, which was already a weighty and influential language in Iberia, and Aragonese.

It is relevant to the development of standardness to indicate that in a large part of Europe, *neutrality* (one of our language myths) meant *shared space*, since the standard forms were considered “additions to existing repertoires” (Rutten, 2016: 25 *et passim*), which evidently, did not result immediately in pressure on other varieties. During the 16th and 17th centuries, there was a gradual conceptual shift towards *neutrality* as *unmarkedness* in which, “the forms marked for use in interdialectal communication, lose their specific application [becoming] ... unnoticed ... common ... the *standard forms*” (Rutten: 28, the emphasis is ours). This shift made the standard forms the only acceptable ones in the higher levels of society. Between the final decades of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th, linguistic nationalism emerged as part of nationalism as a political ideology. Under these conditions, the formation of a significant number of nation states in Western Europe and in the Spanish American empire, gave increased weight to official standardness, which gave rise to a phase of increased intervarectal conflict that has gathered speed and alienating power up until in the present time.

The “discovery” of the Americas took place in 1492, which was a significant year for Spain in many ways: the beginning of a vast empire in the New World, the defeat of the last Iberian Muslim ruler in Granada and the publication of a grammar of the Castilian language by Nebrija. This grammar had the distinction of being the first modern European grammar of a variety with the rigor expected nowadays, which explains why it was still valid in the 18th century. Historical and linguistic factors clearly explain the inevitable selection of the variety of power and prestige as the standard form of the Hispanic world from the 15th to 18th centuries so that when the

Spanish Academy was founded in 1713, it only added more weight to the variety at the center of power.

The 1492 Nebrija Grammar is important beyond its codification of what became Iberian Standard Spanish, because it was written by an Andalusian, born and bred in Seville, then at the periphery of Iberian power. The significance of this event is paralleled by the appearance of Venezuelan Andrés Bello's still valid Grammar "...for the use of the Americans" in 1847, also from the periphery of Iberian power in the newly independent American republics. Nebrija was convinced that Castilian was destined to become the companion of Spain in its quest for empire, while Bello, an active participant in the early phase of the quest for independence, was convinced that the future depended on avoiding a Latin-like fragmentation of Spanish in the Americas.

While regional standard varieties seem to be led inexorably towards convergence toward the speech of the prestigious central-northern based standard in Spain and towards the American standards on the other side of the Atlantic, there are clear signs that this dialectal suicide is not inevitable. Such convergence is shown in the dialects classified as 'transitional' such as Extremaduran, Murcian, and Manchegan as well as Eastern Andalusian dialects which, for reasons of prestige and the lack of a city with the social, economic and historical weight of Seville show signs of a reorganization, which moves them away from the Sevillian Standard (see Villena –Ponsoda & Vida, 2012 on this aspect: 68-69 *et passim*).

In their seminal research, Hernández-Campoy and Villena-Ponsoda (2009) show that this attrition and weakening are not inevitable by presenting solid evidence of a regional standard centered in Seville, which has become a stronghold against the weight accumulated by the Madrid-centered variety in terms of power, prestige and therefore attraction for the Spaniards living in the areas considered substandard linguistically. Before the establishment of Madrid as the capital in 1561 Castilian speech had gone through three phases each with a different center: the first located in Burgos from the 9th to the 11th centuries; the second in Toledo, from the 11th to the 13th, and the third drifting further southwards to Seville from the 13th to the 15th, as that city grew rapidly as the point of origin and return of the voyages to the Americas. In the first two decades of colonization of the island known as Hispaniola, Spaniards from everywhere settled there and a fusion of their different dialects occurred with Seville as the metropolitan center of prestige and this koine provided the basis of the American varieties of Spanish that spread rapidly, after reaching the mainland through Macuro in what was to become Venezuela. Thus, American Spanish has Western Andalusian roots.

Hernández-Campoy and Villena Ponsoda provide ample evidence as to why the Seville variety has become a stronghold against attrition. In spite of being on the periphery of power, its cultural growth has been constant. The fact that the Nebrija

grammar came from Seville adds to its prestige, which can be argued to be derived more from accomplishment than from power. The interesting conclusion is that the emergence of the Sevillian standard has very little to do with its linguistic features or structure, because the eastern Andalusian dialects share many characteristics with Seville, but no eastern Andalusian regional standards have emerged because they are not spoken in cities with the modern accomplishments of Seville. In fact, there is at present a noticeable convergence in eastern Andalusia towards the Madrid standard, especially among younger speakers who are attracted to it by prestige and economic opportunity (Villena Ponsoda and Vida Castro, 2012).

The Seville standard shows that the set of language myths which we have analysed here are activated whenever and wherever communities emerge with a solid identity nurtured by historical, economic and cultural accomplishments. It also shows that regional standardness is not a matter of greater linguistic coherence or more efficient structural factors, but instead is a product of extralinguistic factors, which can be summed up in the trinomial accomplishment-pride-prestige.

On the other side of the Atlantic, in the Spanish spoken on the Caribbean coast of South America, two regional standards have emerged. The countries with Caribbean coastlines are Venezuela and Colombia, which have double geolectal identities because they each have distinct varieties in the highlands of the Andes and on the coast. These two countries, however, have made opposite decisions in terms of selecting standard varieties. During colonial times, the Spanish monarchs appointed Viceroyes with ample powers in Mexico (New Spain), Peru, New Granada centered in Santa Fe de Bogota and Buenos Aires. The Spanish spoken in the courts and at the higher levels of administration was a conservative variety of the standard form, whereas in the rest of the empire, innovative varieties were used. Thus, Bogota, seat of the viceregal power since its foundation in 1739 had a conservative variety, which after independence from Spain, predictably became Standard Colombian Spanish. Venezuela never had anything close to a viceroyalty and the speech of Caracas, its capital, was innovative and its Standard Spanish reflected Western Andalusian influences. Caracas rose to prominence during the independence struggle, largely because Francisco de Miranda (1750-1810), the precursor to Spanish American independence and Simón Bolívar (1783-1830) the liberator, who took over from Miranda, were born in that city and they were both aware of the increasing popularity of nationalism as a political ideology in Europe between the 18th and 19th centuries.

In western Venezuela, two regional standards emerged in contiguous areas¹ Zulia state, with Maracaibo as its capital where an innovative Caribbean variety emerged

¹The descriptions of regional standardness are abbreviated and revised versions of the ones in my papers of 2016 and 2017 and I have included them here for the sake of completeness in my analysis of the myth-discourse-ideology axis and its effects. The description of the Seville phenomenon follows Hernández-Campoy and Villena-Ponsoda's 2009 seminal work. I have only added to the 2009 paper my suggestion that the power-

and the three western Andean states of Mérida, Táchira and Trujillo where a conservative Spanish American Highlands variety emerged. Maracaibo faces one of the largest lakes in South America and petroleum was found there at the beginning of the 20th century, which made Venezuela the world's largest exporter of oil until the middle of that century. This gave Zulia state the resources that made Maracaibo the first city to have banks, electricity and telephone service in Venezuela. On the cultural side, the city became a pioneer in film making and it was the seat of an important university, the second largest in Venezuela. Its literary production and newspaper activity were those of a city with a significant cultural life. This gave its inhabitants a sense of accomplishment and a strong regional pride in their variety of Spanish long before the discovery of oil. In fact their regionalism led them initially not to join the independence movement born in Caracas in the early years of the 19th century.

The Andean states established a solid commercial relationship with Maracaibo through its good port facilities on the lake. The agricultural products from the highlands found their way to their markets in the Caribbean thanks to this partnership with Maracaibo. Both Zulia and the Andes are very far from the capital and were isolated from the rest of the country. During colonial times, Mérida twice became part of a state with Maracaibo as the capital. The resulting strong regional identity gave them pride in their dialects, conservative and innovative. This, together with their accomplishments, economic and cultural, explain why there is no sign of convergence to the standard centered in the capital. If anything, the Highlands and Caribbean varieties of the west of Venezuela show convergence into a western *koine*.

After the independence struggle, Venezuela was left in a decimated state, with both a depleted male population and a large part of the country in ruins. It became prey to armed bands, many of which were led by Andean politicians and men with military experience. Their goal was Caracas and in the final years of the 19th century they took control of the city and for more than four decades they held executive power, often as dictators. The inhabitants of Caracas found their Andean masters rude, unsophisticated and different in their speech and customs. As speakers of an innovative variety inherited from western Andalusia, the people of Caracas felt that the only safe way to mark their difference was to mock the speech of their Andean rulers. This attitude against Andean varieties was projected from the capital to the rest of the country where it has remained up until the present.

Thus, the linguistic situation in Venezuela has unique and anomalous characteristics. There are two competing regional standards, but instead of the more conservative Highlands standard being considered by the general population as the variety of prestige, as is the case in Colombia, this conservative variety is considered not only

prestige binomial should be revised and accomplishment could replace 'power' in the Seville standard as well as in the Maracaibo and Andean cases.

nonstandard, but actually substandard by the majority of the population, who speak the innovative coastal varieties, one of which is the Caracas-centered official standard. Interestingly, the Andean variety is the only conservative dialect with a glottal fricative [h] as allophone of postvocalic /s/, which is a defining characteristic of the innovative varieties of Atlantic Spanish. We argue, however, that this cannot be taken as a sign of convergence to the Caracas variety, given the fact that Andean speakers were roundly ridiculed by the people of Caracas. In our opinion, a more probable explanation is that it is a sign of convergence, not towards the official Caracas standard, but towards the innovative speech of the people of Maracaibo, with whom the Andean speakers have had a historically close and friendly relationship. This characteristic would make Andean speech not a conservative variety, but an intermediate one (Chela-Flores, 1998: 5).

Concluding remarks

In this article, we have revisited my concept of divinization of human language (Chela-Flores, 2016; 2017) and linked it to myth and ideology creation by discursive instantiation. The cases of regional dialects on both sides of the Atlantic examined here are important reactions to the influence and action of the myth-discourse-ideology axis, whose main present-day manifestation is standardness. By considering the interplay of the centripetal forces of standardness and the centrifugal forces of non-standardness, we shed light on the emergence of multiple standard varieties of Spanish in Iberia and the Americas.

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FEMALE NICKNAMING PRACTICES AND GENDER CONSTRUCTS IN PUERTO RICAN SOCIETY

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The pilot study that is the focus of this article partly replicates a similar investigation of female nicknames in Puerto Rico carried out by Alma Simounet (1994). Because of the complex nature of the treatment of women in a male dominated society, an onomastic study of nicknames can shed light on how female gender roles are perceived. Studying the intentions and motives behind the way women are addressed or referred to can reveal acceptable roles for females and help us to better understand male patriarchal culture. This study initiates a process of comparison between the results obtained in 1994 with those obtained in 2016, to see how society might have changed in the intervening 22 years.

Many scholars have worked with the concept of nicknames within the field of onomastics, which is linked to sociolinguistics and pragmatics, and encompasses the sub-fields of folk onomastics, contact onomastics, interactional onomastics, socio-onomastics and linguistic landscape studies (Ainiala & Östman, 2017). Nicknaming is a well-studied trait of human societies and serves many functions in our daily lives. According to Simounet (1994) it is almost impossible for any of us to avoid hearing nicknames used to address friends, relatives, acquaintances, and in some cases strangers. Nicknames are used as terms of endearment, insults, markers of personal traits, and even as a means for reinventing oneself.

Within the field of onomastics, there have been many attempts to categorize nicknames. Morgan, O'Neill and Harré (1979) divides nicknames into those emerging from internal motivation versus those emerging from external motivation. Internally motivated nicknames emerge through linguistic processes like contraction, suffix addition, etc. Examples for these are *Luisito* for *Luis*, *Pao* for *Paola* and so on. Externally motivated nicknames emerge due to factors outside of language itself such as personality traits, behavioral patterns, physical attributes, lifestyle, and events. These scholars also allow for a third group, which is a combination of both linguistic processes and personal attributes. Holland (1990) recognizes several functions of nicknames, including identification, social solidarity, social distance, boundary maintenance, social control, and referencing social change.

Holland (1990: 266) claims that categories cannot be universal for all cultures, so the categories assigned for nicknaming practices must vary, to conform with local cultural practices. A given researcher's notion of these categories may not necessarily be aligned with the psychological reality that these names have for the members of the group under study, therefore in order to devise the most viable classification system, the target culture must be well studied and understood. In a study realized by Men (2012) in which the researcher worked with the socio-semantics of nicknames given to mothers-in-law by Yoruba women, the results were divided into three categories: compliment, insult and a combination of both. Simounet (1994) addresses the dilemma of how to represent the psychological reality of Puerto Rico within existing schemes of classification of nicknames.

In her 1994 study, Simounet found that the nicknames in her data filled the following functions: identifier, verbal aggression, and social control. Women have been a target of patriarchal hegemonic control in many societies over the past several thousand years. The research agenda that underlies both the 1994 and the 2016 studies seeks to determine the extent to which patriarchy is mirrored in nicknaming practices. Of course, patriarchal control may not be implicated in the form and function of every female nickname, but the use of nicknames is often at the cost of the social status of the bearer (Gilmore, 1982). According to the dictionary of the *Real Academia de la Lengua Española* (Royal Academy of the Spanish Language), the word *apodo* means “*Nombre que suele darse a una persona, tomado de sus defectos corporales o de alguna otra circunstancia.*” [A name that is usually given to a person in the basis of personal defects or other circumstances. (authors' translation)] while Cardenas (2016) asserts that:

El apodo es un nombre peculiarísimo, en el sentido que es propio y atribuible a un individuo y no a otro como lo puede ser Pedro, Juana etc. Surge desde la persona como rasgo y consustancial con el que es, la mayoría de las veces con predominio de carácter negativo, tal como lo consignan las definiciones. Su existencia tiene origen en la consideración y el modo en el que el sujeto es visto por los demás, en este sentido, el apodo tiende a identificarlo definiéndolo en relación con un contexto de manera que está ligada con el portador para bien, o como las más veces, para mal. (p.36)

[A nickname is a very peculiar name, in the sense that it is proper and that it belongs to and is attributable to an individual and not to anyone else, as opposed to Pedro, Juana, etc. It arises as a feature of the person him/herself and is consubstantial with who he/she is, in the majority of instances with a predominantly negative character, as the definitions indicate. Its existence has its origin in the esteem and manner with which the subject is considered by others; in this respect, nicknames tend to identify persons by defining them in relation to a context, so that they are linked to the person who bears them for the better, or even more frequently, for the worse.] (p. 36) [authors' translation]

The primary concern of the original study (Simounet, 1994) was to inquire as to how female nicknames in Puerto Rico were either perpetuating traditional patriarchal views of women or instead, voicing a new more equitable vision of gender. According to Ramirez (1999: 45) women in Puerto Rico are highly sexualized objects of men's pleasure, as long as men abide by the taboo of incest and give the respect that is required toward those women who are part of the family. A woman who is sexually liberated is frowned upon, while men are encouraged to engage in Don Juanesque behaviors by family and friends. Ramirez maintains that Puerto Rican masculinities derive honor not from their own behavior, but instead from the behavior of the women close to them (kin or romantic partners).

Simounet (1994) argues that narrow gender roles and sexual taboos for women are imposed by institutions, groups, individuals, family members, etc., and reaffirmed through nicknaming. Acosta Perez (2005: 34-35), claims that in the construction of gender roles, men are expected to be active, rational, competitive, insensitive, assertive, aggressive, hostile, strong, independent, competitive and tough, and to repress emotions that are deemed feminine, such as love and sadness, while women are supposed to be passive, emotional, dependent, emotional, shy, submissive, cooperative, weak, obedient, tender and obedient to men. Ramirez (1999) argues that men are obliged to distance themselves emotionally from other generational cohorts like children or the elderly.

In Puerto Rico, Latin America and the Caribbean there are rigid norms obliging women to conserve virginity until marriage. This idea conflicts with the construction of women as obedient and men's demand for women's demonstration of love and obedience through sexual activities. There is an inherent gender inequality in terms of power in heteronormative relationships. Any lifestyle or behavior that breaks the patterns of these norms may be subject to insult, ridicule, marginalization and this might be evidenced through nicknaming practices.

This study seeks to identify social practices regarding the treatment of women in Puerto Rican culture. In an effort to understand how these practices manifest themselves through nicknames, the following research questions have been developed for the present study:

Main question:

To what extent have norms with regard to female gender roles and sexual taboos changed through the time span of a generation (1994 to 2016) in Puerto Rico?

Secondary questions:

1. What are some examples of female nicknames at present in Puerto Rico?
2. How do Puerto Ricans define female nicknames?
3. What are the functions of female nicknames in Puerto Rican society?
4. What could be some of the covert intentions behind female nicknaming practices in Puerto Rico?

The participants in the study were 15 graduate and undergraduate students, seven men and eight women ranging in age from 18 to 34, all currently enrolled at the University of Puerto Rico. Every participant was born and raised in Puerto Rico. There was a flexible method of stratification for gender but not for socio-economic class, since the focus of this study is not to correlate any particular behavior with a specific demographic, but rather to shed light on how women are viewed in our society as a whole. Due to limitations in resources and time, the sample is too small to be considered representative of Puerto Rican society, therefore this study could be considered to be a pilot for an expanded study in the future. Informal interviews in a relaxed setting were carried out to get more and richer data than might be obtained otherwise. Up to 12 nicknames were gathered from each informant.

In our analysis of the nicknames in our data, we considered the factors listed in Table 1. Each nickname was classified according to: a) its use in referring to (R) and/or addressing (A) the bearer (column 2 of Table 1); b) its linguistic form (column 3 of Table 1); c) its identification of personal features of the bearer (column 4 of Table 1); and d) its function as identified by the participant (column 5 of Table 1).

Table 1 Criteria for nickname analysis

Nickname	Used to Refer to (R) and/or to Address (A) the Bearer	Linguistic Form	Personal Features	Function
	R	Contraction	Behavior	Term of endearment
	A	Suffix Addition	Physical Appearance	Insult
	R and A	Word Play	Lifestyle	Social change
		Syllable inversion	Events	Solidarity
				Sexual objectification
				Taboo behavior
				Neutral

On the basis of our analysis, a simplified 3-column table was constructed for each nickname provided by each participant. The full set of tables for all participants are provided in Appendix 2. For example:

Subject #8 /female/ 20 years old

Guima	R	A person who has gotten pregnant several times
Jevota	R	A really attractive woman
La rompe silla	R	A woman with a big rear end
Potranca	R	Tall woman
La saica	R	A possessive and jealous girl
La revoltosa	A	Deeply involved in a political activism

For the present study most participants defined nicknames as a universal term for additional names given to a person besides their birth name. Nicknames range from terms of endearment to acts of verbal aggression. There is a thin line between insults and nicknames in the data and, as in Cardenas (2016) more than half of the sample of nicknames refer to negative qualities of the bearer, such as making fun of their body or demonization of their supposed sexual practices. There are a significant number (14%) of nicknames that combine both linguistic processes and personal traits such as (*Carlota Pelota*, *Mela Pela*, *Pati Patiá*, *Pame Patabajo* etc.) There were hardly any nicknames that referred to intellectual qualities, but there were many which related to personal traits.

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Continuous contact with US culture in Puerto Rico is evident in some nicknaming practices. For example: Biggie Smalls, Timona, Chicken Run, Maleficent etc. are all based on characters from U.S. popular culture. In Simounet's (1994) study there were also examples of these like Barbie, Blondie, Chubacca, Single white Female, Mary Jo, Peanut Brain etc. There is a larger bilingual community in Puerto Rico today than 22 years ago and the phenomenon of Americanization is escalating. That said, the results from 1994 and 2016 do not indicate any clear increase or decrease in the use of American English nicknames.

In both studies, female nicknames alluding to the qualities of individuals were derogatory and used almost exclusively to refer to the bearer. There were many examples in the 1994 study pertaining to weight or other aspects of physical appearance. In the 2016 study most of the nicknames regarding personal features refer more to taboo behaviors like promiscuity. Although these nicknames generally refer to female sexual taboos, it was surprising to find that the term *puta* ("prostitute") is often used as a term of endearment between female friends. When compared to the 1994 data, in 2016 there was more of a tendency to use nicknames that are in some way related to feminism and women's freedom to choose in a derogatory way such as Busha, Feminazi or Pelua. In Simounet's

study, no such demonization of feminism, sexual orientation or political views was evident.

Personal traits that were subject of derision in both studies include being gossipy, unfriendly, sexually active, and sexually unavailable. In 2016, sexual behavior seemed to be the main reason for nicknames and many were derived from reggaeton culture (ex. Frikitona, Chapeadora, Gata, Sin Jockey etc). There has been a shift in cultural paradigms, and Puerto Rico is a more liberated society not just sexually but ideologically, although there is always resistance. Women are still being forced to submit to unfair social norms. Women are also being sexually objectified through nicknames, but there is more awareness of gender inequality.

In Puerto Rico nicknames are used to reaffirm and enforce, intentionally and unintentionally, patriarchal norms for female gender roles and taboo behaviors. According to Simounet (1994) one function of nicknames can be to reference social change. Hardly any changes in terms of the function of nicknames seem to have occurred between 1994 and 2016, although a more extensive study will be necessary to gain a clearer picture and to create awareness about how linguistic practices such as nicknames are used to enforce the subjugation of women in Puerto Rican society.

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APPENDIX 1: DATA SAMPLES

Subject# 1/female/23

Nickname	Refer or Address	Reason
Yeyi	Address	From Jessica.
Shanti	Address	Because she resembles the reggae singer Congo Ashanti
Timona	Address	Resembles the meerkat from the Lion King movies.
Mama Pollito	Address	Takes care of her crew when they are in trouble and often gives rides or food to her smaller size friends in her tight little social circle.
Biggie Smalls	Refer	the actual person has an even sized breast

Subject#2 /male/25

La frikitona	R	I assume it is derived from freaky in a sexual context.
Yara la rara	A	The person is weird
La brinca verja	R	She is meddling into other people's affairs.
La Hipster guaynabi	R	The person is identified with hipster culture and lives in Guaynabo
La pegá	R	Slow mannerisms and speech

Subject#4 /male/20

Pachemámica	R	New age culture or hippie oriented.
Pankukera	R	A woman that hustles from men using her sexuality.

Natty Nats	R	Natty from Jamaican patwa for Natural.
Chaves		Women from Isabela
Mini		Minerva

Subject #5/female/18

Chi chi	A	From Iris
Casillas	A	She's a goalkeeper in a soccer team
Puchum	A	Origins Unknown
Bacalá	R	Person misses a lot of passes and shots in soccer matches.
Pati Patiá	R	Wordplay
Miss Chula	A	Nice person

Subject #6 /male/21

Patrona	R	Bossy person
La gata cangri	R	Attractive or good at sex
Chulinsky	A	From chula
Sin Jockey	R	Always single
Candela	A	A promiscuous girl
La cabra	A	Also a promiscuous girl

Subject # 7 /female/22

Putandra		Put + Alexandra
Buchi		From bush lesbia
Moretón		"Por que se llama violeta pero ella es un golpe"
Maleficent		Someone's evil boss
Pinky		Pelo rosita

Subject #8 /female/ 20 years old

Guima	R	A person who has gotten pregnant several times
Jevota	R	A really attractive woman
La rompe silla	R	A woman with a big rear end
Potranca	R	Tall woman
La saica	R	A possessive and jealous girl
La revoltosa	A	Deeply involved in a political activism

Subject #9 male 19 years old

OCD	A	Se pasa recogiendo y limpiando
La pelua	A	Doesnt shave
La feminazi	A	Passionate about feminist issues
La loquita	A	
LA setiadora	A	Sets matches up
La chapeadora	R	Hustles from men using her sexuality

Subject #10 Female 20

Novelera	A	Likes gossip
Maniquí	R	Very thin woman
La dura	R	Attractive or good at something.
Joseadora	R	Always hustling
Taina	R	Resembles a taino female
La enchochá	R	Always at home

Subject 11 female 21

Pautosa	R and A	Lots of likes and followers on social media
Farandulera	R	Studies natural sciences and goes to every reggaetón concert at the choli.
Siki traki (fire cracker)	R	Short tempered
Pati larga	R	Likes to go out
Bushi Pluma		Talks a lot and never acts upon her words
Para Bicho	R	Turns someone on and does not follow through with intercourse.
La Llorona	R and A	Person that complain a lot.
Susi	R	A dirty girl.
Putas	R and A	Close friend or a whore
Papaya Dulce	R	Has a very juicy vagina

Subject 12 male 24

Cohete /petard	R	Women with several partners
Gamberra	R	Same as putas
bucha	R	Bush Lesbian looking

Showcera	R	Person that complain a lot
Cochofle	R	Whore
Gata	R & A	Girl

Subject 13/ female/21

Gene Penne	A	From genesis and penne pasta because of the persons is skinny
DS	R	Desecho social
Carlota Pelota	A	Rhymes
Popa	A	For Paula
Mimi	A	For Miriam
Sol	A	Happy Person

Subject 14/male/28

Cherry	A	Always wears red lipstick
Kiki	A	Short for Kiara
Mimi	A	Short for Miriangeliz
Adri	A	Short for Adriana
Bicha	R	Has an attitude and is not friendly
Gummy bear	A	Online username for a video game

Subject 15/female/26

Belms	A	Belmarie
Chicken run	R	Big nose
Pame Patabajo	A	Pamela + Patabajo. Patabajo is a person that indulges in wild activities and has no limits when partying
Locresia	A	Loca+Lucresia
Mela Pela	A	Mela short for Mariela and Pela because of the saying Me la pela, referring to something you don't like.
Krystalita	A	Krystal and suffix adition for diminutive

SINGING BETWEEN TWO CULTURES: THE CASE OF RICKY MARTIN'S CODE MIXED LYRICS

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World famous Puerto Rican performer Ricky Martin has been honored with many awards, including two Grammys, three Latin Grammys, three Billboard Awards, nine Latin Billboard Awards, two American Music Awards and two Latin American Music Awards. He has featured in the hit Mexican teen telenovela *Alcanzar una estrella II* and the long standing American soap opera *General Hospital*. He has appeared in two Broadway musicals, *Les Misérables* and *Evita*. He also dubbed the Spanish voice for the Disney movie *Hercules* and has appeared on almost every major talk show and Pop music-related event. This article analyzes code mixing, lexical borrowings and code switches in Ricky Martin's early work to demonstrate how his recording career has put the spotlight on the hybridity of contemporary Latino/a culture through the use of code mixed lyrics in his songs as well as on how the use of Spanish and English in the same song embodies the singer's strategy of presenting his Latino identity as a desirable and marketable trait on the North American and world markets.

Certainly, Martin is not the first or the only Latino/a musician to attempt to insert him/herself into the North American mainstream market, yet he has been one of the most prominent cases. Dating all the way back to the 1950s, we have cases of all-Spanish songs becoming mainstream North American hits, such as Ritchie Valens' (Richard Valenzuela's) "La Bamba", and Los del Río's "La Macarena". However, these instances remained largely sporadic and isolated. Between the 1960s and 1980s, there were some instances of hit song lyrics including phrases in both English and Spanish, such as "Qué te pasa" (1989) by the group Click and "Chiquitita" (1979) by ABBA. The disco genre seemed to accommodate such code switches, having already incorporated Latin percussion as part of its musical recipe. Mexican American guitarist and bandleader Carlos Santana also introduced Latin instrumental style into Anglo music circles.

Nevertheless, it was José Feliciano, another guitarist and singer/song-writer who contributed the most historically noteworthy code switched song to the North American market with his "Feliz Navidad" (1970). This song has traveled the world and it features one verse in Spanish followed by a loose translation in English. What makes this

song such a success is not only the fact that it includes two of the most widely spoken languages in the world, but also the fact that it employs a combination of very catchy rhythms from both Latin and non-Latin repertoires. The Spanish verse has a slightly slower rhythm than the subsequent English verse, which is emblematic of rock and roll style. The first verse is reminiscent of the type of song one would hear in a Puerto Rican *parranda* or festive Christmas caroling event involving typical Puerto Rican instruments, food and drink while the second verse caters more to Anglo popular taste. In this way, there is a welding together of both musical and linguistic cultures in this simple yet clearly bicultural composition.

In the 1980s, Gloria Estefan and the Miami Sound Machine picked up the pace in terms of Latin influences on otherwise Anglo mainstream Pop music. The incorporation of Latin rhythms and occasional Spanish into their music brought about a uniqueness that became representative of their style. The Italian American and French Canadian descended “queen of pop” Madonna also contributed to the popularization of English/Spanish code switched songs such as “Who’s That girl” and “La Isla Bonita,” both of which became top hits in 1987. Because Madonna is not Latina, her decision to integrate the Spanish language into her music can be seen as token of acceptance from the non-Latino/a community.

The 1990s witnessed a much larger wave of Latino/a artists who transgressed the monolingual English boundaries of the Anglo pop music norm. Artists such as Selena Quintanilla, Ricky Martin, Enrique Iglesias, Shakira, Marc Anthony, Jennifer Lopez and Christina Aguilera were all constantly playing on Latino and non-Latino radio stations alike during this decade. The latter three of these artists started their careers singing English pop and went back to their heritage language, Spanish later on as they saw the opportunity to reach a broader market. The former three are examples of what are commonly known as *crossover* artists, who begin their careers singing Spanish language songs, then translate preexisting Spanish songs into English, and finally compose new songs in English.

Media sources such as *People Magazine*, *The New York Times* and *Newsweek* have characterized this popularization of Spanish language singers and songs as the ‘Latin Boom’, ‘Latin Explosion’ and ‘Musical Invasion’. Using military or war-related terminology demonstrates the uneasiness of the media with “external” influences, metaphorically comparing the phenomenon to migration and displaying an Anglo-exclusive and somewhat patronizing attitude.

In any case, Martin benefitted from all of this in the 1990s, as attested in his being featured at several global events such as the FIFA World Cup and the Grammy Awards. In his autobiography *Me (Yo)* (2010), Ricky Martin talks about this decade in this fashion:

Around that time, the New York Times stated that I had “lit the fire of pop music” and that my performance at the Grammys had established me as the “sym-

bol of the new status Latin culture holds in mainstream America.” You see, during this time, the Latino community of the United States was growing at an impressive rate, and my musical success to a certain degree was reflecting – and feeding off of – that very change. Latin culture was beginning to seduce the United States and modify the musical preferences of its inhabitants. (p. 117)

Enrique Martin Morales was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on December 24th 1971, later to be known to the world as Ricky Martin. His artistic name is reminiscent of Latino figures in US show business such as the comic character Ricky Ricardo from the 1950s situation comedy *I love Lucy*. This character was played by Cuban actor and musician Desi Arnaz who was also Lucille Ball’s real-life husband and the co-producer of the show. Such a beloved sitcom made its impact on US popular culture and its characters made their mark on the Anglo-American psyche. Ricky Ricardo was represented as a Cuban musician and bandleader. He was well dressed and presented an outgoing image of a bilingual Latino. Another figure with a similar name is Ricky Nelson, who was a prominent American rock and roll musician from the 1950s. In this sense, the name Ricky is an expression of the coming together of the memories of two highly visible and well-liked performers, one Latino, and the other all-American.

As a child Martin appeared in commercials, but his greatest artistic achievement during this period was to become a member of the incredibly famous Latino boyband Menudo. His experience in Menudo provided him with the skills, discipline and work ethic that would prepare him for his future. After leaving Menudo, he acted and sang in various shows in Mexico. He started his solo recording career in 1991 with the album *Ricky Martin*, which consists of eleven songs of which three have lexical borrowings from English into Spanish. The lexical borrowings are just single-word loans such as ‘rock and roll’ and ‘stop’. Of these three code mixed songs, “*Te voy a conquistar*” (I am going to win you over) stands out for its direct reference to biculturalism. The line *bailo salsa y rock’n roll* (I dance salsa and rock’n roll) reflects the bicultural status of Latinos/as in the United States.

His first two solo albums, *Menudo* and *Me amarás* (You will love me 1993), were produced by Sony Music Mexico. Undoubtedly, both show the influence of Mexican taste and preferences, in terms of both rhythmic choices and the incorporation or exclusion of anglicisms. *Me amarás* only has code mixing in two songs: the first one, “¿*Qué día es hoy?*” (What day is it today?), includes only the interjection “hey”. The second one includes lyrics from “Hooray hooray, it’s a holiday” originally by Boney M., a Euro Pop music group from the 1970s. The original members were Jamaican-born although they had their roots in Europe and a German producer, Frank Farian. The British newspaper *The Independent* called Boney M “the black ABBA”. Evidently, Martin is reaching out in this song to an international audience not only by includ-

ing English lyrics, but also through his choice of a musical genre that had already gained acceptance worldwide. The lyrics are sung in Spanish by Martin with a musically isolated line in English which is repeated: “Well, I’m game / Fun is the thing I’m after / Now let’s all live it up today / Get set for love and laughter.” The lyrics depict a paradise-like setting by the sea where there is a party, which also evokes images of the Caribbean. In his memoir, Martin mentions feeling somewhat liberated after leaving Sony Music Mexico.

After this record, Martin moves over to Sony Music Latin and there is a visible shift, not so much in terms of the amount but in terms of the type of code mixing he uses. The following two albums *A medio vivir* (Half Living) and *Vuelve* (Come Back) contained few code mixes. *A medio vivir* only contained the phrase “love and peace” in the song “Bombón de azúcar” (Sugar Candy). Here we observe a shift from single-word lexical borrowing to a phrase. The second of these recordings, *Vuelve* (1998), has three songs that exhibit code mixing: “Corazonado” (Hearted), “Perdido sin ti” (Lost without you), and “La copa de la vida” (The cup of life).

The song “Corazonado” (1998) was written in part by Spanish lyricist Luis Gómez Escolar. The use of the word “iceberg” within the Spanish lyrics is not a common lexical borrowing in Puerto Rican Spanish, yet it is used in Spain with an adapted pronunciation. Nevertheless, when Martin sings this word he does not adapt it into Spanish; instead he employs the English pronunciation. Perhaps, his collaboration at the time with fellow Puerto Rican Robi Draco Rosa had something to do with this choice of pronunciation. In any case, the Spanish pronunciation would have taken longer and therefore, it would not have fit in with the rhythm of the song. The song “Perdido sin ti,” from the same album, is fully in Spanish except for two phrases placed toward the end of the piece (“I love you” and “I need you”), continuing the shift to longer stretches of code mixed text in his lyrics.

“La copa de la vida” is a very interesting case. This song was composed for the 1998 FIFA World Cup that took place in France. There are at least three versions: the Spanish “La copa de la vida”, the English “The cup of life” and the mixed “Spanglish” version, which was chosen for the on-site performance. The use of the three languages speaks to the identity of Ricky Martin not only as a man of the Caribbean, where these three languages are spoken, but also as a citizen of the world and a man of many cultures, which situates him as a more educated and respectable figure.

The album *Ricky Martin* (1999) has more code mixed songs than non-code mixed songs, and as such marks the artist’s official crossover toward the English-speaking audience. The majority of the songs start in English with brief intersentential code switches into Spanish, which is the reverse of his previous practice which used Spanish as the matrix language. Still, his former musical recipe is maintained, perhaps with a slightly different aesthetic that finds more middle ground between rock and Latin styles. There are also songs such as the second “Spanglish” versions of “Livin’ la vida

loca” and “María” that start in Spanish and switch to English. The intersentential code switches from English to Spanish often occur during the chorus refrain, highlighting the switch through the resource of repetition. Another interesting aspect of this album is the collaboration with Madonna in the song “Be careful”. In this track, Martin sings in English and Madonna sings in Spanish during the first chorus and later he sings in Spanish and she sings in English.

In this article, we have analyzed some aspects of code mixing, lexical borrowings and code switches in the first five of Martin’s solo recordings. It has been shown how code switching was increasingly by Martin as part of his marketing strategy. As he reached a climactic point in his career, there was a proportional increase in code mixing. Close to half of Martin’s albums have been surveyed here, and the rest still remain to be analyzed. Surely there will be fluctuations in the amount of code mixing he deploys, but it is unlikely that he will ever stop mixing Spanish and English in his songs, as this has become such a key element in his image as a successful performer.

This article is part of a larger study that will examine the rest of Martin’s career, along with those of other pop music artists from the Caribbean region. This will be done with the goal of both tracing how code mixing has been a crucial component in the emergence of the Latin Pop genre, as well as examining how code switches function as acts of identity or identity markers for the Latino/a community, as it becomes more visible and empowered via bilingualism and biculturalism.

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GENDER VARIATION IN THE USE OF POLITENESS ON FACEBOOK

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Introduction and theoretical framework

Effective communication demands that hearers and speakers alike be polite to each other. Factors that contribute to politeness differ from society to society in terms of the social and cultural values of the society and even the gender of the language users. Most research on men and women's use of language reveal that women use language very differently from men. Prominent among these differences is that women tend to be more polite than men in terms of their use of strict formal language, question tags, empty adjectives, hypercorrect forms, emphatic stress, lexical hedging, intensifiers and avoidance of swear words. To contribute to this discussion, this article investigates whether politeness markers are used on Facebook, the politeness strategies used by both genders and whether women's language on Facebook adheres to Lakoff's features of women's language. This is done through a qualitative analysis of linguistic data from forty (40) Facebook posts by selected male and female Ghanaians. The study reveals that Ghanaian Facebook users use politeness strategies in their Facebook interactions. However, the study reveals that men use more politeness strategies than women. Finally, the study puts into question the universality of Lakoff's features of women's language.

Language and gender has received a lot of interests from many scholars (e.g. Lakoff 1975; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Tannen, 1994; Holmes, 1995; Talbot 2010). These scholars and others discuss the differences in language use that occur in male and female speech. Politeness strategies that are applied by both genders, particularly in face-to-face interactions, are not left out in the discussion. Research on gender and language has consistently found male speakers to be competitive and more likely to engage in conflict by using language to argue, issue commands, and take opposing stands. Females on the other hand are found to be cooperative and more likely to avoid conflict by using language to agree, support and make suggestions rather than command (Lakoff, 1975). They are also noted for their use of super polite forms. These super-polite forms involve frequent apology, avoidance of course language, use of tag questions, use of honorific markers and indirect requests.

An overwhelming growth in the development of information and communication technologies in recent years brings about a corresponding increase in computer mediated communication (CMC). CMC basically refers to human communication done through computers. According to December (1997), CMC is a process of human communication via computers, involving people situated in particular contexts engaging in processes to shape media for a variety of purposes. In other words, CMC encompasses all forms of communication facilitated by the use of the personal computer. There is synchronous CMC and asynchronous CMC. Whereas the synchronous CMC involves interactions that take place in real time such as audio communication, video conferencing, asynchronous CMC involves interactions where the participants are not necessarily online simultaneously such as WhatsApp, Facebook or emails. Facebook constitutes one of the most widely used online social networks, through which people manage their communication with diverse contacts or 'friends'. These contacts may include members of the family, schoolmates, work colleagues and popular people in society whom they admire. As such, it can be seen as an integral part of people's digital presence in recent times. It helps individuals to share their thoughts and opinions about issues within and even beyond their circles.

Adel, Davoudi and Ramezanzadeh (2016) assert that within the last two decades, technological advancements have compelled researchers to investigate the use of politeness strategies in computer-mediated communities. Whereas politeness strategies in computer-mediated communities and computer-mediated communication (CMC) have been prominently investigated (e.g. Luzón, 2013; Shum & Lee, 2013; Sifianou, 2015), this theme seems to be under-researched in the Ghanaian context. It is therefore necessary to explore this area further, which is what this article attempts to do.

Against this backdrop, this article analyses politeness strategies based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness strategies and Lakoff's features of women's language. The article seeks to find out whether these politeness strategies applied in face-to-face interaction is applicable in computer mediated communication, in this case Facebook, which is not a face-to-face interaction. Also, the article investigates the politeness strategies employed by Ghanaian female and male Facebook users. Finally, the article examines whether women adhere to Lakoff's features of women's language in their Facebook interactions. The study uses one of Manasseh Azure Awuni's posts as a case study. Manasseh is a journalist with Joy 99.7 FM, one of the leading radio stations in Ghana and the reason for this choice is clearly spelt out in the methodology.

Gender

The different genders and how they use language has been studied for some time. For the purposes of this article, the researcher takes gender as sex in the biological sense just as if it were an unproblematic sociolinguistic variable like age. This is to help the

researcher escape the problems associated with defining what gender really is. Thus, this study is not concerned with the more complex understanding of 'gender' as a social construct or as something that can be constructed through language.

Lakoff (1975) argues that there is in fact a distinct use of language specific for women and men. According to her, women's language is characterised by excessive use of politeness strategies, lack of confidence, eagerness to please, and use of some lexical items, such as colour precise terms, affective adjectives, hedging, tag questions, super polite forms and emphatic stress. For example, a woman will indicate that a colour is not just 'blue' but that it is 'turquoise blue'. She will equally make use of adjectives such as 'adorable', 'charming' and the likes and will try as much as possible to avoid swearwords and use euphemisms to indicate her super politeness. In their quest to hedge, women are found using "filler" items such as 'you know', 'well' and 'kind of'. Hedges can be used for different reasons, but women are said to use them to reduce assertiveness, which may otherwise make women seem too masculine. To seek approval and reduce the force of their speech, women tend to change their statements into questions by using tags like 'don't you?' or 'haven't we?' Women tend to use 'over-the-top emphasis' as in 'What a striking appearance!' because they anticipate not being taken seriously. Talbot (2010) argues that since women are socially less secure, they tend to use a greater amount of prestige forms of language. She claims that men are not under the same pressure to show social status and therefore they do not have the same need to use the prestige variants. Instead men tend to use more of the non-standard forms predominantly used by the working class, which carry masculine connotations.

Tannen (1994) like Lakoff (1975) argues that male speakers have been found to be competitive and more likely to engage in conflict by using language to argue, issue commands, and take opposing stands. Females on the other hand are found to be cooperative and more likely to avoid conflict by using language to agree, support and make suggestions rather than give commands.

Politeness

Politeness has been largely used in gender analysis from sociolinguistic perspectives. Paul Grice's article 'Logic and Conversation' (1975) is often acknowledged as the origin of theoretical interest in politeness. The article is believed to have directly influenced the early works on politeness by Lakoff (1975), Leech (1983) and Fraser and Nolen (1981). According to Lakoff (1975), politeness is a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in every human interaction. Grundy (2000) defines politeness as proper social conduct, awareness of etiquette and tactful consideration for others. Simply, politeness is conducting one's self in a way that takes others into consideration.

Brown and Levinson (1987) explain politeness by using the central concept of 'face' which they define as a public self-image that members of the society want to claim for themselves. According to them, 'face' deals with two basic wants of every individual which are to be approved by others and to have their actions and thoughts unimpeded by others. They argue that 'face' is something that is emotionally invested and can be lost, maintained or enhanced and therefore must be constantly attended to in interactions. They determine the seriousness of a face threatening act (FTA) using the social distance of the speaker and hearer, the relative power of speaker and hearer and the absolute ranking of imposition in the particular culture (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

To add their voice to the discussion of 'face' and hence politeness, Scollon and Scollon (2001) refer to it as the negotiated public image, mutually granted each other by participants in a communication event. This shows that participants of any interaction are to be mindful of the other people with them in an interaction and be mindful of their feelings and thus not say anything that will offend them. And if for some reason they must do otherwise, they necessarily have to be tactful in order not to sound offensive. In this way, they must take note of the face needs of the people involved in the interaction. In other words, people must practise politeness because there is the need to consider others' feelings, establish level of mutual comfort and promote rapport.

To make participants in a conversation feel comfortable, there are two main types of politeness that can be employed depending on the conversational situation at hand: positive and negative politeness. These are strategies by which the interlocutors can mitigate the impact of face threatening acts.

Holmes (2001) refers to *positive politeness* as solidarity oriented, because it emphasises shared attitudes and values. This is to say that it seeks to minimize the threat to the hearer's positive face and to make the hearer feel good. It helps to establish involvement, friendship and respect for a person's need to be liked and understood. It is mostly used in situations where the interlocutors know one another fairly well. In the effort to reduce and to avoid conflict, some strategies of positive politeness include statements of friendship, showing solidarity, compliments, exaggeration of concern for addressee, hedging, tags, indirectness, joking, and promise of forbearance.

Negative politeness is about showing respect by maintaining independence. The speaker shows respect by giving the hearer the right to act freely. It is normally applied when there is relatively greater social distance among the communicators to emphasise avoidance of imposition on the hearer (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Holmes (2001) posits that negative politeness is used to pay people respect and avoid intruding on them. In this strategy, the speaker imposes authority on the listener but the message will be sent in a nicer way to avoid the act of threatening the negative face of the listener. As the main motive of this strategy is to impose power in a gentle way, the

speaker may use various distancing styles such as apology, being indirect, minimizing the sense of imposition and using plural nouns.

Other strategies may also be used. The *bald on-record* politeness strategy is in play when the speaker does not put in any effort to minimize the threats on the hearer's face. This kind of politeness is mostly found among people who have a very close relationship with each other. The tone used often sounds like the speaker is issuing commands to the hearer with no care exercised in their use of words. When they deploy an *off record/ indirect* strategy, speakers use indirect language to express their messages. At the same time, the speaker will tend to minimize or remove the potential of losing his own or the speaker's positive face. Brown and Levinson (1987) believe that Off-record strategies are one of the most polite ways of performing an FTA by communicating indirectly to the audience.

Literature review

According to Talbot (2010), women tend to use both positive and negative politeness strategies extensively. They use hedges, boosters and compliments in friendly conversation but they also apologise a lot, which is a negative politeness strategy. It is possible that this extensive use of hedges and boosting devices comes from women's fear of being seen as bossy and too sure of themselves. However, men have been found to use politeness strategies a lot less than women in the literature. Men appear to focus more than women on the informational and referential function of language, instead of on the affective function, which is used to share feelings. Politeness is used when people interact and women, for example, frequently complement each other as part of positive politeness. Compliments among women are seen as social lubricants while men seem to use competitive verbal abuse to show their power and dominance. Both men and women use language to show closeness and cement friendship and the way they do this is very different.

Linguistic gender differences can be found everywhere in various cultures. In some languages, the differences tend to be so huge that it may seem as if men and women use two totally different languages. Even in cultures where the differences may not be as extreme, in many languages women and men make use of different pronouns or affixes specific to their gender as participants in a speech event. Larsson (2011) provides examples in French where the third person pronouns "il" ("he"), "le" ("him"), "ils" ("they", referring to an all-male or mixed-gender group) are all masculine, while the third person pronouns "elle" ("she"), "la" ("her") and "elles" ("they", referring to an all-female group) are all feminine. This indicates that men and women are treated differently both linguistically and socially.

Mesthrie et al. (2000) look at the use of politeness strategies on the bases of gender. They quote the argument raised by Lakoff (1975) that 'women's social role is that of 'arbiter of morality, judge of manners' and this has encouraged them to be linguisti-

cally polite. They make reference to the fact that women in the Tenejapa community in Chiapas, Mexico use the extremes of positive and negative politeness while men speak more 'matter-of-factly'. This is relevant to the current study as it seeks to investigate which strategies are used by each of the genders on Facebook in the Ghanaian context. According to Mesthrie et al. (2000), Brown relates these findings to the social positions of women and, men in Tenejapan society in view of women's relative powerlessness or vulnerability in relation to men and their need to protect their reputations.

Adel, Davoudi and Ramezanzadeh (2016) look at politeness strategies used in Iran by students of English as a Foreign Language. It examines how the students use politeness strategies among their peers and how they use them with their instructor in a class blog. The study reveals that blogging makes it possible for teachers and learners to explicitly negotiate their powers, with the most frequently used politeness strategies being positive politeness strategies used in student-instructor interactions and positive politeness and bald on record strategies in student-student interactions. They explain that because it is not a face to face interaction, blogging gives the students the opportunity to become closer by using positive politeness strategies in their interactions with the instructor while it maintains the close relation in student-student interaction. Whereas all the participants in this study were female, the current study examines both male and female Ghanaians. The study is relevant to the current study as it examines politeness strategies within Brown and Levinson's theoretical framework.

See, Aziz, & Mohamad's (2015) study explores gender and politeness on Facebook among students at the University of Technology MARA (UiTM) in Kelantan, Malaysia. The study indicates that the selected participants apply several politeness strategies as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) in their conversations through Facebook. Based on the data analysed, female teenagers outnumber male teenagers in applying language which portrays politeness features in their Facebook conversations in certain situations. Depending on the context, however, and especially when the purpose of communication is task oriented, both male and female participants prefer to use the bald on record and positive politeness strategies. Regardless of their gender, participants in this study hardly exhibited the language features that show politeness as proposed by previous researchers. Therefore, this study calls into question the claim that women are more polite than men, at least on Facebook.

Methodology

The researcher chose to do this study using Facebook data because Facebook has become an important medium of human communication, and therefore is bound to have an important long-term effect on language use. This article reports on a qualitative study involving forty (40) participants, including (20) male and twenty (20) female Ghanaian users of Facebook and their detailed comments on one of Manasseh Azure

Awuni's Facebook posts. Manasseh is a journalist with Joy 99.7 FM, one of the leading radio stations in Ghana. His Facebook post was chosen among other reasons because he has 5000 friends and about 83,394 followers on Facebook, both males and females, including the present researcher. His followers are very active when it comes to commenting on the issues that he writes about. Manasseh is quite influential on Facebook due to the fact that he is a public figure and because he often expresses his views on current issues.

This study focusses on the reactions to following post that the journalist put on his Facebook wall:

Why is the Africa CEOs conference being held in Europe? The over 1000 participants will book hotels, eat, shop, and move around. So much cash will be invested in Geneva. Why not an African city? Is this rocket science or common sense? Or something I am missing?

(Manasseh Azure Awuni/www.facebook.com)

This post is about the Africa CEOs conference held in Geneva in 2017. In the post, the journalist expresses his views about the venue of the conference and thinks that since it is an Africa CEOs conference, it should have been held on African soil. This post was chosen because the researcher found the journalist's approach to the issue to be quite provocative and therefore likely to spark lively reactions among his followers. The post attracted a lot of discussion at the time it was posted, and it even resulted in an interview involving him and one of the male commenters on the post on Joy FM.

Since Facebook has a column where users indicate whether they are male or female, it was not difficult to determine who was female and who was male. A purposive random selection was made focusing on one particular post in order to determine how language is used to talk about the same issue by both males and females. Forty (40) comments were analysed using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory together with Lakoff's features of women's language. Given the author's familiarity with how male and female Ghanaians interact on Facebook, the study predicted that the use of language would deviate from that predicted by the currently dominant theories concerning gender and politeness.

The data was analysed after it was coded and categorised. In the process of coding, the data was segmented and labeled with numbers. The posts were used as they were found without any correction of grammatical errors or spelling. Since this study is not on error analysis, this position by the researcher enabled her to use the data as they were in their raw form. The language patterns from both male and female participants were categorised based on the Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness strategies and the features of women's Language as proposed by Lakoff (1975). This process was carried out in order to identify whether politeness strategies were used, the prominent strategies used by the different genders and to investigate how applicable Lakoff's theory is in the Ghanaian context. Since Facebook data is in the public

domain and the names of participants were not included, no ethical issues were posed by the study.

Analysis

Regarding the first objective of this study, the data reveals that indeed Ghanaians make use of politeness strategies in their Facebook interactions. One may think that since Facebook interaction is not face-to-face, people might hide behind their computers and not care about the face needs of others. This seems not to be the case as participants are observed employing the use of both positive and negative politeness strategies in their comments or posts on Facebook. These politeness strategies are highlighted in the sample data provided below and discussed later in relation to the second objective of the study.

FEMALE (F)

F1 Manasseh **please** where from the 6.5k likes??????? I need an explanation

F6 Manasseh **pls** don't rush to post something without doing your background checks first...it makes you look like you lack professionalism or an attention-seeker

MALE (M)

M2 **I admire u but** in the same breath **u disappoint me**. How can u just talk because u have to. Do a little research **my dear brother** before coming out with certain utterances. Has this conference always been held outside Africa? Why did they choose Geneva this time? We live in a global world where CEO's are now global CEO's not continental ones. Sometimes as the elders say, **it is better to just shut up**

M4 It can't be true that these smart CEOs will take such a cheap decision. As a journalist **we so very much** respect, you should have had vivid reasons why it is so. **I think** you rushed to accuse and you've botched.

M6 "My Slave" as we will affectionately refer to ourselves. **I admire your articles more often but** a word of advice from **a brother** to another. Good journalism from a neutral point of view isn't always demonstrated by finding faults with what others do especially the political parties. Yes you could criticise but that shouldn't always be the case because what we as-

sume and presume will not always be right. It's much more appropriate to ask questions from the horses own mouth if we have doubts about policies than resorting to publicly ridicule them. Let's praise more good to encourage

According to Lakoff (1975), women use more politeness strategies than men. She further explains that this is so because the way they were brought up is different from men. She asserts that women are known for their less assertive ways of talking by using tag questions, empty adjectives, hedges as well as indirect statements compare to men who are trained to speak in active voice or 'rough talk'. The data collected for this study questions this assertion by Lakoff. The data reveal that most women are even more assertive in their use of language and as a result avoid any hedges, indirectness or tag questions to save their listeners' face. It could be argued that this is so because the data is collected from a computer mediated communication (Facebook) and not a face to face interaction.

In relation to the second objective of this study, the politeness strategies employed by the female participants is mostly bald on-record. They are found to use language that gives commands to the hearer (reader) hence no attempts are made to mitigate the threats on the hearer's (reader's) face. The male participants however, employed positive, negative and off record politeness strategies. This is captured in their use of indirect speech, solidarity, hedging and apology. They were conscious of the reader's face needs. Some male participants even used what is known as mock politeness or insincere politeness which is used when one wants to be sarcastic.

FEMALE (F)

F2 It is **AFRICA** CEOs Conference not **AFRICAN** CEOs... The CEOs r not Africans, they just work in Africa

F5 What Manasseh Azure Awuni didn't know is that the conference of the CEOs of Africa is rotated between Africa and Switzerland. A little investigation would have saved his banter between himself and Kwame. Next year they will be in Africa. Moreover, the organizers of the conference are not Africans. The purpose is to introduce African CEOs to

MALE (M)

M6 "My Slave" as we will affectionately refer to ourselves. **I admire your articles more often** but a word of advice from a **brother** to another. Good journalism from a neutral point of view isn't always demonstrated by finding faults with what others

M7 This is a genuine concern but you goofed big time on **your** position on Kintampo waterfalls disaster.

M10 If I may ask, why don't mr Wise

European businessmen and women.

F7 Prince Abosongo Philips this clearly shows Manasseh is **too** judgmental sometimes. He clearly doesn't understand what they are doing in Geneva but is here insulting them. He needs to do a **lot** of research before writing. He did same with the palanquin issue and the funeral of asantehemaa. He needs to calm down

F9 Otanhunu ara kwa! Enemies are not God wai. You are just exposing yourself to ghanaians as to how bitter a person you are

stay at **your** hometown for ever but moved out? **I tink** mr Azure would kam again cuz dis one is below belt.

M12 Masa!!! You are not epitome of knowledge. The CEOs have their own undisclosed reasons for having their conference in Europe. **We respect your views** but your views **slightly** lack justification at times. #I am a citizen not a spectator ##still protecting the public purse##

M13 Did the CEOs borrow money from you to organise the conference over there? They chose a venue they also think will be appropriate for their meeting. You don't begin to throw stones when you live in glass house.

From the above, it can be observed that **M6** uses solidarity in “my slave” and in “a brother” to familiarise himself with the journalist. These terms can also be classified as in-group markers that mark the speaker's desire to relate or acquaint himself with the hearer, in this case the reader. He also compliments him with “I admire your articles more often” to mitigate the threats to the journalist's face. **M7** hedges to avoid taking full responsibility for his utterance by admitting that the post is “a genuine concern”. He further makes deference with “but” to continue his face threatening comment. It is clear that he is conscious of the journalist's face that is why he employs these positive politeness strategies. **M10** uses “if I may ask” and “I think”, hedging his comment to save the journalist's face and also to minimize imposition on him. **M12** uses an honorific marker “massa” which means “master”. The use of this honorific marker indicates that he acknowledges the fact that the journalist is a master at what he does. He hedges and compliments him by saying “we respect your views” to tone down his otherwise strong or face threatening comments a bit. **M13** is found using a question to introduce an insincere or mock polite passage. He seeks to be sarcastic with his comment.

The female participants on the other hand are observed to be more direct about their comments and are limited in their use of politeness strategies. These findings deviate from previous studies which indicate that women are more polite than men. Then again this can be so because it is a study that takes data from a computer mediated communication and not a face-to-face interaction. The argument is that perhaps be-

cause there is no physical presence in CMC, women are able to express what they are unable to express in a face-to-face interaction. This shows that there is that earnest desire in them to also put forward what they think, which they may otherwise have been prevented from doing in a face-to-face interaction.

Concerning the third objective of the study, the data for the study indicates that the language used by both genders on Facebook makes little distinction between what is men's language and what is women's language according to Lakoff (1975). Lakoff states that men are more direct in their use of language than women. This study questions that assertion, because the collected data suggests that women do not employ indirectness in their communication. Therefore instead of the indirectness that Lakoff proposes, more directness was observed in the female participants' language than in the language of the male participants.

FEMALE (F)

F4 Anybody who doesn't see a problem with the location of the meeting and has issues with this post **is no better than the corrupt, selfish leaders** who rule over us and constantly complain about. We have a big problem as a people.

F8 **You should get a life** and **discuss better issues** than talk about things that do not concern you. **Get a life**, nana Kwame will get you

F10 Manasseh this should let you know that they have good reasons for having their conference in Geneva. **Mind your own business** and don't try to teach people how to live their lives when you have no clues as to what they are doing. I can see you hardly accepts mistakes.

MALE (M)

M7 **This is a genuine concern but** you goofed big time on your position on Kintampo waterfalls disaster.

M18 **Please** when trolling people, **kindly** remember that Mental Health is a Public Health concern in Ghana these past few months

M11 He should get a life? Do you understand that statement at all? Am sorry but with your kind we have a long way to go as a nation. Oh mother Ghana! Hmmm

From the above it can be observed that the women are more direct with their submissions and use commands. **F4** is forthright about what she thinks about the leaders of the country and says it without any indirectness "...the corrupt, selfish leaders who rule over us..." **F8** is even more direct, as she commands the journalist to "get a life" and stop talking about issues that do not concern him. **F10** also commands the journalist to mind his own business. The men on the other hand are found to be indirect, soft and concerned about the face of others. **M7** is indirect when he admits that the issue is

a “genuine concern” but continues to say that even though the issue is a genuine concern, because the journalist “goofed big time” on an earlier post, there is no need to pay attention to him on this one. **M8** seeks to say that people should be mindful of mental health, perhaps implying that the journalist must be ignored since he may be mentally ill, but he is not at all direct with this assertion. In his quest to address **F8**’s comment, **M11** sounds very surprised at **F8** for the courage to ask the journalist to get a life. Hence, he avoids being direct by asking questions and even after the questions uses “am sorry” which is a negative politeness strategy to express how he feels about a comment he may consider rather unfortunate. While women are found attacking the post directly, the men seem to be referring to other things in their quest to be indirect. According to Lakoff, women use a more intensifiers to express themselves than men. The data reveal that both men and women use intensifiers. As illustrated below, **F7** uses “too” and “a lot” and **M4** also uses “so very much”.

FEMALE (F)

F7 Prince Abosongo Philips this clearly shows Manasseh is **too** judgmental sometimes. He clearly doesn’t understand what they are doing in Geneva but is here insulting them. He needs to do **a lot** of research before writing. He did same with the palanquin issue and the funeral of asantehemaa. He needs to calm down

MALE (M)

M4 It can’t be true that these smart CEOs will take such a cheap decision. As a journalist we **so very much** respect, you should have had vivid reasons why it is so. I think you rushed to accuse and you’ve botched.

Both genders are observed using capital letters for emphatic stress. It is therefore not typical only of women’s language as proposed by Lakoff. **F2** places emphasis on the fact that the conference is an “AFRICA CEOs” conference and not an “AFRICAN” by writing in capital letters. It can also be observed that she is seeking to educate the writer. **M5** places emphasis on the proverb by writing it in capital letters indicating that it is the main message he seeks to get across.

FEMALE (F)

F2 It is **AFRICA CEOs** Conference not **AFRICAN CEOs**... The CEOs r not Africans, they just work in Africa (laughing emoticons)

MALE (M)

M5 There is a proverb **WHAT CAT WILL SEE AND KEEP QUIET N STARE AT IT, A DOG WILL STARE N BARK**. meaning not everything u see u must talk..u av made nana Kwame trend all over the place.

Conclusions

It is very important that the limitations for this study be pointed out. Since the sample for this study was small and limited to Ghana, it could be considered to be a pilot study whose results suggest directions for further research on larger samples including other societies in Africa and elsewhere. That said, the current study revealed that Ghanaian Facebook users utilise politeness strategies in their Facebook interactions. Whereas the female participants were limited in their use of politeness strategies and employed only bald on record strategies, the male participants were found to use positive, negative and off record politeness strategies. Contradicting what might be expected from a reading of the academic literature on the subject, the men used solidarity, compliments, hedging, questions, honorific terms and deference more than the women did, while the women used commands and were in general more direct than the men. The study therefore suggests that in this context, men tend to use more politeness strategies than women, providing evidence that questions the universal nature of Lakoff's features of women's language.

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Appendix: Sample of data used for the study

FEMALE (F)	MALE (M)
F1 Manasseh please where from the 6.5k likes??????? I need an explanation	M1 Last year it was held in Abidjan. The participants are not only African CEOs there are qddwe
F2 It is AFRICA CEOs Conference not AFRI-CAN CEOs... The CEOs r not Africans, they just work in Africa (laughing emoticons)	M2 I admire u but in the same breath u disappoint me. How can u just talk because u have to. Do a little research my dear brother before coming out with certain utterances. Has this conference always been held outside Africa? Why did they choose Geneva this time? We live in a global world where CEO's are now global CEO's not continental ones. Sometimes as the elders say, it is better to just shut up
F4 Anybody who doesn't see a problem with the location of the meeting and has issues with this post is no better than the corrupt, selfish leaders who rule over us and constantly complain about. We have a big problem as a people.	M3 Pls do you drive African made car or whiteman's car ...We cannot get everything in Africa for our journey of life..understand it and be free.
F5 What Manasseh Azure Awuni didn't know is that the conference of the CEOs of Africa is rotated between Africa and Switzerland. A little investigation would have saved his banter between himself and Kwame. Next year the [will be in Africa. Moreover, the organizers of the conference are not Africans. The purpose is to introduce African CEOs to European businessmen and women.	M4 It can't be true that these smart CEOs will take such a cheap decision. As a journalist we so very much respect, you should have had vivid reasons why it is so. I think you rushed to accuse and you've botched.
F6 Manasseh pls don't rush to post something without doing your background checks first...it makes you look like you lack professionalism or an attention-seeker	M5 There is a proverb WHAT CAT WILL SEE AND KEEP QUIET N STARE AT IT, A DOG WILL STARE N BARK. meaning not everything u see u must talk..u av made nana Kwame trend all over the place.
F7 Prince Abosongo Philips this clearly shows Manasseh is too judgmental sometimes. He clearly doesn't understand what they are doing in Geneva but is here insulting them. He needs to do a lot of research before writing. He did same with the palanquin issue and the funeral of asantehemaa. He needs to calm down	M6 "My Slave" as we will affectionately refer to ourselves. I admire your articles more often but a word of advice from a brother to another. Good journalism from a neutral point of view isn't always demonstrated by finding faults with what others do especially the political parties. Yes you could criticize but that shouldn't always be the case because what we assume and presume will not always be right. It's much more appropriate to ask questions from the horses own mouth if we have doubts about policies than resorting to publicly ridicule them. Let's praise more good to encourage
F8 You should get a life and discuss better is-	M7 This is a genuine concern but you goofed big

sues than talk about others. Is it because you drive an old rickety car? Or because John is finer, taller and is more influential across the globe than you? Get a life, nana Kwame will get you	time on your position on Kintampo waterfalls disaster.
F9 Otanhunu ara kwa! Enemies are not God wai. You are just exposing yourself to ghanaians as to how bitter a person you are	M18 Please when trolling people, kindly remember that Mental Health is a Public Health concern in Ghana these past few months
F10 Manasseh this should let you know that they have good reasons for having their conference in Geneva. Mind your own business and don't try to teach people how to live their lives when you have no clues as to what they are doing. I can see you hardly accepts mistakes. Nana Kwame that you for hitting the nail on the head.	M9 Please he begs, consider his age and forgive him!
F11 Manasseh, ever heard the phrase "the world is a global village...?" It is this arrogance that got the comment viral. Geneva is also on earth. It does not make sense that bcos a business I in Africa it should hold it conferences in Africa. You goofed. You didn't take your time to find out the agenda of the confab. To get new business no rational business man will stay in his office and expect the business to come when his terrain is yet to be fully discovered. Best thing you should have just kept quiet. You are a good (not excellent par none) journalist and brave for what you do...humility is not sold but it is the most valuable asset you can get in life. Being humble does not mean being docile. It means you know when to act and react and when to accept that you are wrong.	M13 Did the CEOs borrow money from you to organise the conference over there? They chose a venue they also think will be appropriate for their meeting. You don't begin to throw stones when you live in glass house.
	M14 Why did you choose to do your wedding at Aburi gardens and not your local village, where Otabil and others could see the deprived nature of your people. And use your wedding to inspire the up and coming youth to aim high like you. Probably that local plantain sellers goods could be purchased by the city dwellers. Is this rocket science or common sense or something I am missing??
	M15 People like Manasseh Azure think that the ability to write good grammar is akin to wisdom. Unfortunate.

**RECLAIMING THE PRE-COLONIAL
TO IMAGINE A POST-COLONIAL IN THE
PERFORMANCE AND HISTORIES OF THE
GREATER CARIBBEAN AND BEYOND**

SOCIAL MEANING IN THE FOLK SONGS OF THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN AND WEST AFRICA

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Introduction

African folk traits crossed the Atlantic with enslaved Africans and remerged in a Creolized or neo-African form in the Caribbean, as demonstrated in many studies that have examined the manifestations of such traits in the folklore of the African Diaspora (see for example Nicholls, 2015; Nicholls, 2016a, and Nicholls, 2016b). This article focuses on song texts, particularly on salient examples of social critique in Virgin Island songs and comparable songs of the Igede people of Southern Nigeria. The song texts of the Igede can loosely be categorized into three kinds, 1) dance songs; 2) what I refer to as elucidatory songs that expound on a given topic; and 3) songs of social critique that praise or criticize individual behavior. These song types, each of which will be discussed in this article, are historically replicated in the US Virgin Islands (USVI). It is not suggested here that there is any specific and particular link between the Igede and the peoples of the USVI. Instead, the evidence presented is yet another testimony to the existence throughout the Caribbean region of significant features that typify the song traditions of not only the Igede, but also of the majority of the peoples belonging to hundreds of ethnic groups who inhabit a broad swath of territory across West Africa.

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Dance songs

Dancing has been an important element of social activity among West Africans for centuries as well as among African descended people in the Caribbean both before and after emancipation. Therefore, many West African and Caribbean song texts refer directly to dance. J. B. Moreton, in his book, *Manners and Customs in the West India Islands* (1790) provides the lyrics of a Jamaican dance song which refers to dance movements, jig, twist, shake, and wind:

Hipsaw! my deaa! You no do like a-me!
You no jig like a-me! You no twist like a-me!
Hipsaw! my deaa! You no shake like a-me!
You no wind like-me! Go, yondaa!

Hipsaw! my deaa! You no jig like a-me!
You no work like a-me! You no sweet him like a-me!

In soca and calypso parlance, the word *wind* (pronounced “wine”) refers to the pelvic rotations characteristic of many African-derived dances. Similarly, *work* (pronounced “wuk”) is currently used to refer to dance, as in “wuk up.”

Songs for dancing among the Iggede of Nigeria’s Benue State often utilize a call-and-response technique. The circle dance (*ewoh ologba*) is communal in scope and is a prominent feature of New Yam Festivals, funeral ceremonies, and other social occasions. Dance thus helps to cement community bonds. The music ensemble situates themselves with their drums at the foot of a big tree in the *ojiya*, meeting ground. The participants dance slowly around the *ojiya* responding to a refrain initiated by the musicians. Dancers normally rotate in a counterclockwise direction but reverse circles are sometimes formed within a larger circle. Within the circles, solo dance displays occur. The refrain of an Iggede dance song of the Aitah Ensemble recorded at a funeral held in Obohu meeting ground is simply, “*Ewoh, ewoh, ka hi chi*” – “Dance, dance, let’s do it” which is intoned *ostinato* fashion by the chorus while the lead singer interjects statements derived from the battlefield (Nicholls 2006; 142). The Aitah Ensemble, like many other Iggede traditional dance associations, double as a warrior troupe, and its repertoire consists of boastful songs in call-and-response format including: “*Al’Obohu ru inwa le enu*,” “People of Obohu collect honey in the afternoon;” considered an act of bravery because honey is normally collected at night when the bees are dormant; and “*Go eh Wong ju abwo*,” “put the *eh Wong* on your hand,” i.e. prepare for battle; the *eh Wong* being a warriors’ ram’s hide wrist-shield, which is also worn as dance attire by solo dancers (Nicholls, 1984).

Many West African songs utilize a call-and-response technique and in fact this practice is ubiquitous throughout sub-Saharan Africa. In Ghana it can be found in Ga women’s *Adaawe* performances. Hampton (1992) states:

Women sing *adaawe* songs to the accompaniment of handclapping. They begin at sunset and continue under the moonlight. . . . They sing the name *adaawe*, and other women, who accept what is also an invitation to join them, shout *an-tre boo!* in response. When all are assembled, about twenty to thirty women perform the songs standing in a circle. Once each woman has improvised the solo part in responsorial form, she yields the solo to the singer on the right. When they are ready to retire for the evening, about two hours after they begin, the songs end. (p. 136)

Countless Caribbean dance songs use the call-and-response technique. Regarding the Bamboula dance of earlier years in the Eastern Caribbean, Leith-Phillip (1998) states: “The songs sometimes took the form of . . . a litany with each line divided between a

solo singer and a chorus” (np). The priest Jean Baptiste Labat describes the Calenda in Martinique in 1722 which similarly utilizes call-and-response:

The dancers are arranged in two lines, the one before the other, the men to one side, the women to the other. Those are the ones who dance, and the spectators make a circle around the dancers and drums. The most skilled sings a song that he composes on the spot, on such a subject as he judges appropriate, and the refrain, which is sung by all the spectators, is accompanied by a great beating of hands. (Labat, 1972, [1722]; Translation by the New West Indian Guide)

The characteristic call-and-response technique of women’s dance troupes in the Caribbean, was described by plantation owner Matthew G. “Monk” Lewis in Jamaica: “The principal part of the music to which they dance is vocal, one girl generally singing two lines by herself and being answered by a chorus” (1999, [1834]: 80).

As the above examples show, if the writer mentioned the song text at all, it is usually only the chorus. Thurlow Weed in St Croix is an exception however. He documents both the refrain and the chorus, and his transcription shows that it conforms to Lewis’s format of two solo lines answered by a chorus. In this case the chorus responds, “Hurra, hurra, hurra, hurra!” It is a boastful praise song and Weed (1866) explains that by 1844, ornate expressions in Christmas and New Year celebrations were becoming more flamboyant and this example brags of pockets full of doubloons, expensive cloth such as Cambric – a fine white linen – and the perfume the men use – Attar of Roses, pronounced here as Otto of Roses:

Hurra, hurra, hurra, my Rooky Queen
Hurra, my Sholay Queen – she do not spare no cost.
We wear the best shaleys – we sport the best de lanes
We wear the best muslins – we do not spare no cost.
Hurra, hurra, hurra, hurra!
Here is our Queen – she wears the best of linen
She sports the best of Cambric and doesn't mind the cost.
Hurra, hurra, hurra, hurra!
Our gents smoke the best segars – they sport the Otto of Roses,
For they have pockets full of doubloons
Hurra, hurra, hurra, hurra!
Where is my Lady Dowager? She cannot be seen
She is in her easy arm chair writing to her Emperor.
Hurra, hurra, hurra, hurra!
Where are the garden girls? They cannot be seen
For they have gone to Bredow's Winder to meet the great heads.
Hurra, hurra, hurra, hurra!

The call-and-response technique was helpful coordinating work songs also, as exemplified in the first half of the nineteenth century by a rowing song from Barbados. This doubles as a praise song, flattering an unnamed “massa” for his sexual proclivity at the moment when Trelawney Wentworth, a member of the white elite, was present to document it. The lyrics synchronized the strokes of oarsmen with “the whole crew joining in the chorus in the intervals between every stroke of the oars:”

Massa cum from London town,

Fine time o’ day.

Massa is a hansom man,

Fine time o’ day.

Massa is a dandy man,

Fine time o’ day.

Him hab de dollar, plenty too,

Fine time o’ day.

Massa lub’ a pretty girl,

Fine time o’ day.

Him lub ’em much, him lub ’em true,

Fine time o’ day.

Him hunt ’em round de guaba bush,

Fine time o’ day.

Him catch ’em in de cane piece,

Fine time o’ day.

(Wentworth, 1834: 242)

Masquerade dances similarly incorporate call-and-response. Edward Long observed how the songs performed for the tusked and horned John Canoe masquerade in Jamaica consisted of short perfunctory refrains:

”This character . . . was attended thro’ the town by a great number of negroes, beating old canisters, or pieces of metal, singing “ay, ay John Canoe” in the time expressed by three quavers and two semiquavers, but with little inflexion of the voice: the word “ay, ay,” being frequently repeated like a chorus” (Long, 1774: 424).

