

University of Warwick institutional repository: <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap>

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick

<http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap/2397>

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it. Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

**Auto/biographing Caribbeanness:
Re-imagining Diasporic Nation and Identity**

by

Hazel A. Pierre

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Cultural Studies

**University of Warwick, Centre for Translation and
Comparative Cultural Studies**

August, 2007

Table of Contents



List of Illustrations	iv
Dedication	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Declaration	x
Abstract	xi
Abbreviations	xii
Introduction: <i>Auto/biographing Caribbeanness</i>	1
PART I : <i>Affirmation and Creation:</i> <i>Imagining the Caribbean Nation – Introduction</i>	22
Chapter 1	
<i>Reflecting on Nationhood</i>	25
<i>Nation Politics of the Right: the Case of Trinidad and Tobago</i>	31
<i>Nation Politics of the Left: the Case of Guyana</i>	39
<i>Whose Nation?</i>	48
Chapter 2	
<i>Defining Caribbean Space</i>	54
<i>Theorising Caribbean Nation</i>	59
<i>Auto/biographing the Caribbean Nation</i>	71
<i>Literary Auto/biography and the Imagining of Caribbean Nation</i>	81
<i>Auto/biography as Nation History</i>	110
<i>Paradox of Print Capitalism</i>	131
<i>Constructing Gendered Realities</i>	143

PART II	: <i>Prismatic Creolisation and the Auto/biography of Caribbeanness – Introduction</i>	151
	Chapter 3	
	<i>Re-defining Caribbeanness</i>	155
	<i>Colouring Caribbeanness</i>	170
	<i>Contesting Creole Culture</i>	202
	Chapter 4	
	<i>Metaphors of Creolisation</i>	216
	<i>Prismatic Creolisation Model</i>	228
	<i>Prismism and the Auto/biography of Caribbeanness</i>	234
	<i>Nation Language in Technicolour</i>	268
PART III	: <i>Windrush and her Descendants: Caribbeanness in Diaspora – Introduction</i>	277
	Chapter 5	
	<i>‘Disappointed Guests’: Writing the Caribbean in Britain I</i>	279
	<i>Where are you from?: Writing the Caribbean in Britain II</i>	290
Conclusion	: <i>‘The Autobiography of the Now’: Whither Caribbean Nation and Identity?</i>	303
Bibliography		313

List of Illustrations

- Figure 1: Brathwaite's Orientation Model
- Figure 2: Prismatic Creolisation Model
- Figure 3: From *Fragments of a Spiritual*
- Figure 4: Weavers of the Dust from *Douens*
- Figure 3: Holy Family Mural – Roseau Church, Jacmel, St Lucia

Dedication

*For my mother
and
in memory of my father
(d. Nov. 2001)*

Acknowledgements

I am deeply appreciative of the funding provided by the Warwick Postgraduate Research Fellowship (2001) and the Overseas Research Scheme [now the Overseas Research Students Awards Scheme (ORSAS)] (2001) that facilitated the years of research and completion of this thesis. The additional teaching and other work experience acquired as part of the Fellowship can only be assets. The application process for entry into the programme, consideration for the Fellowship and finally in submission for examination were made much easier with the unwavering help and diligence of the secretaries of the Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies, Mrs Janet Bailey and Mrs Maureen Tustin. They have both improved the Warwick experience for me since most difficulties and uncertainties were often resolved when put to Janet and Maureen who *always* remembered to follow up on queries. Mrs Marjorie Davies of the Centre for Caribbean Studies has also been helpful whenever necessary. For their help, guidance and patience, I am thankful.

As with any long-term project, I am indebted to a number of people who have provided invaluable assistance that has contributed to bringing it to fruition.

Professor David Dabydeen, who has supervised my research over this period must be credited for allowing me the required latitude to explore a range of ideas that I felt necessary to bring what I trust are fresh perspectives to the prosaic concepts of Caribbean nation and identity already in circulation. In particular, Professor Dabydeen's direction to explore the work of the St Lucian painter Dunstan St Omer helped to provide clarity to the vague ideas with which I began for re-conceptualising

Caribbeanness. His unpublished interview of St Omer with accompanying slides of one of the prismatic compositions at the St Phillip and James' Church, St Lucia, were the catalysts for this "revelation". Mr St Omer was himself magnanimous with his time and patience in explaining his theory of Prismism and locating it in the context in which it had emerged to a "stranger" and virtual novice of Caribbean art; for this I am thankful and trust too that I have done justice to his theory and paintings as I have appropriated them in this thesis.

Many others have also helped me in formulating and clarifying ideas by making time for stimulating discussions, which often opened other avenues for investigation and loopholes in my arguments. I am indebted especially to Professor Neil Lazarus for interesting discussions on often far-fetched ideas, insightful comments on drafts of different chapters, direction to reading material and general words of encouragement. Professor Lazarus has always been very supportive of my work and at times of disappointment and despair offered inspiration to continue. I would also like to thank Dr Cecily Jones, for assistance in understanding some of the issues related to gender and Ken Crichlow for providing an indispensable perspective of a painter/art critic/scholar on Caribbean and European art and colour.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to many, who, in the course of my research, have participated in interviews or general discussions (sometimes on an impromptu basis) or provided published and unpublished research papers, texts that again alerted me to other perspectives: artists Dunstan St Omer, Leroy Clarke, Ken Crichlow, Christopher Cozier; Professor Selwyn Ryan, Professor Rhoda Reddock, Professor Patricia Mohammed, Dr Ian Robertson, Dr Walton Look Lai and Monsignor Dr Patrick

Anthony, Professor Robin Cohen, Dr Bob Carter, Professor John King, Professor Gad Heuman.

Professor Gordon Rohlehr also deserves special mention since he has been very influential in the formation of some of my perspectives on issues fundamental to Caribbeanness. As an undergraduate, Professor Rohlehr not only instilled a unique appreciation for Caribbean literature and culture, encouraging the exploration of various ideas but also provided a remarkable example of a responsible and politically involved academic as opposed to the “ivory tower” stereotype so often in evidence. Professor Rohlehr’s attention to detail, thoroughness, insightful perspectives, historical and cultural knowledge are the hallmarks of his research that warrant emulation. I am grateful to have had the opportunity of Professor Rohlehr’s teaching and research guidance.

To my friends who have prayed, laughed and cried with me and extended the hand of genuine friendship, I must say “thank you.” For special mention are the Howes family, Elizabeth Marcano; BAHS friends: Toni, Alicia, S. Clarke-Hinds, Susan, Claire M-G, Simone, Samantha; my many cousins, uncles and aunts and too many others to mention but who know themselves.

My family: there are no words to express the gratitude I owe to each and every one of my family members for the prayers, love, support and “remembered communion” (to borrow a term from Kamau Brathwaite) of family that have always provided sustenance to me. My parents, who came of age during the independence period in the Caribbean, first taught us all the value of reading, learning and exploring different

ideas. Our close-knit unit was the first site where debate, dialogue and discussions on current events and ideas generally took place. Here is where we all first tested our ideas. Thus, the loss of my father within six weeks of starting postgraduate research was difficult. Coping was only possible with the prayers and love of my mother, sisters and brothers as we supported each other in coming to terms with death and loss. Still, the tradition of debate and discussion was continued as my sisters and brothers read, provided valuable comments, updated me on current developments at home and when the pressure was most intense, calmed my nerves. I will be eternally grateful for the good fortune of such a wonderfully supportive family and the confidence and encouragement that they have all provided throughout my life. Lastly, I wish to thank God through whom all things are possible!

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree at any other university. None of the work that appears here has previously been published.

Abstract

This thesis undertakes a multidisciplinary study of the construction of nation and identity in the context of the Caribbean and its diaspora in Britain. Taking Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Britain as the countries for comparative analysis two primary research questions are addressed: How can Caribbean nation and identity be re-conceptualised to represent its complex, heterogeneous societies? How have Caribbean identities resisted, metamorphosed and been re-constituted in the diasporic context of Britain? While current scholarship on nation and identity is interrogated, the principle guiding the methodology has been to engage with the specificities of the region's history and culture with a view to arriving at new interpretations that reflect the contemporary Caribbean situation. It is argued that Caribbean auto/biographical practice, prevalent in much of its artistic production, provides a conceptual tool for interpreting the Caribbean nation. As a site of resistance to received knowledges, Caribbean auto/biography has facilitated *inter alia* the re-inscription of histories and the imagining of nation spaces. Since as a genre it is inherently democratic, multiple imaginings of nation emerge and coalesce from the wider range of voices accommodated by auto/biographical practice.

The prismatic creolisation model is proposed as a re-visioning of Caribbean identity. This model modifies and augments Kamau Brathwaite's creolisation thesis with relevant scholarship from Stuart Hall and the artistic philosophy of the painter Dunstan St Omer, Prismism. Prismatic creolisation suggests a polycentric, more inclusive perspective from which Caribbean identity, culture and language might be interpreted. These theoretical tools - auto/biographical practice and prismatic creolisation - are applied to the examination of how Caribbean identity and culture are translated and re-constructed in the diaspora situation. The Windrush generation, it is argued, began negotiating Britishness by auto/biographing Caribbean transitional identities into the national imagination. Succeeding generations have been re-negotiating these terms by creating new cultural forms and ways of being that resist and inflect Britishness.

Abbreviations

ACDA	-	African Cultural Development Association
ACP	-	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of Countries
ACS	-	Association of Caribbean States
ASCRIA	-	African Society for Cultural Relations with Independent Africa
ASJA	-	Anjuman Sunnat-ul-Jamaat Association
BGLU	-	British Guiana Labour Union
CAM	-	Caribbean Artists Movement
CARICOM	-	Caribbean Regional Common Market
CBI	-	Caribbean Basin Initiative
CCJ	-	Caribbean Court of Justice
CSME	-	Caribbean Single Market Economy
ERC	-	Ethnic Relations Commission
ESC	-	Emancipation Support Committee
GIFT	-	Guyanese Indian Federation Trust
GIHA	-	Guyanese Indian Heritage Association
GIWU	-	Guiana Industrial Workers Union
GOPIO	-	Global Organisation of People of Indian Heritage
IMF	-	International Monetary Fund
NAEAP	-	National Association for the Empowerment of African People
NAFTA	-	North American Free Trade Association
NAR	-	National Alliance for Reconstruction
NJAC	-	National Joint Action Committee
PAC	-	Political Affairs Committee

INTRODUCTION



Auto/biographing Caribbeanness

The idea of the global village perpetuated by late capitalism contrives to confirm the growing irrelevance and end of nation and nationalism with their inherent assumptions of autonomy and sovereignty. That many of the nation states that emerged after the Second World War have been less than successful in achieving the goals of self-determination, social and economic equality for their peoples has served only to compound the view of nationalism as “inherently dominy, absolutist, essentialist, and destructive” in character and unproductive as a uniting force.¹ Echoes of these announcements of the end of nation resonate in the Caribbean where nationhood has presented seemingly insurmountable economic and social challenges which include structural adjustment, stringent debt servicing, shrinking trade opportunities, rising crime, ethnic antagonisms and a continuing brain drain; the list can be extended. The intermittent natural disasters to which tropical climates are typically susceptible - storms, hurricanes, volcanoes, earthquakes – have often exacerbated economic and social hardships making the nation’s future that much more precarious. The coupling of these challenges with the continuing rapid expansion of capitalism makes the suggestion of the end of the nation-state as a viable concept a distinct possibility.

¹ Laura Chrisman, “Nationalism and Postcolonial Studies” *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Ed. Neil Lazarus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 183.

Some scholars and social commentators, such as Rupert Roopnarine, have argued, in fact, that the opportunity for establishing viable nation-states and securing “real independence” has been lost since the historic moment has passed. He asserts:

I’m not sure [that] we haven’t passed the point historically because in a very real sense we’re now talking about generating ... a sense of nation at a time when we’re being told that the idea of nation is no more; that borders are a thing of the past; sovereignty is a thing of the past. So here we are in this new globalised, borderless situation talking about resuscitating a sense of nationhood. It’s a little unreal ... I think our best opportunity for all that was of course, immediately before or immediately after independence ... My own sense is that history has overtaken us in this regard and it may be too late to talk about that particular aspect of unification.²

With a dearth of visionary political leadership and the overwhelming cultural and economic hegemony of the United States of America, what kind of future can Caribbean peoples really imagine for themselves? Of the two Caribbean territories under comparison in this thesis - Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana - some have declared the former to be a failing state; others have mused that perhaps the best solution open to Guyana is the sale of the territory. If indeed, the nation and nationalism have been divested of their legitimacy as concepts of political unity, of what significance is any further research on these subjects? In other words, what is the point of this thesis, which has as its primary concern the investigation of the construction of nation and identity in the Caribbean and its diaspora in Britain as its research subject?

That the concept of nation has lost some legitimacy owing to the expansion of capitalism in the last three decades is not in dispute. However, as the cultural theorist

² Rupert Roopnarine qtd. in *The Forgotten Colony*, narr., and writ. David Dabydeen. BBC Radio 4, 27 November, 2001.

and critic, Stuart Hall asserts, inasmuch as globalisation has subverted its legitimacy, the nation has not, as a consequence, become redundant:

Global developments ... have undermined the nation's reach and scope of manoeuvre, and with that the scale of and comprehensiveness - the panoptic assumptions - of its 'imaginary' ...³

The new, post-1970s phase of globalization is, of course, still deeply rooted in the structured disparities of wealth and power. But its forms, however uneven, are more 'global' in their operation, planetary perspective, with transnational corporate interests, the deregulation of world markets and the global flow of capital, technologies and communication systems transcending and side-lining the old nation-state framework. This new 'transnational' phase of the system has its cultural 'centre' everywhere and nowhere ... This does not mean that it lacks power, or indeed that nation states have no role in it. But that role has been in many respects subordinated to larger global systemic operations. The rise of supra-national formations, such as the European Union, is testimony to the ongoing erosion of national hegemony.⁴

The fact that even in Europe national sovereignty remains a thorny issue in the realisation of the 'full potential' of the European Union as a supra-national entity is testimony to the tension that persists between the nation and the competing global village; a tension that suggests the desire for the co-existence of both the nation and supra-national states. Indeed, critic Neil Lazarus affirms that, "both the historical and the sociological records seem to suggest that, if anything ... the two tendencies [i.e. globalisation and nation-statism] are typically twinned, mutually supportive and entailing."⁵ This gives further credence to Benedict Anderson's assertion that in spite of the continuing predictions of the end of nationalism, it endures as the "most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time."⁶ For former colonies that

³ Stuart Hall, "Thinking the Diaspora: Home-Thoughts from Abroad" *Small Axe* 6 (1999): 9.

⁴ Hall, "Thinking the Diaspora" 10.

⁵ Neil Lazarus, "Disavowing Decolonisation: Nationalism, Intellectuals, and the Question of Representation in Postcolonial Theory", *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 71.

⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983. London and New York: Verso, 1991) 3.

won independence after the Second World War, nation also retains its indispensable significance as a site of resistance to imperialism, however weak-willed, which globalisation re-enacts. As Lazarus argues:

[i]t is only on the terrain of the nation that an articulation between cosmopolitan intellectualism and popular consciousness can be forged; and *this* is important, in turn, because in the era of multinational capitalism it is only on the basis of such universalistic articulation ... that imperialism can be destabilised.⁷

Consequently, this thesis contends that while globalisation effectively contests and re-defines the role and concept of nation, it retains its primary signification as an “imagined community” since as Anderson argues, “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”⁸ Moreover, the tensions between nations and the supra-national entities that are characteristic of globalisation will persist once the former continues to jealously guard the right to determine “the style” in which they are imagined.

In undertaking this multidisciplinary study, cognisance is taken not only of the contestations posed by globalisation but also the problems experienced by Caribbean nation-states since independence some forty years ago. Many anticolonial and postcolonial critics have analysed the experience of nation in former colonies with the Martiniquan psychiatrist, Frantz Fanon making perhaps the most influential contribution to this scholarship in his text, *The Wretched of the Earth*, and the much

⁷ Neil Lazarus, qtd. in Tamara Sivanandan, “Anticolonialism, National Liberation, Postcolonial Nation Formation”, *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Ed. Neil Lazarus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 49.

⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities* 7.

cited essay of that text, “The Pitfalls of Nationalism.”⁹ Fanon, in that essay warned about the vacuity of bourgeois nationalism that was purposed primarily at “transfer[ing] into native hands ... those unfair advantages which are a legacy of the colonial period.”¹⁰ This encapsulates the Caribbean experience of transition from colonial rule to nationhood (as in other former colonies). The boundless enthusiasm and expectations that precipitated the prospect of independence were replaced by disillusionment born of the patent failure by the élite to effect the transformation that independence demanded. Many reasons have been advanced for this failure, including the lack of planning for the transition to nationhood as well as the absence of any cogent ideological framework that would have guided the decolonisation process. As Lazarus and others have suggested, the rhetoric of anticolonialism was reductive in that it was framed solely within the context of “a struggle *against* colonialism, not a struggle *for* anything specific.” Making reference to the African experience, Lazarus explains further:

The register of anticolonialism actively sought abstraction, desiring above all to remain free of ideological factionalism. It never paused long enough to give its ideal of ‘freedom’ a content.¹¹

In the absence of proper planning and strategising for nationhood, the nation-states of the Caribbean have been ill-prepared to confront the challenges of independence. According to economist and critic, Lloyd Best, this has resulted in a prolonged state of stasis in the region. In fact, he argues that the political and social convulsions that continuously threaten to destabilise the region are symptomatic of such stasis and

⁹ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*. 1961. trans. Constance Farrington (London: Penguin Books, 1967).

¹⁰ Fanon, *The Wretched* 122.

¹¹ Lazarus, *Resistance in Postcolonial African Fiction* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990) 5.

what he has called the “crisis of Caribbean civilisation.”¹² For these reasons, Best has averred that in order to escape this stasis, it is imperative that the conventional notions of nation and identity be revisited with a view to “set[ting] out a theory or an interpretation of Caribbean society dealing in the issue of race, class and ethnicity but doing so in deliberately Caribbean terms”.¹³ In this regard, Best further asserts that the “tired and mechanical models” that have been applied to the theorisation of the region should be abandoned with efforts being concentrated on “seek[ing] a whole new interpretation, derived organically from Caribbean history and set in [its] institutions and culture.”¹⁴

This thesis adopts this methodological position in the investigation of Caribbean nation and identity that it undertakes. It is argued that while Caribbean scholarship has largely assumed the sufficiency of Western thought for understanding and analysing its own situation, it has ensured the neglect of many of the theoretical and analytical models that have emerged as an integral part of the traditions of literary criticism and philosophy in the region. The theoretical models, which have been subsumed under the rubric of anticolonial theory, have been classified by some scholars as *passé* and ill equipped to the task of interpreting the complexity of the contemporary Caribbean. Increasingly, there has been a largely uncritical exchange of anticolonial models for the poststructuralist and postmodernist paradigms of European and postcolonial theorists in some Caribbeanist scholarship. In observing this trend in literary criticism, philosophy and history, Derek Walcott has offered his own veiled excoriating critique:

¹² Lloyd Best, “Race, Class and Ethnicity: A Caribbean Interpretation” The Third Annual Jagan Lecture, York University, Toronto, Canada, March 3, 2004. 2.

¹³ Best, “Race, Class and Ethnicity” 3.

¹⁴ Best, “Race, Class and Ethnicity” 3.

a lot of dead fish have beached on the sand. Mostly the fish are French fish, and off their pages there is the reek of the fishmonger's hands. I have a horror not of that stink, but of the intellectual veneration of rot, because from the far-off reek which I get from the stalls of the Academy, there is now a school of fishermen as well as schools of fish, and these fishmongers are interested in examining the disembowelled entrails of poetry, of marketing its guts and its surrounding conversation of flies. When French poetry dies the dead fish of French criticism is sold to the suckers. 'Moby Dick is nothing but words, and what are words, and what do I mean when I say Moby Dick and if I say Moby Dick what exactly do I mean?'¹⁵

Some Caribbean critics have defended the trade-in for poststructuralist models and condemned the countervailing arguments that reflect those articulated by Walcott, Wilson Harris and Best as evidence of "xenophobic cultural nationalism"¹⁶ and unease with "so-called global contexts and perspectives" for which "world-wide" and "universal" are confusingly suggested as synonyms.¹⁷ According to Mark McWatt:

'Globalization' when applied to literature and the arts, can seem like another strategy for the marginalization of peoples and cultures on the periphery and their submergence in a larger and less satisfying reality. This is akin to the well-known quarrel with globalization in the context of economics and trade and it is manifested in the attitude of some Caribbean students in recent years who resist, for example, the ideas and methods of contemporary literary theory on the grounds that these are irrelevant to the realities of the Caribbean that are reflected in the literature.¹⁸

He further disparages "talk about the need to *concoct* theories or critical methodologies that are 'indigenous' and specific to the literature and culture of the

¹⁵ Derek Walcott, "Caligula's Horse" *After Europe: Critical Theory and Post-Colonial Writing*. Eds. Stephen Slemon and Helen Tiffin (Sydney: Dangaroo Press, 1989) 141. Wilson Harris has made a similar observation about postmodernism, comparing it to "a game". He asserts, "[i]t is little wonder that post-modernism is scarcely more than a game, and that nihilism entrenches ontic tautologies (Hades is Hades is Hades, evil is evil is evil, purity is purity is purity, etc. etc)." Harris, "Living Absences and Presences" "'Return' in Post-colonial Writing: A Cultural Labyrinth". Ed. Vera Mihailovich-Dickman (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1994) 1.

¹⁶ Mark A. Mc Watt, "'Omens of Humanity' : World Texts and Contexts in Wilson Harris's Critical Writing" *Theatre of the Arts: Wilson Harris and the Caribbean*. Eds. Hena Maes'Jelinek and Bénédicte Ledent. (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002) 128.

¹⁷ Mc Watt, "Omens of Humanity" 126 - 127.

¹⁸ McWatt, "Omens of Humanity" 126.

region [my emphasis].”¹⁹ Ironically, in what might most accurately be described as a selective, catachrestic and deconstructive reading of Harris, Mc Watt advocates that Harris’ critical writing offers a solution to how a national or regional literature might accommodate “the perspective or context which [he] prefer[s] to ‘world-wide’ or ‘universal’, given the tainted associations of the ‘global’”

[t]he critical writings of Wilson Harris answer this question very effectively by focusing on the ‘universal’ nature of the resources of the creative imagination, so that the wider or transcendent perspective is already inherent in (indigenous to) the Caribbean writer/reader; in fact, Harris insists ... that Caribbean culture and society, precisely because of their particular history and hybrid nature, with multiple influences from outside, are better equipped than most national or regional cultures to enable ‘an art of creative co-existence [that] is of utmost importance’ and ‘an incandescent imagination that may balance shadow and light, age and youth, strength and weakness, poverty and wealth, that it throws a ceaseless bridge across the chasm of worlds.’²⁰

Suffice it to say, that this solution as formulated by McWatt refuses to contextualise or engage with the broader debates about globalisation or its *actual* repercussions for the Caribbean – economically, politically, socially or culturally. In similar vein, by invoking the spectre of xenophobia in the supersensitive context of the Caribbean, McWatt camouflages the substantive issue, which is the determination of some Caribbean students, scholars, academics, artists and intellectuals to interrogate those paradigms – local and ‘universal’ - that have governed scholarship in the region thus far, and to construct conceptual and interpretative frameworks with specific reference to the history and culture of the region. However, what is also implicit in McWatt’s translation of this determination to devise Caribbean-centred theories as a process of “concoct[ion]” is his questioning of the *capability* of Caribbean scholars and intellectuals to offer any legitimate or credible analyses or theories about the region in

¹⁹ McWatt, “Omens of Humanity” 126.

²⁰ McWatt, “Omens of Humanity” 127.

which they live or further to be able to locate such analyses in the “global” context. Is the region not only economically dependent but also intellectually and ideologically reliant on European thought to interpret its own situation? What is more, in referencing the Caribbean’s inherent cultural hybridity: is McWatt suggesting that this inoculates the region against economic and cultural imperialism?²¹

In the spirit of Walcott’s criticism, this thesis rejects the *uncritical* acceptance of poststructuralist and postcolonial paradigms and asks: Are the anticolonial models derived from Caribbean literary and philosophical traditions so completely useless? Are they so thoroughly deprived of scholarly merit and rigour? Are there not obvious continuities between anticolonial and postcolonial theories evident in the co-option, by the latter of influential thinkers such as Frantz Fanon and C.L.R. James (even Harris), for instance? Do these anticolonial theorists not offer even a starting point for thinking anew about the region that they too sought to theorise at that critical moment of its transition from colonialism to nationhood? Interestingly, in one of the founding texts of Postcolonial Studies, its authors, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin have confirmed the contribution made by anticolonial thinkers to the constitution of the then emergent field:

It has been often accepted as a fact that Edward Said initiated the discourse of post-colonialism. Yet *The Empire Writes Back* emerged not from that intervention but from the work of those African, Caribbean and Indian writers, artists and social theorists who were actually engaging the power of imperial discourse – who were ‘writing back’ ... Writers from formerly colonized countries writing in colonial languages, particularly English, demonstrated the counter-discursive potential of the tools appropriated from the colonizers. Writers also

²¹ Invariably, some critics will disagree with this reading of McWatt’s argument. However, my interpretation is substantiated not only by this text but the proceedings of a conference, “(Re)thinking Caribbean Culture”, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill campus, June 4 – 8, 2001 where an earlier version of this chapter was presented. A broader examination of the various strands of the argument will be undertaken in future publications.

engaged the cultural power of colonialism as a more subtle and pervasive accompaniment to its political power.²²

This thesis does not propose to ignore poststructuralist and postcolonial theories. Concomitantly, neither does it accept that anticolonial theories should be summarily discarded. Rather, in keeping with Best's injunction to abandon the tired conventional models (many of which have been imported), this thesis interrogates some of the more influential anticolonial *and* postcolonial theories relevant to the research project to determine their suitability as interpretative tools. In so doing, this thesis revisits some of the literary and philosophical models produced by Caribbean artists and intellectuals and where possible, builds on the foundations that they have established. This is the methodological approach that guides the investigation into the two principal questions that this thesis examines: How can Caribbean nation and identity be re-conceptualised to represent its complex, heterogeneous societies? and, How have Caribbean identities resisted, metamorphosed and been re-constituted in the diasporic context of Britain?

Taking as its point of departure, the brutal history that marked the region's entrance into modernity, it is proposed that given the predilection for auto/biography manifested in much of the Caribbean's cultural production that the genre also functions as an interpretative and theoretical tool by which constructive insights might be gained into how nation and identity are imagined. Auto/biography, which has been appropriated by Caribbean and other minority artists as the preferred genre for writing themselves into being, has offered a unique site for resistance to enslavement and colonialism. Traditionally, the genre has been the exclusive domain

²² Bill Aschroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. (1989. London and New York: Routledge, 2002) 198 –199.

of “the Enlightened subject, unified, rational, coherent, autonomous, free, but also White, male and Western”²³ who undertakes an exploration of an isolated individual self or a self in relation to nature. According to Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, this acknowledged substantive subject position finds its legitimacy in History:

This subject has been variously called “the individual” or “the universal human subject” or “the transcendental subject” or “man”. Cultural attachment to this sovereign “I” signals an investment in the subject of “history” and “progress,” for this “man” is the subject who traveled across the globe, surveyed what he saw, claimed it, organized it, and thereby asserted superiority over the less civilized “other” whom he denigrated, exploited, and “civilized” at once.²⁴

Inherent in the rationale of this subject position was also the assumption that “writing ... stood alone among the many fine arts as the most salient repository of “genius,” the visible sign of reason itself”.²⁵

In keeping with such logic, it was also assumed that subjugated peoples – the Other - were not duly deserving of equal status with their colonisers in the Chain of Being. Indeed, such logic undoubtedly underpinned James Anthony Froude’s authoritative negation of the existence of any “real” people in the region. Thus, it is against this grain that Caribbean artists and others writing from the so-called margins, undertake auto/biographical acts. The emergence of writing from these absent or marginal subject positions has been concerned with contesting these ‘universal’ assumptions and has sought to fill the silences by giving voice to their own experiences.

²³ Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, introduction, *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*. Eds. S. Smith and J. Watson (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998) 27.

²⁴ Smith and Watson, *Women, Autobiography, Theory* 27.

²⁵ Henry Louis Gates, introduction, *“Race,” Writing, and Difference*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986) 9.

Consequently, in appropriating the genre, Caribbean artists have delimited it from its privileged position in Western discourse and adapted its conventional parameters to meet the political agendas of formerly colonised and marginalised peoples that include the recuperation of suppressed histories, the insertion and the establishment of self and agency against the prevailing European narratives that have denied their very humanity. Moreover, the delimitation of generic definitions of auto/biography has served to include other forms of life writing such as “diaries, letters and journals, often adopted by women and those outside mainstream literary culture.”²⁶ A critical consequence of this delimitation has been the expansion of the terrain on which minority artists might be considered as participating in the act of theory and philosophy. In the specific context of the Caribbean where as scholars such as Paget Henry and Selwyn R Cudjoe have pointed out, given the region’s history and cultural heritages, much of its philosophy, literary and intellectual traditions are evident in “tracts, novels, newspapers, travel writings, dramatic performances, open-air theatre, sermons, and poetry.”²⁷ That the appropriated genre recognises these various forms and modes of life writing as sites of intellectual and literary discourse bolsters the argument advanced by other critics, among them Barbara Christian and Carole Boyce Davies, for expanding the understanding of what constitutes theory. As Christian asserts:

people of color have always theorized – but in forms quite different from the Western form of abstract logic. And I am inclined to say that our theorizing ... is often in narrative forms, in the stories we create, in riddles and proverbs, in the play with language, since dynamic rather than fixed ideas seem more to our liking. How else have we managed to survive with such spiritedness the assault on our bodies, social institutions, countries, our very humanity? And

²⁶ Laura Marcus, *Auto/biographical Discourses: Theory, Criticism, Practice*. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994) 1.

²⁷ Selwyn R Cudjoe, *Beyond Boundaries: The Intellectual Tradition of Trinidad and Tobago in the Nineteenth Century*. (Wellesley, Mass.: Calaloux Publications, 2003). 1.

women, ... continuously speculated about the nature of life through pithy language that unmasked the power relations of their world.²⁸

It is thus in view of the variety of modes of forms of auto/biographical practice evident in the appropriated genre as well as its location as a site of theorising that this thesis has adopted the following definition of the term as proposed by Liz Stanley:

an epistemologically-orientated concern with the political ramifications of the shifting boundaries between self and other, past and present, writing and reading, fact and fiction, and with an analytical attention to these within the oral, visual, and written texts that are 'biographies and autobiographies'. The writer/speaker, the researcher and author, are certainly not treated as transparent or 'dead', but very much alive as agents actively at work in the textual production process. Auto/biography engages analytically with these epistemological problematics and displaces the referential and foundational claims of writers and researchers by focusing on the writing and speaking of lives and the complexities of reading/hearing them. It thereby unsettles notions of 'science', problematises the claims of research, questions the power issues that most researches either silence or disclaim.²⁹

Stanley's definition underpins the overarching proposition of this thesis that the imagining of nation has been implicitly interwoven in the region's art and writing especially since the struggle for and acquisition of independence coincided with the emergence of Caribbean writing and other artistic production. Moreover, because in its appropriated form, auto/biography is intrinsically fluid and communal in perspective, the genre permits the articulation of multiple subject addresses and subjectivities thereby facilitating access to how the nation is imagined by a wide

²⁸ Barbara Christian, "The Race for Theory." *Cultural Critique*. 6 (1987): 52.

²⁹ Liz Stanley, "From 'Self-Made Women' to Women's Made-Selves?: Audit Selves, Simulation and Surveillance in the Rise of Public Woman", *Feminism and Autobiography: Texts, Theories, Methods*, ed. Tess Cosslett, Celia Lury and Penny Summerfield (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) 41. I have attributed this definition to Liz Stanley as one of the key leaders involved in the Auto/biography Study Group but also because several ideas included in the definition are evident in some of Stanley's earlier work. Joanna Bornat also makes the same attribution. See Joanna Bornat, "Is Oral History Auto/biography?" *Auto/biography* 3.1 and 3.2 (1994): 18.

range of the various ethnicities and communities of peoples who inhabit the region. Further, the use of the slash in auto/biography is adopted to distinguish this expanded definition of the genre from its Western antecedent and, according to Stanley “to encompass all [the] ways of writing a life and also the ontological and epistemological links between them.”³⁰

In spite of its value as a conceptual tool, it is not suggested that the genre has universal applicability. Rather it is specifically proposed for the Caribbean region which is the context of analysis for this thesis. Furthermore, it is understood that the nation is conceptualised as an exclusive entity that regulates those who are included and excluded from within its borders; as such it cannot be presumed that all voices – especially dissenting voices – are allowed equal space for articulation.

It is pertinent to underscore at this stage, that the examination of Caribbean auto/biographical practice is aimed primarily at determining its viability as an interpretative framework in investigating how nation is imagined. While three seminal texts of Caribbean writing – Martin Carter’s *Poems of Resistance* (1954), Derek Walcott’s *Another Life* (1972) and V S Naipaul’s *A House for Mr Biswas* (1961) - are analysed to illustrate the inherent variety of ways of imagining nation that auto/biographical practice facilitates, it is not the main purpose of the thesis. Since substantial scholarship that examines auto/biographical practice in Caribbean writing and the ways in which individual writers have constructed and interrogated notions of nation and identity in their work already exists,³¹ this thesis has sought instead to

³⁰ Liz Stanley, *The Auto/biographical ‘I’: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/biography*. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1992) 3.

³¹ I am thinking here of the most recent comprehensive study, Sandra Pouchet Paquet’s, *Caribbean Autobiography: Cultural Identity and Self-Representation* (Madison, Wisconsin: Univ. of Wisconsin

extend that scholarship by investigating the broader question of whether auto/biography in fact functions as a site of theoretical analysis and resistance in the imagining of nation and identity. It is therefore from this perspective that the thesis is not conceived primarily as an author study.

The idea of Caribbean cultural identity is complicated by the fact that the region consists of several territories that constitute different linguistic blocs – Hispanophone, Francophone, Dutch and Anglophone. These territories are to varying degrees, individually and collectively multi-cultural, multiracial, multi-ethnic and multi-religious with a range of ideological leanings. Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana are two of the most heterogeneous nations of the region and are interesting locations for understanding how ideas of national and cultural identity are constructed. It is pertinent to note though that while there remains island or territorial insularity it is not incongruous with notions of being both Trinidadian or Guyanese and Caribbean, for example. For as the economist Norman Girvan has averred the Caribbean might be considered as a

sociohistorical category, commonly referring to a cultural zone characterized by the legacy of slavery and the plantation system. It embraces islands and parts of the adjoining mainland – and may be extended to include the Caribbean diaspora overseas.³²

However, given this varied tableau, it is understandable that defining Caribbean identity is at best, difficult. Nonetheless, historian, poet and cultural critic Kamau

Press, 2002). Other scholarly texts have also undertaken sustained analyses of individual seminal authors, these would include, Stewart Brown, ed., *All are Involved: The Art of Martin Carter*. (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2000); Patricia Ismond's *Abandoning Dead Metaphors: The Caribbean Phase of Derek Walcott's Poetry* (Mona: University of the West Indies Press, 2001); Paula Burnett, *Derek Walcott: Politics and Poetics* (Gainesville: University of Florida, 2000); Bruce King, *V S Naipaul*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993); Judith Levy, *Displacement and Autobiography*. (New York and London: Garland, 1995); Leigh Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001).

³² Norman Girvan, "Reinterpreting the Caribbean," *New Caribbean Thought: A Reader*, eds., Brian Meeks and Folke Lindahl (Mona, Jamaica : University of the West Indies Press, 2001) 3.

Brathwaite's creolisation theory, which has been one of the most influential theories that has sought to describe the process of cultural formation and change in the region is also one of the most contested. According to Brathwaite's formulation, Caribbean cultural identity emerges through an involuntary process of ac/culturation and inter/culturation by which the dominant and subordinate cultures were influenced by and adapted to each other in the New World environment during plantation slavery. Brathwaite's creolisation model has been critiqued for its unicentricity as it places disproportionate emphasis on an Afrocentric perspective and further suggests the possibility of recuperating an essential, authentic, unitary identity. As the model is based on the more homogenous Jamaican society in the immediate post-emancipation period, it has also been deemed inadequate to the analysis of more heterogeneous territories such as Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana.

Prismatic creolisation, which is the polycentric model suggested here attempts to describe the complex, dynamic situation that is typical in such territories by building on the kernel of Brathwaite's thesis as well as that of the artistic philosophy of St Lucian painter, Dunstan St Omer and key tenets of the re-conceptualisation of Caribbean identity suggested by sociologist, Stuart Hall. Whereas Brathwaite has suggested the visual metaphor of the prism as one way of expanding his creolisation thesis, St Omer's artistic philosophy, Prismism, incorporates it in his painting style, technique and re-visioning of colour. Prismism emerges from St Omer's interrogation of a range of European artistic styles from the medieval to the modern periods as he sought to define his own style of painting that would represent his Caribbean experience. These efforts conjoined with his search for spiritual truth, evident in his engagement with the representation of divinity. Conceptually, Prismism draws on

some features of both Impressionism and Cubism but places great emphasis on light, intensity and vibrancy of colour.

It is pertinent to observe at this juncture that St Omer shares with Brathwaite, Hall, Walcott and most artists from the region what has been described as a distinctly Caribbean diasporic vision and aesthetic as evinced in his art and philosophy. Despite having spent the larger part of his life domiciled in the region (predominantly his native St Lucia) his artistic philosophy, painting style and aesthetics are derived from a diverse and complex confluence of influences. As explained earlier, elements of European, African and indigenous artistic movements and aesthetics converge in his work with ideas emanating from global and contextual theology, the anti colonial, federalist, nationalists and Civil Rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s. Such a breadth of influences have been possible in the Caribbean as a whole (as well as in individual territories) largely because of the history of migrations that has shaped the contemporary cultural and socio-economic contexts. St Omer's paintings have been exhibited throughout the region and his murals in which his prismatic aesthetics are demonstrated grace the walls of churches in St Lucia, Trinidad and Martinique. Moreover, his art and philosophy were recognised by the Vatican in 2002 when he was awarded the Medal of Merit. Inasmuch as his biographical data is crucial to understanding his art and philosophy, it is secondary to the parallel biographical narrative of nation and region which his artistic philosophy, Prismism elaborates. His prismatic paintings, inevitably speak to notions of Caribbean cultural identity and nation with relevance especially to the discourse of race and ethnicity. Herein lies the intrinsic interconnections between St Omer's philosophy and the more familiar theoretical positions of Brathwaite and Hall on Caribbean cultural identity. St Omer's

contribution to these debates however lie in his interrogation of conventional Catholic representations of divinity as specifically European and white from as early as the 1950s when the Church and other institutions of colonialism commanded immeasurable power in the native imagination as well as the political and social spheres of life in the colonies. That St Omer should choose to explore the luminosity of black as a colour in such representations actually pre-dates the later slogans of “black is beautiful” of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements.

Hall’s re-conceptualisation of Caribbean identity further elaborates the theoretical framework of prismatic creolisation. Four relevant tenets are adopted; these include firstly, the transition from roots to one of *routes*; secondly, the proposition that Caribbean identity is defined by a diasporic aesthetic; thirdly, that it is constructed through complex strategies of representation which are embedded in narratives of cosmogenesis; and lastly, that such representation is always circumscribed by politics and relations of power.

Of the many subject positions from which cultural identity is enunciated, race and ethnicity are two of the more contentious. Given their centrality to debates about culture and identity particularly in the two territories under comparison, race and ethnicity are examined to arrive at some understanding of the antagonisms that persist. Colour, which has been such a constitutive element in the definition of Caribbean culture and identity, provides the lens through which the construction of racial and ethnic stereotypes is understood. This psycho-social application of colour in the reproduction of stereotypes contrasts sharply with the artistic use of colour by visual artists as evinced in St Omer’s Prismism.

The prismatic creolisation model derives its conceptual and analytical value from the prism that underpins Prismism and to which Brathwaite only gestures as a remedy for creolisation's unicentricity. The refraction and reflection of colour inherent in the prism encapsulate the randomness and fluidity that characterise cultural interaction in the Caribbean. As Robert Baron explains, this visual metaphor is well suited to the purposes of creolisation and the cultural contexts and interactions that it seeks to describe since:

In this metaphor, refraction through a prism offers an alternative to a linear approach to the interaction of cultures. The colors refracted through a prism mix in a spectrum in a manner that is not fixed, rigid, or predictable.³³

The prismatic metaphor therefore refines the description of the cultural interactions that terms such as acculturation, interculturalisation, integration, assimilation and cross influence attempt to conjure. These terms have been at the root of much contention in the debates surrounding the definition and construction of Caribbean culture and identity.

In addressing the other research question about the re-constitution of Caribbean nation and identity in the context of the British diaspora, it is argued that whereas the *Windrush* generation maintained deep 'associational identification' with the region and inscribed themselves simultaneously into the British and Caribbean national imaginations, the subsequent generations have been understandably more concerned with negotiating citizenship and belonging to Britain, the country of their birth.

While they still identify with the Caribbean, as Hall explains, for the descendents of *Windrush* the Caribbean is just one of many locations of associational identification.

³³ Robert Baron, "Amalgams and Mosaics, Syncretisms and Reinterpretations: Reading Herskovits and Contemporary Creolists for Metaphors of Creolization" *Journal of American Folklore* 116.459 (2003): 92-3.

Contemporary generations have therefore not only written back to their antecedents and the moment of arrival in Britain, but have moreover engaged with the current debates concerning the terms on which integration into Britishness might be negotiated and the contradictory politics of recognition of marginalised communities. Inevitably, these British Caribbeans have been articulating new modes of cultural expression with which they negotiate Britishness and construct their own identities in 'multicultural' Britain. Both Caribbean auto/biographical practice and the prismatic creolisation model as outlined above provide constructive insights into the investigation of Caribbeanness in the British diaspora.

It is imperative that the caveat be reiterated that Caribbean auto/biographical practice and prismatic creolisation are proposed as conceptual and interpretative tools with limited applicability to the specific contexts from which they are derived, that is, the specific historical, socio-economic and cultural contexts of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, as two of the most heterogeneous societies of the Caribbean and the Caribbean diaspora in Britain. While no claims are made for their universal application or relevance, it is evident that some similarities and continuities in artistic practice and production with other minority communities exist. Evidently, these minority communities would share similar historical backgrounds of forced and coerced migrations and of colonial and imperial rule. Whereas the political projects of Caribbean and other minority communities might conjoin insofar as they are concerned with recuperating lost histories and inscribing self and agency, differences in the administration of colonialism may still nullify any value of these analytical tools to the task of understanding how nation and identity are imagined in these

communities. The determination of such applicability is however appropriate for further research.

The thesis comprises three Parts. Part I briefly outlines the histories of the two territories under comparison and details the salient features of their independence experiences. The second chapter advances the argument for Caribbean auto/biographical practice as a conceptual and analytical tool that could provide insights into the imagining of nation from a variety of subject positions.

Part II extends the study to the examination of the formation and evolution of Caribbean cultural identity. Chapter three is concerned primarily with an investigation of colour as it informs the coding of racial and ethnic stereotypes, which impact on the continuing debates about Caribbean culture and identity. Chapter four reviews and critiques Brathwaite's creolisation thesis and details the philosophical parameters of Prismism. The argument for prismatic creolisation is advanced here.

Part three which comprises just one chapter addresses the question of how Caribbean nation and identity are imagined in the British diaspora.

PART I



Affirmation and Creation: Imagining the Caribbean Nation

Introduction

The two chapters of Part I examine the notion of nation in the Caribbean context. It is argued that the idea of nation in the Caribbean is inextricably bound up with the region's horrific history of decimation, slavery, indenture and colonialism, which effectively precipitated the quest for freedom through independence and nationhood. Consequently, it is asserted that while two of the more influential postcolonial theories of nation, namely, the "imagined community" and the "narrated nation" more closely approximate the Caribbean experience because they privilege the cultural component at which previous theorists had only hinted, their inherent universalism and ahistoricity close vital portals that are crucial to any attempt to apprehend nationhood in the region.

At the same time, it is proposed that the genre of auto/biography as appropriated by Caribbean artists and intellectuals, which enjoins concerns of history and philosophy provides a productive site wherein notions of nation and identity have been theorised and philosophised by politicians, artists and the range of creative artists.

Consequently, it is proposed that the genre provides a more constructive lens through which the imagining of nation might be viewed. Caribbean auto/biography not only

crosses various artistic forms and expressions but also coincides with the centripetal forces of affirmation and creation that drive the process of reconciliation with and reclamation of history and personhood. Moreover, because the acquisition of nationhood was contiguous with 'the coming into voice' of the formerly colonised, the writing of 'histories from below' and serial auto/biographies provided the cultural space for contesting dominant ideologies and knowledge of imperialism and inscribing alternative knowledge that facilitated the imagining of nation by the indigenous and immigrant populations of the New World. As a result, the textual construction of life stories that chronicle the journey to individuation and maturation inevitably intersects with issues pertaining to nation, race/ethnicity, gender and class. The introspective critiques that the journey to self knowledge entails also simultaneously parallel that of the evolving nation.

In substantiating this argument, Chapter one outlines a historical overview of the accession to nationhood in the two territories under comparison, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana probing some of the endemic economic, political and socio-cultural problems with which the new nations must contend. This historical overview examines the roles of the independence leaders and the political parties which evolved around them particularly since they were instrumental to shaping the struggles for freedom, the institutions of the nation-state and instigating the decolonisation process. Many of the decisions taken during this period have had repercussions that reverberate in contemporary Caribbean society. It also reveals that neither colonialism nor the subsequent decolonisation process followed uniform patterns. Inevitably, both the individual histories and subtle differences in societal compositions and orientations of these territories were critical factors in determining

how these nations are imagined. Moreover, given that there are variations to the imagining of nation among the various racial and ethnic communities that constitute these national states, this chapter also asks the question: how can the Caribbean nation effectively embrace the competing forces of syncretism and difference?

Chapter two reviews the trends in Caribbean auto/biography from the early slave and indenture narratives to recent significant literary auto/biographies pointing to some of the differences in the evolution of the genre in this context and critically, its bridging of the chasm between “empirical ‘knowledge’ and emotional ‘knowing.’”¹ In so doing, consideration is given not only to the varieties of auto/biographical practices as exemplified in three examples of literary auto/biography but also to the ways in which the genre is co-opted into the counter discursive project of re-telling/writing the traumatic histories of the region and its peoples through a range of narrative strategies. As a consequence, it is argued that Caribbean auto/biographical practice helps to problematise the idea of nation by permitting the emergence of a wider cross section of voices and perspectives that coalesce in the imagining of nation in the region.

¹ Doris Sommer, *Proceed with Caution, When Engaged by Minority Writing in the Americas*. (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1999) 162. Sommer makes this distinction between “kinds of knowing” that is critical to coming to complete understanding of certain experiences.

CHAPTER 1

Reflecting on Nationhood

Undoubtedly, the arrival at independent nation status in the Caribbean has followed the general historical trajectory as many former British and European colonies. This familiar transition from colony to nation has been typically signposted by the following key defining periods: “discovery” in the fifteenth century that witnessed vast European and British expansion across the globe; the thrust into modernity marked by the implementation of plantation slavery, colonisation and imperialism roughly from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries resulting in emergent capitalist societies; Emancipation and indenture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; the two World Wars which resulted in the weakening of the colonising powers and the shifting of the balance of power to the United States; the consolidation of resistance against these colonising powers which had been a constant feature from slavery under the umbrella of trade unionism and the anticolonial movement. Even though these periods of transition are briefly enumerated here, scholars continue to examine each of these historical events and delineate their significance in ending British and European colonialism.²

² More recent studies on these subjects include: Gordon K Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*, (New York and London : Monthly Review Press, 1968), Franklin W. Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd, eds., *Caribbean Freedom- Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present*, (Princeton, Kingston, London : Marcus Weiner, Ian Randle and James Curry, 1996), Robert J C Young, *Postcolonialism – An Historical Introduction* (London : Blackwell, 2001).

Similarities also abound in the independence experience in the context of the Caribbean. The euphoria of expectation and enthusiasm that attended the prospect of independence in the region was no less powerful than elsewhere. For whereas Emancipation in 1838 and less dramatically indenture in 1917 had theoretically legislated freedom for the enslaved and indentured workers, independence held the greater promise of the opportunity of self-determination and would initiate the decolonisation process. Furthermore, independence would serve to legitimise ownership of the specifically demarcated geographical spaces, which the colonised peoples had been occupying and formally initiate the process of naming and claiming that space. Where slavery and indentureship had ensured their rootlessness and dispossession, nationhood was expected to affirm belonging by conferring the status of 'home' and acknowledging sovereignty over the landscape of the New World to which they had migrated. Most of all, the humanity that slavery, indenture and colonialism had denied was also re-asserted and re-affirmed through this process of belonging that nationhood began.

The disillusionment and despair that ensued in the immediate post-independence period, as encapsulated in Derek Walcott's cryptic assertion, "I have no nation now but the imagination" has pervaded Caribbean society and is also part of that shared experience.³ As historian Gordon K Lewis, has observed, at the pinnacle of nationalist fervour, limited attention had been paid to comprehensive planning for the sustained development of Caribbean society since Independence was seen as an end in itself rather than just the beginning of a long arduous process. He further noted that:

³ Derek Walcott, "The Schooner *Flight*" included in the volume "The Star-Apple Kingdom," *The Collected Poems 1948 – 1984*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992) 350.

In one way, it merely replaces the national struggle against the external metropolitan power with an internal struggle between the various social and ethnic groups of the new national society, to determine who will inherit the vacuum of power left behind by the departing imperialists.⁴

Unfortunately, resistance to Empire, formalised under the anticolonial movement peaked with the achievement of Independence. Some critics have pointed to the reductive nature of the rhetoric of anticolonialism as a primary contributory factor to the new nations' unpreparedness to contend with the inherited dying plantation economy and social dislocation that were the remnants of slavery, indenture and colonialism. Indeed, based on his own experience of the Algerian independence struggle, the Martiniquan psychiatrist Frantz Fanon had portended the outcome of nationhood founded in a bourgeois consciousness. Fanon's account accurately pointed to some of the problems that afflicted the post-Independence Caribbean nation, not least of which was a middle class, ill-prepared and ill-equipped for the task of national transformation which opted instead to act as an intermediary "between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged ... [in] the masque of neo-colonialism."⁵

In retrospect, it is evident that even some of the positive elements that catalysed the nationalist movement, subsequently created complex and difficult repercussions. One such example is the charismatic leadership that emerged which was so necessary for bringing nationhood to fruition and which over time was corrupted into Machiavellian

⁴ Gordon K Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*, (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1968) 396.

⁵ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (1961. London: Penguin Books, 1967)122.

or maximum leadership or “doctor politics.”⁶ Ironically, “the people” who were supposed to be the main beneficiaries of colonialism’s elimination were once again marginalised by the neocolonialist system that nationhood inaugurated. As a result, the euphoria that preceded nationhood was transformed into disillusionment and dissatisfaction as it became patently obvious that little had changed apart from the fact that the transformation of society which nationhood had demanded instead had morphed into a neocolonialist vision shared by a select few.⁷ The resulting corrupt and discriminatory practices, poverty and other social hardships that have tended to characterise and distort these nation states have largely served to taint enthusiasm for nationhood.

Notwithstanding these general similarities in the independence experience among former colonies, it is pertinent that the nations have not evolved in any uniform manner. This is not surprising given that colonialism did not itself function as a uniform practice. Robert Young has pointed to colonialism’s diversity of forms and practices exercised “both historically and geographically, even within the practice of a single colonial power, or with respect to different historical epochs and successive colonial powers in the history of a single colony.”⁸ This is no where more evident than in the Caribbean where from territory to territory, within and across linguistic blocs, subtle and varied political, socio-economic and cultural differences are evident in the construction of individual nations that broadly constitute the region. These

⁶ The term ‘doctor politics’ was coined by Lloyd Best “to describe academics who sought political office.” Best and others subsequently used it in reference to the manifestation of qualities of maximum or prophetic leadership generally. This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter as well as in Part 4. For further explanation, see Selwyn Ryan, “From Picton to Panday: Doctor Politics in Trinidad and Tobago,” *Independent Thought and Caribbean Freedom: Essays in Honour of Lloyd Best*, ed. Selwyn Ryan (St Augustine, Trinidad: Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, 2003) 185-210.

⁷ Fanon, *The Wretched* 119–165. This chapter, “The Pitfalls of National Consciousness” provides an incisive discussion of the challenges and failures of nationhood in postcolonial societies.