Most animal disguises had an *ostinato* refrain that audiences sang while the masquerade danced. In Urlins Village, Antigua, John Bull was also called Potato Bull or Tatie Bull. Romic Williams remembers the chorus, “Come ya [here], Come ya, Tatie Bull,” and according to his sister, “Everyone was pleased to see John Bull and would dance and shake their rumps, ‘Shake a bull, shake a bull,’” winding their waists and rotating their buttocks (pers. comm., 9/22/1996).

The Virgin Islands’ Donkey masquerade danced to a string band and had a distinguishing song: “Donkey want water, hold him down” or “hold him Joe.” The musi-

cians played the tune, while a lead singer would suggest a refrain and the onlookers would join in the chorus. The donkey would prance back and forth, with the performer acting as if he/she were trying to hold the thirsty donkey down, much to the delight of the audience (Asta O'Bryan James, pers. comm., 7/3/1996). According to Philip Rhymer the Bear's song was, "Rum tum tee. The bear got away" (pers. comm., 7/18/1996). The call-and-response technique is well-established and continues to be used in Eastern Caribbean dance songs up until the present time, including those by the popular Barbadian Soca band, Krosfyah (Crossfire), who's 1995 song "Get Set" has the lead vocalist repeatedly calling "Are you ready?" while the chorus responds "Get Set."

Elucidatory songs

Although illustrations of songs for dancing and songs that praise or deride individual behavior appear in the literature, historical examples of songs that expound on a given topic are few and far between, whether of the Igede or the Eastern Caribbean. Such a song was documented by James Edward Alexander (1833: 96) in what at the time was British Guyana as follows: "Outside the house in the moonlight, a musician seated himself, with his drum on the grass, and commenced singing an African air;" however the topic of the air in question remains unidentified. Obviously, the content of elucidatory songs in the two regions is likely to be different. Whereas free African people sing about daily life and guiding philosophies, enslaved people more often report on their oppressive situation. Elucidatory songs appear throughout West Africa but those of the Igede are sparsely documented. However the Etuh Association of Adum-Owo village provides examples and Swedish Anthropologist Bjorn Ranung (1973), recorded four of them. According to Ranung, Etuh was founded by Odeh Ebang in 1967. Etuh means "proverb" in the Igede language and the vocal repertoire of the association features prophetic proverbs and irony, and refers to folktales. It has fifteen or so male members who exchange solos and sing as a choir with drum, gong, and maracas accompaniment.

Wait and see, wait and see, wait and see, wait and see
 Wait and see, trouble will come!
 Your hand clears the way for the hand of death,
 Running after rats; like Alpatriku'u

He tried to catch the mother but failed
 He tried to catch the child but failed
 Running after rats; like Akpatriku'u
 He tried to catch the mother but failed
 Odumegwu Ojukwu is trying to catch rats; like Akpatriku'u

The big share is mine and the small share is yours – yah, yah! x 4
 Daybreak is here, come and see the sun with me!
 Night is here, come and see the moon with me!
 The full moon is like a pad of grass x 4
 The full moon is shining
 The moon of the world is full.

Ranung's notes are summarized as follows:

Line 4. Akpatriku'u found a nest of rats. As the rats scattered, Akpatriku'u almost captured one, but let it go as he caught sight of another. In this manner he went on until he had to return home with his bag empty.
 Line 9. General Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu was the Head of State of so-called Biafra which unsuccessfully attempted to break away from Nigeria in 1967.
 Line 10. i.e. we are members of this music ensemble and you are only listeners.
 Line 13. When carrying a load like water from the waterhole, Iggede twine a little round pad made of grass which is placed on the head to give the big pot support. (Ranung, 1973: np)

This song runs the gamut in the articulation of ideas – obliquely providing retrospective comments on the Nigeria Civil War – beginning (1) with an omen of trouble and death (lines 1-3) and ending (4) with an anthem to the full moon (lines 12-15). The intervening stanzas deal with (2) trouble of a kind embodied in the person of Odumegwu Ojukwu whose ambition is compared to an unnamed womanizer and the foolish figure of Akpatriku'u [Patrick] scrambling after rats (lines 4-9); and (3) a chorus that consists of jocular boasting (line 10). Taken as a whole the song (1) warns of danger, (2) projects a moral through a negative example, (3) provides good humored affirmation, and (4) evokes wonderment at the natural creation.

In the Caribbean, European diarists and intelligentsia only report on elucidatory songs when lyrics were of concern to them. For example, discussing the songs of the enslaved population of St. Croix in the eighteenth century, John Christian Schmidt (1788) a Danish plantation manager, observed: "Often they will express their feelings in song.... [And] If the Europeans paid more attention to these songs and their behavior in bad times than they do (which I am surprised about), they could have often put out a smoldering fire." Schmidt presents one such song in the Creole language that was heard "before a disturbance" which insists "Di Blanco no frey," [The whites are no good]:

Adjo my Mester Neejer, e--Samja
 [Live well my master and blacks,--Oh, how unfortunate I am!]
Da lob my lo lob, e--Samja
 [I must run away etc.]

My noy kan hau di uit mer etc. Di Blanco no frey, e--Samja
 [The whites are no good etc.]
Adjo my Syssie (sister) etc. Van Dag du Mandag etc.
 [Today it is Monday]
Adjo my Mama etc, Da lob my etc.
Adjo my beer Maade (comrade) etc.
Adjo my gud Friende etc.
Adjo my Tata (father) etc.
Di Land no Frey etc.
 [Here in the countryside it is not good etc.]
Adjo my Viese etc.
Let frey met my Mama etc
Dunk op my altyt etc.
My nu sae ferject jou. e--Samja.
 (Tyson & Highfield, 1994: 115)

Social commentary songs

The motivation behind the many West African and Caribbean songs that provide social commentary and praise or critique local action and personages is the threat of being derided publicly, which is an effective means of encouraging conformity to social norms. Such shaming songs can be considered redressive because the songs are directed at creating behavioral change. It is intended that listeners pay heed and correct objectionable behavior. In his discussion of Igede song texts, Oge Ogede (1994: 117) refers to, "the widespread phenomenon in many parts of Africa where criticism is tolerated in song where it would not be tolerated elsewhere."

Not many songs are performed in an immobile position and singing is frequently co-extensive with dance, and during dance performances, singers often enjoy a special license for social commentary. Among the Igede, this latitude is used to good advantage by women's associations, such as Imwo and Ihih. One way Imwo achieves its goal of guarding against socially unacceptable behavior is through derogatory songs. The pointed and biting satire contained in the lyrics, regulates the conduct of over-zealous males. Ogede explains that in an Ihih ensemble there are no dominant lead singers, instead any member can break into song as inspired and improvise on the spot. Local gossip and controversial issues, some involving marital disputes, can be aired, and advice freely dispensed (Ode Ogede, pers.comm. 5/31/1995).

The special license enjoyed by Imwo and Ihih women's associations is extended to the Ogbete girls' association, which deploys a relatively modern music originating in the 1960's and named after a sweet intoxicating wine made from guinea corn. Ogbete songs and dances are strictly the province of unmarried adolescents who are predominantly but not exclusively, female, and among whom it is very popular. Each song is

terminated by a fast foot-stamping dance which is initiated by intense drumming by the solo male drummer and punctuated by blasts on a whistle. The following Ogbete song critiques an unnamed family who has a reputation for mistreating wives. The family would be known by the audience. It reflects the concern of a maiden about her impending marriage to a husband from this family, the singer chides her husband-to-be not to emulate his kin:

A ka yem ka, a nwum ina ka ee x 3
M'ka ka ola 'kpara ki nya ka
Iya ahu pwoo ko ari oleng ee
Ahu pwoo ka ari oleng ee

If you will not marry me, don't kill me x 3
 I will not go for prostitution to their place
 Don't marry a wife and divorce her, you are a man
 The wife did not divorce him, you are a man.
 (Prostitution sometimes becomes the last recourse for a divorced wife).
 (Nicholls, 1992).

The most politically contentious song collected by this author was an Ogbete song (Nicholls, 1992). The Igede are an Idoma subgroup and are administered from Otukpo township, the capital of Idomaland. The position of Och' Idoma, the paramount chief of all the Idoma, rotates among the various Idoma subgroups. At the time of the study the Och' Idoma, the late Mr. Abraham Ajene Okpabi, was a popular figure among the Igede and a source of pride in that he was an Igede man. Nevertheless the following song acts as a reminder that even celebrities should not forget who they are and where they come from:

Okpobuna l'Igede
Ajene kpobuna l'Igede
Oyi lomu ki Kpoto
Ajene ye lomu li Kpoto

He comes from Igede
 Ajene comes from Igede
 He turns himself into an Idoma
 Ajene turns himself into an Idoma
 (Ibid; *Akpoto* is the old term for Odoma. Here it is abbreviated to *Kpoto*)

Included among songs of the children of Uchenyim village documented by Ogede (1994: 114) is a song by a group of little girls and boys that conforms to the social critique genre of Ihih and Ogbete.

O d 'onu chim ka
M w'eje ka
O d 'onu chim ka
M w'eje ka
Alikpa nyam a donu chim ka
M w'eje ka

Chorus

Inyi ki r'ichicheh
I pyeh-pyeh-pyeh, I pyeh-pyeh
Inyi ki r'ituka
I nmo-nmo-nmo
I nmo-nmo-nmo
I h'inu gbogbilo-gbogbilo
I h'inu gbogbilo-gbogbilo
Aricha h'inu gbogbilo-gbogbilo

She doesn't say hello
I don't mind a bit
She doesn't say hello
I don't mind a bit
My friends don't say hello
I don't mind a bit

Chorus

The skinny ones
Sneak quietly away
The big fat ones
Rudely bulldoze by
Rudely bulldoze by
They perpetually twist their faces
They perpetually twist their faces
Aricha perpetually twists her face

Ogede discusses how such a song is directed at creating behavioral change:

The speaking voice belongs to a group of children addressing a particular girl, Aricha, whose individualism they evidently view as a source of danger to one of their society's most cherished values – group solidarity. They make a run-

ning commentary on Aricha's misbehavior in order to discourage any other person who might be inclined to behave like her from doing so. Since the singers know Aricha and see her daily in their midst, they may feel that their singing can directly influence her to change her bad habits. The rude comments that underlie their singing then, are meant to serve an instructional purpose. (ibid)

These somewhat mild songs by young people only hint at the more forceful satire and criticism that an adult women's association such as Ihih might employ during a period of discord.

In the Caribbean, topical songs have been a specialty of Gombay, Belair, Calenda, Bamboula groups, and Cariso and Calypso singers. For Kenneth Bilby (1985), "The use of song for social commentary has been so widely reported in the Caribbean that one must consider this a pan-Caribbean phenomenon. The topical song, relying for its effect on such devices as double entendre, irony, and veiled allusions, is a Caribbean specialty" (p. 201). For Edwards (1794) the slaves' oratorical gifts included, a "talent of ridicule and derision, which is exercised not only against each other but also not infrequently, at the expense of their owner or employer." Williams (1826) observed this in a Jamaican Gombay dance, in which, "the merriment became rather boisterous as the punch operated, and the slaves sang satirical philippics against their master, communicating a little free advice now and then."

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During Christmas festivities in Charlotte Amalie, St Thomas, many Europeans and elites were perturbed to find themselves sung about and often were not sure whether they were being flattered or derided. Although the *St. Thomas Tidende* newspaper pointed out on November 22, 1890, that the satirical songs of the Bamboula were as likely to praise individuals as lambaste them, the editors roundly condemned the songs: "It is not a rule, however, that individuals . . . are ridiculed or scandalized; in many cases it is just the other way, but whether the nature of the song be emulative or derogatory, it [is] an unwarrantable license that people's names be handled with such levity." The paper pondered "whether dragging an individual's name and character into sing song and holding them up to public obloquy is a tolerable or harmless, kind of amusement." By the end of the nineteenth century, the island establishment applied pressure against street revels and particularly against Bamboula, with its overt African characteristics. Bamboula dances were energetic and viewed by Europeans as explicitly sexual, with offensive and ribald songs. Bamboula irked the Establishment and they clamped down, The Editorial of the December 15, 1880 edition of *St. Thomas Tidende*, condoned intervention by police and military in order to quell "The Bomboula nuisance [sic]." As a result the Bamboula dwindled as a viable African-style folk expression by the twentieth century.

Despite this, topical songs continued to be an important part of the seasonal festivities, but were now broadcasting local news and scandals; employing satire and double en-

tendre. Virgin Islands songs that critiqued behavior followed in the local Cariso genre (Carry So – pass it on) which functioned as a cipher and, true to the art form, subjects of a contentious nature were often stated indirectly which rendered the meaning obscure to outsiders. Songs were sung in a language code that was developed during slavery whereby messages could be disseminated without the masters knowing the meaning. Discussing Cariso, Lieth-Phillip (1998) observes: “Strong voice projection gave a performance conviction because the topics of the songs often involved emotions--most frequently anger over the misconduct of certain individuals or at exploitation by the masters.” According to Lieth-Phillip

In former times, musical battles between cariso queens would take place. They challenged each other on choice of theme and words, as well as on musicality. They always had an audience because wherever they sang, they aroused the curiosity of everyone within hearing distance (np).

Christmas was a period when special Cariso songs were composed and social commentators such as Albert Halliday on St Croix would relate the local scandals of the preceding year in songs and speeches. From a month or more before Christmas, performers would begin to practice. Amos Frett points out: “If you do anything they make a song on you; you thief, they make a song on you” (Soule, 1992). These songs had to be topical, just as carnival songs are today--whereby last year's calypso is *passé*, and not current enough for this year's carnival. Leroy Arnold comments: “There were the cariso singers who were very good. If you walk and shake your head, they could have made a song of it” (in Schrader, 1993: 20). Arnold further states: “People make songs about other people; an impromptu thing; Ciple used to make songs like that” (Soule, 1992). The Late Alexander Michael, better known as “Ciple”, was a singer who composed his own songs and would accompany himself on a five-gallon kerosene can which he played like a tambourine. Ciple was a social commentator and his songs, like Cariso, would feature local events. Leroy Arnold remembers a song of Ciple's, “All I want I get it”, which tells of a real incident where a married lady makes an arrangement to meet a flute player after a dance (ibid).

Evelyn Richardson (1984: 147) remembers that in Danish times, “There was an evangelist ...who had been having an affair with one of his converts. It was a scandal and the local gossips had made a song about it.... The incriminating lyrics were: ‘Since Marie learned to ride the bicycle. She told Brother Jacobs of the holy lie down.’” According to the Late Geraldo Guirty, Alfred Harris Lockhart (the first), was a property owner in St. Thomas who had the reputation of being a hard dealer. A Black American chorister, Mr. Squire, couldn't keep up with his rent and was evicted by Lockhart. A song was composed about this event: “See what Lockhart did to Squire. He put out Squire and put him out to lumber.” (pers. comm., 7/18/96).

Calypso brought the social commentary genre into the modern era. In the Virgin Islands, college-educated Luis Ible, Jr has a rare talent for song composition which has earned him the title of Calypso Monarch of Carnival, four times. His calypso “For Really?” won him his first title in 1997: The song plays on the name “Farrelly,” who was the Governor of the USVI from 1987 to 1995, and commemorated by the monumental Alexander A. Farrelly Justice Center building on St Thomas. The lyrics of “For Really?” utilize the idiomatic question “for real?” and raises issues of marital infidelity and administrative mismanagement:

Bad pronunciation has caused me strife
It has caused me understanding problems all my life
I was having some diner in a restaurant in town;
a pretty lady came and sat down,
crying tears that weigh by the pound

She looked rich and dressed real fancy
As she cried she mentioned to me
she said “I’ve been stood up by the man, who I help to run these islands.
So I ask the sad lady to tell me the man name
she said no, it make she shame

Ah say For Really? YES, YES,

Ah say For Really? YES, YES.

She said the truth is the man is really insane
so she told him to say he got Parkinson’s

Ah say For Really? YES, YES,

Ah say For Really? YES, YES.

And she give me a good example using the new
light poles they installed in St. Croix
She said, the man didn’t order no bulb

Ah say For Really? YES, YES, YES

He couldn’t control his workers, his wife or his life
but had me in a lock, Boy, I tired bawl Christ
When he wasn’t out being a (BLANK) asshole
and emptying them damn Cruzan Rum bottles
he was out giving millions to DeJongh and Williams
She told him to stop act like a dodo
and go buy your damn people WICO
She said I’m the other women under the sheets
and I want everyone to know

She told me that just to win re-election
he paid in full for half the airport and say forget the concession

Ah say For Really? YES, YES,

Ah say For Really? YES, YES.

She told me he thief some ah de money and didn't want to look like a scamp
so he told finance director to hide the payroll stamp

Ah say For Really? YES, YES,

Ah say For Really? YES, YES.

She said, seven long years of being head chief
and not one of his damn projects are complete
yet his territory address is among the best

Ah say For Really? YES, YES, YES

Never such a thing happen in life

I was never with a man that was still with his wife

But I took this exception and needless to mention

that the man controlled all the monies and could slide some of it to me

And he owns many of mansions which are being worked on

But the one thing I couldn't stand was his billion and one woman

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So that is why I chopped over his head

when he claimed he fell off the government bed

Ah say For Really? YES, YES,

Ah say For Really? YES, YES.

He's so damn caught up in into politics

that he wouldn't give his name to his son who's six

Ah say For Really? YES, YES,

Ah say For Really? YES, YES.

So ah told she, girl man yo lying

and she started one big crying

Just then she told me they call him Alex

Ah say For Really? YES, YES, YES

(Williams, 1998: 40-41)

In an article in *The VI Daily News*, Fiona Stokes' (2017) account of the winner of the St Croix Calypso Monarch competition of 2017, Tamisha "Calypso Queen" Libert, shows how social criticism continues to feature in modern Caribbean society. She states:

Her song “How Can We Smile” in round one was a crowd favorite as she sang about hardship in the islands that create a struggle for residents. She said it is difficult for residents to smile when schools are in a bad condition, residents are waiting for long-awaited tax return checks and government employment deductions are on the increase while the loan program has been halted. (p. 2)

Conclusion

This article adds to an ever growing body of evidence that West African influences crossed the Atlantic and impacted Caribbean culture. It has focused on the texts of Caribbean social songs and compared them to those of the Iggede people of Nigeria. It demonstrates some of the ways in which African folk traits have been perpetuated in song and dance in the Caribbean

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FROM *BACOO* TO *BOHPOLI*: SOUTH EASTERN AMERINDIAN ELEMENTS FOUND IN THE FOLKLORE OF BARBADOS AND THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN

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Folklore is an integral part of culture; it carries our customs and beliefs, as well as our stories. According to the American Folklore Society, folklore is “the traditional art, literature, knowledge and practice that is disseminated largely through oral communication and behavioral example” (2016: 1). During the colonial period in the Americas, the British, like other European colonizers of the time, relied heavily on indigenous slavery to establish their territories. In his book *The Indian slave trade: the rise of the English empire in the American South, 1670-1717*, historian Alan Gallay notes that many Native Americans from the south east were captured directly by the British, or by other Native Americans, and enslaved before 1715. This is significant, as Barbados was the most likely destination for many indigenous slaves. South Carolina conducted extensive trade with Barbados during its first five decades of colonial rule. Because of these connections, this paper will examine some South Eastern Native American folkloric elements found within the Creole based folklore of Barbados and its Anglophone neighbors in the Lesser Antilles, in order to investigate the extent of North American Amerindian cultural influence there.

Throughout the Southeastern United States, colonists participated in Native American slave trading to obtain capital. In South Carolina, and to a lesser extent in North Carolina, Virginia and Louisiana, indigenous slavery was a central means by which colonists funded economic expansion. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, a frenzy of slaving occurred in what is now the Eastern United States. In fact, the English, and their Chickasaw allies (who used slaving as a way to strengthen themselves at their enemy’s expense) nearly depopulated Florida of its indigenous population. Some tribes suffered more than others, for example the multitudinous Choctaw population in Mississippi was repeatedly battered by raiders, as well as many other south eastern Native American tribes including the Natchez, Westo, Yamasee, Euchee, Yazoo and Tawasa, who also wound up spending their lives as slaves on West Indies plantations.

The historical record of the Amerindian slave trade is based on many disparate and scattered sources, including: legislative notes, trade transaction records, journals of slavers, government correspondence and especially church records, making it difficult to account for the entire history. As the pieces of the puzzle come together in scholarship, historians note that nowhere is there more documentation than in South Carolina, which was the original English colony of Carolina, established in 1670 from Barbados. It is estimated that between 1650 and 1730 at least 50,000 Amerindians (and likely more due to transactions hidden to avoid paying government tariffs and taxes) were exported by the English alone to their Caribbean outposts. Between 1670 and 1717, there were far more Native Americans being exported out than Africans being imported into the colony.

Barbados deeply influenced the Carolina colony and it is important to note that “much of the verbiage for the 1691 South Carolina slave law was borrowed from the Barbados slave code of 1688. The South Carolina statute defined any Negro, Mulatto or Indian who had been bought or sold as such, to be a slave, and the status was extended to the children of such persons” (Goins). In southern coastal regions, more tribes were depleted through slavery than by disease or war. In a law passed in 1704, Amerindian slaves were forced (conscripted) to fight in wars for the colony long before the American Revolution.

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Throughout the Americas, indigenous slavery was part of a larger strategy to depopulate the land in order to make way for European settlers. As early as 1636, after the Pequot war in which 300 Pequot's were massacred, those who remained were sold into slavery and sent to Bermuda. Major slaving ports in what is now the United States included Boston, Salem, Mobile and New Orleans. From those ports, Native Americans were shipped to Barbados by the English, to Martinique and Guadalupe by the French and to the Antilles by the Dutch. Indian slaves were also sent to the Bahamas as a ‘breaking ground’ from which they might have been transported back to New York or Antigua. Through these examples, we can see how Indian slavery complicates the framework created from a white-black world in which the indigenous reside in the outer fringes of a gray frontier in hidden narratives.

These hidden narratives are what have led me to writing this paper. Trained at a young age by my Grandmother to carry on her tradition as the family storyteller, I have spent years dissecting stories taught to me not only by my paternal grandmother (Mae Rogers Maxwell), but also my mother (Ella Claudine Owen Maxwell) and my maternal grandmother (Pearl Lee Porter Sanders Owen). I find myself picking out similar elements from Creole-based Southern and Caribbean folklore and connecting it to that of the indigenous tribes of the south eastern United States. A few of the most interesting examples I have encountered are as follows.

First, I consider *Bacoo*, *Bohpoli*, and similar folklore figures. The example of *Bacoo* I am using is the one from Guyana, as it is the one that holds the most similarity to my nation's little men. In Guyana, *Bacoo* is a trickster figure of small stature that pelts stones at houses and moves objects within a house. *Baku* in many West African languages means 'little brother' or 'short man'. In West and Central Africa, those with physically short stature, such as the 'pygmies' or indigenous forest dwellers of Central Africa, are believed to have magical powers. This tale and some of its elements seem to have been brought to Guyana from Africa (Moses).

In Choctaw folklore, *Bohpoli* is a little man, about two feet high, who dwells alone in the thick, dark woods. The little trickster is known to be rather mischievous, but not malicious. The Choctaws believe that he often playfully throws sticks and stones at them. All unexplained sounds heard in the woods are attributed to *Bohpoli*, in the belief that he takes special pleasure in hitting the pine trees to create noise. The translation of *Bohpoli* is the 'Thrower'. Like the *Bacoo* of Guyana, it is said that *Bohpoli* resembles the little people of European folklore.

The *Kowi Anukasha* are another group of little people in Choctaw folklore. The *Kowi Anukasha* have strong magic and can be very dangerous, but they sometimes also bestow powers upon people who treat them respectfully. Their name literally means "forest dwellers". In Guyanese folklore, the *Bacoo*, if satisfied, will fulfill the wishes of its owner.

In Cherokee folklore, *Yunwi-Tsunsdi* are a group of small humanoid nature spirits, sometimes referred to in English as dwarves or fairies. They are usually invisible but sometimes reveal themselves as miniature child-sized people. *Yunwi Tsunsdi* are benevolent creatures who frequently help humans in Cherokee stories, but they have magical powers and are said to harshly punish people who are disrespectful or aggressive towards them.

In Catawba folklore, *Yehasuri* are mischievous, dwarf-like nature spirits who are not generally dangerous creatures, but the tricks they play can sometimes be destructive, and they are sometimes used as bogeymen to warn children away from bad behavior.

Oklahoma Seminoles describe Little People as ugly but otherwise looking very much like "old time" Muskogee and speaking the Muskogee Language. Sometimes they allow themselves to be seen by humans and can cause confusion and temporary insanity, and can lead humans away from their families (Grantham: 34/Swanton).

Next, I consider *Kashehotapalo*, *Papa Bois* and related folklore characters. In Choctaw folklore, we have a character known as *Kas-he-ho-ta-palo*, he is a combination of a man and deer who delights in frightening hunters. He is also much admired for his speed and agility. If the Choctaws anger *Kashehotapalo*, he will race ahead of them and warn the enemy or animals being hunted. His legs and feet are those of a deer, the former being covered with hair and the latter having cloven hoofs. He lives in low,

swampy places, away from the habitations of men. When hunters go near his abode, he quietly slips up behind them and calls loudly, then turns and runs swiftly away. He never attempts to harm the hunters, but delights in frightening them. The sound uttered by *Kashehotapalo* resembles the cry of a woman, and that is the reason for his name (*Kasheho*, “woman”; *tapalo*, “call”) (Mould: 113).

In Eastern Caribbean folklore, we have *Papa Bois* whom author Lucie Pradel describes as follows:

He was interesting to look at with two short horns on his head, a kind face with piercing eyes and a gentle manner. His hair and beard were long indeed. His feet were like the cloven hoofs of the deer and he wore deerskin over his body. He was strong, light-footed and could run very fast. A flute was hanging from his neck and he carried a large piece of wood in his hand and a large knife in his belt (Pradel: 140).

In the forest, *Papa Bois* does not hesitate to set traps for hunters by directing them towards the wrong track and he also warns the animals of imminent danger. Having the traits of a good-natured fellow, and a protector of animals, he leads hunters astray. In Trinidad and the other Lesser Antilles, *Papa Bois* is known by a wide range of names, including *Maitre Bois* (Master of the Woods) and *Daddy Bouchon* (Hairy Man). He has the ability to appear in many different forms, sometimes as a deer, and sometimes hairy.

Finally, I consider *Deer Woman* and *La Diabliesse*. *Deer Woman* is a deer spirit of the south-eastern Woodlands tribes and is associated with fertility and love. Like many Native American animal spirits, *Deer Woman* is sometimes depicted in animal form, other times in human form, and sometimes as a mixture between the two. Although *Deer Woman* is usually considered a benign spirit who might help women conceive children, some stories portray her as a more dangerous being who might seduce men, especially adulterous or promiscuous men, and either lead them to their deaths or leave them to pine away from love-sickness. Among the contemporary Native American people of Oklahoma, *Deer Woman* often plays a bogeyman sort of role, by trampling incautious people to death, especially girl-crazy young men, or disobedient children.

Like *Deer Woman*, *La Diabliesse* appears in the Caribbean as a young seductress who is the last being encountered in the lives of many unfortunate men. She has one hoofed foot (horse, cow, or goat) beneath her long elegant white dress, which she sometimes, in the heat of excitement, may expose, and one human leg. Her apparent beauty transfixes many a man to follow her into the forest where by the time he realizes what is happening he is hopelessly lost or drowning at the bottom of a river, or, she may amuse herself at night with inconstant men, whom she debauches before throwing them from the cliff tops or abandoning them in a bed of thorns.

The similarities in these tales lead me back again to our shared histories and our obvious assimilation into one another's cultures. Like African slaves and European indentured servants, Native Americans were forced to labor as slaves and in various other forms of un-free bondage or servitude. As with Africans shipped to the Americas, Native Americans were transported from their natal communities to labor elsewhere. Indian slavery complicates the narrative we have created of a white-black world, with Amerindians residing outside on a vaguely defined frontier (Goins). Yet the connection is definitive, somewhere in this Caribbean, the blood and ancestral memory of my people still lives, and little by little, the stories and lives we have shared will bring this realization to light.

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¿CÓMO SE LEE ANANSI EN COSTA RICA? UNA LECTURA DESCOLONIZADORA

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Los cuentos tradicionales del Hermano Araña (*Anansi stories*) juegan un papel fundamental en la literatura oral limonense, de tal forma que las aventuras del astuto Anansi se han transmitido por generaciones, de hecho hay quienes han intentado immortalizar estas historias (Duncan, 2015) mediante la escritura, pero ¿desde cuáles perspectivas se escriben y se leen los textos de Anansi en Costa Rica? Es esta incógnita a la que el presente artículo dará respuesta.

Como punto de partida, señalamos que el Limon Kryol (idioma en que inicialmente se contaban las historias del hermano araña) no es reconocido como lengua oficial en la Constitución Política, ni tampoco por los costarricenses en general, incluyendo a los propios hablantes del idioma. Adicionalmente, la ausencia de medios formales de escritura y la carencia, hasta hace pocos tiempo, de una gramática² que reafirme científicamente al idioma como tal, son indicios de la negación del sujeto afrocaribeño dentro del país.

En segundo lugar, evidenciamos que la ausencia de escritura del idioma resultó en la traducción de los textos a otras lenguas (español o inglés). Dichas traducciones se realizan desde la perspectiva colonizadora, es decir, desde la visión de la centralidad o de los discursos de poder, por lo que se fortalece el sistema hegemónico del blanco:

“La descolonización no pasa jamás inadvertida puesto que afecta al ser, modifica fundamentalmente al ser, transforma a los espectadores aplastados por la falta de esencia en actores privilegiados, recogidos de manera casi grandiosa por la hoz de la historia. Introduce en el ser un ritmo propio, aportado por los nuevos hombres, un nuevo lenguaje, una nueva humanidad.” (Fanon, 1983: 17)

Con el fin de demostrar la perspectiva colonizadora, tomamos como base el cuento “Caballo de trote” (Duncan, 2015).

¹ Brenda Villalobos presentó sola esta ponencia en el 19th Islands in Between, Conference en Barbados en noviembre 2016.

² Prolinca (Programa de Lingüística Centroamericana) de la Universidad Nacional, se encuentra elaborando la gramática de la lengua y actualmente se encuentra en sus pasos finales, se espera que sea publicada en el 2018.

Como tercer punto, demostramos que los textos de Anansi se leen, además, desde la mirada del blanco, en tanto que se juzgan, soslayan y rebajan los comportamientos del negro, al que se le asocia a la representación de los antivalores sociales, en este caso tomamos en cuenta el artículo ‘Cuentos de Breda Anansi: un análisis del contenido’ (Ketelbohn, 1994).

Por último, tras comprobar un sesgo colonial tanto en la escritura como en la lectura de los textos de Anansi, planteamos la deconstrucción³ del discurso dominante (el del blanco), es decir, la eliminación de una centralidad o de un discurso planteado como verdadero, mediante la realización de la primera transcripción que se ha hecho del texto en Limon Kryol⁴. Además, se propondrá un análisis literario en el que se abandonan las posturas jerárquicas jurado/ juez, se elimina la utilización de términos binarios que oponen al blanco y al negro, y se cuestiona el esquema de valores que en las otras lecturas se ha asociado con el blanco.

En lo que respecta a la escritura, los cuentos de Anansi se han escrito en Costa Rica únicamente en inglés o en español, a pesar de que eran contadas en la lengua hablada en Limón: Limon Kryol. Al respecto, cabe recalcar que el idioma hablado en el caribe del país, a pesar de ser la lengua minoritaria con más hablantes en Costa Rica (55 000 aproximadamente), carece del reconocimiento de lengua oficial dentro de la Constitución Política, lo que por supuesto la coloca en una posición de desprestigio a nivel sociolingüístico y en estado de desplazamiento a nivel de revitalización lingüística.

La estigmatización sobre el Limon Kryol y consecuentemente de sus hablantes se debe al predominio de dos lenguas de superestrato en dos distintas épocas: el inglés, antes de los treinta, y el español, después de los cuarenta. En lo que concierne a la primera, debido a la influencia jamaicana, se consideraba como “la lengua correcta”, lo que automáticamente colocaba sobre el criollo limonense calificativos como “incorrecto”, “inglés mal hablado”, “trash” entre otros. Respecto del español, a partir del año cuarenta y nueve el Estado reconoce a la población que habita Limón como ciudadanos costarricenses, lo que conlleva la adopción e imposición del castellano como lengua oficial, por ende, prestigiosa. El crecimiento del español como “la lengua correcta” se implementa mediante una serie de políticas educativas y sociales que con el tiempo desplazaron al criollo limonense a un estado estigmatizado, e hicieron desaparecer el inglés traído por los primeros pobladores.

Esta estigmatización fue plasmada en el imaginario social del costarricense, tanto a nivel interno (Limón) como a nivel externo (el resto del país), ya que el criollo limonense nunca fue considerado como una lengua, sino que fue siempre disminuido a una versión mal aprendida de la lengua inglesa. De lo anterior se deduce un claro desinterés por el criollo limonense, el cual explica quizás la ausencia de políticas de reconocimiento tanto

³ Empleamos el término desde la concepción derridiana sobre la presencia de significado trascendental desde la propuesta epistemológica occidental del logocentrismo, explicado en *De la Gramatología* (1967).

⁴ Esta transcripción es el primer texto literario escrito en criollo limonense y que ha empleado la gramática de la lengua.

a nivel académico como a nivel político que equiparen el estatus del criollo con el resto de lenguas minoritarias del país. Es por ello que los cuentos de Anansi solo se han traducido al inglés o al español, pero la situación lingüística del criollo limonense y la carencia de una grafía del mismo son apenas indicios de la problemática mayor a la que se apunta: la existencia de una negación al sujeto afrocaribeño costarricense.

Al tomar en cuenta que el proyecto de Estado-nación de Costa Rica radica en la homogenización cultural, se comprende que esta forzada imposición del español, el consecuente rechazo del criollo limonense y la ausencia de una gramática, son reflejo de la negación cultural del negro, si recordamos la innegable relación entre cultura y lengua. Al respecto, retomamos la concepción de cultura establecida por Sebastià Serrano (1981), como “todos aquellos hábitos, costumbres o conocimientos que identifican a un hombre como miembro de una sociedad” (p. 15). Según el autor, el lenguaje es el primordial de los signos de la cultura, por lo que la lengua es el hecho cultural por excelencia, debido a que es parte de la cultura, lo heredamos de nuestros antepasados a través de la tradición y es el medio privilegiado “por el cual asimilamos la cultura de nuestra comunidad” (p. 17), ya que es a través de las palabras que las personas aprehenden los valores de su comunidad, al igual que a través de las palabras construyen su concepto del mundo, desde esta perspectiva la lengua es entonces “el sistema que traduce todos los demás sistemas” (p. 17).

Si la lengua es la herramienta mediante la cual el individuo se posiciona como miembro de una comunidad apropiándose de su cultura, y aún más importante, si la difusión de dicha cultura se da precisamente por medio de la lengua y la misma es negada, tal como ocurre en Costa Rica con el Limon Kryol, se promueven dos mecanismos: la desvinculación del sujeto a su cultura, lo que lo convierte en un ser fragmentado, cuya identidad está, de igual modo, fragmentada, y la imposibilidad de transmisión cultural a las siguientes generaciones. Negar un idioma es negar la cultura del sujeto, y en efecto, al sujeto mismo.

En esta desvalorización de la lengua se observa de manera innegable un sesgo colonial, pues el blanco asume una posición “civilizadora” con respecto del negro. Al imponerle el español como lengua lo obliga a adherirse a esta abandonando a su vez su cultura y su identidad, para adoptar el idioma del blanco y su sistema de valores como propio, desarraigándose inevitablemente de sus propias raíces.

A partir de dicho sesgo, el mundo del costarricense responde al orden jerárquico blanco/negro, polos opuestos que se representan respectivamente en la dinámica social y el imaginario del costarricense de la siguiente manera centro/ periferia, poder/ sometimiento, correcto/ incorrecto, prestigioso/ marginal, entre otras oposiciones, las cuales han contribuido a la pérdida de la cultura del limonense y el fortalecimiento del orden hegemónico impuesto por el sujeto de poder.

El desinterés político y social que se observa en la situación de la lengua se refleja en una escritura que propaga el discurso de poder, es decir, del blanco. Al no existir una

escritura del negro (sujeto colonizado), una literatura propia es inconcebible, como lo explica Edouard Glissant:

“Literature attains a metaexistence, the all-powerfulness of a sacred sign, which will allow people with writing to think it is justified to dominate and rule people with an oral civilization. And the last Western attempt to conceptualize a History, that of Toynbee, will organize the Total System based on a discriminatory sequence (great civilizations, great states, great religions) indispensable in such a project” (citado por Mignolo, 1995).

El hecho de que únicamente existan traducciones al inglés y español de los cuentos de Anansi en Costa Rica, impone la reproducción del discurso del blanco (es decir, quien sigue ejerciendo el discurso del poder, de colonizador) en tanto que organizan el texto a partir de la supremacía de este grupo, mientras que representa al negro como un ser carente, sometido y desposeído. Esto se observa indudablemente en el texto “Caballo de trote” (1995) traducido por Quince Duncan.

Se sabe que por medio de la literatura se representa la sociedad dentro de la cual se inscriben los textos, al respecto Edmond Cros afirma, en *La sociocrítica* (2009), que “el texto se halla históricamente ligado a un mundo de instituciones: derecho, Iglesia, literatura y enseñanza” (p. 89), en los mismos se plasma la ideología, que responde a una serie de representaciones ideas, conceptos y mitos; precisamente la ideología se plasma en la producción discursiva (p. 93), razón por la cual el autor define al texto como un elemento semiológico-ideológico en el que se expresan los problemas de la sociedad en forma de contrarios por medio de sus redes, narratología, espacio y tiempo (p. 99). En este sentido, se puede decir que en “Caballo de trote” se manifiestan una serie de implicaciones socio-ideológicas que, aún en la actualidad, se encuentran vigentes en el imaginario social del costarricense, tal y como se demostrará a continuación.

El texto se basa en la historia de dos personajes el Hermano Tigre y el Hermano Araña, quienes compiten entre sí para demostrar su hombría, lo cual se logra mediante la obtención del reconocimiento por parte del sexo opuesto. Como punto de partida, es importante tomar en cuenta los adjetivos utilizados para describir a los personajes, puesto que dentro del texto literario el atractivo físico es la herramienta empleada por los personajes para probar su valía. El Hermano Tigre posee todas las cualidades que lo acercan a las mujeres: es atractivo, cuenta con una fuerza brutal, es “el más guapo del pueblo” (Duncan, 1995: 167) y posee un mechoncito blanco, que es su principal atributo de belleza. Por su parte, el Hermano Araña es más bien inteligente (única característica positiva con la que se le asocia, la cual no es valorada por las mujeres), está falto de fuerza y de atractivo físico. Esto sin mencionar que a lo largo del texto el narrador utiliza calificativos como “solitario”, “abandonado”, “pobre” y “débil” para referirse al Hermano Araña, al exponerlo así como un sujeto carente, inferior y necesitado.

Hasta el momento queda claro que el reconocimiento de los personajes y su valor recaen meramente en la impresión que causen en las mujeres del pueblo, es por ello que la

belleza o la guapura es imprescindible y llama la atención que en repetidas ocasiones se exalta como principal atributo de belleza el mechón blanco que tiene el Hermano Araña, y que por supuesto le falta a Anansi. Al respecto, Chacón afirma que “el narrador pone en primer plano el personaje de Hermano Tigre por su belleza, valor aquí privilegiado (...) es guapo porque tiene un mechoncito blanco que cuelga de su cabellera. Esto significa que su belleza depende de un sema físico que pertenece justamente al otro” (2003: 204), lo que coloca al Hermano Araña en un lugar inferior, pues al no poseer el mechón blanco se aleja del ideal de belleza planteado.

Si el valor predominante dentro del texto es la belleza asociada al mechón blanco, el problema de Anansi es “estar ubicado fuera de este esquema” (Chacón, 2003: 205), ya que es el Hermano Tigre es quien posee el rasgo estético que lo coloca en una posición de dominio y Anansi no es parte de dicho esquema, se observa que se propone, a partir de la lógica binaria anteriormente mencionada, más que distinguir a los dos personajes, inscribirlos dentro de sistemas de valores diferentes cargados ambos de connotaciones que privilegian el etnocentrismo, pues el rasgo físico que marca la belleza es a su vez un marcador de blanquitud. Esto revela que la carencia de dicho sema físico es sinónimo de fealdad y, por lo tanto, de rechazo al personaje que se distancia de “lo blanco”, es decir Anansi, representante de la negritud. Esto último se comprueba si se toma en cuenta que estos dos personajes se contraponen en todo sentido, si el tigre es fuerte, la araña es débil, si es guapo, la araña es fea, entre otros ejemplos.

Al saberse fuera del esquema de belleza dominante en su pueblo, Anansi acude a una serie de estrategias para obtener la atención de al menos una mujer, sin embargo, es usual que falle. Primero, el Hermano Araña intenta hacer que el Hermano Tigre se enamore de una sola mujer, con el fin de que las otras se decepcionen y así poder estar con alguna de ellas, sin embargo, no le funciona porque el tigre se encuentra muy ocupado admirándose a sí mismo y a su hermoso mechón blanco. Esto corresponde a una crítica a la cultura del blanco, al exponer al personaje que la representa como un narciso; se hace una burla de su sistema de valores, sin embargo, el hecho de asociar la belleza con el blanco y excluir al negro de todo ideal estético no hace más que reafirmar la supremacía del blanco.

El segundo plan llevado a cabo por Anansi para “ser considerado un verdadero hombre” (Duncan, 1995: 169) es acudir a la fuerza bruta para poner el ridículo al Hermano Tigre, sin embargo, en este caso resulta de igual modo perdedor, pues “en vez de asustar, resultó asustado” (Duncan, 1995: 167), incluso provoca la risa del tigre cuando se entera de su plan. Tras aplicar estas dos estrategias frustradas, queda claro, para Anansi como para el lector, que es inferior al tigre en cuanto a belleza y fuerza. Es importante tener en cuenta que estas dos cualidades son imprescindibles para la comunidad del Hermano Anansi, debido a que carece de estas se encuentra afuera del sistema social en el que se desenvuelve. Estos dos puntos comprueban la imposición de la voz colonizadora a partir

de la cual se niega al sujeto afrocaribeño en Costa Rica. Esta problemática racial la resume el historiador Iván Molina cuando explica la situación del país:

“el estereotipo de la Costa Rica blanca, pese a los esfuerzos oficiales y de otro tipo en pro de la pluralidad étnica y cultural del país, persiste con fuerza en los contenidos publicitarios, y no exclusivamente en los turísticos; en los criterios de contratación de empleados de ciertas empresas en especial periódicas y de relaciones públicas, en los sistemas de admisión de las universidades estatales (en cuyos campus los estudiantes, profesores y administrativos de origen afrocaribeño son excepcionales), y en los requisitos para ingresar a ciertos bares, clubes y otros locales similares” (2002: 113)

El sujeto afrocaribeño no cumple con los parámetros estéticos de los costarricenses, por lo tanto no puede ocupar una posición social respetable y mucho menos igualarse al blanco, y que además, será objeto de burla del blanco hasta que encuentre la manera de adquirir sus atributos. Lo anterior sugiere que las características del negro son negativas, incorrectas y poco valiosas, mientras que las del blanco son buenas, correctas y dignas de valorar.

Como tercer y último intento para derrotar al Hermano Tigre, Anansi acude a la única característica positiva con la que se le vincula en el texto, la inteligencia, quizás porque esta no pertenece al blanco, por lo que no es exaltada como valor según la comunidad de la que forman parte los dos personajes. Es en este intento en el que Anansi parece superar al Tigre, sin embargo, esta victoria se debe a una mentira, o sea una ilusión.

El hermano Anansi utiliza su astucia para ocupar una posición superior a la del Tigre; idea decirle a todo el pueblo, incluyendo a las mujeres, que el Hermano Tigre era su caballo de trote, cuando este se entera y pretende obligarlo a contar la verdad, Anansi finge estar enfermo y afirma que solo puede ir al pueblo a aceptar que mintió si el tigre lo lleva: “Una vez que tenía todo lo necesario, el Hermano Araña se compuso de su enfermedad, y chilillo y riendas en mano, obligó al Hermano Tigre a entrar al puente con él a cuestras” (Duncan, 1995: 169).

En este punto del relato ocurre una translocación en los roles. Espacialmente hablando, el Hermano Tigre (personaje asociado a lo blanco) pasa a colocarse literalmente debajo de Anansi (personaje asociado a la negritud) lo que alterna el orden jerárquico de los personajes: el tigre pasa de ser superior, dominante y valorado a inferior, dominado y humillado. No obstante, este cambio de jerarquías no es solo momentáneo sino que es falso, lo que sugiere que la única manera que tiene el negro de igualarse al blanco es mediante el ardid o la mentira, como si realmente careciera atributos que pudieran ser valorados por su comunidad.

En lo que concierne a las implicaciones socio-ideológicas inscritas en esta traducción, se observa en primera instancia el ideal de belleza asociado únicamente al blanco, lo que implica que el negro no tiene cabida dentro de los parámetros estéticos que rigen en el país. Esto por supuesto, revela la desvaloración del negro y lo asocia con la fealdad

por el simple hecho de no parecerse al blanco. A su vez, el texto evidencia que existe en Costa Rica un doble discurso, si por un lado se afirma que es una nación pluricultural⁵, por el otro se rechaza y desvaloriza a todo aquel que no concuerde con el ideal de belleza del blanco, tal como le ocurre al Hermano Araña, lo que expone la sociedad costarricense como un mundo cerrado y hostil, dividido de la siguiente manera: adentro/ afuera, nosotros/ otros. En esta dinámica el blanco queda en las primeras categorías de ambos pares opuestos, mientras que el negro se encuentra excluido y es señalado, juzgado y reducido por ser diferente.

Por otra parte, al exponer al personaje que representa al negro como alguien que solo puede vencer mediante la mentira, se da a entender que no cuenta con atributos adecuados para vencer al blanco y que por ende, un triunfo sobre este será solamente una ilusión. Desde este punto de vista, los atributos del negro son negados dentro de su comunidad, al no poseer ningún rasgo de blanquitud no merece ser reconocido, de aquí que la mentira sea una posibilidad para él, porque sabe que de otra forma no podría vencerlo. En síntesis, esta traducción expone al negro como un sujeto rechazado, marginado y considerado inferior dentro de su comunidad, mientras que expone al blanco como el modelo de belleza, fuerza y admiración, colocándolo nuevamente en una posición superior y rebaja al negro, lo que elimina la realidad multiétnica y fortalece en el lector el discurso de eurocéntrico, en donde el negro, no puede competir y queda fuera de todo esquema social posible en Costa Rica. Además, la traducción reproduce una serie de prejuicios relacionados con la fealdad del negro, su inferioridad étnico-cultural y su consecuente rechazo por ser diferente.

Entonces, se pueden aseverar dos situaciones a partir de la lectura anterior. Por un lado, los textos niegan el criollo limonense como lengua al desvincular al sujeto afrocaribeño limonense de su propia cultura, lo que explica que únicamente existan traducciones de los cuentos de Anansi y no transcripciones de los mismos en la lengua original. Por otro lado, dichas traducciones reproducen y fortalecen el discurso colonial desde el cual se observa al negro a través la mirada del blanco, juzgándolo como inferior, e incluso, como un sujeto que ofende debido a la diferencia y sin cabida dentro de la comunidad. Esta reducción del negro observada en la negación de la lengua y en la traducción del texto “Caballo de trote”, se presenta también en las lecturas propuestas sobre los cuentos de Anansi, como lo veremos a continuación.

En el artículo titulado “Cuentos de Breda Anansi: un análisis del contenido” (1994), de Lucía Ketelbohn, se afirma que en el personaje de Anansi se representan los procesos inconscientes de los afrocaribeños, pues las actitudes y comportamientos de este personaje manifiestan emociones y antivalores tales como el egoísmo, la gula, la mentira, el engaño, entre otros. Mientras que conscientemente los afrocaribeños afirman no identificarse con dichos valores. Para probar su punto, la autora hace un análisis de los cuentos

⁵ El artículo primero de la Constitución Política fue modificado hasta el 2015, en el gobierno de Luis Guillermo Solís, para definir al país como pluricultural y multiétnico.

del Hermano Araña, incluyendo “Caballo de trote”, y lo compara con la perspectiva del personaje, establecida por Miss Iris Richard, una mujer limonense a quien Ketelbohn entrevistó.

En primer lugar, es pertinente señalar la descripción del Hermano Araña recalcada en el artículo; según la investigadora, Anansi es un tramposo que está acostumbrado “a ser recompensado sin realmente merecerlo” (p. 2). Al siempre salirse con la suya se devela en este personaje un ideal que justifica las actitudes y valores que se ven en Anansi como la traición, el engaño, el egoísmo, la vagabundería y el ocio (p. 2). Además, afirma que en las diferentes aventuras de Anansi se observa en el personaje el propósito de engañar, difamar y “dañar a otros únicamente por el hecho de dañarlos” (p. 3). Es evidente que la lectura se establece a partir de una mirada moralista, en tanto que se juzgan abiertamente las actitudes de Anansi, personaje que en palabras de la autora, representa al sujeto afrocaribeño y se le asocia a una serie de antivalores. Al afirmar que Anansi no merece ser premiado, se exterioriza una visión ligada a un discurso de poder desde la cual juzga lo que es correcto o incorrecto, e incluso se impone quién debe ser castigado y quién no.

Además, según la autora, las luchas dadas por Anansi para recibir los premios (comida o mujeres) no responden al hambre o a la necesidad, sino a la gula que forma parte de los deseos inconscientes del personaje. Ya en este punto ha quedado claro que en el estudio se proyecta una imagen negativa del negro, mientras que el sistema de valores que, como dijimos anteriormente representa al blanco, ni siquiera es cuestionado.

La autora compara su lectura sobre Anansi con los datos suministrados por Miss Iris Richard en una entrevista, quien afirma sentirse identificada con los valores de la generosidad, la misericordia, la sinceridad, y la modestia representados en el personaje tratado. La autora afirma que aunque conscientemente el sujeto afrocaribeño diga cumplir con estos valores, inconscientemente se asemeja al personaje de Anansi por dos razones: al escuchar los textos de Anansi los afrocaribeños se ríen aprobando la actitud del personaje, y además mientras la autora del artículo realizaba la entrevista, observó que las actitudes de la limonense eran contrarias a su discurso, pues a pesar de afirmar que sentían amor por sus enemigos, ella observó cómo la entrevistada echaba a un ladrón de su casa, lo que – desde su interpretación – indica que mintió.

De lo anterior se constata la postura de juez en la que Ketelbohn se posiciona. Por un lado, por condenar la risa del afrocaribeño al asociarla con un conjunto de antivalores o estereotipos, cuando es un indicador de placer e identificación. Por otro lado, por adjetivar a la misma informante de mentirosa.

Lo que la anterior lectura manifiesta es el juzgamiento del que es objeto el afrocaribeño limonense y su cultura. Se revelan a partir de los juicios de valor realizados por la autora que el negro es concebido como un ente dañino y falso, cuyos afanes egoístas y costumbres de vagancia son un problema para el resto de su comunidad (representada en el Hermano Tigre y el Hermano Mono). Por otra parte, al colocarse en el rol de juez se

revela la creencia de superioridad en quien juzga: el negro es “el otro” cuyo sistema de valores debe ser cuestionado e incluso eliminado, y para él no hay cabida dentro de la dinámica social, pues su inconsciente lo ha revelado como un ser distinto, por lo que requiere que se le señale desde la óptica del blanco que por oposición, es bueno, no perjudicial y no es un tramposo.

A propósito de la asociación del negro con los antivalores sociales, Fanon afirma que es una actitud común en el colono, ya que:

“el mundo colonial es un mundo maniqueo. No le basta al colono limitar físicamente, es decir, con ayuda de su policía y de sus gendarmes, el espacio del colonizado. Como para ilustrar el carácter totalitario de la explotación colonial, el colono hace del colonizado una especie de quinta esencia del mal. La sociedad colonizada no sólo se define como una sociedad sin valores. No le basta al colono afirmar que los valores han abandonado o, mejor aún, no han habitado jamás el mundo colonizado (...) Es, nos atrevemos a decirlo, el enemigo de los valores.” (1983: 20)

La cita anterior explica la relación de poder colono/colonizado expuesta en la lectura en cuestión, la cual representa al sujeto afrocaribeño (mundo colonizado) como “el lugar del mal”, con el fin de justificar la imposición del sistema de valores del blanco como una “tabla de salvación” para los negros limonenses, al hacerlos parecer necesitados del régimen del blanco para establecer un orden social.

De acuerdo a los tres puntos anteriores queda demostrado que tanto en la inexistencia de una gramática de la lengua y las consecuentes traducciones de los cuentos de Anansi como en las lecturas realizadas sobre los textos, se observa al negro desde la mirada del colonizador, percibiéndolo siempre como un ente negativo, cuya cultura es la de los antivalores, la del otro, siempre externo y carente. Sin embargo, más allá de señalar que existe en Costa Rica un sesgo colonial, que coloca al blanco como centro y al negro como periferia, desde el cual se escriben y se leen los cuentos de Anansi, el presente artículo pretende descentralizar dicho discurso.

En primera instancia, este estudio utiliza en la primera transcripción del cuento “Caballo de trote” al criollo limonense, lo que contribuye a la visualización del criollo limonense como lengua, e incluso al aprendizaje de la escritura de dicha lengua tanto por parte de los hablantes como por el resto de los costarricenses. Además de un paso adelante en cuanto a la producción literaria de la zona, al ser el primer cuento de Anansi transcrito en su lengua original, permite la transmisión de elementos propios de la cultura de los limonenses, lo que libera a la narración del sesgo colonial observado en el análisis de “Caballo de trote” realizado con anterioridad.

La transcripción aquí empleada se titula “Anansi luking gerlfren” (ver Anexo 1) se basa en el mismo argumento: el Hermano Tigre recibe toda la atención de las mujeres, razón por la cual el Hermano Anansi decide decirle a todo el pueblo que el tigre es el caballo

viejo que monta su papá, y de este modo logra obtener la atención de la muchacha que le interesa.

La aceptación por parte de las mujeres sigue siendo, en este texto, un factor determinante para los personajes, sin embargo, en “Anansi luking gerlfren” no existe ningún rasgo de blanquitud que explique la atracción de las mujeres por el tigre, en este sentido no se impone el esquema de belleza del blanco sobre el del negro, lo que significa que al menos en lo que a la estética respecta, no se expone al blanco como modelo y por lo tanto se desasocia al negro de los estereotipos de fealdad, lo que permite afirmar que se elimina la negativización de los rasgos físicos del afrocaribeño, así como la colocación del mismo fuera de los parámetros de belleza establecidos en el texto.

Por otra parte, la primera estrategia a la que el personaje Anansi acude para derrotar a su rival es la de la inteligencia, dato que marca la diferencia con la otra versión en la que el personaje de Anansi es inferior al Hermano Tigre tanto en la estética como en la fuerza. En este caso, el personaje que se asocia a la negritud no es rebajado, más bien se encuentra en una posición casi igualitaria con respecto de su rival, pues cada uno cuenta con un atributo para alcanzar su objetivo: el tigre con la admiración de las mujeres y la araña con su astucia. Se abandonan, entonces, las etiquetas de más fuerte, más bello (blanco) y más valorado que se colocaban sobre el representante de lo blanco, así como también las de débil, feo y desvalorizado que se le daban al representante de lo negro. A partir de esta igualación de los personajes y de sus posibilidades sociales dentro de su comunidad, se plantea la valoración y aceptación del sujeto afrocaribeño, ya que Anansi deja de visualizarse como un personaje carente e inferior, ya que no sufre el rechazado por su apariencia física ni en cuanto a la fuerza.

Se observa en esta transcripción el abandono hacia los opuestos binarios blanco/ negro como se solían representar: fuerte/ débil, estético/ antiestético, valorado/ desvalorizado, para dar pie a una narración en la que los personajes se encuentran en igualdad de condiciones. Incluso, solo se entiende que Anansi representa al afrocaribeño si se toman en cuenta datos extra textuales como la preponderancia del personaje en la tradición oral caribeña y el contexto en el que surgen estos cuentos, de otro modo, el texto no contiene ningún tipo de distinción étnica entre los personajes, es decir, no se coloca una cultura sobre la otra.

Si bien es cierto que en “Anansi luking gerlfren” el personaje de la araña también acude a una artimaña para posicionarse sobre el Hermano Tigre, esta no resulta ser su último intento para alcanzar al tigre, sino que es el primero, y efectivamente lo consigue. En este caso, se expone la astucia como un recurso valorado y útil para quien la posee, y no como una virtud desarrollada a consecuencia de las provocaciones del tigre como ocurría en “Caballo de trote”. Al afirmar que la astucia de Anansi es producto de la superioridad del blanco, y además la única herramienta con la que cuenta el afrocaribeño para ser aceptado dentro de su comunidad, se da a entender que incluso la virtud de inteligencia con la que cuenta el negro le fue otorgada por el blanco, lo que recae

nuevamente en la sobrevaloración de este por encima del sujeto afrocaribeño. La traducción empleada en esta investigación no establece dicha dicotomía, no estereotipa, y lo más importante, no se estructura a partir de la lógica colonial.

Por último, llama la atención que tanto en la traducción de “Caballo de trote” como en la lectura de los cuentos de Anansi, analizados en el presente trabajo, se cuestiona el esquema de valores del negro, sin embargo, en ninguno de los dos casos se cuestionan las actitudes del tigre, tales como la risa ante la humillación del más débil, la violencia empleada por este personaje para obligar a Anansi a realizar sus propósitos, o la personalidad de don Juan (mujeriego). El hecho de que este personaje no sea cuestionado deja entrever la hegemonía del discurso del blanco. Como se ha mencionado a lo largo de este estudio, tanto la escritura como la lectura de los cuentos de Anansi en Costa Rica coinciden en que el Hermano Tigre es la representación del blanco, y en el primer caso se toma como modelo estético y figura superior, y en el segundo se aprueba y defiende su sistema de valores como “los más apropiados para la sociedad”. En ambas representaciones existe una valoración negativa del afrocaribeño limonense, cargada además de una serie de implicaciones socio-ideológicas: el negro visto como un ente externo y dañino a la sociedad costarricense, lo que justifica su rechazo y la reducción de los que es objeto; la vinculación del aspecto físico del negro a lo feo, y más grave aún es el hecho de que esa fealdad se deba a que carece de blanquitud, además de la asociación del negro con los antivalores como el egoísmo, la deshonestidad, la gula, entre otros.

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ANEXO

Anansi stwori: Anansi luking gerlfren

Narrada por: Luisa Hutchason⁶

We bak in di twon a Jumyeka we Anansi liv, dem liv Breda Tayga, Breda Blak Snyek, Breda Tombi Bog, Breda Haas, Breda Kow. Bot Breda Tayga waz di priti bway, aal a di gyal dem onli falo BredaTayga, av aal di gyal dem ran in bihayn im an Anansi get so opset.

Anansi se: “No saa”, my kyaan tek dis, mi a fi du somtin, Breda Tayga aal di gyal dem dis a falo im , an falo im, an falo im...

Anansi neva du a ting, bot go op a Breda Tayga gerlfren. Takuma daata. So im go nak di dor, im se “Woope... woopee...”

Wen dat gerl wopen di dor, Anansi tel ar: “Helo...! Mi admaya yu evridye, evridye mi pas an mi tink: wat a byutiful gerl yo a!”

An shi se: “Yes!”

Anansi aks: “Mi kyan kom in?”

Shi se: “Wa yu waan?”

Im ansa: “Mi onli waan taak wit you lik”

“Okye, kom in”, she se

Wen Anansi kom in, im se: “Mi lav yu ay!, yu gat byutiful ay”, mi godnes yu gat byutiful yer!, yu no waan bi mi gerlfren?”

Shi se: “Bot nwo, yu nwo Breda Tayga iz may bwayfren”

Ananse se: “Waaat??!! Breda Tayga iz fi yu bwayfren? Yu no nwo notn, Breda Tayga iz may fada wol rayding aas”

Shi se: “We yu se?”

So, im ansa: “Yes, Breda Tayga iz may fada wol rayding aas”

Shi se: “No, bot Breda Tayga neva tel mi dat jet”

A im tel ar: “Yes, ay se enitaym yu waan yu fayn owt. Bot if yu waan stye wit a bwayfren wa iz may fada wol rayding aas, wel das yor biznis”.

Anansi kip an: “Luk, a mi gwain nwo an mi wil sii yu. Arayt mi wil kom bak an visit yu anada dye”.

⁶ Educadora retirada del Ministerio de Educación Pública, ampliamente reconocida por sus historias transmitidas oralmente a la población limonense.

Shi ansa: “Okye”

Anasi gaan, bot Takuma daata shi opset, shi tink: “A kyaan biliv dat, Breda Tayga iz im fada wol rayding aas... No saa!!” An shi waz so opset.

Di nayt de waz wen av a big paati bika if yu av berdye, yu mek di big selebreshan. Ivnen kom, an BredaTayga kom down, evribadi kom down, plyes ful, Breda Tayga kom: “Ooo my daaling! How ar yu tudye?”

Shi se: “Muv wie. Wie from mi! Yu, mi no nwo yu Breda Anansi fada wol rayding aas”

Breda Tayga se: “No, not, no go so”.

Shi se: “Yes, sombadi tel mi”

Breda Tayga se: “U tel yu dat?”

“Anansi tel me so”, she se

Im veks, tel ar: “Bot yu dwont biliv Anansi. Anansi is a laaya”.

Bot she se: “No! Anasi tel mi an di onli wie mi a gwain pruv it, yu a fi bring Anasi bifer mi, ant el mi iz rayt”

“Arayt! Me wil go fi Anansi”

Breda Tayga veks veks. Im se: “Wel, mi gwain Anansi howz” an Breda Tayga gaan.

Anansi go op in a bed an lef di dor wopen. Wen Breda Tayga got, brwok op Breda Anansi dor an se: “Anansi!! We yu so lay we yu mi gerlfren se mi a yo fada wol rayding aas!?”

“Mi no tel ar notn, me no tel ar notn”

“Shi se yes, yu tel ar. An mi a go kyari yu bay mi gerlfren owz. Yu a fi go wit mi bay ar owz.”

So wikid Anansi se: “Bot mi kyaan go bika mi beli dat aat mi, mi av pyen a beli”.

Im se: “No, no! Yu a go!”

Im se: “No, mi av fiva, mi kyaan waak”

Im se: “Yu gat tu go”

Anansi se: “Mi kyaan go bika mi fut dem wiks, sii ow dem a shyek, mi kyaan go”.

Breda Tayga se: “Wel, mi no kyer, bot mi a go kyari yu eniwie, iven kyari yu pan me bak...”

“Aaaa...!!! Yu waan kyari mi pan yu bak? – Anansi aks–Arayt, mi wil go pan yu bak, but yu a fi yu bak tu hay, yu a fi get somtin layk a sak!”

Breda Tayga ansa: “Okey, mi av di saki, wa mwor yu waan?”

An Anasi go so: “Wel a braygi, an mi waan a wip bika yu nwo yu gat a wol a di flay de”.

Den Breda Tayga se: “Eniting yu waan mi bring it.”

So Breda Tayga go an get di saki, im get di wip, im get di braigy, im get evriting an put it pan im bak.

Ansi se: “Kom down, yu a mek mi go pan yu bak”. Anansi kraal an im go pan im bak. “Bot yu gwain waak slow bika mi beli aat mi an mi fut dem a trembi”

Im se: “Arayt”

So im de rayd Anansi se: “Kom an, gi mi, di wip”. An im tek di wip pan am don waak.

“Tek taym!! Ay!!It a pyem mi, tek taym!!”, Anansi se. So dem waak slwo.

Wen dem gat nyer a Breda Tkuma owz, Anansi ataat wip Breda Tayga Flash!!! Flash!!! Flash!!! An Anansi hao af an se: “Me no tel unu? Se dis a mi fada wol rayding aas. Mi no tel unu?” An Breda Tayga tek bush.

Das way Breda Tayga no liv a ton, an dat kaas fram Breda Anansi...

Jak Mandwora, mi no kaas non.

DU CONTE TRADITIONNEL AU ROMAN ANTILLAIS: CONFLUENCES ET INTERFERENCES

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Dans le bassin caribéen, le conte antillais est un discours oral, hérité de l'esclavage. Il était prononcé lors de veillées nocturnes et / ou mortuaires, afin de distraire l'assemblée. Il se définit, non seulement par ses personnages d'origine animale, humaine ou surnaturelle, mais aussi par la morale du récit qui met à jour "un nouveau système de valeur" (Jardel, 1977: 13), dans un contexte historique particulier, c'est-à-dire la victoire de la ruse sur l'ordre établi du Maître.

Le roman antillais franco-caribéen s'inscrit dans la Caraïbe, "ensemble complexe" (Toumson, 2011: 70) de littérature et de pensée. Le courant de la Négritude a poussé à une interrogation sur soi, et l'affirmation de l'identité antillaise constitue un topos de la littérature post-coloniale et moderne. Les romanciers antillais font re-découvrir le patrimoine. Ainsi, le conte antillais – récit à l'origine en créole, mais traduit et écrit en français – est, tout comme le roman, un genre qui voit s'exposer cette problématique de l'identité culturelle.

Le corpus d'étude de ce travail est constitué de contes antillais recueillis tant à la Martinique qu'à la Guadeloupe, que dans l'univers anglophone d'Antigua, de Sainte-Lucie où de la Barbade: *Trois fois bèl contes*, *Contes et légendes des Antilles*, *Contes créoles des Amériques*, recueillis respectivement par Lafcadio Hearn, Thérèse Georgel et Raphaël Confiant, du début à la fin du XXème siècle.

Le conteur met souvent en scène des histoires dans lesquelles la société esclavagiste est critiquée, ou qui campent le décor de l'habitation coloniale. Les personnages décrits y sont représentatifs du système esclavagiste. Je confronte alors ce monde de conteurs à l'univers romanesque de Simone Schwarz-Bart, Maryse Condé, Joseph Zobel, Xavier Orville et Patrick Chamoiseau – *Ti Jean l'horizon*; *Pluie et vent sur Télumée Miracle*; *Moi, Tituba sorcière noire de Salem*; *Le cœur à rire et à pleurer*; *La Rue Cases-Nègres*; *Le corps absent de Prosper Ventura*; *Le papillon et la lumière* –, en me demandant de quelle manière le monde du conteur a pu permettre de moduler ou de renouveler ce genre romanesque.

L'écriture des romans du corpus, qui s'inspirent pour la plupart aussi de pans de notre Histoire, est guidée par plusieurs concepts de la littérature antillaise. Plusieurs théories

esthétiques conditionnant leur réception, ainsi que diverses idéologies s'articulent entre ces œuvres. Dans ces œuvres, qui appartiennent à la littérature écrite en français, l'inspiration provient du réel antillais. Les romanciers exploitent l'univers moral et psychique aux Antilles: "le roman antillais permet à leur auteur d'analyser de l'intérieur, différents aspects de la personnalité antillaise" (Théodore, 1999: 91)

L'analyse des personnages du conte et de ceux de ces romans, ainsi que des techniques romanesques choisies par ces auteurs peut-elle nous éclairer sur les confluences et les interférences entre les deux genres? Quelles sont les incidences du conte sur le roman: peut-on dire qu'il se renouvelle? Ce sont les questions auxquelles nous nous efforcerons de répondre, après avoir d'abord souligné les caractéristiques du conte traditionnel antillais.

Le conte: miroir d'une société coloniale

Pour mieux comprendre l'essence du conte créole antillais, il faut se plonger, quelques siècles en arrière dans la période esclavagiste, aux Antilles. En effet, les esclaves déportés d'Afrique n'ont pu ramener avec eux qu'un bagage culturel: leurs coutumes orales. Le conte antillais puise ses sources dans le conte africain, récité par un griot. En Afrique, et en particulier dans les sociétés de mémoire orale, d'où proviennent les esclaves arrivés aux Antilles, la transmission de la culture se déroule à l'oral. Il s'agit d'une littérature profane, sans généalogie de héros, initialement connue des griots. Ces conteurs sont des personnages importants, quelquefois même, il s'agit de prêtres vivant à la cour. Ces histoires sont spécifiques à chaque ethnie. En Afrique, le déroulement du conte suit un rituel: le public d'adultes et d'enfants est d'abord rassemblé autour du conteur, à côté d'un feu, et uniquement la nuit. Symboliquement la nuit est associée à la mère, à la fécondité. Alors, dire les contes la nuit, c'est un peu comme disperser une semence. Le conte est un enseignement moral qui rappelle les fables à plusieurs titres, en ce sens où les personnages sont une allégorie, car la morale apporte un enseignement. Or, à leur arrivée aux Antilles, les ethnies sont mélangées. Le public des griots devient homogène et l'ethnie disparaît à cause du mélange des races et des cultures.

Aux Antilles, le conte est lié au contexte esclavagiste. La récitation du conte est le moyen de se rappeler son histoire, son pays: ses origines. Cependant, les symboles, les références culturelles utilisées en Afrique ne se retrouvent plus: le conte africain est alors adapté à la réalité. Les Africains n'ont pas la possibilité de se regrouper et cette littérature orale perdure, circule de plantation en plantation. Les contes sont récités lors de veillées. Elles se déroulent à la campagne, car les conteurs sont des cultivateurs. Les conteurs accordent beaucoup d'importance au moment où ils récitent les contes. Ainsi, s'ils sont racontés la nuit, c'est pour ne pas bouleverser l'ordre des choses. Aux Antilles, il est impossible de réciter un conte le jour, car les esclaves ne peuvent se réunir que la nuit, et il est interdit de les dire la journée. Le conte est en relation avec la magie et la

fécondité. Répondre à des devinettes, ou dire la fin d'un conte équivaut à sortir la clarté de la nuit, à dévoiler la vérité.

Le conte est dit, à l'origine, en créole. C'est le résultat du croisement de plusieurs langues, le français, le hollandais, et de langues africaines. On peut aussi les retrouver dans les veillées mortuaires, devant la maison du mort. Nous en avons un exemple, lors de la veillée mortuaire de monsieur Médouze. En voici le récit effectué par le jeune José Hassam: "il y avait un homme – c'était lui, le maître conteur – qui les disait debout, tenant une baguette à l'aide de quoi il mimait les allures de toutes les bêtes, les démarches de toutes sortes de gens" (Zobel, 1984: 101). Après l'abolition, ces veillées se déroulent à la ville, dehors, "autour de la vieille dâ qui fait partie de la famille. [...] On se blottit contre la dâ. Elle aussi a un peu peur! Elle sent le vétiver, le ricin, le tabac. C'est délicieux" (Georgel, 1963: 9).

Selon Vladimir Propp, analyste précurseur des contes merveilleux, ce qui permet d'étudier un conte ce sont les fonctions, c'est-à-dire "l'action d'un personnage, définie du point de vue de sa signification dans le déroulement de l'intrigue" (Propp, 1970: 31). Il en établit une liste de trente et une. Suite aux travaux de Propp, Brémond (1973) met en place une structure du récit qui comprend trois parties qui se rapprochent de la théorie de Vladimir Propp. Il propose de concevoir le conte comme une série consécutive de séquences, séries de faits qui vont se suivre, les unes les autres, jusqu'à l'aboutissement de la quête. Dans son analyse, il présente d'abord une situation initiale qui met en scène le héros, le cadre spatio-temporel avant le manque. Ensuite, il y a la formulation du manque: il constitue le nœud de l'action. C'est la situation intermédiaire de l'intrigue dans laquelle le héros s'engage dans une quête qui lui est parfois confiée comme une mission. Il devra surmonter des épreuves avec l'aide d'adjuvants et, ou, d'objets magiques, tout en affrontant des ennemis qui nuisent à sa mission. Enfin, le récit se termine par une situation finale, soit la résolution du manque. Le manque est comblé, la mission est réussie et le héros est récompensé.

Plusieurs contes de notre corpus, sont construits à partir d'un manque. Le héros doit combler un manque, et le plus souvent, il s'agit d'un manque de nourriture. Nous avons un exemple dans le recueil de Thérèse Georgel, avec le conte *Cynelle*. Personnage éponyme, elle vit avec ses sept frères. Mais un jour, elle n'a plus de feu, donc aucun moyen de cuire la nourriture. Elle part en chercher et rencontre la diablesse qui lui en donne avec en échange une promesse. Les frères tuent la diablesse, mais ils se trompent: c'était sa fille. La diablesse revient à la charge et vend à la jeune fille des peignes. Les frères sont changés en moutons. Cynelle rencontre le Roi qui l'épouse. Au château, Cynelle affronte la diablesse qui le jette dans un puits, car elle veut dévorer les moutons, mais un domestique sauve Cynelle qui retrouve le Roi.

René Ménil et Aimé Césaire ont effectué une étude sur le thème de la faim (Césaire & Ménil, 1942). Le propos conjoint de ces deux hommes débute de manière ironique par la formule introductrice des contes *il était une fois*, qu'ils reprennent tel un refrain. Si

cette expression est ironique, c'est qu'au lieu de proposer une vision merveilleuse du quotidien antillais, ils proposent à leur tour une vision panoramique des sources du conte créole antillais. *Il était une fois* est donc une formule douce, enchanteresse qui introduit dans le monde des contes, des légendes, soit le monde merveilleux. Dans les contes débutant par cette formule, la fin est heureuse, le héros devient riche, devient roi: il gagne une renommée. Or, à la relecture des contes, Aimé Césaire et René Ménil ont constaté que le merveilleux (qui vient du latin *mirabilia*, choses étonnantes, admirables caractérisées par le surnaturel, la magie, la féerie) n'est pas le constituant primaire des contes "Il était une fois, une fois de malheur, une fois de misère et de honte, un homme noir accroché à la terre noire" (Césaire & Ménil, 1942). On y retrouve plutôt un descriptif de la misère; misère sociale, familiale, voire même affective, avec toutes leurs conséquences. Une de ces conséquences est la faim. Les auteurs insistent bien sur ce manque de nourriture: "c'est un peuple qui a faim" (Césaire & Ménil, 1942). La faim est un des moteurs des intrigues dans le conte créole.

Ils évoquent également la peur: la délation a été un moyen d'obtenir la liberté, qu'importent les dégâts que cela provoque. Pour eux, contrairement au conte français, le merveilleux antillais se constitue de la peur, de la faim et de la misère: "Et voilà qui révèle le mécanisme secret du merveilleux. Quand l'homme écrasé par une société inique cherche en vain autour de lui le grand secours, découragé, impuissant, il projette sa misère et sa révolte dans un ciel de promesse et de dynamite" (Césaire & Ménil, 1942). Ce mélange est détonnant, mais reste en cohérence avec la société esclavagiste de l'époque. Aucun esclave n'a les moyens de subvenir à tous ses besoins vitaux.

Dans le corpus de contes, nous retrouvons également des contes à visée historique, comme *Légende du vieux Malvan*, *Kubila*, ou encore *Nèg né malhéré*, recueilli par Thérèse Georgel, où le conteur propose plutôt une frise historique de la société. Ils reconstituent, de manière chronologique, l'histoire des Antilles: l'arrivée aux Antilles, la révolte des esclaves, l'organisation de la société après l'abolition.

Lafcadio Hearn reprend un des vieux contes de la ville de Saint-Pierre, au début de XXème siècle: *Colibri*. Le thème évoqué est celui de la révolte. Colibri et son tambour se trouvent face au Cheval, au Bœuf, au Poisson-Armé, serviteurs fidèles du Bon-Dieu. Il se retrouve face à Dieu, lui-même. Colibri se révolte contre l'ordre établi; seul Crapaud est son allié. Mais il est anéanti par Poisson-Armé. Ce dernier lui coupe la tête et récupère son tambour. Chaque personnage est en fait la représentation d'un acteur essentiel du système esclavagiste. Le Bon-Dieu est la représentation symbolique du béké. Il dirige une belle plantation et adopte un comportement souvent paternaliste, plus que dans la réalité. Le Crapaud est un homme pauvre, mais il possède un tambour. Cet instrument symbolise la liberté et la culture. Le Colibri, personnage contestataire, est avide de liberté. Le mulâtre est l'esclave qui travaille jour et nuit. Le macaque est lourd et féroce, envieux et parfois ridicule. Le chien est le militaire, souvent général ou capitaine,

proche du lion. Cet épisode n'est pas sans rappeler la révolte menée par l'esclave Romain, à l'origine du soulèvement des esclaves en 1848.

Chez Thérèse Georgel, dans la *Légende du vieux Malvan*, le personnage principal éponyme est donc Malvan, un vieux colon. Il vit de manière aisée: il est propriétaire d'une habitation et est détenteur d'esclaves qui lui ont construit une belle demeure: "autour de lui, tout ce qu'une vie de labeur avait pu créer, avait été fait: son habitation solide, en pierres de taille apportées à dos d'esclaves grands bassins de marbre, moulin à bœufs, allée de palmistes, de mahogany" (Georgel, 1963: 11). C'est un homme d'un caractère invincible, mais il est surtout "le plus méchant des planteurs antillais" (p. 11). La situation initiale de ce conte est problématique: le vieil homme n'accepte pas la mort. Il refuse de mourir en plein sommeil et cherche à échapper à la mort. C'est pourquoi il fait seller son cheval pour partir en guerre contre la mort. Ainsi, la quête narrée ici est inhabituelle. Le vieil homme recherche l'éternité. Le point dramatique de l'action est son arrivée dans le village d'esclaves. Il y rencontre ses anciens serviteurs à qui il a donné la mort. Ce sont des victimes maltraitées. Elles portent des "marques d'étrivières, de friction de pimentade salée, fers aux pieds" (pp. 12-13). Le conteur exprime de manière très significative leur sentiment quand il évoque leurs cris pleins de malédiction. Et l'utilisation du présentatif *c'est moi* donne un caractère authentique: c'est le témoignage historique des voix qui n'ont pu être entendues auparavant. Ces voix d'outre-tombe lui rappellent ses maltraitances: le vieillard se voit à travers le miroir des âmes des esclaves. Cette atmosphère en toile de fond est macabre.

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A la lumière d'une lecture rétrospective, nous comprenons que ce récit est le rêve éveillé du vieux planteur qui lutte contre la mort: il s'agit du passage entre la vie et la mort. A la situation finale, le vieillard, comme ses esclaves, est emporté par la mort. Il ne paraît plus invincible ou immortel tel que le conteur le laissait entendre, ou comme il voulait le croire lui-même, car il se réveille plein d'espoir. La mort de l'homme atteste de sa quête inaboutie. La structure du conte pourrait rappeler celle qui consiste à présenter la faute suivie de la quête. Cette dernière serait vue comme le rachat tardif de sa faute. Le conteur s'inspirerait des théories néo-platoniciennes, tel dans le récit d'Eros et Psyché. La vie du colon est certes bien pleine de richesse, mais il est responsable de plusieurs meurtres d'esclaves. Il souhaite être récompensé dans sa mort, cependant les symboles choisis par le conteur démontrent le contraire. Le cheval est associé à la nuit, au temps et il est porteur de la mort. Il peut symboliser la barque de Charon, qui, dans sa fonction psychopompe, était chargé d'effectuer le voyage des âmes. Sur son cheval à robe blanche, tel revêtu de majesté, il est sublimé. L'animal est un moyen d'accéder au Ciel. Or, pour ce mourant, cette image est plutôt la représentation de son psychisme inconscient: ce colon veut être accueilli au Ciel comme un héros. Mais comme il ne vivait que pour l'apparence matérielle, il est puni. Ici, cette jument est un mauvais présage, celui de la mort, de la géhenne; elle est donc rattachée au monde du bas, celui du feu. La sentence est annoncée: le vieil homme demeurera en enfer. Son âme erre, c'est une mauvaise

mort: "La jument blanche n'est jamais revenue à l'écurie. Elle a gagné l'enfer avec son cavalier; il mourut sans fermer les paupières" (p. 13)

Deux autres contes, *Kubila*, et *Nèg né malhéré* mettent en scène le nègre. Ils apportent une réponse à la fois étiologique et historique à la condition sociale du nègre. Si dans le premier, nous avons un homme âgé, ancien esclave, sans âge précis (car il ne le connaît pas lui-même), dans le second, c'est un être sans âge précis qui en est le personnage principal, mais son portrait dénote une maturité de l'âge. Ce dernier est mis en compétition avec le mulâtre et le béké, car, ils sont invités par le Bon Dieu qui, par le biais d'un cadeau, souhaite donner à chaque individu une chance d'accéder au bonheur. Cet homme n'a pas de prénom. Par son absence d'identité – disons le malheureux – il représente un type, une classe sociale. Le vieil homme, lui, s'appelle Kubila.

On pourrait dire que ces deux contes retracent l'Histoire de l'esclavage aux Antilles. En effet, c'est ce que nous lisons, dans la suite des éléments spatio-temporels de l'histoire de Kubila. Le cadre spatial y est multiple. Il épouse les divers lieux fréquentés par le vieillard: d'abord l'Afrique où il est né puis le bateau qui l'amène en terre d'esclavage: "on les avait débarqués à la pointe Simon, dans une île hérissée de montagne: la Martinique [...] on l'avait dirigé vers le Sud, à la baie des Anglais" (p. 15). Durant sa vie, il a connu la 2^{nde} République puis la Révolte, à l'origine de l'abolition de l'esclavage en 1848. Quant au malheureux, il est apparemment un affranchi. Toute sa vie, Kubila a été fidèle à son maître, ce qui ne l'a pas empêché de répondre à l'appel vital des bois. Il a marronné chaque fois qu'il en avait la possibilité afin de se sentir vraiment libre: "De temps en temps cependant, cette vie régulière l'ennuyait. Il aspirait à courir la forêt, à prendre la route" (p. 16).

Kabila reste fidèle à son identité de nègre et à sa relation filiale avec l'Afrique et ses croyances: il porte jusqu'à sa mort son amulette. Les références géographiques et culturelles apportent du poids au récit. Le vieillard est représenté comme un symbole de culture, de sagesse. C'est une mémoire vivante, même si la narration de sa propre vie est décousue: "Il soliloquait continuellement, égrenant des souvenirs qui revenaient dans sa vieille mémoire fatiguée. Quand on avait entendu ses bavardages pendant six mois, on retraçait à peu près sa vie" (p. 14). Si sa mémoire lui fait défaut, ce n'est que le signe du temps qui passe. Il n'a pas souhaité sa liberté et la refuse quand son maître la lui donne: "Il préférerait rester esclave, attaché à l'habitation, comme la terre, comme les pierres, sauf son marronnage une fois l'an" (p. 17).

Pour le malheureux, la période historique est postérieure à la libération des esclaves en 1848. Ce nègre est le personnage principal d'un conte étiologique qui explique la création du monde ainsi que la répartition des races, en particulier celles que l'on retrouve durant la période esclavagiste aux Antilles. Le conteur expose la répartition des compétences intellectuelle et manuelle de chaque race. A la situation initiale, chacun se pré-

pare pour cette belle journée. Le rendez-vous semble capital. Le conteur insiste particulièrement sur les activités du nègre: peut-être parce qu'il en est un et qu'il ne connaît pas les pratiques des autres, ou qu'il n'a jamais été à leur service pour le découvrir.

Contrairement au béké et au mulâtre, le nègre prend le temps de vivre et il préfère s'acquitter des tâches alimentaires en début de journée, alors que les deux autres commencent par se baigner. Il prend son petit déjeuner, se lave rapidement le visage, avant de soigner ses orteils: "il ramena son pied près de son œil, et avec une épingle se mit à fouiller l'orteil [...], juste sous l'ongle, la figure crispée. Il parlait seul. Il jurait. Sa figure rayonna: il avait la chique; il la brandit à la pointe de son épingle" (Georgel: 23). Ce n'est qu'à cet instant qu'il se prépare à partir. Le malheureux connaît, dès lors, une série de mauvaises aventures, principalement dues à son étourderie et à son indifférence, à son manque d'intérêt pour l'heure qui tourne et au long trajet qu'il doit effectuer pour arriver au rendez-vous.

Bien que tous les personnages, le béké, le mulâtre et le malheureux manifestent leur intérêt à l'invitation, l'heure de leur arrivée est inégale. Ainsi, le béké prend toutes ses précautions pour être à l'heure. Il arrive le premier. Il sera, alors, le mieux pourvu pour réussir dans la vie, car il choisit la richesse symbolisée par une enveloppe. Après avoir exercé son charme sur une belle jeune fille, le mulâtre est en seconde position. Le mulâtre est un séducteur: son apparence physique est importante pour l'aura qu'il veut dégager. Tout son habit est choisi avec soin. Même les chaussures qui craquent ont leur importance. Dans l'imaginaire populaire, ce bruit témoigne, non seulement de la qualité du cuir, mais aussi de la nouveauté des chaussures. Le nègre, lui, n'est pas soucieux de l'heure. Il prend le temps de vivre. Il est plutôt blasé. C'est lui qui arrive le dernier, bien longtemps après le dessert, et après ses concurrents. Ces derniers ont déjà choisi leur cadeau: le béké a obtenu la richesse et le mulâtre, l'intelligence. L'effort du malheureux est peu récompensé. A la fin du conte, de retour chez lui, il va découvrir le contenu du dernier cadeau: une grosse caisse qui contient des outils nécessaires au rude travail de la terre agricole. C'est à ce moment qu'il comprend son malheur.

Alors que dans le récit de vie de Kubila, mort de vieillesse à la fin du conte, nous avons une frise chronologique de l'Histoire des Antilles, en la période esclavagiste, ici, la vie du malheureux fournit la réponse à la question sous-entendue dans le titre du conte. Le nègre de ce conte est responsable du malheur social, de l'échec des autres nègres des Antilles. Son manque de ponctualité et de sérieux, son retard au rendez-vous donné par le créateur, lui a coûté une place reconnue dans l'échelle sociale.

Les esprits sont aussi un thème récurrent. Le diable et la diablesse sont des personnages propres à l'univers merveilleux, magico-religieux antillais. Ils sont souvent représentés. Ils font partie du fonds populaire merveilleux caractéristique de la société d'Habitation. Dans le conte *Barbe Bleue* (Georgel: 59), le diable est le jeune homme venu enlever la jeune naïve à sa famille. On le retrouve aussi dans le conte *Ti Pocame* (Georgel: 40); dans ces deux cas, le diable est l'homme qui punit. Il renvoie à l'adage populaire que

l'on ressasse aux enfants, lorsqu'ils ont fait une bêtise: le diable va te manger. La diablesse est, elle aussi, présente. Quand Cynelle (p. 72) fait sa rencontre, elle accepte de lui donner le feu qu'elle vient chercher, mais, en échange, la jeune fille, en acceptant de lui rendre service, manque de perdre la vie: la diablesse venait lui sucer le sang chaque soir, afin de lui ravir sa jeunesse. La diablesse a parfois le rôle de la marraine, celle qui remplace la mère. Mais son apparence physique la trahit: elle enlève sa peau comme une robe, elle porte un sabot de bouc, elle mange les enfants. Ainsi présentée, c'est son appartenance au monde surnaturel qui est mis en valeur. Tous ces êtres sont communément nommés zombis. Le zombi, est le personnage légendaire de la nuit. Il est aussi nommé soucougnan, bèt à man hibè. Lafcadio Hearn le définit comme: "un mot plein de mystère, même pour ceux qui le créèrent... Le zombi vous trompe sous l'apparence d'un compagnon de voyage, ou même sous la forme d'un animal" (Césaire & Ménil, 1942).

Dans d'autres contes, le diable représente l'oppresseur, le colon aux pouvoirs puissants. Le parallèle effectué entre le maître d'habitation et l'être de la nuit montre comment la force exercée par l'oppresseur est malsaine, destructive. Toutefois, alors que le registre merveilleux suppose que le lecteur accepte la présence et le déroulement de ces phénomènes, le registre fantastique, lui, introduit le mystère. Cependant, ces deux genres peuvent se côtoyer dans un même récit. Et lorsque c'est le cas, la frontière entre ces deux genres est difficile à discerner. Le conte *Scholastine* (Georgel: 105) en est un parfait exemple et il se déroule selon les étapes étudiées par Tzvetan Todorov (Todorov, 1971: 29). Nous y retrouvons d'abord une situation de départ qui semble vraisemblable: Scholastine est une servante au service de son maître et sa maîtresse, propriétaires d'une habitation. La jeune femme est chargée de porter le déjeuner de son maître, qui travaille dans les champs. Elle est souvent surprise par les capacités extraordinaires de son maître qui peut labourer, tout seul, des hectares de terre. Puis un événement étrange qui modifie cette situation, car un jour, elle arrive en avance, et surprend le maître faisant rentrer dans son ventre des cochons noirs alors qu'ils labouraient le champ à sa place. Scholastine se confie à sa maîtresse, qui ne la croit pas. Elle organise un déjeuner plantureux. Mais la jeune femme fait durer le service, malgré les recommandations du maître. La jeune femme ne se rend pas compte des conséquences: le danger imminent. Car, malheureusement, un nouvel événement précipite le dénouement: le maître n'a pu contenir l'ouverture de son ventre. Les cochons se sont précipités sur les deux femmes. Enfin, la situation finale qui suscite le malaise du lecteur.

La fin du conte est un mystère. Tout comme l'a été le personnage éponyme Scholastine, la fin du conte laisse le lecteur perplexe: qu'est devenu le maître? Ainsi donc, merveilleux et fantastique sont des thèmes très proches, mais le fantastique se caractérise par le doute qui plane à la fin d'un récit, par un fait non expliqué. La disparition inexpliquée du maître de maison est un événement qui perturbe la rationalité du lecteur alors qu'elle est introduite au milieu de faits parfaitement réels: la vie de trois êtres humains

sur une habitation. Nous hésitons entre une explication naturelle selon laquelle le maître serait parti de l'habitation à cause de son chagrin; ou encore serait-il disparu dans le monde surnaturel, emporté par le charme des cochons qu'il élevait secrètement? Cette dernière solution a plus de mal à être admise par un esprit rationnel. Nous rejoignons la pensée de Jean-Luc Steinmetz: "Le fantastique s'applique à cerner l'étrangeté, à la décrire et, au besoin, à en rechercher la cause, car il estime qu'elle est un scandale pour la logique dont il se veut implicitement le tenant" (Steinmetz, 1990: 8).

Le thème le plus récurrent est celui de la ruse. Ti-Jean, le Lapin, sont les personnages qui sont les plus rusés. Aimé Césaire et René Méné, dans leur article commun, affirment que l'un des moteurs de la narration du conte antillais est la faim. Alors, afin de combler ce manque, les personnages du conte ont recours à la ruse. Ina Césaire, anthropologue, écrit que: "la fortune attend celui qui agit contrairement à la morale en vigueur. Encore une fois, dans le conte de Ti-Jean, la réponse sociale à la pauvreté est la débrouillardise et la ruse, mises au service d'un évident arrivisme." (Césaire, 1978: 41)

Les solutions proposées par le conte créole sont des solutions empreintes de malice: tel est le cas dans *Colibri* (Hearn, 1932: 26) ou tout autre conte où apparaît Lapin. Ce dernier profite de la faiblesse de ses adversaires pour parvenir à ses fins. Il se joue de ses adversaires en déployant son intelligence et son agilité. Il s'oppose à des personnages plus lourds, moins agiles, moins intelligents, tels l'éléphant. Rusé, il triomphe toujours. Il symbolise l'esclave qui prend sa revanche en jouant au Maître les tours dont il rêve. Dans le conte *Un tour de Compère Lapin*, (Georgel: 147) à force de compliments et de flatteries, il abuse de la confiance de Compère Mouton et lui fait prendre sa place pour recevoir le soufflet de Compère Léphant. Pour Jacques-Stephen Alexis, le Lapin est le mulâtre. Il est vêtu d'un complet blanc, a fait des études et parle en français. Il refuse la loi commune et ne veut pas travailler. Il est au-dessus de la masse servile. Mais bien qu'il méprise les faibles, il déteste aussi les puissants. Peut-être agit-il ainsi pour éveiller la colère et l'esprit de révolte des faibles. Cette opposition entre un être faible mais malin et un être fort mais bête et la victoire du premier sur le second rappelle l'affrontement entre David et Goliath dans la Bible.

Ces auteurs ne mettent pas en avant le côté épique, mais plutôt la pugnacité du héros. Le conte est un lieu où les belligérants sociaux, maître et esclave, se livrent bataille. Le vainqueur est celui qui parvient à utiliser ruse et débrouillardise. Le conte est une réponse sociale à l'état de misère dans lequel vivent les esclaves. La survie dépend d'une ambition forte, car les contes célèbrent un héros qui vit hors de la société, marginal, et qui parvient à gravir l'échelle sociale, grâce à son intelligence. C'est la victoire du génie sur la force. Ainsi dans la morale des contes de Thérèse Georgel, Lapin sort victorieux de ces épreuves. Il en est de même pour le jeune garçon rusé, tel Tit Pocame qui défie le Diable en faisant pousser des orangers avec des graines magiques. Ce garçon fait preuve de qualités morales telles que le courage, la compassion, la maîtrise de soi, contrairement à Lapin. Alors, même si leur statut social est au départ inférieur, leur ruse les

amène à surpasser les règles, à se propulser dans un avenir reluisant. Ina Césaire explique cette attitude par un refus de paternalisme: “le voyage du héros dans le monde non socialisé, [...] est un refus de tout paternalisme et de toute pitié” (Césaire, 1978: 41), en ce sens où il refuse d’être pris en charge par les autres. C’est une façon pour lui de nier ce qu’il n’a pas lui-même mis en place pour sa survie.

Le rôle du conteur est déterminant face au public. Il doit maintenir l’attention de l’auditoire. Il se met souvent en scène à la fin des contes, et atteste de la véracité du récit: “J’étais sous la table. Et je mangeais les os” (Georgel: 78) Le conteur doit travestir ses paroles pour se rendre incompréhensible au Maître. Dans le contexte esclavagiste, la morale du conte est axée sur la réprobation des fautes et mise en valeur de la ruse et l’intelligence. La réaction, l’attraction du public au conte dépend souvent de l’attaque du conte. L’échange entre ces deux pôles du discours est un moment agréable. Le plus souvent, le conteur cherche aussi à faire rire son public par des jeux de mots, des répétitions. Pour indiquer qu’un personnage doit effectuer un long trajet, il dira: i maché, i maché, i maché: i chéma! Cela fait rire le public et, seul l’auditoire, peut comprendre le message. Tout ceci participe également à établir la fonction phatique du discours dans une communication, c’est-à-dire, à garder le contact avec le public. Le conteur est un porte-parole: “Admis, toléré par le système esclavagiste et colonial, notre conteur est le délégué à la voix d’un peuple enchaîné, vivant dans la peur et les postures de la vie” (Chamoiseau & Confiant: 22). Il est donc le génie du Verbe.

Aujourd’hui, les contes sont dits en français, par opposition à la langue créole, qui, autrefois, maintenait l’auditoire à son passé et reflétait la rencontre de l’Afrique et des Antilles, ce qui a d’ailleurs donné naissance à la première culture métissée. Dans cette nouvelle présentation écrite des contes, l’essence même du conte disparaît pour laisser place uniquement à une trace écrite: la transcription des contes de madame Georgel ne fait pas état du début traditionnel du conte. Les appels lancés au public par le conteur *yé krik yé krak! Yé mistikrik! Est-ce que la cour dort?* n’apparaissent plus. Le lecteur ne peut écouter les mélodies du conteur lorsqu’il lit le conte. Même si le chant se retrouve dans quelques récits tels *Cynelle* ou *Pimprenelle*, l’ambiance n’est pas la même. Les contes de notre corpus nous offrent une critique de la société esclavagiste puisque dominé/dominant sont souvent représentés. Les personnages sont des animaux personnifiés et ils représentent un type psychologique ou un personnage de la hiérarchie des colonies, ou des humains ou encore des êtres surnaturels. Ils représentent symboliquement la société et ont été adaptés à la société colonisée. Ils expriment sa vie, ses révoltes: ils révèlent le mental des colonisés. Mais ces contes ont subi l’influence du type merveilleux européen. Au contact de la société caribéenne, le héros et l’univers se modifient. Le monde et les personnages se transforment. L’impossible devient facile, les obstacles cèdent, les petits sont faibles, mais ils prennent leur revanche. Cependant, la psychologie proposée n’est plus l’opposition entre bon et mal, mais plutôt débrouillard contre puissant. Le conte traduit aussi les rapports de hiérarchie socio-politique dans la

société coloniale. Ainsi, nous pouvons retenir que le conte détient un message subliminal une critique sociale masquée que l'auditoire doit mettre à jour. Etudier le conte antillais, c'est donc pénétrer l'univers créole et se pencher sur la place occupée par la parole dans cette société. Le conteur aide à transmettre des valeurs ainsi que l'attitude de résistance; il aide à la prise de conscience de soi.

Le roman: à la croisée de l'oral et de l'écrit

Les auteurs du corpus constituent le canon de la littérature antillaise de langue française. Ils exposent dans leur roman la mouvance à laquelle ils appartiennent: roman rural pour Joseph Zobel, charnière entre négritude et antillanité pour Simone Schwarz-Bart, créolité chez Maryse Condé, antillanité pour Xavier Orville, et antillanité plus créolité pour Patrick Chamoiseau.

Le roman de Zobel est le premier qui inscrit la vie rurale au centre de la littérature antillaise. Avec José Hassam, nous avons un aperçu de la vie à la campagne, dans les années 30, moins d'un siècle après l'abolition de l'esclavage. *Pluie et vent sur Télumée Miracle* est écrit autour d'une saga familiale féminine. Télumée est élevée par sa grand-mère Reine Sans Nom. Devenue adulte, et jeune maman, elle défend son bonheur familial après la mort de son amour de jeunesse, Elie. Maryse Condé nous fait revivre le parcours d'une esclave entre l'île de la Barbade et la ville de Salem où elle devra suivre son maître. Son retour chez elle se termine tragiquement, car elle y sera pendue.

L'histoire de Ti Jean est la réécriture du conte: il part à la conquête du soleil, avalé par la Bête. Le roman est le support d'un voyage initiatique entre la Guadeloupe et l'Afrique, afin de retrouver l'essence de l'identité caribéenne. *Le corps absent de Prosper Ventura* est un roman policier où la quête d'un cadavre se transforme en conte merveilleux, aux contours poétiques latino-américains. Chamoiseau écrit un dialogue initiatique philosophique entre un jeune papillon et son maître, qui apprend à ce dernier à devenir adulte au milieu d'une ville, dans laquelle les lumières artificielles détruisent inexorablement les papillons.

Les confluences et les interférences entre le roman et le conte se retrouvent dans les thèmes développés ainsi que dans le mode d'écriture. Les trames des romans du corpus illustrent l'idéologie développée par les auteurs. Les courants littéraires de la négritude et antillanité ont mis l'accent sur le rapport racial-social et intellectuel, car les auteurs qui s'y référaient, présentaient le monde rural, berceau de la culture antillaise. Il est donc normal pour ces romanciers que la campagne soit le décor de leur roman.

Tout comme dans les contes, dans le roman antillais le lieu de la description est celui de la vie rurale. Chez Joseph Zobel, le titre indique d'emblée au lecteur la thématique du roman: la vie des descendants d'esclaves. L'histoire est celle de la propre enfance de l'auteur, à la Martinique, à la campagne, dans une commune du sud de l'île: Rivière-Salée. Dès les premières lignes, le lecteur est plongé dans le quotidien simple, sans aisance matérielle ni jouets mais ardu, de la vie de m'man Tine, la grand-mère de José

Hassam; c'est elle qui assure son éducation, car sa mère est partie travailler à la ville, la capitale, Fort-de-France, afin d'assurer un avenir meilleur, un avenir plus reluisant à son fils.

Le champ lexical de la nature, dans l'incipit du roman, nous livre le lien maternel qui unit le jeune garçon au monde rural qui l'entoure. Durant l'absence de sa grand-mère, c'est la campagne qui prend le relai: on y découvre presque un lien de tendresse. Le décor y est le monde rural; dès le début de roman, le lecteur y est plongé avec les mots champs de canne, ânes, mangue, goyave, icaque, igname. Ici, et surtout à cette époque, la culture de la canne est l'activité économique prédominante. Les usines assurent le rayonnement des communes qui détiennent un fort potentiel agricole. La canne à sucre est le premier produit du terroir qui assure le fleurissement de l'économie de l'île. En effet, suite à l'abolition de l'esclavage, la population noire, descendant des esclaves, n'a guère le choix: n'ayant pas suffisamment appris à lire, ces premiers descendants ne peuvent que travailler dans les champs de canne, maintenir la propreté et le ménage dans les anciennes habitations. Hommes et femmes sont des travailleurs acharnés. La coupe de la canne demande une vaillance à rude épreuve, car il faut braver, non seulement les intempéries, mais aussi la plante elle-même protégée de feuilles bordées d'épines coupantes comme un rasoir. La canne à sucre ne se révèle qu'après une longue lutte, sous un soleil de plomb et/ou la pluie. La majorité de ces descendants est employée dans les champs de cannes. Ceux qui ont plus de chance, de connaissances, peuvent obtenir une place à la ville. Se rendre à l'école est une pratique qui se met en place au début du XXème siècle.

Dans ce monde rural, les coutumes authentiques rythment la vie quotidienne. Ainsi, la pratique du conte en est une qui est bien ancrée. Le conte est dit la nuit, car, comme nous l'avons écrit plus haut, les esclaves n'avaient pas la possibilité de se réunir le jour. On retrouve les veillées de contes, lors des veillées mortuaires. Nous en avons plusieurs exemples dans les romans du corpus. Ils nous permettent de comprendre l'organisation de cette cérémonie qui se découpe en différentes strates: strate humaine, spirituelle et verbale. La strate humaine est composée des participants vivants, membres de la famille, voisins, amis, venus soutenir moralement les proches du défunt. Ces hommes et ces femmes ont une part active dans la soirée. Chez Zobel, c'est par le regard du jeune enfant empreint de naïveté qu'est décrit ce groupe: "cela ressemble vaguement à une fête, mais quelques personnes, dont m'man Tine ont des airs qui m'empêchent de me sentir gai" (Zobel, 1984: 98).

La veillée mortuaire est aussi un moment de partage: la mort ne fait pas oublier les besoins vitaux. Ainsi, le décès de Reine Sans Nom est certes un événement douloureux, mais il peut revêtir une part de joie, non pas morbide, mais tout simplement le bonheur de se retrouver pour honorer la mémoire d'un être que l'on a apprécié de son vivant: "les gens commençaient d'affluer pour rendre hommage à Reine Sans Nom. On apportait des tasses, des verres, des marmites, du café grillé, des légumes pour le

bouillon de l'aube" (Schwarz-Bart, 1972: 181). La strate spirituelle est constituée, non seulement par les prieurs, venus effectuer le rituel religieux avec la récitation des litanies, de la prière *De profundis*, mais il est aussi constitué par la présence du défunt lui-même. Ce dernier effectue le lien entre le monde des vivants et celui des morts. Il est le point de jonction entre ces deux univers. La veillée mortuaire est aussi le moment où les croyances magico-religieuses sont utilisées, activées, actualisées, car le monde tout autour (gestes, bruits, animaux) est analysé et interprété: "juste après la dernière pelle-tée, nous avons tous pensé qu'elle allait nous mouiller de ses regrets, car des nuages volaient très bas sur le cimetière" (p. 186). C'est l'occasion pour tous les vivants de s'interroger sur leur vie, leur mort. La mort de l'être cher ramène l'assistance à sa propre condition mortelle: "nous mettions en balance le poids des morts et celui des vivants et l'incertitude était grande" (p. 183).

La strate verbale est centrée sur les paroles du conteur. Après le mort, c'est lui qui occupe le second rôle. Toute l'assemblée est suspendue à ses lèvres. Le rôle du conteur est multiple. Il participe à la communion spirituelle entre les vivants et les morts. C'est par lui que les vivants accèdent au mystère de la nuit, au mysticisme. Son rôle est aussi d'effectuer une oraison funèbre, en évoquant les bons souvenirs vécus avec le mort, ses bonnes actions, ses goûts, des anecdotes sur le défunt. L'assemblée autour de Reine Sans Nom se souvient de sa beauté, du présage qui lui avait été lancé dès son plus jeune âge: "elle deviendra un arc-en-ciel et marquera l'azur" (p. 184). Pour la mort de Médouze, le narrateur insiste sur la manière dont, non seulement le conteur, mais aussi l'assistance entière, fait remonter de manière ironique, les habitudes, le portrait moral du défunt: "Devinez donc le mauvais dessin de Médouze! Parce que Médouze voulait pas que nous, ses frères dans le boire et le déboire, nous héritions son champ de cannes du Grand étang!

- Son vieux canari fêlé, ajoutait une voix.

- Son vieux pantalon défoncé, une autre voix." (Zobel: 101)

Le rire permet ainsi d'adoucir la peine.

Enfin, le conteur permet de conjurer le sort qui se manifeste par la mort, le défunt, en célébrant la vie. Cela est présenté dans la veillée de Reine Sans Nom, lorsque Man Cia prend la parole. Son éloge, une antiphrase, fait naître l'ironie et la complicité avec le lecteur: "Je frappe ma poitrine devant Reine Sans Nom et je dis: il y en a dont la vie ne réjouit personne et il y en a dont la mort apaise les humains... voici une belle pierre dans ton jardin, n'est-ce pas la Reine?" (Schwarz-Bart: 184)

La première interférence est la référence au passé esclavagiste. Maryse Condé raconte la vie de Tituba, esclave par amour. Le roman de Simone Schwarz-Bart, *Pluie et vent sur Télumée Miracle*, est l'histoire d'une généalogie de femmes, après l'abolition. Cette œuvre est une fresque de la société coloniale, et l'occasion pour le lecteur de découvrir le portrait héroïque de Télumée: le titre du roman est construit par analogie. Télumée

est en dépit d'un contexte parfois difficile voire tragique, un miracle de la vie, une femme miraculeuse.

En second lieu, le monde des esprits y est aussi évoqué, lorsqu'il s'agit de faire état des croyances populaires. Ainsi, dans le roman de Télumée, quand Jérémie tombe amoureux de Toussine, ses amis pensent qu'il est "sous l'emprise de la créature maléfique entre toutes, la Guiablesse, cette femme au pied fourchu qui se nourrit exclusivement de votre goût de vivre, vous amenant un jour ou l'autre, par ses charmes, au suicide" (Schwarz-Bart: 15). Cette description n'est pas sans rappeler celle évoquée plus haut, dans le conte Cynelle. La personnalité des personnages principaux se révèle également à travers leur relation avec le monde des esprits. C'est d'ailleurs dans le récit de la vie de Tituba que nous retrouvons le plus d'occurrences du monde des esprits, car Tituba incarne le mythe de la sorcière. Chez Télumée, ceci est une pratique religieuse, ancrée dans les croyances ramenées d'Afrique. Ainsi, Télumée choisit le monde de la rêverie pour se créer un refuge, et Tituba est à l'écoute des esprits pour résister psychologiquement à la douleur, au malheur; c'est une résistance sociale à l'ordre établi dans les colonies esclavagistes; une résistance religieuse face aux pratiques des maîtres. Ces deux femmes ont une forte personnalité. Ti Jean n'est pas en reste: il est à la fois esprit et humain, de par sa filiation. Il est le fils de Wadamba, grand esprit de la forêt. C'est le roman d'une aventure fantastique qui se déroule entre deux mondes: le réel et les ténèbres.

Les auteurs poursuivent la réflexion sur l'écriture de l'identité antillaise et nous amènent à nous interroger sur le "rapport métalittéraire avec le livre en train de se lire" (Moude-lino, 1997: 6). Dans cette région, il y a eu absence de mémoire autobiographique, les écrits historiques n'étaient établis que par le biais d'un seul point de vue. En effet, il n'y avait que les chroniqueurs, tels que les religieux qui ont consacré leurs écrits au récit de l'installation de la colonie aux Antilles. Le Révérend Père Du Tertre, tout comme Montaigne, s'intéresse plutôt à la description des sauvages caraïbes. Son récit est empreint de réalisme à la fois pittoresque et humoristique: "il oscille du mythe du Bon Sauvage aux réactions instinctives et méprisantes de l'Européen imbu de sa culture et de sa supériorité" (Corzani, 1978: 100). Cette absence de mémoire a créé un empêchement d'ordre psycho pathologique dans une société post-coloniale. On constate une difficulté du moi à se construire. Selon Frantz Fanon, ce moi empêché aurait plutôt une réponse anthropologique: "La colonisation est une négation systématisée de l'autre, une décision forcenée de refuser à l'autre tout attribut d'humanité" (Fanon, 1961: 240).

On pourrait penser que les romanciers cherchent à combler le vide historique en proposant des intrigues qui mettent en scène des personnages en quête de leur identité. A la relecture de notre corpus, nous constatons que les personnages du corpus sont effectivement en quête. En effet, tout comme dans le conte, chacun des personnages de ces romans est à la recherche de quelque chose. *Moi, Tituba sorcière Noire de Salem* et *Ti Jean L'horizon* sont deux romans de la quête de soi. En effet, le premier roman est le

récit de vie d'une femme qui entreprend la quête inlassable d'elle-même, au contact de la nature. La fin du roman est le bilan de sa vie: "il y a mon île. Je me confonds avec elle. [...] Cette constante et extraordinaire symbiose me venge de ma longue solitude dans les déserts d'Amérique" (Schwarz-Bart: 270-271). Le second, réécriture d'un conte antillais bien connu, est aussi une quête, celle du bonheur. Toutefois, Ti Jean est en mission. A travers la descente dans le ventre de la Bête, son arrivée en Afrique (sa terre de naissance) et son retour aux Antilles (lieu de renaissance), il effectue, non seulement un voyage initiatique, mais aussi un parcours symbolique de la quête identitaire. Il est en quête de la survie de son peuple, de sa propre histoire: "vaine recherche d'un chemin, sentier, signe quelconque d'une voie souterraine conduisant à la Guadeloupe" (Schwarz-Bart: 217).

En fait, dans le conte, tout comme dans le roman, la problématique clé est la poétique du moi. C'est ce thème qui parcourt toute la littérature caribéenne, ainsi que dans chacun des romans du corpus. Le lecteur y retrouve une interrogation identitaire. C'est ce qu'affirme Edouard Glissant, en ce sens où, quel que soit le sujet du roman, son mode d'écriture, c'est tout d'abord l'identité caribéenne qui intéresse le romancier: "une identité questionnante, où la relation à l'autre détermine l'être sans le figer d'un poids tyrannique" (Glissant, 1977: 484). La quasi-totalité des romans caribéens évoquent la quête identitaire. Cette quête identitaire découle de l'organisation de la société coloniale. En effet, dans le système esclavagiste, l'esclave est un moyen économique pour que son maître obtienne du profit. Il n'est pas considéré comme un être humain. De ce fait, toute l'Histoire de l'homme antillais est à conquérir: "l'idée de l'unité antillaise est une reconquête culturelle. Elle nous réinstalle dans la vérité de notre être, elle milite pour notre émancipation" (Glissant, 1977: 26).

Cependant, beaucoup de lecteurs et d'auteurs trouvent que ce thème de la quête de soi est lassant. Or, parmi les auteurs du corpus, il y en a deux qui se distinguent: Xavier Orville et Patrick Chamoiseau. Ils s'interrogent plutôt sur les comportements contemporains. Dans *Le corps absent de Prosper Ventura*, le voyage de l'âme sert de prétexte à l'analyse des mentalités ainsi que de la conscience des foyaux, les amis de Prosper. Ce voyage de retour à l'île natale de Cuba est à la fois physique et cosmique. Chez Chamoiseau, l'œuvre est un dialogue entre deux papillons de nuit, à propos de l'attraction inexorable par la lumière dégagée par les lampadaires de la ville. C'est aussi un dialogue entre un Sage, le vieux papillon, et un jeune, qui va être initié. Il y a donc un échange en un Maître et son disciple. Chamoiseau écrit ce texte sur le thème de la liberté de penser, liberté d'être. Et cet échange philosophique entre les deux protagonistes permettra au jeune papillon de devenir lui-même "un papillon de majesté" (Chamoiseau, 2013: 91). C'est le vieux papillon qui veut justement s'éloigner de la ville, car elle diffuse une atmosphère négative. Il s'y dégage des graisses dégoûtantes dans les cuisines des Big mac; les lumières artificielles créées par l'homme leur font les animaux et

les tuent, les gyrophares des ambulances sonnent trop fort. La ville est un lieu de pollution lumineuse et culinaire. Et il y a d'autres types de pollution: pollution sonore. Il y a une vision négative du milieu urbain. La ville représente un danger. C'est pourquoi le romancier amène son lecteur à s'interroger: faut-il rester soi-même, ou se laisser aveugler par la modernité?

Renouveau du roman

A cet instant de notre réflexion, plusieurs questions se posent à nous. Tout d'abord, quel est donc le vrai genre de des ouvrages de Chamoiseau et d'Orville? *Le papillon et la lumière* est un texte qui laisse le lecteur perplexe: est-ce un roman? Un conte? Cette écriture emprunte des formes au conte, parce que l'ouvrage n'est pas véritablement un roman. C'est une espèce de dialogue philosophique. Mais au départ on a l'impression que c'est un conte philosophique. Le lecteur a des difficultés à définir le statut, de cette œuvre. Chamoiseau s'inspire des contes soufis et particulièrement des contes philosophiques du libanais Khalil Gibran, notamment *Le Prophète*. C'est ce que confirme Liliane Fardin dans son étude critique sur *Le papillon et la lumière*: le dialogue entre ces protagonistes est "nécessaire à la progression d'une parole dialectique favorisant la connaissance" (Fardin, 2016: 72).

L'œuvre d'Orville est empreinte de poésie, de chronique. Le récit de la disparition du corps de Prosper Ventura est parsemé d'émotion et de sensibilité. Ce fait divers tragique ne l'empêche pas d'évoquer le coup de foudre de Bonheur pour Ludivine: "c'était un paradis amélioré. [...] Il eut envie de lui offrir des cascades plus les cinquante-trois églises de la Martinique, plus les pierres à tonnerre dans lesquelles se tiennent enfermés les cheveux de la lune" (Orville, 1993: 98). Ces romans sont construits à partir d'autres genres, tels que la poésie, la chronique, le conte philosophique. Alors, le recours à d'autres genres est-il signe de renouveau?

Pour conclure nous dirons que dans ces contes, le conteur a le souci de préserver la mémoire. Les romanciers partent en quête de leur identité, d'une part, mais aussi, ils veulent la préserver, ainsi que tout le patrimoine qui lui est lié. Mais, certaines caractéristiques du conte se retrouvent dans le roman actuel. Ce genre côtoie aussi la modernité: nous y retrouvons une écriture polymorphe. Le romancier serait-il également un passeur de culture qui pousse ses lecteurs à s'interroger pour parvenir à la quête d'eux-mêmes?

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MARITIME VIOLENCE SHAPED THE CARIBBEAN

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Introduction

Violence in the Caribbean is nothing new; it has always been part of Caribbean history. Violence has forged nations of people whose skin pigmentations, hair textures, languages, and religious beliefs attest to the migrations of workers that were forced, coerced, manipulated, relocated, and abandoned into this part of the world. Modern day violence that we think of as motivated by austerity measures, economic imbalances, racial divisions, cultural disagreements, language conflict, and religious difference owes more to an inherent violent history and the perpetuation of patriarchal hegemony than any of the single factors at play in local contexts. Yet, media outlets highlight local problems that are consequently discussed at length in the streets and blamed for sparking isolated confrontations. These localized disagreements can consequently be condemned and dismissed by the authorities under the guise of them being random acts of violence, perpetuated by problematic individuals or criminal groups. By keeping us focused on compartmentalized acts of violence and assigning individual culpability, the patriarchal state does nothing to address the orchestrated and continued violence endemic to its very existence. This is intentional.

Maritime violence helped to form modern Caribbean society. Yet we rarely acknowledge this in our historical or political discourse and we do not encourage our children or young scholars to study it in schools and universities. Instead we accept romanticized versions of Caribbean piracy in Disney films and we hawk nautical-themed souvenirs and comic tee-shirts in our gift shops. It is time for a reality check. There is no doubt that maritime societies performed a critical role in the formation of Caribbean networks of trade and settlement, and the cultural forms of violence that were endemic to these societies in the age of sail naturally affected the ideologies that these networks were built upon. As such, the following paragraphs present some of the most common forms of violence within the seventeenth and early eighteenth century maritime communities as a prompt to re-evaluate our accepted notions of where modern-day violence comes from. The sources that inform this paper have been collated from first-hand accounts of life at sea based on logbooks, witness testimony, and personal letters written by the people who worked and lived in these violent communi-

ties in an effort to take agency back from the authors of constructed narratives that either dehumanize sailors or frame their acts of violence as romantic fantasy.

Violence makes people work

Repeated testimony in court records between 1620 and 1750 refer to the proliferation and violence of impressment, the maritime practice of coercing workers into service. One deponent recalls how he was taken by a press gangs in 1660:

I met four press-Masters... they took hold of me, two under my Arms, and another two under my Hams, and lifted me upon their Shoulders, and carry'd me about three hundred Yards...they heav'd me from their Shoulders, over the Wharf, cross the Boat-thaughts, which was about five Yards high; and had not Providence preserved me, they had killed, or else crippled me (Angelo & Carli, c.1667: 26).

The same deponent relates a different experience with another press gang in 1662:

No sooner we came to an Anchor, but a Press-Boat came on Board us ... they ty'd a Rope about my Waste, and with a Tackle hoisted me; making a Noise, as if I had been some Monster; and lower'd me down upon the Main-Hatches (Angelo & Carli, c.1667: 26-27).

Other deponents talk about being beaten with sticks, tied with ropes, grabbed in the night, and duped into going aboard (HCA 1/99: 11). Working sailors with no personal wealth to buy their way out of the situation and no say in determining recruitment policies had no choice but to accept the situation as normal. It was just another hard fact of life that a majority of the lowest ranking crew, like sailor David Creagh, were “kept in the Service by force and violence” (HCA 1/13: 108).

Violence asserts authority

Ubiquitous violence aboard sailing vessels, either in the guise of discipline, piratical activity, or local squabbles, led to high death rates at sea. Tyrannical captains and superior officers made repeated physical threats to those working under them, e.g., threats to cut a sailor's ears off for lack of compliance with orders (HCA 1/99: 24; HCA 1/99: 98) and one Quartermaster's threat to throw a sailor overboard because he woke him up (HCA 1/52: 124). One sailor reports how he “was in continual Fear of his Life” (HCA 1/99: 618) owing to the violent treatment he received at the hands of his own captain. Threats of personal violence were simply a part of daily life for most sailors occupying the lower ranks.

Furthermore, evidence indicates that these were not idle threats. Archival records include various testimonies of physical violence including torture and imprisonment, beatings with bare hands and various maritime instruments, broken bones, teeth knocked out with forceful punches to the face, and sailors left unfit for duty for months after receiving severe beatings. Beatings also frequently resulted in death, e.g.,

the captain who was put on trial (and acquitted) after he “took a cane of moderate size...and gave the Deceased two or three Blows about the Head and Shoulders” (HCA 1/99: 8) and “The Petition of a woman who prosecuted a master of a ship, for beating her son to Death” (HCA 1/101: 225). Actual records of bodily harm and death in the archival records refer to the actions of superior officers more commonly than battles at sea.

In addition to the harsh treatment that sailors received from their own superiors, ship-board violence was a consequence of capture by foreign or pirate vessels. Capture often led to a continuation of cruel and unusual punishments such as the pirate attack in which one victim is described, “his throat was cut and belly burst so that his bowells came out” (HCA 1/52: 137). Other testimonies describe sailors being burned with lighted matches (HCA 1/9: 3), blindfolded and hung by rope (HCA 1/9: 15), cut around the anus (HCA 1/99 Jamaica 1738-1739), and even having sexual organs twisted (HCA 1/99 New Providence 1722), or cut off and stuffed into the mouth (HCA 1/99 Agostinho, July 8, c.1721, 4). Suffice to say, living aboard autonomous sailing vessels that maintained the networks of trade around the early colonial Caribbean required great mental and physical strength. Workers were subject to repeated threats and acts of physical violence for which there was little chance of recourse, remedy, or retribution.

Violence keeps social order

In addition to the cruel and unusual violence that sailors suffered at the hands of captors and their own tyrannous officers, they were also subject to corporal and capital punishment under naval law. Rules aboard ship were harsh and punishable by a range of inventive sanctions up to and including death, e.g., Edward Collins was forced to wear a basket of shot around his neck for an hour to make him confess to the stealing of personal items (HCA 1/9: 83), Edward Abbot was lashed 40 times “furiously & violently....about the face, back, head & shoulders” for asking for bread, a punishment for which he died three weeks later (HCA 1/9: 137-8), and an unnamed sailor accused of attempting to jump ship “was put on Shore on Some uninhabited Cape or Island [with] a Gun Some Shot a Bottle of Powder, and a bottle of Water to Subsist or Starve” (HCA 1/99: 109).

Indeed, the scope of potential offenses and the energy with which punishments were administered led to a 1749 revision of the Naval Articles of War in Britain that described acceptable punishments for different types of infractions. As part of this revision process, captains were reminded that punishments should never be assigned “without sufficient cause, nor ever with the greater severity that the offence shall really deserve” (cited in Adkins & Adkins, 2008: 209). The need for this reminder highlights how much of a cultural phenomenon excessive and undeserved punishment had become by that time.

Sailors could be legally executed after being found guilty of crimes under Court Marshall, procedures which were permitted aboard ships in addition to the courts on land. Court Marshall proceedings were not an unusual occurrence in the naval fleets of the period, e.g., the logbook of the *Albemarle* refers to four separate trials in as many months between January to April 1697 (ADM 52/1: 5). These trials permitted captains and courts to pass guilty verdicts sentences of death that became a public spectacle intended to deter others. The deterrent function of criminal proceedings is confirmed by the rhetoric of the court that stipulates maximum exposure of the convicted felon to the maritime community:

Ye and each of you are adjudged and Sentenced to be carried back to the place from whence you came from thence to the Place of Execution, and there within the Flood Marks be hanged by the neck till ye are Dead, Dead, Dead.... After this you... are to be taken down and your Bodys hung in Chains (HCA 1/99: 169).

Although some scholars believe that the harsh legal code in England was more flexible in practice than in theory (Fury, 2015: 17, 71-74, 102-123), English naval law was not unique in its harsh treatment of sailors. Gage explains how contemporary Spanish ships endowed their officers “with full Commission and Authority to imprison, banish, hang and execute all delinquents” (1648: 15). In short, the international waters were replete with floating, autonomous yet repressive communities in which common sailors were the typical victims of excessive disciplinary measures intended to ensure their compliance and subordination.

Violence dissipates collective dissent

Ships officers permitted local disagreements and mandated participation in public rituals of punishment to promote catharsis. Captains turned a blind eye to petty complaints and squabbles, e.g., quarrels over private property ownership (HCA 1/99: 81), verbal complaints when ordered to duty (HCA 1/99: 26), physical fights over the pecking order (HCA 1/99: 25) and conflict over assigned sleeping quarters (HCA 1/53: 48).

Yet a more effective method of prompting catharsis and relieving the tension in the shipboard community was achieved through mandating participation in public rituals of punishment such as administering lashes. These public rituals included a punishment known as being “lashed through the company” in which men were sentenced to one or more lashes from everyone aboard the vessel, or the fleet in extreme cases. For example, as a punishment for attempting to run from the ship in Sierra Leone, one sailor “received two Lashes from every Man in the Company as a Punishment” (HCA 1/99: 45), another offender similarly suffers “2 Lashes thro [through] the Company” (HCA 1/99: 109) and “William Williams was lashed by Every Man in the Company” (HCA 1/99: 114), both for attempted desertion. Yet the punishment was also adminis-

tered for lesser offenses such as one sailor's presumed intoxication, e.g., "the Company whipped him because of his Liquor" (HCA 1/99: 159). Another punishment called "running the gauntlet" involved tying the offender's arms and forcing him at knife-point to run the length of the ship lined with his crewmates armed with knotted rope that they used to beat him repeatedly and violently as he passed, a practice abolished in 1806 (Adkins & Adkins, 2008: 215-6).

So, by selectively permitting minor conflicts among the crew and promoting cathartic release of anger in a controlled manner that also served as a deterrent, those in authority could patch up potential fissures in social order that might give rise to more collective and organized dissent directed at the higher-ranking officers and the systems they imposed.

Violence motivates the economy

Trading patterns of the early colonial era were notoriously fraught with disputes deriving from international and local politics. Many local economies were underfunded, sporadically regulated, and incompetently managed which led to a proliferation of clandestine networks that operated on bribes, nepotism, and theft. As a result, the trading vessels that functioned in these spaces were frequently involved in heated and potentially violent conflict that is often simplistically categorized as "piracy." Rather than accepting representations of a simplistic division between piracy and legitimate trade, there seemed to have existed a continuum that ranged from violent theft, through forced trade and negotiation, through coercion, to free but non-legitimate commerce that formed an important part of local colonial economies.

One letter dated 1690 seems to indicate that conflict and plunder was only a last resort for the pirates around New York who preferred substantive farming and trading over armed conflict (HCA 1/98: 47). Potential trading partners may have been initially presented with violence to motivate international trade in a context of imperial monopolies, e.g., the sailors who "burnt a towne called Meofe because the inhabitants would not come downe to traffick with them (HCA 1/53: 10), an incident when a crew encountered "the Negroes unwilling to Trade freely with him...the said Collins shot among them and killed one" (BL/74/816/m/11/36: 2), and the captain on the same voyage who settled a trading difference by seizing the master of the town and dragging him to the shore before cutting his head off (BL/74/816/m/11/36: 2).

Yet, shows of force like this may have been performative and economically strategic. Peter Leeson's work on the economics of pirate organizations (2007, 2008) indicate that mariners used violence as a form of intimidation to achieve their goals in negotiation rather than an objective in its own right, and if they could instill enough fear in their potential trading partners to achieve the upper hand, then a suggestion of violence was all that would be necessary to achieve maximal profit with a minimum expenditure in conflict (in terms of effort and lives lost). Indeed, pleading that trade was

forced was a common excuse that local town officials could claim if their complicity in contraband trade was identified, particularly if the “pirates” (i.e., trading partners) had made some public show of force.

Bicheno explains how such acts gave Portuguese towns an alibi in consensual negotiations with English traders in the early colonial period that explained “not only evading the Spanish royal tax but also saving the greater loss of time and wastage involved in sailing against wind and current to Saville” (2012: 78). Thus, if most local officials and traders were willing accomplices, as Bicheno suggests, then the shows of violence that seem to define a modern concept of piracy were no more than expected customs of trade negotiations in the context of the early regional economies.

Conclusion

In short, violence is nothing new; it has always been part of the formative maritime history of the Caribbean. It was customary in the social practices of recruitment and maintaining order that were recreated in port settlements. It was endemic to the trading practices of the port authorities that in turn expanded and gave rise to the local governments. It was also foundational to the networks that helped motivate the autonomous economies of Caribbean nations. In short, violence was a powerful force in the making of Caribbean and wider American societies and its inherent association with social disorder and the forceful establishment of hierarchical institutions forged the economies and ideologies that these regions are built on.

If we wish to understand modern-day manifestations of Caribbean violence, we must acknowledge the legacy of our maritime history, and in so doing we must also acknowledge that endemic institutional violence is a cornerstone of local government in our region. This is not to say that we accept nor perpetuate such violence, but rather that by initiating a discourse in which we educate ourselves about traditions of institutional violence, we might learn about how petty squabbles and public displays of punishment perpetuate our collective compliance and subordination.

If we can acknowledge, understand and critique the complex and authentic history of maritime violence by including it in our educational curricula and agendas for social action rather than domesticating it into innocent fun packaged for our tourists and softening it into fantasy for our children, then we might learn more about the sources and persistence of violence in our Pan-American history, which in many ways has paved the way for our current subordination to anti-democratic politicians and the globalizing forces of corporate domination.

Then it might be time for mutiny.

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**RECLAIMING THE PRE-COLONIAL
TO IMAGINE A POST-COLONIAL IN THE
CREOLE LINGUISTICS OF THE GREATER
CARIBBEAN AND BEYOND**

AFRICAN INFLUENCES ON THE ATLANTIC CREOLES: EVIDENCE FROM CRUCIAN ENGLISH LEXIFIER CREOLE

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This article is based on a study that seeks to replicate and expand the survey done by Faraclas (1990) in which he demonstrated the structural similarities between the languages of southern Nigeria and the Atlantic Creoles. Faraclas limited his work to taking inventories of features, and thus was not able to provide more than a very few examples of the presence of the 93 core features in the languages surveyed. Additionally, he was not able to include any other variety of colonial era English lexifier Atlantic Creole besides Nigerian Pidgin (Naija or NP) in his study.

The research reported on in this article provides concrete examples for all of Faraclas' 93 core features from Nigerian Pidgin itself, as well as from a subset of the 12 Nigerian Pidgin substrate languages examined by him. In most cases, this subset is restricted to Yoruba and Obolo for which examples have been obtained for virtually all of the 93 core features. In the case of certain features, however, such as those having to do with pronouns, full examples from a larger subset of substrate languages have also been provided.

The major contribution of this study, however, does not involve the substrate sample itself, but instead involves the Atlantic Creole sample, which in the present work does not only include Nigerian Pidgin, but also includes Crucian, the English lexifier Creole spoken on the island of St. Croix. Both Holm (2000) and Aceto (2003) observe that in St. Croix and the rest of the northeastern Caribbean, speakers of the colonial era English lexifier Creoles have had more exposure to Standard varieties of English than in any other region of the Afro-Atlantic outside of North America. While some might argue that Faraclas found many typically West African features in Nigerian Pidgin mainly because Nigerian Pidgin is spoken primarily in West Africa by West Africans, our survey demonstrates that many of the same typically West African features are also found in a variety such as Crucian. Thus, Faraclas' case for substrate influence is strengthened.

Our comparison of Crucian simultaneously with Nigerian Pidgin and two of Faraclas' sample of West African languages, Yoruba and Obolo leads to the conclusion that substrate factors play at the least an equally important role in the emergence of the

Atlantic creole languages as do universals, superstrates, monogenesis and other factors. The results generally indicate that structural continuities from West Africa are still present in contemporary Crucian. And, despite the fact that some creolists feel that Crucian (St. Croix English lexifier Creole) is not a creole language due to massive decreolization (Prof. Arnold Highfield, personal communication), Crucian retains a considerable number of grammatical structures that typify both Atlantic Creoles and a large number of Benue-Kwa languages, and, therefore, should be considered to be a dialect of Afro-Atlantic English lexifier Creole. Our comparison of the grammatical features of three languages of the Benue-Kwa sub-branch of Benue-Congo and Nigerian Pidgin with Crucian show striking similarities at almost every level of linguistic structure. The features that typify Benue Kwa languages and Nigerian Pidgin in Faraclas' work are widely observed in our Crucian corpus. Our conclusions are summarized according to 15 feature groups, each treated separately in the following paragraphs.

Verb classes

In the Benue-Kwa languages, Yoruba, Igbo and Obolo, verbs are minimally classified into a high toned class and a low toned class, sometimes with one additional tone-defined class attested. The basic tone carried by a verb determines the suprasegmental pattern found over the verb phrase in which it is found. While the classification of verbs in Nigerian Pidgin can be done on the basis of tone, and while the suprasegmental patterns found over verb phrases are determined by the tone associated with the Nigerian Pidgin verb, the classification of verbs in Crucian on the basis of tone is less straightforward. Despite the fact that verbs in Crucian can be found carrying high pitch and low pitch, their suprasegmental behavior seems to be determined more by the general intonational and stress contours of the sentence than by any tone associated lexically with an individual verb, as demonstrated by Faraclas and Ramirez (2006). This is one of the few feature groups that we consider in this work where Crucian does not seem to pattern in a clear way with both Nigerian Pidgin as well as with the Niger Congo substrate languages.

Copulas

Most Benue-Kwa languages have more than one copula. Despite the widespread assumption that creole languages tend to have no copulas, NP shows a complex copula structure with different copular lexemes. NP has an identity copula *nà*, an existential copula *dè* and a negative copula *bì*. In Yoruba, Igbo and Obolo, there is also more than one copula and the different copulas in each language include an identity copula and an existential/locative copula. Crucian and Nigerian Pidgin copulas are very similar in function to those found in the Benue-Kwa substrate languages. Both Crucian

and Nigerian Pidgin have more than one copula, including an identity copula and an existential/locative copula and a highlighter. Crucian also has a negative copula.

Serialized verbs

Yoruba and Obolo and most other Benue-Kwa languages use serialized verb constructions; the verb ‘take’ is used to show instrumentality; the verb ‘give’ is used to introduce indirect objects; ‘come’ and ‘go’ are used with a locative function; and the verb ‘pass’ is used to show comparative degree. Serialized verbs in Crucian and Nigerian Pidgin are substantially similar to those found for the Benue-Kwa substrate languages. Both Crucian and Nigerian Pidgin have serialized verb constructions, use the verb ‘take’ to denote instrumentality, and use the verbs ‘come’ and ‘go’ with a locative function. While in Nigerian Pidgin the verb ‘give’ is used to introduce indirect objects and the verb ‘pass’ is used to express comparative degree, we were not able to find examples of such uses of ‘give’ and ‘pass’ in our Crucian corpus. Table 1 summarizes our findings for verb classes, copulas and serialized verbs.

Table 1 Verb classes, copulas and serialized verbs

Features	Crucian	Nigerian Pidgin	Yoruba	Obolo	Igbo
Verb Classes:					
1. Marked by pitch	+/-	+	+	+	+
2. High pitch class	+/-	+	+	+	+
3. Low Pitch Class	+/-	+	+	+	+
4. Other class	+/-	+	+	+	+
Copulas:					
5. More than one	+	+	+	+	+
6. Identity copula	+	+	+	+	+
7. Negative copula	+	+	+	+	+
8. Other copulas	+	+	+	+	+
Serialized verbs:					
10. Serialized verbs common	+	+	+	+	
11. 'take' instrumental	+	+	+	+	
12. 'give' indirect indirect/benefactive	?	+	+	+	
13. 'come' locative	+	+	+	+	
14. 'go' locative	+	+	+	+	
15. 'pass' comparative	?	+	+	+	

Tense

In NP and its substrate languages, aspect is more often marked than tense; future tense is more often marked than other tenses and the future marker is the same as one of the markers for irrealis modality. Also, present tense and realis modality are usually unmarked. Regarding factative tense, a verb which shows no overt tense marking and

which is not modified by any adverbials of time, is normally interpreted to be in the present tense, if it is a stative verb, and in the past tense if it is an active verb.

In Yoruba, Obolo, and most Benue-Kwa languages, tense is not prominent, with future being the only tense which is regularly marked, zero present marking, factative tense interpretation and a strong link between future and irrealis modality. In both Crucian and Nigerian Pidgin we find the same patterns: tense is not prominent, with future being the only tense which is regularly marked, zero present marking, factative tense interpretation and a strong link between future and irrealis modality.

Examples of these tense-related features can be found in Tables 1A to 1E below. In these and following tables, the following abbreviations are used to refer to sources:

Crucian:

S = Sterns (2008)

D = Various documents from court transcripts

Nigerian Pidgin:

F = Faraclas (1997)

FPC = Faraclas (personal communication)

Yoruba:

B = Bamgbose (1966)

W= Welmers (1973)

Obolo:

F = Faraclas (1984)

FPC = Faraclas (personal communication)

TABLE 1A

Feature 16: Tense not prominent

Language	+/-	Source	Example
Crucian	+	S: 42	<i>I see she.</i> I see her 'I see/saw her.'
Nigerian Pidgin	+	F: 195	<i>a tink (se) ìm go.</i> I think (that) s/he go 'I think/thought (that) s/he goes/went .'
Yoruba	+	B: 92	<i>ó rí.</i> s/he see .it 'S/he sees/saw it.'
			<i>ó shòro.</i> it be.difficult 'It is/was difficult .'
Obolo	+	F: 61	'Most Obolo verbs are NEUTRAL for tense and do not have any tense marking.'
			<i>i-tap ubok i-ge ikpa.</i> s/he- take hand SERIAL- write book 'He/she wrote/writes with his/her hand.'

TABLE 1B

Feature 17: Future most prominent ‘tense’

Language	+/-	Source	Example
Crucian	+	S: 43	<i>I gon hear from she.</i> I IRREALIS hear from her ‘I will hear from her.’
Nigerian Pidgin	+	F: 195	<i>a gò go tawn.</i> I IRREALIS go town ‘I will/would go to town.’
Yoruba	+	B: 29	<i>ni.o, wà á sɔnwó.</i> COPULA.FOCUS you IRREALIS pay.money ‘It is you who will pay.’
Obolo	+	F: 61	‘The future tense is the only tense which is regularly marked:’ <i>omo ma-o-ro emi n-ge íkpá.</i> s/he IRREALIS -s/he -make me I-write letter ‘S/he will make me write the letter.’

TABLE 1C

Feature 18: Zero present marking

Language	+/-	Source	Example
Crucian	+	S: 32, 51	<i>eh geh jam in Wes.</i> it have party in West ‘There is a party on the West Side.’ <i>you think I fraid you?</i> you think I fear you ‘Do you think that I fear you?’
Nigerian Pidgin	+	F: 195	<i>A tink (se) ìm go.</i> I think that s/he go ‘I think (that) s/he went.’
Yoruba	+	B: 92	<i>ó shòro.</i> it be.difficult ‘It is difficult .’
Obolo	+	F: 56	<i>ìkpá i-kùp mé ùwú.</i> letter it-COPULA.LOCATIVE in house ‘The letter is in the house.’

ABLE 1D

Feature 19: Factative tense

Language	+/-	Source	Example
Crucian	+	S: 42	<i>I see she.</i> I see her ‘I saw her.’ [+ active] > [+past] <i>eh geh jam in Wes.</i> it have party in West ‘There is a party on the West Side.’ [-active] > [-past]
Nigerian Pidgin	+	F: 195	<i>A tink (se) ìm go.</i> I think that s/he go ‘I think (that) s/he went.’ tink [-active] > [-past] go [+ active] > [+past]
Yoruba	+	B: 92	<i>ó lo.</i> s/he go ‘S/he went.’ [+ active] > [+past] <i>ó shòro.</i> it be.difficult ‘It is difficult.’ [-active] > [-past]
Obolo	+	F: 56, 113	<i>i-tap ubok i-ge ikpa.</i> s/he-take hand SERIAL-write book ‘He/she wrote with his/her hand.’ [+active] > [+past] <i>i-luk me Ataba.</i> s/he-COPULA.LOCATIVE in Ataba He lives in Ataba. [-active] > [-past]

TABLE 1E

Feature 20: Link future-irrealis

Language	+/-	Source	Example
Crucian	+	S: 26	<i>I gon hear from she.</i> I IRREALIS hear from her ‘I will hear from her.’ <i>He going tell me my tint too dark.</i> He IRREALIS tell me my tint too dark ‘He would (have the gall to) tell me that my tint is too dark.’
Nigerian Pidgin	+	F: 195	<i>a gò go tawn.</i> I IRREALIS go town ‘I will/would go to town.’
Yoruba	+	B: 28, 29	<i>ni o, wà á sonwó.</i> COPULA FOCUS you IRREALIS pay.money ‘It is you who will pay.’ <i>kó tóó lo, wón á ti gbà á.</i> let.s/he reach go they IRREALIS COMPLETIVE get it ‘Before she goes, they would have got it.’
Obolo	+	F: 61 FPC	‘The future tense is marked by the [irrealis] modal verb má ‘want’ which is followed by the subject prefix (in all cases except the first person singular) and the verb stem:’ <i>omo ma-o-ro emi <u>n</u>-ge íkpá.</i> s/he IRREALIS -s/he -make me I-write letter ‘S/he will make me write the letter.’

Aspect

In Yoruba, Obolo and most other Benue-Kwa languages, aspect is prominent, completive/incompletive is the main aspectual distinction, a reflex of a verb meaning ‘finish/done’ is used as an auxiliary to mark [+ completive], a reflex of a locative/existential copula is used as an auxiliary to mark [- completive], and factative aspect is also used to interpret aspect. Crucian and Nigerian Pidgin exhibit the very same aspectual patterns: aspect is prominent, completive/incompletive is the main aspectual distinction, a reflex of a verb meaning ‘finish/done’ is used as an auxiliary to mark [+ completive], a reflex of a locative/existential copula is used as an auxiliary to mark [- completive], and factative aspect is also used to interpret aspect.

Examples of these aspect-related features can be found in Tables 1F to 1I below:

TABLE 1F

Features 21 & 22: Aspect Prominent and COMPLETIVE/INCOMPLETIVE is the main aspectual distinction

Language	+/-	Source	Example
Crucian	+	S: 43, 44 D: Exhibit 10-654A page 5	Completive aspect: <i>I dun mek a police report an dem man yo know.</i> I COMPLETIVE make a police report and them man you know ‘I completed a police report and all that stuff, you know.’ Incompletive aspect: <i>Luisito car de park outside.</i> NAME car INCOMPLETIVE park outside ‘Luisito’s car is parked outside.’ <i>you da speak Yankee?</i> you INCOMPLETIVE speak Yankee ‘Do you speak [American Style] English?’
Nigerian Pidgin	+	F: 188	Completive aspect: À dón go. I.COMPLETIVE go. ‘I am gone/I am out of here.’ (focus on the completion of the event) Incompletive aspect: À dè go. I INCOMPLETIVE go. ‘I am going.’ (focus on the duration of the event)
Yoruba	+	B: 95 W: 345	Completive aspect marker <i>tí</i>: ó tí yé mi. it COMPLETIVE understand me ‘I get (have understood) you.’ Incompletive aspect marker <i>ń</i>, related to copula <i>ní</i>: ó ń-shishé. s/he INCOMPLETIVE.work S/he is working. ó ń-shishé l’ána. s/he INCOMPLETIVE.work yesterday

‘S/he **was working** yesterday.’

ó ti ñ ta (paper) télè.

s/he **COMPLETIVE INCOMPLETIVE** paper
before

‘S/he **used to** sell newspapers’

Obolo + F: 57 ‘All Obolo verbs occur in one of two aspects’:

FPC

Completive aspect:

n-gé íkpá í-sanga.

I-write letter-**finish/COMPLETIVE**

‘I **wrote** a letter (and finished)’

Continuative (incompletive) aspect:

n-ki-ge íkpá.

I-INCOMPLETIVE-write letter

‘I **am/was writing** a letter.’

TABLE 1G

Feature 23: ‘finish/done’ [+ completive]

202

Language	+/-	Source	Example
Crucian	+	S: 38 D: Exhibit 10-654A, page 5	<i>I dun mek a police report an dem man yo know.</i> I COMPLETIVE make a police report and them ‘I completed a police report and all that stuff...’
Nigerian Pidgin	+	F: 188	<i>à go finish.</i> I go COMPLETIVE ‘I am gone/I am out of here. ’ <i>à dɔn go finish.</i> I COMPLETIVE go COMPLETIVE ‘I am gone/I am out of here. ’
Yoruba	+	B: 32	<i>wòn jẹ ẹ ton pátápátá.</i> they eat it finish IDEOPHONE.completely ‘They ate it up. ’
Obolo	+	F: 103	<i>n-gé íkpá í-sanga.</i> 1PS-write letter SERIAL- finish/COMPLETIVE ‘I wrote a letter (and finished).’

TABLE 1H

Feature 24: Locative copula [- completive]

Language	+/-	Source	Example
Crucian	+	S: 45	<i>I deh yah.</i> I COPULA.LOCATIVE here 'I am here.'
		D: Exhibit 10-654A page 5	<i>I dey reach home.</i> I INCOMPLETIVE reach home 'I am arriving home.'
Nigerian Pidgin	+	F: 46	<i>à dé háws.</i> I COPULA.EXIST house 'I am in the house.'
			<i>à dè go.</i> I INCOMPLETIVE go 'I am going .'
Yoruba	+	B: 95 W: 345	Incompletive aspect marker <i>ń</i> , related to copula <i>ní</i> : <i>ó ń-shishé.</i> s/he INCOMPLETIVE.work 'S/he is working .'
Obolo	+	F: 56-57 FPC	'The continuative [INCOMPLETIVE] prefix is <i>ki-</i> is derived from locative copula <i>kup</i> plus the SERIAL marker <i>i-</i> ' <i>n-ki-ge íkpá.</i> I- INCOMPLETIVE-write letter 'I am/was writing a letter.'

TABLE 11

Feature 25: Factative aspect.

Language	+/-	Source	Example
Crucian	+	S: 42	<i>I see she.</i> I see her ‘I have seen her.’ [+ active] > [+completive] <i>eh geh jam in Wes.</i> it have party in West ‘There is a party happening on the West Side.’ [-active] > [-completive]
Nigerian Pidgin	+	F: 195	<i>A tink (se) ìm go.</i> I think that s/he go ‘I am thinking (that) s/he is gone.’ tink [-active] > [-completive] go [+ active] > [+completive]
Yoruba	+	B: 92	<i>ó ló.</i> s/he go ‘S/he is gone.’ [+ active] > [+completive] <i>ó shòro.</i> it be.difficult ‘It is (being) difficult.’ [-active] > [-completive]
Obolo	-	F: 56, 113	<i>i-tap ubok i-ge ikpa.</i> s/he-take hand SERIAL-write book ‘He/she wrote with his/her hand.’ [+active] > [+completive] <i>i-luk me Ataba.</i> s/he-live in Ataba ‘He is living in Ataba.’ [-active] > [-completive]

Modality

In Yoruba, Obolo and many Benue-Kwa languages, modal verbs are common, a zero subject imperative is used; the most commonly marked modality distinction is [+/-realis], with [+realis] usually unmarked but with a reflex of the verb meaning ‘come’

and phrase final *o* also used to mark [+realis], while [-realis] is often marked by a reflex of the verb meaning ‘go’. While reflexes of the verbs ‘leave’ or ‘make’ mark subjunctive in Yoruba, this appears to be only marginally the case in Obolo, where such uses of ‘make’ seem to be restricted to causatives. In terms of modality, Crucian and Nigerian Pidgin are very similar to the Benue-Kwa substrate languages. In both Crucian and Nigerian Pidgin, modal verbs are common; reflexes of the verbs ‘leave’ or ‘make’ mark the subjunctive; a zero subject imperative is used; the most commonly marked modality distinction is [+/- realis], with [+realis] usually unmarked but with a reflex of the verb meaning ‘come’ (‘go’ in Crucian) and phrase final *o* also used to mark [+realis]. Table 2 illustrates our findings for tense, aspect and modality

Table 2 Tense, aspect and modality

Features	Crucian	Nigerian Pidgin	Yoruba	Obolo
Tense:				
16. Tense not prominent	+	+	+	+
17. Future most prominent	+	+	+	+
18. Ø present marking	+	+	+	+
19. Factative Tense	+	+	+	+
20. Link future-realisis	+	+	+	+
Aspect:				
21/22. Aspect prominent and [+/- completive]	+	+	+	+
23. 'Finish/done' [+completive]	+	+	+	+
24. Locative copula [-completive]	+	+	+	+
25. Factative aspect	+	+	+	-
Modality:				
26. Modal verbs common	+	+	+	+
27. 'leave' or 'make' subjunctive	+	+	+	+/-
28. Ø subject imperative	+	+	+	+
29. [+ realis] usually unmarked	+	+	+	+
30. 'come' [+realis]	+/-	+	+	+
31. Plural final O	+	+	+	+

Voice

In Yoruba, Obolo and most Benue-Kwa languages, there is no true passive; with constructions involving impersonal pronouns, especially third person plural pronouns, or reflexes of the verbs meaning ‘catch’, ‘do’, etc. being used instead. Crucian and Nigerian Pidgin exhibit similar patterns to those found in the Benue-Kwa substrate languages: there is no true passive, with constructions involving impersonal pronouns, especially third person plural pronouns, or reflexes of the verbs meaning ‘catch’, ‘do’ being used instead.