⁸ Young, *Postcolonialism* 17.

differences may be attributed to the types of colonies established – whether colonies of settlement or exploitation; variations in the duration of colonisation, the range of colonising powers and their particular practices in individual territories, the resulting ethnic and racial composition of the nations, and the measure of economic and political fortune and stability that has endured since the acquisition of independence. In the Anglophone Caribbean where colonies of exploitation were established, three factors have been key in shaping the kinds of nations that have been imagined. These are firstly, the fact that most of the indigenous populations have been eradicated; consequently, these territories comprise transplanted peoples from various continents who brought their own diverse ancestral languages, cultures, religions and social practices for the primary purpose of providing labour; and thirdly, that unlike those settler colonies of Latin America, in colonies of exploitation, the economic framework that was the plantation was established prior to the importation of labour. Moreover, the plantation system was concerned primarily with production for export rather than for the domestic consumption.⁹ The latter two factors have had enormous repercussions in the contemporary Caribbean situation particularly as it relates to race and ethnic relations and economic and political stability.

Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, the two territories that are the subject of this thesis are examples of differing ways in which colonising practices have influenced the construction and imagining of nation in the Anglophone Caribbean. While these territories have experienced parallel patterns of forced and coerced migration resulting in multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, polyglot societies similarly constituted, subtle

⁹ For further discussion of the impact of these factors in the contemporary Caribbean situation, see Lloyd Best, "Race, Class and Ethnicity: A Caribbean Interpretation," Third Annual Jagan Lecture, York University, Toronto, 3 March, 2001 (Toronto: CERLAC Colloquia Paper, 2004).

differences are evident in the ways in which each of these nations has evolved. After a comparably short period of slavery, the two islands of Trinidad and Tobago were legally joined in 1889 under British colonial rule and achieved independence in 1962. Guyana, the largest of Britain's Caribbean colonies had, like Trinidad and Tobago been colonised by multiple powers – Holland, France, England – and achieved independence in 1966. As with other territories in the Caribbean, Haitian independence in 1802 followed by Cuban independence in 1902 were early catalysts for aspirations for a similar fate.¹⁰ Independence for India and Ghana in 1947 and 1957 served only to embolden these aspirations. The rise of trade unionism in each territory was followed by the return of the first batch of scholars that marked what Gordon Lewis has referred to as 'the revolution of intelligence' epitomised in the ascension to power and influence of anticolonialist and nationalist leaders Eric Williams, Cheddi Jagan and Forbes Burnham. As the architects of independence in these territories, they were confronted with the challenges of forging societies from among disparate groups who had been introduced at different periods of time and in largely antagonistic circumstances. Moreover, colonialism had wrought a corresponding cultural estrangement that had created insecure peoples.¹¹ The resulting unplanned cultural exchange between the colonisers and the colonised metamorphosed into creolised or hybrid cultural forms. The economic rivalry that contaminated relations between the two major ethnic groups of Africans and East Indians from their initial encounter also helped to entrench deep-seated tensions that

¹⁰ CLR James has observed that "West Indians first became aware of themselves as a people in the Haitian revolution, [and] whatever its ultimate fate, the Cuban revolution marks the ultimate stage of a Caribbean quest for national identity." James, *The Black Jacobin* (New York: Alfred Knoph; 1963) 334.

¹¹ Fanon explains this estrangement thus, "[c]olonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By some kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it. This work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today. Fanon, *The Wretched* 169.

have remained. These nationalist leaders, as is illustrated in the following analysis, each opted for contrasting political ideologies and pathways in confronting these challenges. Invariably the question that dominates the imagining of these nations is: whose nation is this?

Nation Politics of the Right – the Case of Trinidad and Tobago

Eric Williams' seminal history text, *Capitalism and Slavery* established his credentials as a fervent anticolonialist. Inasmuch as his historical training and experiences of racial discrimination as a student at Oxford University and subsequently as an employee of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission were influential in shaping his vision of an independent Trinidad and Tobago and Caribbean as a whole, in praxis his political stewardship reveals some contradictions.¹² Contrary to the socialist strain of politics and ideology adopted by most other Caribbean nationalist leaders Williams' politics, despite his strident anticolonial rhetoric embedded in the history from the ground that he espoused, was definitely of a liberal democratic bent. It was hardly the case that he had not been exposed to Marxist thought. On the contrary, not only had he encountered it during his metropolitan education in Britain and later during his sojourn as a lecturer in the US, but even within his own party the Peoples National Movement (PNM), leading members subscribed to Marxist thinking albeit to varying degrees. Indeed, CLR

¹² Such contradictions, which are usually accompanied by evidence of corrupt practices by some members of the ruling élite cannot be divorced from the fact that postcolonial nations "were and are at the same time the creatures of larger powers and forces in the world system" as Lazarus points out. He further asserts that "[e]conomically speaking, the poverty and, indeed, ever-deepening immiseration and indebtedness of so many postcolonial nations is a structural feature of the terms of their insertion into the global economy, from which it has been impossible for them to 'de-link' or disconnect themselves." Lazarus "The Global Dispensation" 20.

James, with his record of radical left-wing activism was conspicuous in his avowal of Marxism even while he served as Williams' advisor, long-time mentor and later editor of the PNM's newspaper publication. Even while he flirted with Marxism under these influences, Williams, it has been noted, retained an ambivalent pragmatism:

Williams tended to draw the line between the militant demystification of colonialism and the imperial political-intellectual tradition, on the one hand, and the vision of possibilities open to small Third World countries attempting to move beyond that tradition, on the other. He was never ... a radical who went sour half-way in the nationalist struggle, but rather a complex liberal nationalist torn often between the militancy of his anti-colonial sentiments and a liberal's pragmatic realism about Third World potentialities.¹³

Perhaps it was the West Indian Federation and its emblematic struggle for the Chaguaramas Naval Base that tested and demonstrated Williams' political praxis of liberal democracy that also later coloured his term of office.¹⁴ Although opting out of membership in the West Indies Federal Labour Party because of its avowal of socialism, Williams consented to participation in the Federation largely because of his commitment to and belief in Caribbean integration. It is pertinent, however that ideological differences were perhaps the least of reasons for the Federation's failure.

The eventual failure of the Federation was precipitated by, among other issues, the souring of relations among the larger islands over issues ranging from the quality of leadership of the Federal government; to the location of the headquarters for that government; to the more critical issues of the freedom of movement of labour and goods among the member states and developmental strategies and responsibilities

¹³ Walton Look Lai, "CLR James and Trinidadian Nationalism," *CLR James' Caribbean*, eds., Paget Henry and Paul Bulhe (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992) 178.

¹⁴ For an extensive discussion of Williams' participation in the Federation see Colin A Palmer, *Eric Williams and the Making of the Modern Caribbean* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006) Chapter 2.

with respect to the union.¹⁵ However, the disagreement over the compromise made by the Federation's Prime Minister, Grantley Adams that allowed for the postponement of negotiations for the release of the American's claim on the Chaguaramas Naval Base for another ten years only exacerbated the already toxic relations among members. This Base, which had been leased to the US during the Second World War, had been designated as the site for the Federal government's headquarters.¹⁶ It was on this basis that Williams had instigated its release. That he was not supported in his claims against this postponement despite the initial agreement among Federal members incensed Williams. Williams also detected collusion between the US and Britain in extending the claim to the Base as a betrayal of intentions to acknowledge the sovereignty that nationhood would bring and thus opted to demand its release outside the ambit of the Federation. Employing all his powers of rhetoric and persuasion, Williams harnessed the support of the people in marching on Chaguaramas and among other things, symbolically burning the American flag and its association with re-colonisation.¹⁷ For in severing ties with Britain, the territories had fallen under the American hegemon, which had both its advantages for opening alternative trade routes and its disadvantages of further imperialism by the growing super power.

However, while the US capitulated to Williams' demands by relinquishing their rights to the Base, it was a pyrrhic victory because of the far reaching consequences for the

¹⁵ For further analysis of the failure of the Federation see Ryan, *Race and Nationalism* 292 – 313.

¹⁶ For extensive analysis of the issues surrounding the release of the Base see Palmer, *Eric Williams* Chapter 3.

¹⁷ Meighoo, *Politics* 45-47. It should be noted that the struggle for Chaguaramas was among the issues which the DLP opposed and had actually tabled two motions of no confidence against Williams' and the PNM. The DLP's victory in the subsequent Federal elections encouraged Williams' mobilisation of supporters for this symbolic march and was another contributing factor in his now infamous intemperate speech against the DLP and its supporters. Meighoo offers further analysis on these issues.

politics in the region thereafter. Not only did the US engineer a declaration of allegiance to the West and its particular shade of democracy but also mandated an ideological divide from any territory that opted to pursue alternative political pathways, particularly if it was rooted in socialist or Marxist thinking; hence the subsequent isolation of Guyana, Cuba, and Grenada. By agreeing to these terms, Williams and Norman Manley, Jamaica's Premier, ensured that most of their counterparts in the former British colonies would adhere to the democratic lead of the US under whose "sphere of influence" the region had fallen with the declining fortunes of Britain. The sovereignty of the new nations was thus compromised even before Independence was effectively granted and severely limited the extent to which infrastructural changes could be made in the post-colonial period. Some critics have viewed this as evidence of Williams' (and his party) "zigzagging ... between a radical modernity in statement and a tame accommodation with traditionalism in fact." As Best further argued:

The aim of the Agreement had been to trade submissiveness to imperial militarism for metropolitan economic assistance and more generally to maintain metropolitan confidence. By the same stroke, however, protection was offered to the plantation economy and to the metropolitan investors who controlled it. The further logic was to move into Independence as a Monarchy, and so to retain the symbols as well as the agents, instruments and relations of the old order.¹⁸

Thus, while for all intents and purposes, Williams' battle met with some success in that he gained more leverage internationally and further consolidated his power, the resulting fallout from the collapse of the Federation and the widening ethnic chasms

¹⁸ Qtd. in Ryan, *Race and Nationalism* 343. Percy C Hintzen has also asserted that "Such repudiation of national sovereignty in favour of the rights of capital was to become the hallmark of West Indian post-independence political economy. It was [Cheddi] Jagan's anti-imperialism that forced these leaders into a clear declaration of uncritical support for American capitalism, and cast Jagan at one and the same time, the *bete noire* of the West Indian nationalist movement and the darling of international radicalism." See Hintzen, "Charisma and Guyana's Challenge to Western Capitalism," *Caribbean Charisma : Reflections on Leadership, Legitimacy and Populist Politics*, (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2001) 139.

within the society of Trinidad and Tobago were detrimental.¹⁹ That Jamaica first took the decisive act of withdrawal from the Federation did not diminish the harsh critique of Williams in what was viewed as the highhanded manner in which he too declared Trinidad and Tobago's withdrawal from that effort.²⁰ The absence of agreement among Federal members on fundamental economic and political issues diminished the opportunity for uniting strategically against the overwhelming influence of the US. As individual island states the chances for any such opposition are almost non-existent.

Opposition Politics and Race Relations

Colin Palmer has argued that Williams demonstrated commitment "with reservations" to parliamentary democracy despite accusations from some quarters of dictatorial tendencies.²¹ In a society comprising roughly 43.5 percent of Africans, 36.5 percent Indians; 17 percent of mixed races and a range of religious persuasions,²² and the fractured nature of race relations, neither Williams nor the PNM could represent the sentiments of *all* of "the people". There were at least five opposition parties, each

¹⁹ For discussions on the collapse of the Federation see Ryan, *Race and Nationalism* and Elizabeth Wallace, "The Break-up of the West Indies Federation," *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present*, (Princeton: Marcus Weiner; London: James Currey; Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 1996) 455-476.

²⁰ Ryan summary of the resulting consequences are insightful, "West Indian intellectuals, especially those abroad, were deeply shamed and embittered by what seemed to be a cynical wrecking of the only real chance of Caribbean integration. Their hopes for a meaningful economic and political base for West Indian Independence were now dashed ... [At home, in Trinidad], [s]ome were more opposed to the method by which the decision was made than they were to the decision itself ... The basic complaint of a large section of the population was that no political party, no matter how large its majority, had any right to take a decision of such magnitude without consulting the people. The [opposition] DLP was similarly anguished that its offer of a bipartisan approach had been contemptuously refused ... The Premier had again proceeded in a high-handed fashion to ignore political forces that were not associated with the PNM ... By failing to establish truly national machinery for settling the federation issue, the PNM had needlessly plunged the community into bitter turmoil on the eve of Independence." Ryan, *Race and Nationalism* 311-12.

²¹ Palmer, *Eric Williams* 164.

²² Qtd. in Ryan, *Race and Nationalism* 3.

declaring a socialist disposition. In addition, by 1953, the Indian community had found its political voice in the People's Democratic Party (PDP) led by Bhadase Sagan Maraj; a party that was acknowledged as the principal opposition to the PNM. Maraj's political appeal was to the largely Indian constituencies of sugar workers and the Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha (SDMS), the Hindu organisation of which he was also President. Religion and politics were therefore linked inextricably under Maraj's leadership of the two organisations.

As the official opposition, the PDP's political influence and support were especially evident during the Federal experiment. In 1957, Maraj formed the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) by allying the PDP with two other parties, the Trinidad Labour Party (TLP) and Party of Political Progress Groups (POPPG).²³ The basis of the alliance was more opportunistic than ideological. Whereas the latter two parties had both advocated a socialist agenda, the alliance party, the DLP firmly espoused an anti socialist ideology. According to political scientist, Kirk Meighoo, this was a major weakness in the party (a weakness that was also evident in the formation and failure of the People's Progressive Party of Guyana) and contributed, in part to the type of politics practiced and its eventual demise.²⁴

In the first Federal election, whereas Williams' PNM was cautiously optimistic about its victory, it was the DLP that was victorious. Many have argued that this event

²³ For a more in depth discussion of the DLP and its politics see Kirk Meighoo, *Politics in a 'Half Made Society' : Trinidad and Tobago, 1925-2001*, (Kingston : Ian Randle; Oxford : James Currey; Princeton : Marcus Wiener, 2003) 45-67.

²⁴ Meighoo points out that "[a]lthough the DLP's deep flaw – its opportunistic basis of alliance – seemed quite apparent from the start, the party offered itself as a more truly 'democratic' (seeming to mean less centralised, less personality-centred, and less rule-bound than the PNM), free enterprise oriented, and multi-racial alternative to the PNM. But, with some exceptions, its politics in the Legislative Council on the whole was negative: its tactics included obstructionism, walkouts, and time-consuming allegations of corruption. In addition, their performance was peppered with internal party squabbling –sometimes quite ugly – played out in the Council." Meighoo, *Politics* 45.

marked a turning point in the relationship between Williams, the PNM and the Indian community as a whole because of the intemperate response it elicited from Williams. For Williams not only considered the DLP's victory a betrayal but further resorted to stirring the latent fears of the Afro-Trinidadian community by raising, in a public political meeting, the spectre of a political coup and 'take over' by the predominantly Indo-Trinidadian party and its members. Such fears had found fertile ground in the articulations of conservative members of the Indo-Caribbean community who had gestured to just such a possibility as early as the beginning of the twentieth century. Most notably, F E M Hosein, a returned Island scholar who had trained as a barrister in Britain, lobbied against the prospect of cultural assimilation through ongoing contact with Afro-Caribbeans for education especially, had also argued that Indo-Caribbeans would eventually control the island:

[I]t was no mere hyperbolic statement that Indians would people the colony and drive out the rest of the inhabitants ... The African was not as productive as the Indian; and if circumstances did not compel him to leave the colony, he would naturally die out ... Trinidad would be maintained and owned by the Indian in the field, the office and the shop.²⁵

In the already racially tense climate of the Federal elections, however, Williams' immoderate reference to members of the Indo-Trinidadian community as "a hostile and recalcitrant minority" at that meeting confirmed the divide between the two groups and underscored the different perspectives and agendas of each group towards the Federal experiment and independence.²⁶ For the Indo-Trinidadian population, the Federation represented an assurance of equality of political representation and participation in the decolonisation process. Such a guarantee, they felt, would be lost within an individual nation state already predisposed to migration from other smaller

²⁵ Qtd. in Jeremy Poynting, "Literature and Cultural Pluralism," diss., University of Leeds, 1985, 358.

²⁶ Bridget Brereton, *A History of Modern Trinidad 1783 – 1962* (London: Heineman, 1981) 239.

islands; in this configuration, the resulting net effect would be to increase the numerical imbalance between the races thereby neutralising the Indo-Trinidadian influence.²⁷ Williams' subsequent unilateral decision to leave the Federation and fight for an independent Trinidad and Tobago was therefore viewed through this jaundiced lens by the Indo-community.²⁸

Among the other minority communities, Williams' leadership was cautiously monitored to ensure that no debilitating or stringently socialist economic or political policies would be implemented that might diminish their wealth through redistribution or alienate external investment. The protection of business interests through the maintenance of economic and political stability in the transference of power from Britain was therefore the primary concern among the local White, Chinese, Portuguese and Syrian/Lebanese communities who were the majority owners or stakeholders of private sector and entrepreneurial interests by that time. For example, in considering the participation of the Chinese community in local politics, historian Walton Look Lai explained that the Chinese, as a minority group "were more concerned with the impact of nationalism on them rather than their impact on nationalism."²⁹ Moreover, as with other middle minority groups, the Chinese "considered themselves already 'well off'" belonging to the petit bourgeois class and as such their fears were of losing whatever economic gains they had made of their own initiative; a possibility that was not entirely far fetched given the experiences of family members still resident in the now communist China.³⁰

²⁷ This point is elaborated in Ryan, *Race and Nationalism* 309-312.

²⁸ For further discussion of the issue of Williams' race relations see, Ryan, *Race and Nationalism*, Patricia Mohammed, "A Very Public Private Man: Eric Eustace Williams," *Caribbean Charisma* 155-191; Palmer, *Eric Williams* Chapter 8.

²⁹ Walton Look Lai, personal interview, January 12, 2004.

³⁰ Walton Look Lai, personal interview, January 12, 2004.

On the eve of independence, Williams was acutely aware of the corrosive effects wrought on the emerging nation by the escalating ethnic rivalry. In his *History of Trinidad and Tobago* completed to coincide with independence, Williams asserted, “[t]wo nations have been freed, but a society has not been formed.” His task, he acknowledged was “to create a nation out of the discordant elements and antagonistic principles and competing faiths and rival colours that had produced the amalgam” of peoples in the newly forged societies.³¹ In retrospect, it is obvious that mere legal citizenship was not enough to bind such a nation together. Rather, what was critical was the development over time of a shared sense of cultural and psychic belonging. The fractures among the various racial and ethnic groups had surfaced during the independence struggle. The unequal distribution of the limited resources, despite the prospect of prosperity with the discovery of oil since 1910, would only widen these fractures. Moreover, even as the groups located in Trinidad wrangled over these limited resources, the citizens of Tobago found that their eighteen-mile separation succeeded in marginalising them from the centre of debate in Port of Spain and from immediate consideration in the sharing of wealth.

Nation Politics of the Left – the Case of Guyana

Unlike Williams, Cheddi Jagan was unapologetically Marxist and sought to implement his decolonisation project for Guyana based on the tenets of this ideology. His social experiences and training as a dentist in the United States helped to deepen

³¹ Williams, *History of the People* 278-9.

his understanding of class stratification and race relations. Persuaded by the writings of Nehru, Mao and Karl Marx, Jagan was convinced that Marxism offered the alternative approach to development that countered the capitalism propagated in the US.³² Unfortunately Jagan's credentials as a Marxist became a major deterrent in his territory's quest for independence and made very little difference to the confrontational nature of race relations that ensued.

Contrary to Williams too, Jagan's political base emerged from within the labour unions where his strain of political thought found favour. Forming the Political Affairs Committee (PAC), Jagan, his wife and other allies contested the Crown Colony Elections of 1947. Their limited success, which they attributed to voting along racial lines, resulted in a strategic change. Recognising that race was the principal determinant for electoral voting fuelled the Jagans' decision "to recruit a charismatic African leader to parallel Jagan's appeal to East Indian voters in the Afro-Guyanese community"³³

In 1950, Jagan formed the People's Progressive Party (PPP) by merging the interests of the PAC and the Guiana Industrial Workers Union (GIWU). Embracing such a broad membership base, the leadership of the PPP factored the racial component into its composition to bolster the tenuous unity between the races in preparation for the next election of 1953 and the longer-term goal of Independence. Forbes Burnham, a middle class Afro-Guyanese, educated as a lawyer at the University of London and theoretically attractive to Afro-Guyanese and the middle class, was Jagan's choice as

³² Jagan, *West on Trial* 1997.

³³ Jane L Sillery, "Salvaging Democracy? The United States in British Guiana 1961-1964," diss., U of Oxford, 1996, 19. This opinion is corroborated by Ralph R Premdas, "The Rise of the First Mass-Based Multi-Racial Party in Guyana," *Caribbean Quarterly* 20.:3-4 (1974) 9.

Chairman of the PPP. Jagan retained leadership of the Legislative group since he held the only seat for the Party in the legislature because of his victory in the 1947 election. Thus, as Janet Jagan admitted in an interview in 1994, “[w]e did that because the racial thing existed [...] We were trying to get over that.”³⁴

Jagan and his allies had recognised the volatile nature of race relations in Guyana. It was patently evident that the ethnic mix of peoples in Guyana had set the stage for an even fiercer contestation for cultural space and power than in Trinidad. A number of reasons have been advanced to explain the confrontational relationship between Afro- and Indo- Guyanese. These include the segregation of the two groups during indentureship which pre-empted the development of social relations or familiarity; the uncooperative landscape that required significant capital investment in hydrological systems which also made crop cultivation that much more laborious thereby precluding any encouragement or opportunity for the small scale farmer after Emancipation as had occurred in Trinidad. The introduction of East Indian indentured labour in Guyana was therefore met with greater suspicion and antagonism.³⁵

While other British colonies were considering federalism as *the* preferred approach to independence, Guyana, whose leadership abstained from inclusion from the outset, argued that “Guyana is geographically and economically different from the other

³⁴ Sillery, “Salvaging Democracy?” 21. Sillery conducted an interview with Janet Jagan on 20 July, 1994 in Georgetown, Guyana.

³⁵ For a comparative analysis of the experience of slavery and the beginnings of nationalist thought in Guyana and Trinidad see Clem Seecharan, “The Shaping of the Indo-Caribbean People: Guyana and Trinidad to the 1940s,” *Journal of Caribbean Studies* 14. 1-2 (1999) 61-92.

Caribbean lands.”³⁶ Alternatively, Jagan argued for a closer alliance between Guyana and her South American neighbours as opposed to the English-speaking Caribbean. Several reasons have been suggested for Jagan’s position on this issue. Some argue that he was persuaded that closer association with South America would have facilitated more intensive infrastructural development that was important for the territory’s sustainability and progress. Others suggest that Jagan had not always been against the ideals of Federation. In fact, he had voiced agreement with the idea of a Federation but in 1948 and 1958, had publicly opposed its proposed structure. His preference was for each territory to lobby for internal self government overseen by “a strong federal body which would have certain powers delegated to it by several units.”³⁷ Jagan’s subsequent cautious approach to Federation has been attributed to the political implications that the resulting increased migration may have had on the territory’s slim resources and more critically, the shift in the tenuous demographical balance existing between the two major races - the net effect of which would have been either an increase or decrease within Jagan’s popular base.³⁸ Jagan maintained this scepticism when some fifty years later as Guyana’s President he asserted that “[o]ur societies are better classified as multicultural rather than monocultural [and that] cooperation and integration must come **in spite** of this heterogeneity and cultural diversity.”³⁹

³⁶ Lewis, *Growth of the Modern West Indies* 258. Lewis further states that this “difference” was “the leading Opposition point in the Legislative Council’s debate on Federation in March 1955.” So pervasive was this sentiment that it was later circulated as part of a scare tactic to dissuade people from voting for Jagan’s PPP party after the split and the formation of the rival Forbes Burnham led party, the People’s National Party (PNC).

³⁷ Qtd. in Selwyn Ryan, “East Indian, West Indian and the Quest for Caribbean Political Unity,” *Social and Economic Studies* 48.4 (1999)155.

³⁸ Ryan, “East Indian, West Indian,” 151-184. Ryan here provides some insight into Jagan’s ambivalent position on the West Indian Federation and the reactions it elicited.

³⁹ Cheddi Jagan, “Multiculturalism in Guyana,” *Indo Caribbean Review* 2.1(1995): 2.

Having abandoned involvement in Federalism Jagan embarked on a decidedly socialist approach to development in an attempt to balance the inequalities in economic and social opportunities among all the peoples, which slavery, indenture and colonialism had helped to create. Although many other Caribbean nationalist leaders espoused socialist approaches the PPP was unique in boldly declaring that:

The People's Progressive Party, recognising that the final abolition of exploitation and oppression, of economic crises and unemployment and war will be achieved only by the socialist organisation of society, pledges itself to the task of winning a free and independent Guiana, of building a just socialist society, in which the industries of the country shall be socially and democratically owned and managed for the common good, a society in which security, plenty, peace and freedom shall be the heritage of all.⁴⁰

It was this flagrantly stated position which resulted in Jagan being ostracised by some of his Caribbean colleagues. From their perspectives, it was undoubtedly expedient to dissociate themselves from his brand of politics at that crucial point when independence was almost within reach. As such, Jagan noted that he faced opposition from within Guyana from the mainstream, middle and ruling classes and from his Caribbean neighbours who, as in the case of St Vincent, declared Janet a "prohibited immigrant" and limited her visit to fourteen days; and later in both Trinidad and Grenada where they were similarly labelled and treated. For the Jagans, these bans were viewed as "badges of honour" which also served to heighten their profiles within and outside the region.

The consequences of Jagan's declarations of Marxist intentions were severe. Within one hundred and thirty-three days of his Party having assumed office, Britain and the United States intervened and engineered the suspension of the constitution. World

⁴⁰ Qtd. in Sillery, "Salvaging Democracy?" 21.

politics during that period, dominated as it was by the United States' anti-communist policies, was intolerant of the faintest prospect of another communist country emerging anywhere in the world. Britain, perhaps less forceful and protective of her burdensome colonies, had herself also been embattled against communist led uprisings in Malaya at that time as well.⁴¹ Given this general animosity, Jagan stood little chance of actualising his dream of a socialist Guyana even after a landslide victory at the polls. The haste with which Jagan implemented change after taking office alarmed a reluctant Britain, that had initially construed his activities as "anti-colonial nationalism ... [that] would be moderated by the responsibilities of office" and advocated a policy of cooperation with his government in an attempt to tie Guyana to the West has also been posited as a reason for the swift suspension of the constitution.⁴² Indeed, even within domestic circles, the speed of change caused some concern and tested the commitment of party leadership and members to the socialist ideology:

Once established in government, the PPP ministers mounted a series of far-reaching reform proposals so rapidly that it was by September 1953 easy to see the government in general, and certain of its ministers in particular, as 'extremist.' And the government gave hostages to its opponents when it began seeking to suspend the Standing Orders of the House of Assembly in order to push its reforms through more quickly, to the point of passing a bill through all its stages in a single day.⁴³

In suspending the Constitution, the British charged the newly installed Jagan administration with attempting "to turn British Guiana into a totalitarian satellite of

⁴¹ Historian K.O. Lawrence has noted that "[n]either country could rest easy at the prospect of a pro-Russian government in British Guiana. Communist or not in the strict sense of the word, that would represent an important victory for Russia in the Cold War, a second potential bridgehead, if one imagines Guatemala as the first, from which to engineer the spread of pro-Russian and communist propaganda inside the base of Russian's arch-rival and of a Britain still clinging to Great Power status." Lawrence, "A Note on the Suspension of the Constitution of British Guiana (1953)," *The Journal of Caribbean History* 29.1 (1995) 60.