Transitivity and objects

In Yoruba, Obolo and most Benue-Kwa languages, the distinction [+/- transitive] is largely irrelevant for verbs with verbs of motion, stative verbs, and copulas taking objects. Human destinations may not be expressed with objects, some verbs take particular objects or cognate objects, and the distinction [+/- direct] is not a very useful one in the description and analysis of verbal objects. Nigerian Pidgin, and to a lesser extent Crucian, are very similar to the Benue-Kwa substrate languages, with the distinction [+/- transitive] being largely irrelevant for verbs, with verbs of motion, stative verbs and copulas taking objects, and with human destinations not expressed with objects. Some verbs in Nigerian Pidgin take particular objects and cognate objects but this does not seem to be the case in Crucian. In Nigerian Pidgin, the distinction [+/- direct] is not a very useful one in the description and analysis of verbal objects but this does not appear to be so in Crucian. Table 3 summarizes our findings for voice, transitivity and objects.

Table 3 Voice, transitivity and objects

Features	Crucian	Nigerian Pidgin	Yoruba	Obolo
Voice:				
32. No true passive	+	+	+	+
33. Impersonal pronoun use for passive	+	+	+	+
34. Third person plural pronoun used	+	+	+	+
35. 'catch', 'do' as pseudo-passive role reversal verbs	+	+	+	+
Transitivity and Objects:				
36. [+/- transitive] irrelevant	+	+	+	+
37. Verbs of motion take objects	+	+	+	+
38. No human destination	+	+	+	+
39. Stative verbs take objects	+	+	+	+
40. Copulas take objects	+	+	+	+
41. Some verbs take particular objects	?	+	+	+
42. Cognate objects	?	+	+	+
43. [+/- direct] object irrelevant	?	+	+	+

Nouns

In Yoruba, Obolo and most Benue-Kwa languages, associative-genitive constructions and compounds are marked by special pitch patterns and a pronominal or adpositional linker is used to join two nouns into an associative-genitive construction. Gender distinctions and number specification are normally made only with [+human] nouns. Crucian and Nigerian Pidgin are quite similar to the Benue-Kwa substrate languages, with associative-genitive constructions and compounds being marked by special pitch patterns, a pronominal or adpositional linker being used to join two nouns into an as-

sociative-genitive construction, and gender distinctions and number specification normally being made only with [+human] nouns.

Table 4a summarizes our findings for nouns:

TABLE 4a

Features	Crucian	Nigerian Pidgin	Yoruba	Obolo
Nouns:				
44-46. Associative-genitive and compounds marked by pitch	+	+	+	+
47. Linker used in associative/genitive constructions	+	+	+	+
48. Gender on nouns marked for [+human] only	+	+	+	+
49. Number on nouns marked for [+human] only	+	+	+	+

Pronouns

As noted above, we used a larger set of Benue-Kwa grammars for pronouns than for the other feature groups. This larger set of grammars includes the following:

Yoruboid subbranch of Benue-Congo

Yoruba (YO): Bamgbose (1966)

Edoid subbranch of Benue-Congo

Engenni (EN): Thomas (1978)

Igboid subbranch of Benue-Congo

Izi (IZ): Meier et al. (1975)

Igbo (IG): Emenanjo (1978)

Ekpeye (EK): Clark (1969)

Cross River subbranch of Niger-Congo

Lower Cross division of Cross River

Obolo (OB): Faraclas (1984)

Ibibio/Efik (IE); Kaufman (1968)

Upper Cross division of Cross River

Mbembe (MB): Barnwell (1969)

Bendi division of Cross River

Bekwarra (BE): Stanford (1967)

Atlantic Creoles:

Crucian English lexifier Creole (CR): Sterns (2008)

Nigerian Pidgin English lexifier Creole (NP): Faraclas (1997)

Yoruba, Obolo, Engenni, Izi, Igbo, Ekpeye, Efik/Ibibio, Mbembe, Bekwarra and most Benue-Kwa languages distinguish between 6 persons in their pronominal systems, including a distinction between second person singular and second person plural. They do not show gender distinctions, even in the third person. They make an emphat-

ic/non-emphatic distinction and a subject-object distinction. While all of these pronominal patterns are found in Nigerian Pidgin, Crucian follows some of these general patterns, except that there is a gender distinction made in third person singular pronouns, and the emphatic/non-emphatic distinction and the subject-object distinction, while present, are not always maintained.

Instead of the 5 person distinction made in English (where the singular and plural forms of the second person are conflated) in Nigerian Pidgin, Crucian, and all of the Benue-Kwa languages in our sample, a six person distinction is made. The common assumption that the pronominal form *ayo* used for the second person plural in Crucian is derived solely from a non-standard English form such as ‘all a [of] you’ is put into question by our data:

Although *ayo* is also found in other English lexifier Atlantic Creoles spoken in the northeastern Caribbean and beyond, the apparently related forms *awi* used for the second person plural pronoun and especially the plural question word *ahu* ‘who (plural)’ seem to occur somewhat less commonly outside of St. Croix. In many Niger-Congo languages, the nominal prefix *a-* is used on plural pronouns. For example, in Yoruba the emphatic first person plural form is *à-wa*, while the non-emphatic form is *wa* and the emphatic third person plural form is *à-won*, while the non-emphatic form is *won*. Furthermore, in the Western Benue-Kwa languages, where only traces remain of the Proto-Niger Congo prefixed-based nominal classifying system, *a-* tends to be the most robust relic prefix, as well as the default prefix which is assigned to new items, etc. In Papiamentu, *a-* is the prefix which is assigned to many pronominals in their emphatic forms (*a-mi* from first person singular non-emphatic *mi*, *a-bo* from second person singular non-emphatic *bo*, etc.). The emergence of the *a-* pronominal prefix in Crucian and other Atlantic Creoles can therefore be said to be motivated not only by the Euro-Atlantic form ‘all a you’ but also by several different patterns found in the Niger-Congo languages spoken along the west coast of Africa” (Faraclas, 2014; Vergne, 2011).

Table 4b summarizes our findings for pronouns.

Table 4b Pronouns

Languages	Feature 50 6 persons	Feature 51 Gender not marked	Feature 52 [+emphatic/independent] distinction	Feature 53 [+/- subject] distinction
Crucian	+	+/-	+	+/-
Nigerian Pidgin	+	+	+	+
Yoruba	+	+	+	+
Engenni	+	+	+	+
Izi	+	+	-	+
Igbo	+	+	+	+
Ekpeye	+	+	+	+
Obolo	+	+	+	+
Ibibio/Efik	+	+	+	+
Mbembe	+	+	+	+
Bekwarra	+	+	+	+

Possessive adjectives

Yoruba, Obolo and most other Benue-Kwa languages have possessive adjectives for 6 persons, with gender not being marked on these possessive adjectives, and reflexive pronouns being formed with a word meaning ‘body’ and/or ‘self’, sometimes with and sometimes without an adjacent possessive adjective. Nigerian Pidgin and Crucian follow all of these general patterns, except that in Crucian there is a gender distinction made in third person singular possessive adjectives.

Table 5 summarizes our findings for possessive adjectives.

Table 5 Possessive adjectives

Features	Crucian	Nigerian Pidgin	Yoruba	Obolo
Possessive adjectives:				
54. 6 persons	+	+	+	+
55. Gender not marked	-	+	+	+
56. Reflexive with 'body' or 'self'	+	+	+	+

Determiners

In Yoruba, Obolo, and most Benue-Kwa languages, definite and indefinite articles are optional, ‘one’ is used as the indefinite article and ordinal numbers are used in cardinal compounds. All of these features are found in Nigerian Pidgin and Crucian, with the exception of the use of ordinal numbers in cardinal compounds, for which there was no evidence in our Crucian corpus.

Table 6 summarizes our findings for determiners.

Table 6 Determiners

Features	Crucian	Nigerian Pidgin	Yoruba	Obolo
Determiners:				
57. Definite article optional	+	+	+	+
58. Indefinite article optional	+	+	+	+
59. 'one' used as an indefinite article	+	+	+	+
60/61. Ordinal numbers for cardinal compounds	?	+	+	+

Adjectives and plurality

In Yoruba, Obolo and most Benue-Kwa languages, there are few or no adjectives and predicative adjectives are absent, with the use of stative verbs instead of adjectives, of associative-genitive constructions instead of adjectives, and of reduplicated forms instead of adjectives being widespread. Yoruba, Obolo and many Benue-Kwa languages often leave plurality unmarked and use reduplicated numerals to convey a distributive meaning. Yoruba, but not Obolo, uses the third person plural pronoun to mark plurality. All of these features are also found in Nigerian Pidgin. They are also present in Crucian alongside features that are more similar to those typical of adjectives and plural markers in English, except perhaps for the use of reduplicated quantifiers for the distributive, for which there was no evidence in our Crucian sample.

Table 7 summarizes our findings for adjectives and plurality.

Table 7 Adjectives and plurality

Features	Crucian	Nigerian Pidgin	Yoruba	Obolo
Adjectives and Plurality:				
62. Few or no adjectives	+	+	+	+
63. Predicative adjectives rare	+	+	+	+
64. Statives verbs instead of adjectives	+	+	+	+
65. Associative-genitive construction instead of adjectives	+	+	+	+
66. Reduplicated form with adjectival meaning	+	+	+	+
67a. Ø plural	+	+	+	+
67b. Third person plural pronoun for plural	+	+	+	-
68. Reduplicated numeral for distributive	?	+	+	+

Adverbials

In Yoruba, Obolo and most Benue-Kwa languages, there are few true adverbs, with reduplicated nouns or verbs often used instead, there is one main adposition which can be used to express multiple locative meanings and this adposition may be used with locational nouns to further specify its meaning. All of these features are also present in

Nigerian Pidgin. In Crucian these features are also to be found, alongside features that are more similar to those typical of adverbs in English, except perhaps for the use of the main adposition with locational nouns to further specify its meaning, for which there was no evidence in our Crucian data.

Table 8 summarizes our findings for adverbials.

Table 8 Adverbials

Features	Crucian	Nigerian Pidgin	Yoruba	Obolo
Adverbials				
69. Few true adverbs	+	+	+	+
70. Reduplicated form instead of adverb	+	+	+	+
71. One main adposition	+	+	+	+
72. Locative use of the main adposition	+	+	+	+
73/74. Adposition used with locational nouns	?	+	+	+

Ideophones

In Yoruba, Obolo and most Benue-Kwa languages, ideophones are onomatopoeic and often reduplicated, with some being used with particular verbs and others being used with many different verbs. Ideophones may be generated spontaneously by a speaker in certain contexts or communicative situations. These patterns are found in both Nigerian Pidgin and Crucian as well.

Table 9 summarizes our findings for ideophones.

Table 9 Ideophones

Features	Crucian	Nigerian Pidgin	Yoruba	Obolo
Ideophones				
75. Ideophones used	+	+	+	+
76. Ideophones used with particular verbs	+	+	+	+
77. Ideophones used with many different verbs	+	+	+	+
78. Spontaneous generation of ideophones	+	+	+	+
79. Reduplicated ideophones used	+	+	+	+

Sentence level phenomena

In Yoruba, Obolo and many Benue-Kwa languages, dislocation is one of the main processes by which an item may be topicalized and clefting is one of the primary means to show focus, with verbs being nominalized and put at the beginning of a clefted sentence to show verb focus. SVO word order predominates, with adverbial complements (adjuncts) usually coming after the object slot but with a restricted set of adverbials allowed to precede the verb. There is more than one negative marker and

these markers normally occur before any auxiliary verbs in a sentence. Noun phrases and sentences can be conjoined without any surface conjunction marker but and/or-type particles are available to be used as conjunctions as well. By far, the most common strategy for conjunction at the sentence level is the use of serialized verb constructions. Relative clauses are optionally introduced by a relative linker and object clauses are introduced by a reflex of the verb meaning ‘say’. Yes-no-question tags are used and question words may be compounds formed from a single question word or a particle and a noun. All of these features are also found in Nigerian Pidgin and Crucian, with the sole exception of verb focus clefted sentences for which there were no examples in our Crucian data.

Table 10 summarizes our findings for sentence level phenomena.

Table 10 Sentence level phenomena

Features	Crucian	Nigerian Pidgin	Yoruba	Obolo
Sentence Level Phenomena				
80. Yes/No tag used	+	+	+	+
81. Interrogative compounds	+	+	+	+
82. More than one negative marker	+	+	+	+
83. Conjunction optional	+	+	+	+
84. and/or conjunction	+	+	+	+
85. Relative linker	+	+	+	+
86. 'say' complementizer	+	+	+	+
87. Topic dislocation	+	+	+	+
88. Focus cleft	+	+	+	+
89. Verb focus by nominalization or reduplication	+/-	+	+	+
90. SVO order	+	+	+	+
91. SVOA order	+	+	+	+
92. SAVO order	+	+	+	-
93. Negative marker before most auxiliaries	+	+	+	+

Conclusions and implications

The result of this study generally demonstrate that in nearly all areas of their grammars, both Crucian and Nigerian Pidgin show striking similarities to Yoruba, Obolo and other Benue-Kwa languages. While significant continuity from Benue-Kwa might have been expected in the case of Nigerian Pidgin, the parallels between Crucian and Benue-Kwa are in evidence in nearly all areas of its grammar as well. It should be noted, however, that in Crucian many of the typically Benue-Kwa grammatical features found in our study coexist alongside features which are more typical of English, which is not as often the case in Nigerian Pidgin. Nevertheless, on the basis of the pervasiveness of typically Benue-Kwa grammatical features in Crucian that we have

encountered in the present study, we contend that Crucian could just as easily be considered to be a dialect of Afro-Atlantic English lexifier Creole as it could be considered to be a dialect of English.

For many speakers of the language, Crucian is considered to be a ‘broken’ form of English. We believe that the evidence presented and analyzed in this study should help to convince speakers of Crucian that their language is not a degraded form of any other language and is worthy of scholarly study. The Crucian language is rule-governed and its West African traits are reflected in its semantics, its lexicon, its phonology and its morphosyntax.

We would like to conclude this article by affirming Faraclas’ (1990) words: “As long as creolists continue to ignore or deny the influence of sustrate/aereal features in creole genesis and development, we will be hopelessly unable to do descriptive or explanatory justice to creole languages, not to mention our ability to do historic and social justice to their speakers” (p. 169).

We still have a lot of work to do.

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POLYPHONIC CREOLE DISCOURSE: AN EXAMINATION OF PHRASAL VERB CONSTRUCTIONS IN CRUCIAN

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In this paper, we provide a preliminary examination of phrasal verb constructions and their double-voicing properties in Afro-Caribbean creole grammar. We look at phrasal verb constructions in the languages of a small community of permanent and transient residents of the U.S. Virgin Island St. Croix. Phrasal verbs are interesting because they are used in highly productive constructions which consist of particles, or satellite features, that add semantic content to verbs. A phrasal verb consists of a verb in V1 position and a particle, like *out* or *away*. In the phrasal verb *take out*, the second element *out* looks like a preposition, but it is best to consider *out* a particle. One test for phrasal verb constituency is to check whether a pronoun can follow the second element in a phrasal verb. If forward movement is not allowed, the second element in the phrasal verb construction should be considered a particle (Kaplan, 1989: 152). In the previous example, *take it out* is acceptable, but **take out it* is not.

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Particles add essential semantic content and can completely change the meaning of a verb, or otherwise enhance it in some way (Rudzka-Ostyn, 2003). Particles can indicate a number of things, including duration, manner, path, and change of state. Talmy believes, “The satellites in English are mostly involved in the expressions of Path” (2007: 141). In this respect, particles in phrasal verb constructions are similar in function to verbs in V2 position in serial verb constructions, which are core grammatical features of Afro-Caribbean Creoles and their West African substrates. We argue below that particles in Afro-Caribbean Creoles shift interpretations of verbs from literal to figurative and, in some cases, render polyphonic readings of phrasal verbs that carry both literal and figurative interpretations simultaneously in a single utterance (Bakhtin, 1982: 6-7).

For the present study, we consulted the Crucian Wiretaps Corpus (CWC) to identify and analyze instances of phrasal verb constructions in Crucian (for a discussion about the composition and use of this corpus see Vergne, 2008; Corum, 2016). We note here that the CWC does not provide a monolithic representation of Crucian, nor should it

be taken as a body of text that can be used to generalize over sociolinguistic patterns of creole use in St. Croix. The discourse in the corpus is restricted to specific text types and age and gender cohorts are minimally represented. The corpus is unique, however, in that it provides examples of natural creole discourse. Most of the large corpora that exist today of language spoken in Caribbean and West African regions represent regional varieties of European lexifiers, for example the International Corpus of English Jamaica and Nigeria corpora, and do not provide a large searchable body of creole text.

A cursory search of the CWC yields an extensive list of different phrasal verb constructions. We find that the constructions contain particles that provide semantic functions to verbs. One of these functions is a change of state meaning, for example, ... *maybe he switch over B...* (CWC, 2006, *switch over*: hit 1). Particles in phrasal verb constructions were also found to provide information concerning path of motion. The particle *out* in *burst out* conveys an ‘outward path’ meaning in both Crucian and English. A durative meaning is observed in the use of *out* in the expression *hang out*, although *hang* has an inherent aspect of unboundedness, too. Some phrasal verbs are only interpreted figuratively, for example, *financially mashed up* in Crucian (CWC, 2006: *mashed up*, hit 1).

Finally, consider the verb *link* in Crucian and in English. In both languages, the verb functions without a particle to mean ‘connect’, as in, *link you with him* ‘connect you with him’ (CWC, 2006: *link*, hit 28). With an added particle, as in *link up with you*, *link you up*, or *link you back*, the meaning can shift to ‘reconnect’. Talmy (2007: 155) considers affixes like *re-* satellites, as well. Crucian prefers analytic satellites over bound derivational forms for certain verbs. In the Crucian data, we do not find instances in which speakers use affixes to add an aspectual meaning to *link*, in this case an aspectual meaning ‘connect again at some point’. Instead, particles co-occur with the verb. English also makes extensive use of free morphemes in phrasal verb constructions, but it has alternative strategies for marking aspect, as seen in the *reconnect* example above. Furthermore, when a particle is used with a verb in English, there are restrictions on the placement of the predicate’s constituents, and certain placement renders specific interpretations of a phrasal verb’s meaning. Creole continua, on the other hand, allow for flexibility of syntactic rules, multifunctionality of lexical and grammatical items, and plurality in the expression of meanings. Below, we provide a case study of *rip off* that shows marked differences between English and Crucian in these regards.

The online Cambridge English Dictionary defines the verb *rip*: “to pull apart; to tear or be torn violently and quickly: *I ripped my shirt on a nail*” (2017). In both English

and Crucian, a shift in meaning occurs to the verb *rip* when *off* is added as a particle. When the verb is used with an object, *rip* provides the ‘quick’ or ‘forcible’ meaning, whereas the particle provides the ‘remove’ meaning. In the CWC, there is a description of an event in which an affidavit was stapled to someone’s door and was reported to have been removed: *They dou rip it off* ‘They have removed it’ (2006: *rip it off*, hit 1). This is a literal reading of the phrasal verb *rip off*; note, the pronoun must be placed between the verb and the particle in both Crucian and English for this literal interpretation. When the object is not a pronoun, it can occur after the particle: *They ripped of their clothes and ran into the sea* (Cambridge University Press, 2017: *rip [something] off*). The phrasal verb *rip off* can also mean ‘to cheat’: *We got ripped off buying our new car* (Cambridge University Press, 2017: *rip off someone/something*). In the CWC, there is a context in which two speakers use *rip off* in ways that are different from the literal use of *rip off* noted above (2006: *rip* off*, hits 1-2):

Speaker a: *If he want thirteen thousand we gon rip off he head.*

Speaker b: *If you do it you got to mek it look like you ripping off my head to...*

In the conversation above, one interpretation of the phrasal verb *rip off* as used by both speakers is ‘to cheat/to rob’. Interestingly, however, the speakers use *rip off he head* and *ripping off my head* in the ‘cheat’ context in ways that American English does not allow. When a body part occurs after the particle *off* in American English, the immediate interpretation involves the meaning ‘remove’. A ‘cheat’ meaning is only vaguely understood in that construction, and it would likely co-occur with the nouns *butt/as*,: *She ripped his ass off*, but ?She ripped off his ass which would be acceptable in African American English, but probably not in most other Standard US varieties of English.

In Crucian, however, the body part appears after the particle and the intended meaning is still ‘cheat’. In addition, a second interpretation emerges simultaneously with the first in the example above: the act of robbing will result in the figurative removal of the guy’s head, thereby causing literal elimination from future activities. The ‘removal’ meaning is conveyed in the utterance because of the syntactic rules of English—when a noun phrase follows the particle, the interpretation has a literal meaning ‘remove’, and the ‘cheat’ meaning emerges due to the flexible and creative uses of morphemes and lexical items in creole grammar, which apparently allows body part terms to move forward and retain a figurative interpretation. A dialogic relationship manifests itself through this use of *rip off*, and we observe that “two voices [English and Afro-Caribbean] collide within [the utterance] dialogically” (Bakhtin, 1982: 184). Afro-Caribbean Creoles and their West African substrates are especially good at this polyphonic, multiple-voicing phenomenon, which has been framed in terms of “cultivating ambiguity” by the UPR working group on the agency of marginalized persons in the emergence of creole languages (Faraclas et al., 2016).

Our preliminary examination of phrasal verb constructions in the CWC leads us to characterize Crucian as a satellite-framed language (for an overview of typological differences between satellite-framed and verb-framed languages see Talmy, 2007; for a discussion of English prepositions vs. English particles see Shanklin, 2015). English is also a satellite-framed language, but CWC data suggest that phrasal verbs in Crucian are used differently syntactically and pragmatically than their counterparts in English. First, in the CWC we observed that Crucian expresses double voicing via placement of the direct object and the phrasal verb's free, analytic satellite. Second, there are pragmatic differences between English and Crucian that were observed in the simultaneous literal and figurative interpretations of phrasal verbs, as seen in our analysis of *rip off* and noted by Aceto (2009), which we discuss below.

One of the motivations for the present study stems from Michael Aceto's comments on phrasal verb constructions in Afro-Caribbean English-lexifier Creoles, which he believes do not originate from historical or present-day dialects of English; examples include *kiss up* 'to kiss', *wet up* 'to wet', and *cook up* 'to cook' (2009: 215). In English, the core readings are expressed by verbs, hence the absence of particles in the translations. We note that *kiss up (to)* is a phrasal verb in metropolitan Englishes, too, but it has a different interpretation than 'to kiss'; *cook up* is similar in this respect. We can find *cook up X* and *cook X up* in metropolitan Englishes, but those expressions do not mean 'to cook'. This is the shift from literal to figurative/metaphorical that was mentioned in the section above on productivity of phrasal verb constructions. In the CWC, we found uses of phrasal verbs that are like the examples from Aceto (2009). There were instances in which the phrasal verb *stab up* was used to mean 'to stab', for example. That is, *stab* did not occur in the corpus without its particle *up*. Similarly, the *rip off* phrasal verb discussed above does not occur without its particle *off*¹. *Rip off* is simply the way that speakers in the CWC reference a literal act of removal. The tendency to overtly mark a second structure in these constructions is reminiscent of aspectual marking strategies on V2 verbs in West African languages.

Particles are satellite features, and so are V2s of serial verb constructions in West African languages. Example (1) below offers a serialized verb construction in Fon, a West African language of the Gbe cluster:

1. *cuku ó lǒn tón sin xò mè gbòn flété ó nu*
dog def jump exit from room in pass.by window def edge
 'The dog jumped out of the room through the window.' (Brétière-Lambert, 2009: 22)

¹ We admit that there were few instances of these phrasal verbs in the corpus. Thus, we can only make tentative conclusions about *rip* versus *rip off* or *stab* versus *stab up* in Crucian.

Fon is a satellite-framed language. Path is lexicalized in the verb satellite *tón* ‘exit’ and Manner is lexicalized in the verb *lǎn* ‘jump’ (Brétière-Lambert, 2009: 1). In Haitian Creole, we see a similar strategy of marking the aspectual reading via a satellite. In example (2), *vini* expresses the ‘toward’ meaning in the overall interpretation:

2. w ap mennen vini
 you will lead come
 ‘You will bring in.’ (Creole Institute, 2012: text 8, line 407)

Similarly, an ‘away’ meaning in the phrasal verb *run away* is expressed via a V2 satellite ‘go’ in Afro-Caribbean Creoles, as seen below in Table 1.

Table 1 SVC *run away from him* in Four Caribbean Creole Languages

English	run	away	from	him
Jamaican	<i>ron</i>	<i>go</i>	<i>lef</i>	<i>im</i>
Papiamentu	<i>kore</i>	<i>bay</i>	<i>lagá</i>	<i>e</i>
Haitain	<i>kuri</i>	<i>ale</i>	<i>lese</i>	<i>li</i>
Saramaccan	<i>kule</i>	<i>go</i>	<i>disa</i>	<i>en</i>

Note: Table adapted from Holm (1988: 183; originally in Alleyne, 1980: 12).

Satisfactory accounts of the addition of particles to verbs in Crucian and its sister Creoles will look to both the lexifier input and the linguistic heritage of substrate influence in the Afro-Caribbean region.

Future studies of Crucian will need to assess multicausal explanations for historical and current uses of phrasal verbs that lead to complex marking and interpretation strategies. This means looking to serial verb constructions in Atlantic Creoles and their substrates and adstrates, as well as adverbials in regional varieties of European lexifier languages (see Corum, 2015 for a similar approach to the study of location marking in West African Creoles and Pidgins).

In the discussion section of this paper, we found that uses of particles in phrasal verb constructions found in the CWC resemble the functions of V2 satellites in Afro-Caribbean Creoles and West African languages. And yet, we still take note of the received wisdom in creole studies: “Verbs in series often serve semantic functions equal to adverbs or prepositions in European languages” (Holm, 1988: 183). We conclude that the form of a phrasal verb like *rip off* can be traced in part back to English, but the added particle that provides a polyphonic reading of that construction should be conceptualized as a complex discursive strategy that is part of an enduring legacy of West African influence and ongoing convergence with creole languages that are spoken

alongside Crucian varieties today, all of which contain grammatical serial verb constructions and pragmatic double-voicing properties.

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A SOCIOLINGUISTIC OVERVIEW ON LIMON KRYOL

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Introduction

Limon Kryol (LK) is an English lexifier Creole, that is, LK is a creole language spoken along the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, whose words mainly come from English, but whose grammar comes from African, European and other languages. LK is closely related to Jamaican and the other English lexifier Creoles of the Caribbean, all of which are related to the English lexifier Creoles of West Africa. In total, the speakers of all of the varieties of this Afro-Caribbean English lexifier Creole number more than 120 million, making it one of the largest and most widely spoken languages in the world today. Afro-Caribbean English lexifier Creole is also one of the fastest growing languages in the world, because it is not only being transmitted from parents to children in most places where it is spoken, but also millions of new speakers are learning the language as adults in places like Nigeria, Ghana and even London (Faraclas, 2013). As will be shown in this article, despite the fact that LK is related to a group of varieties that can be said to be thriving, LK itself can be considered to be struggling for its very existence in Costa Rica today.

In this introductory section, general geographic and demographic information concerning Limon Kryol (LK) will be discussed. More precisely, the segment starts with the geographical location of the language, an approximation of number of LK speakers, languages spoken in the Caribbean area of Costa Rica, LK constitutional status and finally, some remarks on the lack of LK instruction at any level of the educational system.

Costa Rica is located in Central America, and the country is divided into seven provinces. Limon is one of them, and is located on the Caribbean coast of the country. The province has an area of 9,189 km², and according to Costa Rica's most current population census (2011), Limon has a population of 386,862 inhabitants. Within the province there are six *cantones*, or counties: Pococi, Guacimo, Siquirres, Matina, Limon, and Talamanca. It is important to mention that most LK speakers live in the area from Siquirres to Talamanca in the South, with the port-city of Limon having the highest concentration of LK speakers.

As mentioned before, Limon has an approximate population of almost 400 000 inhabitants; however, this number is not equivalent to the actual number of LK speakers.

Limon province has a mixed ethnic population including African descended peoples, Asians, European descended peoples, indigenous peoples, and *mestizos*. LK speakers are mostly, but not exclusively, African descended. As an additional fact, during the last decades, there has been migration from Limon to the Central Valley because of better working conditions, so that the current number of LK speakers can no longer be tied to strictly ethnic or geographical factors.

Unfortunately, the most current population census (2011) did not include information about language, so that a precise number on LK speakers cannot be given. Among linguists and demography specialists, the approximate number of LK is said to be some 1.3% of all 4.6 million Costa Ricans, which is the equivalent of 55,000 speakers. This percentage makes LK the minority language with the most speakers in the country (more than those who speak the five living indigenous languages and those who use Costa Rican Sign Language [LESCO]).

There are three languages sharing territory with LK: Spanish (the official language), Cabecar and Bribri, both of the latter being autochthonous indigenous languages. The following table¹ displays general information about LK and the languages with which it coexists.

Table 1 Limon Kryol and the languages with which it coexists

Language	Number of speakers ²	Official status	Language health	Affiliation
Spanish	4,585,353	Official	Flourishing	Indo-European
Cabecar	11,000	Regional	Developing	Chibchan
Bribri	8,840	Regional	Developing	Chibchan
Limon Kryol	55,000	Non existent	Vigorous	Creole

The last aspect to take into consideration in this introductory section concerns the current governmental policy with respect to LK. Lamentably, the Political Constitution of the Republic of Costa Rica does not mention or even recognize LK as a language. As established in article 76 Spanish is the official language of the nation; however, the State is obliged to ensure the maintenance and cultivation of national indigenous languages. There is no mention of LK in the entire whole text, which makes LK invisible to most of the population of the country. Lately, a bill has been proposed to include the language in the Political Constitution. This initiative has been proposed and advanced by PROLINCA³ and some other collaborators like SITRPEQUIA⁴ from Limon.

¹ The table shows languages sharing territory with LK. The other two living indigenous languages from Costa Rica, Guatuso and Guaymí, are not included here because they do not share territory with LK.

² This number refers to the total amount of speakers in the whole country, not only in Limon.

³ Programa de Lingüística Centroamericana, Universidad Nacional.

⁴ Sindicato de Trabajadores Petroleros Químicos y Afines

Concerning language policy, it can be said that the five indigenous languages (Bribri, Cabecar, Guaymí, Buglere and Guatuso) have the status of regional languages which guarantee, at least, promotion of education and text production in their own language in their territories. In the case of LK, the lack of any political recognition as a language has affected, among other factors, the linguistic identity of LK speakers. To finish with this section, the precarious linguistic identity of LK does not allow for any possibility of instruction in LK at any level; especially taking into account that the language does not even have an alphabet, standardized writing system, or a communally accepted name.

Socio-historical overview

The aim of this section is to provide a socio-historical overview of the emergence of LK and its current situation in Costa Rica. A detailed historical synthesis on how LK arrived and took root in Costa Rica is provided. Additionally, special remarks are made on the historical process by which the people of Limón were granted recognition as Costa Rican citizens. This event changed the superstratum language from English to Spanish, which in the end modified LK not only structurally but sociolinguistically. Finally, we provide a review of the current sociolinguistic situation including the legal status of LK, its speakers and non-speakers' linguistic attitudes, domains where it is mostly used, and names given to the language.

The *hispanisation* of Costa Rica was done at the expense of linguistic diversity, reducing the number of languages spoken in Costa Rica from twelve to six (Guatuso, Bribri, Cabecar, Spanish, Limón Kriol and Guaymí). The situation is even more catastrophic when one considers that while 98% of people speak Spanish, only 1.3% speak LK and the other 0.7% is distributed among speakers of the four remaining indigenous languages.

Written historical records indicate that the first African descended people who arrived in Costa Rica came as slaves brought by the Spanish, but these enslaved peoples were not taken to the Caribbean coast of the colony. Even though the first European-indigenous contact took place in Limón, Spanish conquest and settlement of Costa Rica started from the Pacific. This was mainly a result of the high mountain barrier and harsh weather conditions that Europeans faced when trying to colonize the Caribbean part of the country. According to Duncan and Meléndez (2011: 78), Spaniards decided to reach the Central Valley via the Pacific coast which has better conditions and a flatter geography. This is the reason why the first African descended peoples in colonial Costa Rica came to Guanacaste and not to Limón. Traces of this history can be perceived in African-like complexion of some inhabitants of Guanacaste today, especially those living in Santa Cruz and Nicoya.

During that period, the Caribbean area of the country remained inhabited almost exclusively by indigenous peoples. There were some cocoa plantations in Matina which were

worked by indigenous and African descended slaves under the control of the Spanish. Besides these people, a small population of African descended turtle fishermen who came from Panama settled on the Southern coasts of Limon. Existing records (Fernández, 1921: 33) show that pirates like Edward Mansvelt and Henry Morgan, arrived at Portete, Limon, looking for gold. They reached as far as Cartago and were expelled, so they left Costa Rica and never returned. When Costa Rica gained its independence, in 1821, 17% of the population had African-descended backgrounds.

It is known that African descended slaves were constantly running away and establishing Maroon settlements on the Caribbean coast of Central America from the 16th century onwards, and that some of these maroons became intimately involved with the English pirates and other English-speaking renegades when they arrived. The English lexifier Creoles that emerged from this early contact are still spoken along the Caribbean coast of countries which border Costa Rica, such as Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras and Belize. Unfortunately, because of the lack of official documentation of African descended peoples in general and of maroons in particular in the historical record, we can only speculate about the possible emergence of English-lexified contact varieties on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica in the 16th and 17 centuries and their possible contribution to what became LK.

After Independence, the growth of coffee as the main Costa Rican cash crop made the establishment of a port for exporting it to Europe necessary. Limon port was founded for this purpose in 1854 by archaeologist and explorer Philipp J. J. Valentini (Encyclopedia Americana, 1918-1920). The government soon realized that moving the enormous amounts of coffee from where it was being produced around San Jose to its shipment point in Limon by oxcart was not practicable, and that a railroad was needed. In order to build the railroad, the government hired the Keith brothers, who, after initially employing labor from China, started to employ African descended laborers, many of whom spoke English lexifier Creoles, from the Caribbean islands, Honduras, Belize and Panama.

In 1872, the first laborers from Jamaica arrived at port Limon to work in the construction of the railway. They came looking for job opportunities, since at the time Jamaica was experiencing a crisis in sugar cane production. Despite the fact that their stated aim was usually not to stay for too long in Costa Rica, but instead to make money and later return to Jamaica, this Jamaican population gradually came to outnumber other immigrants in the area.

By the time the railway was completed, its owner Minor Keith saw an opportunity for planting bananas in Limon and founded the United Fruit Company. The weather and geography were perfect for growing the fruit and exporting it to the US. The resulting job opportunities were taken up by the already established Jamaicans, who started inhabiting the banana plantation areas established along the railroad line. Once this occurred, the English lexifier Creole used by these Jamaicans came into contact with the

English language used by those in charge of the plantations, while contact with Spanish was almost non-existent, since for most Costa Ricans, Limon remained a remote place inhabited by people of African descent.

As time passed, Jamaicans introduced every aspect of their culture to the Limon area, including food, religion, and of course, their language. In terms of infrastructure, Limon city had Victorian style buildings, theaters and many Protestant churches where influence from Jamaica, Britain and Europe could be observed. Ships took coffee and bananas to Europe and returned with silk from Paris, metal from Belgium, and other goods from the Old Continent. Antillean cuisine was easily adapted to Limon's Caribbean conditions, most ingredients were easy to find and the ones which were not were simply substituted for. As a matter of fact, the traditional dish from Limon is called *rice and beans*, a local version of Jamaican *rice and peas*. Sports like cricket, dances like the *Square Dance*, and secret lodges were some of the customs that Jamaicans added to Limon's cultural landscape.

Education and access to information was well developed in Limon. Despite the fact that the Costa Rican government established just one single public school in Limon in the year 1877 (Zapata & Meza, 2008: 66), the African descended people of the region received their education at a number of so-called *traditional schools*, which were established and managed by church members who wanted children to get an education. Classes were taught in English by Jamaican or British teachers. Their aim was to promote respect for British institutions and Antillean culture, which in a way helped preserve LK as the language spoken at home. Increasingly, advances in education brought intellectual growth to the region. According to Ross and Capelli (2003: 78), the bilingual papers published in Limon around the 1920s provided the first systematic public access to international news anywhere in Costa Rica.

Gradually, Europeans from countries such as Sweden, Germany, Finland and the UK started coming to Limon to take managerial positions in the administration of the railway and the banana plantations. Their international lifestyle and the growing prosperity in Limon soon attracted the interest of the powerful coffee plantation owners from the Central Valley of Costa Rica. It is said that upper class life in Limon at the time was much more luxurious even than that of San Jose (Ross & Capelli, 2003: 80). While banana plantations gave Limon's higher classes the opportunity for access beyond borders, the African descended peoples of the area were kept unaware of what was happening in the rest of Costa Rica, and for the rest of Costa Rica they remained simply invisible. In the end, after having exploited Limon for 40 years, the United Fruit Company moved elsewhere (Arias, 2007: 77) leaving a trail of unemployment and poverty in its wake.

Regarding language, Limon people were diglossic, they managed at least two codes, British English, used in formal environments (school, church, etc.) and LK for informal contexts (at home, with friends, neighbors, meetings, etc.). As for Spanish, its usage

was scarce during the first decades of immigration and settlement, it was used for communication with the small Costa Rican *mestizo* population who lived in Limon at that time. It can be established that LK was mainly in contact with its lexifier language, and to a much lesser extent with Spanish, native indigenous Cabecar and Bribri, Chinese, and some other Indo-European languages which came with other immigrants.

After all of these events, a political decision was made that changed not only the status of the African descended people of the region, but that of their language as well. After realizing that the zone was of importance (especially political importance) to the country and that racial divisions were getting out of control, president Figueres Ferrer decided to recognize the African descended people of Limon as Costa Rican citizens in 1949. The change was welcomed in Limon by most African descended people, who were given a *cédula* (identification card) and the other rights of citizenship. This event had its most important linguistic impact due to the fact that Limon schools were directed to adopt Spanish as their official language of instruction. This meant that the former traditional schools were to gradually be abandoned in favor of government schools and thus LK was no longer to be in contact with its lexifier language in that key context.

It is important to remark that domains for LK never included educational, administrative, official or any other empowered environment, even when in contact with its lexifier during railroad building and banana plantations. Therefore, it should be noted that the imposition of Spanish was not the unique trigger for LK's present day low status.

After obtaining Costa Rican citizenship, Limon people started struggling with learning Spanish. In first place, children who were used to speaking LK and English were confronted with an abrupt change in the educational system; suddenly, they had to be able to learn their subjects in a totally different language. Before long, parents started telling children that if they wanted to succeed, they had to learn Spanish as quickly as possible. This change in language of instruction has been one of the factors that has contributed to a high dropout rate among Limonese students, with consequential effects on the high unemployment and crime rates in Limon.

In addition, this political change brought ethnic mixture to Limon where African descended peoples, Asians, indigenous peoples, Costa Ricans coming from the Central Valley, called *pañás* (a term derived from '*Spaniards*'), and European descended peoples converged. This mixture has brought about a rich exchange among mixed families in terms of food, traditions, religion, and music; in almost every aspect of life but language. In a setting where one parent speaks LK and the other Spanish, the latter has nearly always been chosen as the native language for children, since it has not been seen as useful for children to learn Creole as their first language.

The "hispanization" of Limon has brought about a series of circumstances which have affected LK's identity. Among them, an increase in the already existing stigmatization of the language. Among the many names assigned to the language include pejorative ones like *Broken English*, *Flat English*; English variant names like *Limon English*,

Limon Creole English; the most common ones like *Patwa*; and even some debated and coined by linguists like *Mekatelyu*, *Jamaican Creole*, *Limon Taak*, and *Limon Kryol*. This latter name is spelled the way the language is written in an attempt to regularize its orthography. The name in English then, should be Limonese Creole and in Spanish *criollo limonense* which might cause some confusion with the Spanish word *criollo* commonly used to refer to typical Costa Rican cultural manifestations and lifeways instead of to a creole language. This lack of a consensus regarding the name of LK was commented upon extensively by Winkler in *Limon Creole: a rose by any name* (2003). When in the field, a linguist can face the problem of one informant calling the language *Patwa*, while within the same family another person might call it *English*.

As a defense mechanism against stigmatization, LK speakers limit and hide their use of the language, which might eventually lead to its extinction. An attitude adopted by some speakers is to deny their creole identity by claiming that LK is just a variant of English, a position which incredibly has been supported by a few local linguists. All these factors combined with the Costa Rican government's lack of interest in recognizing LK as a language, even at the regional level, have contributed to the deterioration of the socio-linguistic profile of LK.

In comparison with the rest of the English lexifier Creoles spoken along the Caribbean coast of Central America, LK seems to be one of the most underdeveloped in terms of linguistic identity, official language status, language planning and revitalization policies. It can be said that Belizean is the most empowered Creole in the area, given the fact that the majority of Belizeans speak Creole as mother tongue or second language. In Nicaragua and Panama, creole languages have the status of regional and minor languages. In contrast, in Honduras and Costa Rica Creoles are not even considered languages. LK speakers in Costa Rica lack a strong linguistic identity, caused in no small degree by the fact that LK is not officially recognized.

Over the course of its history, LK has undergone miscellaneous internal and external changes. Contact with its lexifier and the isolation lived by Limon people before they acquired Costa Rican citizenship in 1949 made it possible for them to establish their lifestyle and language on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica. The political change whereby Limon people became officially Costa Ricans has brought some improvement in different aspects of their lives, but for LK this has not been the case. Being the target of stigmatization from both outside and within, LK is now struggling against many undermining factors. Thinking of language planning and revitalization seems to be a very difficult task, if speakers of LK do not even realize that what they speak is actually a language.

The future of Limon Kryol

As explained above, the current situation of LK should be of grave concern to all who worry about language extinction. This section describes the most important scholarly

work done on LK, including the very few sociolinguistic studies undertaken to date. This is followed by an overview of some of the sociolinguistic phenomena and issues which are in urgent need of further research. Finally, recommendations are advanced concerning possible ways of rescuing LK from its present vulnerable condition.

To start, it is important to mention that most of the academic studies done on LK have been of a structural descriptive nature; in the field of sociolinguistics, however, less has been done. The most important researchers on the structural aspects of language have been Herzfeld, Winkler, Portilla, and most recently Zúñiga. Herzfeld has developed studied how the creole continuum it is reflected in LK. Her book *Mekaytelyu: la lengua criolla* (2002), describes the sociolinguistic reality of LK, referring to its origins and the socio-historical events which have affected not only LK, but Limon province as well. Herzfeld has also worked on the LK Tense-Aspect-Mood system and its relation to the creole continuum, and made a general comparison among the English lexifier Creoles spoken along the Central American coast.

Portilla has amply developed several structural descriptions of LK, among them, studies of relative and causative clauses, of vowel lengthening and tone, and borrowings and loan words adopted from Spanish. The author has also worked in producing an orthography for LK which has the objective of regularizing the way researchers write in LK. This orthography, however, has remained largely inaccessible to most native speakers. Zúñiga has recently carried out a description of the morphosyntax and phonology of the language in his grammar of LK (Zúñiga, forthcoming). Additionally, he has designed the first alphabet for speakers to write in their own language (Thompson & Zúñiga, 2017). He has carried out some studies about structural influence on LK from Spanish, a topic which has also been explored by Winkler especially in the area of morphosyntax. Over the last years, he has also studied LK language vitality and the danger of its extinction.

Thus far, research on LK sociolinguistics has less forthcoming. As mentioned above, Herzfeld (2002) dedicates a great part of her work to the description of historical and social factors which have influenced LK. Spence (1997; 1998, etc.) has conducted studies on language attitudes, linguistic identity and language status. Despite the publication of these works, neither the government nor any other agency has carried out initiatives for language planning or revitalization.

Generally speaking, it can be said that sociolinguistic work on LK has remained on paper. The lack of interest from the government, Limon outsiders and native LK speakers in recognizing that what is spoken in Limon is a language just like any other has made the task of working on language policy very difficult. Taking into account this situation, PROLINCA, which designs descriptive grammars for languages from low-land Central America, has included LK among the set of languages it studies since 2011. Under this project, René Zúñiga has been in charge of designing a grammar for LK (including phonology, morphology and syntax). Among the objectives of the project,

one is to prove that LK has a systematic set of structures and rules, which is well known by linguists, but not by speakers.

Within the project, the necessity of providing the language with an orthography, not only for linguists but for the LK speaking population, has arisen as a priority. With a native speaker (Gloria Thompson) co-authoring the work, the program created a draft proposal for an alphabet for writing in LK. After consulting with the community of speakers for them to provide feedback on the proposal, and after testing the proposed orthography with them, the final version was published in *Mek wi rayt wi langwich: Limon Kryol alfabet* (Thompson & Zúñiga, 2017). Our hope is that the new orthography will be used for instruction and materials development for primary school students. This task will ultimately depend on teachers' and principals' interest in revitalizing the language.

Since LK is not recognized as an official language, educational institutions are under no legal obligation to use it. During the process of consulting the community on the alphabet, PROLINCA members formed a local committee to initiate the process of legal recognition of LK as a language in the Political Constitution of Costa Rica, just like the indigenous languages. As the result of the hard work done by this committee, this initiative is now known throughout the country and the Congress has drafted a bill designed to change the status of LK in the Political Constitution, which is expected to be approved in the near future. This official recognition should lead to more systematic and sustained efforts for LK language planning and revitalization.

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“UNIVERSAL” OR EUROPEAN? TESTING CONVERSTIONAL POSTULATES IN AFRO-CARIBBEAN COMMUNITIES

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Introduction

The complex historic and linguistic matrix of the Afro-Caribbean has inspired linguists, especially creolists, to identify European and West African traits in the languages and cultures of the region. Their findings have ultimately contributed to the controversy regarding the existence of so-called “universal” patterns. In an effort to continue such discussion, in this article, I examine politeness and conversational routines in some Anglophone Caribbean communities, with the ultimate goal of testing the applicability of Paul Grice’s (1975) Cooperative Principle (CP) and conversational postulates.

An analysis of specific events – such as service encounters, greetings, and casual conversations –, as well as some general reflections concerning collectivism, ambiguity, and indirectness, reveal important similarities between (West) African and Afro-Caribbean communities. Moreover, communicative patterns among these speakers do not fit, but rather contradict, Grice’s approach to linguistic and pragmatic theory. In the light of such findings, it is evident that, like many frameworks concerned with language and social interaction, Grice’s model is at least to some degree Eurocentric.

The multiplicity of political, economic, sociocultural, and linguistic forces that have influenced the Caribbean throughout its history have allowed the emergence of complex communicative patterns, with features that both support and challenge traditional accounts of universality. In other words, Caribbean varieties are not exceptional, yet they show distinct features as the result of the juxtaposition of mainly¹ European and West African elements (Faraclas et al., 2015). While dominant theories emphasize European influences in the languages of the Caribbean and the Afro-Atlantic, recent findings have highlighted the significant role of West African varieties (Faraclas et al., 2014; 2015). Much of this research is focused on structural linguistic levels, such as phonology and morpho-syntax; nonetheless, I argue that these findings may be extended to include features of pragmatic behavior. To this purpose, I explore politeness

¹ There is influence from Indigenous peoples, among other sources.

and conversational routines in some Anglophone Caribbean communities, taking into consideration both European (i.e., English) and West African speech practices.

On the one hand, politeness is considered a pervasive phenomenon present in everyday interactions and an essential element of communicative behavior. Its study is concerned with a variety of linguistic strategies employed by a speaker in order to minimize threat of imposition over his/her addressee (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In general, it increases in direct proportion to a speaker's effort in either claiming solidarity (i.e., positive politeness) or showing respect to the other's autonomy (i.e., negative politeness) (Brown & Levinson, 1987). It is very much a European/Western concept, although it has been successfully applied to the study of non-Western cultures as well (Leech, 2005).

Whereas politeness is defined as a strategic behavior, conversational postulates constitute a set of rules required to hold successful interactions. Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle (hereafter, CP) states that speakers must follow acceptable patterns of inference, in accordance with four maxims:

- (i) Quantity: Say no more and no less than what is expected.
- (ii) Quality: Tell the truth.
- (iii) Relation: Be relevant to the topic being discussed.
- (iv) Manner: Avoid ambiguity/obscurity, and be brief and orderly.

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While the author acknowledges the possibility of a clash between these maxims, leading speakers to violate some of them in order to satisfy others, he argues that they are universally observed in daily encounters because they respond to speakers' expectations. Therefore, abiding by them is not an obligation, but rather a matter of being "reasonable" (Grice, 1975: 48).

Following recent research (Ameka, 2009; Faraclas et al., 2014; 2015; Fenigsen, 2005; and others), I propose that, like many theories concerned with language and social interaction, Grice's (1975) CP may have Eurocentric bias. Hence, what he considers to be "universal" may apply to only a fraction of the world's languages. In fact, most claims of universality, such as those included in Politeness Theory itself (Brown & Levinson, 1987), have been challenged with data from non-Western cultures. Even though Brown and Levinson provide a space for cultural and linguistic variation, this does not seem to be the case with Grice's CP. Therefore, a look at conversational practices in both European and non-European settings may offer useful insights.

In the subsequent lines, I discuss communicative patterns in some Anglophone Caribbean communities, and compare them with features found in (West) African languages and "standard" English. Since language-use conventions may vary across different cultural groups and settings (Wolfram & Schilling, 2016), I focus on specific communicative events, such as service encounters, greetings, and casual conversations. My analysis addresses the following pragma-linguistic and sociocultural mat-

ters: (i) the structure and functions of conversational routines; (ii) the goals of face-to-face interaction; (iii) the negotiation of meaning in verbal exchanges; (iv) individualist versus collectivist values; (v) the cultivation of ambiguity; and (vi) directness *vis à vis* indirectness.

Bargaining in West Africa

One speech event that merits discussion is the service encounter, defined as an interaction between speakers whose ultimate goal is to provide/receive a product or commodity. In the context of West African markets, however, sales encounters involve more than a mere exchange of items, as people engage actively in bargaining practices (Okolo, 2003). Unlike Western stores and supermarkets, where prices are fixed and customer-seller interactions are limited in scope, open markets offer buyers the possibility of using communicative strategies in order to negotiate a lower price. However, as Okolo observes, this also involves the negotiation of the relationship between the speakers, who are expected – though not required – to cooperate with each other.

It is important to mention that sales encounters in Nigeria (and throughout West Africa) can take place in a pidgin/creole such as Nigerian Pidgin (as in the passage below) and/or any of the local languages, and they usually start with greetings that include affective, personal, and social information. These act as positive politeness strategies to assert solidarity, and they may eventually influence the outcome of the interaction. In the next example, greetings are followed by references to the precarious economic situation, which lead to the initial exchange of offers:

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1. S: Doctor, yu kom market?
(You came to the market?)
 2. B: Yes-o. Good afternoon.
 3. S: Good afternoon.
Haw famili?
(How's your family?)
 4. B: Dem wel. Haw maket?
(They are well. How is the market?)
 5. S: Market no gud egen. Tins tu kost. Yu no si haw my shed empty?
(Market is not good any more. Things are too costly. Don't you see how empty my shed is?)
 6. B: Na wa-o-o. Pesin go fit sovaiv fo dis kontri?
(It is terrible. Can anyone survive in this country?)
 7. S: Na God go sev us. Wetin yu wan bai?
(Only God will save us. What do you want to buy?)
- (taken with revisions from Okolo, 2003: 193)

Once bargaining officially begins, the customer and seller take turns, until they reach a mutually satisfactory agreement (or until the former leaves emptyhanded). The fluidity of offers entails that goals may be modified during the course of the speech event, and thus proposals need not be sincere. In fact, Okolo describes how, at first, the seller tends to overprice the item, while the customer underprices it. Since the information exchanged is not true, this would constitute a violation of the Maxim of Quality. Nonetheless, contrary to Grice's predictions, overlooking this conversational rule does not hinder communication, but rather enables the use of various accommodation strategies between speaker and addressee, based on the interpretation of each other's utterances and intentions. Consequently, it seems to be a requirement for a successful interaction in this context.

Even though, to my knowledge, there are no recent works concerning bargaining practices in the Anglophone Caribbean, these communities do have open markets. Hence, this would be a fruitful arena for research, considering the potential influence of West African conversational patterns. For instance, salespersons in St. Croix have been found to use various persuasive strategies and consume multiple turns in order to convince customers to buy particular items (Simounet, 1990). However, it is fair to mention that the nature of the interactions in this study was not the same as the one described by Okolo (2003), since the Crucian data was obtained at liquor, jewelry, and furniture stores. In terms of context, then, markets would allow bargaining much more openly than stores, where there is usually a reluctance to change already fixed prices.

Greetings and casual conversations in West Africa and the Caribbean

Other communicative exchanges, such as greetings and casual conversations, show parallels in both West African and Afro-Caribbean cultures. In her ethnographic study, Fenigsen (2005) observes that Barbadian greetings often transcend the ritualized "good morning/afternoon/evening" typically found in English and other Western languages, since they include questions about the addressee's health, family, plans, news, etc. On the one hand, like their Anglo/European counterparts, these serve as positive politeness strategies to express solidarity, affection, and genuine care for the other. However, they are also interpersonal moves to obtain and share information. Here lies a significant distinction between Standard English and Barbadian greetings: while the former are considered mere phatic formulas, the latter act as both politeness markers and information-seeking devices (Fenigsen, 2005).

This is also the case in West Africa. As suggested by Okolo (2003), service encounters and bargaining in Nigerian markets include the exchange of greetings that often turn into longer conversations about the well-being of the addressee and that of his/her family. In addition, they may feature comments about social, political, and economic matters, clearly violating Grice's (1975) Maxim of Relation, since they may not seem relevant to the transaction itself. Nonetheless, as already shown, these actually en-

courage cooperation and negotiation, and have a positive influence over the interaction.

The nature and functions of greetings presented by Fenigsen and Okolo seem to be part of a valued cultural practice throughout West Africa and the Afro-Atlantic. In fact, Ameka (2009) notes that questions such as “how are you?” have traditionally been studied from an Anglo/European perspective, where they act as routine greetings meant to generate a short and positive answer (e.g., “I’m fine, thank you”). In contrast, he demonstrates how speakers of Ewe and other West African languages ask greeting questions with the expectation of obtaining a true – instead of a positive – answer. Rather than complying with a “universal” Maxim of Quality, such practices are associated with a desire to assert community values and strengthen in-group ties (Ameka, 2009).

The full picture: collectivism, ambiguity, and indirectness

In a previous contrastive study, Ameka (1987) highlighted the strong sense of collectivism among the Ewe and other West African groups. For instance, Ewe speakers consider that events do not affect single individuals, but rather their whole community, including ancestors and spiritual beings. Such beliefs are evident in their usage of language, since expressions of congratulations – which can be part of greeting routines – tend to have collective associations. For example, *Máwú wɔ dɔ!* ‘God has worked’ and *ɲú-wo nú-wo sé ɲú!* ‘Beings (things) around you are strong’ are commonly employed among the Ewe in response to good news (Ameka, 1987: 305-306). Conversely, equivalent utterances in English (e.g., “congratulations”, “well done”) make reference to individual speakers, thus emphasizing personal success and autonomy. While both individualist and collectivist values coexist in the Anglophone Caribbean and the Afro-Atlantic due to historical reasons, there seems to be a tendency to favor the latter (Fenigsen, 2005).

In addition to such cultural considerations, face-to-face conversations involve a dialogic process (Bakhtin, 1981) that provides a space for the negotiation of speakers’ worldviews and ideologies. This does not imply, however, that they ought to reach total agreement or come to the same conclusions. In fact, Fenigsen (2005) explains that Barbadians often end their interactions holding different interpretations of the event, since their utterances are never full or completely clear. Moreover, she states that, sometimes, the purpose of conversation itself is to obscure meaning. The latter observations point to stark violations of the Maxims of Quantity and Manner. On the one hand, Grice’s (1975) theory would predict that Barbadians offer less information than expected, thus increasing the amount of inferential work required by their addressees in order to repair any “missing” associations. On the other hand, the fact that their utterances are unclear and ambiguous poses a threat not only to the Maxim of Manner, but to the universality of the CP and its emphasis on pragmatic clarity. Does

this mean that speakers fail to cooperate with each other and that, as a result, they hold unsuccessful interactions? It seems to be quite the contrary. Grice's predictions do not hold true in this Afro-Caribbean context, since speakers actively cultivate ambiguity, and cooperation takes place as they engage in various dialogic, dialectal, and dialectical practices (Faraclas et al., 2015).

Such findings extend to linguistic expressions employed as markers of politeness. For instance, Mühleisen (2011) registers five different uses of *allyuh*, a second person plural pronoun in Trinidadian English-lexifier Creole: (i) to emphasize the plurality of addressees (i.e., inclusive use); (ii) to address one person as the representative of a group; (iii) to avoid directness (i.e., negative politeness marker); (iv) to express aggression (e.g., in 'bad talk'); and (v) to signal humor. As seen in this brief summary, these five functions seem contradictory, yet speakers manage to use and interpret them by relying on contextual factors. Furthermore, *allyuh* may often convey multiple meanings at once, since they tend to overlap.

Mühleisen observes that the ambiguous use of Trinidadian *allyuh* is similar to that of Jamaican *unu*, which is also a second person plural pronoun. She attributes these features and behaviors to various sources, all of them related to the colonial history of the region: West African languages; the establishment of bonds among African slaves during the Middle Passage; and power asymmetries as the result of the plantation system. Regarding the latter, it is known that African- and Caribbean-born slaves engaged in creative uses of language as a strategy to conceal some messages from European overseers and plantation owners. Therefore, there is no denying that ambiguity has played a fundamental role throughout the history of West Africa, the Afro-Atlantic in general, and the Afro-Caribbean in particular, and it still survives in both native and diasporic communities.

Moreover, there is evidence that linguistic ambiguity is commonplace not only in West Africa and the Caribbean, but also in southeastern Africa, specifically in Madagascar. One of the first studies to openly challenge the "universality" of conversational postulates found that Malagasy speakers generally do not abide by Grice's (1975) "Be informative" principle, related to the Maxims of Quantity and Manner, since they provide limited information and avoid any direct or explicit references (Keenan, 1976). The author explains that, in Madagascar, keeping valuable information is regarded as a source of power. In addition, she argues that this behavior responds to face-concerns, including fear of personal shame/guilt and reluctance to compromise the security and well-being of others as the result of sharing sensitive information (Keenan, 1976). Nonetheless, it is crucial to establish that the cultivation of ambiguity in these societies transcends individual face-concerns and the desire to hoard information – as explained by Keenan –, and is, in turn, related to the celebration of collectivist and multicultural ideologies (Faraclas et al., 2014; 2015).

In both African and Afro-Atlantic languages, particularly in Afro-Atlantic Creoles, the cultivation of ambiguity is closely linked to the assertion of multiple identities and double-/multiple-voicing (DuBois, 1903, in Faraclas et al., 2014; 2015), as the result of complex historic and sociocultural realities. In these communities, patterns of interaction and linguistic structure (e.g., TMA markers, intonation) are characterized by pluri-functionality, polysemy, and indeterminacy of meaning, as they invite a dynamic cooperation between speakers (Faraclas, 2014; 2015). Participants promote meaning-making through the negotiation of their personal and social relationships within a particular communicative context. Further, their engagement in such heteroglossic practices provide them tools to reinforce their agency and power, as well as tools of resistance against the imposition of Eurocentric values and a unitary language (Bakhtin, 1981; Faraclas, 2014; 2015).

Opposing a unitary language and embracing different interpretations of the same utterance is undoubtedly linked to indirectness, which is an important value in African and African-influenced societies. Conversely, English speakers in both the US and the UK display a preference towards conventionally indirect utterances as markers of politeness (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010). These expressions achieve a balance between non-imposition and pragmatic clarity, thus complying with cooperation/conversational and politeness maxims (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Brown & Levinson, 1987). Hence, speakers of Standard English consider indirect speech acts – such as hints and ambiguous utterances – to be impolite because of the “burden” they place on the addressee for interpretation, a corollary of their apparent lack of clarity. While conventionally indirect strategies are preferred in a large number of languages, including Western and non-Western speech communities (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984), it seems that speakers of (West) African and Afro-Caribbean/Atlantic varieties abide by a different set of rules, although conventional indirectness may still operate in more formal and impersonal settings. Therefore, it is essential to consider the role of context when analyzing conversational routines within and across languages and cultures.

Final remarks

Throughout this article, I have looked at the dynamics of informal speech events, such as service or sales encounters, greetings, and everyday conversations. I have also examined a few individual words and expressions, as well as their links to general conversational features and sociocultural values in (West) African, European/English, and Anglophone Caribbean communities. Although entirely qualitative, the data suggest strong correspondences between African and Afro-Caribbean pragma-linguistic patterns, which display a preference for collectivism, ambiguity/multiple-voicing, and indirectness. On the other hand, individualism, pragmatic clarity, and conventional indirectness are considered the norm among speakers of standard varieties of English.

Nevertheless, despite the many similarities between (West) African and Afro-Caribbean societies, it is not my intention to categorically deny any influence from Anglo or European sources. Nor is it my objective to overlook or undermine the active role of Caribbean/Atlantic peoples in reinterpreting and reconstructing African- and European-related practices, or even creating their own. Rather, my goal has been to provide evidence of patterns that do not fit “universal” approaches to linguistic and pragmatic theory. In particular, I have tried to demonstrate how the disregard of Grice’s (1975) conversational postulates does not hinder communication, but rather may aid cooperation, negotiation, and accommodation between speakers in a variety of casual and informal settings. Thus, instead of having universal validity, it appears that, as expected, Grice’s (1975) maxims are modeled after European communicative patterns, and they fail to apply in many non-Western languages and cultures. By recognizing such realities and acknowledging the possibility of contextual variation, I refuse to contribute to the “zero-sum” game (Faraclas et al., 2014: 181) of over-generalizations and binary oppositions, and instead join the celebration of pluralism.

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**RECLAIMING THE PRE-COLONIAL
TO IMAGINE A POST-COLONIAL IN THE
GENDERS, IDENTITIES AND LITERATURES
OF THE GREATER CARIBBEAN AND BEYOND**

LOCATING OTHERS: JAMAICA KINCAID AND THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MEMORY

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The question of representation is central to the construction of identity; but in constructing one's identity, the subject inextricably links itself to a defining Other, who helps to establish self-identification. Thus, the way a person represents him/herself with respect to others and represents others in relation to him/herself will facilitate a phenomenological construction of that self in relation to others and a better understanding and/or appreciation of one's place in society.

This study sets out to examine the representation of Self and Other in Jamaica Kincaid's *The autobiography of my mother*. It proposes that the narrator's account of herself is really an 'othered' account of a self that is so fractured in its construction that it fails to develop an identity in relation to itself and to the society in which it is located. By the end of the narrative the Other is faceless, thus implying also the facelessness of the Self.

While through personal episodic memory the narrator attempts a phenomenological continuity of her mother's identity, through personal semantic memory she also creates the narrative continuity of that identity, all in an effort to establish her own identity. However, since the mother/Other identity she constructs is in itself a fractured one, she seems to end up, or perhaps remain, equally fractured herself – a feature that she attempts to project beyond herself. I conclude by showing that the projection of this fracturing onto others raises issues in relation to the confrontation with failure, the anxiety over change and the ambiguity of moral choices within a society that at once contributes to her fractured self-construction and rejects the Self that she has become.

For a text that artistically uses the single character of its protagonist to explore the brokenness and darkness of not just that individual, but also of a nation and of a whole and varied race of people, Jamaica Kincaid's novel *The autobiography of my mother* is hardly the autobiography that it claims to be – that is, of the protagonist's mother. With Xuela, the narrator-protagonist, positioned at the centre of the text as an extension of her mother, whom she never knew; and in tracing this linkage of identity synchronically and diachronically to a whole range of people and events related directly

to her and not, the narrative, told from the first person point of view, is as much an autobiography of the narrator herself as, by extension, it is that of her mother and of other people within her social or geographical circle. Additionally, it is also metaphorically an ethno-autobiography of the Caribbean island of Dominica where the narrative is set. Therefore, although the title of the novel and, perhaps, the opening line of the narrative, “[m]y mother died at the moment I was born” (Kincaid: 3), insinuate that this is likely a recounting of the narrator’s mother’s auto/biography, the reader is soon to learn that the text is a rather heavily layered account of Xuela’s own life as it may very well partly be an account of the short and miserable life of her mother, the long and malcontent life of her father and the never-ending, self-disavowing lives of the people who make up the society of which she is part.

From Paul John Eakin’s analysis of autobiographical narratives, it is, therefore, clear that Kincaid’s novel largely assumes more of a “we”-experience which it progressively transmits into an “I”-narrative. In this way, the novel transcends the normative assumptions of autobiographical narration as a “story of individuation” (Eakin: 74) and adopts the incorporation of “a socially expansive notion of personal experience” (Peggy J. Miller quoted in Eakin: 73). Kincaid’s protagonist, thus, constructs for her readers not only her own identity but also the identities, multiple or merged, of all of those people whose lives and stories are inextricably connected to hers. Based on the fact that Xuela’s ‘autobiographical’ account is mostly told retrospectively from memory, I analyse her narrative from the approaches of psychology and memory studies to the construction of identity. I defer to these approaches because of the insight that they lend to the process of identity formation as a dynamic system of awareness that emerges from the (re-)construction of memory.

In their essay “The identity function of autobiographical memory: time is on our side”, Anne Wilson and Michael Ross assert that “self-identity depends on autobiographical memory, but the nature and strength of the association depends on qualities of both the self-identity and the memories” (Wilson & Ross: 137). They further state that there also exists a reciprocity in this association as “[p]eople’s recollections influence their self-view and vice-versa” (Wilson & Ross: 137). In *The autobiography of my mother*, this reciprocity is not only revealed, but it also comes into sharp focus as Xuela, the narrator-protagonist, simultaneously constructs and expresses a self-identity through the concurrent reconstruction and expression of a memory that simulates autobiography. In this simulation, Xuela does not only give details of the events of her own life, but she also reconstructs details of the cycle of events of others. She states that because her mother died at the moment she was born, she felt vulnerable throughout her life: “my loss had made me vulnerable, hard, and helpless; on knowing this I became overwhelmed with sadness and shame and pity for myself” (Kincaid: 3-4). From the perspective of Wilson and Ross, it is obvious that this knowledge of herself informs what she reveals about herself. Her narration is heavily marked with and

evokes sentiments of 'sadness, shame and pity' as she focuses on retelling those things that have made her 'vulnerable, hard and helpless'.

As Dona Addis and Lynette Tippet point out in their review of the essential contribution that autobiographical memory (AM) makes to identity, "memories provide the raw material from which identity is constructed" (Addis & Tippet: 72). Although they admit that identity can in no way be reduced to AM alone, they strongly assert that it plays a major role in its formation and that constructing identity in this manner, through the process of "accessing, remembering, and reflecting on personal memories [is the] key to forming a coherent sense of identity and personal continuity" (Addis & Tippet: 71). Thus, individuals attain a certain idea of their self-value and are also able to figure out their place and role in society by engaging in the construction and expression of autobiographical memory. Through such expressions, the individual enacts forms of representation, or better still, of self-representation, that become crucial to establishing an identity.

However, as Helen Garner states in her essay 'I', people are inextricably intertwined, "[w]e form each other. We form ourselves in response to each other" (Garner: 2-3). It is therefore, "impossible to write [or speak] intimately about your own life without revealing something of [other] people" (Garner: 3). In this regard, the question of ethics arises. For, as Helen Garner questions, where does the one end and the other begin? To further extend this argument, in the same manner in which a representation of the self cannot be done in isolation of a representation of others, so also is it arguably impossible to construct an identity of the self without invariably constructing the identity of others, and to draw on these representations and constructions of the other to give meaning to the self. It is from this interrelationship between the Self and the Other that I venture to argue that, by the end of her narrative, Xuela, Kincaid's narrator-protagonist, fails to successfully construct a coherent sense of self which will ensure the "continuity of [that] self over time." Conversely, I suggest that, ultimately, Xuela isolates herself from society, locating herself as an Other, an identity that is itself fractured through her fractured construction and representation of others.

In his essay 'Personal narratives and the life story', Dan McAdams (2008) states that "the stories we construct to make sense of our lives are fundamentally about our struggle to reconcile who we imagine we were, are, and might be in our heads and bodies with who we were, are and might be in the social contexts of family, community, [...] ethnicity, religion, gender, social class, and culture" (McAdams: 242). In Xuela's construction of the experiences and events in her life, she echoes this notion as she describes her world as one "full of danger and treachery" (Kincaid: 41) through which she constantly "negotiated many treacherous acts of deception" (Kincaid: 42). Summing up his analysis of the relationship between the self and society, McAdams asserts that "[t]he self comes to terms with society through narrative identity" (McAdams: 243). Thus, to come to terms with the precariousness of her life and the society

of which she is inevitably a part, Xuela constructs an identity located within the social framework of a loveless, distrustful world of uncertainties.

In an account of the sort of traits that were inculcated into her and others as children within this society, Xuela relates,

We were not friends; such a thing was discouraged. We were never to trust each other. This was like a motto repeated to us by our parents; it was a part of my upbringing, like a form of good manners: You cannot trust these people, my father would say to me, the very words the other children's parents were saying to them, perhaps even at the same time. (Kincaid: 47)

From this account, Xuela reveals that growing up as a child she was taught by her father to distrust other children even though they lived within the same society. As a result of their social proximity, these children invariably attended the same school and yet they were "never to trust each other". In her description of this general caution against trust, we cannot overlook the added value judgement placed on the other children and transferred subconsciously by the parents through the reference to them as 'these people'. Through this seemingly innocuous term, there is already established among them an oppositional binary in which each and all the children simultaneously potentially consist of an 'us'-group against a 'them'-group. From her retrospection of this cautionary inter-relation with her society, Xuela ironically declares that it was inculcated in them 'like a form of good manners', implying that they imbibed it without questioning, therefore becoming distrustful of all.

In a further analysis of autobiographical memory, McAdams (2008) also shows that the individual draws from his/her consciousness very early experiences of life that are mostly episodic in nature, but which s/he will compose into "an autobiographical storehouse" (McAdams: 244) and from which s/he may draw meaning for his/her life. In the narrative expression of these episodic memories, the narrator, may use and combine three different patterns in which the narrative may be organized. These include drawing events from lifetime periods, organising memories into general events and recounting memories from event-specific knowledge. Examining Xuela's narrative closely from the perspective of this analysis, I find that each of these patterns are reflected in diverse ways. In terms of events, she makes constant reference to the major event in her life, which takes place right at the onset of that life, which is the death of her mother. This particular lifetime event defines her from beginning to end, and by constantly referring to it, she probably intends for it to assume this comprehensively defining role in the narration of her life and in the shaping of her identity. The reader is forced to take this fact of her life into serious account as it frames her whole ac-

count and gives clues as to why she feels forlorn and abandoned and is permanently unable to deal with the condition of emotional defeat. From this position of emotional defeat, she also develops a keen understanding of emotional loss and suffering, which makes her able to identify others who may be suffering in similar conditions as her own. These other characters are Madame Labatte (who tries to use Xuela to achieve her desire for motherhood by getting her to be sexually exploited and impregnated by her husband, Monsieur Labatte), Xuela's half-sister (whose own mother spares her no love and pays her no attention), and Moira (the English wife of the doctor Xuela eventually marries).