⁴² Sillery, "Salvaging Democracy?" iii.

⁴³ Lawrence, "A Note on the Suspension" 61.

Moscow and a dangerous platform for extending Communist influence in the Western hemisphere.”⁴⁴ Contained in a White Paper of 20 October, 1953 was the further accusation that the PPP had demonstrated “no concern for the welfare of the Colony and threatened its progress as an orderly state; [had] seriously damaged the economic life of the colony and had set it on the road to collapse.”⁴⁵ The suspension, however, marked the breaking point for the tenuous political alliance of the PPP and triggered the racial rivalry, which had been somewhat latent during the previous five years. Burnham and his supporters split from the PPP forming a rival party, the People’s National Congress.

Notwithstanding his communist stance, critics have posited that Jagan’s political praxis ironically bore much resemblance to that of his Anglophone Caribbean counterparts who exercised an anti-communist policy. Percy C Hintzen has pointed out that Jagan, apart from disagreeing ironically with the US media’s representation of him as a communist also implemented conventional domestic and foreign policy changes as did his counterparts.⁴⁶ But even more critically, Hintzen argues that Jagan

[w]as not hostile to America or to American investments. He firmly believed that the nationalist goal of economic self-determination would have been considerably enhanced if the colony were weaned away from dependence upon the sterling bloc. This was precisely the thinking behind the ‘anti-communist’ policies advocated by other West Indian nationalists from the 1950s through the post-independence era.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Sillery, “Salvaging Democracy?” 29.

⁴⁵ Sillery, “Salvaging Democracy?” 29.

⁴⁶ See Hintzen, “Charisma and Guyana’s Response” 138. Hintzen points to these similarities in that “[d]omestically, [Jagan’s] populist focus was on extending universal adult suffrage to local government elections, providing universal access to cheaper education and health delivery services, providing additional scholarships for study overseas, implementing social security and workers compensation programs, agricultural and infrastructural development, tax reform, diversification of trade specifically focused upon Japan and improving wages and conditions of work, particularly for those in the lowest socio-economic brackets.”

⁴⁷ Hintzen, “Charisma and Guyana’s Response” 138-9.

Hintzen further points out that such similarities became ensnared in the discourse of Cold War politics that eventually determined the fate of any attempt by Jagan to transform Guyana into a socialist state.

Consequently, although Jagan's PPP won the next two elections in 1957 and 1961 after the suspension was withdrawn the internal problems only worsened with racial tensions increasing amid the continuing labour disturbances and political protests. Notwithstanding these victories, internal forces opposed to Jagan colluded following his Party's 1961 victory to limit his powers and further destabilise his hold on power.⁴⁸ The fears of Britain and the US about Jagan's credentials as a communist had hardly been allayed. Thus, as St Pierre argues, it was through the strategic slowing of the process towards Independence by these combined forces that Jagan was eventually forced out of power. Moreover, from 1961 to 1964, industrial and social protests became the norm and so contributed to the general social and economic instability of the colony.

By 1964 when a State of Emergency was called because of the uncontrollable unrest and violence, Britain and the US were provided with the necessary loophole for taking decisive action to end Jagan's hold on power. With the election that year held under the new system of proportional representation, lobbied for by the PNC and its ally the United Front (UF), Jagan was destined to lose. The alliance between the PNC and UF facilitated a much wider constituency base as compared to Jagan's, whose supporters remained confined to the sugar estates and those constituencies inhabited

⁴⁸ For a discussion of the labour strikes, riots and other obstructionist tactics that made governance of Guyana difficult during this period, see Ralph Premdas, "Race and Ethnic Relations in Burnhamite Guyana," *Across the Dark Waters: Ethnicity and Indian Identity in the Caribbean*, eds., David Dabydeen and Brinsley Samaroo (London: Warwick U/Macmillan, 1996) 39-64.

predominantly by the Indo-Guyanese community. Under Burnham's leadership as Prime Minister (reportedly an ambition voiced to his father at the age of fourteen), Guyana became an Independent nation on 26 May, 1966.

Forbes Burnham

Burnham's failure as Guyana's Independence leader is legendary. The notion of maximum leadership, considered a typical trait among Independence leaders, found its extremities in Burnham's dictatorship; supported and manipulated by corrupt election machinery and severe measures to ensure social control. Incrementally, Burnham engineered full control of all arms of the military (which increased from 2,135 in 1965 to some 31,000 by 1979), the Judiciary, and Legislature. Burnham thereby secured his dominance over Guyana and suppressed all opposition:

Control over the security services, and *de facto* control over the judiciary, was buttressed by control over the legislative establishment. Burnham was in fact an "imperial president" par excellence. The 1974 Constitution gave him power to suspend or dissolve parliament, veto legislation, issue decrees in the interest of national security, and appoint, dismiss or promote the heads of all branches of the security services. The provisions of the Labour Amendment Bill also gave the President effective power to declare any strike in the public sector illegal. It likewise provided that the Trade Union Congress, which the PNC dominated, was to function as the sole bargaining agent for all workers.⁴⁹

Burnham's suppression of opposition forces was accomplished by extreme measures, and epitomised in his treatment of his nemesis Walter Rodney. Rodney, a historian and scholar, also espoused a socialist vision for change and development in a racially divided and economically declining Guyanese society. Whereas Jagan, as the official

⁴⁹ See World Bank report No. 25640- GUA, "The Challenges of Governance and Growth", November 03, 2003.

[http://www.wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB?2003/12/09/000012009_20031290902647/rendered/INDEX/25640.txt.\[pdf\]](http://www.wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB?2003/12/09/000012009_20031290902647/rendered/INDEX/25640.txt.[pdf]).

opposition leader, understandably, sought to effect change through recourse to electoral reform, Rodney and his labour-based party, the Workers' Peoples' Alliance (WPA) opted for a policy of "critical exposure" for the deeply corrupt Burnham government.⁵⁰ Possessing his own brand of charisma, Rodney attracted support across the racial boundaries of Burnham's PNC and Jagan's PPP and was openly, boldly and unrelentingly critical of Burnham's policies and political practice. His assassination in 1980 underscores not only the potency of the threat he posed to the ruling régime but the level of 'gangsterism' to which Burnham was willing to resort in stamping out opposition forces.

Whose Nation?

Although postcolonial nations boldly enunciated equality for all of their new citizens and proliferated the myth of national unity, since independence many across races and ethnicities have questioned: 'whose nation is this'? The insecurities that underlie such questioning have arisen often when the balance of political power has shifted between the two major races that constitute the nation states of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. More critically, such questioning points to deeper challenges that have plagued the emerging nations: primarily, how to arrive at consensus in the tide of competing interests that were rightly or wrongly seeking first to recuperate and consolidate linkages to lost histories and heritage and the inevitable syncretism that the common experience of historical trauma and cohabitation had initiated? In other

⁵⁰ Linden Lewis asserts that because Jagan assumed the function as opposition leader in an obviously corrupt electoral system, he helped to legitimise the Burnham government since ironically "Burnham was always able to lay claim to legitimacy and democratic practice by pointing to the existence of a legitimate parliamentary opposition." See Lewis, "Unravelling the Paradox of Postcolonial Charismatic Leadership in Guyana," *Caribbean Charisma : Reflections on Leadership, Legitimacy and Populist Politics*, ed., Anton Allahar, (Kingston : Ian Randle Publishers, 2001) 92 – 120.

words, how was a *whole* society to be created from the complex of fragments that had congregated therein?

It is evident that the political and economic policies pursued in the immediate post-Independence period were incapable of surmounting these challenges. Neither praxis of politics of the right or left was particularly successful in the face of internal ethnic rivalries and suspicions that colonialism had exaggerated nor against the external forces of rapidly expanding global capital which were allowed to dictate the limits of sovereignty and nationhood in the region. In retrospect, as Ryan has observed, political thought and praxis was populist in nature:

This was so whether parties followed a Marxist-Leninist line, with its prescriptions about a vanguard party, or a mass democratic party with a welfarist or labourist flavour – the one which characterised so many of the parties which emerged in the 1950s and 1960s. All of the latter accepted as given the prescriptive notion that informed the Westminster model. Most of those on the left also thought that they had no option but to participate in Westminster-type elections even if their ultimate ambition was to change it in its essentials.⁵¹

In fact, the politics of nation in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana especially underscores how the legacy of slavery, indentureship and colonialism combined to help to institutionalise tribal politics, that is, a politics based on race and ethnic rivalry. Sociologist Ralph Premdas suggests that tribal politics began with the nationalist movement and provided the tools for creating an “ethnic consciousness [that] pervades social, cultural, economic, and political life, conferring on it at the individual level a pathological siege mentality and at the collective level persistent

⁵¹ Selwyn Ryan, “Caribbean Political Thought: From Westminster to Philadelphia,” *Contending with Destiny: The Caribbean in the Twenty-first Century*, eds., Kenneth Hall and Denis Benn (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2000) 248.

poverty and violence.”⁵² The prevalence of voting along racial lines was further enforced by the “parliamentary institutionalised system of zero-sum competition [which] facilitated both group organization and communal conflict” according to Premdas.⁵³

The populist appeal of politics also helped to create another strain of dependency epitomised in the political leader. Such dependency cast the political leader in the role of “saviour” and kindly benefactor thereby allowing absolution from individual and collective responsibility by citizens of the new nation states. In such an environment of populist politics, maximum leadership and doctor politics could thrive since according to Best, “our political practice presumes a messiah and a crowd, a man with power necessary to keep other men in order.” This particular characteristic of political leadership has been in evidence in most Caribbean and perhaps postcolonial leaders, irrespective of race or ethnic persuasion since Independence.

Economic policies employed were also unable to achieve the transformation expected in facilitating a more equitable distribution of wealth. Caribbean economists such as the Nobel Prize winner Arthur Lewis, George Beckford, Norman Girvan and Best were able to diagnose the source of the problem. However, the solutions posited had limited success in changing the economic circumstances of the former colonies.

While many territories adopted Lewis’ model of “Industrialisation by Invitation” as a means of encouraging immediate foreign investment and jump-starting economic growth, its limitations were many. Its emphasis, according to some of its critics was

⁵² Ralph Premdas, “Race, Politics, and Succession in Trinidad and Guyana,” *Modern Caribbean Politics*, eds., Anthony Payne and Paul Sutton (Baltimore and London : The John Hopkins University Press, 1993) 122.

⁵³ Premdas, “Race, Politics and Succession” 123.

on “import-replacement, rather than import displacement” which did not actually create a viable manufacturing industry or generate substantial employment.⁵⁴ The basic infrastructure of the plantation economy that relied on mono crops and importation of finished products remained largely unchanged. Under this dispensation, the larger territories appeared to prosper initially solely by dint of having comparatively greater resources and numerically larger populations; the smaller ones continued to struggle, less attractive as viable investment opportunities to foreign interests. However, all remained vulnerable to the vicissitudes of foreign tastes and demand for goods and services. Alternatively, the growing tastes for foreign goods by the new citizenry served to increase expenditure on luxuries that they could ill afford.

While Best, Beckford and Girvan recognised that Caribbean economies and societies had come to be characterised by the plantation system, the transference into effective policy and implementation capable of alleviating the inherent inequalities and poverty left in colonialism’s wake was obscure. Even today, the economies of the Caribbean and many other former colonies continue to grapple with policies – some imposed by lending institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – that can kick start real growth and development.

Although political and economic policies largely exacerbated the inequalities in these societies, it was in the area of culture that the marginalisation of various fragments was most painfully experienced. Culture, became a very useful tool of control and

⁵⁴ See the following articles for a more detailed discussion of this issue: Kari Levitt and Lloyd Best, “Character of the Caribbean Economy” and Havelock Brewster and Clyde Thomas, “Industrialization of the West Indies: The Manufacturing Sector in the Total Economy,” *Caribbean Freedom- Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present*, 394-404 and 405-420 respectively.

exercise of power and privilege. As Rohlehr asserts with respect to Williams, “[c]ulture ... became a manipulable lever in an elaborate machinery of patronage on the part of the controlling elite and clientelism on the part of the common folk.”⁵⁵ The privileging of Afro or Creole aesthetics and cultural modes that have dominated the inscriptions of culture has perpetuated the view of a Creole nationalism to the exclusion of others. In the resulting contestation for cultural space fought primarily between the two major ethnic groups of Afro- and Indo- Caribbeans, the question of ‘whose nation’ has come to incorporate equality of recognition of cultural difference and diversity. In the ensuing debates that have raged between these two groups in this sphere, the voices of the other marginalised peoples – the Amerindians, Europeans, Spanish, Portuguese, Syrian/Lebanese and the increasing mixed population - have virtually been drowned. Notably, women were also generally invisible and excluded. Their roles continued to be defined as cultural preservationists although many had been instrumental to the struggles for labour rights and Independence. The debates that have propagated over this contestation for cultural space are explored in further detail in Part II. It is pertinent to note here, however, the corrosive effects that the manipulation of culture has had in exacerbating stereotypes and emphasising difference rather than facilitating, as is possible in the cultural sphere, the arrival at common grounds of consensus between the tension of desires to retain difference as well as syncretism in evolving Caribbean societies.

Notwithstanding, the fact that attempts at political and economic Independence met with limited success, what becomes evident however, is the overwhelming shadow that history has cast upon every facet of life in the region. It is therefore imperative

⁵⁵ Gordon Rohlehr, “The Culture of Williams: Context, Performance, Legacy,” *Callaloo* 20.4 (1997): 868.

that leaders, whether political, social or cultural, consider not only the material and psychological impact of history but also determine how it might be positively re-visioned as an integral part of imagining the nation and implementing the transformation that nationalism demanded. While Caribbean historians such as Goveia and Williams pioneered the re-visioning of the region's historiography which was critical to re-assessing and re-interpreting the record inscribed by European and British travellers and settlers, it was inevitably bound up in the conventions of Western historical research and analysis that paralyses time and space in an effort to extract the historian's interpretations and conclusions. Although this exercise necessarily involves the historian in a selection of data for the narrative construction of their interpretation of history however, s/he is also constricted by the absence of what Guyanese writer and critic Wilson Harris refers to as "the arts of the imagination" from which he argues "a philosophy of history" might be derived.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Wilson Harris, "History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas," *Selected Essays of Wilson Harris – The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination*, ed., AJM Bundy (London, NY: Routledge, 1999) 152-166.

CHAPTER 2

Defining Caribbean Space

In delineating the scope of this thesis, the countries Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Britain have been selected as the locations for comparative analysis. As Anglophone territories, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana have been selected since they are arguably two of the most heterogeneous territories in the region. Britain, as the dominant colonising power from which independence was won by these territories has been selected because of its undoubtedly pivotal role in shaping and influencing the social, political and cultural institutions of these Caribbean territories. Moreover, the mass migration of Caribbean peoples to Britain after the Second World War has also contributed to the re-shaping of the socio-cultural milieu and the traditional concept of Britishness. Over time, migration also compelled the re-imagining of nation-ness and identity in the British context.

For the purposes of this thesis, the term West Indies is deliberately abandoned in preference for the more contemporary term Caribbean.⁵⁷ While the terms West Indies and Caribbean have sometimes been used interchangeably, the former has usually been associated with the British West Indies. This is reflected in the early organisations of economic and political unions such as the West Indies Federation or the West Indies Federal Labour Party (WIFLP). On the other hand, Caribbean has more usually been associated with Latin America. However, since independence in

⁵⁷ Exceptions are made to this rule where the term, West Indies or West Indian is expressly used in quotations from texts.

Haiti and Cuba in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries respectively and the wave of nationalism in the region since the 1950s there has been an ongoing re-definition and re-interpretation of the region's geographical boundaries and affiliations propelled by "external influences and ...internal currents."⁵⁸ As the economist Norman Girvan argues, language differences, geography, history, culture, geopolitics and geoeconomics have all contributed to the variety of collective designations such as: Los Caribes, Las Antillas, Greater and Lesser Antilles, wider Caribbean. The demand for greater regional co operation has contributed to the increasing use of the term Caribbean as an expression of the expansion of the regional boundaries across linguistic blocs. Such organisations as the Caribbean Regional Common Market (CARICOM), Caribbean Festival of Creative Arts (Carifesta), Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of Countries (ACP), North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) are all indicative of this progression towards a collective understanding and acceptance of the term Caribbean, albeit not to the exclusion of some of the other labels of Latin and Central America, for instance.

Given the circumstances that have impelled economic and political co operation in the region, Girvan, in rethinking the definition of the term Caribbean has suggested that it might be conceived as:

a sociohistorical category, commonly referring to a cultural zone characterized by the legacy of slavery and the plantation system. It embraces islands and parts of the adjoining mainland – and may be extended to include the Caribbean diaspora overseas.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Norman Girvan, "Reinterpreting the Caribbean," *New Caribbean Thought: A Reader*, eds., Brian Meeks and Folke Lindahl (Mona, Jamaica : University of the West Indies Press, 2001) 6.

⁵⁹ Girvan, "Reinterpreting" 3.

Whereas Girvan's definition draws on the socio-historical and geographical commonalities to define the term, creative artists such as the Martinican writer and critic, Édouard Glissant brings to the definition a more psycho-cultural perspective. Thus for Glissant, 'the Caribbean' as a geographical construct derives its essence from the intuitive investment of the peoples in what he describes as "a multiple series of relationships" that constitutes the region:

What is the Caribbean? A multiple series of relationships. We all feel it, we express it in all kinds of hidden or twisted ways, or we fiercely deny it. But we sense that this sea exists within us with its weight of now revealed islands.

The Caribbean Sea is not an American lake. It is the estuary of the Americas ... in the Caribbean each island embodies openness.⁶⁰

Glissant's re-interpretation is of particular significance since it implicitly suggests that the Caribbean has always been susceptible to and shaped by a multiplicity of relationships with other Continents whether on account of trade, outsourcing of labour and raw materials, as a transshipment point, or even for strategic warfare. These relationships have also ensured a continuous flow of extra and intra regional migrations of which cognisance must be taken in any definition of the region. Such migrations also reinforce Stuart Hall's assertion that "[t]he Caribbean was the first, the original diaspora" which is reflected in the regional definition.⁶¹ Moreover, the definitions of both Girvan and Glissant agree on the idea of there being many Caribbeans, each of which is recognised through the intersections and conjunctions that are reflected in the ebb and flow of the Caribbean Sea that facilitates the openness of the territories.

⁶⁰ Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, trans. J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989) 139.

⁶¹ Stuart Hall, "Negotiating Caribbean Identities," *New Caribbean Thought: A Reader* eds. Brian Meeks and Folke Lindahl (Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2001) 28.

In summary, the deliberate choice of the term Caribbean as opposed to West Indies is significant insofar as it specifies both the geographical and metaphorical landscapes to which the term gestures. The term identifies the actual geographical areas from the islands of Trinidad to Cuba including mainland territories of South and Central America from Guyana to Belize. The multiple sites of the Caribbean diaspora are also included as spatial locations. However, the metaphorical definitions proffered by Girvan and Glissant are as significant to the definition of the Caribbean as they embrace the commonalities of history, geography and culture while at the same time recognising what Kamau Brathwaite identifies as “differing psycho-social Caribbeans.”⁶² By adopting this all-encompassing definition of the Caribbean – a position that is reflected in a substantial amount of both the creative and scholarly production of the region – this thesis inevitably also avails itself of the rich and diverse intellectual tradition that has evolved across the region and its diaspora since the colonial encounter. It is an intellectual tradition that has been fertilised by the common experience of transplantation, enslavement, the plantation economy, colonialism and imperialism. It is these experiences, varied depending on colonising practices and inherited languages, that have been the source of intensive analysis and theorisation for the region’s politicians, intellectuals and creative artists.

Approach to Comparative Study

Scholarship emanating from the Caribbean has been shaped by several methodological challenges; chief among these is that the very characteristics that define the region such as its innate fragmentation, insularity, uprootedness and

⁶² Edward Kamau Brathwaite, “Caribbean Man in Space and Time”, *Savacou* 11/12 (1975): 2.

cultural heterogeneity, also inhibit attempts at “global” studies.⁶³ This holds true for the comparative study proposed in this thesis and to which the analysis of the experience of nation in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana in Chapter one attests.

Although these territories are located in the Anglophone Caribbean and share similar history, in comparison, they are riven with contradictions and differences where more commonalities might have been expected. Needless to say, in comparative analyses involving territories across linguistic blocs, challenges further multiply.

Thus, even though this thesis uses these two Anglophone territories as the basis of comparison, they have been selected because of their inherent complexities; the exploration of which provides substantial grounds from which conclusions might be extrapolated with respect to other territories in and across the region. This by no means eliminates the need for in-depth research into the specific histories of individual territories. Emphasis is placed here on the exploration of the commonalities that exist across the region in terms of the overriding concern with history and other artistic motivations that underlie Caribbean expression irrespective of the inherited European languages and appropriated traditions from which they emerge. As the critic, Silvio Torres-Saillant argues with respect to Caribbean literature, for example, “the oneness ... lies in its ‘parallelisms’ and ‘typological affinities’.”⁶⁴

⁶³ Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island- The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, trans., James Maraniss (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996) 1.

⁶⁴ Silvio Torres-Saillant, *Caribbean Poetics: Towards an Aesthetic of West Indian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 17.

Theorising Caribbean Nation

The critic Robert J C Young has perceptively observed that “[w]hat those in the West call ‘third world nationalism’ has never been successfully analysed by the theorists of nationalism because it never operated according to a general model, or even ideology.”⁶⁵ Young’s observation underscores the extent to which it has been almost glibly assumed that scholarship on nation and nationalism from the Caribbean (and undoubtedly other former colonies) are merely derivative discourses of the Western nation. While undeniably there are some similarities between these discourses, such as, the substantive political and economic functions of the nation-state – for example, its deceptively unifying culture and the mythopoesis that facilitated these processes – much of the meaning of nation and the circumstances of its evolution are lost through such broad theorisation since the Caribbean presented other challenges to these conventional models. While the problems of disseminating scholarship from the region to the Western academy and the implicit hierarchy of knowledge entailed therein,⁶⁶ have contributed to this perception, over the past three decades the emergence of Postcolonial Studies has succeeded in shifting the focus to the explicit differences in the conceptualisation of nation across geopolitical landscapes.

⁶⁵ Young, *Postcolonialism* 172.

⁶⁶ Bart Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics* (London and New York: Verso, 1997) 5. Moore-Gilbert explains that despite its long history in former colonies, anti-colonial and postcolonial criticism and analysis “arrived only belatedly in the Western academy and British university literature departments more particularly.” Ahmad has suggested that the rise of anti-colonial criticism in the former colonies was countered by a shift in the focus and language of criticism in the West. These issues are discussed more fully in “The Paradox of Print Capitalism” that follows.

Finding its conceptual and ideological beginnings in some of the seminal texts of anticolonial theorists, particularly Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*⁶⁷ (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Postcolonial Studies and theorists such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha, considered among the seminal thinkers in the field, have inaugurated varying methodologies for analysing colonialism and the controversially named "postcolonial" condition.⁶⁸ According to Young, their postcolonial project distinguishes itself from its precursor, anticolonial criticism in "the comprehensiveness of its research into the continuing cultural and political ramifications of colonialism in both colonizing and colonized societies."⁶⁹ As such, postcolonial theorists have been reconsidering and reinterpreting scholarship on the nation, race, ethnicity, subjectivity, gender, class and concepts of liberation in the context of continuing colonial and imperialist projects today.

In contesting the received notions of nation Benedict Anderson⁷⁰ and Homi K Bhabha⁷¹ have proposed two of the more influential alternative theories of nation. Their definitions of the nation as 'imagined community' and 'narrated nation' respectively have revolutionised the way in which nations have been previously theorised. Both Anderson and Bhabha privilege the cultural component of the nation by founding their definitions in the multiple significations produced through cultural artefacts and the printed media of the newspapers and the novel which make the idea

⁶⁷ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (1952; London: Pluto Press, 1986).

⁶⁸ Many critics have sought to bring more clarity to the field of study questioning not only the meaning of the term 'postcolonial' but also the methodology and critical tools utilised especially by the three critics mentioned. Two critics who have addressed several fundamental aspects of the criticism commonly advanced are Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory* (London, New York: Verso, 1997) and Young, *Postcolonialism* (London: Blackwell, 2001).

⁶⁹ Young, *Postcolonialism* 6.

⁷⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (1983; Rev. ed., London, NY: Verso, 1991).

⁷¹ Homi K Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation," *Nation and Narration*, ed., Homi K Bhabha (London and NY: Routledge, 1990) 291 – 320.

of nation viable across the width and breadth of the geographical spaces and in the minds of the peoples in whose name it is invoked.

However, in spite of the innovations that these re-conceptualisations bring to the thinking of nation-ness, critics have pointed to equally significant weaknesses that effectively limit their applicability to former colonies. While critics generally agree with Anderson's argument that the confluence of circumstances, including the dawn of the Enlightenment, the secularism that it introduced and the emergence of what he refers to as 'print capitalism' can account for the spread of nationalism in the West, some have taken issue with his assertion that other nationalisms were "modularly imagined" and thus have "a profoundly modular character." Ania Loomba and Partha Chatterjee are perhaps two of the harshest critics of this claim for modularity.