Through her narration, Xuela's ability to organise her memories into general events from which she however derives some meaning provides another revealing pattern. McAdams (2008) refers to this process as 'autobiographical reasoning' (McAdams: 244). For Xuela this is a way of making sense of the atmosphere of mutual distrust and hatred in which she grows up; and by reflecting on the fact that, even as children, whenever they went to school they did not walk together until they were out of the town, she comes to understand that "[t]o mistrust each other was just one of the many feelings [they] had for each other, all of them the opposite of love" (Kincaid: 48). Besides, when she narrates an incident of the mystical disappearance of a boy who had drowned as a result of swimming out into the deep to meet the apparition of a beautiful woman in the river (Kincaid: 49), the narrator relates episodic memory drawn on an event-specific knowledge on the basis of which she insists on constructing her own reality (Kincaid: 50).

McAdams (2008) points out that life stories expressed in this manner have a bi-functional purpose – to reconstruct the past in order to make personal meaning of one's life and to draw on past recollections in order to project an imagined future. However, from the novel, it becomes obvious that Xuela is dysfunctional in the latter purpose in the sense that she consistently rejects the conceptualization of an imagined future. From her reconstruction of her past she attempts to make personal meaning of her present which she states is "always perfect" (Kincaid: 205) but she declares that she never longs for the future,

"...it will come or it will not; one day it will not. But it does not loom up before me, I am never in a state of anticipation. The future is not even like the black space above the sky, with an intermittent spark of light; it is more like a room with no ceiling or floor or walls"
(Kincaid: 205)

In this declaration, Xuela dismisses any notion of the future in her existence. As a result of this dismissal, she also does not anticipate it, since for her it is without substance. When she describes it as 'a room with no ceiling or floor or walls' she empha-

sises its vacuity. Yet, perhaps realising that the image of a room does harbour the notion of a form or a shape, she quickly asserts that “it is the present that gives it such a shape, it is the present that encloses it” (Kincaid: 205). Thus, she affirms that the present shapes the future, gives it form. However, for her that shape is just a vacuum, an empty space.

According to Addis and Tippet (2010), “[t]he integration of temporally partitioned identities [i.e. past, present and future identities] is necessary to achieve an essential characteristic of identity: *continuity*.” Drawing on Erik Erikson (1993: 261), they further point out that “‘inner sameness and continuity’ are the sense of identity” (Erikson cited in Addis & Tippet: 72). Thus, the ability for a subject to perceive of itself as essentially the same person from past time to present time and into future time help that subject to establish its identity for itself and to present this identity to others. In Xuela’s case, however, since she does not conceptualise a future time or identity she fails to attain continuity as well as a complete sense of identity.

As she narrates the different events of her life, she also admits that at each of the different stages that correspond to those events, she is essentially a different person. Upon the death of her mother, her father deposits her, along with his bundle of dirty clothes, with his laundress, Ma Eunice for her nurturing. During her stay there, she is sent to the local school as per her father’s wish. After learning how to write letters in school, she starts to secretly write letters to her father in which she expresses her misery and how she thinks she is hated by everybody except him. With no intention, nor means, to send these letters to her father, she hides them under a large stone at the gate of the school where they are discovered by another child who takes them out and hands them over to their teacher. Her teacher unreasonably taking offence and believing herself to be the “everybody” that Xuela refers to, sends the letters to her father to prove “that she had a clear conscience” (Kincaid: 21). As a result of this, her father, who has re-married, comes to take her away to live with him. Thus, from this fortuitous event, she discovers that her words can effect major changes in her life as do the words of the letters she secretly writes to her father.

After this discovery she becomes a different person. She declares that “[t]o speak of my own situation, to myself or to others, is something I would always do thereafter. [...] I came to be so extremely conscious of myself, so interested in my own needs [...]. From this unfocused, childish expression of pain, my life was changed and I took note of it” (Kincaid: 22). Thus, even at the still young age of seven, the major change in her circumstances that her words, through her letters, have effected leaves a lasting impression on her, teaching her to assertively stand up for herself. When she goes to live with her father and his wife, she comes to the realisation that her father’s wife wishes her dead and she learns to be on her guard against her. From this stance of wariness, she declares that “in this atmosphere of no love” with which she had become familiar she could “make a life” for herself (Kincaid: 29). After an incident in which

she suspects her father's wife may have tried to poison her, she becomes self-reliant for her own basic needs, especially food.

Later when her father takes her to live with Monsieur and Madame Labatte and they sexually exploit her, she states that she had again been changed into a different person though she "did not know this right away" (Kincaid: 78). As a result of this sexual exploitation, she becomes pregnant and decides to abort it; and after her first excruciating experience of an abortion, she claims, "I was a new person then, I knew things I had not known before" (Kincaid: 83). Thus, as she narrates incidents that mark the different stages of her life, she insists that she changes at each stage into a different person who is quite different from the person that she was before. After the incident with the Labattes she affirms that she was "changed forever" (Kincaid: 93).

Even though McAdams (2008: 244) contends that when individuals compose their lives into stories, one of the most important functions this achieves is integration, Xuela's story rather seems to depict a disintegrated self, formed of all the different persons that she has become. However, this may very well be explained by the assertion made by McAdams (p. 244) that integration is performed through two main methods, synchronic and diachronic. The first method affords the teller the ability to "bring together different self-ascribed tendencies, [...] and remembered events into a synchronic pattern that expresses how the individual person, who seems to encompass so many different things in a complex social world, is at the same time, one (complex and even contradictory) thing as well" (McAdams: 244). Through the second method, diachronic integration is achieved as the individual recounts how transformations over time have occurred and how one has evolved from being one thing in the past to becoming something else at a present time. From this assertion, McAdams observes that the "formulation of an integrative narrative identity is an especially salient challenge for individuals... who seek personal integration" within a complex society (McAdams: 244).

In the life of Xuela, the effort at forming an identity through integration results in the paradox of multiplicity. She synchronises the complexity of her ethnic descent – being of mixed race and not fully belonging to either – into the fact that she remains socially recognizable as among the defeated but possesses a keen sense of her personal ability to transcend this social categorization into a self-formulated category from which she attempts to categorise others. She is keenly aware of other complexities of her life including the fact of being the motherless child of a self-obsessed mercenary father; the undesired half-sister of a disregarding half-brother and a spiteful half-sister who have been taught by their mother to be suspicious of her; and the hope of Madame LaBatte who offers her friendship and also offers her to her husband so she can fulfil through her the possibility of motherhood, since she cannot bear her own children and can no longer endure the virility of a husband whom she has tied to herself through a spell.

Xuela also attempts to achieve diachronic integration by recounting how she has transformed from a curious offensive child at the age of four under the care of a foster mother (Kincaid: 7-11), to an obnoxious fearless seven-year old whose stepmother constantly wishes her dead (Kincaid: 33-35), to a precocious self-loving 12-year-old with an uncanny deftness to “initiate and complete” complex tasks of self-care in relation to her coming into puberty (Kincaid: 56-58); and an intelligent 14-year-old who holds a highly critical perspective of life (Kincaid: 59). She further narrates her life as an impressionable 15-year-old who is sent by her father to live with the Labattes and who, after having become the victim of other people’s wishes, consequently develops enough agency to rid herself of an unwanted pregnancy by the age of sixteen. In the course of her narration, she ceases to connect specific incidents to what age she is at the time of those events. Nevertheless, we find that the critical worldview and agentic subjectivity she has developed in her early years persist and that she has become an ingenious and extremely sensuous person who is self-centred and cares little how her actions affect other people. In a later reflection on her life and the actions she has taken, she unapologetically insists: “My impulse is to the good, my good is to serve myself” (Kincaid: 216).

In a further discussion of the expression of narrative identity through the act of storytelling, McAdams (2008: 245) points out that “stories are social phenomena, told in accord with societal expectations and norms.” Examining Xuela’s storytelling from this added perspective, it is clear that, engaged as she is in a discursive discovery of who she is, she constructs her narrative of self-expression through the expectations of what/who society expects her to be/become. For example, because she is female, she is expected to become a mother. She, however, systemically refuses to conform to such social categorisation and she breaks out of the mould of such expectations and norms in order to form her own identity. Validating this form of subversion, Sidonie Smith, in *A poetics of women’s autobiography*, argues that “[w]omen who do not challenge those gender ideologies and the boundaries they place around women’s proper life script, textual inscription, and speaking voice do not write autobiography. Culturally silenced, they remain sentenced to death in the fictions of woman” (Smith: 44).

Thus, Xuela, in re-writing her life text, chooses never to be a mother herself. She does not conform to this social demand, for after all she is still yearning for identification with her own mother, a yearning which only leaves her with a sense of irretrievable loss. As a result of this loss, she turns the gaze of desire upon herself and develops a self-love from which she derives satisfaction but which also forms the basis of her power to overcome sexual subjugation. She states, “I believe that no life is complete, no life is really whole, without [the] invisible current, which is in many ways a definition of love. No one observed and beheld me, I observed and beheld myself; the invisible current went out and it came back to me. I came to love myself in defiance, out of

despair, because there was nothing else” (Kincaid: 56-57). Loving herself in this way, she comes to the realisation that “the child in me would never be stilled enough to allow me to have a child of my own” (Kincaid: 57). Thus, she refuses to have any children of her own because she can love only herself. But she also recognises the social context within which she lives – among a “people who began and ended with murder and theft and not very much love” – and decides, when she gets pregnant, to rather endure “the agony of expelling from my body a child I could not love and so did not want” (Kincaid: 89).

From this pervasiveness of violence and animosity, she identifies her social context as one peopled by the vanquished and the defeated who still depended on the colonial government to provide “various things to give for free to people in the most need” (Kincaid: 188). Even though she accepts this historical fact about herself, she again refuses to be defined by it. She declares, “I am of the vanquished, I am of the defeated. The past is a fixed point, the future is open-ended; for me the future must remain capable of casting a light on the past such that in my defeat lies the seed of my great victory, in my defeat lies the beginning of my great revenge” (Kincaid: 215-216).

In her own small way she wreaks this imagined revenge on Philip Bailey, the English doctor she eventually marries, who for her epitomises the conqueror and represents, in many ways, the opposite of what she is: “[he] was of the victors, and so much a part of him was this situation, the situation of the conqueror” (Kincaid: 217). She at once attempts to negate the superiority of his historical situation over hers and as he goes through a period of loss and forlornness she offers him no comfort, refusing “to make his suffering real” to her. She admits that “many things which reminded me that he, too, was human and frail caused a great feeling of anger to swell up in me; for if he, too, was human, then would not all whom he came from be human, too, and where would that leave me and all that I came from?” (Kincaid: 220). Therefore, she ultimately refuses to even accept the humanity of the victor or the conqueror, thereby attempting a subversion of power relations between colonial/colonised, white/black, and male/female.

However these binaries not only predicate power relations. They also inform discourses of identity construction in the connection between the Self and the Other. In constructing herself through her narration, Xuela inevitably draws on the social context of the people around her or connected to her in diverse ways to assert her identity. However, through Xuela’s representations of the people around her, Kincaid’s play on the image of the other/Other at different social levels has the wry effect of locking Xuela in that otherness.

In their text, *Key concepts in postcolonial studies*, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin identify the ‘other’ with the lower case ‘o’ as referring to colonised others who are marginalised by imperial discourse, whereas the ‘Other’ with the uppercase ‘O’ refers to the subject that yearns “to exist in the gaze of the Other” such as the psychoanalytic

notion of the father/mother figure (pp. 186-188). In *The autobiography of my mother*, Kincaid invokes both the notion of alterity and the focus of desire through Xuela's representation of herself and of others. Since these representations are interconnected at multiple levels, I fuse here both notions of alterity and desire into the single term 'Other'. By both invoking and critiquing the metaphor of the Other on multiple levels, Kincaid urges us to evaluate our own spontaneous disregard of its effect on the protagonist, even though its aspect and influence may appear, at first, indeterminate.

As the central frame of reference for narratives of Freudian and Lacanian self-construction and of the subjectivity of the individual, the image of the Other brings together discourses of narrative identity and ethics. This alliance begs justification. Ensuing from narrative approaches to the study of personality psychology with its firm focus on personal narratives and the life story, how can an analysis of narrative identity expose the individuated self of our narrator as fractured and so indistinct from others, and also incapable of forming a social self? And how can ethics, encompassing the notions of responsibility towards oneself and others, reveal the jeopardy of Xuela's refusal to belong or to represent others as belonging to a meaningful society? For she asserts that she is alone in the world (Kincaid: 223) and in her own words she intones, "I refused to belong to a race, I refused to accept a nation. I wanted only... to observe the people who do so. The crime of these identities... I do not have the courage to bear. Am I nothing, then? ...but if nothing is a condemnation, then I would love to be condemned" (Kincaid: 226). And that is what she does, she condemns herself to a loveless life characterised by sadness and an insatiable, indefatigable hankering after a self-defined social identity which eludes her to the same degree that she denies it others in her narrative. I, thus, draw together aspects of these two discourses because they are, in a complex way, related to one another, to Xuela's vain attempts to represent herself and her determination to break links with her historical past while yet holding fast to the "central motif" (Kincaid: 225) of her personal past which, for her, defines every aspect of her life.

Xuela's obsession with developing a personal self-concept on an individual level is at best self-serving, aimed solely at defining an autonomous self-identity devoid of her social history while yet persistently drawing on that defining moment of her mother's death. Towards the end of her narration she becomes more keenly aware of her desolateness and declares that although what she strives for is an impossibility, "only such a thing would satisfy me. To reverse the past would bring me complete happiness. Such an event [...] would make my world stand on its feet; it... has for a long time stood on its head." (Kincaid: 228). In their analysis of the construction of social identity, Marilyn Brewer and Wendi Gardner (1996) encourage us to see that representation of the self occurs at three levels of construal analysis, namely the individual, the interpersonal and the group levels. They also argue that these levels are necessarily interrelational in the sense that the construction of the self is largely dependent on its rela-

tionship with significant others within its social context (pp. 83-84). For Xuela, these significant others are either dead – her mother; absent – her father; or scornful – her father’s wife, her half-sister and half-brother; or they are exploitative – Monsieur Labatte who takes undue sexual advantage of her, and his wife, Madame Labatte, who pins her hopes and fantasies of having children on her and so covertly encourages the lustful affair. Later, after she develops more agency, the significant others around her – Roland, the married stevedore she falls in love with and Philip Bailey, the doctor she eventually marries – are firmly under her control and she determines how long her affair with the one would last and how unhappy the other will remain for the rest of his life.

At the individual level of analysis Xuela presents a personal concept of herself by pointing out the traits she has formed from childhood and how these may have developed as she matures. Upon the death of her mother, her father places her in the care of Eunice Paul, “the same woman he paid to wash his clothes” (Kincaid: 4). In vividly depicting how her father bundles her off, as a baby, along with his bundle of dirty clothes, to this woman who is no relation of either of her biological parents, the protagonist/narrator already addresses questions of value, and perhaps by extension of ethics, through the imagery of juxtaposing the two ‘burdens’ in her father’s life: his soiled clothes and his orphaned baby. At that stage of her life she is already burdensome to herself because she is helpless and essentially dependent on others, but she is also burdensome to her father “because he was a very vain man [whose] appearance was very important to him” (Kincaid: 4). And by describing how her father hands both bundles over to Ma Eunice, one to be picked up and replaced regularly with a new bundle, the other to be left there for seven long years, to a woman who already had six children of her own, Xuela raises the questions of ethics and identity where they intersect: in the metaphor of the Other often invoked to conceptualise both the self and the construction of an identity in the symbolic order.

In the Freudian/ Lacanian notion of being the subject that “desires to exist in the gaze of the Other,” she describes her father as “loveless” (Kincaid: 211), believing that instead of protecting her as she thought him capable, he placed her “at an early age ...in the jaws of death” (Kincaid: 211). From the very early age of four, she already notices the retreating presence of her father, and when she starts to see less and less of him, she asks, “Where is my father?” (Kincaid: 7). As she slowly comes to the realisation that “everything in [her] life whether good or bad, to which [she is] inextricably bound is a source of pain” (Kincaid: 7), and that her father the very focus of her desire “was part of a whole way of life ...which perpetuated pain” (Kincaid: 39) both for herself and for other people, she starts to develop a form of agentive subjectivity through which she attempts to subvert the binaries of representation and identification that place her among the “defeated,” the “unreal,” the “not human,” and “all that is without love, ...without mercy” (Kincaid: 37), who cannot be trusted or believed because their

story is that of “the illegitimate, the poor, the low” (Kincaid: 39). Very early on in her life, she has a grim perspective of such a life as “vulnerable, hard, and helpless” leaving her “overwhelmed with sadness and shame and pity for [her]self” (Kincaid: 4). Consequently she becomes generally distrustful of people and is always on her guard against others while already bearing a keen sense of cynicism towards life. This in actual fact gives her a critical awareness of herself as an individual and results in a narcissism that would at once deny happiness and existence to others as well as trap her in an isolated Nietzschean existentialism. For her, this state of existence certainly contradicts the illusory ideal of the English countryside pictured as that “HEAVEN” (Kincaid: 9) into which Ma Eunice dreamed of entering when she died or to which she wondered if her father actually managed to go (Kincaid: 210).

Xuela thus becomes doubly cast in the mould of otherness, through the alterity of association with the colonised and the conquered and through the deprivation of both mother and father. She observes that “my mother and father then were a mystery to me: one through death, the other through the maze of living” (Kincaid: 41). To overcome this otherness, therefore, she feels the urge to have a certain amount of control in the life of others as well as over her own life in the hope of reversing the categorisation that comes with it. At the age of four, in her first fortuitous practice of wielding such control, she places a family of three land turtles, with which she has fallen in love, into a small enclosure and makes them totally dependent on her for their existence. When she gets angry with them because they would not come out of their shells when she calls to them, she teaches them a lesson by sealing off the mouth of their shells with mud which dries up, trapping them in and eventually killing them (Kincaid: 12).

Later, at the age of fourteen, she is taken to Roseau by her father so she can continue schooling, and there, she lives as a boarder in the house of Monsieur and Madame Labatte where she gets into a sexual relationship with Monsieur Labatte, with the silent encouragement of his wife. When she discovers that she is pregnant, the very thing that Madame Labatte was hoping for (to have a child through her), Xuela subjectively takes the decision to abort the pregnancy. Secretly absconding to the house of a local woman where she takes a concoction that crudely ends the pregnancy and puts her own life at risk, she attests that she “carried [her] own life in [her] own hands” (Kincaid: 83). From this point onward, she not only controls what happens in her own life, but she also exercises some control over the effect that other people may have on her. She defines them in ways that make her feel superior to them, not necessarily morally, but to the extent that she exercises more agency over their ability to act upon her.

Her father who has failed to provide love or protection for her is described as a very vain man (Kincaid: 184), who was “cruel especially to children and people in a weaker position than himself” (Kincaid: 185). She states that his “skin was the color of cor-

ruption” (Kincaid: 181) and that “[he] was a thief, [...] he spoke falsehoods, he took advantage of the weak” (Kincaid: 54). When he finally died she declares, “when I looked down at him, seeing him dead, I felt superior, I felt superior in the fact that I was alive and he was dead, and even though I knew and believed that death was my fate also, I felt superior to him” (Kincaid: 213). In a similar manner, she gloats over the deaths of other people she knew: “My sister died. Her husband died. Her mother died. All the people I knew intimately from the beginning of my life died. I should have missed them but I did not” (Kincaid: 214). This same sense of superiority is felt earlier on when upon the death of her father she chooses the clothes in which he is buried, not because, by birth right, she is older than her sister, but “because of the superior position in which [her] marriage had placed [her]” (Kincaid: 211).

This yearning to be in a superior position to others plagues all her social relations and the way she represents others. Speaking of Ma Eunice, the laundress in whose care she is left as a baby, she admits that she “was not unkind” treating her the way she did her own children but referring to that treatment as brutal and cruel (Kincaid: 5). When she breaks the only china that Eunice owns and gets punished, the event establishes for her the “relationship between captor and captive, master and slave, the powerful and the powerless, the strong and the weak, [...] [with] Eunice... metamorphosing into a succession of things furious and not human” (Kincaid: 10).

With this motif of binary power dynamics etched into her young mind, her representations persistently feature subtleties of power or value. Thus her father’s wife depicts “the face of evil” (Kincaid: 28); Madame Labatte, once beautiful in her youth, becomes “defeated” (Kincaid: 65); her half-brother, designated to inherit their father’s wealth but who dies before he turns twenty, is “weak” and fragile, like “something vegetable and out of a fable” (Kincaid: 110-111); her half-sister, who despised her and insisted on calling her “illegitimate” (Kincaid: 114), becomes a “semi-invalid for the rest of her life” (Kincaid: 125); and Moira, the English wife of doctor Philip Bailey, who believed herself superior to other women based on the distinction that she was a lady (Kincaid: 158), was “waxy, ghostish, without life” (Kincaid: 156) and looked “fossil-like,” “malicious” and like “a vector of malaise” (Kincaid: 157). Xuela describes even her own mother, whom she loved and yearned for constantly and whose very name she now bears, as likely bearing a disposition of “sadness”, “weakness”, “dejectedness” and “false humility that was really defeat” (Kincaid: 200).

In conceiving of others in these terms, however, she constructs also for herself an “otherness” which she asserts is “not particularly offensive” and which she becomes “more familiar with” (Kincaid: 158). And in identifying with the defeated, with the “disenchanted” and the “disinherited” (Kincaid: 111) and, most of all, with her mother, she puts the reality of her own existence into question for she is caught in the Levinasian crisis of being, wherein being herself she questions whether her being is justified and whether her being is not already the usurpation of someone’s place, per-

haps that of her mother. And in the persistence of an ontological enquiry into her existence, she observes that “unless you are born a god, your life, from its very beginning, is a mystery to you. [...] Who you are is a mystery no one can answer, not even you” (Kincaid: 202). It is in such an ambivalent representation of herself, as connected to others, through the history of conquest, resulting in the subjugation of gender, the categorisation of social classes, the separation of races, and even the ambiguity of naming that she attempts to simultaneously recuperate and subvert those identities that set up hierarchies amongst humanity.

By the end of her narrative all of the identities and personalities she has taken on have merged into three main fractured entities – her mother, whom she has never seen except to fantasise about her in her dreams and whose face never appears even in those dreams; herself, within whom are trapped the social identities that she refuses to conform to such as motherhood; and her aborted children along with the aborted possibilities of how different her life could have been had it not been bound to the history of a defeated people. She thus declares:

This account of my life has been an account of my mother’s life as much as it has been an account of mine, and even so, again it is an account of the life of the children I did not have, as it is their account of me. In me is the voice I never heard, the face I never saw, the being I came from. In me are the voices that should have come out of me, the faces I never allowed to form, the eyes I never allowed to see me. This account is an account of the person who was never allowed to be and an account of the person I did not allow myself to become.” (Kincaid: 227-228)

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MOTHERING, MARRONAGE AND FEMALE SAME-SEX DESIRE IN MICHELLE CLIFF'S *ABENG*

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Introduction

An examination of Caribbean historiography reveals the exclusion of homosexual subjects and subjectivities. In fact, conventional convictions concerning alternative sexuality in the Caribbean generally sanction the silencing of homosexual subjects, whose erotic expressions transgress cultural codes. The absence of homosexual experiences in the historiography of the Caribbean is problematic, as history is intimately and inextricably connected with identity and a sense of community. Hence, this article focuses on Michelle Cliff's *Abeng*, a novel which fundamentally challenges the Caribbean's androcentric and heterosexist historical narrative and creates an alternative history which includes submerged sexualities. Representations of mother-daughter imagery and female same-sex desire in Cliff's *Abeng* undermine and subvert prevailing structures. Unconventional expressions of maternity and female sexuality dismantle colonial control, patriarchal power and hegemonic ideology.

Michelle Cliff, a Jamaican writer who resided in the United States until her death in June, 2016, has crafted important stories centered on contentious subjects like racism, colonialism and homoeroticism. In *Abeng* Cliff skillfully merges the personal and the political as she constructs a multifaceted, woman-centered tale. The novel profoundly describes the anxiety and ambivalence associated with the construction of racial, cultural and sexual identities in colonial and postcolonial Jamaica. *Abeng* is a fragmented fictional story and this incoherence is represented by the narrator's unfolding of the narrative from past to present, present to past, and the fluctuating social, physical, economic and political landscapes which oscillate between periods of enslavement and emancipation in Jamaica.

Cliff creates a fictional discourse which inherently challenges androcentric expectations of narrative and female sexuality in the Caribbean. Helen Scott in *Caribbean women writers and globalization* argues for the acknowledgment of the important relationship which exists between the disruption of narrative conventions and the contestation of hegemonic constructions and ideology in Caribbean women's writings. Scott cites Antonia McDonald Smythe's appraisal of the anti-androcentric narrative strategies which are utilized by Afro-Caribbean women: "the eclectic, fragmented form favored by [Michelle] Cliff and [Jamaica] Kincaid for encoding the female expe-

rience is a rejection of the linear polemic of some earlier male-authored West Indian texts” (p. 5).

The temporal and spatial inconsistencies apparent in *Abeng* authorize access to both colonial and postcolonial female subjectivity. The protagonist, Clare, introduced at the commencement of this fictional narrative, is constructed as a representation of the nation, as she negotiates the varied conflicts which emerge when an independent Caribbean nation navigates national identity in a multicultural space. Clare’s mapping of her own cultural and sexual identities in a cultural space which is depicted as ethnically diverse and overtly homophobic is complicated by her mixed ancestry and homoeerotic yearnings for her friend, Zoe. Clare’s story, historically situated during the post-emancipation period in Jamaica is frequently interrupted by female-centered slave narratives and escapades of *marronage*.

This article, which is concerned with female resistance in the Caribbean deliberately deviates from the primary story which is focused on Clare’s mostly passive experience and instead sheds the spotlight on Cliff’s imagined account of the maroons which only occupies a few pages of the novel. It intersects maternity and female sexuality and provides a discussion on sexuality as a site of female agency, emancipation and the affirmation of cultural identity.

Challenging hegemonic systems and ideology

Michelle Cliff’s *Abeng* intentionally reconstructs and re-enacts accounts of *marronage* in the Caribbean. This is significant given that the Maroons have historically been positioned at the center of legendary slave uprisings. Historical documents corroborate that colonial authority on the slave plantation was destabilized by the Maroons in diverse Caribbean territories. Richard Sheridan in *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1730-1830* provides a simple profile of the Maroons.

The Maroons were communities of ex-slaves who had escaped from the plantation and found refuge in the rugged interior parts of the colonies...though small in number by comparison to the slaves, the maroons were sufficiently numerous to harass and threaten the European slave-owning colonists ... (p. 152)

In this fictional story of *marronage*, Cliff challenges and contests the invisibility of women in Caribbean history by crafting slave narratives which situate women at the nucleus of overt and covert resistance. In Cliff’s *Abeng* the historical figure Nanny, an Ashanti slave, who is represented in Jamaica’s historical records as a venerated Maroon, reemerges as a character. Nanny is described as an innovative leader who resides in the mountains where she expertly mobilizes and organizes runaway slaves for battle against the British. Her military strategies and supernatural abilities make her army indestructible in their battle against colonial troops.

Cliff’s representation of Nanny in the novel affirms the significance of African identity within a space dominated by British customs and ideology. She is unambiguously

depicted as a maternal figure since she functions as protector and caretaker of the Maroons and the transmitter of African values. Nanny reestablishes Africa as the motherland within the imagination of the runaway slave by the deployment of African rituals and traditions. Implicit resistance to the imagined cultural superiority of the colonizer's country is thus symbolized by the secret survival of the oral tradition, a central component within African societies. Mma Alli, an African mother who emerges in *Abeng* after Nanny is declared dead, also covertly educates enslaved children on the plantation concerning cultural beliefs and traditions which originated in Africa.

A significant portion of the story is centered on Mma Alli's relationship with a former maroon, Inez. This unusual connection serves as the impetus behind the dismantling of patriarchy and colonialism in the text. The authority of patriarchy and pervasiveness of sexual violence and violations are exemplified in Inez's story. Inez, a Maroon, who becomes intimately aligned with Mma Alli, is introduced as the daughter of a "half-blood Miskito Indian" woman and "a Maroon, an Ashanti from the Gold Coast" (p. 33). Her demise is set in motion by instructions provided by her father to leave the protection of the Maroon community for the purpose of obtaining a weapon from a plantation slave. Inez's criminal offence is discovered as a consequence of unexpected betrayal. She is therefore captured by the plantation owner and brought before the judicial system to be convicted of theft. Her punishment for this unlawful act would exclusively be determined by a judge and a guilty verdict could mean that "...she would have had her hands cut off at the wrists, or been given a hundred strokes of the cat" (p. 34).

Patriarchal supremacy and female oppression, insistent elements in this work of fiction are represented within the judicial system. Inez's accuser is a male plantation owner and the penalty for her transgression is left to the discretion of a male judge. The punishment which should be administered according to the criminal justice system is completely disregarded by the judge who perceives Inez's dilemma as an opportunity to dishonour and dehumanize her: "...but the judge intervened and took her home, where he raped her. He raped her for six weeks until he left on one of his trips to London. She was eighteen" (p. 34).

Mothering female resistance and independence

Maternity remains an important construct in the Caribbean imaginary. The mother is repeatedly depicted in diverse discourses as nurturer and protector of children. At the same time, her primary role is to socialize children to conform to societal expectations. Varied analyses of Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John* (1985), *Lucy* (1990), and *The autobiography of my mother* (1996) situate the mother as pivotal to the construction of values consistent with the society's expectations. In Edwidge Danticat's *Breath, eyes, memory* (1994), the mother is positioned by patriarchy as the protector and preserver

of female sexuality and in this novel she exerts this power through sexual violence and violations.

Maternity, also a crucial constituent within the African community, is unavoidably a central dynamic in Inez's narrative. Mma Alli who resides on the plantation, performs the responsibility of Inez's biological mother when the judge temporarily migrates to London. Inez's surrogate mother reintroduces her to her motherland, Africa. Inez is socialized to embrace the rituals, traditions and values of her father's people, the Ashanti. During her confinement within the judge's household, Inez rediscovers her cultural identity: "There was a slavewoman in the quarters whom she visited and who taught her more about *Obeah* and magic. This woman's name was Mma Alli – a strange woman with a right breast that had never grown. She said she was a one-breast warrior woman and represented a tradition which was older than the one which enslaved them" (p. 34).

Mma Alli is explicitly characterized as homosexual since she pursues sexual intercourse exclusively with women: "Mma Alli had never lain with a man. The other slaves said she loved only women in that way..." (p. 35). Cliff deliberately situates homoeroticism within a historical canon which traditionally silences alternative female sexuality. This author's insertion of female homosexuality into slave narrative serves to include and indigenize homosexuality. Makeda Silvera in *Man-royals and sodomites: some thoughts on the invisibility of Afro-Caribbean lesbians* states that: "As Afro-Caribbean women we are still at the stage where we have to imagine and discover our existence, past and present..." (p. 48)

Traditional expectations of the maternal figure are both affirmed and contested since motherhood is intricately connected in *Abeng* with the subversion of heteropatriarchy. Mma Alli socializes African daughters by encouraging the establishment of alternative expressions of female sexuality, in a colonial space controlled by the ideals of patriarchy. This maternal figure's erotic seduction and sexual stimulation of women to the point of orgasm is described as a mere component of the female socialization process: "They said that by being with her in bed, women learned all manner of the magic of passion. How to wet again and again all through the night. How to soothe and excite at the same time. How to touch a woman in her deep-inside and make her womb move within her. She taught many of the women on the plantation about this passion..." (p. 35).

Expressions of alternative sexuality engender a sense of female agency and autonomy in this slave narrative. The narrator describes how Mma Alli's "tongue was all over Inez's body – night after night – until the judge returned from his trip to London and Inez had to return to the great house. But she went there with a new found power" (p. 35).

At the same time, patriarchal and colonial control of the female slave's reproduction is undermined by Mma Alli's provocative relationship with Inez.

When Inez came to Mma Alli to get rid of the mixed-up baby she carried, Mma Alli kept her in the cabin overnight. She brewed tea of roots and leaves, said a Pawpaw chant over it, and when it was beginning to take effect and Inez was being rocked by the contractions of her womb, Mma Alli began to gently stroke her with fingers dipped in coconut oil and pull on her nipples with her mouth, and the thick liquid which had been the mixed-up baby came forth easily and Inez felt little pain. (p. 35)

Inez's abortion signals the death of a subjugated, enslaved woman and paves the path for the renaissance of a subversive Maroon. Therefore, Inez successfully executes her plan to escape detention on the slave plantation: "Inez had made her move that afternoon. Back to the Cockpits" (p. 39). Although the judge, the symbol of patriarchy on the estate, vigorously searches the estate, he is unable to locate the woman whom he once confined within his household.

Conclusion

Inez rediscovers her cultural identity as a result of her intimate association with Mma Alli, and she embraces her motherland. She recognizes Africa as her place of origin and is determined to return there, but before her departure she crafts an offering for Mma Alli, the woman who 'mothered' her collective identity and individual independence. Mma Alli's homoerotic relationship with Inez challenges Caribbean discourses which position maternity as the site of silencing and policing female sexuality. Moreover, Cliff's representation of Mma Alli as both mother and motherland affirms the desire of Caribbean lesbians at home and abroad to claim a Caribbean motherland where expressions of alternative female sexuality are no longer proscribed, but permitted to flourish.

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THE RISE AND FALL OF CARIBBEAN GENTLEMEN: MARGINALIZATION AND THE UNMANNING OF CARIBBEAN MASCULINITIES IN ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN FICTION

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Unmanning colonialism: introduction

The present study examines the concept of unmanning as manifested through the lives of bourgeois Afro-Caribbean male protagonists in C.L.R. James's *Minty Alley* (1936), Garth St. Omer's *A room on the hill* (1968), and Orlando Patterson's *An absence of ruins* (1967). James's Mr. Haynes, St. Omer's John Lestrade, and Patterson's Alexander Blackman carry the values of Afro-Caribbean patriarchy and the contradictions inherent in their performances of race, class and gender as well as the demands that come with them. These characters suffer abuse and oppression by European metropolitan and colonial powers. Even when their islands' societies were no longer under European colonial rule, these men remained under the oppression of hegemonic discourses and social praxes left over from European colonial, racist, and gender/sex policies.

In the context of these novels, colonialism is the legally sanctioned social, cultural, political, and economic exploitation, subjugation, and degradation of "weak" nations and peoples by "strong" foreign powers and their representatives. This system of government transforms its victims into "natives" deprived of wealth, power, agency, and personhood by creating conditions of economic, social, and cultural dependence that favor the metropole, its representatives and accomplices at the expense of the colony and its inhabitants. Colonial rule transforms the colonized into objects for exploitation and commodification, crafting them into signs that are chiefly interpreted in deterministic terms of active "have" (whiteness, masculinity, wealth, status, etc.) or passive "have-not" (blackness, femininity, disenfranchisement, marginality, etc.). Thus, victims of colonial oppression learn to see themselves as creatures of negativity forever defined by what they lack rather than what they have. Colonialism, as Fanon argues in *Black skin white masks*, creates deep psychosomatic uncertainties in the colonized, tainting the mind and soul of Afro-Caribbean men with "zebra striping(s)" that compel them to be "acknowledged not as *black* but as *white*" (p. 63). These skewed ways of

thinking affect the worldviews of Afro-Caribbean men, including their constructs of masculinity:

Man is motion toward the world and toward his like. A movement of aggression, which leads to enslavement or to conquest; a movement of love, a gift of self, the ultimate stage if what by common accord is called ethical orientation. . . . The person I love will strengthen me by endorsing my assumption of my manhood, while the need to earn the admiration or the love of others will erect a value-making superstructure on my whole vision of the world. (p. 41)

For Antillean males, this becomes all but impossible to achieve because the colonial impasse they live in translates into pathological insecurity regarding their masculine gender performativity, which itself is inseparable from how manhood is defined throughout Eurocentric discourse. Thus, colonialism in the Caribbean can be tied to the concept of unmanning when referencing Afro-Caribbean male protagonists in the three novels in this study.

The term “unmanning” denotes the opposite of conventionally held assumptions about what so-called true masculinity consists of, at least in the Eurocentric sense of the word. To “unman” a person (or more specifically, a male human being) is to strip him of qualities or attributes traditionally associated with men, namely courage, fortitude, resolve, and initiative. The term designates a willful and systematic undermining and destruction of men as individuals and groups as well as the ways through which they may accede to the imitation and enactment of mainstream (i.e. hegemonic) masculinities. This process feeds upon fear, insecurity, self-loathing, and other pathological afflictions likely to affect subordinate men who reside in colonial and postcolonial societies within the Caribbean basin. Unmanning preys on the shame, guilt, anger, and insecurity of men who believe they have lost or otherwise compromised their masculinity because of what they (or their wives, mothers, children, or other men) did or failed to do.

Unmanned men lose their capacity to partake in the mimesis and praxis of masculinities that any particular society privileges above others at specific times and places. These hegemonic masculinities are discursive constructs erected on grounds of race, class and gender that maintain social subjects in states of subjugation within which they perform simultaneous roles of victims and victimizers. Nevertheless, Raewyn Connell and James Messerschmidt warn that this term should not be used to designate facile, one-dimensional notions of masculinity, hegemonic or otherwise. From the late nineteenth century onwards, the term hegemonic masculinity embodies “the currently most honored way of being a man” in Western societies at a particular time, place as well as social, cultural, political, and economic contexts (p. 832). This fact accords with what Aviston Downes writes regarding dominant and subordinate masculinities in the context of colonial Barbados at the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries:

Hegemonic masculinity is a discursively constructed masculinity which gains and maintains its preeminence through its ideological linkages with socially dominant men whereas the masculinity of superordinate men secures legitimacy and normative status, oppressed men have their masculinity either devalued or negated. . . .[F]or any representation of masculinity to become hegemonic, the co-optation or complicity of “lesser masculinities” is necessary. The consequence is empowerment of most men over women, but a control predicated also on the control of men. . . . (p. 107)

As Michael S. Kimmer and Michael A. Messner state in *Men's Lives*, male human beings must be understood as social subjects that act and are acted upon “through the prism of gender” (p. xiii). Men are both cause and effect of a “gendering process” that brings forth “the transformation of biological males into socially interacting men” and is as much a “central experience” for men as experiences of race and class (p. xv). Reexamining masculinities, the social, cultural, political, and economic behavior of males, and the ways power is distributed and performed on grounds of race, class and gender is an important part of such questioning, itself inseparable from history, politics and culture.

Caribbean masculinities are produced and practiced through/in Caribbean social, historical, cultural, and economic contexts mediated by Eurocentric notions of gender, race, and class. As Paula Morgan claims in *The terror and the time: banal violence and trauma in Caribbean discourse*, Caribbean societies came into being through personal and communal tragedies, most of which have their origin in the transatlantic slave trade and other evils brought about during the so-called Age of Discovery:

The New World island societies of the modern Caribbean have been crafted by a traumatic encounter between worlds. In an early experiment of technologically driven global modernity fueled by the largest mass labour migration in human history, Europe undertook to transform two-thirds of the then known world into its playground and factory. The imperial impulse which propelled the enterprise of the Indies drew together a multiplicity of non-homogeneous people-groups – indigenous Indians, Europeans, Africans, Asians – in minute island spaces to jostle for a place in an embryonic social order. This took place against a framework of genocide of indigenous tribes, oppressive systems of slavery and indentureship, racism and denigration, poverty, hunger and social inequities – all buttressed by incredible excesses of terrorism and social violence. (p. 1)

The making and unmaking of masculinities has much to do with what Morgan terms the “intersection between sexuality and power and the interplay between patriarchal, colonial masculine subjectivities and alternative subcultural masculinities within plural Caribbean societies”, which generates grievous inequalities and monstrous suffering compounded by shame, self-doubt, and self-loathing (p. 5). Upholders of Eurocen-

tric hegemonic masculinities use guilt and fear to control men who do not meet the standard criteria by maintaining them in complicit, subordinate, or marginal positions within the pecking order. Threats and invitations of shame and pleasure incite both dread and desire in victims and victimizers, forcing them to avoid the social derision that comes with transgression.

The colonial, neocolonial or postcolonial contexts that permeate James' Trinidad, St. Omer's Saint Lucia, and Patterson's Jamaica twist their protagonists into victims and victimizers within the societies and epochs they live in. Political independence notwithstanding, these characters and their island societies are subject to former colonial metropolises through ideology, education, and economy. For instance, *Minty Alley's* Mr. Haynes cannot assess the lives and deeds of his fellow tenants in other terms besides his own, namely those of a young man who belongs to the mulatto (colored) middle class of early twentieth century colonial Trinidad. Haunted by the ghost of his departed mother, Haynes's inability to move and act beyond the limits of 1920's mulatto middle class masculinity makes his interactions with the inhabitants of the barrack yards an awkward affair. John Lestrade from *A room on the hill* is both victim and victimizer within a colonial society akin to St. Lucia in the nineteen-fifties, when the island was still a British colony subject to the social, political, economic, and cultural influence of the French Catholic Church. The deaths of his mother and friends force Lestrade to confront his conflicted feelings about his absentee father and the unmanning both men share with others in his island society. In *An absence of ruins*, Alexander Blackman returns to a recently independent Jamaica after years of sojourn in London. Already estranged from himself and others by personal frustrations and a difficult relationship with his mother, extended family and former wife, Blackman realizes that the working-class people of Jamaica have little in common with the notion of the "folk" he has come to espouse after years of study. This fact compounds his divorce from his nation and alienates him from his fellow Jamaicans, causing him to return to England as an emasculated outcast who cannot manage the pleasures and perils of the postcolonial world.

Similar to what Fanon states, these characters are African descended men living among their own in the twentieth century, always on edge about the next moment when their "inferiority" will come into being "through the other", particularly the "almost-white, the mulatto, and the nigger" (p. 110). These characters become lost in a "dark and unarguable" blackness that relentlessly torments, pursues, disturbs and angers them with insidious claims that "Negroes are savages, brutes, illiterates" (p. 117). Despite knowing such claims to be false, Afro-Caribbean men's relationship to one another is compromised by the oppressor's language and culture:

Every colonized people – in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality – finds itself face to face with the language of the civi-

lizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle. (p. 18)

Haynes, Lestrade and Blackman embody what Fanon would term an "eloquent form of ambivalence" (p. 19). Rather than being "deified" for their closeness to the mother country, they find themselves cut off from the common folk as well as their friends and family. They are also unable to accede to Eurocentric masculinity and its privileges because they were groomed to fulfill the role of mediators between the metropole and its colonized subjects. They are essentially lackeys who "convey the master's orders to their fellows" and enjoy "a certain position of honor" that is little more than a sham (p. 19).

Colonial education and its social, cultural, and political ramifications play key roles in Haynes's, Lestrade's, and Blackman's notions of self and other. Like many West Indians of their times, these characters remain immersed in European bourgeois ideologies of gender, race, and class, and thus cannot think in other terms. Seeking to unveil and heal this psychological dis-ease, West Indian male authors resorted to a self-fashioning that would facilitate their entry into the metropole's space of hegemonic masculinity and authorship as defined by late nineteenth and early-to-mid twentieth century mainstream British thought. As Belinda Edmondson states in *Making men: gender, literary authority, and women's writing in Caribbean narrative*, race became conflated with genre, gender, literary discourse and other considerations in twentieth century West Indian contexts:

The tropistic relationship between nineteenth-century Englishness and twentieth-century West Indianness has structured the meaning of "authorship" and "nation" in anglophone Caribbean discourse such that what is now recognized as West Indian oppositional discourse to Britain is still marked by a utilization of a specifically English vision of what constitutes intellectual production. That English "vision" of intellectual authority is the idea that intellectual labor is the realm of "real" men, "gentlemen," middle-class/upper-class Englishmen. For nonwhite, non-English men to make a case for self-government, they must state their case as gentlemen, which means they must, in essence be "made" into Englishmen. (p. 5)

Nineteen and twentieth century struggles to (re)define Caribbean manhood and womanhood contributed to the predations enforced by colonialist regimes entrenched in racism, sexism, and classism.

Desire for social mobility and access to wealth, power, and respectability compelled a chosen few men of Afro-Caribbean (later Indo-Caribbean) descent to pursue an education that would remake them into subjects entirely in the image and likeness of the metropole. West Indian men with the means and ability to do so could take advantage

of glaring weaknesses in England's policies towards its colonies in the Caribbean basin:

The one chink in the English imperial armor was its domestic class policies; the degraded status of blackness could be renegotiated through black men's access to the status of "gentleman" through the critical knowledge of the artifacts of English cultural archaeology. If, on the one hand, nineteenth-century British imperialism defined England as superior to its nonwhite colonies, on the other it allowed for a handful of the nonwhite "elect" to be trained in the manner of the English gentleman. These men were to pass on the tenets of Englishness to their societies in their roles as civil servants and other kinds of "go-betweens" between the colonial government and the colonial society. The black men of this class became the West Indies' first black middle class ... (pp. 8-9)

However, Leah Pate alleges that such privilege could not ease the inner turmoil of most Caribbean subjects. In *At home in the world: masculinity, maturation, and domestic space in the Caribbean Bildungsroman*, Pate argues that colonial education did the exact opposite for "black, Indian, and Asian students lucky enough to attend school", for they "... faced "historical erasure",

... rooted in a curriculum based on a Manichaeian value system whereby white was privileged over black, male over female, and, most overwhelmingly, England over the Caribbean in such a way that knowledge was removed from the realm of experience. Anything and everything worth knowing was foreign to the colonized student, and home was always elsewhere. (pp. 33-34)

Built upon deleterious silencing and selective oblivion, colonial education played an important role in enforcing alienation and separation in its victims and victimizers. A system of education so "removed from the realm of experience" of Afro-Caribbean children taught its pupils to see themselves as "savages" who would inexorably follow the common road of misery, poverty, and powerlessness most West Indians were doomed to walk unless they met the many demands of Anglocentric hegemonic masculinity.

These and similar difficulties bound West Indian men to Eurocentric paradigms of knowing, thinking, and feeling carefully crafted to teach them to despise and deride anything that deviated from the paradigms of the mother country. Such definitions of manhood and character became hegemonic as far as they encompassed what many men considered their "natural" prerogatives, rights, and duties, similar to what Downes writes about the aims and terms of colonial masculinist hegemony:

The appropriate values of colonial hegemonic masculinity were those represented by the English gentleman, since historically creoles were viewed as inferior to their metropolitan cousins. The features of hegemonic mas-

culinity ... were precisely those which were privileged within England in the Victorian and Edwardian periods: sociopolitical leadership; economic dominance; heterosexuality; headship of nuclear family; chivalric defence of property, empire and family. Moreover, there was a renewed emphasis on physical prowess, expressed in sports and war, which served to reinforce the “naturalness” of male power. This expression of masculinity was also aggressive, racist and expansionist, but Euro-Christianity played a pivotal role in lending moral authority to this version of masculinity. (p. 107)

Afro-Caribbean males aped hegemonic “white” masculinities as a way of gaining acceptance and respectability in the racialized/racist colonial system that degraded non-European sex/gender performances. In practice, however, they were barred from sharing in the largesse that England derived from its chokehold over much of the Caribbean basin at the time. Most of the few Afro-Caribbean males who received English-style education became complicit with the colonial project insofar as their subordinate masculinities served the interests of English hegemony. By mimicking the idea of English (gentle)men as defined and performed in the nineteenth/twentieth century, Afro-Caribbean men believed they could challenge the master by “stealing” his books and creating counter-discourses out of their contents, but this alone would not suffice to dethrone him. The struggles with self and Other would never be over as long as colonialism and its offshoots weighed in whatever sense colonial, neo and postcolonial subjects made of their own lives and their struggles with gender, race, class and the hegemonic discourses that loom large in the lives of Afro-Caribbean peoples.

West Indian literature is rife with conflicts related to masculinity and unmaning. Earl Lovelace’s *The wine of astonishment* evinces such struggles through its protagonists Bee Dorcas and Bolo, both of whom live in Bonasse, Trinidad at the time of the Shouter Prohibition Ordinance (1917/51). Whereas Bee is a church leader who fashions his masculinity through pacifist resistance against colonial authority, Bolo is a warrior who advocates a more belligerent version of masculinity to oppose the government, only to be sent to prison and abandoned by a community he resents for embracing what he regards as “softness” and “passivity”. After his release, the former stick-fighter becomes a criminal who terrorizes the people he once loved, leading to his death during a standoff with colonial police.

In “Calling all dragons: the crumbling of Caribbean masculinity, Kenneth Ramchand examines Lovelace’s *The dragon can’t dance* and its protagonist Aldrick through the scope of Caribbean masculinity. Ramchand uses the term “construction” to restore “the notion of human agency, of someone doing the constructing” of masculinity, who is therefore accountable for “the deliberate and conscious part we can play both in the process of making-over or reconstructing ourselves and in the shaping of concepts and images that influence behaviour and attitudes” (p. 311). The term also implies “the

guilt and accountability certain interests must bear for establishing, or for acquiescing in, “constructions” of persons not justified in nature” as well as “social arrangements disadvantageous to particular groups and classes” (p. 311). Nevertheless, Ramchand argues that Caribbean subjects should assume responsibility for themselves and others rather than settle for indolent resistance or the violence of “bad-johns”, persons who through criminal behavior constantly subvert “colonial attempts to regulate and civilize them” while blaming others for the way their lives turn out (p. 311). According to Ramchand, Aldrick goes beyond passively resisting Eurocentric hegemonic masculinity and becomes the “masculine dragon” he played every year at Carnival by putting into practice the strength and self-possession it represents (p. 321). Aldrick reconstructs his masculinity to empower Sylvia, treating her as “a person in her own right” who must learn to “make her own way” in life rather than “surrender her individuality for the care and protection of any man” (p. 321). Unlike Aldrick, Bolo never unlearns his ingrained notions of so-called true masculinity. This inability prevents the young man from going beyond the proverbial bad-john roles of “figure of resistance” and “African warrior”, making him a dangerous subject who turns against his community because he wants to “be seen or acknowledged as a person” (i.e. a man) above all else (p. 313).

Albert Memmi explores these dynamics in *The colonizer and the colonized*. According to Memmi, the colonizer is unmanned because of his “double illegitimacy” (p. 9). He arrives at a foreign land ruled by a metropole that grants him wealth, power and privilege at the expense of the native population. Knowing he is to blame for the latter’s misfortunes, the colonizer exploits the colonized because he needs the latter’s work and degradation to maintain his illegitimate rule and the bounty it affords him. For that matter, the colonized sees himself as a lowly being who is always “less than” the colonizer. The colonized regards the mother country as a panacea that will solve his problems and do away with his inadequacies, so when he compares himself and his people to the metropole and its representatives, he looks upon the latter favorably and regards the former with shame and contempt.

Memmi alleges that the colonized falls into the colonizer’s trap because he is deceived by “[t]he mythical portrait of the colonized,” the oppressor’s fashioning of the oppressed as sub-humans beset by “unbelievable laziness,” ingrained unruliness, and a taste for violence and disorder which the colonizer must police for the colonized’s own good (p. 79). The colonized is unmanned by racism, economic exploitation and what Fanon terms an “inferiority complex” created by the colonizer who killed and buried his masculinity and way of life in the name of progress and civilization (Fanon: 18). These self-destructive tendencies relate as well to Fanon’s own findings about the behavior of black men living in a white world:

The Negro’s behavior makes him akin to an obsessive neurotic type. . . he puts himself into a complete situational neurosis. In the man of color there

is a constant effort to run away from his own individuality, to annihilate his own presence. Whenever a man of color protests, there is alienation.

Whenever a man of color rebukes, there is alienation. (Memmi: 60)

Although a chosen few among the colonized have access to education, the latter is saturated with the metropole's Eurocentric worldview and demands. The anxieties that arise from such demands compel colonized subjects to construct their masculinity according to the standards of European (and later North American) hegemony. As Martin Summers argues in *Manliness and its discontents: the Black middle class and the transformation of masculinity, 1900-1930*, Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean men who lived in the United States and elsewhere in the western hemisphere from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century could fashion themselves into middle-class men by cultivating their "character" (p. 1). This "catchall term" entailed a "collection of individual traits" that made men into "virtuous member[s] of the community" by cultivating traits such as "honesty, piety, self-control, and a commitment to the producer values of industry, thrift, punctuality, and sobriety" (p. 1).

Moreover, the mulatto middle-classes from French and British colonies in the Caribbean "laid claim to a bourgeois status partly through respectability" (p. 7). Using the work of Bridget Brereton, Summers defines respectability as an adherence to middle-class Eurocentric notions of gendered, raced, and classed hierarchy. These mores regulated individual and collective behavior (particularly the performance of sexuality) through prescriptions of so-called proper conduct, and placed utmost importance on "educational advancement for [middle-class] children" ("Society and culture in the Caribbean: the British and French West Indies, 1870-1980", pp. 90-92; quoted in Summers: 7). However, these standards were contested during the early twentieth century by "[a] modern ethos of masculinity" that intruded upon earlier notions of what it meant to be a man (Summers: 8). According to Summers,

[m]anhood became less defined by production (or engagement in the marketplace), character, respectability, and the producer values of industry, thrift, regularity, and temperance. Rather, middle-class Americans increasingly unlinked manhood from the market, at least from the orientation of the producer, and began to define it in terms of consumption. One's manhood became more and more defined by the consumer goods one owned, the leisure practices one engaged in, and one's physical and sexual virility. Respectability, or the public performance of producer values, also became less important in middle-class constructions of masculinity. (p. 8)

Although the old standards of masculinity did not disappear completely, they lost much of their earlier preeminence in the eyes of the public inside and outside the United States.

In addition to power, prestige and respectability, Afro-Caribbean men were compelled to flaunt their masculine largesse by buying, consuming and performing heterosexu-

ality. Such expectations led to the creation of hierarchies of masculinity akin to the ones E. Antonio de Moya explores in “Power games and totalitarian masculinity in the Dominican Republic”, namely “hegemonic” masculinities, “subordinate” masculinities, “marginal” masculinities and “residual” masculinities” (p. 80). These hierarchies are “concentric circles centred on the notion of power and control, superimposed on the yin-yang dialectic of the household and street cultures” (p. 81). Hegemonic males are “exclusively heterosexual and nominally monogamous” men who father “children of both sexes who are kept and educated at least until eighteen years of age or until marriage” (p. 82). They are expected to practice “[s]poradic or recurrent unfaithfulness to one’s wife, or having a mistress and children” as part of “a certain transgressiveness allowed to the hegemonic male” (p. 82). These sorts of men are mostly loyal to their male children, who in turn are “supposed to ‘inherit’ their father’s masculinity” and its accompanying praxes and prerogatives (p. 82). Next come “[s]ubordinate heterosexual men”, “still-men” who have yet to earn the title of “true” or “real” men, assuming they can ever do so (p. 81). This group consists of men deemed “incomplete” by their peers because of deficiencies in their virility or character, particularly if they remain childless bachelors past the age of twenty (p. 84). Further down are “virtual men”, adult biological males that are not regarded as “true” men because they behave in ways unbecoming of hegemonic masculinity (p. 84). Men in this group lack initiative and assertiveness and have little to no control over people inside and outside of the household, which prompts other men to dismiss them as weak-willed, passive nobodies (p. 84-85). Lower still are “dudes”, suspicious men whose masculinity is contested because they depend on mothers, wives, or other women to survive economically, or otherwise live off them as kept men (p. 85). The bottom rung is comprised by “survivors” and “losers”, men who are “generally treated as outcasts, pariahs or non-persons” because of their “social and economic powerlessness”, which makes it difficult, if not impossible, for them to find and retain female partners (p. 86).

Irrespective of where they stand within these echelons, most men of African descent have suffered from racism, dispossession and disenfranchisement that stem from the same Eurocentric establishments that prod them with promises of wealth, power and enjoyment, yet simultaneously bar them from transforming such dreams into reality. Colonized men have experienced the underside of what Rafael L. Ramírez defines as “the power of masculinity.” According to Ramírez,

[m]en perceive the power of masculinity in contradictory ways. Collectively, men are considered to be powerful, but individually, there are men who do not have much power – men subjugated to other men and, on occasion, to women – and who evaluate themselves as individuals deprived of power. This situation responds to the fact that the power of masculinity is constructed and unevenly manifested in homosocial relationships (social

relations among male actors, from which women are excluded). Masculine power is also interrelated with existing inequalities in a society. (pp. ix-x)

Personal success or failure notwithstanding, Afro-Caribbean men and their American counterparts have never experienced what Summers would term a “seamless change” in definitions of masculinity (Summers: 9). They have constantly reconstructed and renegotiated their masculinity on the premise of gender identities, “means of becoming” that entailed processes “marked by ambiguity, contradictions, and uncertainty” in the midst of ongoing Euro-American economic exploitation and cultural encroachment (p. 9).

Lament of the unmanly: masculinity, alienation, and unmanning in C.L.R.

James's *Minty Alley*

Minty Alley tells the story of Mr. Haynes, a young middle class Afro-Caribbean man of 1920s Trinidad who rents out his late mother's house and moves into the slums at No. 2 Minty Alley. Although the inhabitants of the barrack-yards show a great deal of respect and deference towards him, the very deference and power Haynes derives from his education as well as his privileged position regarding race, class and gender alienate him from his neighbors. Colonized by education and middle-class ideology, Haynes' personal circumstances make any rupture with colonial history, culture, identity, and being all but unlikely.

As the young gentleman ponders what to do about his dwindling income, he recalls how his mother molded him into the man he has become. Mrs. Haynes instills in her only son the urgency of achieving financial independence because she is aware of the perils that await someone in his gendered, racialized and classed position, yet rather than explain the situation and help him make his own decisions, she preempts the young man's agency:

In the West Indies, to get a profession meant going to England or America, and his mother had decided she would send him to England. She was a headmistress and in her spare time taught unwearyingly. First she had bought the house on a stiff mortgage. Haynes was to work in the island for a year or two and then, when the mortgage had been paid off, she would send him abroad and keep him there. Medicine it was to be. ‘Law wouldn't suit you, my child. You are your father's son.’ She got a job for him in the only book shop in the town, and Haynes worked in the day and came home and read the books in the evenings. For all the change it made, he might have been still at school. (James: 22)

Mrs. Haynes takes over “masculine” duties such as breadwinner, protector, and head of the family following the death of her husband. Since her son exhibits an excess of traits commonly relegated to women (namely meekness, passivity, and “softness”), she assumes the lad would founder if he pursued a career in law, which demands initi-

ative, assertiveness, “hardness”, and other “masculine” characteristics. However, illness disrupts Mrs. Haynes’s authority over the household. The hegemonic order she helped maintain ultimately degrades her into an economic burden her son must assume. For all her talk about the need for black men to have a profession and become financially independent, Mrs. Haynes unwittingly disrupts her son’s quest to achieve hegemonic masculinity acceptable to the mulatto bourgeoisie of his time. The young gentleman becomes unmanned because he thinks himself deprived of the means and qualities he needs to assume his “rightful” masculine roles of breadwinner, protector, and ruler.

This deficiency becomes evident during the first of many violent incidents Haynes witnesses at Minty Alley. When Nurse Jackson physically assaults her son, the lad escapes to Haynes’s room, yet the young man’s half-hearted protests cannot save him from his fate. The incident caused Haynes to recall his own childhood under the tutelage of an overbearing woman who, much like the Nurse herself, meticulously planned every step and direction her son would take in life while disregarding any say he had on the matter. These parallels become clearer that evening, when Jackson visits him in an effort to justify her actions: “I suppose that you [Haynes] think me a cruel mother. But Sonny is my only child and all my hopes are on him. I’ll give him anything he wants and that a child should have, but he will obey me until he is a man for himself” (p. 47). Just as Sonny is unable to stop his mother from wailing on him, Haynes cannot extricate himself from his mother’s lingering influence, as evinced by his embrace of the middle-class ideals she taught him to value above all else, such as financial independence achieved through the practice of a prestigious profession.

Following the incident, the Nurse returns frequently to “attend to Haynes” after he injures his foot: “She [the Nurse] talked easily, told him [Haynes] a lot about herself, and extracted twice as much from him” (p. 49). Haynes’s naiveté blinds him to the very real possibility that the Nurse, Mrs. Rouse, and others might be trying to deceive him for their own purposes, so he volunteers crucial information about himself to someone who has a keen interest in knowing as much as possible about him. Such gullibility demonstrates that Haynes is severely wanting in cunning, discernment, and other “masculine” traits. Moreover, he only escapes trouble because his family servant Ella was looking out for him. The fact that James’s protagonist needs a woman (and an impoverished Afro-Caribbean one at that) to protect him from Jackson and company demonstrates how ill-prepared Haynes is to confront the realities of life as a mulatto middle-class man living in 1920’s Trinidad.

Haynes is a subordinate heterosexual male who aspires to achieve hegemonic masculinity by acquiring a prestigious profession and marrying a woman from the colored bourgeoisie. Since he lacks the wealth, power and influence required to realize middle-class respectability through marriage and economic independence, the young gentleman moves into the barrack-yards to save money until he can put his mother’s plans

into practice. The young gentleman has depended economically upon Mrs. Haynes since his father's death, and even after her passing requires Ella's services to keep the pace of daily life inside and outside of the family home. *Minty Alley* portrays Haynes as a passive man much too dependent on the work of women, unable to make his way in the world without his mother's leadership and Ella nudging him in the "right" direction, so his masculinity falls somewhere in-between "incomplete" and "virtual".

Throughout the novel, Haynes shows himself to be weak-willed and easily manipulated by people inside and outside of his household. He never outgrows his petty bourgeois aspirations because his epoch and milieu will not allow him to, and he is much too unimaginative to create any other kind of life for himself. Haynes's unmanning chiefly stems from an incapacity to recognize the source of his oppression and inadequacies, namely early-twentieth century Trinidadian colonial society, its stratifications of race, class, and gender, and its conflictual and conflicted discursive coercion. Dwindling fortunes and job insecurity may have forced Haynes to mingle with "ordinary people", as Ella puts it, but these setbacks do little to change his mind about who he is and what he ought to do. This fact ultimately unmans him after the barrack-yards become gentrified and its new inhabitants prepare to sing their own lament of the unhomely.

On banality and belonging: masculinity, unmanning, and nationhood in Garth St. Omer's *A room on the hill*

St. Omer's John Lestrade hails from an island society similar to 1950s St. Lucia, when the island was a Crown Colony ruled by England and the French Catholic Church. Lestrade's ways of thinking and seeing himself as a man make him a typical example of both victim and victimizer under mid-twentieth century British colonialism as well as of the selfishness and alienation characteristic of the middle-class of his time. The unmanning that plagues St. Omer's protagonist all but truncates any attempt at reconstructing race, class, and gender in other terms besides those of mid-twentieth century Eurocentric hegemony.

Colonialism in all of its versions and guises can cause Omerian characters to become complicit with their own oppression just as easily as it can persuade them that all human striving is pointless. Still, a handful of these victims and victimizers take a third option: unable as they are to leave the island or excise the hold of colonialism from their minds, they arrive at a consciousness of their own oppression that most of their contemporaries never attain. Nevertheless, these choices ultimately alienate colonized subjects from themselves and their fellow men, a severance no less insidious than the pursuit of Eurocentric "success" and the forsaking of self and Other through indifference and learned helplessness.

Lestrade makes such an attempt following the deaths of his mother Lena and his friend Stephen. John's guilt over his inaction to save Stephen causes him to give up on his plans to study in Canada, much to his mother's shock:

"Why are you punishing yourself?" [Lena] asked again ...

"What do you mean?" [John] prevaricated.

"You're punishing yourself. And you're punishing me. Whatever you're punishing yourself for, you're punishing me, too, for it."

It was intolerable that she should take his pain and add to hers.

It was intolerable that he should have pain she could not share.

They were compelled to a confrontation neither of them had looked for.

(St. Omer: 44)

Lena emasculates Lestrade by forcing herself on *his* pain and suffering. She strips her son of a valuable means for reevaluating his gendered, raced and classed sense of self, which in turn would allow him to revalidate his agency as a colonial male subject from the mulatto middle-class of nineteen-fifties St. Lucia.

This also explains why John refuses to accept the truth when Harold tells him that Stephen's death was a suicide: "... Stephen's cry, coming over to [John] on the wind, was no longer a cry inviting him to death and unfulfillment. Its echo rolled over him senselessly, with ugly deceit" (73). Stephen's suicide transforms John's life and world into something unhomely. Lestrade can no longer feel at ease within the proverbial castle of his skin because its foundations are defective at best and compromised at worst. His inner abode has become as hostile and stultifying as his island society and the multitudes that accept colonial domination as their lot in life. Possessed by remembrance, John recalls a sinister amusement from his childhood:

As a boy [Lestrade] had often stood in the dirty, shallow water, his shoes in his hands and the unclean smells all around him, looking at the rats drown in their submerged cages. The frantic struggle of the rats to escape amused him. They clung to the steel wires. They fought each other for possession as if the wires did not confine them to death but led to liberty and life. They bit one another. They turned their sharp teeth even on themselves. He and his friends watched and laughed. Eventually, exhausted, they lost their grip and sank slowly, their grey bellies upturned, and the displaced air from their bodies rising in assorted bubbles to the sea's dirty surface. (p. 39)

Lestrade and company briefly "usurped" the privileged position of the metropole and its colonial representatives whenever they watched vermin wage a futile war of survival, similar to how tourists drop by their island to observe the "natives" in their "natural" habitat. Just as the rats were of a "sickly" grey rather than black or white, Lestrade is cut off from the peasantry of his island society because he is not "black" enough in regard to social position, political allegiances, and ideology, and is exclud-

ed as well from the metropolitan English and the Euro-Creole colonial ruling classes because he is not sufficiently “white.”

John’s very existence unmans him because it does not allow him to negotiate his life in raced, classed and gendered terms besides those allowed by the either/or dichotomies preconized by colonial society. Society itself practically bars Lestrade and others from performing the currently most honored versions of “black” or “white” masculinity as well as enjoying their privileges. This frustrating liminality is also present during one of the most painful moments in John’s life:

[John’s] mother was standing in the doorway of the small shop, alone. It seemed she was about to cry. He went to her side; she might not have seen him. She was looking at Chou Macaque. Chou was standing in the middle of the ring of onlookers and was inviting his mother to come down on the pavement. [...] Chou’s imprecations rolled out of his black lips into the hot air, dirty as the clothes he wore, uglier than his unshaved face with gaps where the batons of policemen had knocked his teeth out, as deformed, in his mixture of patois and English, as his flat bare feet, cracked between the toes and at the heels, and black at the cracks with dirt. (p. 77)

With his father absent, it falls upon John to protect his mother and household, yet he fails to do so out of fear of a lumbering giant of a man who could beat Lena and himself to a bloody pulp just as easily as he can drown them in hosannas of obloquy with the complicity of their community. Lestrade shows an appalling lack of mastery over language as a weapon for performing an alternative masculinity that might successfully challenge Chou Macaque’s, as he does not even try to rally the crowd in Lena’s favor or persuade her attacker to leave them alone.

Chou and the mob tell John all he needs to know: he is the product of Lena’s clandestine union with a married man known only as Mr. Lestrade. Although the elder Lestrade contributes to Lena and John’s upkeep, this is not enough to save the family from shame and ostracism because their union violated prevalent social and religious mores. John himself has turned to indifference and forgetting to excise the painful memories of the few times his father was present in his life. One specific instance taught him to regard fatherhood differently:

It was Thalia’s laughter while he stood, his back to her, and pissed against the wooden fence of the yard, that he had been listening to. And when he no longer heard it, he had turned to see her disappearing behind the corner of his mother’s house, her hand to her mouth, and at the same time, felt himself lifted by one hand and the heavy repeated stings of the thick black belt his father had removed from his waist. He was only eleven years old then but the memory of this must have helped to provoke his adolescent resentment and the expression he gave to it a few years later. More than the pain of the strap it had been the feeling of being unjustly punished by

someone who, now, no longer had the right to punish, that had moved him. (p. 79)

By urinating in public, John casts doubt on his father's claims to colored middle-class masculinity because he acts in ways usually expected from villagers, drunkards, and other undesirables. The lad undermines Mr. Lestrade's facade of bourgeois prestige and respectability by putting him in the same raced, classed and gendered social echelons as Chou Macaque and his "flock".

Although Mr. Lestrade does not own the house, the place essentially belongs to him as long as he acts as breadwinner and protector of his "other" family. Although he is not married to Lena, performing these roles grants Mr. Lestrade legal authority over his former lover and son, which gives him the "right" to punish John whenever he misbehaves. However, in the young man's eyes, Mr. Lestrade has no power over his mother and himself because he does little else apart from supporting them economically, as demonstrated by his absence during the altercation with Chou Macaque. As far as John is concerned, Mr. Lestrade was exercising a prerogative of masculinity he had no right to perform when he punished him that day. Still, the elder Lestrade will not allow his son to challenge his claims to mulatto middle-class masculinity, as shown by the former's reaction when John assaulted him years later:

There was this look of undethronable authority on his father's face that would have driven his growing feeling of helplessness to murder if it were possible. And his father's calm figure standing stockily on its slightly parted legs, looking at him with considering detachment as if he were some strange animal, no surprise on its face, and slowly putting back the belt into the tabs at its trousers' waist, seemed to mock his inadequacy. (p. 79)

John's father derides the whole spectacle as a sham, gazing upon the lad as if he were little more than a caged gorilla pounding its chest at a local zoo.

Just as the man dismissed John's adolescent assertion of masculinity, his son belittles Mr. Lestrade's newfound love and concern for his offspring. When Mr. Lestrade announces his plans to sell Lena's house and give the money to John without even consulting him, the latter takes offense at this ultimate intrusion. Although young Lestrade cannot stop his father, he finds other means to channel his pent-up rage: "Not so long ago [John's] father had bought a car which, because he had learnt so late to drive, he drove with caution and with difficulty. The image of his father sitting awkwardly behind the steering wheel of his second-hand car made him smile. And he felt better" (p. 81). Mr. Lestrade might have the capital to acquire a car, yet lacks the expertise necessary to master the vehicle. John interprets this as a deficiency of masculinity on his father's part, which in turn gives him the rare chance to laugh at his father's foibles without fear of punishment.

The tragedies in John's life compel him to acknowledge his own oppression, yet this option is not free from conflict. Like other Omerian male protagonists, Lestrade embodies an essential lack of character and moral fiber that is both cause and effect of the lives he leads as a subordinate heterosexual male in his island society. John's aimless drifting, budding alcoholism and inability to confront his father makes him a "virtual" man according to the standards of hegemonic masculinity: he may "look" like a man, yet he does not act like one because he has abdicated all initiative and responsibility for himself. Personal circumstances notwithstanding, there is very little that makes John Lestrade stand out from his small circle of friends, let alone other "heroes" from St. Omer's corpus. Lestrade and other characters reject all possibility of change and purpose: their mere existence belies all finality (except death) because they never truly lived. *A room on the hill* reaches a similar "conclusion" itself: its so-called ending is little more than an impasse to the extent Lestrade and company reprise their unmanning throughout the rest of St. Omer's work.

The masculine abyss: alienation and unmanning in Orlando Patterson's *An absence of ruins*

Set in Jamaica shortly after the island achieved independence, *An absence of ruins* examines race, class and gender from the perspective of Alexander Blackman, its Afro-Caribbean petty bourgeois male protagonist. After years of sojourn in England, Alex returns to his native land as a young sociologist who hopes to contribute to the new postcolonial government. However, his personal crises reduce him to a subject of anomie unmanned by friends, family, and his inability to come to terms with himself and the people in his life in positive ways.

Blackman's knowledge of African and European history makes him conscious of his own oppression as well as that of his nation, yet does not provide him with the means to refashion himself in positive ways. He also adheres to a long-revered version of masculinity that socializes males to regard women as objects of desire they can capture and consume to attain "manly" enjoyment and fulfillment. Social ascendancy and its attendant notions of prestige and respectability are inseparable from such fulfillment, becoming crucial goals for men of the mulatto middle-class. Under this sort of masculinity, a failed marriage strips men of "masculine power" because they cannot hold on to their woman's body and loyalty, let alone stop her from giving herself to other men. These emasculated male subjects lose face in the eyes of society by being "conquered" themselves by whatever man claims their "property" or status symbol. Because of this, Alexander shifts blame for his fears and inadequacy to his current wife Pauline, conveniently forgetting that *he* is at fault for the failing marriage. Alex interprets Pauline's emotional outbursts as performances of "excessive" femininity that exacerbate his anger because they deviate from hegemonic masculine standards of objectivity, rationality and self-control. Although he cannot empathize with somebody

who refuses to stand up for herself when she suffers abuse or mistreatment, Blackman is left “bare, contrite, exposed to himself” when he realizes he is the one who “bludgeoned [Pauline]” into the antithesis of the “thing of passion” she once was (Patterson: 51).

Alex’s inability to relate to people in terms besides his own compels him to create a deluded philanthropy as tyrannical and destructive as the greed and lust for power of the former colonizers. Similar to the former, the young gentleman conquers “weaker” people, enslaves them to serve his purposes, and discards them when they outlive their usefulness. Fueled by guilt, shame and bad faith, Alexander derides these persons as “weak” or “deficient” to justify his dominance over them and profiteer from their lives, blaming them for their shortcomings as well as his own. Like the old representatives of “civilization”, Alex takes it upon himself to “uplift” his own victims from their “degraded” state, yet refuses to acknowledge the fact that he is at the very least partially responsible for *his* downfall as well as theirs.