Loomba argues that not only does Anderson's argument conflate with previous thinking on nationalism in this respect but that such a conclusion further reduces these nationalisms to "a 'derivative discourse,' a Calibanistic model of revolt which is dependent upon the coloniser's gift of language/ideas."⁷² Chatterjee further reasons that Anderson's assumption of modularity virtually eliminates the need for any 'imagining' or 'creation,' which are implicit in his thesis of the imagined community, and argues vehemently that:

If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain "modular" forms already available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine? History, it would seem, has decreed that we in the postcolonial world shall only be perpetual consumers of modernity. Europe and the Americas, the only true subjects of history, have thought out on our behalf not only the script of colonial enlightenment and exploitation, but also that of

⁷² Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 1998) 189.

our anticolonial resistance and postcolonial misery. Even our imaginations must remain forever colonised.⁷³

Chatterjee further argues that such reasoning does not hold against the histories of anticolonial nationalisms in Asia and Africa and posits that some of the most creative and successful of such nationalisms were deployed “not on an identity but rather a *difference* with the ‘modular’ forms of the national society propagated by the modern West.”⁷⁴ Chatterjee’s objections have been critiqued as being the result of a “tendentious reading” of Anderson’s thesis since it is apparent that he “overstate[s] the case that Anderson makes for the modularity of the forms of nationalism” in order to make the charge of Eurocentrism.⁷⁵ To this end, Chatterjee’s inversion of the stated sequence of the origins of nationalisms – Western Europe and America – succeeds in shifting the context of Anderson’s argument.

Still, while Anderson’s general thesis is sound, some ambivalence is apparent. For while he pointedly asserts that “[t]he new states of the post-World War II period have their own character, which nonetheless is incomprehensible except in terms of the succession of models we have been considering,”⁷⁶ he also very perceptively argues that “[c]ommunities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by *the style in which they are imagined*” (my emphasis).⁷⁷ It is evident that some contradiction exists since to consider the “style” in which nations are imagined would involve a determination of the range of specificities that distinguishes one from the other rather than merely the extent to which they mimic pre-existing models.

⁷³ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) 5.

⁷⁴ Chatterjee, *Nation and its Fragments* 5.

⁷⁵ Neil Lazarus, *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999) 129-132.

⁷⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities* 113.

⁷⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities* 6.

With respect to Bhabha, critics have lauded his inventive reading of the nation as being a complex linguistic act of narration. However, his methodology, which introduces and privileges the temporal and spatial variables in the thinking of nation while pointedly obliterating the historical circumstances from which nation-ness inevitably arises, has met with some criticism. This is a key feature of Bhabha's theoretical practice which he defends in this instance by asserting that "[t]raditional histories do not take the nation at its own word, but, for the most part, [it is assumed] that the problem lies with the interpretation of 'events' that have a certain transparency or privileged visibility."⁷⁸ However, as many critics have noted, the implications for such an approach are at times devastating when juxtaposed against the histories that have contributed to the formation of the new nations of the 'Third World' and the peoples who were literally (and not metaphorically or linguistically) displaced and dispossessed.

Arif Dirlik contests this methodology because of its blatant reduction of "social and political problems to psychological ones, and ... [its substitution of] post structuralist linguistic manipulation for historical and social explanation."⁷⁹ Other critics have also noted the paradox involved in Bhabha's attempt to decentre Eurocentrism as the prism through which the world was previously viewed by a "recentering of theory and practice" wherein the Third World is deployed as a "dehistoricised, homogenized rhetorical construct" that serves to exclude the alternative perspectives of others.⁸⁰ Moreover, it has been pointed out that recourse to the poststructuralist language

⁷⁸ Bhabha, Introduction, *Nation and Narration* 3.

⁷⁹ Qtd. in Benita Parry, "Signs of our Times: Discussion of Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*," *Third Text* 28/29 (1994): 9.

⁸⁰ Alex Callinicos, "Wonders Taken for Signs: Homi Bhabha's Postcolonialism," *Post-ality: Marxism and Postmodernism*, eds., Teresa L Ebert and Donald Morton (Washington: Maisonneuve Press, 1995): 100.

models “cannot provide any independent support for the claim that there is a privileged relationship between these concepts and ‘colonial textuality’” which have given rise to Bhabha’s integral projects of mis-reading, re-membering and ultimately re-writing the texts that attempt to suggest strategies for contesting the colonial and imperial machinery.⁸¹

In spite of these obvious weaknesses, these theories open the door to an interdisciplinary perspective that recognises the imaginative elements that inscribe and inspire a shared belief in nation as a united community through the cultural artefacts, forms and narratives that are deployed for its purpose. Through such an examination that assumes as its point of departure the imagination, the novel and other narrative constructs, these theories succeed in positing plausible explanations for the longevity and potency of the idea of nation based on what Timothy Brennan refers to as the myths of the nation that engender “the fictive quality to the political concept itself.”⁸²

The Caribbean Experience

Even though the theories proposed by Anderson and Bhabha are beneficial to the understanding of nation in former colonies, Robert Young’s observation retains some relevance since some questions remain. For example: Have any theories addressed the experience of nation in the Caribbean region particularly? Or, more pertinently,

⁸¹ Alex Callinios, “Wonders Taken for Signs” 106.

⁸² Timothy Brennan, “The National Longing for Form,” *Nation and Narration*, ed., Homi K Bhabha (London and NY: Routledge, 1990) 48.

can existing notions of nation be re-conceptualised to represent the complex, heterogeneous nature of Caribbean society? This thesis intervenes in this debate and suggests that answers to these questions lie in the proposal that Caribbean auto/biography provides a productive site wherein notions of nation and identity have been theorised and philosophised by politicians, intellectuals and the range of creative artists.

On the questions of specific theorisations of the Caribbean nation, it is likely that the immediate responses may be in the negative largely because it is difficult to pinpoint any single theory that neatly encapsulates a concept of Caribbean nation. However, closer examination of the scholarship produced especially since the end of World War II provides a prompt refutation. Whereas typically theoretical analyses such as those detailed by Anderson and Bhabha are self contained, theorisations of Caribbean nationhood have been scattered across several disciplines such as the Humanities, especially Literature and History, and the Social Sciences in the expected areas of Political Science and Economics. This is characteristic of some Caribbean scholarship as Paget Henry convincingly argues with respect to doubts about the existence of a tradition of Caribbean philosophy. As Henry explains:

[M]any of the original features of our philosophical and other discursive practices have been shaped by the colonial problematics and contours of our cultural history. Within this imperial framework, the original contents of Caribbean philosophy emerged as a series of extended debates over projects of colonial domination between four major social groups: Euro-Caribbeans, Amerindians, Indo-Caribbeans, and Afro-Caribbeans. The discursive productions of the first group were contributions to the creating of hegemonic situations through legitimating of colonial projects. The productions of the other three groups were attempts at destroying Euro-Caribbean hegemony through the delegitimizing of their colonial projects. This was the communicative framework within which Afro-Caribbean philosophy

emerged, a framework that always embodied an unequal discursive compromise.⁸³

Correspondingly, scholarship on Caribbean nationhood is embedded within the wider Caribbean intellectual tradition that has its beginnings in the onset of modernity. Modernity in the Caribbean, as has been pointed out, is connected to the region's "discovery" and subsequent mass migrations – all pivotal to the eventual struggle for independence. The anti-colonial movement, with its largely Marxist ideology and rhetoric that encapsulated the independence struggle was effectively a diasporic response that was inflected by local and global resistance movements that preceded it such as Maroonage, the Harlem Renaissance and Négritude. Young points not only to the cross fertilisation of ideas that constituted anticolonial ideology but also to the often unacknowledged continuities between anticolonialism and postcolonialism:

Like postcolonialism, anti-colonialism was a diasporic production, a revolutionary mixture of the indigenous and the cosmopolitan, a complex constellation of situated knowledges combined with radical, universal political principles, constructed and facilitated through international networks of cells and organizations that generated common practical information and material support as well as spreading radical political and intellectual ideas.⁸⁴

As such, many influential, anticolonial voices emerged across former colonies of the world, as varied as Jawaharlal Nehru who led the Indian independence struggle to Kwame Nkrumah who had similar success in Ghana. From the Caribbean, these voices included Aimé Césaire, George Padmore, Frantz Fanon and CLR James. The creative artists also added their voices to the movement often also embedding their own philosophical perspectives on the establishment of a whole society from the fractures that colonialism and imperialism had entrenched. The prospect of

⁸³ Paget Henry, *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy* (New York, London: Routledge, 2000) 3.

⁸⁴ Young, *Postcolonialism* 2.

independence also spurred the necessity for writing “histories from below” reflected, for example, in the histories of individual territories such as Williams’ *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago* (1964) and Walter Rodney’s *A History of the Guyanese Working People, 1881 –1905* (1981).

In the aftermath of independence, these histories all provided a foundation for interrogating some of the unexpected challenges through Social Science studies such as Selwyn Ryan’s *Race and Nationalism in Trinidad and Tobago* (1972) and Percy Hintzen’s *The Cost of Regime Survival: Racial Mobilization, Elite Domination and Control of the State in Guyana and Trinidad*⁸⁵ (1989) or Arthur Lewis’ *The Industrialization of the British West Indies*⁸⁶ (1950) and George Beckford’s *Persistent Poverty: Underdevelopment in Plantation Economies of the Third World*⁸⁷ (1972).

The proposal of Caribbean auto/biography as a site of theoretical analysis of the subjects of nation and identity takes cognisance of this dispersal of the region’s intellectual tradition across academic disciplines and the full range of creative production. The proposal further concurs with the views of other literary critics that particularly in colonial and imperial contexts, several forms of knowledge and knowledge-making have always existed in tandem, albeit within implicit hierarchies. Contestation of the legitimacy of some forms of knowledge, as is evident in debates

⁸⁵ Percy C Hintzen, *The Cost of Regime Survival: Racial Mobilization, Elite Domination and Control of the State in Guyana and Trinidad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

⁸⁶ Arthur W Lewis, *The Industrialization of the British West Indies* (Barbados: Government Printery Office, 1950).

⁸⁷ George L Beckford, *Persistent Poverty: Underdevelopment in Plantation Economies of the Third World* (New York; London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

about the existence of philosophical and intellectual traditions in the Caribbean might be understood as an extension of the core question of what might constitute theory and theorising. Surveying the canon of African American letters, the literary critic Barbara Christian, has argued for the validity of other forms of theorising, reasoning that:

people of color have always theorized – but in forms quite different from the Western form of abstract logic. And I am inclined to say that our theorizing (and I intentionally use the verb form rather than the noun) is often in narrative forms, in the stories we create, in riddles and proverbs, in the play with language, since dynamics rather than fixed ideas seem more to our liking. How else have we managed to survive with such spiritedness the assault on our bodies, social institutions, countries, our very humanity? And women, ... continuously speculated about the nature of life through pithy language that unmasked the power relations of their world.⁸⁸

Carole Boyce Davies is among critics who have concurred with Christian's injunction for the expansion of the definition and understanding of theory. Supplementing Christian's argument, Boyce Davies suggests Teresa Ebert's proposition that theory be understood as "'frames (or modes) of intelligibility' through which we see and interpret the world or as 'discursive ways of making sense of structures of values and belief which circulate in any given culture' and not as a reified discourse for the privileged few."⁸⁹

Christian's observation about ways of theorising are echoed in the recent work by Selwyn R Cudjoe. In his exploration of the intellectual and literary traditions of Trinidad and Tobago in particular, Cudjoe has asserted that such traditions have "not

⁸⁸ Barbara Christian, "The Race for Theory." *Cultural Critique* 6 (1987):52.

⁸⁹ Carole Boyce Davies, *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*. (London and New York: Routledge, 41.

been mapped, historicized, or examined in detail”.⁹⁰ Like Christian and Paget Henry, he avers that this is on account of the fact that

[t]his tradition exists in tracts, novels, newspapers, travel writings, dramatic performances, open-air theatre, sermons, and poetry. It can be found in all of these practices – within the recesses of history, as it were – that scholars seldom examine.⁹¹

In proposing auto/biography as a site of theoretical analysis, this thesis adopts Christian’s suggested formulation of ‘theorising’ to frame the various ways of being and knowing (knowledge-making) that co-exist in minority literatures and cultures. Further, auto/biography as deployed in this context also takes cognisance of the various resources and disciplines in which such theorising occurs especially as it pertains to understanding the imagining of nation and identity in the Caribbean region. What is more, its usefulness as a theoretical tool is premised on propositions stated earlier; that being that an interdisciplinary approach is required to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the material and cultural contexts of nation in the region, and secondly, that history and culture must be privileged in any such study. This approach is supported by some Caribbeanists, such as Lloyd Best, who, having surveyed what he terms the “crisis of civilization”⁹² that currently plagues the Caribbean, has suggested that rather than adhering to “tired and mechanical models” there is “need to seek a whole new interpretation, derived organically from Caribbean history and set in Caribbean institutions and culture.”⁹³ Although some theorists caution against such approaches that insist on an appreciation of the specificities of embedded histories and cultures on the basis that they produce parochialism or

⁹⁰ Selwyn R. Cudjoe, *Beyond Boundaries: The Intellectual Tradition of Trinidad and Tobago in the Nineteenth Century*. (Wellesley, Mass.: Calaloux; Amherst, Boston: University of Mass. Press, 2003)

1.

⁹¹ Cudjoe, *Beyond Boundaries* 1.

⁹² Best, “Race, Class and Ethnicity” 2.

⁹³ Best, “Race, Class and Ethnicity” 3.

inverse racism, others have concurred with Best and other Caribbeanists who share his position.⁹⁴ Moreover, in his assessment of the Western nation, sociologist A D Smith asserts the significance of history, arguing that it “derives its force from its historical embeddedness” and as such transcends traditional ideological formulations. He further argues that,

[i]ts success therefore depends on specific cultural and historical contexts, and this means that the nations it helps to create are in turn derived from pre-existing and highly particularized cultural heritages and ethnic formations. This, not some revolutionary but abstract formulation, is what stirs so many men and women in so many corners of the world today.⁹⁵

If history understandably is so central to the idea of nation in the West, its significance to former colonies can hardly be overstated. This is the rationale that guides the methodology for this entire thesis, and in application to the question of Caribbean nationhood where auto/biography is suggested as an alternative analytical tool, the expected outcome is what the African philosopher V Y Mudimbe refers to as a third-level discourse. This third-level discourse critiques not only the traditional dominant discourses to which Best gestures, but also those that claim to apprehend the actual lived experience or *la chose du texte* of the community.⁹⁶ The “meta-discourse [at which it is aimed]” according to Mudimbe, “could bring about a history of histories of a given culture.”⁹⁷ The obvious questions that arise from the proposition are: how is auto/biography defined in this context and consequently, how does auto/biography provide insight into the imagining of Caribbean nation?

⁹⁴ Ahmad cautions that “[t]he ideology of cultural nationalism is based explicitly on this singularising tendency and lends itself much too easily to parochialism, inverse racism and indigenist obscurantism, not to speak of the professional petty bourgeoisie’s penchant for representing its own cultural aspirations, virtually by embodying them as so many emblems of national culture.” See Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London and New York: Verso, 1992) 8.

⁹⁵ A D Smith, *Nations and Nationalisms in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995) vii.

⁹⁶ V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Idea of Africa* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1994) xiv. Mudimbe translates this as “imitating the practice of everyday life ... trapped faithfully within a discourse forever.”

⁹⁷ Mudimbe, *The Idea* xiv.

Auto/biographing the Caribbean Nation

Whereas autobiography has been adopted by the current cult of celebrity as the genre *du jour*, for Caribbean artists (and other minorities) it has been appropriated as a site of resistance from the time of slavery, indenture and other migrations. In part, these circumstances have shaped Caribbean auto/biographical practice from its beginnings in oral testimonies to its textual non-fictional and literary narratives. To speak of Caribbean auto/biography then is to invoke the wide-ranging forms, modes, political, social and cultural functions that differentiate the practice from its Western antecedent. Yet, claims of exclusivity cannot be made for the appropriation of the genre since other intellectuals and artists from the margins have not only demonstrated equal propensity for the genre but have experimented with it similarly.

Moreover, like its Western antecedent, Caribbean auto/biography defies easy definition. The influential French theorist Philippe Lejeune has offered one definition of the genre as “retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality.”⁹⁸ This definition has met with some criticism because of its concentration on the individual (which is in keeping with the objectives of Western autobiographical practice) and its strict limitations especially on the mode and form of the genre. By contrast, Caribbean (and minority) auto/biographical practice has not been so constricted despite drawing intertextually and generically from the Western antecedent.

⁹⁸ Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography*, trans. Katherine Leary, ed., Paul John Eakin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989) 4.

Recent scholarship on minority auto/biography has sought to incorporate the range and variety of mode, form and cross-disciplinary approaches that have shaped the genre since the twentieth century. These differences and the ontological and epistemological positions that have fashioned the strategies of ‘coming into voice’ and inscribing previously unwritten lives have been identified through the use of the slash to split the term – auto/biography. The slash is further intended to emphasise the interdependent and interdisciplinary relationships of the genre, particularly with its virtual ‘other half’ biography but also with history, philosophy, literature, gender and cultural studies. Laura Marcus is one critic who utilises this formulation with the slash to gesture to these differences. Noting that “[t]he most interesting auto/biographical theory and practice are being written across traditional conceptual and disciplinary divides”⁹⁹ and referring to recent acknowledgment of the fact that autobiography and biography of necessity function together, Marcus confirms that:

[t]he term auto/biography ... is one such attempt to indicate the affinities between biography and autobiography as traditionally defined. Other critics have bypassed ‘autobiography’ altogether, overtaking it on the left, and focus instead on related ‘outlaw genres’ – including testimonial literature, oral narratives and ethnographies.¹⁰⁰

Whereas Marcus has been concerned predominantly with highlighting the interconnections between autobiography and biography which had been deemed separate genres during the Victorian period, the feminist sociologist, Liz Stanley, offers a definition that re-conceptualises the genre. Agreeing with Marcus’ rejection of conventional generic distinctions between autobiography and biography, Stanley is, at the same time, careful to acknowledge the differences in the variety of forms of life writing. However, she cautions that these differences are not generic since “the same

⁹⁹ Laura Marcus, *Auto/biographical Discourses: Theory, Criticism, Practice*. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994) 273.

¹⁰⁰ Marcus, *Auto/biographical Discourse* 294.

epistemological, theoretical and technical issues arise.”¹⁰¹ Consequently, Stanley explains that she uses the term auto/biography (with the slash) “to encompass all [the] ways of writing a life and also the ontological and epistemological links between them.”¹⁰²

Stanley has further proposed a nuanced definition of the genre of auto/biography that elaborates on and incorporates the new perspectives, strategies and related issues arising out of the appropriation of the genre by women and other minority artists. Stanley’s definition gestures not only to the inherent instability of the genre but more importantly points to the multiplicity of forms and modes of life writing and the agency of the author (oral or scribal) or researcher in the process of constructing self (or selves). She states that auto/biography is:

an epistemologically-orientated concern with the political ramifications of the shifting boundaries between self and other, past and present, writing and reading, fact and fiction, and with an analytical attention to these within the oral, visual, and written texts that are ‘biographies and autobiographies’. The writer/speaker, the researcher and author, are certainly not treated as transparent or ‘dead’, but very much alive as agents actively at work in the textual production process. Auto/biography engages analytically with these epistemological problematics and displaces the referential and foundational claims of writers and researchers by focusing on the writing and speaking of lives and the complexities of reading/hearing them. It thereby unsettles notions of ‘science’, problematises the claims of research, questions the power issues that most researches either silence or disclaim.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹Liz Stanley, *The Auto/biographical ‘I’: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/biography*. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1992) 3.

¹⁰² Stanley, *The Auto/biographical ‘I’* 3.

¹⁰³ Liz Stanley, “From ‘Self-Made Women’ to Women’s Made-Selves?: Audit Selves, Simulation and Surveillance in the Rise of Public Woman”, *Feminism and Autobiography: Texts, Theories, Methods*, ed. Tess Cosslett, Celia Lury and Penny Summerfield (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) 41. I have attributed this definition to Liz Stanley as one of the key leaders involved in the Auto/biography Study Group but also because several ideas included in the definition are evident in some of Stanley’s earlier work. Joanna Bornat also makes the same attribution. See Joanna Bornat, “Is Oral History Auto/biography?” *Auto/biography* 3.1 and 3.2 (1994): 18.

This thesis adopts Stanley's definition to its purpose not only because it corroborates the general parameters associated with Caribbean and other minority auto/biographical practice as will be illustrated in the subsequent analysis of literary texts but also because it cannily acknowledges the auto/biographical impulse (implicit or explicit) in texts that are written, visual and oral. Whereas this chapter concerns itself primarily with literary auto/biographical texts in Caribbean writing, Part II reads the paintings as examples from which spring the artistic philosophies of the artists Leroy Clarke and Dunstan St Omer as evidence of another form of auto/biographical 'textual' practice.

Caribbean Auto/biography

It is also from this definitional vantage point that it is argued that auto/biography, as envisaged by Caribbean artists is interwoven into much of the region's cultural production. The genre has been an integral component in the development of these new nation states and has been the site from which perhaps the most credible resistance has been mounted against colonising and imperialist enterprises. As such, auto/biography has not only contested the received knowledges of self and history, but has facilitated the re-inscription of recuperated histories, imagining of new nation spaces and the insertion of self and agency. In other words, auto/biography has been instrumental to the decolonisation project as it participates in the "interrogation, unmasking, and the establishment and ratification of a disidentified colonial self, not entirely free of its European pre-texts perhaps, but aware, actively resistant, and

independently creative.”¹⁰⁴ Auto/biographical practice is therefore situated at the centre of the fight for national culture in the Caribbean and as Fanon has pointed out, this fight was effectively bound up with the movement for national liberation and cultural development.¹⁰⁵

Sandra Pouchet Paquet, in her exploratory text, *Caribbean Autobiography: Cultural Identity and Self-Representation*, outlines several conventions that prescribe the practice, observing that,

Autobiography constructs multiple spaces where the private and the personal collapse into projections of a public self, where the individual is represented within the context of mutuality and commonality.¹⁰⁶

Pouchet Paquet’s formulation gestures to the ways in which auto/biographical practice facilitates a multiplicity of subject addresses that cross ethnicity, race, class and gender, its variety of modes and forms and the privileging of the communal rather than the individual; all based within the multiple spaces which the genre constructs. In its adoption of these characteristics Caribbean auto/biography functions in complicity with the overarching project of re-writing the histories of the multiple peoples who now inhabit the region and by which a distinctly Caribbean aesthetic and ethos are being continuously encoded. Consequently, implicit to this proposition is an expansion of the boundaries of auto/biographical practice that is not limited to the exploration of a singular self and personality but rather is marked by a determination

¹⁰⁴ Helen M. Tiffin, “Rites of Resistance: Counter-Discourse and West Indian Biography,” *Journal of West Indian Literature* Vol. III No. 1 (1989): 30.

¹⁰⁵ Fanon, *The Wretched* 166 -199.

¹⁰⁶ Sandra Pouchet Paquet, *Caribbean Autobiography- Cultural Identity and Self-Representation* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002) 5.

to represent the interdependent intelligences that coexist in these new nations.¹⁰⁷ The implication is, then, that auto/biography demands a particular attitude to reading as much as writing as contended by Latin Americanist Sylvia Molloy.¹⁰⁸ The adoption of this “attitude” effectively facilitates an examination of the corpus of Caribbean expression – literary, visual, performance, filmic – through the auto/biographical lens as Liz Stanley’s definition also suggests.

The instinctual fluidity of the genre evident in these “multiple spaces” made possible by utilising these various modes and forms also facilitates the evocation of a multiplicity of subject addresses and polyphony of voices. Coupled with its inherently retrospective and introspective postures, auto/biography lends itself to the overarching project of history writing and the recuperation of cultural memory, both so crucial to the development of a Caribbean ethos. Inescapable to this task is the question of how to remember (and forget) the trauma of history that prescribed the beginnings of these nations, not only the unspeakable atrocities, but also the brutal suppression of cultural heritage, religious practices and languages. However, the trauma of history is not limited to former slaves or indentured labourers. In some Caribbean societies and other postcolonial areas, such trauma might be experienced as varying degrees of guilt by the former colonising class who also share common citizenship of the new nations. Giving voice to this trauma tests the boundaries of memory and the competence of language to communicate and testify to these experiences. For this reason, trauma has been a significant determining factor in the

¹⁰⁷ See Walcott’s “Reflections on *Omeros*,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 96.2 (1997): 229 – 246 where he discusses, in part, the role of the Caribbean artist and poet in his society even in the absence of a committed, responsive audience.

¹⁰⁸ Sylvia Molloy, *At Face Value: Autobiographical Writing in Spanish America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 2.

choice of oral and literary strategies as well as the forms¹⁰⁹ employed in recording these stories of self, history and culture. Language has been integral to these narrative strategies. Writers and artists have experimented continuously with inherited languages often aspiring to a syncretic language that reflects the almost imperceptible merging of remnants of ancestral languages with those inherited, arriving at what Kamau Brathwaite refers to as “nation languages.”¹¹⁰ The process of mastering the nation language coincides with the transcendence of trauma and the beginnings of healing. In other words, the very act of enunciating such trauma is at the same time painful and cathartic. As Gilmore explains, “part of what we must call healing lies in the assertion of creativity. The ability to write beyond the silencing meted out by trauma is an achievement.”¹¹¹

Moreover, because trauma has delineated so much of Caribbean experience the conventional address of its auto/biography is invariably communal rather than individual. Use of the subject pronoun “I” as enunciated in the region’s auto/biography therefore does not refer exclusively to the first person narrator but rather gestures to the “we” of the community from within which it emanates. As Pouchet Paquet has asserted,

¹⁰⁹ Form is used here in the same sense defined by Gordon Rohlehr as the interrelation of three factors primarily, “the writer’s intelligence, temperament and sensibility. Secondly ... the material, the *stoff* on which that sensibility nurtures or fashions itself. This material or *stoff* may include both the given conditions of personal and social experience and vicarious experience: what the writer has read, absorbed, admired or hated, reacted to or against; the world of writing of which what he writes is a part and to which, it is, perhaps, a contribution. Thirdly, there’s the writer’s imagination which shapes experience by means of processes which may be arbitrary, intangible and unpremeditated.” See “The Problem of the Problem of Form: The Idea of an Aesthetic Continuum and Aesthetic Code-Switching in West Indian Literature,” *The Shape of that Hurt and Other Essays* (Port of Spain: Longman Trinidad Limited, 1992) 1.

¹¹⁰ Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *History of the Voice- The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry* (London and Port of Spain: New Beacon Books, 1984). The question of language is more thoroughly explored in Part II of this thesis.

¹¹¹ Leigh Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography- Trauma and Testimony* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001) 24.