As David Scott argues, Patterson’s protagonist is “not merely devoid of essence but *deprived* of essence” because he is both “a willing being and an enslaved being. . . caught in a web of paradoxes” (p. 169). Blackman is obliged to take responsibility for himself despite being stuck in uneasy anomie that will not allow him to hold on to his former colonized self, yet also bars him from embracing the postcolonial condition and all that comes with it. Within this liminal state, he is only able to assert his masculinity and agency in trivial ways, as shown during a particular instance:

As I walked I kept remembering all the advertisements for Red-Stripe beer. I believed it all now. Anything that would fill, even momentarily, the vacancy within me; anything that would end the crippling sense of indecision that was becoming increasingly unbearable. And why not a Red-Stripe beer? They said on the radio that it was a man’s drink. I knew at least that I was a man – so there, that was something meant for me. They also said that nothing could better quench your thirst. I was very thirsty – therefore I could at least decide to drink some beer. (Patterson: 39)

Alex uses an advertisement as ironic self-reference to renegotiate his masculinity. He fashions himself as a Jamaican man among countless others who cannot make any serious decisions to confront their own (dis)ease as postcolonial subjects living in the wake of independence. Unable to come to terms with the experience of failure at a personal and collective level, Blackman refuses all choice save for inane acts that tease him with what he seeks, only to unceremoniously take it away.

The young man makes his actions a site of abdication where neither negation nor fulfillment is possible because he deems all choices irrelevant, yet cannot opt out of choosing and living with its consequences, tainting even his most inoffensive needs and desires with self-contradiction. Such abdication threatens his notions of masculinity, as demonstrated during his encounter with a prostitute. Blackman’s perfor-

mance of hypermasculinity strives to meet the standards set by the currently most revered versions of masculinity, yet his failures in such efforts highlight his incapacity to meet such standards, evincing just how unmanned he has become.

Alexander suffers further unmanning in the public and private spheres when his intellectual friends summon him to a private gathering. After much arguing about government policies and the protagonist's inability to assume determinate positions about the new nation and its problems, Lloyd reiterates what Alex already knows:

"You're a black man; a Negro. And you live in a white world. The colonial past is still here in this country ... We are black men in a white civilisation and whether you like it or not you're committed to the freedom of your race ..."

There is your country. This land. Our land which we must save from the neo-imperialists. This people. Our people, which we must save from poverty. Which we must mobilise to action. And there is yourself which you must save from the corrupt bourgeois background we live in." (pp. 64-65)

Posturing notwithstanding, Alex knows why his friends keep coming up short on this endeavor. Lloyd and company claim to fight for Jamaica, but show little regard for the people they allegedly represent. Instead of engaging the common people in dialogue and ruling *with* them rather than *over* them, the group's members assume that their privileged social status entitles them to lead the general populace in the fight to save the new nation from mid-twentieth century Euro-American hegemonic interests and the predation and poverty they visit upon Jamaica.

For all its pretenses of enlightened cosmopolitanism and liberal altruism, colonialist ways of thinking keep this mulatto elite divorced from the life and realities of most Jamaicans, reducing it to a provincial enclave as recalcitrant as the postcolonial government it opposes. The group also encumbers the Jamaican folk with "feminine" traits such as passivity and docility, unmanning voiceless majorities as they unman Blackman himself. Lloyd and the others dismiss the sociologist's personal reservations as irrelevant and expunge him from their inner circle on the grounds of his being uncommitted to common goals, complicit with the postcolonial establishment, or otherwise indifferent to his nation and people.

Nevertheless, while Alexander needs no reminders about Jamaica's state of affairs, he also knows that repeating truisms does not help anybody. Pressed by Lloyd's speeches, the protagonist unveils the source of his grievances:

"I don't want to be categorised. I don't want to be labelled and compartmentalised into little pigeonholes of abstractions, no matter how large, no matter how important they may seem. I don't want to spend my life *being* a Negro or being a Jamaican or being a socialist or a capitalist or what you like. I'm goddamn sick and tired of the whole damn' process. I'm bored, absolutely bored with being things, with being abstractions. If you must

know, I simply want to be me, to be what I am. And that alone takes a lifetime of knowing. And until I know that any attempt at being Jamaican or socialist or reactionary or Negro or what you like is just jumping the gun. As far as I'm concerned all I'd be then would be simply a model of paper labels which tears easily and is all hollow inside." (p. 65)

The more Blackman struggles to escape this imprisonment, the more he falls into the same rut. His circle of "enlightened" friends labels him a straddler at best and a traitor at worst because colonial education and the political ideologies they share have not prepared them for someone like Alexander.

Imploding due to the increasing momentum of this widening gyre, Alex turns to history to make sense of his absence of ruins. The Eurocentric narratives he learned and interiorized abroad only taught him to regard himself as an excrescence of Western hegemony, one whose very existence justifies the doings of England and its colonial cronies. Still, Blackman knows better than to buy into the tantalizing alternative offered by the Rastafari movement. He cannot embrace those myths that lionize Ethiopia as a promised land "where all was bliss and peace and love" and descendants of enslaved Africans could abolish the centuries-long suffering and oppression visited upon them by European powers (p. 97). Although Alexander soon finds the fissures that creep into such a discourse, his attitude does little to mitigate the clash that follows:

So I [Blackman] went up to one of these cultists and I asked him with humility what was to be, what was to come of us who did not believe. And he drew himself up and he said with great wrath:

"Thou shall burn, Babylon; oh you son of Sodom; you who was mothered in whoredom and villainy; if you are not with us, then you are against us; an' if you are against us then you shall surely suffer the dreadful fate of the oppressors. Your tongue shall be plucked out! You shall be made to thirst until the verge of death with a glass of cold lemonade dangling less than an inch from your lips. Then you shall be roasted slowly from the big toes upwards. There will be no mercy; no mercy whatever for the oppressors of the children of the black God, the children of slavery, the true Israelites!" (p. 97)

Blackman regards these Rastafarians as desperate rabble-rousers maddened by deluded ideals. Furthermore, he is part of the mulatto middle-class this Rastaman has learned to blame for the tribulations that plague "the children of the black God." Like Lloyd and his fellow intellectuals, the preacher pigeonholes Alexander into ready-made abstractions and judges him accordingly. If Alex is not their ally, then he is another cynical "heathen" who carries the blood of Europe and Africa in his veins, yet sides with the white man's tyranny because he favors "Babylon" over the land of his enslaved ancestors.

This impasse leaves Blackman unmanned because it deprives him of alternative means for redefining his identity as a middle-class man of Afro-Caribbean descent stuck in the transition between Jamaica's colonial past and its uncertain postcolonial future. By constantly reminding himself of such abstractions, Alex sabotages his own performance of masculinity because he cannot think himself in other terms apart from Eurocentric or Afrocentric ones. The more Blackman quarrels with history, the more frustrated he becomes with its astounding ability to make sheer nonsense of itself in the name of remembering the past, explaining the present, and plotting out the future. Fed up with the whole affair, Alexander pinpoints the real reason for his foibles:

...[T]here is no longer any excuse, any reason, any explanation to be found outside myself. I come before history, I come before race, I come before culture, I come before parents, I come before God. At this point the very effort of finding such excuses has become mockingly self-defeating. In so doing I am like a temporarily impotent man straddled over a voluptuous, naked woman, incapable of having an erection, forcing myself to have one, while making humiliating excuses to her, yet by this very effort, by this very attempt at explaining his incapacity, failing even more. (p. 116)

Alex realizes that using culture, race, history, and even his social and familial background as scapegoat avails nothing. Just as the "temporarily impotent man" makes himself contemptible by blaming extraneous factors for his inability to perform masculinity, Afro-Caribbean men become unmanned when they fail to take responsibility for themselves despite the aggravations that mediate their lives as gendered, raced and classed subjects.

This impasse grants Blackman the chance to rearticulate himself as an Afro-Caribbean male subject, yet he ultimately squanders the lessons he has learned. Soon after his botched suicide attempt, Alex realizes what prompted his initial decision:

It was not himself really whom he wanted to hurt, but those others. If he had killed himself he would have made them all sorry; he would have made the whole world sorry. By committing suicide he would have singled out himself as one of those few who had suffered more, much more than was the ordinary human lot. It was not so much their pity that he needed, but their guilt, their remorse at what they had done to him. Suicide would have been the final, decisive statement absolving him of all responsibility, of all guilt, while at the same time, making them all responsible and guilty for him and his fate. (p. 119)

Blackman fakes his own death to "assert once and for all the position he had chosen on life", that so-called noble cowardice of "someone who refuses to be held responsible; who in his finer moments also refuses to hold anything or anyone responsible for himself, but who, in his baser moments, sought to do exactly the opposite (p. 120). However, the scheme results in the death of Alexander's mother, which earns him the

ire of his extended family and friends and causes him to return to England in shame. By the end of the novel, Blackman has not only become just another face in the crowd: he is a site of alienation and exile from self and Other, unmanned by his own choices and the raced, classed and gendered baggage that defines him despite his best efforts.

Blackman's disagreements with his intellectual friends and the Rastafari group bar him from alternative ways of relating to other people and modifying his notions of masculinity. Shunned and despised by nearly everyone he knows, Alex returns to England as an outcast, which relegates him to the masculine hierarchical rung occupied by "survivors" and "losers." Repeated errors in judgement confirm Alexander's unwillingness to take responsibility for himself, and his incapacity to learn from his mistakes unmans him because he cannot be trusted to behave in ways worthy of "real" men. These flaws invalidate Blackman's claims to hegemonic masculinity because he has allowed his quarrel with history to turn him into a debased nobody that has the appearance of a man and little else.

Conclusion: (un)becoming masculine subjects

Haynes, Lestrade and Blackman model their masculinities after the most honored ways of being a man prevalent in their respective societies. However, following such paradigms prevents them from meeting the standards of hegemonic masculinity, particularly economic self-sufficiency, aggressive heterosexuality, and mastery over self and Other. Though these characters live in relative privilege, their masculinities do not earn them the power, prestige and respectability attached to Eurocentric hegemonic masculinity because they do not fully belong to the upper or the lower strata of their islands' societies. As a result, they are barred from higher spheres of power and influence, and are also deprived of a sense of solidarity with their fellow colonized due to personal character flaws.

Mr. Haynes's mother insists that her only son should acquire a profession and become financially independent, as she is all too aware of the perils that assail an inexperienced middle-class "colored" young man who needs to be protected from contact with the "savagery" of the lower classes. Since Haynes cannot break free from his mother's hold, his allegiance to the Trinidadian mulatto middle-class worldview remains unchanged throughout the novel, causing him to become unmanned when he returns to his family home. His time in Minty Alley notwithstanding, in the end Haynes is the same dim-witted mama's boy he was at the start of the novel. Unable to see beyond his narrow middle-class worldviews, Haynes cannot arrive to a consciousness of the colonial oppression he and his fellow tenants suffer. Consequently, he deprives himself of the means to change how he relates to his social "inferiors", which in turn might have given him a chance to question his ways of thinking and constructing his masculinity.

A broken soul consumed by guilt over his supposed failures as a son and a man, John Lestrade can barely cope with the deaths of his mother and friends. Beset by depression and resentful over his father's absenteeism, St. Omer's protagonist becomes unmanned by a sense of futility after spending a lifetime in an island colonized by British social, political, and economic interests and stultified by the moral policing of the French Catholic Church. Being the offspring of an adulterous union, Lestrade cannot escape shame and derision in the eyes of colonial society, particularly after he fails to protect Lena from Chou Macaque and meets with disaster when he tries to assert his masculinity in front of his father. Unlike Haynes, Lestrade has an acute consciousness of his oppression as a colonized subject, but rather than liberate him, such consciousness further erodes John's mastery over himself, barring him from taking control of his own life, acceding to hegemonic masculinity and enjoying its spoils.

Alex Blackman is driven to despair by anxieties over his past as a subject of colonial Jamaica. Shortly after his nation becomes independent, Blackman realizes there is no place for him in a postcolonial Caribbean nation that remains in thrall to the Jamaican mulatto middle-class he himself belongs to. Alexander is conscious of his own oppression as a colonized subject, yet unlike Lestrade, he discards all possibility of establishing positive bonds of relation with other people when he tries to force the rest of the world to feel responsible for his life and death, thus releasing him from all obligation to himself and others. Although Blackman's dismissal of emotionality as feminine indicates an adherence to "masculine" tenets of reason, self-control and self-possession, his abdication of all self-responsibility demonstrates that he simply does not measure up to hegemonic masculine standards. Tired as he is of being categorized according to Eurocentric notions of race, class, and gender, Alex's inability to settle his quarrel with history and the world unmans him, causing him to return to England as a shadow of the man he never was.

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THE PENIS: PROBLEM, POWER OR PARTNER? INTERSECTIONS OF MALE INDO-CARIBBEAN SEXUALITIES AND PHALLOCENTRISM IN SHANI MOOTOO'S *CEREUS BLOOMS AT NIGHT*

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Although love, intimacy and sexuality are potent indices of Indo-Caribbean masculine identity in Shani Mootoo's *Cereus blooms at night* (1996), they are configured differently from their engagement in traditional West Indian canonical literary works that also depict constructions of Indo-Caribbean masculinities such as Samuel Selvon's *A brighter sun* (1952) and V.S. Naipaul's *A house for Mr. Biswas* (1961). *Cereus* reflects contentions and collisions encountered in the fabrication of ethnic, class and gender identities as it is set in the period of Indentureship but written from a contemporary ideological frame, highlighting the then social taboos of homosexuality, lesbianism, and transgender sexuality, as well as the heinous crimes of rape and incest among East Indian families in the Caribbean, represented through a slate of characters. Significant cultural variation occurs in sexual desire, orientation and practices leading to a social reality underpinned by gender diversity. This paper addresses the resultant milieu of sexualities, both in orientation and in practice, among Indo-Caribbean males in Mootoo's work and interrogates the possession of the biological penis as creating problems for some, generating power for a few, and forging partnerships for others, forging a tripartite interplay of phallocentrism among Indo-Caribbean males.

Mootoo's fictional enquiry reflects multiple narrative techniques inclusive of an embedded narrative, epistolary narratives, flash forwards and flashbacks, as well as a main plot and a sub-plot. The entire story, claims the author, is one that traces the known and unknown aspects of the genesis of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad. Predominantly East Indian in membership, the parent Church in Canada came to the Caribbean with a view to converting lower strata Indo-Caribbean ethnicities to Christianity so that they would return to India with a religion purer than their own. Says Mootoo:

My story gives the account of the spread of the Presbyterian faith among Indians, their conversion and their hope for an after-life. I use it also to reflect the shifts in a sexual paradigm present in the Caribbean, largely ignored by earlier writers, but present nonetheless. It is a story about ordinary people,

leading ordinary lives, not fabricated, but very realistic with their natural sexualities being hidden, not because there is anything abnormal about these; they simply had no choice! It is simply a society than reprimands alternative sexualities. But it is real. My story tells this reality (personal interview, 2006).

Harbouring potent understandings of the binary and normative constructs of gender as dictated by a heterocentric society, the reader experiences literary cognitive dissonance in the exposure to, and interrogation of, different dimensions of the sexual lives and experiences of Mootoo's major and minor characters in the fictional Caribbean island of Lantanacamara, the novel's setting that comes to resemble Trinidad with its history of Empire and the white missionary. Mootoo's choice of a fictional island in the West Indies points to her broadening of space in a manner that reflects occurrences in the West Indies in general rather than be enslaved to the specificities of an actual, named Caribbean island. May (2004) supports this by asserting that an imaginary space offers opportunities to remember identities and histories differently while also providing room to imagine different futures. She adds that a non-specific fictional location is particularly useful when writing about the conjoined histories of trauma and exile in diasporic contexts. The present plot tells of Tyler, a foreign-trained, East Indian male nurse, acting as the protagonist/narrator telling us the story of his care of, and devotion to, the demented Mala Ramchandin whose incestuous and horrific lifetime of rape at her father's hand spirals her into the realm of insanity. Mala is accused of murdering her father, Chandin Ramchandin, years ago and has been relegated to the alms-house where she is feared and held in contempt by the other nurses but understood and appreciated – indeed, needed – by Tyler.

Tyler's sexual identity and the subsequent intimate relationship he enters with a female transsexual and the impact of this in the local society is the minor story in *Cereus*. It is inextricably intertwined with the major story of Mala's childhood into early adulthood and her ordeal, her father's sustained incestuous heterosexuality and her mother's lesbianism, in an earlier Lantanacamara. Smyth (1999) avers that the novel is full of characters living on and crossing over social and sexual borders and presents sexuality as a fluid form of identity and parallels sexual indeterminacy or outlaw sexuality with other forms of border-crossing identities.

But Mootoo offers her readers much more than a plot within a plot. Rather, Tyler's acceptance of his homosexual identity, prefaced by his transvestism, comes full circle through his relationship with Mala who, almost monosyllabically and trance-like, goads him to wear a female's nurse uniform. It was then Tyler recognized that Mala was observing him and his effeminate personality: "I stared speechlessly at the calf-length dress and the stocking ... I felt she had been watching me and seeing the same things that everyone else saw ... She knows what I am... She knows my nature" (p. 76). Ben-

eke (1997: 158) suggests that “men wearing women’s clothes may encompass the transsexual longing of a biological male to be and be seen as, a woman.” Mala’s subsequent non-reaction to Tyler’s adornment of the dress and stockings is reflective of both her acceptance of his transsexual longing and a suggested alter ego of Tyler. Consequently, there was no need to comment on his action and outcome. The implied author’s voice, ironically deafening in Mala’s silence, creates the episode as natural and as what should be, allowing Tyler to begin the process of embracing his transgender characteristics. In this vein, Mala – the brick that Lantanacamara society’s builders rejected – truly becomes the cornerstone of Tyler’s gender identity.

Tyler’s identity confusion regarding his suppressed homosexual orientation begins to dissipate after his cross-dressing and sporadic transvestism. He is a lonesome character, ridiculed by his female colleagues and held as suspect by the males in his environment. This begins to be altered after Mala’s single visitor, Ambrose – childhood friend and adult lover – appears at the alms-house with his ‘son’, Otoh Mohanty.¹ Tyler grows increasingly fond of Otoh, whose first name the author subscribes to the latter’s “vexing inability to make up his mind” (p. 110), alluding to ambivalence about his own sexuality and gender construction, and abbreviated from the acronym OTOHBOTO (On The One Hand But On The Other). Welsh (2000) argues that the double naming technique employed by Mootoo (Chandin Ramchandin, Mala/Pohpoh, Otohbotto) conveys identity as unstable or in flux in the novel as the duality of the names reflects the double worlds they inhabit and the repression of elements of their identities. But Otoh is no son. Engendered masculine in a socio-cultural process of male gender socialization relevant to his female-bodied male person,² Otoh’s outward physical frame – his gait, his strapping build, his clothes – accounts for the attraction of many women and quite a number of men who fantasize about a sexual relationship with him/her:

Unlike the other men in the village, and much to their envy, he had long been the object of desire of every Lantanacamaran woman, regardless of her age. It is also noteworthy that a number of men were shocked and annoyed by their own naggingly lascivious thoughts of him. (p. 135)

Otoh’s female-to-male non-operative transsexual nature is fully acknowledged and nurtured by his/her mother. Consequently, she does not refer to Otoh as “my son” but rather, “my child” and reassures him/her that whatever path his/her sexuality leads him/her on, she is there to support him/her. Mohammed (2007) reflects on language use as a cultural product, being inherently deficient as there is an inability to adequately reflect reality, particularly the diversity of sexual identities and gender, as exemplified

¹ Although the novel does not directly state Otoh’s ethnic frame, allusions can be made to an Indo-Caribbean ethnicity. This was confirmed in my personal interview with Shani Mootoo.

² Cromwell claims that female-bodied men or female-bodied transpeople are individuals who acknowledge that their bodies are those of biological females but may or may not identify as either a female transvestite or a female-to-male transsexual.

in Mootoo's interchange and presentation of both masculine and feminine pronouns. The series of he/she or him/her insertions points to a duality that resides in the person of Ambrosia/Otoh. Otoh is grounded in this maternal sanctuary and the apprehensions, fears and anxieties that come to be associated with non-operative transsexuals are largely absent in her situation and she is very successful in *passing* as male.³

It is this emotional solace that permits Otoh to fully explore her sexuality with repetitive non-sexual encounters with females. Depicting the Westernized behavioural tendency of masculinity underpinned by hardness, power, and being in control, Otoh's true sex identity becomes momentarily unconcealed when she faints after viewing Chandin's decomposed corpse in Mala's compound. The incapacity to handle crises juxtaposed to the patriarchal need for men to be protector of women is reflective of Westernized notions of gendered femininity and this features in Otoh's sudden loss of control in a macabre situation. Otoh is generally successful in retaining the secrecy of her gender identity, however, and the only non-family member that becomes aware of it is Tyler.

Their budding relationship that commenced at the alms-house is cultivated over time until they both anticipate a flowering of their relationship: "The cereus will bloom in just another few nights. Can you wait?" I [Tyler] whispered to him [Otoh]. "Yes, yes. Just barely, but I will wait" (p. 248). Tyler and Otoh's attraction for each other is characterized by a blossoming intimacy that mirrors the cereus believed to be in full bloom soon, reflecting the psychological breakthrough and acceptance of each, their sex and gender identities at last. Tyler, aware of the female nurses' gossip and litany of criticisms levelled against him, ignores their stares and their remarks as, hand in hand, he and Otoh walk along the beach: "I could see the nurses had come to a halt and were watching us. I held my head high. The gossip mill began to rumble but I listened instead to the leaves in the trees" (p. 248). Tyler seems justified in this outlook toward the female nurses as Beneke (1997: 160) claims, "Many women – straight women in particular – are homophobic and denigrating of gay men. This gives gay men good reason to feel angry toward some straight women."

In this virginal work that confronts and interrogates alternative sexualities in postcolonial Caribbean literature, Mootoo achieves plenty. Firstly, she creates the scenario in which her East Indian homosexual narrator reflects tendencies of transvestism: "I wore lip colour more thickly than usual, shades brighter than my dark lips. With powder I blotted the shine that tends to develop on my nose and cheeks on hot days. I tied a flower-patterned scarf around my neck, and on my temples I daubed enough scent to make a puritan cross his legs and swoon." (p. 247)

Secondly, she fashions experiences of romantic love between him and Otoh, a female-birth assignation man who has always been perceived of as a male-birth assignation

³ Within transsexual discourses, *passing* means blending in and becoming unnoticeable and unremarkable as either a man or a woman.

man in his society. What transpires is a male homosexual quasi-transvestite entering an intimate relationship with a female-to-male transsexual. Ultimately, Mootoo's unfolding plot reflects a(n) (re)ordering of the binary normative of heterosexuality in the relationship between Tyler and Otoh but only within strict traditional constraints of biology. Tyler perceives himself as a woman, and Otoh as a man. To the homophobic readership, argues Mohammed (2007), the Otoh-Tyler union is a veritable coup-de-grace that restores the heterosexual binary as normative for indeed, it may have procreative potential. Rather, the traditional social and cultural constructs of masculinity and femininity become destabilized in this male homosexual/female transsexual hybridity and projection of counter-hegemonic masculinities.

And it is here that Mootoo deviates from traditional literary discourse in projecting constructions of sex and gender identities among Indo-Caribbean men as polarized heterosexuality or homosexuality. Her inclusion of Mr. Hector's character, the gardener at Paradise Alms House, whose father banished his brother, Randolph John, from the family home for being homosexual, is reflective of Mootoo satisfying the need to confront the phenomenon of alternative sexualities both in society and in the literary discourse of the Caribbean. Her pairing of Tyler and Otoh shatters adherence to the binary rigidity of society's male and female, masculine and feminine. Mr. Hector's enquiries at the novel's end: "I wish my brother could meet you two. Christ where he is, I wonder? Where my brother? By any chance, you know my brother?" (p. 248) transcends a literal search for a long-lost sibling. It becomes a philosophical criticism of the absence of non-heteronormative constructions of sex/gender identities in West Indian canonical writings, a factor that has certainly deprived generations of readers of the full appreciation of the aesthetic dimensions of literature in relation to understanding constructions of Caribbean masculinities nurtured by love, intimacy and sexuality.

On another level in this text, Indo-Caribbean male sexuality is presented through the horror of incest and rape. As young girls, both Mala Ramchandin (fondly called Pohpoh, as is typical in many East Indian households in relation to both their male and female offspring) and her sister, Asha, are victims of these social ills at the hands of their father, Chandin. Chandin himself is portrayed as a victim who engenders a measure of sympathy, certainly not because of his repetitive incestuous acts towards his daughters but rather because of the elopement of his wife, Sarah, with Lavinia Thoroughly, the daughter of the missionary who was responsible for his earlier conversion from Hinduism to Presbyterianism.

As a boy, Chandin was selected by the Presbyterian missionaries, Reverend and Mrs. Ernest Thoroughly, to live with them and be branded, as it were, in the Presbyterian faith, the earliest Christian proselytizer among the East Indians in the Caribbean, emblematic of religion as a major tool in the colonizer's arsenal. Chandin ascends the social hierarchy simply by virtue of his association with the white, colonizing missionary and reaches as close as is humanly possible that a non-white man can reach in his quest

for masculinity status along the Creole continuum in the Caribbean at that time. There is the process of creolisation evident in the attempt of Presbyterianism to syncretise its rituals and practices with the East Indian cultural practices.

Chandin benefits from this collusion, but becomes blindingly aware that racialized and colour identities remain an insurmountable hurdle in the realm of intermarriage among the various ethnicities at the time. He is paralysed by virtue of his blackness and is rejected by the Thoroughlys when he expresses a love interest in their daughter, Lavinia. In her study of gender and ethnicity relations among English missionaries of the 1830s and 1840s, Catherine Hall (1992) makes a strong case for the way a particular kind of ethnicity and 'racial' characteristics – that of white Englishness – was central to the sense of manliness as it was lived by missionary men working in the Caribbean during the Indentureship period. She believes that it is impossible to isolate the elements which constitute the masculinity of these men without recognizing their dependence upon ethnicity – Englishness – and race – whiteness.

Chandin pays the ultimate price for his non-whiteness – an emasculation of his manhood in the eyes of his surrogate parents, the Thoroughlys. Later, a depressed and embittered Chandin enters a rushed marriage to the East Indian Presbyterian convert, Sarah. The Thoroughlys themselves pay the highest parental price – the loss of their daughter – for their refusal to even consider Lavinia marrying a non-white man, although she herself had no interest in him. The unacknowledged sin that would have led to this would be the Reverend's assertion to Chandin that he cannot marry Lavinia since she is *like* a sister to him; yet, he arranged her marriage to a *blood* cousin in Canada. Rev. Ernest Thoroughly, therefore, becomes less than a *thoroughly earnest* father, blinded to the possibility of an interracial marriage between his white daughter and Indian protégé.

Ironically, race and ethnicity are not as powerful as is gender in this case. It is this loss of a wife through no perceptible action of his own that places Chandin in a sympathetic light, which itself becomes extinguished in his subsequent animalistic protracted rapes of his daughters. Morgan and Youssef state that, "Stripped to the core and fallen from what has been placed before him and his people as the loftiest role in European civilizing order, Chandin loses hold of the incest taboo and sinks to the lowest level of depravity." He engages in incest with first, Mala, and then Asha. It is Mala's horrific reaction to the possibility of her sister's rape that propels her to give of herself to Chandin in an effort to spare Asha the pain and trauma associated with incest and rape.

Mala comes to assume guilt for her mother's elopement and grows to believe that her father is entitled to his habitual rape of her, resulting in her sacrificial self as atonement for such guilt. She becomes the surrogate wife of her father and, by virtue of a maternal protection of Asha, becomes a surrogate mother to her. Indeed, she becomes "a woman whose father had obviously mistaken her for his wife, and whose mother had obviously mistaken another woman for her husband" (*Cereus*: 109) culminating in an irrevocable

attachment or *intimacy trauma* in Mala's life. Morgan and Youssef (2006) explain the role of attachment or intimacy traumas as relevant to Mootoo's characterization of Mala in this enquiry. These:

impact affective changes of companionship between adults or the relational ties between parents and their infants and children. These traumas occur in cases of abandonment, death, kidnapping, divorce, betrayal and any state which creates loss of intimacy. Intimacy traumas are most intense if they occur in infancy, when the child has not created the other value-processing systems which are necessary for healthy maturation. In the case of father-daughter incest, its negative impact is intensified since the father forces the dependent child to pay with sex for the attention and nurture which should have been given as a matter of course... Attachment traumas can shatter the individual's self-worth and ability to connect and can lead to relationship and personality disorders. (pp. 143-144)

The complexity of these family relations and acceptance of such in society is a reflection of incest as a phenomenon with its own peculiarities in East Indian family culture. Morgan and Youssef (2006) suggest that father-daughter incest, particularly within impoverished rural Indo-Caribbean communities, is characterized by an ownership principle. The father believes that he possesses the right to sexual intercourse with his daughter and exacts this right recognizing no constraint of morality or spirituality, fatherly duty or affection, sense of decency or societal order. Morgan (2006) claims that Chandin's long-term incestuous acts are tantamount to rape by an alienating order. Released by rejection and betrayal from the lofty colonizing intent and moral constraint of Presbyterianism, he also loses hold on cultural anxieties in relation to incest. And having lost the highest place in the hierarchical order, he shamelessly sinks to the lowest. No one will interfere with his right, and certainly in this fictional enquiry, no one reprimanded Chandin for his depravity. Morgan and Youssef argue that "for relatives, loved ones and the society in general, rape is so repugnant that it seems better silenced, erased, forgotten unrepresented." This comes to light in Chandin's realization that Ambrose has been secretly visiting Mala:

"What the ass...?" he mumbled. "A man tiefing my baby? He brave to even try. I ent go let nobody tief my woman again. No man, no woman, no damn body go tief my property again. I go kill he. I go kill she too, if it come to that. I go kill meslf too. I sharpenin' cutlass tonight." (p. 220)

These impending acts of violence by Chandin against Ambrose, Mala and himself, coupled with the already self-emasculating violence and trauma that accompanies Mala's rape, become a ritualized performance of the polarized social relations of power: the dominant and the weaker, the powerful and the powerless, the active and the passive,

the masculine and the feminine. Kaufman (1997) labels men's violence as being a tripartite tool in a man's zeal to jealously retain his power. Chandin's promise of violence to Mala, her 'lover' and himself relate directly to Kaufman's triad of violence: violence against women, violence against other men and violence against self. The three corners of Kaufman's triad reinforce one another and, Kaufman claims, are groomed in patriarchal, heterosexist, authoritarian, class societies.

In this novel, the metaphor of the penis-as-weapon is solidified in the sordid account of the most brutal rape of twenty-something year-old Pohpoh/Mala when Chandin violates the body, mind and soul of his daughter in the most despicable of manners as punishment for her 'betrayal' of him. Mootoo successfully wields the penis-as-weapon device and the reader is fully aware of the victim's extreme and horrific physiological pain, as it has been proportionately magnified by the grossly overwhelming potent destructive capacity of the perpetrator in his manipulation of the penis as the ultimate weapon of Mala's destruction. It is certainly a microcosm of the proverbial weapon of mass destruction that characterizes many a sexual relation(ship) between powerful men and women who experience powerlessness, as depicted in the brutally graphic rape account penned by Mootoo.⁴ In this account, the penis reigns supreme in its potently active movements and almost grants the East Indian Chandin a new identity. He is a man who is fully rejuvenated, endowed with a power that characterizes masculine identity simply because of an erect penis. Ramirez's (1999) succinct assertion is notable: "Male genitals become the locus of power" (29). The monosyllabic verbs of action utilized by the narrator successfully and graphically create the impression of the male figure who is in full control of the entire situation as he begins to *move, hit, push, shove, press, yank, pry, kick, part, ram, squeeze, pump, thrust, pull, fling, point, slap, and spurt*. At the same time, the power that comes to Chandin through the erect penis is directly proportional to the reduction that annihilates Mala and her capacity to (re)act.

The penis and its sexual power effectively silence a traumatic Mala and diminish her responses to being uttered in almost hushed tones depictive of a loss of communicative power; and reduce the female form almost to a state of nothingness that the erect penis and – by extension – the owner of the erect penis are capable of generating. Power relations become central to an understanding of rape which is designed to instill a full

⁴ The actual extract is placed here: "Chandin moved through the small kitchen like a hurricane. Instead of hitting her, he unbuckled his belt and unzipped his trousers. "You want to know what hurt is? I'll show you what hurt is." He pushed her to the sink and shoved her face down into the basin, pressing his chin into her back as he used both hands to pull up her dress. He yanked out his penis, hardened weapon-like by anger. He used his knees to pry her legs open and his feet to kick and keep them apart. With his large, fat fingers he parted her buttocks as she sobbed and whispered, "Have mercy, Lord, I beg, I beg." He rammed himself in and out of her. He reached around and squeezed her breasts, frantically pumping them to mimic the violent thrusting of his penis. Then he pulled out of her and flung her around. Standing with his pants around his knees, his still erect penis pointing at her, Chandin slapped her back and forth with the palm and the back of his hand. He lowered his huge frame astride her, pulled her up by her hair and shoved his penis into her mouth. She choked and gagged as he rammed it down her throat. When she went limp, he took the weapon out of her mouth and spurted all over her face." (*Cereus*, 221-222).

awareness of the rapist's power over the powerless victim. Judith Herman (1997) argues that the essential element of rape is the physical, psychological and moral violation of the person. Violation is in fact a synonym for rape. The purpose of the rapist is to terrorize, dominate and humiliate his victim. Thus rape, by nature, is intentionally designed to produce psychological trauma. Mala becomes infinitely malleable as Chandin mauls and molests her in diverse manners without her making any physical effort to deter him; no doubt the legacy of repeated rapes since childhood that she has come to accept as her lot in life. As she *sobs* and *whispers*, *chokes* and *gags*, her voice is drowned in Chandin's guttural utterances and precise movements.

Chandin's sexual exploitation of his daughter takes him, over the years, beyond the boundaries of socially approved standards of sexual behaviour but it fails to lead him to confront and interrogate his inner landscape. Foucault's notions of ethics, as the rules one sets for one's own behaviour, and 'technologies of the self', as the ways that an individual's ethics are manifested in his mindset and actions, are both largely diminished in Chandin's case. His lack of a morality code, underpinned by an utter and ultra lack of shame on his part, impacts upon his downward spiral into an abyss of self-destruction and, as his repeated acts of rape and sexual violation against his daughter increase in their monstrosity and intensity, his conscience becomes weaker in its quest to stem such behaviour, until it is no more. His abominable and beastly sexual actions become the pinnacle of repulsive and revolting behaviour associated with East Indian *tabanka*⁵ that Sampath (1993) describes as the "social belittlement, and sexual and moral shame" (p. 50) that becomes Chandin's after Sarah leaves.

The dichotomy of male and female sexual identities as demonstrated in this account becomes understandable in light of a socially shared concept of a patriarchal Caribbean society. Kaufman (1997) suggests that society's embrace of manhood is part of an equation:

Male = penis = power = active = masculine

The other half of the equation, in the language of the unconscious in patriarchal society, is:

Female = castrated = subservient = passive = feminine

Power, therefore, and the capacity to rule and overrule, become a marker of masculine identity that is arrived at via the vehicle of male sexual ideology.

Sex and sexual behaviour seem to be a cornerstone in understanding Caribbean masculinities and West Indian literature is rich with the sexual exploits of men and their tenacious capacity to conquer the female at all costs. Yet, against the backdrop of sexual identities interrogated thus far, and in consideration of the diversity of male characters, in Mootoo's work, it would be grossly inaccurate and highly misleading to suggest that

⁵ *Tabanka* – a painful feeling of unrequited love, for loving someone who does not love in return, especially someone who was once a lover or a spouse.

this one-dimensional tract of violent male sexual ideology can be generically attributed to masculine identity for all Indo-Caribbean men, indeed for all men. Kaufman (1997) lends credibility to this by arguing that men have the capacity to bring a lot into relationships that can contribute to intimacy. Huge emotional needs that heterosexual men find difficult to meet with other men can be brought into relationships with women and can contribute to their intimacy and intensity. As men are different in appearance, outlook and perspective, so are their sexual ideologies and their resultant treatment of women and other men.

As evidence of such an assertion, Mootoo's depiction of sexual intercourse between Mala and her childhood friend-turned-lover, Boyie/Ambrose, can be explored.⁶ In direct contrast to Mala's sordid rape by Chandin, this account fails to even allude to the penis as a weapon of destruction. On the contrary, it is an instrument that fills Mala with a sense of purpose, beauty and renewed self-confidence. The description of the sex act also posits her as an active participant rather than the passive victim-recipient of her father's rape. The narration focuses on *her* motivation, *her* actions, *her* desires, *her* urges, *her* responses, *her* awakening to what an instrument the penis can be, besides a weapon. Mohammed (2007: 4) claims that, "...her trysts with her childhood sweetheart, Boyie, were not only initiated by her but were clearly liberating." Ambrose is certainly exploring his own sexuality, underpinned by an emotional and physiological level of intimacy. Here, male sexuality is characterized by the ultimate display of affection and love that a man can overtly demonstrate towards a woman, in communion with her; indeed, in partnership with her.

Mootoo's portrayal of both Tyler and Otoh certainly opens the floodgates for Caribbean writers and literary critics to reorient their perceptions of the Indo-Caribbean male's construction of masculinity. But in so doing, what Mootoo ironically and inadvertently achieves, in part, is a solidification of the perception of Indo-Caribbean masculinity as replete with the tensions, contentions and collisions that accompany male sexualities in their intersections with phallocentrism. *Cereus Blooms at Night* can be seen as a fictional enquiry into patriarchy that allows the penis to transcend its mere biological functions and enter the realm of discourse in way that problematises gender identity, critically unmasking the wielding of power over the powerless, and opens up a space for it to become a partner in enhancing the physical and psychological fulfilment, not just of the man whose body it is attached to, but also in enhancing the fulfilment of those with whom he shares a sexual relationship.

⁶ The related sexual episode is placed here: "She closed her eyes and repeated to herself, Enjoy him, he is not my enemy, he loves me. Mala pressed her body against him, knowing he would be quite hard. The hovering hand found her buttocks. She met, mirrored and embraced his passion. She moved against his hardness. Ambrose experienced what it was like to empty his semen into a woman, into his childhood friend. For the first time Mala felt no pain. And though she had been forced to touch her father countless times, it was the first time she explored and felt on the tips of her fingers and the palm of her hand what a penis was really like." (*Cereus*, 218-219).

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**RECLAIMING THE PRE-COLONIAL TO
IMAGINE A POST-COLONIAL IN LANGUAGE
AND EDUCATION IN THE GREATER
CARIBBEAN AND BEYOND**

LITERACY AS A PREREQUISITE FOR WORLD PEACE

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Introduction

Literacy is commonly perceived as learning to read and write; however, there is considerable disagreement among scholars as to what it means to be literate (Hull & Hernández, 2010). Currently, there are at least four distinct scholarly conceptions of literacy: *literacy as a discrete set of skills*; *literacy as situated practice*; *literacy as a learning process*; and *literacy as text* (EFA Global Monitoring Report Team, 2005).

Literacy as a discrete set of skills refers to the cognitive skills of reading and writing conceived as decontextualized and independent of the learner's social background. Within this perspective, there has been sustained controversy between those who favor the "phonetic" approach (popularly termed "phonics") which stresses "sounding out" words, and those who favor the "semantic" approach (popularly termed "reading for meaning") which pays special attention to the holistic relationships among phonetics, word recognition, spelling, and vocabulary. Recent research has focused on the way the brain processes reading patterns and on techniques such as phonological awareness training and timed reading tasks (Abadzi, 2003). The view of literacy as a bundle of discrete skills also includes *numeracy*, the capacity to interpret and communicate via language different types of quantitative and spatial information in contextually appropriate ways (Gal, 2000). The skills model was very popular until the 1960s and 1970s when studies of *functional illiteracy* pointed to the importance of context in literacy acquisition and use, and revealed that no one set of literacy skills applied to all situations and communities.

Literacy as situated practice emerged from anthropological observations of the variable enactment of literacy in different cultures. The *New Literacy Studies* of the 1980s and 1990s (e.g., Scribner & Cole, 1981; Heath, 1983; Canieso-Doronila, 1996; Gee, 1999) viewed literacy as a culturally-mediated practice that was highly dependent upon social factors such as class and race, and upon the nature of the interactional setting. As Hull & Hernández (2010: 329) explained it: "[Literacy] does not operate in a decontextualized manner outside fields of power, and can itself be implicated in the maintenance of social and political inequalities as well as turned toward the egalitarian." Practitioners of this approach carried out ethnographic fieldwork to document literacy events and practices and discovered that individuals labelled as "illiterate"

actually utilized literacy practices for specific purposes and relied on effective oral practices to accomplish other functions.

Literacy as a learning process is an approach based upon the learning theories of Dewey and Piaget, which were utilized by constructivist educators and developed more fully in the work on *collaborative learning* and *communities of practice* (Wenger, 1998). Its most influential proponent was the Brazilian adult literacy educator, Paulo Freire, whose *pedagogy of the oppressed* stressed active engagement with written texts and with “reading the world”, in other words, questioning and reflecting on social experience in order to raise consciousness about the contradictions of society, act upon them, and transform society (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Freire, 1995). *Critical literacy*, as this process is now termed, has been utilized fruitfully in Latin America and Africa. We can see its historical roots in the highly successful Cuban and Nicaraguan literacy campaigns of 1961 and 1980, respectively (see Kozol, 1978; Murphy, 2013; Hirshon, 1983; Arnove, 1987; Hanemann, 2005).

Literacy as text draws strongly from the theories of French philosopher Michel Foucault (1972) and is centered on the *critical analysis of discourse*, focusing upon the topic, genre, modalities, linguistic complexity, and overt or covert ideological content. It views literacy as a communicative and political practice that constructs, legitimizes, and reproduces social power structures (Fairclough, 1991; Gee, 1999). It questions the adequacy and relevance of traditional skills-based literacy instruction in schools and adult programs. Some studies in this vein, like Collins & Blot (2003), reveal how the hegemony of the literate standard is embedded in colonialism, neo-liberalism, and institutionally-anchored power relations.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has utilized various definitions of literacy. In 1958, it stated that: “a literate person is one who can with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement on his or her everyday life” (UNESCO, 1958). In 1978, it adopted a more stringent definition of functional literacy: “A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community’s development” (UNESCO, 1978).

In this article, literacy will be defined as *the ability to handle written text in its myriad modern manifestations in an effective and empowering manner*. This includes actively engaging traditional academic and literary documents and books, plus everyday genres like grocery lists, love letters, street signs, leases, traffic tickets, song lyrics, movie listings, and product labels, as well as technological genres like text messages, emails, online ads, and websites.

The different multimodal genres of literacy today are heavily dependent on the economic development and opportunities available in a given society.

Literacy is critical to the development and well-being of all of the residents of this planet because it permits intercultural communication over distance, raises awareness of and respect for the needs and goals of other groups, expands human understanding, and is a precondition for meaningful participation in democratic processes (Bokova, 2011). It also serves as the most efficient means of conserving human history and enhancing cultural identity and distinctiveness.

Literacy, “literacies”, and the “literacy gap”

Today there is recognition that literacy comes in many forms and varies even in the life of a single individual. As a result, the term *literacies* is now in vogue, along with *new literacies*, *multiliteracies*, *digital literacies*, and *21st century literacies* (Coiro et al., 2008). *Biliteracy* and *interliteracy* describe how bilingual children actively construct literacy from two language systems, sometimes keeping them apart and sometimes mixing them creatively (Reyes & Moll, 2010).

In 2002, the U.N. declared the United Nations Literacy Decade and affirmed the crucial nature of literacy in enabling individuals to confront life challenges and participate effectively in the social and economic activity of the 21st century. The National Council of Teachers of English went even further in 2013 and stated that multiple literacies were necessary in order to respond flexibly to technological changes. Specifically, literate individuals need to:

- Develop proficiency and fluency with technological tools;
- Build cross-cultural connections and relationships to pose and solve problems collaboratively and strengthen independent thought;
- Design and share information globally;
- Manage, analyze, and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information;
- Create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts;
- Attend to the ethical responsibilities required by complex environments

Unfortunately, this list has a strong “first World” bias to it, and many communities worldwide are not materially able to meet these 21st century literacy requirements. In the next section, we will take a look at the existing “literacy gap.”

It should come as no surprise that literacy is not evenly distributed across the world (see United Nations, 2013). Many individuals, particularly females, oppressed and marginalized ethnic minority groups, impoverished populations, and differently abled individuals have historically been denied full literacy. The lack of access to universal literacy has created great disparities among nations and permitted only certain groups to benefit from globalization and information technology.

Among the many factors which contribute to the “literacy gap” by disrupting the educational process and societal stability are emergency and conflict situations (natural disasters, genocidal campaigns, war), health issues (HIV/AIDS, epidemics like Ebola,

famine), mass migrations, and cultural practices that favor males over females (child marriage, male-only education, cloistering of females, etc.).

Age is a major variable. Typically elderly adults have the most limited literacy skills; however, today, with so many disrupted communities, childhood education is not a given. The regions in which young people have particularly limited literacy skills are countries in West and Central Africa, Ethiopia, Madagascar, and Afghanistan (see UNESCO, 2016).

Gender is a particularly crucial variable. The global gender divide distributed by region is most pronounced in Southern and Eastern Asia and throughout Africa (Deutsche Welle, 2012), where a difference of 20% or more exists between male and female literacy rates. This depressing difference is rooted in longstanding patriarchal ideologies that value men above women and maintain male hegemony. One way this is accomplished is by tying women down with many children. The European Environment Agency (2012) has found a strong correlation between fertility and literacy among adult females worldwide. The more children a woman has, the less likely she is to be literate. Moreover, female illiteracy is linked to high rates of infant mortality. The more literate the woman, the more informed reproductive and healthcare decisions she makes for herself and her offspring, thus maximizing her children's lifespans (Saurabh, Sarkar & Pandey, 2013). Since women are still primarily responsible for the well-being of children, educating women advances the community as a whole.

Need for literacy and peace education

The need for literacy is tightly bound to the need for peace education. The United Nations explicitly supports literacy and peace education as essential to human survival and progress. The 1945 UNESCO Constitution begins by noting that the defenses against war must be erected in the minds of individuals. This implies that education is essential to preventing warfare and interpersonal violence. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) asserts that: "Education shall... promote understanding, tolerance and friendship ... and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace."

The 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child affirms a child's right to an education that develops moral and social responsibility, and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child specifies that the child is to be prepared for a "responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin" (Article 29.1 d). To this end, in 1996, peace education was explicitly incorporated into the anti-war agenda of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

Shapiro (2015: 1) defines *peace education* as “a holistic process of development of human potential to coexist in a less violent manner. Peace education encourages students to care about the welfare of others and work as agents of peace. It also informs students about the value of peace and justice and the consequences of war and social injustice (Page, 2008). It develops moral values, positive attitudes toward others, productive skills for building peace, and behaviors that foster harmony with oneself, others, and the natural environment. It may take the form of conflict resolution training (Conflict Resolution Network, 2008), instruction in democratic principles and practices, human rights orientation, or worldview transformation. Topics commonly addressed include: gender equality, religious tolerance, intercultural understanding, bullying, sexual harassment, and domestic violence.

Jakar and Milofsky (2016: 44) define *peacebuilding* as “a process of establishing peaceful relationships and building institutions that can manage conflict without resorting to violence.” They describe how the English language classroom can provide a space for young people in many countries to discuss peace and conflict, develop critical thinking, learn conflict management skills, and participate actively in peacebuilding. Their work in Israel is applicable to the situation in Puerto Rico. By means of a curriculum that addresses conflict and seeks to build peace, students can improve their oral and written skills in English in a meaningful and engaging way.

The authors suggest that teachers honor diversity and emphasize multiple perspectives, teach dialog (not debating) skills, engage students in creative interactive tasks (e.g., role play, small group work, experiential activities, etc.), share real life stories that tap into student empathy, and alleviate despair by showing students how to empower themselves by finding peaceful solutions to conflicts. Milofsky (2011) presents many excellent techniques in her peacebuilding toolkit for educators.

Approaches to peacebuilding used by educators in areas plagued by internal violence (e.g. Israel, South Africa, Ireland, Bosnia) include:

- visits to communities of opposing groups in order to deconstruct their Otherness,
- development of text books to explain the viewpoints of the Other,
- field trips to places that evoke painful memories in the Other community,
- shared art, music, and dance events,
- joint projects to foment socially just situations and contexts, and
- celebrations of the Other’s holidays and festivals (Shapiro, 2002).

Puerto Rico has serious problems that disrupt the peace of the society and the individual. Collective anxiety and discord are at an all-time high for multiple reasons. There is street violence linked to drug sales (48% of all homicides are drug-related), domestic violence stemming from economic frustration and the inability of couples to successfully negotiate changing gender roles, hostility toward Dominicans and other im-

migrants (González-Espada, 2005), discrimination and hate crimes directed at the LGBTI community, sexual harassment in the workplace (Lugo Fournier, 2009), and bullying in schools as young children act out the intolerance and domination scenarios they see modeled in the media and their own families (Bauzá, 2013; Matos, 2015; *Convivencia Escolar*, 2014). Much is the by-product of ignorance due to limited formal education exacerbated by poor communication skills which foster violent action rather than discourse and negotiation.

The police homicide statistics for Puerto Rico in 2016 available at: <http://policia.pr.gov/informe-preliminar-de-asesinatos/> make it clear that the island is not at peace. Drug trafficking accounts for nearly half (48%) of the 433 killings; however, many cases listed under vengeance (17.3%) and grudges (27%) are also drug-related. A recent article in *El Nuevo Día* (Cortés Chico, 2016) reports that about 66% of homicides are due to drugs and rivalries among the gangs that control drugs. In contrast, domestic violence only accounts for 2.8% of the deaths.

It is not difficult to see the link between illiteracy or incomplete education and the drug trade. When young people leave school early and are not fully educated, they are not equipped for employment at a living wage. A certain percentage will opt for the greater and more immediate monetary rewards reaped in drug trafficking and other illegal activities. This is yet another reason why it is so important to teach children to read and write well and engage them fully in the literate world so they can better prepare themselves to critically understand and withstand the pressures they will be subjected to by forces that seek to misuse their talents and shorten their lives.

Special literacy needs in Puerto Rico

Literacy has long been a concern in Puerto Rico, and the level of illiteracy has steadily decreased since 1898 when the Spanish ceded Puerto Rico to the U.S.

Table 1: Illiteracy in Puerto Rico		
Year	Percent	Total population
1899	79.0	953,243
1910	65.5	1,118,012
1920	55.0	1,299,809
1930	41.4	1,543,913
1940	31.5	1,869,255
1950	24.7	2,210,703
1960	16.6	2,349,544
1970	10.8	2,712,033
1980	11.5	3,196,520
1990	10.4	3,523,037
2000*	-----	3,808,610

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000)

*Note: The illiteracy question was not included in the 2000 Census, so no statistics are available.

During the 1930s, the federal Puerto Rico Emergency Relief Administration (PRERA) ran 22 literacy camps, and during the 1940s, combatting illiteracy was an indispensable part of the plan to industrialize the island. By 1950, only 24.7% of Puerto Ricans were still illiterate. In 1954, the Literacy Program (*Programa de Alfabetización*) was initiated, and by 1970, illiteracy had dropped to 10.8%. The 1990 census indicated that only 10.4% of Puerto Ricans (245,291) were still unable to read and write in Spanish.

This would seem to indicate undeniable progress; however, modern literacy needs are far more complex than those of the past, and the question of functional illiteracy is paramount. In 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 25% of residents 25 and over had not completed the ninth grade, a sign of limited functional literacy. The Literacy Survey of Puerto Rico (*Encuesta de Alfabetización de Puerto Rico*) was carried out in 2010 to fill the void left by the Census. It consisted of phone interviews with 6,574 persons aged 18 or older.

The results indicated that overall literacy was 92%, with slightly lower figures for females and the elderly. The greatest levels of illiteracy (32.3%) were found among rural senior citizens. Only 45.8% of respondents claimed to read books weekly, while 98.5% watched TV or listened to radio. More than 7% of the men had trouble writing, and 18.5% of the interviewees had children with reading difficulties (Disdier Flores, Pesante González & Marazzi Santiago, 2012: 1). The correlation between poverty and illiteracy was robust, and literate individuals were more likely to be healthy and physically active (Disdier Flores & Pesante González, 2013).

The Education Commission of the House of Representatives in Puerto Rico (Cámara de Representantes, 2012) criticized the Department of Education in 2012 for failing to eliminate illiteracy since so many young people were dropping out before graduation. Young people who are functionally illiterate cannot cope well in a technologically advanced society and often end up permanently “discouraged,” underemployed, or involved in criminal activities. The problems tend to worsen when they become adults, especially if they are immigrants or differently abled.

Adult illiteracy

Much of the early work on literacy in Puerto Rico of necessity had to address adult educational needs because so many adults lacked schooling. However, by the middle of the 20th century, it was felt that adult illiteracy was best tackled in specialized units. In 1954, the elementary school program for adults was transferred to the Office of Adult Education. During the 1980s, the Literacy Component was created and developed numerous projects to continue reducing the level of illiteracy on the island. Among these were:

- *Uno Enseña a Otro* (One Teaches Another) – high school students supervised by teachers gave classes to adults and received academic credit
- *Educación para Adultos Deambulantes* (Education for Homeless Adults) – federally funded classes were given in shelters and community centers.
- *Alfabetización en Marcha* (Literacy on the March) – combined academics and artisanry
- *Alfabetización desde la Biblioteca Pública* (Literacy from the Public Library) – teachers offered classes in public libraries.

During the 1990s, classes were offered in night schools, adult academies, centers for educational services, and a volunteer project in which citizens gave classes to family members and neighbors. Approximately 66,440 adults were taught to read and write. In 2000, the Literacy Project (*Proyecto de Alfabetización*) was established and launched a creative curriculum called *Alfabetización: La Magia de Leer* (Literacy: The Magic of Reading). It featured reading, math, learning games, flexible hours, and alliances with other government agencies. By May of 2005, it had provided services to 42,334 adults (Ortiz, 1990).

Today the Department of Education of Puerto Rico offers adult basic education via the Programa de Educación para Adultos (PEA) in centers located in Arecibo, Bayamón, Caguas, Humacao, Mayagüez, Ponce, and San Juan. This program was created under the aegis of the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. It focuses on developing the abilities of adults who left school early, so they can deal effectively with workplace demands and successfully face the challenges of modern life. Specifically, it helps them complete high school degrees, increase their employability, and become active participants in their children's education. Among the curricular offerings are basic literacy, basic math, English as a Second Language, high school equivalency, and parenting.

Teaching immigrants to read and write

A second group that requires special attention with literacy is the immigrant population. Puerto Rican schools receive growing numbers of students from the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and other Caribbean islands, as well as return migrants who have been living in the United States (Nuyoricans). Dominican Spanish is somewhat different from Puerto Rican Spanish, and Haitians and return migrants may lack formal training in Spanish. Dominicans and Haitians usually possess few English skills, and Puerto Rican return migrants generally use non-standard English which is looked down upon or rejected in the schools in Puerto Rico (Pousada, 1994; Clachar, 1997).

The Department of Education operates a Title III-A funded Spanish as a Second Language program called *Programa de Limitaciones Lingüísticas en Español e Inmigrantes* (Program for Linguistic Limitations in Spanish and Immigrants) which serves

students who speak a language other than Spanish at home or who come from outside of the U.S. and its territories. It provides instruction in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding Spanish as well as content area curriculum and aims to help students assimilate into Puerto Rican society. Participants are chosen on the basis of a Home Language Survey and a screening and placement test. The program additionally makes available tutoring sessions, parent literacy workshops, mentoring services, and individual counseling. Differentiated instruction is utilized to address the needs of the students.

However, many needy immigrants may not be documented or participate in the school system. The Department of Education needs to expand its efforts to identify and serve Puerto Rico's ever-growing immigrant population. In addition, it must be noted that Puerto Rican return migrants who are exposed to Spanish in their households must rely on other forms of assistance to deal with their limited or non-standard Spanish skills and to help them adapt to island norms.

Providing literacy instruction for the deaf

The final group with special literacy needs we will examine is the Deaf community. The 2012 American Community Survey reports a hearing challenged population of 150,000 in Puerto Rico; however, the Puerto Rico Deaf Association (Sordos de Puerto Rico) considers that there are at least 340,000 hearing impaired and 80,000 totally deaf individuals (Williams & Parks, 2012). There are four sign varieties in active use: American Sign Language (ASL), Puerto Rican Sign Language (PRSL), Signed Spanish, and Signed English. In rural areas, homemade signs are also common. PRSL came before ASL but is mainly used in rural zones and can be catalogued as endangered. ASL is definitely prevailing over PRSL. ASL interpretation is familiar to Puerto Ricans during televised hurricane warnings and speeches by the governor, and close-captioned TV in Spanish is provided by some local stations. However, there have been numerous documented violations of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, including refusals to provide sign interpreters, limited educational services, and job discrimination (Academia Estudios Relacionados al Sordo, 2000).

There are only four schools for the deaf in Puerto Rico (in Luquillo, San Juan, Ponce, and Aguadilla), and ASL for teachers and other interested parties is taught at the Universidad del Turabo in Gurabo. Until 2010, the Academia de Estudios Relacionados al Sordo (Academy of Studies Related to the Deaf) offered ASL instruction in San Juan, Aguadilla, Ponce, and Arecibo. In addition, there are at least four interpreting agencies and a number of text and video relay services. Most sign language interpreters in Puerto Rico (100-150) are freelance and uncertified, given the absence of a formal certification process, and the supply is insufficient to meet the demands of the deaf population (personal communication, Ramón Valle-Jiménez 2014).

In Puerto Rico, deaf children may be mainstreamed and accompanied by an interpreter, enrolled in one of the four schools for the deaf, enrolled in a Special Education program, or home schooled. Many receive a patchy or incomplete education, and some may attain only a fourth grade literacy level.

Teaching deaf children to read is challenging since they must learn to link written symbols representing a spoken language they cannot hear to meanings or mental representations, a process referred to by Padden and Ramsey (2000) as “chaining.” It was long felt that the deaf should be taught via an oralist approach to “fit into” the hearing world. Oralism was also viewed as a prerequisite for teaching literacy, leading to a focus on speech therapy and auditory training and resulting in educational lag and emotional trauma. Research during the 1970s and 1980s led to acceptance of sign as a full-fledged human language suitable for educating the deaf. However, initial work in teaching literacy through signs relied upon artificial systems like Manually Coded English which follow English morphological and syntactic patterns rather than those of ASL. Supalla and Cripps (2010) view such an approach as dysfunctional since it confuses deaf students and causes errors in their ASL signing.

Recent studies reveal positive effects of sign language proficiency on reading and academic achievement (Hermans et al., 2008). However, teachers need special literacy tools and instructional procedures to help deaf children make the transition from sign to written language. One technique has the teacher fingerspelling a word while pointing to letters written on a blackboard and finally using a sign for the entire word. Few teachers in Puerto Rico (even those certified in Special Education) have the skill in ASL to accomplish this. It should be noted that deaf children with deaf parents often learn to read more easily, probably because their parents are adept at sign and can support the learning process.

While these comments have of necessity been brief, and have over-simplified matters, they should be convincing evidence that services for all three special needs groups – adults, immigrants, and the deaf – must be provided within a coordinated public education policy if functional illiteracy is to be completely conquered in Puerto Rico.

Conclusion

Nowadays illiteracy tends to be the result of social marginalization and exclusion. When it prevails, it means that individuals and groups are disenfranchised and denied basic human rights. Such denial leads to conflict and inter-group hostilities. Literacy, on the other hand, empowers people and allows them to obtain the information they need to participate in democratic processes and shape their communities’ destinies. Furthermore, it provides the skills required for meaningful employment and helps eradicate poverty, reduce infant mortality, control population size, promote gender equality, and guarantee sustainable development (UNESCO, 2016). It additionally

enables inter-group dialog and cooperation and maximizes opportunities for mutual understanding and peace.

It is important to underscore that “literacy is no longer exclusively understood as an individual transformation, but as a contextual and societal one” (EFA, 2006: 159). Accomplishing full societal literacy is an absolute necessity if the many ills that plague Puerto Rico today are to be confronted and a peaceful and harmonious society created.

Solid curricular design, careful planning, pre-service and in-service teacher training, continuous collection and publication of data, political and economic backing by the government agencies, and community support are essential. School facilities must be made available to both the native-born and immigrants during the evenings, weekends, and summers so adults and adolescents can attend classes with as few obstacles as possible. In addition, the literacy skills of the deaf and other differently abled groups must be developed further so they can fulfil their potentials.

Conquering functional illiteracy will pay off in innumerable ways, among them increasing individual and societal peace. It must be a priority for all educators and policymakers. English teachers in Puerto Rico can do a lot to help by selecting readings and class activities that reflect the principles of peace education and develop critical analytical and writing skills among students at all levels.

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THE ACQUISITION OF THE FRENCH ADVERBIAL PRONOUNS *EN* AND *Y* BY SPANISH-ENGLISH BILINGUAL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN PUERTO RICO

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This article summarizes the results of a study on the acquisition of the French adverbial pronouns *en* and *y* by Spanish-English bilingual university students in Puerto Rico. From March 12th to March 27th, 2015 a total of 24 students of French as a foreign language took pre-tests and post-tests designed to assess their mastery of both *en* and *y* before and after instruction in the use of these adverbial pronouns.

The inductive and deductive teaching methods were used to teach students in the use of these two pronouns in French. Ten students were taught using the inductive method, and fourteen using the deductive method. One of the goals of the study was to determine whether there was any correlation between the successful acquisition of the pronouns and the teaching method used. I hypothesized that the inductive teaching method would be more effective than the deductive teaching approach, because my teaching experience lead me to agree with Dekeyser and Prieto Botana (1995), who argue that difficult grammatical points need to be taught using the inductive teaching methodology.

Other independent variables were also considered, namely, previous knowledge and proficiency in three other second/foreign languages. My six years of experience as a teacher of FLE (*Français langue étrangère*, or French as a Foreign Language) and ESL at the University of Pueerto Rico, Río Piedras, and my readings on Third Language Acquisition, led me to hypothesize that the typological similarities between French and Italian (French pronouns *y* and *en* are the equivalent of *ci* and *ne* in Italian) would help the Italian group to outperform their English L1/L2 and Portuguese L2/L3 peers. I also considered the recency factor as another salient element in their acquisition of the French pronouns, since the Italian group had studied Italian as a foreign language for one year before taking French classes, and therefore they were in their third semester of Italian when they took the test. According to Hammarberg (2001: 23), the term ‘recency’ refers to the fact that an “L2 is activated more easily if the speaker has used it recently and thus maintained easy access to it.” The psychotypological and recency factors led me to predict a higher activation of a Romance background language, that is Italian, in their minds when acquiring the French adverbial pronouns *y* and *en*.

Given the small sample size in this study, three different statistical tests (t student, z test and ANOVA) were used to evaluate the effect of the following four independent variables with a 95% level of confidence interval: instruction method (inductive or deductive), and proficiency in English, Italian and Portuguese.

The overall results of the study did not confirm my initial hypotheses. The results suggested that the differences between the two teaching methodologies were not statistically significant, since both the inductive and the deductive groups showed the same progression between the pre-test and post-test. The inductive group scored an average of 77% on the post-test with *y*, against 84 % for the deductive group, that is, a 7-point difference. Given that the inductive group had a lower score on the pre-tests, though, the progression between the pre- and post-tests was about the same for both groups. In the case of the pronoun *en*, the inductive group scored an average of 87% on the post-test, against 85% for the deductive group, that is, a statistically insignificant 2-point difference.

The results also indicate that the difference between the Italian as a foreign language and the other groups were not statistically significant. However, it is interesting that the group with the highest proficiency in English outperformed the Italian one in acquiring *y* (by 9 points), while the Italian group did slightly better than the English proficient group in the acquisition of *en* (by 1 point). Despite these results, my study does not call into question the role played by L1 and L2 on L3 acquisition. The results appear to be in line with the TPM (Typological Primacy Model) established by Rothman (2011), which claims multilingual transfer. According to this hypothesis, typological closeness is the main factor triggering transfer between languages, and this regardless of the order of acquisition. In the same vein, the outcomes of my study corroborate the Cumulative Enhancement Model (CEM) elaborated by Flynn & al. (2004), which states that transfer between existing language systems can facilitate L3 acquisition or remain neutral, and implies that negative transfer will never occur.

The L2 Status hypothesis advanced by Bardel and Falk (2007) suggests that the slightly better performance of the high proficiency English students in the post-test results can be explained by the fact that they are already bilingual, and thus have an advantage over monolingual learners. Indeed, it is believed by many scholars such as Cenoz & Valencia (1994), Jaspaert & Lemmens (1990), Bild & Swain (1989), Thomas (1998) and Liceras & Zobl (1993), that it is easier for those who already know a second language to learn a third language, compared to monolinguals. Cenoz and Genesee (1998) claim that bilingualism triggers positive transfer from second language learning to learning additional languages. Similarly, studies by Bild & Swain (1989), Genesee (1983), Gulutsan (1976), on the acquisition of French in Canadian immersion programs showed advantages among third language learners in comparison to monolinguals.

Cenoz and Jessner (2006) recommend that multilingual proficiency needs to be related to multilingual education. They propose putting emphasis on the development linguistic

awareness and on the mutual impacts of L1, L2 and L3. However, it should be mentioned that there is not enough data available thus far to explain the effects of metalinguistic awareness in multilingualism. Most of the studies in multilingualism deal with the impact of the L1 and L2 on an L3, but few studies focus on two-way effects among L1, L2 and L3. The general outcomes of our study suggest that we need to adopt different teaching methods when dealing with multilingual learners. How can we mobilize students' existing command of more than one language and maximize students' cognitive capacity to facilitate their acquisition of additional languages? Cenoz and Gorter (2015) define translanguaging as follows,

it is important to consider that translanguaging has its origin in a context of bilingual education that claims at developing balanced bilingualism both in Welsh and English. The idea behind it, is that it is necessary to understand the information before using it, and that ability in both languages will increase when these languages reinforce each other (p. 3).

As argued by Jessner (2008), second language acquisition is not equivalent to third language acquisition, that is why we need to examine the complex roles of L1 and L2 in L3 acquisition and L3+ acquisition. In future research I plan to include a translanguaging teaching methodology into my experimental model in order to analyze its impact on L3/ L3+ language acquisition. I will also incorporate subjects acquiring non-Indo-European languages to analyze the effect of multilingualism on the acquisition of non-genetically and non-typologically similar languages.

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SOCIOLINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF LEARNING ENGLISH AND FRENCH IN HAITI

CLITON SEIDE

UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO, RÍO PIEDRAS

Introduction

The Republic of Haiti has been historically acknowledged as a bilingual country because of its two official languages, Haitian Creole (HC) and French. The existence of two official languages is the result of the French colonial legacy along with the Constitution of 1987 (still in force) which recognized Haitian Creole, the local vernacular, as a co-official language of Haiti.

The reality is that Haiti may be considered as a multilingual country because of a notable presence of English and Spanish. Spanish is learned by some because of the presence of the Dominican Republic on the other side of the island of Hispaniola. While an interesting topic in and of itself, it will not be examined in this essay. English as a foreign language is viewed very favorably around the world and is in high demand in the international economic market place. Currently, in Haiti, to be proficient in English is viewed as necessary for obtaining employment and improving one's lifestyle.

Myers-Scotton (2006) makes the point that all humans of normal intelligence speak at least one language, and many know two or more languages. With some exceptions, few multilinguals are as proficient in their additional languages as they are in their first language. Two social reasons explain why people who speak several languages do not master them equally well: (1) few multilinguals have been equally exposed to all the languages in their repertoire, and (2) they do not use them all with the same frequency or in the same situations. This is very true in Haiti.

Most Haitian children enter school speaking only HC and encounter the French language for the first time when they begin their formal education at age 5. English teaching begins more or less at age 10. At the present moment, although both English and French are taught from a very early age, the learning of English is somewhat more favored and has been given greater focus according to Renaud, Tannenbaum & Stantial (2007), even though French is still the standard medium of instruction at all levels and the language used in government.

The study upon which this article is based utilizes library and Internet-based research to examine the way French and English are taught and learned in Haiti today. The following sections review the history and culture of the island, the language dynamic, the

educational system, and the language planning efforts made in Haiti. Then the essay describes the different functions that French, Haitian Creole, and English have in Haiti today, considers the institutional support for each, and highlights the role of language attitudes on the part of teachers, parents, and students in determining learning outcomes. Finally, the work comes to some conclusions about the current state of affairs, and considers the implications for the future.

History and culture of Haiti

Haiti is located in the Caribbean on the western end of the island of Hispaniola, named in honor of Spain by Christopher Columbus when he landed there in 1492. The area was originally populated by the Taínos who called it Quisqueya. The Spanish settlements on the west side of Hispaniola did not prosper commercially due to widespread *marronage* and attacks by English, Dutch, and French pirates. In 1664, the French West India Company took control in the name of France, and the western territory was renamed Saint Domingue. It was exploited for the cultivation of cotton, sugar, coffee, tobacco, indigo, and cacao. During the 18th century, Saint Domingue was known as the Pearl of the Antilles, one of the richest colonies of France's empire, and in the 1780s, exported 60% of all the coffee and 40% of all the sugar consumed in Europe, more than all of Britain's West Indian colonies combined (Henley, 2010).

326 However, this economic growth depended on the coerced importation of slaves from West Africa to work on the plantations. The West African slaves brought with them their native languages, customs, and traditional religious beliefs, which evolved into the creole language spoken today and the modern religious practice known as *vodou*. The enslaved were treated brutally by the slave owners, and after much struggling and suffering, rebel leaders led a successful slave insurrection, declared independence in 1804, and renamed the country Haiti. Consequently, Haiti became the world's first Black-led independent republic (Burtoff, Vilsaint & Morisset-Métellus, 2011).

Despite this victory, after independence Haiti suffered great misfortunes. In exchange for diplomatic recognition, the French demanded reparations for the lands they had lost (150 million francs in gold), and Haiti went into serious debt. Haiti made annual payments to France from 1825 to 1947, and to come up with the money, it took out huge loans from American, German, and French banks at exorbitant rates of interest. According to historian Alex Von Tunzelmann (cited by Henley, 2010), by 1900, 80% of Haiti's national budget was spent on repaying France.

In addition to these serious economic problems, there were repeated internal conflicts and divisions, incompetent and greedy governments, cruel dictatorships, economic takeover of the Haitian National Bank by the U.S. in the early 20th century, and military occupation by the U.S. from 1915-1934. Between 1957 and 1986, the Duvaliers (Papa Doc and his son Baby Doc) utilized the savage *Tonton Macoutes* force to create one of

the most corrupt and repressive regimes in modern history, killing between 30,000 and 60,000 Haitians, and raping, beating, and torturing countless more (Henley, 2010).

During the years that followed, the U.S. government maintained a constant presence in Haiti. It provided economic aid, trained intelligence officers, and retrieved refugees after the 1991 military coup that ousted then-President Jean Bertrand Aristide. Most of these refugees were subsequently returned to Haiti. The U.S. was also heavily involved in Aristide's return in 1994, his two presidencies, and his eventual removal from Haiti in 2004. In January 2004, U.S. troops returned to Haiti along with U.N. peacekeeping forces, and in 2010, after the devastating earthquake, once again U.S. officials and rescue workers were on the scene. All of this resulted in considerable exposure to the English language and American cultural values among several generations of Haitians.

Similarly, Haiti is frequently torn apart by earthquakes and hurricanes, and most of its arable land has suffered deforestation and subsequent soil erosion as people have cut down trees to produce charcoal for cooking (Henley, 2010). In addition, poor infrastructure and weak government have hampered the country's ability to deal with national emergencies. According to the World Bank (2015), only half the adult population can read and write. Unemployment and under-employment are extremely high; the economy depends on subsistence farming and factories that manufacture garments for export, mainly to the United States.

Because of the lack of jobs, many Haitians leave the island to seek a better life elsewhere. In 2009, Georges Anglade, a Haitian geographer, estimated that more than four million Haitians and their descendants live overseas, mostly in the United States of America. The existence of this diasporic population of Haitians in the U.S. is another reason why English has grown in importance in Haiti.

The language dynamics in Haiti

Ever since Saint Domingue was claimed as a French colony, French has been used as the official language, but Haitian Creole (HC), a language variety produced from the contact between various non-standard French dialects and several African languages, developed alongside French as Haiti's main spoken language. Manipulated by the French-speaking elite who wanted to maintain their power and privileges at the expense of monolingual Creole speakers, Haitians were stripped of their African identity and taught to define themselves as products of French culture and society.

The French language was forced on the Haitian people via the school system, even though the majority could hardly speak it. Ever since colonial times, fluency in French has served as an indicator of social class because only whites and educated mulatto freedmen spoke it. This has colored modern attitudes toward HC. Parents worry that education in HC will be relegated to the poor, while the children of wealthy families will retain French and magnify their advantages. Thus, language policy and reform, no matter where they are undertaken, cause anxiety for parents, teachers, and students.

French, formerly the only official language which was used in all formal venues such as the school system, government, the print and broadcast media, and public speaking events, is today considered both a second and a foreign language (Govain, 2014). It is a second language for the small percentage of the population (not more than 10%) that speaks it on a daily basis and, by attending school to learn how to read and write, makes use of it as a vehicle to continue on to the higher levels. Thus, these individuals can use French in any situation. French is a foreign language for those whose mother tongue is HC, which has remained the sole means of communication for the immense majority of Haitians, whose contact with French is only superficial and restricted to the classroom. It is important to note that French and HC are two distinct languages and not variants of the same language. A Creole is more than just a simplified form of a given language. It is a full-fledged language with its own grammar and can serve all the intellectual, psychological, and social needs of its speakers. Both Holmes (1992) and Myers-Scotton (2006) concur that a Creole is a complete and adequate natural language, stable and autonomous in its norms, acquired as the mother tongue of a speech community for the intellectual development of its speakers. The field of creolistics has dedicated itself to documenting those very statements (cf. Roberts, 2007; Alleyne, 2000).