[i]ssues of self-identity merge with issues of West Indian identity. The individual predicament of the writer as autobiographical subject illuminates the collective predicament of an island community. The autobiographical act emerges as a means to an end rather than an end in itself.¹¹²

From this representative vantage point, Caribbean artists engage in an examination and exploration of self that questions not only the validity and commitment of their enterprise as artists within their communities but also in an evaluation of the problems and possible solutions in the evolving nations. Elaborating on the complexity involved in the auto/biographical act, Pouchet Paquet explains how the process of self-enquiry is tied to cultural assessment. Continuing, she states:

[S]elf-enquiry is self-imaging and self-evaluation, but it is also cultural assessment ... [T]here is a clearly defined tension between the autobiographical self as a singular personality with the psychological integrity and the self as a way into the social and political complexities of the region. Autobiography gives the writer direct access into his privileged relationship to the West Indian community as an insider, and, additionally, it gives him the opportunity to define the quality of his relationship to that community in ideal terms. Self-revelation becomes a way of laying claim to the landscape that is at once geographical, historical, and cultural. In this fashion, the writer is privileged to write himself into the symbolic systems that make up West Indian literature and culture. In the process, the autobiographical self as subject is transformed into a cultural archetype, and autobiography becomes both the lived historical reality and the myth created out of that experience. Personal experience and historical events alike are transformed into autobiographical myth.¹¹³

Evidently, in auto/biographical writing myths of self merge with myths of historical and cultural beginnings in relation to the matrix of peoples and histories that constitute the whole of the community or nation. The project of recuperating lost cultural histories with that of enunciating histories of self in the construction of identity – individual and communal – is thus achieved from the emblematic or archetypal subject position of “the people.”

¹¹² Pouchet Paquet, “West Indian Autobiography” in William Andrews, ed. *African American Autobiography- A Collection of Critical Essays*. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993) 197.

¹¹³ Pouchet Paquet, “West Indian Autobiography” 197-98.

However, there are obvious problems posed by the 'I' that claims implicitly or explicitly to represent the community. For, despite the fact that auto/biography offers the democratic inclusion of multiple voices and it inevitably intersects with other biographies for the emergence of the story of self, some questions remain, such as: who qualifies as being truly representative of the people? On what criteria should representativeness be determined? In other words, on what basis are writers, even as seminal to the Caribbean canon, as Walcott, Naipaul or Kincaid qualified above others to speak on behalf of or to represent "the people"? Although some argue that slave narratives and other forms of testimonials underscore the entry of "the people" into the wider discourses that frame histories and nations, such narratives, as will be illustrated in the examination of Mary Prince's dictated text, are invariably mediated to varying degrees. But more than that, such narratives that bear witness to trauma also dramatise the tensions in testimonial and auto/biographical practice between truth/fact and fiction given that memory, by its very nature, dictates a selective remembering of events. The necessity for verifying details is not limited to the non-fictional either but includes fictional auto/biographical texts. Paradoxically, however, it is this representative feature of Caribbean auto/biographical practice that links it to the act of imagining nation. As Gilmore argues:

The interface of singular and shareable goes to the issue of political representation, for the autobiographical self who is cut off from others, even as it stands for them, is a metaphor for the citizen ...
Autobiography's investment in the representative person allies it to the project of lending substance to the national fantasy of belonging ... The nation prompts fantasies of citizens, rendered real, embodied, and whole through incorporation into the national.¹¹⁴

In at least two other important respects, auto/biography lends itself to the understanding and theorising of the Caribbean nation. Firstly, because the genre

¹¹⁴ Leigh Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography* 12.

seeks to record a process of “becoming” that both precedes and surpasses the writer’s existence as auto/biographical persona, so too the nation continuously signifies and cannot conceivably suggest its own beginnings or end (barring genocide as Anderson proposes).¹¹⁵ Thus in both instances, the auto/biographical record and the nation coexist as phenomena in this state of parenthesis. Secondly, despite the nation’s instinctive exclusionary impulse, Caribbean auto/biographical practice can lend credibility to that all inclusive address “the people” largely because, as a discursive practice, it “projects an arc of meaning that illuminates the tensions, contradictions, differences, and interpenetrations of heterogeneous community within a variety of opposing modalities” as Pouchet Paquet suggests.¹¹⁶

Inasmuch as auto/biography serves as a valuable alternative conceptual tool for analysing the Caribbean nation, there are corollaries to this proposition. First, the aim is not to superimpose yet another universalising discourse or even to suggest its applicability to the entire postcolonial world. Instead, the focus is obviously the Caribbean and its diaspora for which the comparative analysis of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana is illustrative. Any suggestion of universal application is subverted by founding the claims on the specificities of the histories and cultures of these territories. Secondly, cognisance is given to the paradoxical exclusivity that is inherent in the very notion of nation since as Anne McClintock has noted, nations “are contested systems of cultural representation that limit and legitimize people’s access to the rights and resources of the nation-state.”¹¹⁷ Consequently, even as

¹¹⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities* 205

¹¹⁶ Pouchet-Paquet, *Caribbean Autobiography* 4.

¹¹⁷ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995) 353.

Caribbean auto/biographical practice admits a greater number of discordant voices¹¹⁸ to the ongoing dialogue of the imagining of nation (especially through other recent technologies such as the electronic media and the world wide web) selectivity still persists based on criteria such as accessibility and literacy. The fact that auto/biography offers a site of inscription for these discordant voices, however, facilitates what Best calls “real politics” or constructive dialogue and as such wider participation in the democratic process of the state. If only for this reason, questions of who is entitled to speak on behalf of the people remain.

Literary Auto/biography and the Imagining of Caribbean Nation

Inasmuch as the preceding discussion details the argument for Caribbean auto/biography as a site of theorisation and imagining of nation, this section anchors that argument in literary analysis of three representative and seminal texts of the Anglophone Caribbean canon. Consequently, while comprehensive analyses of these texts yield rich insights into any number of aspects of Caribbean life, for the purpose of this argument, the texts are examined with the intention of revealing some features of life writing as they are co-opted into the project of resistance to colonialism, revisions of history and the affirmation and creation of the nation in the imaginative literature. These texts – three selections from Martin Carter’s volume of poetry, *Poems of Resistance*, Derek Walcott’s *Another Life* and V S Naipaul’s *A House for*

¹¹⁸ I am thinking here of autobiographies for instance, by disenchanted politicians such as Albert Gomes’ *Through a Maze of Colour* (Port of Spain: Key Caribbean Publications, 1974); and by creative artists such as Martin Carter, *Poems of Resistance from Guyana* (Georgetown, Guyana: Release Publications, 1979) whose poems chart his career as a revolutionary against the Burnham régime.

Mr Biswas - reflect the variety of form, mode and literary strategies utilised in life writing. More than this however, they illustrate the multiplicity of ways in which the nation is imagined through characterisation and omniscient narrative commentaries.

While each artist selected originates from a different territory, it is pertinent to point out that their thematic concerns are at once local, regional and universal in context.

Although the two territories under comparison - Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana - are taken into consideration in the selection of Carter and Naipaul as representative of these territories, Walcott is included not only because of his canonical status but also because he represents another version of the many psycho-social Caribbeans to which Girvan, Glissant and Brathwaite gesture in defining Caribbean space.

Moreover, the selections from Carter and Walcott – the former Guyanese, the latter St Lucian – while both poetic in form can be further delineated as political literary auto/biography and more conventional, self-consciously literary auto/biography respectively. However, inasmuch as each poet addresses the specificities of the political and socio-cultural contexts of Guyana and St Lucia, their perspectives and concerns also embrace the region as a whole. This is inevitable since both were coming of age as poets, critics and active participants in the regional dialogue that was in progress during the heady, turbulent transitional period from colonialism to the euphoria of nationhood that was sweeping the region and former colonies world wide.

This holds true for Naipaul. However, his prose understandably, brings into sharper relief than is evident in the poetic selections, the issues of race, ethnicity and gender relations in the construction of nation in Trinidad. These concerns, as well as

Naipaul's legendary ambivalence towards notions of home and homeland; the incompatibility of the socio-cultural milieu of his homeland with his aspiration to become a writer are common thematic concerns; again, these themes are not limited to Trinidad or even exclusively to the Caribbean but are also apparent in literatures of other minorities. Not surprisingly, whereas Carter and Walcott chose to remain in the Caribbean (in the case of Carter in Guyana specifically) to hone their poetic art, Naipaul migrated to Britain where he flourished as a writer. Naipaul, as one of the earliest Caribbean writers to provide such comprehensive insight into the religious and cultural traditions of the Indo-Trinidadian community (and by extension Indo-Caribbeans) gives voice to previously muted tones in the vortex of contending perspectives on the imagining of nation.

What also accrues from the exploration of these texts is insight into how these fictional representations have grappled with the tensions between the political and their responsibilities and investments as artists in their societies. Further, in their various meditations on history - inevitable pathways in the construction of the Caribbean nation - these artists evince that conjoining of knowledges to which Doris Sommer refers to as empirical knowledge and emotional knowing.¹¹⁹ That is to say that these artists represent versions of history that are tempered by both the empirical data recuperated by historical scholarship as well as their intuitive artistic sensibilities.

¹¹⁹ Sommer, *Proceed with Caution*, 162.

Carter's Political Auto/biography

Many critics consider Martin Carter to have been Guyana's premier poet of protest. In view of Carter's intimate involvement with the Guyanese nationalist project and party politics, this perspective captures an important influence on his poetry.

However, it also diminishes what was his commitment to poetry as art first and foremost and latterly to its use in resisting colonialism and forging new beginnings through the acquisition of independence. Indeed, exploration of his entire body of work reveals a trajectory of development that spans his early preoccupation with eradicating colonialism and creating a whole society in Guyana, through to his involvement with the PPP lead by Cheddi Jagan and lastly the disillusionment with the disintegration of the Guyanese nationalist and decolonisation projects which results in the final consummation of his commitment to the life of the poet that is sustained until 1980. Inasmuch as Carter's development as poet parallels the evolution of the crisis of the Guyanese nationalist project, it is proposed that his poetry might be classified as political literary auto/biography. Political auto/biography is usually associated with texts produced by politicians and political activists. Exploring the autobiographical texts of Black women activists during a similar period of history in the US, critic Margo V Perkins has suggested that the following are among the typical features of political autobiography:

[T]hat the autobiographer will emphasize the story of the struggle over her own personal ordeals; ... that she will use her own story both to document a history of the struggle and to further its political agenda; ... that she will provide a voice for the voiceless; ... that she will honor strategic silences in order to protect the integrity of the struggle as well as the welfare of the activists; ... that she will expose the oppressive conditions and the repressive tactics of the state; ...that she will use the

autobiography as a form of political intervention, to educate as broad an audience as possible to the situation and issues at stake.¹²⁰

Many of these features of political auto/biography are apparent in Carter's poetry particularly of the early period when his political involvement was most intense. However, what separates Carter's poetry from the texts of politicians and political activists is perhaps the arsenal of literary strategies that he mobilises to the cause of political struggle in his work. The three poems under review - "University of Hunger", "This is the Dark Time My Love" and "All are Involved" - of the celebrated 1954 collection *Poems of Resistance*¹²¹ offer rich templates for examining Carter's literary technique as he records the history of Guyana's anti-colonial struggle to which he was both witness and active participant.

Carter's *Poems of Resistance* were written during and after his imprisonment in 1953 for involvement in a protest march against the suspension of the Guyanese Constitution by Britain. As critic A J Seymour notes, this collection "come[s] in the second phase of Carter's poetry when the stirring call of revolutionary anti-colonialism to be found in *The Hill of Fire Glows Red* was replaced by dark anger, a sense of waste and of personal suffering".¹²² Of "University of Hunger", Seymour further observes that it has been accorded "pride of place among Martin Carter's poems, since they provide words, like guns, in which he speaks for all colonials

¹²⁰ Margo V Perkins, *Autobiography as Activism: Three Black Women of the Sixties*. (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2000) 7.

¹²¹ Martin Carter, *Poems of Resistance from British Guiana. University of Hunger: Collected Poems and Selected Prose*. Ed. Gemma Robinson. (Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books, 2006) 84 - 104.

¹²² A J Seymour, "A Commentary on Two Poems" *All are Involved: The Art of Martin Carter*. Ed. Stewart Brown. (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2000) 103.

everywhere, and for the oppressed subjected and deprived people living in slums in big cities".¹²³

Although the oppressed peoples are the subject of Carter's poem "University of Hunger"¹²⁴ they are identified only through several oblique references. In fact, not until the third stanza does Carter directly mention "the dark ones" who are "half sunken in the land" – images that invoke the enslaved and indentured labourers who people a physical and economic landscape that is treacherous and uncompromising in the toll it takes on their bodies and mental well being, hence the first stanza:

is the university of hunger the wide waste
is the pilgrimage of man the long march
The print of hunger wanders in the land
The green tree bends above the long forgotten
The plains of life rise up and fall in spasms
The roofs of men are fused in misery.

The repetition of the poem's title in the first line seems to echo Eric Williams' own coinage of the phrase University of Woodford Square. As in Williams' university, the phrase becomes a metaphor for another kind of learning; learning that is acquired not from structured curricula administered by renowned leaders or professors but rather from life's continuous struggles to satisfy the deprivations of much needed nourishment for the body, mind, and soul for mere survival. In these struggles however, 'the people' or 'the proletariat', according to Carter "is they who had no voice in the emptiness / in the unbelievable / in the shadowless." The invocation of the landscape also calls to the fore the memory and burden of history which presaged the middle passage journeys to the new landscape. The middle passage journey which was made by sea however is now replaced by a pilgrimage made through a long

¹²³ Seymour, "A Commentary" 103.

¹²⁴ Carter, "University of Hunger" 84.

march across land. On this pilgrimage from rural landscape of their labour to the cityscape, the workers' progress is signposted by images of their deprivation.

Throughout the poem, Carter pinpoints these signposts again through the use of repetition, in this instance of the phrase "They come ...":

They come treading in the hoof marks of the mule
 passing the ancient bridge
 the grave of pride
 the sudden flight
 the terror of the time.

.....

They come from the distant village of the flood
 passing from middle air to middle earth
 in the common hours of nakedness.

.....

They come treading on the mud floor of the year
 mingling with dark heavy water
 And the sea sound of the eyeless flitting bat,
 O long is the march of men and long is the life
 And wide is the span.

By transforming the workers into pilgrims, Carter focuses attention on their political objective – to unite in solidarity against the oppressive forces of colonialism that have shackled them to the land. The pilgrimage is as difficult as the struggle is almost insurmountable. Carter again harnesses images of the natural elements which are not in solidarity with the worker's cause. Thus, he invokes the twin dilemma of drought and flooding, both of which ruin crops and make their labour in vain. But the invocation of the elements also serves to convey the difficulty and apparent interminability of the journey which effectively beg questions of whether their pilgrimage, may end in futility in much the same way as their labour falls victim to the vagaries of the seasonal weather. In other words, will this pilgrimage result in the satiation of their hunger? Will it bring an end to the misery and deprivations that they suffer?

Twin bars of hunger mark their metal brows
 Twin seasons mock them
 Parching drought and flood.

.....

is the golden moon like a big coin in the sky
 is the floor of bone beneath the floor of flesh
 is the beak of sickness breaking on the stone
 O long is the march of men and long is the life
 And wide is the span.
 O cold is the cruel wind blowing
 O cold is the hoe in the ground.

After describing a period of rest, “the cocks of dawn stand up and crow like bugles” awakening the workers from their brief slumber and calling them to arms again; to continue the pilgrimage; to continue the struggle even when confronting no temporary respite from their hunger and deprivations . Their resolve and determination is underscored as Carter repeats the conditions that circumscribe their deprivation.

is they who rose early in the morning
 watching the moon die in the dawn
 is they who heard the shell blow and the iron clang
 is they who had no voice in the emptiness
 in the unbelievable
 in the shadowless
 O long is the march of men and long is the life
 And wide is the span.

What then does this poem say of how Carter imagined the Guyanese nation? It is argued that while the landscape that Carter depicts in the poem is undeniably Guyanese (for example “the distant village of flood”, “the broad city” and the vacillating seasons of flood and drought) in ensuring that “they” who are the subject of his meditation are not specifically identified, he references all the subjugated peoples of the world who then and now are situated in similar universities of hunger. Although at this particular period when his political involvement with the PPP was focussed on fighting against British and American control of the political and

economic infrastructure of the anticipated nation, Carter is himself pragmatic but resolute about the enormity of the struggle that they face. Yet, he is convinced that the socialist ideals to which the PPP had committed itself are the solution for escaping their oppression under colonialism. The nation Carter imagines then is one in which the inherent inequalities – economic, social, political – must be eradicated and *all* become participants in the national dialogue for development and beneficiaries of its wealth. However, Carter recognises that their commitment to struggle is imperative since it is only through such struggle that they might wrest control of these institutions so that the expectations of freedom, self determination might be achieved. In his dual roles of poet and political activist, Carter is determined to convey the importance of solidarity and commitment to the cause of nationhood and decolonisation. For emphasis, Carter insists on investing his political poetry with a very oral quality that even in its written format draws on the speech patterns of what Brathwaite has described as nation language. Evident in “University of Hunger” are the staccato rhythms that match the cadences of accent and tone in oral performance which captures the terse, simmering undertones of anger. That these poems were in fact all performed in public places that attracted and invited the participation of ‘the people’ also serves as a process by which the mandate for action was validated and the cause for which they were engaged in struggle was legitimised. The orality of the language and tone of the poetry further eliminates any distinctions between the poet’s public and private personas as he becomes the voice with the responsibilities of their shared experience of oppression. The repetition of key phrases and ideas also assists in committing the poems to memory and consequently the values that they convey.

“This is the Dark Time My Love”

Addressed to his wife while he was imprisoned, “This is the Dark Time My Love” continues Carter’s meditation on the misery, deprivations and dehumanisation that characterise daily existence during the period of constitutional suspension. The poem which is of just three stanzas is deceptively simple but dark in its imagery and tone. Carter employs repetition of the title in the first line of each stanza to underscore the ominous cloud that hangs over the landscape. Interspersed throughout the poem are images that evoke the menace and brutality of the military that patrol the land to crush any protests and enforce order.

It is the season of oppression, dark metal, and tears.
It is the festival of guns, the carnival of misery.
Every where the faces of men are strained and anxious.

Unlike “University of Hunger”, Carter also modifies many of the nouns with epithets of colour that entrench the menace. Thus the militia is described as “brown beetles” that “crawl about”; their arms are “dark metal” and the “red flowers bend their heads in awful sorrow.” The “red flowers” also symbolise the nascent socialists advocates who are leading the assault against the oppressive forces.

The final stanza asks two rhetorical questions about the identity of the oppressors.

Carter’s then unvarnished response is:

It is the man of death, my love, the strange invader
watching you sleep and aiming at your dreams.

In this response, Carter is pragmatic about the objectives of the “strange invader”; that is not merely to quell any rebellion but rather to stamp out any ambitions for freedom or aspirations for the people acquiring power and control over their own destinies

through nationhood. The trope of the dream echoes Carter's earlier poem "Looking at Your Hands"¹²⁵ from the volume *The Hill of Fire Glows Red* where the poet persona confesses that "I do not sleep to dream, but dream to save the world." By echoing the line in this poem, Carter suggests a progression in the deprivations and oppression being endured since such dreams of changing the world born of youthful enthusiasms and naïveté are threatened with annihilation.

"All are Involved"

The brevity of this poem – just two stanzas - which is the final one of the collection summarises this period of Carter's development as poet/political activist and forecasts a future where poetry will assume a primacy of place and purpose over his political interests. The poem is a re-affirmation of the commitment to the struggle against colonialism. Moreover, the poet is concerned to ensure that 'the people' should not abdicate their responsibilities for fighting for freedom and the possibilities that independence and decolonisation represented. As such, adopting a retrospective gaze over his period as revolutionary political activist, the poet persona shares the wisdom which he has acquired:

This much I have learnt:
 today a speck
 tomorrow a hero
 hero or monster
 you are consumed!

Carter is at pains to emphasise that apathy is not an option given the deepening political crisis that marred the progress towards nationhood and democracy in

¹²⁵ Carter, "Looking at Your Hands", *University of Hunger: Collected Poems and Selected Prose*. Ed. Gemma Robinson. (Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books, 2006) 70.

Guyana. Alluding to the inevitability of their active participation in remedying the horror of crisis, Carter, again in staccato rhythm exhorts:

Like a jig
shakes a loom.
Like a web
is spun the pattern
all are involved!
all are consumed!

This call to arms, however, is not an invitation to take violent action against their oppressors. Rather Carter and his comrades in arms were the victims of state violence. However, the poet's militancy is encapsulated in the language and tone of the poem.

Walcott's *Another Life*

Where Martin Carter's political literary auto/biographical poetry charts the growth of the poet's political consciousness as it parallels that of the Guyanese peoples, Walcott's *Another Life* is much more self consciously concerned with his development as a poet/artist. Though Walcott eschews organised political involvement, he asserts his right to engage in the political and social life of the region through his poetry and critical writing. As with Carter or any other artist, consideration of Walcott's whole body of work is necessary for assessing his development as poet. *Another Life*, is selected for examination here because it stands at a pivotal moment in Walcott's growth as a poet when he is assessing the important influences that have shaped his art. The poem also marks the end of his apprenticeship to the masters from whom he has honed his craft and the beginning of his experiments with his own individual artistic voice. Moreover, as critic Patricia Ismond has posited, *Another Life* "marks a culmination of his thought and ideas as a

Caribbean poet, and the arrival, at this midpoint of his career, at a consciousness which remains seminal to his total achievement.”¹²⁶

Even as Walcott traces his process of individuation, it is not an exclusively individual endeavour particularly since the poet posits among his objectives, a commitment to recording the region’s spiritual history and the biography of the landscape through poetry and painting. In so doing, Walcott, like Carter and other Caribbean artists becomes the voice of the cultural and artistic consciousness of the region.

Another Life

Walcott, “in the middle of another life” and career undertakes the writing of his autobiography, *Another Life* over a period spanning 1965 to 1974. This coincides with the immediate post-independence period in the region and invariably contextualises the historical and socio-political background of what Edward Baugh has defined as a prose poem.¹²⁷ Walcott relies on memory to recapture and record his early influences as an artist and his eventual commitment to the craft of poetry. In this sense, Walcott, in attempting to craft his identity as poet also repeats the feats of his predecessors in the English canon, in charting the ‘growth of a poet’s mind’ and painting a ‘portrait of the artist as a young man’. His story of development inevitably thrusts him into a further engagement with the absent history of his native island, St Lucia and the wider Caribbean. In ordering his recall of those significant events and persons who contributed to the growth of the poet, Walcott structures the long poem into four books, each of which records these ‘spots of time.’ In view of the

¹²⁶ Patricia Ismond, *Abandoning Dead Metaphors: The Caribbean Phase of Derek Walcott’s Poetry*. (Mona: University of the West Indies Press, 2001) 141.

¹²⁷ Edward Baugh,

parameters governing Caribbean auto/biographical practice discussed earlier, the poem straddles “the shifting boundaries between self and other, past and present, writing and reading, fact and fiction” as the poet chronicles the delineation of his poetic identity and unique voice. Walcott’s growing awareness of nation is woven almost seamlessly into the poem. Four critical turning points in the prose poem - one of each from the four books - is examined to illustrate this development.

The critical turning point of Book one, titled “The Divided Child” occurs in the seventh chapter wherein the poet persona experiences a moment of epiphany which bears intertextual echoes of James Joyce’s protagonist Stephen Dedalus in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In the “crabbed style” that characterises his poetry the poet persona oscillates between scenes of childhood and adult memories. These snapshots interwoven in the narrative poem, illustrate the strong impressions which his father’s memory, manifested in the remnants of his own artistic endeavours and his mother’s interests in reading classic literature, made on his budding artistic aspirations. Moreover, his inclination to painting which is nurtured by mentor and friend Harry Simmons and Dunstan St Omer respectively, which gives rise to their desire to record the St Lucian landscape is born in these early days. It is also in this book that Walcott introduces, albeit fleetingly, his first love and re-introduces his concern with the concept of history. That concern is also connected to the poet persona’s personal history as the product of mixed heritage and “prodigy of the wrong age and colour”, which explains the Book’s title, and its twin theme of identity as a West Indian artist.

Having established the circumstances of his early life, which gave birth to his inclination to art, the persona then describes that epiphanic moment that confirms his commitment to art, to “writing the spiritual history of the region”¹²⁸ The moment describes the persona at fourteen when finding himself lost in the scarp “dissolve[s] into a trance” which is powerful enough to move him to tears. It is in these moments that the poet persona seems to gain final confirmation and makes an almost public commitment of his life to the art of poetry:

I was seized by a pity more profound
 than my young body could bear, I climbed
 with the labouring smoke,
 I drowned in labouring breakers of bright cloud,
 then uncontrollably I began to weep,
 inwardly, without tears, with a sense of serene extinction
 of all sense; I felt compelled to kneel,
 I wept for nothing and for everything,
 I wept for the earth of the hill under my knees,
 for the grass, the pebbles, for the cooking smoke
 above the labourers’ houses like a cry,
 for unheard avalanches of white cloud,
 but “darker grows the valley, more and more forgetting.”¹²⁹

In the succeeding lines, the persona makes that prayer-like pledge confirming “that he fell in love with art, / and life began”.¹³⁰ In the scenes of this moment of new knowledge which are depicted in chapter seven, the poet gains new knowledge and a fresh perspective on his environment as his eyes swiftly survey the objects and persons of his past, other life. Vested with this new vision, the apparent meaninglessness of that other life also assumes new significance. The poet persona’s three pivotal concerns are enjoined in these scenes of the final chapter and according to critic Edward Baugh prefigures “the theme of loss and separation which runs through the poem and comprehends all the separations and deaths which the poem

¹²⁸ Qtd. in Edward Baugh, “The Poem as Autobiographical Novel: Derek Walcott’s *Another Life* in Relation to Wordsworth’s *Prelude* and Joyce’s *Portrait*.” *Awakened Conscience: Studies in Commonwealth Literature*. Ed. C.D. Naramsimhaiah. (Hong Kong: Heinman, 1978) 23.

¹²⁹ Walcott, *Collected Poems* 185.

¹³⁰ Walcott, *Collected Poems* 186.

laments and accepts".¹³¹ The joining of art, life and love at twilight also produces that new authoritative literary persona that heralds the dawn of yet another life - that of committed artist and poet.

This adult literary persona that is firmly established after the epiphanic experience of Book one casts another backward glance at the start of Book two which, as its title suggests, pays "Homage to Gregorias" or Dunstan St Omer, friend and mentor who shares the persona's dedication to art. In these glimpses of the past, the persona attempts to unravel the reasons for his predisposition to poetry as opposed to painting, his first love, and to which he has dedicated considerable time and effort. In so doing, he compares his difficulty in capturing the landscape in watercolour to the ease with which Gregorias accomplishes the same undertaking with "the linear elation of an eel".¹³² It is St Omer's unswerving energy and commitment to his artistic vocation of painting, which the persona wants to emulate. For him, however, the 'word' becomes the parallel medium with which he has been entrusted to pursue his Adamic mission of naming, recording and possessing the landscape bequeathed to the New World. It is also through this medium that he re-visions his literary self through autobiography, and charts the growth of his artistic imagination.

Amid these memories, the persona returns to another life wherein he first discovered the vacuum that represented the history of the islands. This moment of confrontation of the contradictory ideas of history marks the second critical turning point in the poem. From his first volumes of poetry, Walcott has attempted to grapple with the opposing concepts of history. For Walcott, the Western concept, which equates

¹³¹ Edward Baugh, Derek Walcott - Memory as Vision: *Another Life*. (London: Longman, 1978) 35.

¹³² Walcott, *Collected Poems* 201.

history with progress and achievement, measured largely through the acquisition of Empire is unacceptable and debilitating for the artist. Instead, he posits his own view of history, which if embraced, allows the artist to articulate a more penetrative, holistic perspective of the present.¹³³ Within the state of erasure that is Caribbean history Walcott envisions a wealth of possibility not available to artists of the Old World. As such, the Caribbean artist, like the archetypal figure of Crusoe but moreover, like Adam in his second paradise, must name his world in order to possess it. Walcott contends therefore that, “[i]f there was nothing, there was everything to be made”.¹³⁴ The confrontation with history, pivotal to the advancement of this second Book and the poem as a whole, forces the persona’s revocation of the old ideas of history as he was taught through the vision made possible from the eyes of the maturing artist. He proclaims:

But drunkenly, or secretly, we swore,
disciples of that astigmatic saint,
that we would never leave the island
until we had put down, in paint, in words,
as palmists learn the network of a hand,
all of its sunken, leaf-choked ravines,
every neglected, self-pitying inlet
muttering in brackish dialect, the ropes of mangroves
from which old soldier crabs slipped
surrendering to slush ...
For no one had yet written of this landscape
that it was possible, though there were sounds
given to its varieties of wood; ...
whole generations died, unchristened,
growths hidden in green darkness, forests
of history thickening with amnesia¹³⁵

¹³³ Walcott’s Adamic concept of history is discussed in greater detail in the next section of this chapter, “Auto/biography as Nation History”.

¹³⁴ Derek Walcott, “What the Twilight Says”. *What the Twilight Says: Essays*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1998) 4.

¹³⁵ Walcott, *Collected Poems* 194-5.

Through this process of confrontation the persona reconciles himself to the history of the islands which is also inextricably bound with his personal history as an artist whose imagination straddles and is influenced by the “richness“ of the Old World and the nothingness of the New. As a result of this reconciliation, Walcott admits his gratitude for the ironic fate which has bequeathed such an inheritance to him:

I give the strange and bitter and yet ennobling thanks for the monumental groaning and soldering of two great worlds, like the halves of a fruit seamed by its own bitter juice, that exiled from your own Edens, you have placed me in the wonder of another, and that was my inheritance and your gift.¹³⁶

He thereby relieves himself of former concerns of his ‘divided self’ and proceeds towards a more holistic perception devoid of that earlier conflict of history.

Whereas the first two Books of *Another Life* are dedicated to exploring those experiences that have shaped the artist’s imagination, they also foreshadow the inevitable separations and departures that must occur to complete the artist’s development. The enjoining of the artist’s first love, love for poetry and the landscape of the island which occurs at that critical turning point of Book one are all disjoined during Books three and four of the poem. “The Simple Flame” (Book three) which concentrates on the fire that destroys Castries and the relationship between the persona and his first love, Anna simultaneously depicts the poet rationalising the reasons for its failure. Pertinent to this rationalisation is the fact that just as the poet is attempting to write his autobiography – a task, which can only be achieved through the artistic recreation of selective events – so too he is unable to resist the compulsion to capture the essence of Anna in words. However, Anna resists such reduction:

I was simple,
I was simpler then.
It was simplicity
which seemed so sensual

¹³⁶ Walcott, “The Muse of History”. *What the Twilight Says: Essays*. 128.

.....
 but you brought the tears
 of too many contradictions,
 I became a metaphor, but
 believe me I was unsubtle as salt.¹³⁷

As Baugh suggests, it is this transcription of Anna to the realm of metaphor that thereafter precludes any relationship between the two:

Walcott uses Anna to develop his examination of the nature of poetry and his own poetic process and vision. Even while he tries to make her over into something more complex than she might have been, to make her into an image bearing more meaning than she can perhaps bear, at the same time he aspires towards her as a symbol of that very simplicity and directness of life to which he hopes that his circuitous, crab-like mind, delighting in the complexities and contradictions of metaphor, may lead him.¹³⁸

Although the termination of any possibility for an enduring relationship with Anna is crucial, it is encapsulated within the larger separation from the increasingly oppressive landscape and its nurturing qualities for which the poet yearns. Walcott had admitted the need for such separation:

Yet, the older and more assured I grew, the stronger my isolation as a poet, the more I needed to become omnivorous about the art and literature of Europe to understand my own world.¹³⁹

The departure from St Lucia in search of a wider experience creates at this point a temporary separation from all the early influences, which had helped to shape his artistic imagination so far. Thus it is the passage, which describes an experience of “homecoming without home”, which underscores the inability of the imagination to re-produce past experience that foreshadows the permanent separation from these nurturing influences willed by the poet persona’s departure from the island. His/story is therefore discovered to be transient in nature:

¹³⁷ Walcott, *Collected Poems* 242 – 3.

¹³⁸ Baugh, *Memory as Vision* 55.

¹³⁹ Walcott, “Muse of History” 127.

And so one summer after I returned, we arranged
to stay in the old village ...
but it was not the same at dawn, it was a book
you'd read a life ago ...
I left there that morning with a last look
at things that would not say what they once meant ...
three lives dissolve in the imagination,
three loves, art, love, and death,
fade from a mirror clouding with this breath,
not one is real, they cannot live or die,
they all exist, they never have existed.¹⁴⁰

While departure from the island results in temporary separation, it is death in life (as in the case of Gregorias) and actual physical death (as with Simmons) which ends the communion between the poet persona and his muses – Simmons, Gregorias, history. These separations are painful and traumatic in the permanence which they inflict. Walcott's first intimation of death's imminence occurs in a reunion with Gregorias in Trinidad. From his vantage point, he recognises the truth of all the rumours he had heard about Gregorias' decline. But it is Gregorias' admission of his attempted suicide that foreshadows the circumstances of Simmons' own suicide. The stark solitude and pointlessness of Simmons' suicide marks the final critical turning point in the poet's development. This loss throws the poet persona into convulsions of rage and grief. He laments the disdain with which the politicians, academics and society as a whole treat their artists "spitting on their own poets, / preferring their painters drunkards, / for their solemn catalogue of suicides."¹⁴¹

It is in the experience of the trauma of separation that the artist's individual voice is defined granting the adult literary persona the authority and purpose to re-make the circumstances and events that comprise the 'portrait of the artist as a young man' and

¹⁴⁰ Walcott, *Collected Poems* 255 –7.

¹⁴¹ Walcott, *Collected Poems* 265.

which preceded this other life of artistic maturity. Bereft of the muses of his early life, memory becomes the muse, which now stimulates his imagination and helps him to re-create an-other life. Words then remain his oldest of friends from which he cannot be separated and which provide him with the medium through which he re-makes history. Walcott concludes by re-affirming his commitment to a life of poetry and art – “the light and amber of another life”.

Walcott’s auto/biography *Another Life* records in much more detail the emergence of a Caribbean aesthetic and consciousness than does Martin Carter’s auto/biographical poetry. The aesthetic values and consciousness which Walcott explores in his auto/biography are developed from a complex confluence of influences spanning the cultures that have, as a result of history, congregated in the region - European, African, Asian and indigenous cultures. The densely metaphorical framework by which the prose poem acquires its coherence and unity is demonstrative of this complex of influences. From the allusions to European art, artists and traditions to the evocation of the fauna, flora other aspects of the landscapes of Trinidad and Tobago, Walcott details the breadth of his apprenticeship to the masters and the rich cultural heritages from which he has delineated his voice as Caribbean poet and artist. *Another Life*, however does not merely record Walcott’s progress from poet with apparent predilections for European influences towards one enamoured of the indigenous cultural heritages. Rather, as critic Patricia Ismond points out, Walcott’s relationship to this tradition is much more complex:

It is quite complex, many-sided, and finally eclectic: in Walcott’s practice, it ranges over correspondences and parallels, rebuttals, acts of communion and of subversion, continuities and discontinuities.¹⁴²

¹⁴² Patricia Ismond, *Abandoning Dead Metaphors: The Caribbean Phase of Derek Walcott’s Poetry*. (Mona: University of the West Indies Press, 2001)13.

In addition to the variety of cultural influences that have obviously contributed to the development of Walcott as independent poetic voice is the polyphony of other voices – familial, community, mentors and friends - that have come to inhere in its construction. This is critical to the auto/biographical act wherein the delineation of self is inherently dependent on the referencing and construction of others as Pouchet Paquet argues.

Naipaul's *A House for Mr Biswas*

At seventy-five and in the twilight of a long and prolific career as a writer, V S Naipaul on a recent reconciliatory visit of sorts to his country of birth, Trinidad and Tobago deflected questions about which of his books he was most proud or about which he felt most deeply. However, in an essay of remarkable candour, Naipaul in 1983 reflected on his experience writing the auto/biographical novel, *A House for Mr Biswas* admitted:

[o]f all my books *A House for Mr Biswas* is the one closest to me. It is the most personal, created out of what I saw and felt as a child ... The book took three years to write. It felt like a career; ... The labour ended; the book began to recede. And I found that I was unwilling to reenter the world I had created, unwilling to expose myself again to the emotions that lay below the comedy. I became nervous of the book. I haven't read it since I passed the proofs in May 1961.¹⁴³

This admission perhaps suggests some of the reasons for the rancour and ambivalence evident in Naipaul's writing with respect to his childhood, community and nation of origin. More than that, Naipaul also points here to the depth of personal investment made as a writer in inscribing what is undoubtedly a reflective and intimate assessment of family life, community and the wider Trinidad society over some three

¹⁴³ Qtd. in Peggy Nightingale, *Journey through Darkness: The Writings of V S Naipaul*. (St Lucia, London, New York: University of Queensland Press, 1987) 41. Nightingale quotes from an essay written by Naipaul published in the *New York Review of Books* 24 November 1983.

generations of an Indo-Trinidadian family. Interwoven in the complex of narratives however, is the most critical – that of Naipaul’s tortured journey to escape what he perceived as the morass of his homeland to fulfil the treasured aspiration of becoming a writer. As with Walcott who hoped to fulfil his father’s aspirations as a painter, Naipaul too as perceptive witness to his father’s own frustrated although then unorthodox aspirations of becoming a writer, ironically, shared those dreams. However, his father’s disappointment fades in the light of V S Naipaul’s incomparable success crowned with him being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2001. Notably, these dreams are realised in self-imposed exile in Britain in a milieu which Naipaul sensed as being more enabling and welcoming for writers.

Nonetheless, *A House for Mr Biswas* holds a special place in Naipaul’s body of work since it is arguably the first to provide such a comprehensive socio-historical examination of Indo-Trinidadian life spanning from the colonial period to the immediate post-independence years in the island. In the context of Caribbean auto/biographical practice then, Naipaul, more than Carter or Walcott illustrates the nexus of disciplines that converge in auto/biographical texts – social and oral histories, biography, sociology and cultural studies. So perceptive and comprehensive is Naipaul’s study of life in Chaguanas in Trinidad from the first half of the twentieth century that it opens perspectives into the hitherto cloistered and static world of the Indo-Trinidadian community. It was a world referenced often in terms of myth by other communities existing alongside yet kept firmly outside of that world. As critic Baidik Bhattacharya confirms about Naipaul’s early novels generally:

[t]hese novels present a unique opportunity to explore a buried history of British imperialism – the history of indentured labor, the nineteenth-century, as migration of cheap laborers from the Indian subcontinent to different parts of the New World following the formal abolition of

slavery. Without his fiction and his staging of the familial/autobiographical in them, the imaginative and emotional life of this 'other' globalization of the nineteenth-century, and the resultant diaspora that continues through the present moment of history would have been quite inaccessible.¹⁴⁴

The Trinidad that Naipaul depicts in his auto/biography is perceived from the point of view of the main protagonist, Mohan Biswas – modelled loosely on his father Seepersad. It is a narrative of frustrated ambitions of being a writer which in itself condemns him to an existence of isolation, separation and unbelonging from his family and community. His quest for a house which amounts for Biswas “to lay[ing] claim to one’s portion of the earth”¹⁴⁵ unites the epic length narrative and stands metaphorically for this isolation, unbelonging and futility; all of which would have been confirmed had he “died as one had been born, unnecessary and unaccommodated.”¹⁴⁶ To trace Biswas’ movement from the house in which he was born “unlucky” to that in which he died is to connect not only the trajectory of the character’s tragic-comic attempts at becoming a writer and owning his home. Moreover it is an exploration of the social and cultural history of the closed Indo-Caribbean community as it resisted and succumbed to the impact of change heralded by the nationalist movement in the island. Each of these houses underscores the isolation of the protagonist while at the same time serving to redouble his efforts to own his house in which he could finally demarcate his independence as an individual and a man and gain some control over his destiny. In many ways, this quest for a house and the independence and belonging thus associated parallels that of the nation’s independence struggle and decolonisation efforts; both struggles are fraught

¹⁴⁴ Baidik, Bhattacharya, “Naipaul’s New World: Postcolonial Modernity and the Enigma of Belated Space.” *Novel* 39.2 (2006) 245.

¹⁴⁵ Naipaul, *A House* 14.

¹⁴⁶ Naipaul, *A House* 14.

with disappointments and disillusionment with the acquisition of the prize – the house and nationhood – resulting in tremendous responsibilities than had been imagined.

Mr Biswas' desire for his own house is confirmed when with the unfortunate death of his father Raghu and in the absence of any other maternal relatives of means he is with his mother Bipti, brothers and sister forced to sell their humble hut and land to settle an outstanding debt. The hut of mud and grass was of itself insecure and transient yet it would have represented an inheritance of some worth for Mr Biswas and his siblings. In its loss, Mr Biswas experiences a sense of dislocation and displacement akin to that described by the indentured labourers who made the crossing of the *kala pani*. Ironically, the land on which the house had once stood appreciated in value with discovery of oil and accompanying industrialisation undertaken from the early years of the twentieth century. This initial displacement is described thus:

And so Mr Biswas came to leave the only house to which he had some right. For the next thirty-five years he was to be a wanderer with no place to which he could call his own, with no family except that which he was to attempt to create out of the engulfing world of the Tulsis. For with his mother's parents dead, his father dead, his brothers on the estate in Felicity, Dehuti [his sister] as a servant in Tara's house and himself rapidly growing away from Bipti who, broken became increasingly useless and impenetrable, it seemed to him that he was really quite alone.¹⁴⁷

Biswas' displacement is compounded by his isolation from his mother and other siblings. He effectively comes to recognise his alone-ness. Yet, Biswas seems even at this early age to have made the promise to himself to purchase a house as a means of establishing his individuality, independence and belonging. Unhoused, Mr Biswas' life choices automatically are limited and susceptible to chance. Consequently, as he

¹⁴⁷ Naipaul, *A House* 40.

moves from one house to the next, Mr Biswas is exposed to training as a pundit, formal education at a Canadian Presbyterian school as well as a variety of job – from sign painter to driver and overseer and finally as journalist.

It is however, Biswas' impromptu marriage into the conservative and prosperous Hindu family, the Tulsis, that changes the course of his life forever. Tulsidom with its signatory mansion, Hanuman House becomes the next explicit sign of his alienation and displacement from a world that was an anathema to interests and ideals of individualism and independence. The house had been built by Pundit Tulsi, the patriarch of the family who had perished in a vehicular accident. Unlike most other members of the Indo-Trinidadian community however, Pundit Tulsi had not acquired his fortune as a labourer; instead he had still been in communication with family members in India, thereby ensuring a connection to his origins and had obviously belonged to a high caste given his elevation to the position of pundit. Hanuman House was a symbol of the Tulsi family's wealth and elevated position. The house is also the metaphor for the static retention of religious and cultural traditions and customs and is a microcosm of the wider Indo-Trinidadian rural community at that time. Imposing among the other dilapidated buildings, the House concretised the Tulsis reputation among Hindus as "a pious, conservative, landowning family."¹⁴⁸ However, even in Naipaul's initial description of the seemingly impenetrable exterior of the House, there is the implicit suggestion that it could be susceptible to the changes that had begun to sweep through the society.

Among the tumbledown timber-and-corrugated-iron building in the High Street at Arwacas, Hanuman House stood like an alien white fortress. The concrete walls looked as thick as they were, and when the narrow doors of the Tulsi door in the ground floor were closed the

¹⁴⁸ Naipaul, *A House* 81.

House became bulky, impregnable and blank. The side walls were windowless, and on the upper two floors the windows were mere slits in the façade. The balustrade which hedged the flat roof was crowned with a concrete statue of the benevolent monkey-god Hanuman. From the ground his whitewashed features could scarcely be distinguished and were, if anything, slightly sinister, for dust had settled on projections and the effect was that of a face lit up from below.¹⁴⁹

Its exterior betrayed the structured, hierarchical order that circumscribed daily life within its walls. For Mr Biswas, this was antithetical to his disordered, dislocated upbringing. Moreover, the communal organisation positioned sisters in order of importance on the basis of age; husbands were also ordered according to their occupations in the family business with all being subordinate to Seth, the senior brother-in-law and second in command to the matriarch Mrs Tulsi. Children of these marriages “were regarded as assets, a source of future wealth and influence.”¹⁵⁰ Ironically, in an effort to level the playing field, all children were fed in common and punished and rewarded equally. All were aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to their position in the hierarchical chain in the House.

In spite of the well-ordered structure and operation that was Hanuman House, it was not impervious to the allure of other cultural and religious influences, the attractions of the city, Port of Spain, where educational and other employment opportunities were numerous and the changing social mores that prized individual achievement and advancement above the closed communal efforts on which Tulsidom had been built. Consequently, as the critic Maureen Warner-Lewis argues, Naipaul as he plots the cultural confrontation, disintegration and syncretism which are thematically significant in his novel, illustrates the “sometimes subtle, sometimes obvious, way in

¹⁴⁹ Naipaul, *A House* 80-1.

¹⁵⁰ Naipaul, *A House* 188.

which the Western-oriented Creole culture of Trinidad corrodes Hindu traditional customs and beliefs, and the shifting of attitudes and psychological bewilderment this produces.”¹⁵¹ Thus the opportunities for formal education which was established as the key to future success in the new socio-economic system and politics being put in train was enough incentive to encourage the move from the rural Arwacas to Port of Spain for the Tulsi clan. The move to the city and the benefits of formal education in predominantly denominational schools that were usually Catholic spurred the interactions with others of diverse racial, ethnic and religious persuasions. The impact was immediately noticeable not only in the demeanour and adoption of other rituals and customs by the two gods, Owad and Shekhar but even in Mrs Tulsi for whom combining Catholic and Hindu practices was par for the course. Eventually, as if recognising the inevitable fate that awaited Hanuman House, Mrs Tulsi moved the clan to a new house at Shorthills. However, the matriarch’s absence in Port of Spain to oversee the education of the two gods had robbed Arwacas of its ancestral leader and ruptured the previous order.

Mr Biswas’ move to Port of Spain with his wife Shama and children Anand and Savi had served to fuel his desire to extricate himself from Tulsidom. His job as a journalist at the Herald also partially satisfied his desire to write and moreover was rewarded with greater respect from the Tulsis as they adjusted to the different world of Port of Spain. Though he could hardly afford the house and remained in debt to the end, Mr Biswas eventually realised his dream of purchasing his own house against all the odds of his unpredictable life. The crudeness of the structure betrays the journey towards its ownership but does not diminish the pride with which Mr Biswas and his

¹⁵¹ Maureen Warner-Lewis, “Cultural Confrontation, Disintegration and Syncretism in *A House for Mr Biswas*.” *Critical Perspectives on V S Naipaul*. (London: Heinemann, 1979) 98.

family regard it. Like Hanuman House, its distinguishing features ensured it drew attention in the community.

The house could be seen from two or three streets away and was known all over St James. It was like a huge and squat sentry-box: tall, square, two-storeyed, with a pyramidal roof of corrugated iron.¹⁵²

As with the independent nation, Mr Biswas was unprepared for the responsibilities of house ownership; the expenses seemed to multiply: landrent, rental of the rediffusion set, rates, interests, repairs and debts.¹⁵³ That his children were also able to study abroad was another distinct source of pride for Mr Biswas; the realisation of another dream. The dream that his children would benefit from the opportunities which had escaped him.

These three writers - Carter, Walcott and Naipaul – in their respective texts each represents their constructions of nation that coincided with the independence period in the Caribbean. Their auto/biographies reveal a variety of previously muted voices that interrogate the prevailing notions of colonialism and nationalism while proffering often very idealistic positions of the utopian nation. For example, Walcott argues against political or other militancy as initially suggested by Carter, proposing instead that “the future of West Indian militancy lies in art.”¹⁵⁴ There is in this proposal however, not suggestion of how social justice and equality might be attained within the new nations. For Naipaul, while the critique of the nation is salient, there is hardly any optimism offered to counter the alienation of the main protagonist. Rather migration to Britain for educational purposes appears to be the outlet suggested.

¹⁵² Naipaul, *A House* 8.

¹⁵³ Naipaul, *A House* 574.

¹⁵⁴ Walcott, “What the Twilight Says” 16.

Notwithstanding this, these writers are incisive in their assessments of the nationalist projects and inscribe social, cultural and political histories into their auto/biographies. The nexus of disciplines that collide in their auto/biographical writings is also illustrative of the breadth of the genre in its appropriation by Caribbean writers.

Auto/biography as Nation History

With the prospect of independence, both historical and literary production was concerned with affirming belonging to and ownership of the adopted Caribbean homelands and the creation of cultural traditions from the vestiges of ancestral practices that had survived the Crossings. Integral to this process of writing the individual territories and region anew was the interrogation of established historical narratives of otherness circulated for example, in early European pre-texts and subsequent travelogues, diaries, commissioned inquiries and novels. Differing approaches to remembering bifurcated largely by the amateur and trained historians' empiricist techniques, and the creative artists' literary re-imaginings guided by their own philosophies of history shaped the resulting narratives.¹⁵⁵ Taken together, however, these histories and creative literatures come to constitute alternative biographies and auto/biographies that lend acuity of vision and sensibility to the imagining and critique of nation. The historian, like the biographer faced with the task of inscribing the life of another person or place, relies on sanctioned documents, past records and where possible, interviews. For the historian, the outcome is a detailed profile of the territory or region, often beginning before "discovery" and

¹⁵⁵ Paget Henry makes a similar distinction between these philosophical approaches, labelling them historicist and poeticist respectively. See Henry, *Caliban's Reason* 1-18.

charting the introduction of other peoples, the changing landscape and development of composite cultures.

While both approaches to re-writing history are invaluable to the decolonisation project, the auto/biographical narratives proffered by the creative artists (and to a lesser extent by some politicians) are further emboldened by the fact that they are able to bridge an important chasm between what Doris Sommer calls “empirical ‘knowledge’ and emotional ‘knowing.’”¹⁵⁶ The intuitive knowledge to which Sommer refers has been critical to the recuperation of cultural memory in the Caribbean where history is so intrinsically associated with trauma. As illustrated in the preceding discussion, creative artists, ever conscious of their target audience, have much more than professional historians, combined these two epistemological positions into their works as a means of allowing (or denying) privileged access into the experiences to which they are giving voice. Moreover, the philosophies of history espoused by artists such as Harris, Lamming and Walcott are informed by intuitive knowledge and influences the narrative strategies employed in their prose and poetry.

Auto/biography has thus presented another site of reckoning with history as artists re-sense and record alternative nation histories. But Kincaid’s penetrating questions quoted below betray not only the problematic and pervasive position that history occupies in the Caribbean imagination but also the challenges presented in the act of memory, the shaping of that memory into narrative and the inadequacy of language to the task of naming, describing, testifying and determining the details of the historical experience:

¹⁵⁶ Sommer, *Proceed with Caution, When Engaged by Minority Writing in the Americas* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1999) 128.

What to call this thing that happened to me and all who look like me?
 Should I call it history?
 If so, what should history mean to someone like me? Should it be an
 idea, should it be an open wound and each breath I take in and expel
 healing and opening the wound again and again, over and over, or is it
 a moment that began in 1492 and has come to no end yet? Is it a
 collection of facts, all true and precise details, and, if so, when I come
 across these true and precise details, what should I do, how should I
 feel, where should I place myself?
 Why should I be obsessed with all these questions?¹⁵⁷

Indeed, Kincaid's metaphorical use of the "wound" to symbolise the trauma
 associated with history gestures not just to the actual physical abuse occasioned by the
 institutions of slavery, indenture and colonialism but also the psychological wounds.
 Cathy Caruth, drawing on Freudian psychology, explains that trauma's psychological
 wounds represent a

breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world [and is]
 not like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather
 an event that ... is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully
 known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes
 itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the
 survivor.¹⁵⁸

Consequently, Kincaid's questions echo across ethnicities and races in the Caribbean
 and reverberate most of all in the imaginations of the region's historians and artists,
 for whom the muse of memory, fuelled as it usually is by a historical past, cultural
 traditions and academic conventions, must engage in quarrels with "this thing" called
 history as a prerequisite to perfecting their respective crafts.

For the historian, the quarrel with history and the process of revolutionising
 Caribbean historiography began arguably with John Jacob Thomas' famous response

¹⁵⁷ Jamaica Kincaid, "In History" *Callaloo* 20.1 (1997) 1.

¹⁵⁸ Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) 4.