Unfortunately, it is difficult to convince people of that linguistic reality. Today, HC is still an object of degradation, stigmatization, and discrimination for most Haitians, while French is seen simultaneously as a link to cosmopolitanism and as an instrument of oppression sustained by the educational system. At present, HC is starting to be taught in schools and is widely used in broadcasting with official status granted. However, French remains the main written language of Haiti. It is used in most official documents, and most of the country's newspapers are published in French.

There are two contact varieties in Haiti called "*créole francisé*", which is an acrolectal variety of HC that attempts to sound like standard French, and "*français créolisé*" which is French with certain HC characteristics. Speakers who lack effective oral communication in French often use a form of phonological code switching in which they pronounce the *Kreyòl* words as if they were French, thus pretending to be "higher social class" than they are. Haitians with little exposure to French speak "*gwo Kreyòl*" (vulgar Creole) or "*Kreyòl rèk*" (rough Creole); this last term is perceived as pejorative.

Given the long-standing historical relationship between the United States and Haiti, the English language has very high prestige, and many Haitians are anxious to learn it. Since the French language in Haiti has experienced significant linguistic contact with English, especially in the domains of sports and technology, this has even given rise to Anglicisms or Americanisms, English elements mixed into French utterances. Govain (2015) explains that sports terms like *push ups*, *time out*, *goalkeeper*, and *outside* are used instead of French *pompes*, *pause*, *gardien de but*, and *hors-jeu*. English computer terms like *laptop*, *folder*, and *online* are preferred to their French equivalents, as are many auto mechanics terms like *gasket*, *power steering*, *muffler*, and *clutch*. Additional

English loanwords are used when discussing business (*marketing, stocks, royalties*), music (*blues, jazz, freestyle*), lifestyles (*playboy, superstar*), and food (*fast food, hamburger, snack*).

Since the schools have been the primary arena in which the language dynamics of Haiti have played out, let us now turn to the development of education on the island.

History of education in Haiti

The first schools in Haiti were established shortly after the Constitution of 1805, one year after the outstanding victory of the Haitian people against colonialism (Burtoff, Vilsaint & Morisset-Métellus, 2011). Free and compulsory primary education was mandated. A large percentage of French teachers were integrated into the system with the signing of the accord with the Vatican in 1860. They were assigned the responsibility of establishing and maintaining Catholic schools, which was a plus for the education system because of their new methods and their proficiency in the French language.

The religious orders promoted an attachment to the French language and copied the French school model, which the Haitian educational system continues to do today. Only a few of the clerics went to rural areas to educate peasants, so the urban elite had the most access to education. The educational system did not undergo any meaningful changes until 1978 when the Bernard Reform, as it is known, mandated a change in the materials, the curriculum, level of accessibility, and relevance of education to the poor. One major alteration produced by the reform was the use of HC as the language of instruction in the first four grades and an emphasis on discovery learning rather than rote learning.

Interestingly enough, the Bernard Reform has met with resistance since its inception, especially the use of HC. Thus, education remains a privilege of the upper and middle classes, with fluency in French a marker of success. Even though education has been promoted by Haiti's post-colonial leaders, today only a small minority of Haitians are educated beyond primary school because no comprehensive or accessible public school system has developed to date.

In Haiti, education begins at preschool, which is followed by nine years of fundamental education (first, second, and third cycles). Elementary education is compulsory for children between ages six and eleven; secondary education comprises four years of schooling.

The educational system is plagued by an assortment of problems which make progress very challenging, especially with very little financial support. Many schools (both public and private) use outdated curricula. "The high dropout rates and low enrollment rates in Haitian schools are due to economic hardship, high repetition rates, and linguistic barriers along with the dearth of qualified teachers. The lack of trained teachers, especially in disciplines such as physics and chemistry, means that instructors may be unable

to conduct even basic laboratory experiments. This contributes to the low caliber of many Haitian schools.” (Luzincout & Gulbrandson, 2010: 3).

Education in Haiti has become increasingly privatized. Only eight percent of schools are public, while approximately 92 percent are privately owned and financed, meaning they are tuition-based in most cases, according a World Bank survey carried out in 2002-2003. There are many private schools that are set up by people who are only interested in making money and do not have the necessary credentials for teaching. Some Haitian children attend international private schools because the public education system is extremely weak, but, for the most part, only children of diplomats and NGO staff attend. In Haiti, some of the international schools are run by Canada, France, or the United States, and many are church-run. Multiple languages are usually taught, especially English and French.

According to the Expat-quotes website, the only alternative to an expat student at present is to attend an international school, due to the deficiencies elsewhere in the system. Preference may be given to students based on nationality within those schools. Enrollment procedures vary from school to school. Tuition tends to be expensive, but these schools offer high standards of learning, first rate facilities, and extracurricular activities. Boarding facilities are available at some schools, but most only provide day classes.

Language planning and language choice in Haitian schools

Language planning involves decisions made and implemented by governments and can be roughly divided into two categories: status planning and corpus planning. *Status planning*, according to Valdman (2015), deals with defining and modifying the status of a language. It refers to decisions about the functions that will be assigned to the various languages or language varieties used in a given community and the linguistic rights of citizens. During such a process, authorities decide which language is to be used in different domains such as education, administration, political affairs, etc. *Corpus planning* involves increasing the language’s domains of use and equipping it with the linguistic means of satisfactorily covering these domains. Any particular language should be provided with sufficient means for the functions and domains to which it is assigned. Although the number of speakers of French had been reduced considerably at the dawn of the Haitian independence, the act of independence was drafted in French, a language that still monopolizes the official domain, even though the first Haitian leader, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and many other military leaders were primarily speakers of HC. Franklin D. Roosevelt, then Secretary of the Navy and the individual who claimed credit for drafting the constitution of the new nation in 1918, included an article therein referring to the official language (Valdman 2015)

Le français est la langue officielle. Son emploi est obligatoire en matière administrative et judiciaire. (Article 24)

[French is the official language. Its use is obligatory in administrative and judicial matters.]

The exclusive official role of French was maintained in the numerous constitutions that followed in 1932, 1946, 1950, and 1956. However, in 1964, during the presidency of François Duvalier (“Papa Doc”), a clause was added that, for the first time, mentioned HC:

Le français est la langue officielle. Son emploi est obligatoire dans les services publics. Néanmoins, la loi détermine les cas et conditions dans lesquels l’usage du créole est permis et même recommandé pour la sauvegarde des intérêts matériels et moraux des citoyens qui ne connaissent pas suffisamment la langue française. (Article 35)

[French is the official language. Its use is obligatory in public services. Nevertheless, the law determines the cases and conditions in which Creole is permitted and even recommended for the preservation of the moral and material interests of citizens who do not sufficiently know the French language.]

Numerous constitutions promoted French as the sole official language until 1987, a year after the overthrow of the Duvalier regime, when a new constitution was promulgated in which Haitian Creole was finally granted official status. This new regulation, which is still currently in use, established Haitian Creole as the national language that all citizens of Haiti share.

Tous les Haïtiens sont unis par une langue commune: le créole.

(Article 5.1)

[All Haitians are united by a common language: Creole.]

Le créole et le français sont les langues officielles de la République.

(Article 5.2)

[Creole and French are the official languages of the Republic.]

Article 40 stipulated that all the country’s official acts and decrees, including everything that impacts on national life, should be made public in both HC and French. Nevertheless, three decades following the decree, the scrupulous application of these clauses cannot be assumed. French continues to be highly present in the administrative and political spheres, as well as in education and the media, while the vernacular presence is limited to religious activities where it is much more dominant. HC is very prominent in *vodou* rituals and in many radio broadcasts.

In terms of corpus planning, a language academy was stipulated in the Constitution of 1987 for the linguistic development of Haitian Creole, including the elaboration of a standard norm and terminological innovations (Petit-Frère, 2014). Unfortunately, the pertinent clause of the constitution is only now being implemented, and, as a result, the role of the Haitian government in corpus planning has remained nearly non-existent.

Language curriculum and language barriers in Haiti

An investigation conducted by Hebblethwaite (2012) reports that 95 percent of the population is monolingual in Haitian Creole, while the portion that speaks French does not exceed 5 percent with an additional 5-10 percent having some receptive competence in the language. The paper highlights the fact that international educational language policy is often ignored in Haiti, even though it has been repeatedly shown that the use of a second language in school correlates with high illiteracy rates and poverty. In contrast, there is strong evidence that native language education dramatically improves literacy since the use of the student's native language has positive psychological effects. Thus, using HC may be the best solution for improving educational outcomes in Haiti.

As a native speaker of HC, I acknowledge that the vernacular is the only language spoken and understood by all Haitians, whereas the language of instruction in most schools is French. Even worse, school children are penalized for their use of Creole although the state's national curriculum prescribes its use in primary schools and the vernacular has been granted official status along with French. For the most part, textbooks are in French, and students are generally tested in that language. Yet, most teachers are not fluent in French. Although the vernacular bears structural similarities with its French counterpart, the two varieties are quite distinct and are not mutually intelligible, especially for monolingual Creole speakers. Thus, using French as the medium of instruction excludes around 90 percent of the population for whom French is an inaccessible and foreign tongue (DeGraff, 2010).

Haitians who only speak Creole are often treated as second-class citizens, a situation that allows the classification of Haiti as a state of 'linguistic apartheid'. Nowadays, all official decision making processes are conducted in French or English, excluding the majority of Haitians, those who need access to services the most. Contrary to popular claims, the creole language does not isolate its speakers, and it can express complex and sophisticated concepts. DeGraff argues that in the Americas, more people speak HC than French, and in the Caribbean, the language has the second highest number of speakers, after Spanish. Thus, it is French that would isolate Haitians from their neighbors, and it is Spanish or English, not French, that should be promoted as a link between Haiti and its neighbors. Besides, there is evidence of populations smaller than Haiti's, such as those of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Norway, whose native languages are the languages of education and public discourse within their respective nations. The aforementioned countries are not backward or even isolated from the rest of the world, as many claim when it comes to the official use of HC in Haiti.

According to DeGraff (2010), in order for the Haitian school system to be successful, all academic subjects should be taught in HC, and French should be taught as a foreign language. The author promotes accessible, collaborative, child-friendly, child-centered, inquiry-based, and hands-on learning as an overdue remedy for the age-old and oppres-

sive rote-memorization of French texts that most students *and teachers* do not understand. Without Creole-based and technology-based curricular reforms and teacher training, billions of dollars of international aid will go into the rebuilding of schools, but the situation will only worsen.

From the dawn of Haitian independence to the present date, the education system has been a failure because it has neglected the people it was intended to serve. Instead, the system continues to identify more with France than with Haiti. For many Haitian families, French is the sole measure of their children's ability to succeed, but they usually fail because they are not proficient enough in French. This linguistic issue is one of the most salient factors in the Haitian educational system. French-based learning does not meet the needs and aspirations of Haitians because the textbooks and workbooks come from France and are not adapted to the Haitian environment. In addition, many children go to school without books. Education does not appear to be focused on the specific needs of the country at all. A Haitian system of education in Creole would definitely be more effective, especially when starting school.

Since 1980, exposure to and the use of French has continued to decline. According to Valdman, Villeneuve & Siegel (2015), approximately 66 percent of parents have never attended school; therefore, it may be assumed that many students are not exposed to French at home either, and have minimal proficiency in the target language. Jean-François in Valdman, Villeneuve & Siegel (2015) reported that in Port-au-Prince itself, HC continues to be the language of everyday communicative interactions, even among bilingual Haitians. There are few situations in which the use of HC, alone or with French, is excluded. Today, the exclusive use of French dominates only in highly formal situations (e.g. university classes, job interviews, official evaluations) and in the private schools and clubs of the upper-class elite and the expat community.

According to Valdman, Villeneuve and Siegel (2015), there has been a shift in language use, not only in school, but also in the spoken media and online. There is increasing use of HC by radio stations, as well as an expansion in the number of stations. Exposure to French has diminished considerably, while exposure to HC has expanded in all radio, TV, and online-in discussions of political affairs. Before the advent of the Internet, there were few periodicals that offered texts in HC in Haiti, except for the monthly *Bon Nouvèl* published by a Catholic order. Now HC is extremely visible on the Internet and used in social media communication. In addition, despite its socially dominant status, for a large proportion of the Haitian population, French plays no major role in daily life outside of the classroom. Monolingual HC speakers do not need French to solve everyday problems or to deal with their immediate social environment.

HC is the French-lexifier Creole with the largest number of native speakers. It has a local population of 10 million speakers in Haiti and around 4 million more in the Haitian Diaspora community. HC is currently the most widely broadcast French-based Creole in North America, and has become the most standardized and viable creole variety,

receiving institutional support from an official language academy (Akademi Kreyòl Ayisyen) founded in December 2014 (Valdman, 2016), about three decades after the official law mandating its existence. The academy has as its fundamental tasks:

- the normalization of the official spelling,
- the support of oral communication,
- the preparation of an official dictionary, and
- the encouragement of the use of HC in administration, justice, and all public matters.

Today, the majority of radio stations broadcast in HC, and some newspapers are published completely in Creole. There are also collections of poetry, novels, and literature. In 1975, Francketienne was the first Haitian writer who published in Creole (*Dezafi*) followed by Emile-Megie (*Lanmou Pagen Baryè* [Love Has No Limits]). The achievement of these works certainly contributes to the enrichment of the vernacular. Chaudenson (cited by Valdman, 2015) says that among all French-based Creoles, HC is the one that stimulates the most work, particularly lexicographic studies. All told, there are already around twenty dictionaries of HC.

These days, English is almost as important in Haiti as it is in English-speaking countries. The Haitian American Institute (HAI), a renowned institution in Haiti, was founded by both Haitian and Americans on the Fourth of July of 1942 as a bi-national center to reinforce friendship and cultural ties between the two countries. The HAI has two goals: English-teaching and cultural exchange services. So far, the HAI is the premiere institution in Haiti for learning English and the only accredited educational testing center. To date, over 100,000 students have studied English and successfully pursued a wide variety of professions, both locally and abroad. Approximately 2,500 students attend classes per day. The institute plays a leading role in hosting English teaching seminars. The institute also is the official testing center for the TOEFL and SAT, and offers GRE, and PRAXIS exams. HAI is an important center for cultural affairs and activities, sponsoring an assortment of art exhibits, food and craft fairs, concerts, special films, and conferences as it develops programs to serve the local and international community (Haitian-American-Institute, 2016).

The reality of teaching English in Haiti is extremely challenging. In many schools, the polished cement is painted black to serve as a blackboard. Students have no books. There is no electricity, it is hot, and sometimes teachers have just a piece of chalk and their imagination to help them teach their students English (Renaud et al., 2007). This scenario is prevalent in Haiti and repeated in thousands of schools, but it also arises in thousands of schools in hundreds of developing countries throughout the Caribbean, Africa, South America, and Asia.

Conclusion and implications

Given the global tendency toward multilingualism, learning a foreign language is a requirement in the new world market place. That is, being able to read and write in different languages is an important factor in global, multicultural exchanges because it enables speakers to maintain contact with the rest of the world. However, learning to speak a foreign language is somewhat difficult after a certain age. Young children are able to acquire a language rapidly or with remarkable ease during brain maturation, before puberty. That is, children learn their native language with little apparent effort and without instruction before they reach school age.

This paper sustains that the school system's failure in not providing scientific and practical training, while relying instead on rote learning significantly reduces its effectiveness. Furthermore, the education system is not relevant to the nation's economic needs. An important factor to be considered in order to identify and address the inequalities in Haiti is the division of the society between HC and French-dominant speakers.

The lack of proper scientific, technical, or even vocational training in Haiti is not the fault of the students. They do not understand science because the schools do not teach science. Few secondary-level students ever see a genuine laboratory, and even at the schools of medicine, engineering, and agronomy, the laboratories are in lamentable condition when compared to the French Institute's well-equipped laboratory (Clark, 1975). Both French science and Haitian American Institute teachers report, however, that the best Haitian science students are as good as the best elsewhere in the world.

Théodat (2004) claims that French will disappear in Haiti as a second language because of the employment of English as the main vehicle of the elite. At present, learning English in Haiti appears to be a challenge for the masses. English classes at the Haitian-American Institute are considered the safest way to get a visa for the United States. In addition, many private schools are implementing curricula from the United States, a situation which may lead French to lose its hegemonic status. The promotion of Haitian Creole as an official language in 1987, along with French, and the development of educational programs and materials in Haitian Creole and English have removed the French monopoly over language and culture. Above all, one needs to recognize that the language issue in Haiti remains political.

While the French language is employed for administrative concerns, political affairs, and particularly within the school system, English proficiency is widely connected to professional matters and is one of the most highly required skills for obtaining employment. The creole vernacular has been greatly modified by the influence of the foreign languages with which it has come into contact (Govain, 2015).

Youssef (2002) noted that *Kreyòl* is today acknowledged as a language in its own right by speakers within some francophone communities, like Martinique and Guadeloupe, and its status is growing. Indeed, New York and Miami have replaced Paris as the des-

tinuation of most Haitian students. Those who return after their long stay in North America usually reject French with a preference for English. Their Creole tends to integrate standard phrases imported from the United States, and as a result, English has become the language of social promotion of the current generation. What can be done to meet the current challenges?

First, a new educational program with significant changes in the curriculum should be elaborated and taught using modern pedagogical methods. Second, teachers must promote understanding rather than mere memorisation (rote methods). Better teacher training should be implemented for real change to occur. Such a measure would diminish the extremely high rate of failure in the baccalaureate examinations as well as the extremely high illiteracy rate. Finally teachers' salaries must be raised so that they do not seek work elsewhere. One of the problems in Haiti is that its society does not absorb college graduates, and constructive changes in scientific and technical education would only prepare more Haitians for emigration.

This essay has only touched upon the most accessible points of the language dynamic in Haiti today. Due to difficulties in obtaining materials from Haiti, there were many areas of the English and French curriculum that could not be explored in depth. Future studies should involve fieldwork in Haiti, interviews with teachers and students, and examinations of the books and other materials that are being used in the classrooms.

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CELEBRATING A 50TH BIRTHDAY: THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES (UWI) TO CARIBBEAN CIVILIZATION

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While writing my doctoral thesis on the history of the development of Caribbean linguistics, I kept asking and re-asking the question whether there could be something correctly called Caribbean linguistics delineated as an academic field of research and study. In attempting to answer that question, two things happened. Firstly, I began to ask related but tangential questions: What was the University of the West Indies? and How could its outputs, if it had any, be characterized as similar? Secondly, I began to seek information about other work done where ‘Caribbean’ was used as a qualifying adjective in the title.

There are notable bodies of work done which bear the adjective Caribbean in their labelling. There is a body of Caribbean economic research, a body of Caribbean historical research, a body of Caribbean literary work and there is an extensive body of Caribbean linguistic research. In looking at the similarities between the bodies of research created, more came to light about what the University of the West Indies is and its role in the preservation of the Caribbean civilization.

What also became clear, is that there had been less of a concerted effort to collate the contributions from across the University of the West Indies to create a type of metatheory or prototype for the research done. This type of reflection can assist us in understanding how we develop knowledge in the Caribbean and how research contributes to the building of Caribbean civilization¹.

This article seeks to examine the contribution of University of the West Indies as part of the reflection and celebration of the 50th anniversary of Independence of Barbados and Guyana in 2016. The article suggests that reflecting on the work done by Caribbean scholars thus far, as well as the scholars themselves, is critical at this historical juncture. It allows us to understand the intellectual products created for the sustenance of the Caribbean in the independence era. It also provides a road map for how the Caribbean can continue to grow and achieve further objectives. To this end, I offer a brief sketch

¹ See Meighoo (2007) for a contemporary discussion on the issue of Caribbean civilization, its definition and the relationship between research and the building of civilization.

of the beginnings of a Caribbean intellectualism. Then a brief history of the development of the University of the West Indies is outlined. Finally, I examine current definitions of metatheory and how the building of metatheory can assist in our understanding of the research done at the UWI over the years.

Benn (2004: 65) asserts that there was a slow emergence of a West Indian nationalist identity from as early as the nineteenth century. He locates some of the most coherent thoughts in the writing of J. J. Thomas. Thomas was a self-taught speaker of at least French and classical languages. He rose in his chosen profession of teaching to become a head master by the end of his career². As agitation for amendments to Crown Colony Government heightened in 1880s in various Caribbean colonies, a treatise appeared denouncing the ability of blacks to rule themselves. The book, *The English in the West Indies: or, the bow of Ulysses* was written by Oxford Professor James Anthony Froude. In response to the assertions made by Froude, Thomas, in 1889, published *Froudacity*. Thomas wrote to refute many of the inaccurate and racist conclusions Froude had repeated or drawn. The book was one of the earliest rebukes of the imperial rhetoric which had long formed a part of the racist component of the slave system. Benn (p. 69) in explaining the importance of Thomas' work explains, "...*Froudacity* remains an important intellectual contribution as one of the earliest and clearest challenges to the ideological validations of colonial rule. As such it not only constitutes an important element in the development of a nationalist consciousness, but may also be said to mark the tentative starting point of a systematic intellectual tradition of nationalist protest in the region."

Social and political tensions continued between metropolitan England and its former colonies, which were often called the "Commonwealth Caribbean" in the period after Thomas' written rebuke was published. Two particular phenomena can be said to have assisted in the ferment of the Caribbean intellectual tradition. Caribbean intellectuals leaving the region to study and soldiers recruited to serve in the First World War found themselves on the periphery of English society and facing segregation and racism. Both experiences resulted in Caribbean natives realizing that despite their religious and educational training which encouraged them to identify as British, they were not embraced as British in Britain itself.

As noted Caribbean son, Hugh Springer³ wrote of his experience when he went abroad to study, "the business being of a West Indian assumed great importance when I went abroad. It was to England that I first went. I was not English. That much was clear, though in my youthful reading I had more often than not identified myself with English heroes of history or romance. Now it was borne in upon me strongly that I wanted a place and a people to belong to which would be recognized and respected for what they

² Biographical Information taken from introduction written by Gertrud Aub-Buscher to *The theory and practice of creole Grammar* (J. J. Thomas) in the version of the book published in 1969.

³ Hugh Springer was the first General Secretary of the Barbados Workers' Union. He was also the first native Registrar of the then University College of the West Indies and the third native Governor General of Barbados.

were” (1953: 181). Apart from the actual displacement that travelling to England caused for scholars, a criticism of those scholars returning to the territories and their pace in assisting the nationalist movements and struggles to realign the social and political injustice of the masses emerged.

Campbell (1996: 207) writes that, “In the 1920s discussions about the desirability of requiring the Island Scholars to study professions [mainly law and medicine] preferred by the Board [scholarship board] usually ended up in an admission by its members that the university scholarship was primarily a personal award for individual brilliance, and not a means for building up the human resources most essential for the development of the society. The winners were not obligated to serve the community which paid for the scholarships; indeed they were not even required to return to the island after completion of their studies.”

Not all of the academics who returned to the Caribbean overlooked their obligation to assist the development of their society. Slowly but steadfastly, a group of nationalist minded individuals began to write and agitate for changes in the social and political conditions for the Commonwealth Caribbean territories. The personalities in the vanguard of the Caribbean nationalist movement largely intersected with the returning academics and the slighted World War 1 veterans. By 1920, Cipriani was active in the revived Trinidad Workingmen’s Association and Williams’ first seminal treaty *Capitalism and slavery* appeared in 1944. Other less known figures were also writing and working at the community level.

By the third decade of the 20th century, the discontentment with working, living and other social conditions among the African descended masses had resulted in riots and other disturbances across a number of the territories. As focus on the defeat of imperial attitudes toward the descendants of enslaved Africans intensified, education, access to education and the role of education in the maintenance of the imperial status quo came under scrutiny.

As Benn explained (2004: 83), nationalist scholars became acutely aware of the connections between imperial institutions of learning and the preservation of imperial perspectives and views. In his analysis of Williams’ work Benn opines, “[Williams] was keenly aware of the important political roles filled by British academics and their consequent influence on British imperial policy. Moreover, Royal Commissions on colonial affairs invariably included British academics with specialised knowledge of colonial issues.” The real question was how would the Caribbean put itself in a position to produce more scholars whose default setting was not a British Imperial one?

After the riots in 1930s across various British colonial holdings, the West Indian Royal Commission, commonly called the Moyne Commission, was established on August 5th, 1938 by the British Government to investigate the reasons for the upheaval. In 1943, a separate commission, the Asquith Commission, was established as part of the Moyne Commission to specifically examine the issue of provision of higher education across

the colonies. The issue of access to education was seen as one of the variables that had led to the 1930s disturbances.

Taylor (1949: 4) in his article "The University College of the West Indies" notes that the Caribbean's indigenous populations were severely depleted due to the English settlements on the various islands. He attributed the absence of University type institutions springing up in the British colonies as a consequence of the limited natural resources of the region. Although Taylor does not explain what these natural resources were and how their lack might hinder the development of a University, he seems to contradict himself in the next few paragraphs both by acknowledging that there were various institutions established for higher learning and that donations from the colonies were pivotal in establishing at least one medical education institution in North America (p. 4). While the colonies in Africa and other territories had institutions that were present before British colonialization and could be rebuilt to create higher education facilities, the Caribbean had no such infrastructure. A separate committee, the Irvine Committee was appointed in January of 1944 to examine the case of the British Caribbean colonial territories and the best strategy for the provision of higher education to them. The main recommendation of the Irvine Committee, which was to establish a University College⁴ to serve the British Caribbean territories, was tabled in Parliament in June 1945 (Taylor 1949: 6). Taylor notes that governments of the Caribbean territories agreed that a campus should be cited in Jamaica to serve Barbados, [then] British Guiana, British Honduras, Jamaica, The Leeward Islands, Trinidad and Tobago and the Windward Islands (p. 6). The territories also agreed that while the initial funding would come from the Colonial Development and Welfare funds, that recurrent expenditure would be split among the beneficiary territories.

The University College of the West Indies admitted its first cohort of thirty four undergraduate students in October 1948. The first intake for natural sciences was in 1949 followed a year later by the first entrants to arts. Although this higher learning institution was located in the Caribbean, its syllabi were still very British and early challenges soon emerged. Commentary about the early challenges is partly to be found in the autobiography of one of the earliest Arts faculty members, Robert Le Page. Le Page soon realized that the nuances of the Caribbean created challenges for teaching effectively. Le Page was hired as lecturer in Anglo Saxon literature but teaching in Jamaica made his research irrelevant and he was forced to abandon it (1998: 55; 57). He took an interest in the creole languages being brought to the classroom by his students from around the Caribbean but his initial attempts to introduce the study of them as a part of the syllabus was blocked by University of London hierarchy. In Le Page's words, "The reaction I got from London for some years was that 'creole languages' did not exist as a subject; nobody in London was competent to examine it; there were no books about

⁴ The University College would be affiliated with the University of London which would be the terminal degree granting power.

it; how could it then be ‘studied’ in any university sense?” (p. 79). Scholars within the University structure, both foreign and local born continued to agitate until the curriculum of the new University was modified to become more reflective of the educational and research needs of these new polities.

The need to decolonialize the curriculum was not only restricted to humanities and arts. The same types of considerations were emerging in the social sciences with regard to areas such as economics. Scholars organized themselves into groups for the purpose of discussing the issues they thought pertinent to building scholarship which addressed the issues of an emerging Caribbean identity and independence. One such group which emerged soon after the establishment of the Faculty of Social Sciences was called The West Indian Society for the Study of Social Issues. The movement rebirthed in 1962 under the title the New World Group. One of the founding members of the New World Group, Norman Girvan, in a reflective paper about the movement and its purpose writes, “...the rapid localization of its [University College of the West Indies] academic staff, provided an institutional base for the emergence of critical thought. Much of the impetus for intellectual activity sprang from a desire to “localize” scholarship in the Social Sciences.” (2006: 331)

The University of the West Indies earned its independent status in 1962. There were a number of professional societies which emerged as Caribbean scholars or writers sought to create space for their research and intellectual products on various aspects of the Caribbean reality. These included the Caribbean Arts Movement (1966), the Association of Caribbean Historians (1969) and The Society for Caribbean Linguistics (1972). Along with these professional societies, teachers in primary schools, cricket clubs and other groups began to organize study groups as well as to publish about the Caribbean and its issues. Some of the better known platforms for these publications were *Kyk-Over-All* in Guyana, the *Beacon* and *Trinidad* in Trinidad, *Focus* in Jamaica and *Bim* in Barbados⁵.

Of all the work done across the various disciplines from the beginning of the Independence movement and the establishment of the University of the West Indies, are there any common threads or linkages in the research produced? This question seems to be a significant one in understanding how the work of the University across various disciplines may be contextualized. It is also a healthy reflective point as research agendas continue to expand and change within the UWI space. Wallis (2010) in discussing the field of metatheory advances some themes which seem to suggest that metatheoretical development is an academic discipline that could help us to understand research done as a collective rather than disjointed exercise. This type of overarching analysis of the University of the West Indies research agenda has not been done hitherto, as far as this writer is aware, and it would be worthwhile at this juncture in Caribbean history.

⁵ See Knight’s introduction in Lewis’ *The growth of the modern West Indies* (2004).

There are a few general points to make about the construction of metatheory and how it can be useful as a reflective tool. Firstly, in order to construct a metatheory, a working definition of science is needed. Wallis (p. 75), describes science as "...a process of investigation, replication, communication and the emergence of new and useful meanings. Not as some think, of science as a complete set of natural laws where meanings are fixed." The University of the West Indies has perhaps always operated with a definition of science and academic research which is tied to the needs of a particular broad community of people as opposed to an esoteric endeavour. Through its relationship with entities such as the Caribbean Examination Council and the various Commonwealth Caribbean governments, praxis has always been a feature of Caribbean scholarship. This relationship has caused impacts on areas such as publication and independent research, but our intention in establishing a metatheoretical approach to analyzing the research done at UWI up to this point is not to determine if the University has done 'right or wrong' but to understand what was done and why.

The next necessity is to define how I use the term metatheory itself, since it is a term utilised extensively, but often with divergent meanings. I use the term metatheory in the same way Wallis does. After analyzing over twenty-one definitions from various writers Wallis begins by noting that metatheory is "focused on the analysis of theories." (p. 78) Wallis also notes that metatheoretical construction involves "integrat[ing] multiple theories" (p. 78) and finding co-causal networks between concepts and themes (p. 78). He summarizes that, "...the analysis, evaluation, and integration of theory leads to the development of new methods of evaluation, which may then be used to evaluate results. Far from a useless tautology, this suggests a path for the development of some conceptual constructs through the development of other conceptual constructs."

Wallis' definition of metatheory makes it a living entity which can change over time. This is more fluid than most traditional concepts of metatheory. It also makes metatheory relative to particular environments, places and times. The University of the West Indies has always been engaged in asking the question 'What is needed for a Caribbean society to thrive?' The result is that some criticism has been made of Caribbean researchers who were accused of believing that there is uniqueness in the Caribbean case.⁶ However, by constructing the metatheory of Caribbean research within the University of the West Indies⁷ the research done up to this point can be interlinked and interconnected to show how various studies were done to facilitate the development of a wider Caribbean project. This type of approach to the research done in the UWI system over the years could help reveal that researchers were not making a case for the uniqueness of the region. Rather they were using the historical, economic and social data for the

⁶ See Girvan (2006) on the criticism of Dependency Thought and Kouwenberg (2011) on her criticisms of linguistics in the Caribbean.

⁷ There is no reason why the process could not be extended to wider studies of other Universities across the Caribbean.

region to create various research and theories that related to a particular geographical and historical space - the Caribbean. In a sense this is the work which every University partakes in and deconstruction of ideas like 'colonial culture' and 'modernism have left vast spaces for relativist perspectives.

The type of metatheory building I am proposing here is plausible under Wallis' framework. He asserts, "It is possible to categorize theory in a number of other ways. For example, one might create a category based on some specific context (historical, geographical)." (p. 90) The Caribbean has been defined for the purpose of research as being a historically and/or geographically defined space. Therefore, a metatheory developed along the same variables would not be an unreasonable venture.

I think beginning to construct the intellectual histories of those involved in creating departments and research agendas within the UWI structure is timely and urgent. These will assist in structuring a wider metatheory associated with the University of the West Indies. This is a worthwhile activity even if the terms of operationalization are in need of detail. Once again, this project is not an attempt to isolate the region and stress its uniqueness. Indeed, the research with a heavy anti-imperial flair which characterized UWI in its early years was not restricted to the Caribbean. During the 1950s and 1960s, several other British dependencies were fighting for independence and a reimagining of their own cultures and their global importance (see Said, 1994).

As Caribbean society advances, we must act with greater purpose and intent to find ways to consolidate and record research undertaken in the region up to this point, in order to gain the overview of the past which we will need for articulating a clear and feasible research agenda for the University of the West Indies of the future.

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**RECLAIMING THE PRE-COLONIAL
TO IMAGINE A POST-COLONIAL IN THE
CULTURES AND SOCIETIES OF THE
GREATER CARIBBEAN AND BEYOND**

“*SHI WI USE HAR BLOOD TIE HIM*”: A THEOLOGICAL INTERROGATION OF CULTURAL BELIEFS ABOUT MENSTRUATION AND FEMALE [IM]MORALITY IN JAMAICA

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But a woman's blood/can bind/long after lust is weary – Opal Palmer Adisa

“*Yu can sey anything you want to sey ... Mi nah eat from dem!*” – male construction worker (Wignall, 2013)

Introduction

Much stigma and shame continue to be attached to menstruation in Jamaica (Weeks, 2016). Many a Jamaican girl grows up hearing that she should not step over her brother as she will cause him to “*dong grou*” (be short in stature) or learns that she can “*tie*” a man using her menstrual blood, that is, compel his devotion and financial support by feeding him her menstruum. Almost without exception curse words in Jamaican refer to female genitalia and the peculiar requirements of menstruation, such as the use of a special “*klaat*” (cloth) to absorb menstrual blood. This referencing is a throwback to earlier days, before mass produced sanitary products, when women used pieces of white calico to absorb menstrual blood. Indeed, the use of such cloth made the menstrual process a less than private affair as: “Everyone knew when you were having your period as you had to wash the cloth white like chalk and hang it on the line to dry for reuse” (72 year old Verlie Allen in Hussey-Whyte, 2007). Men fear encountering this *klaat* or menstrual blood itself since both have been considered unclean and harmful to them. The convenience and relative privacy of sanitary pads and tampons has not totally removed this taboo, however.

Such menstrual taboos are not beliefs of a long gone era; in fact, menstrual taboos continue to make Jamaican women “*waak pon chaak lain*” [walk on a chalk line, that is, tread carefully] even in the twenty-first century, as was highlighted by Donna Hussey-Whyte in a 2010 article in the *Jamaica Observer*. She lists among the threats posed to the wellbeing of others by a menstruating woman:

- holding a young baby is believed to cause the baby's stomach to gripe
- going to sea (boat rides or cruises) will cause the sea to become angry and may even overturn the vessel

- having sex will cause the man to be cursed
- bathing or swimming will cause the others who use the facility to be cursed ... (Hussey-Whyte, 2010).

Other Jamaican taboos are noted: menstruating women prevent cakes from rising, cause pickles to go bad, flowers to wilt, teeth to fall out (James T. Callow, 1963). The result of ignoring the taboo on intercourse during menstruation is still believed to be a baby born with reddish skin and hair. Menstruating women are also thought to have a malignant effect on young crops, although the presence of a certain plant is believed to neutralize this ill effect (Chevannes, 1994). But perhaps the most troubling concern with menstruation is the fear of being tied:

This tie down belief is even more rooted because so many men find it hard to get out of a relationship no matter what is happening in the relationship. Whether you believe it or not this practice is going to be around for a long time. (Jamaica Views, 2008)

This article builds on the insightful anthropological work of Elisa Sobo undertaken in rural Jamaica in the 1980s. She links beliefs about menstrual uncleanness to the island's Judeo-Christian heritage, although it may be argued that there are several influences, including perhaps our Akan and other African ancestry (see Amoah, 1995; Opong, 1974). Sobo makes the key argument that not only is there a belief in the uncleanness of menstrual blood and its power to "*tie*" men, but, more importantly, men believe that women have the ability and inclination to use their menstrual blood in this wicked fashion: "*Shi wi(II) tie him*". Essentially, there is a morality embedded in this cultural belief around menstruation. There is a theological notion of human sin and sinfulness underlying this belief, in particular that women are more prone to sinfulness and that this is evident in their menstrual uncleanness. At the same time, this menstrual pollution is the very instrument of their wrongdoing. The article then presents a womanist critique of these beliefs and their oppressive impact on the lives of both Jamaican men and women. This exploration takes place against the background of Third World Feminist theology's focus on and critique of "sexual exploitation such as sex tourism, sexual discrimination in the church and in the workplace, and sexual taboos such as menstruation and pollution" (Pui-lan, 2005: 185).

Sobo and tying

Elisa Sobo undertook her ethnographic work in the 1980s in a rural coastal village in north eastern Jamaica; her research site was inhabited by eight hundred poor, rural, African-descended Jamaicans. Her research produced the seminal discussion of the Jamaican peasant understanding of the workings of the individual body and the social body. She explores the Jamaican understanding of how the body reflects and is a medium for expressing ideas about the social and moral order, hence concerns with female [im]morality as expressed through menstruation and its uses. Jamaicans clearly have a concrete

understanding of nature and its ability to manifest itself through objects and products, such as bodily fluids, especially blood. The fear of menstruation gives expression to the further dimension of the belief that human beings are capable of manipulating nature to the benefit of some and the detriment of others.

Sobo describes a social reality that is riven with moral concerns. Her informants describe a moral anthropology: People are born directly evil and wicked. Because such wickedness is inborn in the human species it is best to avoid socializing with sinful or “low” people. This wickedness can be expressed through “*compellance*”, manipulating a person when something that compels is introduced into the body. Such compelling material can be specially-prepared powders or oils, as Jamaican storyteller extraordinaire Joan Andrea Hutchinson demonstrates in her poem, “A Hog Name Crowd”. In this humorous piece, a woman attempts to compel faithfulness from her man by feeding him a meal of stew peas spiked with a little something from the Obeah man. It all backfires when the man throws the meal out to the pig, who consumes it ferociously. The man subsequently leaves the woman and the bewitched pig becomes her devoted *paramour*, who follows her around faithfully and is wont to turn up in her bed. The powder did work and powerfully so.

Similarly, Jamaican reggae artiste Lovindeer sings of the use of such oils in “Oily” and tying in “*Shi trick him*” [“She’s tricked him”]. Dancehall, the well-known Jamaican music form, also gives expression to these beliefs as can be heard in Bounty Killa’s “Oxtail and rice,” in which it is claimed he “disses” his fellow DJ and arch rival Beenie Man for having been “tied” by a woman through consuming this popular meal. The “Killa” charges:

Jamaican: *Yuh a gal clown once/Yuh a gal clown fi life. /No gal kya tie Rodney Price/Dem hol the dread with oxtail and rice....*

English: Once you have been made a puppet by a woman/you are a woman’s puppet for life/No woman can tie Rodney Price [Bounty Killer’s real name]/A woman has *tied* the Rastaman [Price’s unnamed opponent] with oxtail and rice.

Sobo relates similar stories from two male informants, who felt themselves targeted by lovers wishing to compel their devotion; both tell that the plan was foiled; one through vomiting up the offending cake and the second by a discerning cat that refused to consume the proffered pudding. Jamaicans believe that relationships built on *compellance* or *tying* cannot last. The person who is tied will feel uneasy/forced/irritated by contradictory emotions in the relationship: “*Tied*, like a donkey, s/he resents the rope” (Sobo: 121). This will result in the person being *tied* but unaware of it acting irrationally although being wholly unconscious of the reason, sometimes leading to the victim one day rising up and hacking off the hand or head of the person who has *tied* him/her. Such violence is generally justified as the *tie*-er must receive some comeuppance. Such violence is culturally sanctioned.

A story told by anthropologist, popular talk show host and newspaper columnist Kingsley “Ragashanti” Stewart bears quoting in full (with translation):

Jamaican: *But what is truly disgusting is di main way dem believe seh tying work. Mi cannot go inna details bout how dis most popular form a tying work because it too nasty fi di STAR. But nuff a unu know weh mi a talk bout. All mi can say is dat it involve a lady's monthlies.*

But it look like it still a gwaan nuff, cause a bredda beat out a woman wah day outa East cause him claim seh him find out seh shi did a tie him. Wen dem ask him how him know, him claim seh him food neva look right and him carry it go show him docta bredrin who confirm it seh a certain oda red substance did inna di stew peas. Di man jus fahwud back a him yaad an go put on crazy board lik pon him catty.

English: What is really disgusting is the main way Jamaicans believe *tying* works. I cannot go into details about how this popular form of *tying* works because it is too nasty for the *Star* newspaper. But a lot of you know what I’m talking about. All I can say is it involves a lady’s monthlies.

This practice of *tying* men seems to be still happening a lot because a man recently beat up a woman the other day out in Eastern Jamaica because he claimed he found out she had *tied* him. When he was asked how he knew he claimed that the meal she served him looked suspicious. He took it to a doctor friend who confirmed that there was another red substance [i.e., menstrual blood] in the stew peas. The man returned home and beat his woman severely. (Ragashanti, 2010)

Apart from *tying* the man, it is believed that the continued ingesting of menstrual blood can lead to “bad belly” and physical changes in a man. An overdose of menstrual blood can also kill him. This was perhaps the reason the man felt justified in administering the brutal beating. Interestingly, while it is little spoken of, an informant in Barbados told of “pink pudding” (menstrual blood mixed into pudding) from a Johnny claat (menstrual cloth) as a tool of revenge used by women. In Belize, adding menstrual blood to food is also believed to tie two people together; this is known “sweat rice”.

Sobo makes connections between the notions of flow within the body, in the traditional Jamaican consciousness, and the sharing of resources among family members. Men are often perceived to be the holder of resources and women are forced to find creative means of relieving them of these resources, oftentimes for the care of children and other kin folk. Women are not able to express power overtly and therefore are more prone to use covert means to manipulate. Throughout the Caribbean women are thought of as “smart, devious and clever” (Sobo: 190) and Jamaican women are no exception.

Because of their reproductive role women have more access to the most potent means of *tying* – menstrual blood (afterbirth blood is also considered a particularly potent “*tying*” agent. Cunnilingus is also seen as able to *tie* men as well.). Sobo believes that

menstrual taboos in Jamaica flow from this “natural” fact. At the same time, ambivalence about relationships and the motives of others is revealed in the fear of being *tied*. The fear of being *tied* is frightening as it raises questions about independence – no man likes to be forced to act against his will, especially by the weaker sex. Taboos about sex during menstruation are the means of preventing men from coming into contract with this potent means of *tying* and the person with the greatest power to *tie*. Sobo contends that:

Through talk of the female practice of “*tying*”, men can project their exploitative tendencies back on women. Moreover, the discourse on “*tying*” allows men to express their resentment of kin and kin-like demands...When “*tied*” by a woman, a man’s autonomy is stolen so that his resources and devotion can be secured. His sense of obligation toward this “wife” is then not really his own, and his “willingness” is taken advantage of. (229)

Sobo sees the fear of *tying* in men not simply as a foil for kinship expectations but also as a reaction to the legacy of slavery. Sexist expectations are also at play as men are expected to control women and not the reverse. Women prepare the food men eat, men hold the resources women desire, and women have the natural advantage of menstrual power. As noted before, traditionally, menstruating women do not cook for their men. Clearly, the reasons for this are not simply hygienic, but the fear of the menstrual blood. Women transfer blood to food by steaming (squatting over the pot, to allow the steam to loosen the menses) or by squeezing blood from menstrual rags. There are certain foods that are often feared by men – rice and peas, stew peas, red peas soup. All are the correct colour therefore the additional “flavouring” is undetectable or believed to be. Interestingly, as Sobo’s study shows, men also engage in tricks to compel fidelity from their women or for them to provide intercourse; some may even impregnate unsuspecting partners. For example, some men, who will be away from their partners for a while, rub concoctions on the women’s lower body to sicken any man who “interferes” with them. Men believe that they own the sexual labour of women and as women are the receptacles in which they plant their seed they strive to ensure that the child the woman bears whom they are required to support is really theirs. They also fear being seen as soft by others because their woman “steps out” on them.

At the same time, men can harm women by deliberately infecting them with venereal diseases. They can also trick women by placing the membrane of a boiled egg on their penis before intercourse. This membrane remains behind in the woman and is believed to rot leading to sickness and blocked tubes. Men also trick women by pricking or pinching condoms in order to impregnate them. Some men also add aphrodisiacs to the drink of women in order to ensure that the targeted partner is willing. Popular culture decries the greedy woman, who is “*licky lick*”, and is therefore deserving of being tricked. Women also engage in other “tricks”. Some women put laundry blue inside their vaginas to harm men’s penises. Sobo infers that this may have little to do with the intent to

harm but may be a device to erase menstruation (menstrual blood being considered harmful to men). This is a practice of prostitutes, who often need to work in spite of menstruating. Given the transactional nature of sex, some women trick men into believing that menstruation has started once money has exchanged hands. As long as it was not explicitly stated that the money handed over was for sex, it cannot be demanded back as to do so would be to classify the woman as a prostitute. But perhaps the biggest trick is *tying*.

The importance of resources – control and access – in *tying* is captured in Opal Palmer Adisa's intriguing poem, entitled "Nannie" (2004: 67). In the poem, which appears to be dedicated to the memory of her paternal grandmother, she writes:

now as you lift
great grandson and daughter
into your arms
embracing me
hair silver white
and thin like a hen's
i try to
fix the details of your life
grab at the little pieces
you share reluctantly
all the stories you whispered
about susu and the things women did
with their menstrual blood to keep their men (emphasis added).

Palmer Adisa similarly references the power of menstrual blood but through the eyes of a teenager in "*Bumbo Claat*":

monthly mortality
spills from between
our legs
but a woman's blood
can bind long after
lust is weary. (. 79, emphasis added)

Palmer Adisa presents the use of blood to *tie* men in the same breath as *throwing pard-ner* ("*susu*"), the woman-centred self-help microfinance and savings programme that is a staple in most Caribbean islands.

The reluctant telling of such tales raises questions about the potential opprobrium that would greet such forbidden activities, yet both *tying* and *susu* are clearly of "the things women did with their menstrual blood". Like *susu*, such "things" are deployed as means of survival when resources are scarce. Women compete with each other for financially solvent men as men are wont to move on once they lose interest. Tracing the practice to her grandmother roots it in a long history of survival and resistance of Jamaican women.

Interestingly, Palmer Adisa's grandmother is of Jewish heritage and so the suggestion is that the practice crosses class and racial lines and may indeed be part of Jamaican culture. Intriguingly, "Nannie" is followed by "Nannie II", which appears to describe her maternal grandmother, a nutmeg brown woman in contrast to Nannie who had silver hair as thin like a hen's. No mention is made of Nannie II, who is clearly African-descended, engaging in such practices. Nannie I deploys methods of *tying* and *holding* ("survival") that are peculiarly female and her actions reinforce the widely held perception that women are more crafty than men.

There is no doubt that Jamaican society is deeply patriarchal in its structure, having been fed, on one side, by a Euro-Christianity that privileges maleness and associates maleness with superior reason and spirit, and African traditions, on the other, which also contain ambivalences towards the feminine. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the epitome of evil is often located in the person of Eve in the story of the Fall (Genesis 3), as observed by Grahn (2005):

[T]he religious origin story of Eve in the Garden of Eden, a story central to Jewish and Christian beliefs, and the blame put on her, a blame that is interpreted as menstrual in many cultures. 'Menstruation and pain in childbirth are God's punishment for original sin' – this is a sentiment we have heard so many times, in the classroom and out of it.

Mechtchild of Magdeburgh, German mystic and visionary (1210-1283), spoke of the sinful sap which flows through the human body as a result of Adam's consumption of the apple. Eve received in addition accursed menstrual blood, which has been inherited by all other women all because of an apple (Radford Ruether, 1998). Indeed, Chevannes (1994) argues that the control of women by men within Jamaican peasant culture is reinforced through myths and symbols, especially Biblical ones. The story of Adam and Eve justifies the woman's place within the family and society. Through her behaviour Eve caused sin to enter the world and so must be justly punished through her inferior standing, menstruation and painful childbirth – or so the story goes.

Menstruation is therefore interpreted as the sign of women's evil as well as punishment for sin. Eve's story along with the stories of Delilah and Jezebel reinforce the belief in women as treacherous by nature. Ecclesiastes describes "women [as] more bitter than death" (7.26). Indeed, the stories of women as primary sinners and naturally treacherous/immoral, have all elided together in the moral anthropology expressed in the belief in *tying*. As one Zacche the tailor describes her, woman, Jamaican woman, is:

Amusing, but so is monkey, which is more deceitful than any of the animal in this world; woman walk softly, but so do snake and scorpion; woman mean well but so do black spiders; woman is attentive, but so is sandfly and mosquito; woman is bewitching but so by all account is the very devil himself (De Montagnac, 1899 in Chevannes, 1994: 30).

The Bible has clearly been used as a source of authority to justify menstrual taboos and moral evaluations of women that serve the purposes of men (Wignall, 2013). In this (deliberate) patriarchal misreading of the series of ancient Jewish folk tales that constitute what is commonly referred to as the Old Testament, Eve has bequeathed her nature and punishment to her female descendants, who in turn hold the potential to harm others, especially unsuspecting men. This belief in the moral evil of women has been a strong part of the Christian tradition. Evil, woman, the feminine are assumed to be naturally linked. In fact, in fifteenth and sixteenth century European culture there was a widespread belief that women and women's bodies were fundamentally evil (Gardennour, 2010). Women were considered anatomically and spiritually venomous. Elements of this belief can be seen to be present in Jamaican culture where women are seen to have the ability to *tie* and the willingness (natural inclination) so to do.

Womanist critique

Recognising the theological anthropology implicit in the beliefs and practices connected with menstrual *tying* calls for a Womanist critique. “[I]t is the task of women theologians to investigate the underlying religious views that support negative customs and ask how these might be transformed by a worldview that is more life-enhancing for women in partnership with men” (Radford Ruether, 1998: 261). This right to evaluate received cultural practices – from traditional African cultures, from Christianity, and from Western Secularism – in terms of how they benefit or harm women is one that is valued highly by Womanist theologians. By claiming such a right, Womanist theologians also claim primacy as arbiters of what truly promotes or impedes the well-being of women, especially African-descended women.

A Womanist critique of the cultural beliefs about menstruation and female immorality must therefore begin with the experience of African-descended Jamaican women, who see themselves as once again typecast in the role of the intrinsically evil Other, who encounter fear, rejection and mistrust by their intimate male companions at certain times of the month, who feel intense shame toward their monthly period, who feel compelled to hide the pads and tampons because they are considered nasty/dirty/harmful, who fear the remarks people make about menstrual smell as a bad/raw smell, who describe their own menstruation in these same terms, who experience male abandonment or philandering and so feel pressured to compel their devotion or support in order to ensure the survival of their families, who choose to appropriate the identity of an innately treacherous and immoral being who will do harm simply because she can.

The question of justice for Jamaican women rises to the fore. The continued typecasting of women evil and sinful by religious teaching does not augur well for the possibility of right relations and well-being in ecclesial and societal human communities as well as between human beings and the earth. It serves to reinforce the brokenness of the

relationships between men and women. It sanctions the continued domination by Jamaican men over Jamaican women and absolves men of their responsibility to their families which men fear is at play in *tying*. At the same time, it calls into question the very nature of Jamaican society and individual Jamaican communities, which is so intrinsic to the understanding of self, especially the embodied Jamaican female self.

Far from reflecting the true divine will and the nature of women, menstrual beliefs about *tying* subvert God's creation and distort human nature, both male and female. It is clearly a false anthropology that designates women as more sinful than men. A rereading of the Fall which rejects the belief in *tying* can recognise the equality of all human beings in sinfulness. There are also resources in the Jamaican popular tradition which point to the belief in universal potential for evil among all human beings. Similarly, there are resources within the Christian tradition that question the vilification of women who are menstruating. The voice of Gregory the Great was strident in his rejection of the position of those who would bar women from Church because of the natural process of menstruation. A womanist anthropology calls into question the way such menstrual beliefs have created the conditions whereby many women accept their own marginalization. It calls upon Jamaican women to find within their experience of menstruation a process of life giving relationship with others, especially men, which is worthy of celebration.

Conclusion

"Beliefs about the functions of the body have more to do with social and cultural assumptions than with medical facts, and this is seldom more the case than with menstruation" (Mullin, 2009: 497). Indeed, Jamaican popular beliefs about menstruation, as described by Sobo, reveal less about the character of this biological process, and more about traditional and contemporary patriarchal concerns over resources and relationships grounded in constructions of the female, especially the female body. Such beliefs, when unexamined, serve to create and perpetuate oppressive relationships between men and women. By constructing women, especially menstruating women, as dangerous and polluting and willing to use their menstrual power to *tie* men, such beliefs reinforce religiously-sanctioned ideas of sin and evil as especially present in women. Clearly, such cultural beliefs and practices require emancipatory transformation in order to allow both Jamaican women and Jamaican men to live and be as persons created in the image of the divine.

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THE ROLE AND IMAGE OF MIDWIVES IN CARIBBEAN SOCIETY FROM THE COLONIAL PERIOD TO THE PRESENT: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DISCOURSE RELEVANT TO MIDWIFERY IN SPECIFIC HISPANO-PHONE, ANGLOPHONE, AND FRANCOPHONE CONTEXTS

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Introduction and methodology

The objective of the study that forms the basis for this article was to trace the evolution of the role and image of midwives in Caribbean societies from the colonial period to the present on the islands of Puerto Rico, Saint Croix and Martinique. We analyzed the female strategies used by midwives to position themselves as agents of resistance in favor of women. In order to do so, we utilized a linguistic perspective in the study of oral and written language to unveil the role of discourse about midwifery, especially the dominant discourses propagated by the powers that be.

We obtained responses to the following research questions: How has hegemonic discourse about midwives affected women on the Caribbean islands of Puerto Rico, Saint Croix and Martinique? How have midwives found a way to become agents of resistance in favor of women on these islands? How have the role and image of midwives in Caribbean society evolved from the colonial period to the present in these specific Hispanophone, Anglophone, and Francophone contexts? How has the degree of importance accorded to 'science' in the values of the culture of each of these islands affected women's view of midwives?

In order to find answers to these questions, we resorted to Critical Discourse Analysis (Wodak, 2009) as a method of analysis in order to examine the language used around and about midwifery and by midwives. We utilized a number of methodological instruments and sources of data to collect as much information as possible in order to present the setting within which midwives have had to struggle.

We prepared a twenty-question survey to be delivered online. We decided to do so due to the complexity of this research which involved three different Caribbean islands with three different languages and historical backgrounds. All questions were open questions about midwives, giving birth with a midwife, the professional or non-professional character of midwives and the role midwives play today.

One of the contributions of this investigation was the innovative use of social media and new technologies to be able to do the data gathering in the study of language use and cultural practices. We created the questionnaire using the electronic platform Survey Gizmo for data collection. With this electronic platform, we could generate a summary report that, among other things, provided sources, countries and cities, and IP addresses. This combination of resources allowed us to create a reliable research structure regarding the recruitment of participants. This type of resource allowed for a wide range of research possibilities. We also created a web page using the platform known as Wix where three different links took participants from the different islands to their corresponding questionnaire.

We paid then for advertisements on Facebook which specifically set filters to reach participants on the islands of Martinique, and Puerto Rico. In the case of Saint Croix, Facebook does not have such filters. The advertisements contained the link to the web page where the participants had access to the survey. Participants were able to select the “Share” option to share the survey with their contacts, which would allow the researcher to recruit other participants through the ‘snowball’ methodology for sample design. Thanks to these efforts, 24 participants from Martinique and 34 from Puerto Rico answered the questionnaire. After collecting our data, we proceeded to analyze it so as to arrive at the conclusions that appear below.

Besides the survey, we also examined other sources. For Puerto Rico, we used several written sources such as an open letter from the Medical Association of Puerto Rico (Asociación Médica de Puerto Rico, 2011) to the Government of Puerto Rico concerning legislation on compensation for malpractice, news articles about a controversy that took place regarding a legislative bill for the regulation of the practice of midwifery, a special two-part report from a local TV channel and data from web pages concerning initiatives/organizations founded by midwives. For Saint Croix, besides the survey, we analyzed a total of three interviews, one with a midwife, a second with a nurse-midwife and a third with an obstetrician, and some written sources. Finally, in the case of Martinique, we analyzed the survey, articles about a midwives’ strike that had taken place in France and Martinique, and excerpts from a blog by medical residents about the midwives’ strike. These additional sources of information helped us in drawing a more precise picture of the medical, social and cultural context of midwifery on each island.

Analysis and findings

We analyzed all elements looking at those words and expressions that could help answer our research questions. The criteria selected for this study were the use of lexical items or expressions that (a) promoted othering; (b) created a sense of fear of certain birth-related situations; (c) were repeated for the sake of manipulative emphasis; (d) expressed facts or arguments in a particular order of presentation so as to confuse; and (e) constructed figurative language such as metaphors which help create vivid images that

are readily implanted in people's minds. Our most important findings are detailed below.

One of the consequences of othering is gaining control over the othered group. Both the Church and the State initiated a witch-hunt campaign from the 15th to the 18th centuries whose main victims were women, particularly midwives. This witch hunting created the foundations for the campaign of delegitimization waged by male obstetricians against midwives in the 19th century, which resulted in the replacement of midwives by chiefly male obstetricians (Barker-Benfield, 2000). This process has had detrimental consequences not only for midwives in particular but for all women in general. Respondents claimed that women have been deprived of their power over their bodies, their power to decide and choose.

Another way to achieve othering has been to construct an opposition between backwardness and progress, in such a way as to radically devalue traditional practices as backward and to radically overvalue patriarchally dominated scientific and technological 'progress'. This was evident in responses to the question "What comes to your mind when you hear the word midwife?" such as – "past customs", "rural zones", "no formal education", "poverty", "country women", and "black women". These responses referred to the obsolescence of the tradition of midwifery and its 'backward' association with rurality or primitiveness. The ideology of progress has penetrated so deeply into the mindset of people that they do not question it or what has been lost in the name of 'development'. Othering has also been achieved through the association of midwives with no formal education, the economic precariousness of those who have had no other choice but to use a midwife, and the rural areas of provenance of women who have this type of childbirth.

Midwives sustain that most people are not aware of the evolution of their competences. For example, they are perfectly capable of ruling out pathologies and possible complications before these result in an emergency situation. In France and Martinique, however, midwives enjoy a fairly secure medical status and a positive public image. At the surface, their practice seems to have reached a certain degree of apparent prestige and autonomy. However, at a deeper level, their practice is as negatively impacted by the dominant medical discourses as is the practice of midwifery in the island of St. Croix, and more negatively impacted than in Puerto Rico, where midwives have real autonomy. This is because midwifery in Martinique has evolved within a health care system dominated by the medical profession. In Martinique, midwives' autonomy is limited by the health system in which they work. In this sense, it could be said that midwifery in Martinique is more akin to the medical model of care. The same goes for St. Croix. Puerto Rico has a midwifery model of care that is autonomous, and that is closer to the model of the Midwives' Alliance of North America (n.d.), which is woman-centered. Fear is closely related to othering. In fact, it is a key tool with which a group that is othering another group creates ideologies and manipulates public opinion (Marko,

2013). Obstetricians have managed to change the perception of pregnancy and childbirth from a social event to a medical event. Since in our societies conventional medicine deals with, and reacts to, pathologies, people fear the alleged complications and risks of pregnancy and childbirth. Most people do not even think of the possibility that medical protocols and unnecessary interventions in pregnancy and childbirth are creating the pathological conditions that they fear. Many women and their husbands have developed fear as a result of the discourse of medical doctors, who thereby achieve control, all through manipulation of language.

In all three islands the fear factor permeates respondents' answers. Although there are exceptions, the element of fear is a constant in the minds of respondents because of the ideology of childbirth as a dangerous medical event – instead of a natural social event. However, this view is far from being monolithic. For example, in Puerto Rico, obstetricians are known for performing inductions at their convenience. Another argument that exposes the non-monolithic character of obstetricians' supremacy is that some respondents affirmed that people do not know the true value of the work of midwives, and that physicians have managed to create the idea that childbirth was a dangerous event. People are also aware that the dynamics of the pregnancy and childbirth processes boils down to a control issue: obstetricians want to control women/nature at their convenience. One must bear in mind that time is money, and when one controls time, one establishes the parameters that enable the accumulation of capital or, at least, enough resources to have a lifestyle deemed appropriate to the standards of the medical profession, which again in the collective imaginary is upscale.

Martinican respondents, like Crucian respondents, also have the idea that midwives assist in childbirth when there is no obstetrician and that they are good assistants to obstetricians. In other words, some people consider that, in the past, the role of midwives was important, not based on their knowledge and skills, but because there were no readily accessible obstetricians or not as many as there are today.

Throughout our data, examples abounded of the emphasis given to the idea that, nowadays, the work of midwives must be supported by science and technology and that they must be overseen by obstetricians. The purpose of repeating this argument is to diminish the figure of the midwife, to relate her to backwardness and to ban her autonomy by converting her into an assistant to obstetricians. This strategy allows the reinforcement of the mental model of the unquestioned authority of science and technology. The use of words such as *conocimiento* (knowledge), *hoy en día* (today), and *mundial* (worldwide) reinforces in the psyche of the audience the ideology of the authority of science and modernity. This strategy seeks to invalidate any other knowledge and conceal evidence-based practice, which is a core principle of midwifery.

In an open letter from the Medical Association of Puerto Rico (MAPR) to the Government of Puerto Rico concerning legislation on compensation for malpractice, the ordering of facts sought, among other things, to establish who had prestige and who had the

power to prevent the people of Puerto Rico from being the victims of a health crisis. The purpose of choosing expressions such as “lack of access”, “overcrowding”, “great discontent among patients”, “the situation is so critical”, and “we risk” – was to instill fear, manipulate public opinion and make people feel vulnerable and at risk. To reinforce this vulnerability and fear, the MAPR resorted first to a campaign of delegitimization against midwives which resuscitated notions about their lack of formal education, backwardness and peril. Their arguments relied on the background knowledge of the readers of this letter. The lexical choices and the ordering of the information given showed that the MAPR is aware that the readers have assimilated the ideology of medical supremacy over midwives.

The use of metaphors stood out in the survey responses. Metaphors such as “*las parteras son cuentos de ‘antes’ y de viejitos*” are revealing because some people view with disdain anything that has to do with a retrograde past or that reflects poverty. This shows that people have assimilated the othering process. Progress and scientific advances are overestimated even though these advances embody all of the flaws inherent to the observation and the trial and error processes followed by humans since the beginning of their existence on this planet.

The impact of the campaign of delegitimization against midwives that made all of this possible are still reverberating in the comments in our data set. That said, there were several common themes that revealed the negative mechanisms and impacts of the hegemony of the medical establishment over the birth process. These included observations that most cases of childbirth take place in hospitals and are extremely medicalized and that technology is overused in pregnancy and childbirth.

The belief that midwives do not have as much knowledge about childbirth as obstetricians is deeply rooted in the minds of people, who do not consider the fact that obstetricians acquire their knowledge almost exclusively through formal education while midwives are not only well educated, but also have extensive practical experience. Although hegemonic discourse has affected the view of many women about midwives, we argue that medical hegemony is not absolute because each day many more women seek to give birth with midwives or demand that obstetricians allow them to have gentle and respected childbirths.

The agency of midwives

The deeds of midwives in Caribbean societies from the colonial period to the present have made it possible for advocacy for the re-naturalization of childbirth to be at the forefront of an important social and medical debate. Today, women demand respect for themselves and for their babies; they expect a gentler childbirth process, even a gentler caesarian section when there is a true need for one; they hope to share their pregnancy and childbirth process with their family; and they are also in the midst of creating stronger networks. All of this has in no small measure been made possible because of

the awareness raising activities of midwives, who have never stopped working towards the re-naturalization of childbirth, the reunification of the family, and the establishment of grassroots networks. Therefore, midwives have helped women to regain control over their bodies and to reclaim their power.

These female strategies have been instrumental to their agency and to a renaissance of the womanly art of midwifery. This renewed vision of childbirth – which we found in the use of positive lexical choices such as “spontaneous delivery,” “is more natural,” and “the mother may be able to enjoy it” – is one of the many contributions of midwives. In addition, they have continued to provide a service in which the woman, the time of pregnancy and nature are respected.

The idea that women have been deprived of autonomy over their bodies and the power to decide and to choose was raised when participants in the survey were asked “What comes to your mind when you hear the word midwife?” Many of their answers to this question reflected an indirect recognition that the replacement of midwives chiefly by male obstetricians has resulted in a disempowering paradigm shift. Underneath the dominant layer of medical ideology lies another layer of prior or background knowledge of a reality that is presumed to be in the past but that reveals a positive and important but tragically ignored truth: that midwives respect women’s autonomy and power to give birth and to choose. This is the positive side. The tragedy lies in that, while more women are looking for alternative ways to experience their pregnancy and childbirth and for going back to the basics, today these options are almost non-existent, when compared with the options open to women in the past. Only a few women today enjoy the autonomy and power to choose, for example, having a home birth assisted by a midwife. On the other hand, the fact that such an option still exists attests to the agency shown by midwives, who have kept working in favor of women and have prevailed throughout time, despite the campaigns of delegitimization that have so continuously and consistently been waged against them, by abiding by their ethical actions, worldview, and philosophy of life and by educating and empowering women.

Although respondents to the questionnaire affirm that today’s midwives are educated women, the first thing that came to their minds was the lack of education of midwives, which seems to be a contradiction. However, in an important sense it is not a contradiction, because at some level respondents acknowledge that midwives have always had the true knowledge of the physiology of pregnancy and childbirth although not necessarily an academic degree. The importance of having an academic degree nowadays is a change of paradigm that came along with the discourses of progress and medical authority. In the final analysis, this is the true contradiction, because medical advances indiscriminately and uniformly used as standard medical procedure have been deployed to the detriment of most healthy women. We need look no farther than Puerto Rico for abundant evidence of this. On our island, we are suffering from one of the highest rates of caesarian sections (PrimeraHora.com, 2015) and malpractice in the Caribbean; not

to mention the alarming rate of obstetric violence (Parrilla-Rodríguez, 2010) against Puerto Rican women, which is a violation of human rights. There is also violation of human rights with respect to midwives as a group, since they have been subject to a smear campaign whose intention has always been to dismantle their woman-centered practice in favor of a male dominated guild whose physician-centered practice is determined more by status and money than by the women they are supposed to be serving. This has prevented midwives from attaining social mobility and deprived them of access to the levers of power.

The professional histories of each one of the midwives in Puerto Rico reflect an agency that has produced positive results for the benefit not only of women but of babies and society in general. The repeated lexical selections of respondents – respect, commitment, education, empowerment, intimacy, vocation, professionalization, reliability – bear witness to the agency deployed by midwives.

Midwives have a high level of social reflexivity because they have demonstrated a strong capacity to act within the social structure shaping their own norms, tastes, politics, desires, etc. (De Certeau, 1984). They have worked from a non-confrontational space to retain their autonomy, to defend the right to exercise their practice and to empower women through education. Education and professionalization are the tools they have developed to resist and persist in providing the best possible services to women. Therefore, the perception of unsafety regarding giving birth with a midwife has changed. People are regaining confidence in midwives.

Since the scope of the work of midwives is mainly related to the birthing process, and since this process is socially conditioned, defined and interpreted, the political, religious and economic onslaughts against midwives have affected women in general. Women have lacked respect and caring attention to their needs. In Puerto Rico as well as in Saint Croix, respondents gave significant weight to the respect for the values and wishes of the woman which they ascribed to midwives. The awareness of the issues and the realities that pregnant women and women giving birth live every single day are a reflection of the arduous and continuous educational and empowering work of midwives.

In Saint Croix, all respondents said that midwives are professionals with academic degrees and certifications. They believe that midwives have the same role that they had in the past but with more experience and training because they are professionally trained and licensed. For Crucian respondents, the formal education of midwives was important.

Although in Saint Croix there are independent midwives, most Crucian midwives are nurse-midwives who practice as such. Unlike in Puerto Rico, people are accustomed to seeing them in hospital settings as is the case in many states of the United States, where midwives provide follow-up for women's pregnancies from the beginning up to the end, when obstetricians take over the last stage of the childbirth process. Although these two islands are both territories of the United States, there are differences in the way the

health care model is structured with respect to pregnancy and childbirth. Therefore, the image of midwives as uneducated women did not arise as part of the collective imagery of Crucians, who nevertheless downgraded the role of midwives to an assistant to obstetricians.

In both territories of the United States, most respondents seem not to have even considered the possibility that the excessive and indiscriminate use of technology and the medical and hospital protocols is the cause of many – if not most – of the hazards associated with pregnancy and childbirth. This corresponds to the uniform application of standard operating procedures to all women – those who are healthy and those that present any kind of pathology – which triggers a series of events that leads to situations that require more interventions in a chain reaction. This model of care puts at risk pregnant and laboring women and their babies due to unnecessary interventions that hinder the natural process of pregnancy and childbirth.

In addition, respondents do not seem familiar with the differences in the scope of work of midwives and obstetricians. Midwives are better equipped than obstetricians to work with healthy women presenting healthy pregnancies because they are experts in the physiology of pregnancy and childbirth. They are also trained to rule out conditions that could lead to an emergency; hence they know when they need to refer a woman to an obstetrician. Midwives have expanded their scope of work through continuous education, training, workshops and international collaboration. Their practice is aimed at normal pregnancies and childbirths of healthy women. They do not follow standard uniform protocols. On the contrary, they treat each woman individually respecting her time and capacities, and they are trained to manage emergencies. More important, because of the individualized and close follow-up that midwives provide to pregnant women, they are capable of identifying possible risks or emergencies with enough time to refer them to the experts in the relevant pathologies. Thus, midwives are aware of the scope of their work and its limitations.

Obstetricians, on the other hand, are trained to manage pathologies and, since they approach pregnancy and childbirth from a pathological standpoint, they are not experts in physiological pregnancies and childbirths. The fact that their training is based on pathologies may be the reason why they cannot approach pregnancies and childbirths without resorting to discourses of fear.

Another difference between midwives in Puerto Rico and Saint Croix is that, while in Puerto Rico the government ceased regulating midwifery a long time ago, in Saint Croix the strictness of regulations has driven most independent midwives to the US mainland or to other islands in the Eastern Caribbean. Therefore, respondents in Saint Croix are more familiar with nurse-midwives, while in Puerto Rico respondents are more familiar with midwives. Nurse-midwives do not provide follow-up to pregnancies and do not assist childbirth except for those cases where the obstetricians cannot arrive in time for the expulsion phase of labor.

Public policy in Saint Croix has affected independent midwives because it seems that, due to the mobility of the islanders among the islands of the Eastern Caribbean, there are immigration issues that hinder the decision for having home births. Women choosing home births confront many issues with the Department of Health to get birth certificates because of the government questioning if the child was born on the island, if the mother actually lives there and why they had a home birth.

Pregnancies and childbirths are also highly medicalized and the caesarian sections rate is high in Saint Croix. Therefore, the number of home births is increasing because more and more Crucian women want freedom of mobility, choose non-medicalized, gentler childbirths and try their best to have a natural childbirth.

Crucian nurse-midwives tend to practice a pregnancy model of care that is more akin to the medical model than with the midwifery model because their scope of work has restrictions imposed by hospital protocols and they are subjected to orders from obstetricians. However, they share many characteristics of independent midwives. In fact, they may be applying some of the approaches of midwifery to their hospital practice, and this might suggest that the experiences of the women they assist are more satisfactory than is the case in Puerto Rico – where the number of nurse-midwives is very low and those who are nurse-midwives do not practice as such, but practice instead as graduate nurses because the law does not enable them to function as midwives. But in this case, we would only be speculating.

While in Martinique, the role of midwives is recognized within the Health System of France and Martinique, midwives are in second place with respect to obstetricians. Even in a country where people broadly recognize and respect midwives as health care providers, there is prejudice against their capacity to effectively assist laboring women. This is so not because people necessarily have no faith in midwives' skills and knowledge but because people think of pregnancy and childbirth as an illness and a risky event instead of a social, normal and natural event.

All three islands were and still are under the influence of their respective metropolises: The United States, in the case of Puerto Rico and Saint Croix, and France, in the case of Martinique. There are similarities between the health care systems of the metropolises and their respective islands. Puerto Rico and Saint Croix, although being part of the same metropolises, present differences in the role of nurse-midwives, since in Saint Croix nurse-midwives work as such in hospitals, while in Puerto Rico they are not authorized by law to work as midwives, only as nurses. In other words, Puerto Rico does not mirror the health care system of the United State as far as nurse-midwives are concerned. However, Saint Croix and Martinique do mirror the health care structure of their respective metropolises. These differences merit further investigation.

The seeds of its own destruction

Applying Marx' concept, we must say that the medical industry carries within it the seeds of its own destruction. The extreme actions of the medical establishment and the way in which it has treated women have worked against it. These actions have produced a negative image toward obstetricians, which may be compared to the negative image that the medical industry created with its campaign against midwives. Today, many more women fear giving birth with an obstetrician and going to a hospital.

Many women believe that the birthing process has been dehumanized. Female participants stated that when women give birth in a hospital, they are detached from their connection to nature. Pregnancy and childbirth, in general, are seen as illnesses instead of natural processes. Women feel pressured by nurses and obstetricians to take medication; they must lie in bed, and obstetricians break their membrane to speed up labor. Moreover, the health care system is business-driven, for it forces women to become blind consumers of unnecessary technology and interventions.

Unlike the medical industry, it seems that the womanly art of midwifery, which midwives have crafted with dedication, patience, respect, knowledge of the physiology of childbirth, individualized care, and education, is based on living the experience of each instance of childbirth as unique. Midwives' craft has always consisted of experiencing childbirth as an event that is new, unique, never previously witnessed. They have built-up their practice based on events where nature has control but, at the same time, their thorough observation of nature has endowed them with the expertise on the physiology of childbirth.

This attitude contrasts with that of the medical professional, who tends to normalize, control, and establish protocols irrespective of the differences between women and between the pregnancies of the same woman, which may be completely different. The medical professional feels the urge to intervene because that is what he is trained for. After comparing these two similar but very different practices viewed as a craft and as a profession respectively, one might conclude that in the universe of midwifery, midwives carry within them the seeds of their survival, while medical professionals carry within them the seeds of their own destruction.

Conclusions and the limitations of this study

We recognize that the utilization of a survey as one of the tools of our methodology entailed drawbacks that face-to-face contact would have resolved, since we would have been able to clarify or insist on deepening some of the answers provided by participants. There is still more space for investigation that would serve to answer, for example, questions such as "How do age, level of education and place of origin in the Caribbean play a role in the image of midwives among peoples of the Caribbean?" or "How have

pressures from physicians and the importance that the public gives to technological advances and science affected the performance of midwives and the confidence they have in their practice?”

The design of our instrument did not allow us to determine, for example, if the practice of midwives working at hospitals in Martinique is autonomous enough to respect the midwifery model of care or if, on the contrary, it is closer to the medical model of care. That line of enquiry is suitable for another research project.

Our conclusions were the result of a careful critical analysis of the discourse found in the different sources of data collected for this study. The combination of different sources for analysis made it possible to obtain a richness of data that aided in the formulation of the many conclusions presented here.

Birth is an act of nature shared universally in the animal kingdom of which human beings are a part. In the case of human beings, the birthing process is not only a physiological component of women’s biology, but it is a process that is socially conditioned, defined and interpreted. Although this research is not about the birthing process, it certainly is about a figure – the midwife – who incarnates not only the power of enabling life as a woman but the power of being the keeper of the womanly art of birthing. A midwife is the keeper of women’s strengths and possibilities, and because of this, the political, religious and economic onslaughts endured by midwives over the past centuries have negatively affected women in general. The hegemonic discourse about midwives has always been articulated through a campaign whose objective is gender and class subjugation.

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EMANCIPATION WITHOUT LIBERATION: THE STRUGGLE FOR LAND AND CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS IN DENNIS SCOTT'S *AN ECHO IN THE BONE* AND DAVID EDGECOMBE'S *KIRNON'S KINGDOM*.¹

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Land ownership and received notions associated with its efficient utilization for sustainable economic growth and development within contemporary globalized economics are fundamental to a broader understanding of independence and nation building in postcolonial Caribbean nations. However, Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin explore the ambiguous nature of the Western driven concepts of development (2010: 27-28) and contend that development is “a form strategic altruism in which technical and financial assistance from the self-designated First world is geared toward its own economic and political interest”, as well as being a constructed propagandistic discourse that perpetuates and consolidates the social, economic, cultural and political hegemony of Western nations (p. 28). But from a more liberal and benign perspective, Huggan and Tiffin (2010: 29) draw on Amartya Sen's (2000: 2-3) idea that development is not all about economic figures but also about human liberation and freedom.

David Edgecombe's play, *Kirnon's kingdom* (2001) and Dennis Scott's *An echo in the bone* (1985) explore the ecological and environmental malpractices imbedded in neo-colonial ideas of development: diversion of natural resources, tourism, monocropping, and real estate development. As Huggan and Tiffin argue, “development is generally recognized to be a strategically ambiguous term, adapted to the different needs of those who use it ... based as it all too often is on the enormous cultural assumptions and presumption of the West” (Black cited in Huggan & Tiffin, 2010: 27). In other words, the notion of development in the Caribbean is tied to the Euro-Western concepts defined by an ideology of “catching up” by the so called developing countries (p. 31). These types of neocolonial developments Huggan and Tiffin state:

¹ This paper is a revised version of a paper first presented at AFTA (African Theatre Association) Annual International Conference, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana, with the title: “Land, development, and African Caribbean theatre/ drama of emancipation and nationhood: the ecopoetics of Dennis Scott in *An echo in the bone* and David Edgecombe's *Kirnon's kingdom*.”

“Far from putting an end to old-style imperialism. . . modern (post-war) development finds new ways of instantiating it, e.g. through the ongoing collaboration between national governments and gargantuan trans-national companies whose economies exceed those of all but the largest ‘developing’ countries, and whose financial and technical assistance is provided in terms that continues to favor the West.” (p. 30)

Indeed, Caribbean nations fall into such economic traps set up by multinational companies, which create an illusion of “development” that is juxtaposed to a country’s social and political “backwardness.” Simply put, neo-imperialism operates through coordinated systems of hegemonic ideologies of development in order to control the natural resources of poorer nations.

In these strategies of development praxes offered to Caribbean nations, there is a denial of the consequences of racialized history, economics, ecological, and socio-cultural relationships between poorer nations of the south and richer nations of the north. *An echo in the bone* and *Kirnon’s kingdom* are both dramas that agitate for development praxes defined by ecological and cultural consciousness derived from historical experiences in the Caribbean. Development then becomes an emotional, cultural, spiritual, and a sustainable entitlement to land, not the type of entitlement Tom Griffiths (1997: 151-152) glibly labels “as a legislative mechanism for the recognition of affective ties to land and place that are confirmed by historical continuity of association.” Entitlement is not bourgeois pastoralism invented as part of a conquistador patriarchal ideology of fictive attachment and preferences for the simplicity of lives in colonized spaces. The bourgeois notion of entitlement views Caribbean landscapes as pastoral and pre-lapsarian “fictions of contentment and social harmony” which are enunciated “through ... pleasingly domesticated images of working farm[s] and fruitful garden[s]” while “conveniently” erasing the deep and warring historical, gender, racial, economic, cultural, and sexual “division of labour that make such productivity possible, allowing instead for the charming development of a ‘beautiful’ relation between rich and poor” (Huggan & Tiffin, 2010: 83).

An echo in the bone is Scott’s challenge to these false representations of the Caribbean landscape as a paradise where there is total harmony between the races, and where the history of racism and plantation slavery is irrelevant. Master Charles, heir to plantation slavery, returns from England, committed to ignoring the new situation of a Caribbean without slavery. He tries to reassert his entitlement to the land, its free African peoples, and their labor and reproductive potentials. His position is as a neo-Euro-imperialist, is “expressed [through] the idea of unchangeable social and cultural hierarchies” (Huggan & Tiffin, 2010: 84) choreographed through international agencies to which Caribbean nations are coerced paid members. In *An echo in the bone*, Scott further critiques the legitimization of “highly codified relations between socially differenti-

ated people: relations mediated, but also mystified by supposedly universal cultural attitudes to land” (Huggan & Tiffin, 2010: 84) and highlights the issues of the “crisis of ownership” (p. 85). He opens up “the tensions between ownership and belonging in ... colonial and postcolonial contexts: contexts marked, for the most part, by direct or indirect engagement with often devastating experiences of dispossession and loss” (p. 85).

Often categorized as ritual drama, *An echo in the bone* stages post-emancipation struggles of Afro-Caribbean people for land rights (Kuwabong, 2009: 118-122). Thus, I frame my reading of this play within the concepts of African-derived ritual drama. I lean on Victor Leo Walker Jr.’s assertion that “most black Africans in the Diaspora who create performative rituals do so to reaffirm the life force of the community by engaging the community in an experience that reinforces the collective worldview in which the natural rhythms and the cosmic balances of the community, despite periodic disruptions, are in harmony” (Walker, 2002: 14). Performative ritual transcends religiosity and rises to encompass what J. C. de Graft identifies as tools provided to humans through word, action, and silence “to empathize physically, emotionally, and intellectually with the forces that threaten [their] very existence” (Harrison et al., 2002: 21). To De Graft humans are able to combat psychological disorders caused by traumatic experience whether natural or human made at the “deepest levels of consciousness” through performative ritual (p. 21). Performative ritual thus becomes the “motive force” (p. 21) that guarantees psychic equilibrium. Performative ritual emanates from “apprehension” and stimulates acts of “propitiation, purification, and exorcism” (p. 20). Through performative ritual drama, “participants seek ... social solidarity, ... through which they ... reaffirm, keep alive, or commemorate ... facts [of life], relationships, and attitudes as the community considers vital to the sanity and continued healthy existence” (p. 23).

Corollary to the above, I see performative ritual as undoubtedly an enabling force that creates the necessary space for entry into spiritual negotiations with the community’s cosmic environment. (Kuwabong, 2011: 200-203; Soyinka, 1976: 149; Wright, 1987: 13-28) Thus, Babatunde Lawal agrees that within the African’s world, performative ritual encodes “ideas and ideals” through word and image, and through them, one is able to “mediate between the human and spirit worlds ...” (Harrison et al., 2002: 41). On the one hand, in the process of mediation, the actor’s corporeality transforms into a threshold of multiple entrances and exits. *An echo in the bone* enacts rituals of race memories through performance, rooted in the memories of the plantation landscape that retraces the journey of their histories of disempowerment to the seascapes of the Middle Passage. On the other hand, these memories, as they get translated onto the ritual and performative funereal space of the nine-nights ceremony insert a counter narrative that calls for a restructuring of relations with the land, the stage of their ear-

lier disempowerment to move toward re-empowerment. Each actor reveals how the blood and sweat of their ancestors and themselves have created a new association with the land that would guarantee entitlement and historical and cultural rights as marks of their citizenship in a Jamaica in which they are no longer enslaved. They recognize that without this new relationship with the land that guarantees their survival as a people, they cannot really talk about liberation as a people. They will continue to be dispossessed of their rights to life as a free people and eventually be re-enslaved to the whims of their former white enslavers. *Kirnon's kingdom* enacts a politicization of that race memory. In these performances, reality is mythicized and politicized to become multiple racial, cultural, social, and economic histories.

Moreover, as Paul Carter Harrison (p. 194) argues, African Diaspora theatrical performances are “imbued in the life experience [as] race memory”. He echoes Alain Locke’s (1927: iv) prescription that the “finest function ... [of] race drama would be to supply an imaginative channel of escape and spiritual release, and by some process of emotional reinforcement to cover life with the illusion of ... freedom”. Harrison stresses that “the aims of the black theater are inspired by a social ethic which is diametrically opposed to the presumed cultural hierarchy of the Western world” (p. 195). *An echo in the bone* is set in a domestic funeral ground where the characters perform their histories of struggle from plantation slavery to neo-colonialism. The community performs the traditional Afro-Caribbean “nine-night” wake to celebrate Crew’s death in defense of their land rights. Thus, in situating the play’s action in this way, Scott also realizes the theatricality of both secular and religious ritual performances through the appropriate use of all of the creative resources of theater.

Having established a reading methodology of *An echo in the bone* as ritual drama, it is my assertion that the African-derived cosmogony that informs the performance translates the funeral space into a ritual space. I am aware that all funeral spaces in African-derived cultures are also spiritual spaces in which ancestral spirits receive the spirit of the newly departed from the community of the living. In *An echo in the bone*, that ritualization of the performance space is guaranteed by the nine-night wake. At such wakes, there is performance of music, dance, drumming, storytelling, divination, spirit possession, and revelation (Jay Wright, 1987). The nine-night is a penitential and salvific last rite of passage for the dead during which the breach between the worlds of the living and dead caused by a member of the community dying is healed. The drum is a central prop in the nine-night wake. Hence, the first member of the community to arrive at funeral ground is Rattler, the sacred drummer with his drum. Used in the ritual performance, the drum’s sacerdotal rhythmic sound opens invisible portals of interaction between the world of the gods and ancestors and that of humans. There is also the performance of libation as an invitation to the gods and ancestors to bless, ward off evil, and join the community during the performance.

Rattler (Scott, 2008: 79) dips his finger in rum and makes the sign of the cross on the floor facing the door, first as acknowledgement of the divinity of earth, second to bless anyone entering the house, and third, to prevent any evil from entering the ritual space. Dreamboat complicates the performance when he tries to wrest the bottle for rum meant for libation from Rattler, and in the process the bottle falls, breaks and the rum spills. Dreamboat's action breaches protocol. Dreamboat must undergo disciplinary exorcism of the spirit of drunkenness manifested in his inordinate disrespect for tradition: "[DREAM *in silence, pants loud and fast. The others watch him motionless. His head begins to swivel on his neck, slowly till the whole body is weaving on the spot. His feet shuffle a little, the ...*]." (Scott: 80) Possessed by Crew's spirit as retribution for his undisciplined behavior, Dreamboat now enters into a trancelike dance of spirit possession, accompanied by Rattler's drum beats while a purification ritual is performed:

Madam: Hold him Stone! He inside the boy trying to get out and the heart will break open if the oil is not put on his head and his mouth.

Stone: Help me, then.

Madam: Hold the candle in front of his face.

[P *does so. STONE grapples with DREAMBOAT. They lurch together then fall. STONE pins him down, the candle is held close triumphantly, Madam makes the sign of the cross on the boy's head, then wets his lips with oil. DREAMBOAT arches his shoulders, shuddering, lies quiet. RACHEL is at the door gripping the arm of SONSON, the two girls behind them close. RACHEL enters dressed in white, with her head tied. The drum is still*] (Scott: 81-82).

Sacramental objects for ritual purification are assembled: water, oil, candle, pipe, and marijuana. While Rattler's steady drum beats keep the spiritual portals open, Rachel, the widow of Crew, distributes communion in the form of marijuana to smoke. The sharing of marijuana binds the community together in their celebration of Crew's life, and "communitizes" his sacrifice. The hallucinogens in marijuana and the alcohol in rum help break down their human physical limitations enabling them to enter into direct contact with the spirit world. The post-communion incantatory ritualized call-and-response performance engages spiritual allusions that symbolify the community's post-emancipation aspirations: free access to the natural resources of the land. Symbolification is facilitated through spirit possession in which Sonson, Crew's son, is possessed by Crew's spirit and is transfigured into Crew. Sonson is able then to relate and revivify his father's story. The narrative of Crew's act of defiance and sacrificial death justifies and legitimates the collective protest against their continuous oppression. (Kuwabong, 2011: 119-12)

Both *An echo in the bone* and *Kirnon's kingdom* articulate this absence of real emancipation through compensatory land distribution. For Rachel, Crew, Jacko, P, Sonson,

and the rest of the African Caribbean community in *An echo in the bone*, these rights to land are non-negotiable. Therefore, Master Charles' attempts to resurrect his entitlement to a plantation lifestyle based on slave labor, and his insensitivity to others' needs, coalesce to uncover traumatic memories of enslavement, rape, torture, dispossession, deprivation, and murder. By deliberately trying to rewrite the history of the place and its role in shaping the worldview of the formerly enslaved, Charles becomes an obstacle to Afro-Caribbean agency. Consequently, his suicidal actions initiate his death by accident and subsequently lead to Crew's. Rachel laments: "I beg him not go, you see, but he was a good man, and the only way he could find to save the little piece of land and feed us was to shame himself in front of that man" (p. 97). Brigit historicizes this further: ". . . Black people used to work this land for nothing and they used to treat them like beast, they coulda mount them anytime. I not breeding for any man just of pleasure" (p. 115). Her argument collapses Caribbean landscape and the African Caribbean body, both male and female, exploited for centuries for the pleasure and leisure of European Caribbean peoples. Brigit's position is validated in Master Charles' desire to re-control Rachel's body and labor, and ultimately to disrupt her newly acquired sense of self and belonging. Rachel is firm in her rejection of his corrupting offer and leaves him seething with the squealing of a castrated male: "Ask around, hell! I know what I want. Of course it will take a while to change the place into the kind of home it should be. But there's no reason to wait. I need some good home cooking right now to fatten me up" (p. 118).

Realizing that Rachel will crumple under neither persuasion nor threats, he takes revenge by diverting the flow of water to Crew's farm, thus ensuring that what he cannot have by force, he must sabotage through ecological imperialism. By this act, Charles childishly believes he can bring Rachel to her knees. But what he fails to reckon with is the new found self-assertiveness of both Crew and Rachel, and by extension, the African Caribbean population. It is this that propels Crew to seek a dialogue of understanding in the share of the water resources that historically both of them are entitled to. Crew's articulates this through Sonson. When Rachel earlier suggests that Crew leave and look for work in town, he cannot believe his ears: "Leave here? I can't do that! How I will live? My navel string bury here, woman. Give up the land? You don't want me to do that?" (Scott: 128)

Crew: I know every step of it. Every bush; like the back of my hand. Is a history behind every foot of it. Look at me, woman! I don't have nothing except what I get from the ground. I born by it and marry by it and one day it going to kill me. Maybe even now, but what I know , it is what nothing can change. . . .I only can trace the line here in the hard dirt, see? And the line going from here to there, and this end is where them bring my great grandfather, here, and this is me. If you take away the line from the ground I am nothing. I am nobody! (Scott: 128).

Master Charles's bullying tactics and his awareness of Crew's vulnerability is symptomatic of present day exploitative bullying of poor nations by rich nations through commodity price controls and trade barriers. Likewise, when Caribbean nations are tricked into emulating development patterns of rich Western nations, which subsequently results in a collapse of their primary products-based economies, the incentive to hold on to the land weakens. Subsequently, family lands with their histories are liquidated in favor of Western owned and operated enterprises, such as tourism.

Stone: Aye, man, what man to do? You work sun up to dark, and the money come trickling and go out like the river washing in space. You grow a little corn and potatoes, and take it to the market, how much you can sell for? The white ladies, all of them go into town to buy their goods [imported], nobody in the market to take the provisions off you hands except poor people like you, hungry same way, poor same way. ... (Scott: 108)

Stone expounds and rationalizes further why most African Caribbean people therefore constantly leave the land to go seek jobs in town or emigrate, and bequeath the land by default to new land prospectors interested in buying the lands to build tourist resorts, holiday homes, or to grow export crops such as coffee, bananas, and cocoa.

Stone: You should get yourself a little piece of land, and that's what Crew tell me, last time we was together. Settle down, Stone, he say, and raise a crop. For what? I ask him that, you see. I watch how the big land-owners they corner up with their own and sell the sugar back to us for four times what it cost us to raise. I know. I see the inside of the offices sometimes, and the big house that they build from two hundred years ago, when all of us worked the land for nothing, like animals. You think things change any? (Scott: 109)

But Stone's position does not invalidate Crew's rejection of Rachel's appeal not to fight for his land.

Sonson: It is everything! Everything! I will tell you! My father and his father sweat for it, year after year. It is my birthright that say I am not a slave anymore. I don't have to work for no man, I don't have to beg no man for bread to pass down to my children. And my woman don't have to go slave in any whiteman house, I don't care how much they pay you!

Rachel me love, don't take that away from me. (Scott: 128)

What Crew however fails to perceive is Charles' contempt for these so-called birth-rights based on historical realities and user rights. "Thirty years. Thirty years of a man's life! ... Father sun is your time now, Jesus, I dry. . ." (p. 124). To Charles, and others like him such as the unnamed and dying generation of plantocrats, such a declaration by Crew is meaningless (p. 124). Charles tries to kick him out like a dog, trips and falls and Crew kills him. Crew then proceeds to sacrifice himself at the same river

whose water Charles denies him. Crew's death becomes meaningfully enshrined in the liberation consciousness of his people. His actions have re-emancipated them and allowed them their free share of the water.

While Scott's play (2006) is situated in the immediate post emancipation struggle for land, David Edgecombe's *Kirnon's kingdom* (2001), explores unsustainable land use practices and their negative impact in post-independence Paran. Harold Kirnon, a sharecropper, unable to pay for his son's education, decides to "collect" at night and without permission of the landowner, some of the cotton which they farm. This action is necessitated by the fact that the land where Harold farms his cotton does not belong to him, though his enslaved ancestors had worked on it for centuries. Calvin argues right before they go to "collect" the cotton that "it would not be stealing, Daddy. We would only be reaping what we sow. Taking up what we put down" (Edgecombe, 2001: 213). As established by Edgecombe (p. 203), "the action occurs on Paran, an imaginary Caribbean island", the time is set up to cover from the "1940s – 1970s". Harold states, "I didn't own any land so I couldn't even vote, far less run for office. You see, in those days it was only the well-to-do, specifically people with land, who were allowed to vote" (Edgecombe: 210). The possession of land and the right to participate and/or to collaborate in the economic growth of the country, and by extension to escape the economic dire straits of Harold and his people echo what Crew and Stone articulate in *An echo in the bone*. Like Master Charles in former play, Mas' James in *Kirnon's kingdom* has absolute proprietary rights to the land on which Harold is a share cropper.

Edgecombe's (2001) play advocates a more equitable distribution of land. Thus, Harold, like Crew and Stone in *An echo in the bone*, rejects the continuation of the "gud ole days", the system of plantocracy that enslaved Harold and his African ancestors. Unlike Crew however, Harold decides to fight this through the ballot box, by politicizing the issue of decolonization and equal distribution of land.

Harold: Is a hard struggle, Calvin. You been out there in that cotton ground with me so you know how much work it is. Me and my father since before you were born clear all that land. He wid a four-rib cutlass sharpen back and belly, me wid a smaller three-rib cutlass ... One whole week it took us to clear just a tass of land, but we kept at it ill all the land was ready for planting ... After he died, me alone, or me and your mother and sometimes you. We must find the money to buy cotton-seeds to plant. Then we must weed the cotton, take care of it and pray God nutt'n destroy the fruit of our labour ... And in a good or bad year, half of everything ... must go to Mas' James. And what work he do? What risk he

take? Except sit down on his behind and stretch out his fat han' for his half when time come. (Edgecombe: 212)

Harold like Crew visits Mas' James hoping to get a loan to pay Calvin's exams fees. Unlike Crew however, who is looking for a break in his dependency on Charles, Harold seeks further entanglement to Mas' James through a loan. It only when the loan is refused that he begins to think. "Poor people mean less than dirt to him," squeaks Harold to his wife, Martha, when she asks about Mas' James and the loan. (Edgecombe: 211) Disturbed by Mas' James lack of understanding, Harold and Calvin decide to go and "collect" some of the cotton and sell it in the market to pay for Calvin's exams fees. Calvin is caught and is temporarily imprisoned. The importance of land possession and its use has different implications for Harold and Mas' James. Helen Tiffin (2010: 199) argues this succinctly: "... some important (if broad) distinctions can be drawn between the "landscape" of the indigenous peoples and those of the migrant, that is, the ancestrally or recent translocated. . . for colonized peoples who are also ancestrally migrant, any coming to terms with the "new" landscape frequently involves a journey back through the depictions of that land by the imperium whose perceptions and representations of it exert a powerful hegemonic influence on the colonized.

Although for Harold Kirnon the landscape and the working of it represent generational acquisition of agrarian knowledge that gave some economic relief, the reality that he does not have full usufruct rights to the land means continuous enslavement to Mas' James, for whom land possession is the basis for the oppressive labor conditions of the share-croppers that he needs to maintain his lifestyle. Thus, like Master Charles and his dying father, Colonel Charles, Mas' James is a symbol of a dying imperialism represented by recalcitrant white colonizers who "were historically cast in dominant positions where their attitudes to the land and landscape – both that to their homescapes and to the tropics and the Caribbean – necessarily exerted a powerful influence on the majority populations of African and Indian descent". (Tiffin: 200)

Thus, in *Kirnon's kingdom*, land is perceived as a destiny changer, not only for individuals, but also for a nation's future. Land is more than a commoditized piece of earth. It is a tool to freedom from oppression. Harold Kirnon enters politics with this vision about land and becomes Paran's first Chief Minister and "by then, even the poorest families owned some kind of land" (Edgecombe: 227). In this neo-colonial setting, Mr. Kirnon encounters the reality of false independence. Immediately following his victory, the price and the demand for cotton subsidies, the citizens of Paran migrate to Canada because they see "no money in farming" (Edgecombe: 227). Harold's popularity declines severely because of external forces that cause economic uncertainty for his people. He is advised by foreign development aid experts to gamble away his nation's future through the re-prioritization of his primary cash crop, from cotton

to a perishable tomato controlled by a monopolistic Canadian company, Soddors Inc. with a purchase price guarantee of “one cent a pound”. (Edgecombe: 227)

The insulting monetary compensation is compounded by this undemocratic and unsustainable development approach, and further undermined by Paran’s inability to control the prices of this perishable single commodity. Harold’s gullibility is beyond compare: “I agree it sounds like a small figure, but the company is introducing a new variety known as Roma Tomato ... the owners of the factory are going to assist with mechanical land preparation, planting and reaping. They are also introducing a new fertilizer which tests have shown dramatically increases tomato yields”. (Edgecombe: 229) It is a female farmer who diagnoses the cancerous nature of the assistance. She realizes the farmers have become heavily indebted to the company, but cannot pay and hence they mortgage their lands. This leads to trauma as the people have been defrauded of the little portions of land from which they could have eked out a sustainable life.

As Antonio Benítez-Rojo (2005) contends, the ecological and environmental problems generated by the economic development strategy of mono-culture have a clear source. He asserts that “the responsibility for this ecological catastrophe lies primarily with the sugar-making machine. But a machine is an ensemble of indifferent parts moved by a motor ... Responsibility must be sought in the power groups that controlled it, whether of Spanish, Creole, or North American origin” (Benítez-Rojo, 2005: 43). One of the most severe calamities highlighted by Benítez-Rojo is the loss of traditional herbalism in the Caribbean or wherever else single crop production has been promoted as the agricultural savior of a particular country. Concerning this, Benítez-Rojo asks, “How many traditions disappeared when the small rural property-holder became a sugar-making proletarian?” (2005: 44)

But Harold Kirnon’s lust for power now blinds him to his betrayals of his people’s hopes. He goes on to embrace an even more disruptive neocolonial economic proposal, that of land for real estate development in Paran. Al Majors’ plan of turning the arable land of the country into pieces of real estate is emblematic of what is happening to land in the contemporary Caribbean. As Edgecombe argues in the play: “Well, what this Majors man has done is to chop up the estate into about fifty or sixty lots ... A few of those Americans have started to build houses. Carpenters and masons are in demand” (Edgecombe: 235). Thus, in altering drastically the agricultural basis of Paran’s economy to that of estate development for foreign occupation, Harold inadvertently creates a future of servitude for his people. As Braziel (2005: 111) comments, “the lure and the allures of ‘island’ tourism, however, are not always so neatly aligned with the principles of sustainable development or environmental protection”. Harold’s confrontation with his cousin Arnold exemplifies how far he has sold his nation to neo-imperialist greed. Arnold after years in England returns to Paran with

the dream of building a house on the land that he left Harold to take care of. He is left flabbergasted by Harold's stupidity:

Harold: "Listen, Arnold, it's not that I'm unwilling to sell you some land ... that whole Lincoln area is earmarked for new housing development project ... We can't have cattle and goats running all over people's nice lawns ... All lands have now been zoned. Some for hotels, some for housing, some for agriculture. But apart from that ... you doan own de land at Lincoln anymore". (Edgecombe: 244)

Harold Kirnon's endorsement of neocolonial takeover of his nation, signals a dangerous reversal of all the potential gains that could have come with Independence. His power lust makes him re-submit the country to the domination of transnational corporations, thus further creating a nation of landless people.

Both the playwrights stage the rising determination of former enslaved Africans in the Caribbean to gain true independence by creating ambiguous performances in new post-plantation economies. The plays reveal how class, race and gender play roles in the struggles for true freedom and degrees of dignity by staging "more knowing [or] adversarial sense of 'environment' rather than 'nature', 'countryside' or 'landscape'" (Gifford, 1999: 174) through their characters. Thus, the two plays are informed by ecological principles of interconnectedness, as well as educated understandings of the "symbolic link between environmental and social justice". (Huggan and Tiffin, 2010: 115) Also, the plays succeed in their reinsertions of the traumatic histories of Caribbean islands as "fractured spaces in which the natural relationship between people and their environment [land] was wrenched apart, not only by brutalities of the plantation system, but also by the moment of 'Discovery' and the sickening violence it brought in its wake". (Huggan and Tiffin, 2010: 116) They acutely dramatize the near-impossibilities of maintaining revolutionary praxes of land use through transformational imaginaries and emotional reattachments to the land saturated with their ancestors' blood and sweat. (p. 117-118) But they envision that through a process of realignment to land, the Caribbean may yet "recover some degree of agency for their actions, as well as some amount of individual and collective proprietorship over their land."

The project of European vandalism and colonization in the Caribbean partially succeeded because they were temporarily successful in expropriating Caribbean lands and cruelly exploiting the unpaid labor of enslaved Indigenous peoples and Africans in the plantation economy they set up. Post-emancipation, and post apprenticeship implied that the ex-enslaved were also now entitled to the land which they had worked on for centuries. For as Amilcar Cabral (1994: 54) argued, for any formerly colonized people to truly gain both cultural and political liberation, they also need to seize control of the modes of production that the natural environment grants them by right of citizenship.

No true cultural and economic liberation is achievable without repossession of the land. Scott's play re-affirms that this struggle as Cabral (1994: 56) insists, must be won.

This struggle is ritualized in *An echo in the bone* (1985) to link the past, present, and future, the material and spiritual worlds to the political and economic struggle by African Caribbean peoples to gain their agency of permanence in the landscape. The blood of Crew is the sacrificial and enabling blood of a martyr of the second liberation struggle in the post-plantation Caribbean. For in his dying he succeeds in removing the last remaining physical obstacle that has stood between the people and their claim to land rights. The play thus generates a conversation among the actors and audience about who really has moral legitimacy to the resources of the environment, the one who works the land or the one who exploits the people without any knowledge of how to work the land? For Crew and his people, Scott's play is a provisional staging of Cabral's argument that the liberation fighters need to "return to the upward paths of their own culture" (1994: 56) seen here performed in the nine-nights ceremony and the performance of oral history," which [are all] nourished by the living reality of [their] environment, and which negate ... both harmful influences and any kind of subjection to foreign [or domestic neo-colonial] subjection" (1994: 56). The play suggests that the battle has begun to assert and claim their rights to land to land and subsequently, retake the "productive forces [of their society and land] ... to determine the mode of production most appropriate for them."

But while Scott's play (1985) is willing to suggest that blood sacrifice is necessary for real liberation of the land for the benefit of the people, Edgecombe's play (2001) laments the regression that has become normative in Caribbean political, economic, and cultural development in which the land is both consciously and unconsciously restored to the hands of the colonizers. If the struggle in Scott's play is for land rights to produce food as a way of becoming independent from the former slave system, *Kirnon's kingdom* (2001) is a dire warning that the Crews of *An echo in the bone* must have died in vain. The unwitting embrace of unsustainable agricultural development through monocropping that targets only the outside market, to the neglect of sustainable mixed-cropping agricultural practices, is in evidence everywhere in the Caribbean. The over-reliance on mono-export crops that have taken over the most arable lands of the Caribbean has seen the economies of various Caribbean islands collapse.

Edgecombe's play portrays a nationalist struggle as well, this time not against visible master Charles, but the invisible transnational banking systems that have infiltrated fragile Caribbean economies and undermined any attempts at genuine independence. Through Mr. Kirnon, the island has become a subsidiary and subservient province of a new-imperialist, a Canadian fronting as the new adventurer conquering new econo-

mies for his Canadian banks and businesses. Thus, when the tomato crop is left to rot in the fields, the farmers owe their land as collateral to the foreign banks and they are pressured to give the land away for real estate development, there seems to be no hope. However, Edgecombe is not a prophet of inevitable doom.

The family drama that now ensues between father and son, suggests that the future can still be saved, and the land can be reclaimed for the younger generation, who are beginning to see the evil machinations of these so-called development experts from the so-called developed nations. Edgecombe's play (2001) is strategically placed within a materialist theory of political economy, that reveals a new struggle for freedom by post-colonial Caribbean nations against the faceless, non-corporeal imperialist: multinational and trans-lateral corporations and banks located in the metropolises of former colonial empires who use subterfuge in the form of loans, grants, development advisors, control of the markets, and threats to retake lands lost by their ancestors a century earlier. They find gullible and corrupt politicians to be their internal allies. While the two plays share many thematic and ideological similarities, their dramaturgic execution and ideological stances are different. Nonetheless, they both strategize to conscientize Caribbean people about the urgent need to keep control over their lands. To lose that control is to lose the major foothold of their resistance to a new and more insidious foreign domination. They do not preach a struggle for land as a marketable commodity. Land is presented in both cases as the archive of their collective histories, cultures, spiritualities. Land is the invaluable warranty of their futures. Land in both plays then is agency, it is real freedom, and it stands as the solid foundation of Caribbean peoples' national and cultural identities. To lose their lands would mean emancipation without liberation.

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PROBLEMS IN URBAN PLANNING REGIMES AND THEIR ENFORCEMENT: THE CASE OF WA MUNICIPALITY IN THE UPPER WEST REGION OF GHANA

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The urban planning regime in Ghana and problems with enforcement

As population increases in urban agglomerations, land uses intensify and urban activities spill-over into previously rural lands on the fringes. Various land use control mechanisms are designed to promote effective utilization of urban land, to maintain standards for physical development and to ensure harmonious spatial distribution of human activities in accordance with an approved master plan (Essein, Musa & Yacim, 2009; Hameed & Nadeem, 2006). In so doing, development controls reduce the negative effects of physical development. While development controls have been utilized with a degree of success to ensure harmonious spatial distribution of activities in some industrialized countries, their application has been problematic in many non-industrialized countries (Tang, Choy & Wat, 2000; Wang, Tao, Wang & Su, 2010). This has prompted Ogundele, Ayo, Odewumi and Aigbe (2011) to suggest that in most cities in non-industrialized countries, physical development does not necessarily conform to planned outcomes. As a result, the built environment in many of those cities are rapidly deteriorating despite the existence of planning legislation to monitor and control development (Boamah, Gyimah & Nelson, 2012). According to Hameed and Nadeem (2006), Owei, Ede and Obinna (2010) and the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS, 2008), most cities in Africa are so resource-strained that they fail to monitor and channel urban development in desired directions.

In Ghana, research has highlighted the laborious procedures involved in the land documentation and permitting processes and the lack of administrative capacities to respond to the needs of home builders (Jowell, 1975; Davis, 1980; Yahya et al., 2001; Sheuya, 2004). Over the last three decades Wa, the regional capital of Upper West Region, has experienced rapid growth in terms of physical and economic development since it was declared the regional capital. As a result, land use has intensified and urban activities have now dispersed into the fringes, mostly in an unplanned manner.

The indiscriminate construction of all kinds of structures raises questions about the Municipal Assembly's ability to control the situation. The problem of planning in Wa Municipality is not entirely due to the unavailability of local plans since areas like Tendamba, Kpaguri and Konta that are haphazardly developed had local plans before physical development began. The difficulty therefore lies with the complex nature of the land acquisition processes which is influenced by the land tenure system, legal documentation and the ability of the institutions to enforce development control tools (Yeboah & Obeng-Odoom, 2010; Owei et al, 2010; Pogbekuu, 2007) The aim of this article is therefore to examine the capacities of various agencies responsible for enforcing such development controls in Wa.

Bogoro and Samson (2014) defined development control as regulation of the use of land within an area with the use of legal instruments designed to safeguard, regulate, conserve and disburse land in the interest of the community. Development controls are relevant to health and safety by regulating threats which might arise from overcrowding, fire disasters, diseases, pollution and natural hazards as a result of urban expansion. Regardless of the type of tenure arrangement, what is most relevant is to formulate policies to encourage proper land use development in urban centres (Payne, 2001; Kirondi 2000). According to Ogundele et al (2011) and Aluko (2011), development control is a physical planning instrument established by legislation, which generally involves regulations and control over material change on land. Davies, Steele, Finney and Suddards (1980), state that the main principle for development control is that "Every proposal to develop land or change its use requires planning permission from the local authority" (p. 7).

Despite its immense significance in promoting safe and healthy communities, controlling development remains one of the central challenges facing many non-industrialized countries. A study conducted by Yahya et al (2001) has shown that inefficient controls have created the problems of overcrowding, inadequate water supply and sanitation, inadequate refuse collection, poor drainage, road transport, low quality of buildings and high levels of fire outbreak. According to Farvacque-Vitkovic, Raghunath, Eghoff and Boakye (2008), in non-industrialized countries, authorities wait until buildings collapse and flooding and other disasters occur before attempting to enforce regulations. Research by UNCHS (2008), Jowell (1975), Davies et al. (1980) and Sheuya (2004) indicated several issues contributing to weak enforcement of building regulations, which often result in developers turning to illegal means to get authorities responsible for enforcement to turn a blind eye (Payne and Majale, 2004). Tipple (2001) shows that in order to effectively enforce building regulations and standards it takes political will and resources which is sometimes problematic in non-industrialized countries, especially with respect to adequacy of personnel and logistics. Payne and Majale (2004. p14) further asserted that "many developing countries do not have both human and logistical capacity to enforce building standards". Gallent

& Kim (2001) indicated that strict controls such as building codes and regulations lead to an increase in the cost of development therefore reduce the attraction of producing certain types of building in certain areas. The urban poor in non-industrialized countries are often obliged to comply with standards which were designed for industrialized countries, which are not only inappropriate but also beyond their means. UNCHS (2008) revealed that over the past decades, the conventional forms of urban development and planning regulations have failed to provide orderly and sustainable urban development in African cities. The lack of compliance with control mechanisms adopted by planning authorities has created informal settlements and unauthorised structures in African cities. Local governments are often handicapped by inadequate and incompetent development control mechanisms, their low technical financial capacities, fragmented institutions and outdated planning regulations.

According to UNCHS (2008), the main objective of urban development and planning regulations is to ensure orderly development of urban areas therefore policies of urban planning and management are decentralised through complex institutional frameworks whose roles and responsibilities are also delegated to various agencies for easy implementation and management of development. Yusoff et al (2014) who that due to the involvement of many institutions in controlling physical development, there are ambiguities in the responsibilities and relationships between Local Authorities, Government ministries and agencies. Another factor that makes urban planning difficult is lack of institutional resource capacity. Successful enforcement of development controls entails more than institutional structures in place but the presence of human and technical resources to run the institutions. Sheuya (2004) indicated that local authorities are weak, suffering from inadequate revenue, quality of trained staff and equipment and logistics to aid in enforcement of planning regulations. Therefore, there is the need to address institutional capacity issues in an attempt to ensure effective enforcement of development controls.

Dissanayake (1989) concludes that, no matter how appropriate Plans and regulations are, little can be realized without a suitable administrative framework with sufficient powers to ensure their enforcement. As part of efforts towards managing and controlling the growth of settlements in Ghana, the Town Planning Department was established by the Town and Country Planning Ordinance of 1945 (cap 84, is a section under the Act 1945 within the TCPD Ordinance). The Department is responsible for the planning and management of development and growth of human settlements to enhance social and economic activities and the wellbeing of people in Ghana. This is pursued through the design of structure plans, detailed planning schemes and the administration of planning standards to guide and ensure orderly growth and development. The department was established in 1901 as part of the Mines Department during the colonial era. The department produces the sectorial plans on which title registration is based. Though it also prepares the base maps on which plotting is done, site

plans are prepared by licensed surveyors hence are usually inaccurate and unreliable causing land disputes.

The Lands Commission is another key institution when it comes to development control in Ghana. It currently operates under the Lands commission act 1994 (Act 483) of the 1992 constitution. The commission is responsible for the management of public lands and any lands vested in the president or the commission on behalf of the government. The Secretariat provides Land Title Registry with records of all transactions on any given area of land before a land title registration certificate can be granted. The commission has the responsibility to manage public lands and any lands vested in the president or the commission on behalf of the government and to advise the government, local and traditional authorities on policies for the development of specific areas to ensure coordination between individual pieces of land and development plans for the area. Some constraints on the Lands Commission Secretariat include inadequate skilled personnel, frequent political interference in its activities, inadequate logistics and support services, poor remuneration and low morale among staff (Kasanga & Kotey, 2001).

The Local Government Act, (Act 462) of 1993, National Building Regulations, Town & Country Planning Ordinance of 1945, (Cap 84), National Development Planning Commission Act 479 and National Development Planning System Act 480 are among the legislative instruments provided to support planning authorities to manage growth in the built environment (Yeboah & Obeng-Odoom, 2010). The Town and Country Planning Ordinance, 1945 (No. 13 of 1945, Cap 84) makes provision for a planning authority to remove, pull down or alter a building or any other work which does not conform to planning schemes. At the apex of the planning structure is the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), established by Act 479, which consequently established the legal framework for planning in the country. The Local Government Act 462 of 1992 was meant to complement the National Development Planning Commission and also oversee all planning activities at the district and local levels. This act also spells out the functions of the District Planning Authority. Enforcement in Respect of Unauthorised Development is stipulated in Section 52 of the local government Act. It gives the District Planning Authority the mandate to prohibit, alter, abate, remove or demolish any physical development that has or is being carried out without a permit or compliance to stipulated conditions in the permit. The National building code (L.I. 1630) regulates all physical development in Ghana. The Legislative Instrument 1630 (L.I.1630) spells out in detail the building permit application requirements, building densities, permissible land uses and site and spatial standards. The roles of District Planning Authorities and validity period of permits are clearly indicated in the building code. This institutional and legal framework is plagued by problems such as duplication of effort, lack of coordination and flaws in the legislative instruments (Abubakari & Dinye, 2011; Boamah et al., 2012).

As shown in Figure 1, a given nation's planning activities are backed by legal and institutional frameworks. No matter how appropriate plans and regulations are, little can be realized without a suitable administrative framework with sufficient powers to ensure their enforcement. The physical planning instruments which regulate the development of land and building generally include local plans, subdivisions, building regulations and permit systems. The ultimate aim for controlling development of land is to achieve orderly development of cities to improve the living environment and health status of the residents of a given urban area and to direct urban development process in an efficient manner. Nevertheless, this process is sometimes impeded by challenges which include legislative bottleneck, lack of public participation, inadequate institutional capacity, land acquisition process and corruption.

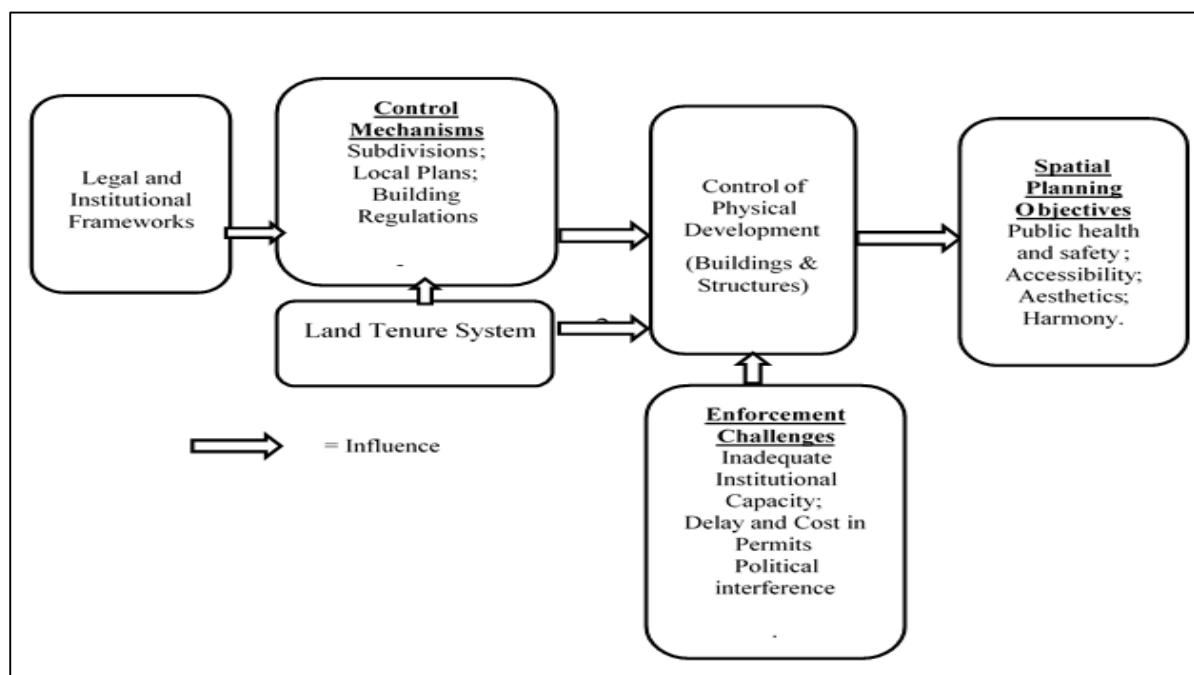


Figure 1 Conceptual framework for urban planning. Source: Authors' Construct, 2015

Study area, design and methodology

As indicated in Figure 2, the Wa Municipality is the regional capital and most urbanized settlement in the Upper West Region. It is located within latitude 2°35'N to 2°25'N and longitude 9°55' to 10°10'W. It is the only municipality out of the eleven (11) administrative districts within the Upper West Region, and is bounded by Nadowli district to the north, Wa East District to the east and south, and Wa West to the west. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) (2014), the Municipality has a total population of 224,066 with a growth rate of 2.7% for rural and 4% for urban areas. There is growing population density and consequently pressure on land and socio-economic infrastructure. This raises the issue of population management, specifically, housing, conflict management and land use planning.

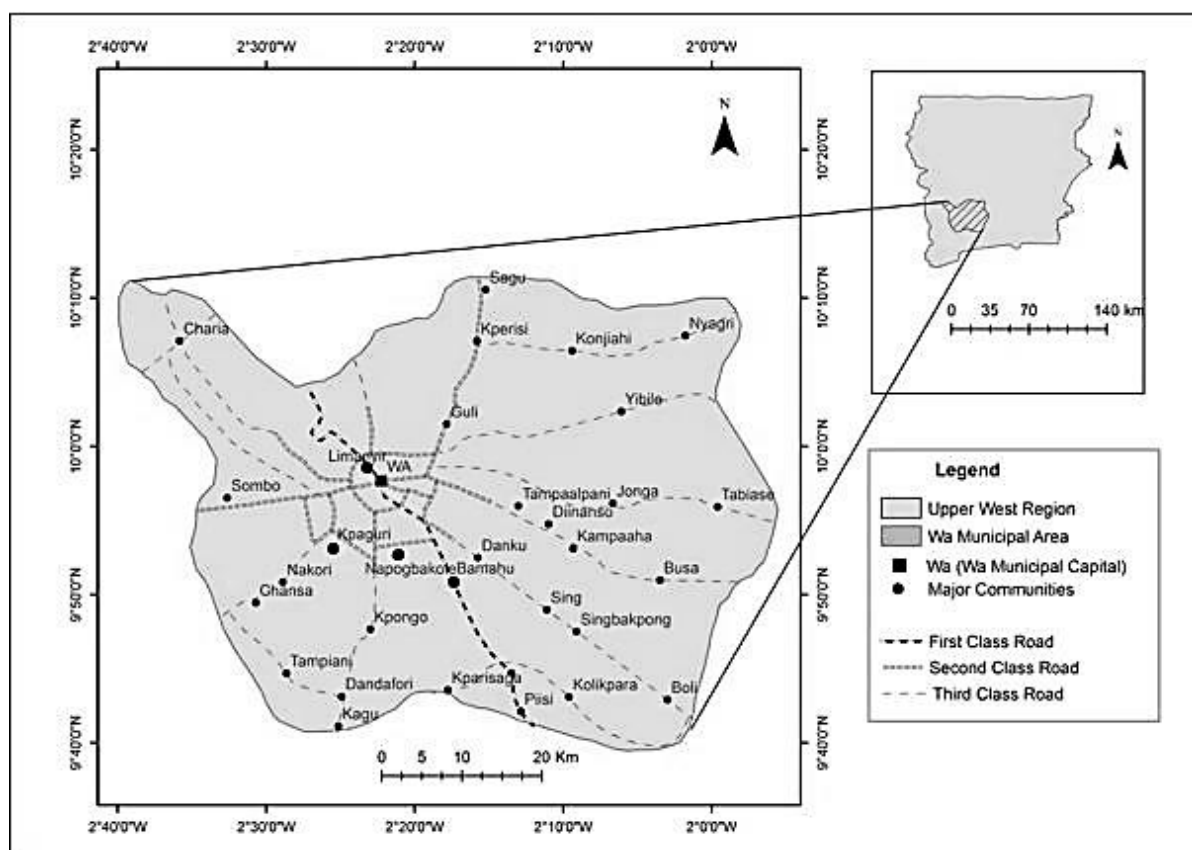


Figure 2 Map of Wa Municipality (Adapted from WMA, 2010)

The study adopted a case study design. Wa is a typical example of a growth pole city in the developing world. This is the result of the creation of employment and other opportunities due to rapid urbanization and development initiatives, especially since the establishment of the Wa campus of University for Development Studies. This has attracted a lot of people from all walks of life into the city to tap into the different opportunities that are offered. As a consequence, the city is currently witnessing an increasing intensity in land use activities making it a typical case for studying the capacity of institutions responsible for dealing with development control in urban areas.

The Town and Country Planning Department (TCPD), Lands Commission and Municipal Building Inspectorate Unit were selected for the study. These are the key institutions responsible for development control in the municipality. Primary data on the capacity of the selected institutions in enforcing development control was obtained through face to face interviews. This included data on human resources, logistics and funding. Two officials from TCPD, one from the Building Inspectorate and one from the Lands Commission were interviewed. These respondents were selected based on their in-depth knowledge of the subject under investigation. An interview guide was used to ensure that all relevant questions were asked and discussed. With the consent of the officials, all interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

The qualitative data from in-depth interviews was transcribed and uploaded into the primary unit of Atlas-ti (a software used for contemporary qualitative data analysis) in

separate files where each interview was coded and marked. These codes correspond to the various themes identified from each interview. Finally, outputs of the codes with quotations were generated from all interviews and patterns identified for analysis. Quantitative data on personnel and logistics were analysed with the aid of Microsoft Excel software and presented in the forms of tables. Secondary data was also used to aid in the analysis, especially the National Building Regulations of Ghana, planning policy documents and planning schemes from Town and Country Planning.

Results and discussion

The Town and Country Planning Department is the main body responsible for orderly development by ensuring that Local Plans are prepared to guide physical development in their area of jurisdiction and to ensure that every structure whether permanent or temporary has a permit to be constructed. The Lands Commission with its respective divisions is responsible for managing land, the Building Inspectorate Unit ensures that home builders adhere to regulations over physical development, while the Customary Land Secretariat keeps up-to-date records on land owners and land transactions in the study area. However, many of these functions are not consistently carried out because of limitations on the human resource capacities of these institutions. Aluko (2011) and Hameed and Nadeem (2006) argued that there is general lack of dedicated and competent staff to enforce regulations therefore, planning authorities very often compromise on the building of illegal structures which are much in evidence in the Municipality.

The study revealed that while all of the institutions responsible for managing physical growth in the Municipality require a total of at least 49 professionals to carry out their responsibilities effectively, currently just half of this number (24) are in place. Table 1 illustrates the human resource deficiencies of the institutions responsible for managing physical development in the Wa Municipality.

Table 1 Human Resource Numbers for Relevant Institutions. Source: Field Survey, 2015

Institution	Position	Existing	Required	Backlog
TCPD	Planner	1	5	4
	Technical Officers	2	5	3
	Total	3	10	7
Building Inspectorate Unit	Building Inspectors	2	5	3
	Total	2	5	3
Lands Commission	Survey	6	10	4
	PVLMD	7	7	-
	Land Valuation	5	15	10
	Total	18	32	14
All Institutions	Total	23	49	24

In the Wa Municipality, the Building Inspectorate is the basic unit at the local level for the enforcement of Local Government Act 462 section 53, which allows the the District Assembly to “.... prohibit, abate, remove, pull down or alter so as to bring into conformity with the approved plan, a physical development which does not conform to the approved plan”. However, the study revealed that the Building Inspectorate cannot enforce these regulations because of the strain on their human resources. The entire Municipal Unit has only two building inspectors, instead of the 5 required to visit the site before construction begins, during construction and after a building is completed to ensure that building standards are adhered to. Findings related to human resources at the Lands Commission were similar, with only 18 out of the required 32 staff in place to ensure effective management of land, prepare land documentation, draw up site plans and carry out other responsibilities.

The problem with the human resources is not only a question of quantity, but also of quality. According to Yeboah and Obeng-Odoom (2010), to be effective, staff require the ability to respond to growing societal challenges and a good understanding of socio-cultural, demographic and cultural issues. A Planning Officer is expected to have the qualification of a master’s degree but this is not the case at present. The Municipal Building Inspectors’ level of qualification is diploma certificate while the official minimum requirement is a bachelor’s degree. Except for the PVLDM staff of the Lands Commission, who all had the required qualification of a bachelor’s degree, the remaining staff in Survey and Land Valuation all lacked the required qualifications. This implies that almost all the professional staff of the various institutions studied lacked the required qualifications for their positions, which can be problematic in terms of identifying, understanding and analyzing problems and designing strategies to address them. Dissanayake (1989) indicated that no matter how appropriate plans and regulations are, little can be realized without suitably qualified staff to ensure enforcement. A respondent’s account of this problem is revealing:

Required qualifications to man a Municipality is at least second degree in planning for the planner or with long service experience. Currently the Municipal Planner is a degree holder and the technical men must have at least an HND certificate. When their qualification is too low they become untrainable hence you happen to have human beings but you do not have people to effectively carry out their duties as expected.

Table 2 present’s staff qualification both existing and required for the institutions under study.

With respect to logistical support, the Town and Country Planning Department currently have only one vehicle which must be used by all four planners in managing eleven districts, instead of the required five vehicles. Thus, if a planner needs to go to the field and the vehicle is being used by another planner, the trip must be postponed until the vehicle is accessible.

Table 2 Existing and Required Qualifications of Staff for Relevant Institutions. Source: Field Survey, 2015

Institution	Position	Existing Qualification	Required Qualification
TCPD	Planner	First Degree	Masters
	Technical Officers	HND And Certificate	HND
Building Inspectorate Unit	Building Inspectors	HND	First Degree
Lands Commission	Survey	HND	First Degree
	PVLMD	First Degree	First Degree
	Land Valuation	Diploma	First Degree

The Building Inspectorate Unit is in an even more dire situation, having only one motorbike for regular site inspection, instead of the required five vehicles and two motorbikes. A respondent revealed that “Building Inspectorate do not have personnel or logistics to enforce regulations they are only two with one motor bike so anytime you see stop work notice then either the home builder wrote it or the Building Inspector had an intrinsic interest”. Another respondent mirrored these sentiments, as follows: “There are no vehicles at all for monitoring with one motorbike so is even not possible to do any effective site inspection because buildings spring up every day here in Wa”. Instead of the required 18 laptops, 5 digital theodolites and 6 GPS receivers that it needs to effectively function, the Land Commission has only 1 laptop, 2 digital theodolites, and 3GPS receivers. The Survey Division is unable to provide satisfactory services to clients, which is resulting in the use of fake surveyors in preparing site plans.

Funding was found to be a major problem across all the institutions studied. The Assembly is unable to release funds to prepare Local Plans hence resulting in developers financing the process and dictating the pace. The Building Inspectorate relies solely on the pool of internally generated funds of the Municipality which was described by one respondent as “always empty”. The Lands Commission used to receive funds on a monthly basis directly from their mother institution, but these funds now arrive less regularly and sometimes major activities must be put on hold until funds are received. According to an official from the Lands Commission, delays in funding are likely to get worse, because unlike before when the funds were released from headquarters of the Lands Commission, now the Ministry of Finance is responsible for release of funds and the bureaucracy involved delays funds from reaching the lower levels on time.

Conclusions and recommendations

This study demonstrates that despite the existence of local plans and building regulations in the Wa Municipality, urban sprawl occurs in a haphazard way. This is basically due to weak enforcement of these plans and regulations, due to deficiencies in the capacities of the institutions responsible. Human resources, logistics and funding are crucial in ensuring that urban planning institutions achieve their objectives, but the provision of these resources is seriously lacking in Wa. Hence, for effective enforcement of development controls, it is necessary for the capacities of the institutions responsible for managing physical development to be enhanced.

Some practical ways in which this could be done include the following:

- 1) All students from tertiary institutions who study courses such as land economy, real estate, development planning, settlement planning and building technology be posted to planning and land sector institutions for national service. After three months on the job training, they can undertake site inspections and monitoring with little supervision, helping to compensate for deficiencies in quantity and quality of existing staff.
- 2) Existing staff be granted study leave without pay (but with a guarantee of being able to return to their post after their study leave is completed) in order to obtain scholarships to develop their skills and learn new strategies for solving contemporary planning problems.
- 3) The Municipal Assembly play a more proactive role in generating funds to finance its urban planning and planning enforcement institutions.

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REFLECTIONS ON ‘REFLEJOS’: BELIEF AND SCIENCE IN POPULAR THERAPEUTICS

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In the Caribbean and in Caribbean communities in the United States, medicinal talismanic products have a long history. These are over-the-counter oils or ointments that seek to heal, or to address concerns such as fears, anxieties, lovesickness, and other conditions that fall outside the domain of the medical establishment. A number of businesses, drug stores, and *botánicas* sell this type of merchandise. This article focuses on a particular category of these products that were manufactured and sold between 1930 and the early 1970s in Puerto Rico. These were called *reflejos*, or reflections. The name was based on a paraphrase of a quote from St. Paul: “What we see is a reflection of what is hidden” (Vielle, 1952: 7). The name *reflejo* therefore alluded to something unknown and mysterious, which had to be deciphered and activated. But the word *reflejo* was an apt one, because the products reflected the concerns and expectations of the consuming public.

These products were sold in very small (¼ ounce) glass bottles and cost 25 cents. The bottles were similar to perfume bottles, and had tiny labels with a variety of names. Those who manufactured the *reflejos* took great pride in their product and sought to offer something that would attract the buyer. The aromatic oils that gave the product color, scent, and viscosity were imported from Grasse, France, considered the perfume capital of the world. And while the labels were very small, they were printed by hand on metallic foil in a factory in Batavia, New York, which was noted for the quality and design of its products. Embossed and edged in gold, the labels added a measure of glamour and prestige to the product, distinguishing it from others.

There were 111 different *reflejos*, each one geared to dealing with a particular situation. Each bottle had a number and a specific name that covered the alphabet from A to Y. The first was called “Aguántalo aquí” [Hold it here] while the last one was the compelling “Yo puedo y tú no” [I can and you can’t]. There was also “Amansa guapo” [Hunk Tamer], “Arrasa con todo” [Ravage everything], “Exito en el negocio” [Success in business], “No te vayas” [Don’t leave], and “Todo lo puede” [All powerful]. But not every *reflejo* bore a popular, folkloric name. Some sought to achieve specific goals and were limited to indicating their aim: Love, Charity, Money, Hope, Fortune, Justice, Peace,

Tranquility, Triumph, Virtue. Others aimed at counteracting or repelling negative acts or thoughts: Jealousy, Envy, Evil, Fear, Hatred, etc. Yet others followed a Biblical or religious tradition. Thus, for example, one was called “Jesús de Gran Poder” [Almighty Jesus] and another bore the name “De los siete templos” [Of the seven temples], alluding to Jesus’s journey from the site of the last supper to the Mount of Olives, a pilgrimage that Catholics replicate symbolically by visiting seven churches on Holy Thursday. Each *reflejo* was sold with a leaflet indicating how the product should be used, thereby orienting the user, providing a sense of agency, and making him (or, more likely, her) a direct participant in the “treatment.” While *reflejos* could be used alone, they could also be combined with others, or diluted with scented waters, bay rum, or other products. In addition, a *reflejo* could be applied in a variety of ways. It could be dabbed directly on the skin, used as a rubbing lotion, poured into the bath water, sprayed on clothes or on the bed, and distributed throughout different parts of a home.

In addition to the instruction sheet, the *reflejos* were explained more thoroughly in a longer leaflet written under the pen name of “E. Vielle.” This small leaflet, which measured approximately 5” x 4,” was titled *El poder de los reflejos* [The power of reflejos] (Vielle, 1952). This sold for 50 cents and described the history of these products and how they operated. It also included a list of all the different *reflejos*, their complementary products, and some of the different statements or prayers that should accompany their use. Although there were different statements for each product, there was a generic one that could be expressed silently or out loud. This, more of an affirmation than a prayer, read as follows: “I am free and have no fear.”

E. Vielle made it clear that the information contained in the leaflet was nothing new; rather, it summarized “the magical effect that *reflejos* ... exert on human beings” (Vielle: 3). The author also stressed that it was not his intention to “gain converts concerning the use of *reflejos*”, but rather to be “a mere informer”, providing readers with a summary of treatises on old and current magic and its relation to the liquid products.

Vielle’s essay was based on several premises. First, humans have a biological and psychic life, but also have a spiritual side. It is the latter that *reflejos* seek to activate in achieving specific objectives. Second, through its plants and flowers, nature has provided us with tools to achieve certain ends. *Reflejos* make use of these tools in a way that is accessible to all. Lastly, it is necessary to believe in order to achieve the desired ends. Thus E. Vielle made the following disclaimer: “... while our task is aimed at helping everyone, we know that we will strike a responsive chord only among **true believers**, the afflicted, and all those who, tired of struggling, constantly search for the means to latch onto a ship that will carry them to a safe port” (Vielle: 9, emphasis added).

E. Vielle knew that, if the product succeeded in achieving its goal, he would have a loyal and committed customer: the user would be convinced that there was a causal

relationship between the *reflejo* and the outcome. Moreover, because we tend to remember success more than failure (a phenomenon known as ‘confirmation bias’), this recollection would strengthen the belief in the *reflejo* used. And if the *reflejo* failed, there were different ways to explain why it had not fulfilled its intent: the combination of products was not the right one, or the dosage had to be adjusted, or the product had not been properly applied, or the accompanying statement had not been duly pronounced and the ritual had not been properly accomplished. Each of these explanations suggested other options, thereby giving clients the opportunity to modify their strategy and begin anew. There were additional alternatives to explore, and these enhanced the clients hopes and loyalty as customers.

In contrast to many patient-provider encounters, what took place between the *reflejo*-dispensing pharmacist and the client was a true consultation: the pharmacist listened to the patient, who most often initiated the exchange, and prescribed the *reflejo* that would best address the situation described. In some cases, the provider also recommended complementary products, be these other *reflejos* with similar ends, or diluting substances. Given the specific names, the variety of scents and colors, the different prescriptions, and the alternative methods of use, clients would leave the drugstore with highly customized products targeting whatever ailed them. *Reflejos* were therefore “magic bullets” designed for each individual client.

The factory in which the *reflejos* were prepared was located on Ponce de León Avenue in Santurce, an area known as Stop 24 on the old trolley route. It was directly behind the *La Fé* Drugstore. Both businesses were owned by a couple, both pharmacists, who supervised the manufacturing, the dispensing and sale of the varied *reflejos*. Although they also produced different scented waters, bay rum, and perfumes, it was the *reflejos* that gave the enterprise its distinction. One of the owners was the “E. Vielle” who appeared as the author of the leaflet on the powers of the product.

While nowadays *reflejos* may appear to be somewhat of a folk item whose popularity can be explained by the customers’ naiveté and the sellers’ merchandising savvy, the products had a number of characteristics which explain their efficacy and popularity. Indeed, the relevance of the product can be explained in light of what we now know concerning self-efficacy, the provider-patient relationship, personalized medicine, and the placebo effect.

Reflejos tended to promote self-efficacy because clients had the opportunity to explain the situation, describe their concerns, and take direct action with techniques that were within their control. In addition, users had a vast array of alternatives to choose from, which gave them flexibility and decision-making power over what to do. Dr. Albert Bandura, who has written extensively about self-efficacy, defines the concept as “people’s beliefs about their capabilities to produce effects” (1997). Bandura stresses that self-efficacy is neither innate nor inherent in a person; rather, it is something that can

be learned and developed through a variety of means. The behavioral patterns that Bandura's model considers as leading to success do not differ from those followed by users of *reflejos*. According to Bandura's scheme, embarking on an activity, a sense of control, setting a clear goal, adopting a strategy to tackle a problem, learning from experience, controlling stress, and visualizing a favorable outcome are all behaviors leading to success. By contributing to each of these activities, the successful use of a *reflejo* was not merely casual or random. And what better example of an exercise in self-efficacy than affirming "I am free and have no fear"? Indeed, this statement of autonomy and bravery is precisely what Bandura has called "positive self-talk" or verbal self-persuasion, a practice that reinforces a patient's sense of self-efficacy.

Obtaining *reflejos* also entailed a personal interaction between the pharmacist and the user. This was especially the case in the Puerto Rico of the 1930s through 1950s, when there were relatively few physicians and a substantial segment of the population lacked easy access to medical services. The pharmacist therefore played an important role in the life of the community and the delivery of services. The drugstore was not only a business, but also, in the words of a recent publication, "a social club, a political space, a place of intrigue, a hub of health consultation and discussions concerning babies' names, memories, and fables" (*Cuentos de Botica*, ix). Many pharmacies, including *La Fé*, had soda fountains and sold ice cream, and were therefore visited by people in the neighborhood for different purposes. Pharmacists were thus familiar figures in the daily lives of many, and knew their customers more than most doctors know their patients at present. While a degree in pharmacy and a white coat conferred the trappings of authority, the druggist's familiarity made him or her more accessible to the general population. In addition, as suggested earlier, in the case of a consultation regarding *reflejos*, the encounter was in both directions: the client provided details on his/her needs and feelings in order to receive the proper prescription to solve his/her situation. It was therefore a more egalitarian encounter than that which usually takes place in a hospital or a physician's office, where the interaction tends to be institutional, impersonal, and one-sided (Cary & Penner, 2016). And there was certainly greater contact than nowadays, when providers may be more focused on the information on a computer screen than on that provided by the patient sitting in front of them.

Because of its crucial role in health services delivery, the relationship between patient and provider has elicited the scholarly concern of members of different disciplines. Medical schools and other health science programs have recognized that the stress on data has tended to eclipse factors such as empathy, patience, and compassion in the health professions, thus undermining the patient-provider relationship. We now know that what is important is not the duration of the encounter, but rather its content (Mauksch et al, 2008). A recent Canadian study examining the relative efficacy of therapy and communication in patients who suffered from back pain found that patients

who had undergone sham treatment but had therapists who actively communicated reported a 55 percent decrease in their pain. Moreover, “communication alone was more effective than treatment alone” (Ofri, 2017). As evidence of the healing power of conversation increases, medical schools are including communication techniques in their training, stressing the need for patients to feel that they have had a chance to not only describe their symptoms, but also to state their feelings and concerns. It is also important for the provider to verify that patients understand the therapeutic options available, and can assuage any doubts they may have concerning them.

Leaving the encounter with an explanatory leaflet and a specific action plan, users of *reflejos* had evidence that they had been heard. And they had the instruments to address their situation, experiment in their treatment, and consult with the pharmacist without the barriers of appointments or cost.

The specificity of *reflejos* also suggest that these tools were precursors of what is currently known as personalized or precision medicine. Nowadays, personalized medicine has as many definitions as scholars addressing the topic. In its broadest version, personalized medicine is defined as that which seeks to “unite each patient with the best treatment, based on specific biological markers” (Redekop & Mladli, 2013; Roche Argentina, 2016). Other definitions are somewhat narrower, suggesting that this type of medicine seeks to design a treatment plan based on a patient's detailed genetic profile. In some cases, treatment and intervention are focused on a single patient, the idea being that this type of strategy may also be used on patients with similar conditions.

While *reflejos* sought to address many types of concerns and were aimed at solving many types of problems, they were also highly individualized and specific remedies. The combinations and permutations of the 111 different *reflejos*, the various diluters, and the specific rituals that accompanied their use, all created personalized therapies that made each client special and the prescription precise. While the specificity of the product targeted how the patient felt rather than his or her genetic make-up, *reflejos* were forerunners of precision medicine, both modalities sharing the goal of achieving “the correct therapy for a given patient at the right moment” (Roche Argentina, 2016). Lastly, the use of *reflejos* supports many of the recently-confirmed findings concerning the placebo effect. The placebo, defined as “an inactive substance ... prescribed as if it were a dose of a necessary medicine” (Mosby Staff, 2000: 970), has a long history in both healing and in clinical trials. The most common placebos are sugar pills and saline solutions, but there is a wide array of placebo products that may be used as part of a medical intervention. Traditionally, the most important use of placebos has been in laboratory research and in pharmaceutical drug trials, in which a study population is randomly divided into two groups, one of which receives the medication under investigation (the experimental group) while the other (the control group) gets an inactive substance or placebo. If the drug is effective, the results obtained in the experimental group will be statistically different from those experienced by the control group.

Until relatively recently, the placebo had a dubious reputation because its major function was to deceive patients, making them believe that they were receiving something of value when there was no indication that this was indeed the case. Over the past six years, however, the definition of medical treatment has changed and this in turn has led to a greater interest in, and respect for, the placebo. In 2011 Harvard Medical School and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center inaugurated a Program in Placebo Studies and the Therapeutic Encounter (<http://programinplacebostudies.org>), highlighting the importance of and legitimacy of this tool. Significantly, at the end of 2015, Dr. Jerome Groopman declared the power of the placebo as “one of the seven most significant medical findings of the year” (Groopman, 2015).

The growing interest in the placebo effect is due largely to advances in neuroimaging, which trace how the brain reacts to different stimuli, including a drug or a placebo (Kaptchuk & Miller, 2015). Recent studies indicate that believing in the efficacy of a treatment can unleash the same responses as the treatment itself. Expectations play a role in healing, and we can therefore state that “believing is healing.” In addition, different doses of a placebo can elicit different responses, even when the substance is inactive.

Other findings suggest that the appearance of what a patient takes, even when it is an inert substance, has a differential effect on the patient. Thus, capsules tend to be more effective than pills, and taking two pills instead of one (even if the dosage is the same) has a measurable effect. Color and size can also be important: pills that have an intense color are more effective than white pills, and, the larger the size, the greater the effect (Specter, 2011). In addition, belief and rituals can have an impact on the final result, leading the user to feel better even in the absence of logical or physiological reasons for the manifest change (<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/putting-the-placebo-effect-to-work>).

In sum, recent research suggests that *reflejos*, even when they were never subjected to rigorous study, had many of the attributes that could contribute to success for the patient. The product was inexpensive and accessible, and as such was within the reach of many. In addition, the potions had a number of features that have proved to be effective in addressing a variety of conditions and situations. The distinctive character of *reflejos* – their appearance, specificity, scent, and varied methods of application – together with the context and ritual within which they were used, do not differ much from many of the measures that recent studies have proved effective in a variety of cases. Almost eight decades before these effects were confirmed, the combination of Afro-Hispanic beliefs, French aromatic oils, American merchandising, and entrepreneurial wisdom created a unique Puerto Rican product that met the felt needs of a sizeable segment of the population.

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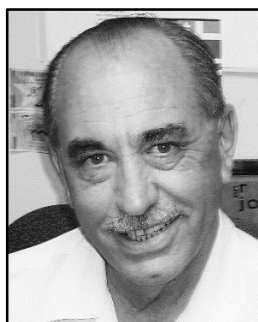


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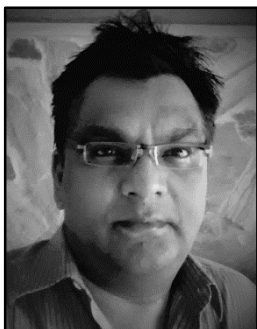
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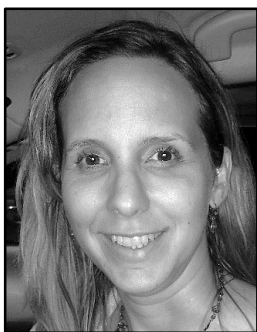
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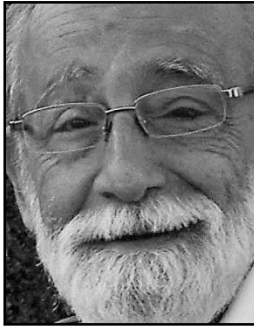
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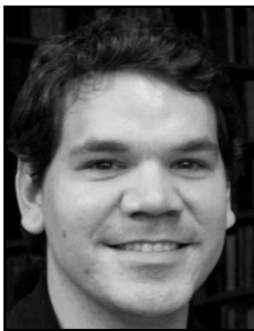
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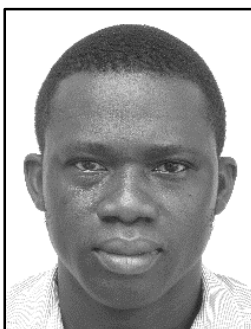
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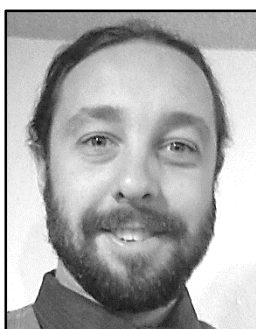
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