Froudacity: West Indian Fables Explained (1889)¹⁵⁹ to the scathing catalogue of observations of the British historian James Anthony Froude's *The English in the West Indies* (1888).¹⁶⁰ Later historians, most notably Elsa Goveia and Eric Williams, Caribbean born and British trained, assessed and challenged the previously untrammelled truth and rationalisations of inherited history and proffered alternative versions in their seminal works, *A History of the Historiography of the British West Indies to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (1956)¹⁶¹ and *Capitalism and Slavery* (1964).¹⁶² Subsequent Caribbean based historians Walter Rodney, Kamau Brathwaite, Keith O Laurence, Woodville Marshall, Bridget Brereton and Brinsley Samaroo – all pioneers of the study and teaching of Caribbean history on the campuses of the University of the West Indies after 1962 - continued in this vein of giving voice to interpretations of history from the perspective of the formerly enslaved and colonised peoples and thus building the bank of knowledge so necessary for establishing commitment and belonging.¹⁶³

Inevitably, in varying respects, each has contested Froude's confident conclusion that "[t]here are no people there in the true sense of the word, with a character and purpose of their own" by positing their versions of history that served to restore agency and subjectivity to the formerly enslaved and indentured by making them the subjects of

¹⁵⁹ J. J. Thomas, *Froudacity: West Indian Fables Explained* (New Beacon Press, 1889).

¹⁶⁰ J. A. Froude, *The English in the West Indies or the Bow of Ulysses* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1888). For a contemporary assessment of this debate see Faith Smith's "A Man Who Knows his Roots: J J Thomas and Current Discourses on Black Nationalism" in *Small Axe* Vol. 5 (1999): 1-13.

¹⁶¹ Elsa V. Goveia, *A Study of the Historiography of the British West Indies to the End of the Nineteenth Century* 1956. (Washington: Howard University Press, 1980).

¹⁶² Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1964).

¹⁶³ Included among such historians are Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770 – 1820* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), and Walter Rodney, *The History of the Guyanese Working People 1881 – 1905* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1981) who further encouraged the study and research of Caribbean history in the then University College of the West Indies and later the University of the West Indies in the post-Independence period.

history rather than mere objects. In so doing, their purported 'historylessness', the basis on which their enslavement was justified came into sharp relief. Thus, according to Nana Wilson-Tagoe:

in both perspective and methodology, [twentieth-century West Indian historiography] has attempted to reexamine institutions, structures, and relationships not just from the point of view of economic motivation and political and social development but also from the point of view of the conscious lives of mass numbers of slaves as they sought to make adjustments in the society. There were greater attempts now to analyse the nature and dynamics of plantation society. Historians pieced the lives of slaves together and attempted to create images of life and relationships within slave society. Plantations were conceived as models of socialisation, and slaves, virtually invisible in the histories of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century historians, now became the focus of analysis.¹⁶⁴

Inasmuch as the Afro-Caribbean population were at the forefront of such recuperation, other races and ethnicities were also similarly absorbed. Ethnic histories that sought to record ancestral beginnings, arrivals to the New World and contributions to the nation states also emerged. For example, Dwarka Nath's *A History of the Indians in Guyana*¹⁶⁵ (1970), John Le Guerre's *Calcutta to Caroni: The East Indians of Trinidad and Tobago* (1974), Mary Noel Menezes' *Scenes from the History of the Portuguese in Guyana*¹⁶⁶ (1986) and Jo-Anne Ferreira's *The Portuguese of Trinidad and Tobago*¹⁶⁷ (1994). Walton Look Lai has also written extensively on the Chinese population in his text, *The Chinese in the West Indies*¹⁶⁸ (1998) while Trev Sue-A-Quan has examined the Chinese in Guyana in his text *Cane*

¹⁶⁴ Nana Wilson-Tagoe, *Historical Thought and Literary Representation in West Indian* (Oxford: James Curry, 1998) 27.

¹⁶⁵ Dwarka Nath, *A History of Indians in Guyana* (London: 30 Crowther Road, S.E. 25: D. Nath, 1970).

¹⁶⁶ Mary Noel Menezes, *Scenes from the History of the Portuguese in Guyana* (London: Sister M N Menezes, RSM, 1986).

¹⁶⁷ Jo-Anne S Ferreira, *The Portuguese of Trinidad and Tobago: Portrait of an Ethnic Minority* (St Augustine: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1994).

¹⁶⁸ Walton Look Lai, *The Chinese in the West Indies: 1806 – 1995, A Documentary History* (Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago: The Press, University of the West Indies, 1998).

*Reapers: Chinese Indentured Immigrants in Guyana*¹⁶⁹ (1999). While some research has also been done into segments of the white population,¹⁷⁰ histories of the Amerindian, Syrian and Lebanese communities are at the early stages.

Although historians - amateurs and professionals – experimented with a range of approaches to history writing in the region, for the most part, they obeyed the demands of Western historical models whether within the vein of historicism or empiricism or through the more metaphorical approaches, whether biological or mechanical.¹⁷¹ What remains constant with these approaches is a bias towards a continuous linear progression of time in which achievement is measured and assessed as a cumulative of wealth, Empire and power – none of which is realistically possible in the islands within the wider schematic of capitalist expansion. Thus, as some critics, including Anderson and Bhabha have argued, the very methodology employed by the historian of which periodisation is a necessary ingredient limits the possibilities through which history might be re-interpreted or re-imagined even within the context of the catastrophe that it represents in the Caribbean imagination. As Nana Wilson-Tagoe posits:

For history as has been developed in Western and West Indian historiography demands a particular context of space and time, a particular dating scheme as well as a way of separating moments of time, of measuring relations between cause and effect, and of reaching conclusions. Its conception of past time is of a single solid unit from

¹⁶⁹ Trev Sue-A-Quan, *Cane Reapers: Chinese Indentured Immigrants in Guyana* (Vancouver, British Columbia: Riftwood Publishing, 1999).

¹⁷⁰ See Howard Johnson and Karl Watson, eds., *The White Minority in the Caribbean* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998).

¹⁷¹ Barry W Higman, *Writing West Indian History* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Caribbean/Warwick University Caribbean Series, 1999) 171. Higman explains that metaphors are employed in at least three different ways in writing History; these include as “a depictive or illustrative function, using a literary device to increase the power and meaning of a narrative. Secondly, it may function as a heuristic, opening new perspectives and insights, and advancing understanding through explanatory analysis. Thirdly, it may be constitutive, replacing previous meanings with new ones, drawing on everyday ideas or other sciences.”

which smaller units (epochs, centuries, decades) may be removed, described, and shaped.¹⁷²

Indeed, Goveia confirms that while the early writing of history in the region aimed to be comprehensive in its study of the whole society, it was confined within linear, chronological parameters although it was essentially a record of social change.

Goveia explains that:

[I]n history, time supplies the continuum but not the principle of change. To discover that principle, it is still necessary to do as so many of the West Indian historians did – to seek, beyond the narrative of events, a wider understanding of the thoughts, habits, and institutions of a whole society. In the society itself, in its purpose and in its adaptive processes, will be found the true genesis of its history.¹⁷³

The extent to which Caribbean historians took cognisance of this “principle of change” is arguable. Purposing to effect change must have been a definite consideration not only in undertaking to re-write history but more particularly in the writing of those “first” histories of the burgeoning nations evidenced for instance in Williams’ motivation for writing *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago* which can elucidate similar projects in other territories:

The aim of writing the book, however, was not literary perfection or conformity with scholastic canons. The aim was to provide the people of Trinidad and Tobago on their Independence Day with a National History This history ... is seeking to inform them of their past as an essential guide to their future action, places them and their problems at all times in international perspective.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Wilson-Tagoe, *Historical Thought* 32.

¹⁷³ Goveia, *A Study of the Historiography of the British West Indies* 176-177.

¹⁷⁴ Eric Williams, foreword, *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago*. (Port of Spain : PNM Publishing Co., 1962) vii. As further explanation of Williams’ motivation for transforming the national and regional societies, he explains that: “Two principal objects have been kept in view in the preparation of this National History on the occasion of the Independence of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. The first is ... that it is only in unity on essential national issues that future progress can be made. Division of the races was the policy of colonialism. Integration of the races must be the policy of Independence. Only in this way can the colony of Trinidad and Tobago be transformed into the nation of Trinidad and Tobago. The second principal object that has been kept in view is the integration of the separated Caribbean Territories. Separation and fragmentation were the policy of

While signally useful in the stated objectives, such national histories still conformed to scholastic principles and thereby did not succeed in mapping paths to the achievement of such change or transformation as nationhood demanded. Perhaps such paths begin to emerge in the works of those historians who attempted to combine the practice of history with other disciplines as a means of determining how the catastrophe of history might be transcended. Two such examples are Orlando Patterson in his text, *The Sociology of Slavery* (1967)¹⁷⁵ and Kamau Brathwaite's *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, (1770 – 1820)* (1971).¹⁷⁶

Some Caribbean artists share the professional historian's predisposition for a linear, causal relationship between event and idea. Most notably among these artists is Naipaul distinguished as the region's "finest writer of the English sentence"¹⁷⁷ As the textual analysis in the preceding section reveals, for Naipaul, born into the second generation of a family of Indian immigrants in central Trinidad, the landscape represented alienation and an abysmal absence of history that seemed only to underscore his unbelonging and identitylessness. In his non-fictional text, *Finding the Centre*, he explains that:

I grew up with two ideas of history, almost two ideas of time. There was history with dates. That kind of history affected people and places abroad, and my range was wide: ancient Rome (the study of which, during my last two years at Queen's Royal College in Port of Spain, was the most awakening part of my formal education); nineteenth century England; the nationalist movement in India.

colonialism and rival colonialisms. Association and integration must be the policy of Independence. vii – viii.

¹⁷⁵ Orlando Patterson, *The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origins, Development, and Structure of the Negro Slave Society in Jamaica*. (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1967).

¹⁷⁶ Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica: 1770-1820* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

¹⁷⁷ Walcott, "The Garden Path" *What the Twilight Says: Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998) 126.

But Chaguanas, where I was born, in an Indian-style house my grandfather built, has no dates. If I read in a book that Gandhi had made his first call for civil disobedience in India in 1919, that date seemed recent. But 1919, in Chaguanas, in the life of the Indian community, was almost unimaginable. It was a time beyond recall, mythical. About our family, the migration of our ancestors from India, I knew only what I knew or what I was told. Beyond (and sometimes even within) people's memories was undated time, historical darkness. Out of that darkness (extending to place as well as time) we had all come. The India where Gandhi and Nehru and the others operated was historical and real. The India from which we had come was impossibly remote, almost as imaginary as the land of the *Ramayana*, our Hindu epic. I lived easily with that darkness, that lack of knowledge. I never thought to inquire further.¹⁷⁸

It is evident that within Naipaul's imaginative schematic, history follows an ordered, continuous chronology of time, marked by significant dates that recorded events that affected the lives of 'real' people and places *elsewhere*. But migration to the New World has forcibly disrupted that ordered passage of time and space. The resulting psychic dissonance is palpable especially in Naipaul's later work. As a maturing artist, Naipaul appears increasingly to be engulfed in a pessimistic darkness, perhaps prompting his now infamous rhetorical questions about West Indian history on visiting the islands just before its Independence and having agreed to write "a non-fiction book about the Caribbean" for then Premier Williams:

How can the history of this West Indian futility be written? What tone shall the historian adopt? ... The history of the islands can never be satisfactorily told. Brutality is not the only difficulty. History is built around achievement and creation; and nothing was created in the West Indies.¹⁷⁹

Ironically, investing in such a static philosophy of history, Naipaul subverts the potential of his creative imagination for disrupting what Harris describes as "the historical stasis which afflicts the West Indian sensibility and which may only be breached in complex creative perspectives for which the historical convention would

¹⁷⁸ Naipaul, *Finding the Centre* 51-52.

¹⁷⁹ Naipaul, *The Middle Passage* 20.

appear to possess no criteria.”¹⁸⁰ Through Naipaul’s pessimistic lens that focuses on history’s shipwreck, its ruins and its wounds, the view can only be one of nihilism. Curiously enough, some critics have pointed to the similarities in vision of Naipaul and Williams in this regard.¹⁸¹ Undoubtedly, Naipaul’s concept of history has also influenced his perception of the capabilities of the West Indian writer as he ironically asserts: “A literature can only grow out of a strong framework of social convention.”¹⁸² Such an assertion not only devalues the work of other Caribbean writers but also surreptitiously bolsters Naipaul’s argument for adherence to colonial values and novelistic paradigms. Yet, Naipaul’s anxieties about history and ambivalence about his own integrity as a writer also becomes evident through this statement. By contrast, Harris defends the ability of the Caribbean writer to treat with the challenges of history asserting that s/he is fully equipped to explore history without these pessimistic results:

The constitution of history as it affects the Caribbean and the Guianas is one which the creative writer is profoundly qualified to explore, I believe, provided he can suffer again through his work the ancestral torment of finding his tongue seized again as if he had become a dumb thing without voice or language: yet for this very reason knowing himself uniquely immersed and equipped to embrace the muse through an imaginative re-discovery of the past ... It is easy to pronounce on “historylessness,” oppression etc. – once one stands above it within an order of insulation – once one does not creatively descend into the disorder of it, suffer creatively the disorder of it: an escape route which may well prove the nest of two worlds and permit a skilful short circuiting of real crisis or confrontation in depth. The art in short not of alienation as it is popularly called but of insulation.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Wilson Harris, “History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas,” *Selected Essays of Wilson Harris: The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination*, ed., Andrew Bundy (London and NY: Routledge, 1999) 156.

¹⁸¹ See for instance, Gordon Rohlehr, “History as Absurdity,” *My Strangled City and Other Essay* (Port of Spain: Longman Trinidad Limited, 1992) 17-51, and Wilson-Tagoe, *Historical Thought and Literary Representation* (Oxford: James Curry, 1998).

¹⁸² Naipaul, *The Middle Passage* 66.

¹⁸³ Wilson Harris, “The Unresolved Constitution,” *Caribbean Quarterly* 14.1/2 (1968): 44.

In spite of Naipaul's stubborn adherence to such a philosophy of history, alternative approaches to contending with history have been explored from the beginning of forced or coerced migrations to the region. In fact, slave narratives and other testimonial forms from which Caribbean auto/biographical practice has evolved, were some of the earliest sites of such contention. Slave narratives by Mary Prince and Olaudah Equiano provide early evidence of how auto/biography was appropriated in re-telling life histories from the perspectives of the slave and freed man respectively. Prince's text, *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave, Related by Herself* (1831)¹⁸⁴ although heavily mediated, demonstrates clever story telling techniques in depicting the ordeal of the life of the archetypal female slave even as the more sordid details are omitted and emphasis placed instead on the embrace of the coloniser's religion – an overt privileging of her patrons' agenda and motives. Whereas Prince illustrates her dexterity in story telling, Equiano, a slave who, through his own cunning and entrepreneurship had purchased his freedom, demonstrates his mastery of the coloniser's language (another of the hallmarks of Caribbean literature) in writing and negotiating publication of his story *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*.¹⁸⁵ In the period before Emancipation, these texts established the paradigms that would guide the discursive practice of Caribbean auto/biography and dictated, in part, the basic functions, which the genre could accommodate.

However, these testimonies as well as the reports of commissions of enquiries into indentureship such as John Edwards Jenkins' *The Coolie: His Rights and Wrongs*¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave, Related by Herself*. (1831. Reprint, Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, 1993).

¹⁸⁵ Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavas Vassa, the African. Written by Himself* (London, 1789).

¹⁸⁶ John Edward Jenkins, *The Coolie: His Rights and Wrongs* (New York: George Routledge and Sons, 1871).

(1871) raise pertinent issues related to Caribbean auto/biographical practice such as the authenticity of the voices that emerge, the veracity of “facts” included and the critical role of the audience to whom such texts are directed. In the case of Prince, the very circumstances that facilitated her oral testimony of her lived experiences as a slave from childhood also presented certain hindrances. As a female slave, exiled in England with her benefactor and employer, Thomas Pringle, secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, and a willing amanuensis, Susanna Strickland, Prince was in favourable circumstances for the reception of her testimony. That Prince’s narrative is doubly mediated, first through selective editing by Strickland, her amanuensis and further by Pringle, her editor and publisher, ensures that her narrative would be shaped to suit the political purposes of each. As such, the details that are given prominence in Prince’s text relate to evidence of her physical abuse at the hands of her slave masters and their wives and the sheer hardship of slave life. What has obviously been silenced are details of forced sexual encounters that are anathema to the Methodist instincts of the editors and upset the uncontested power hierarchies based on the responsibility assumed by the civilised English plantocracy for taming their barbarous slaves.

To lend credibility to her edited testimony, Prince must give a blanket pledge, as if in a judicial context, to tell the truth about her experiences: “I will say the truth to the English people who may read this story that my good friend, Miss S---, is now writing down for me.”¹⁸⁷ Still, her pledge is deemed insufficient to withstand the intense scrutiny anticipated by the abolitionist lobby. To this end, Pringle seeks to authenticate Prince’s testimony by providing copious supporting documentary

¹⁸⁷ Prince, *The History of Mary Prince* 84.

evidence, comprising for example, written testimonials of white female witnesses who verify not only Prince's existence, but having personally examined her body, corroborate the claims of physical abuse evident from the scars they have seen. The need to overcompensate in the provision of corroborating evidence exemplifies some of the challenges of testimonial and auto/biographical forms to bear witness to trauma and their use as representative voices for such. As Gilmore explains:

Because testimonial projects require subjects to confess, to bear witness, to make public and shareable a private and intolerable pain, they enter into a legalistic frame in which their efforts can move quickly beyond their interpretation and control, become exposed as ambiguous, and therefore subject to judgements about their veracity and worth ... Thus the joint project of representing the self and representing trauma reveals their structural entanglement with law as a metaphor for authority and veracity, and as a framework within which testimonial speech is heard.¹⁸⁸

Given this legalistic framework that circumscribes testimonial narratives, the other question that arises is whether Prince's voice actually emerges in the narrative presented. Although Pringle provides reassurances that, "as far as possible, Mary's exact expressions and peculiar phraseology" have been retained, there is obvious evidence to the contrary.¹⁸⁹

These challenges inherent in testimonial narratives become even more pronounced in Jenkins' report on his enquiry into the inhumane nature of indentureship in the then British Guiana. Jenkins functions within a formal legal framework since his brief is that of independent observer of the proceedings of the Royal Commission which was charged with the duty of investigating criticisms made against the indenture system by William des Voeux. Jenkins' role is further complicated since he is acting in the

¹⁸⁸ Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography* 7.

¹⁸⁹ Prince, *The History of Mary Prince* 45.

interest of the Aborigines Protection Society. Although Jenkins demonstrates as much sympathy for the travails of the indentured labourers as Pringle does for the slaves, their entrenched biases remain intact. Just as Jenkins repeats the racial stereotypes of the Other, already firmly entrenched by the nineteenth century (albeit with less flagrancy when dealing with the indentured labourers), so too Pringle appraises Prince's femininity based on Victorian ideals of womanhood.

Despite his sympathetic posture, Jenkins' choice of reporting style and format succeed in muting the voices of the indentured labourers. For while burdened with profuse details of the bureaucratic administration of the indentured system, the territory's geography, the layout of the estates, housing, health care, methods of resistance, social customs and relations of the indentured labourers and other free labour Jenkins allocates only a small fraction of the text comprising some three hundred pages to the actual testimony of the indentured witnesses before the commissioners. Indeed, the text bears more resemblance to a travelogue, with its minute details about delays, reportage of daily occurrences, and Jenkins' moral voice intoning distaste not only for the inhumane system but also with the decadence and indifferent attitudes of the plantocracy which he witnesses. This was perhaps to be expected given that Jenkins had an established reputation as a novelist, having already authored several books, the most successful of which is referenced on the title page of his report.¹⁹⁰ Much like Pringle, Jenkins too, in recording the direct speech of indentured labourers attempts to stay faithful to the cadences and tones of the speakers, evident, for example in the interrogation of the indentured labourer Hoonimaun:

¹⁹⁰ Noted on the title page of the text is: "By the author of "Ginx's Baby"". Jenkins, *The Coolie* (1871), Author's edition.

What was your quarrel with the manager about? Don't tell me a long story; make it as short as you can.

-- Very well, sir. One Saturday, about three o'clock, manager came to my house, and he ask me, "Driver, have you seen the hog-minder. I ask him why he not mind hogs; and the hog minder say, "Me got nine bitts last week, and the manager say, Send to the missy.'" So me ask him what he send for.

The President – I don't want all you said and he said; tell me what happened ...¹⁹¹

Yet, because Jenkins' narrative is laden with personal invective and paraphrases much of the indentured labourers direct testimony, their voices become muffled.

However, although constrained by the legal contexts within which their testimonies are judged, Prince, Equiano and the indentured labourers are not silenced. Rather, they succeed in subverting the constructed narratives of their mediators by skilfully exercising some authority over the voices that emerge through a range of strategies, such as the very involved story-telling techniques that suggest much more information than is required as illustrated above, repetition, "staged silences" that signify meaning to audiences other than the obvious target audience and the use of language and intonation peculiar to their communities and gender. Thus, to answer Spivak's now rhetorical question, the subaltern can in fact speak although the primary target audience may not *hear* the nuanced meanings of their stories in the delivery of their testimony or auto/biography.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Jenkins, *The Coolie* 140.

¹⁹² I make reference here to Gayatri Spivak's controversial article, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Laura Chrisman and Patrick Williams, eds., *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993): 66 – 111. Spivak has subsequently adjusted her declaration of the subaltern's voicelessness in a published interview, where she argues that the situation of the subaltern has changed over time, "[t]he subaltern now is altogether permeable, rather unlike the definition of subalternity in an earlier conjuncture by the South Asian historians' group where the subaltern was precisely the person outside the circuit of mobility. I have formulated a new notion of restricted permeability. The bottom is altogether permeable from above ... But the permeability from below up into the area of the dominant is not only as restricted as, but more restricted than it was before." See Meyda Yegenoglu and Mahmut Mutman, "Mapping the Present: Interview with Gayatri Spivak," *New Formations* 45 (2001-2002): 11.

The narrative strategies employed in these testimonial accounts have largely informed auto/biographical practice in the Caribbean, as Pouchet Paquet asserts and which is further corroborated in the textual analysis of the preceding section. With the onset of anti-colonialism and nationalism, auto/biography emerged as the preferred genre among politicians, intellectual, sportsmen and creative artists as they sought, for a variety of reasons, to inscribe self in relation to nationalist ideology and politics or as part of the project of defining a Caribbean aesthetic. While auto/biographies have been written by a number of the region's Independence leaders such as Williams¹⁹³ and Jagan¹⁹⁴ in most instances, the authorial intentions have been geared towards making intrinsic connections between their growth and evolution as radical leaders and their preparedness for the struggle of independence and decolonisation. Thus, these auto/biographies have served alternately to validate leadership and cement links between the goals of the community and that of the leaders who had challenged their colonial oppressors. Although auto/biographical writing by politicians and other role models also facilitates the inscription of alternative histories particularly in relation to the lived realities of colonialism, the concern here is specifically with autobiographical writing by the region's creative writers. It is primarily such autobiographical practice that evinces the attributes of Caribbean poeticism and which distinguishes its form and function in the imagining of the Caribbean nation.

Contrary to Naipaul's nihilistic view, other artists have contemplated the ruins but divined creative rejuvenation and innovation. The variables of time and space that act as methodological strictures for the historians and other similarly predisposed artists, instead open expansive possibilities for other artists. Several artists including Harris,

¹⁹³ Eric Williams, *Inward Hunger: The Education of a Prime Minister* (London :Deutsch, 1969).

¹⁹⁴ Cheddi Jagan, *The West on Trial: My Fight for Guyana's Freedom* (1966. St John's, Antigua: Hansib Caribbean, 1997).

Walcott, Lovelace and Pauline Melville, working within the Caribbean poeticist tradition that privileges myth, metaphor, journey motifs and a number of other narrative strategies, have envisaged within history's devastation, opportunities for exploring innumerable possibilities for rejuvenation and renewal. Common to their view is an acceptance of catastrophe, not as defeat and despair, but rather as the starting point for creation. As Harris explains:

... catastrophe accompanies, or is associated with, genuine change. Some element of catastrophe anyway. It is as if because of the debasement of the psyche over generations and centuries there can be no bypassing some degree of catastrophe as one experiences the regenerative potential of the muse.¹⁹⁵

Thus, where Naipaul accepts history on its conventional linear terms, by adopting this alternative mindset, other artists vigorously interrogate these conventions and conclude that because history is subject to the "fitful muse of memory" its 'facts' "evaporate into myth." As such, these artists participate in "an act of memory" wherein a "sense of the past [that] is of a timeless, yet habitable moment"¹⁹⁶ is deployed which subverts the stasis and facilitates access to "the assimilation of the features of every ancestor" from landscapes new and old now assembled within the territories. It is within this timeless and boundaryless space – perhaps that impenetrable "historical darkness" to which Naipaul refers - that these artists' intuitive imaginations benefit from the breadth of influences contained in the complex polyglot that constitutes the Caribbean.

¹⁹⁵ Wilson Harris, "Some Aspects of Myth and the Intuitive Imagination," *Explorations : A Selection of Talks and Articles 1966 – 1981* (Mundelstrup: Dangaroo Press, 1981) 97.

¹⁹⁶ Derek Walcott, "The Muse of History," *What the Twilight Says : Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998) 36.

By deploying the combined forces of myth and metaphor¹⁹⁷ in the inscription of alternative versions of history, language is constantly being negotiated in order to bridge the chasms of articulation between history and the intuitive imagination as Harris suggests. In this “torture of articulation,” each ascribes to language the empowerment for claiming the landscape and enunciating the “principle for change.”

As Walcott explains:

What would deliver him [that is, the New World person] from servitude is the forging of a language that went beyond mimicry, a dialect which had the force of revelation as it invented names for things, one which finally settled on its own mode of inflection, and which began to create an oral culture of chants, jokes, folksongs, and fables; this, not merely the debt of history, was his proper claim to the New World.¹⁹⁸

Thus, Walcott’s engagement with language traverses from the point of ascribing to a “language that went beyond mimicry” to that of a “mulatto of style” through arrival at a “style past metaphor” in his more recent poetry when it is evident that he has delineated his own individual mature voice as a Caribbean poet. Harris, from the start has been experimenting with language to arrive at what he calls variously a “language of the unconscious” and the “language of the imagination.” Each of his works participates in an “infinite rehearsal” that can be seen as taking the writer closer towards this goal.

¹⁹⁷ Some critics have contested the usefulness and success of the use of myth by Caribbean artists arguing that “historical narrative is subject to the same structures of representation which characterise fictional narrative, and so in this sense history is fiction. But this is distinctly different from characterising the fictional aspect of history as myth. It is *legerdemain* which Walcott employs to substitute textuality for history. Such substitution facilitates the elision of fundamentally different experiences between victor and victim, coloniser and colonized. Wilson Harris also establishes his critical perspective on the framework of this elision, so that he substitutes textuality (which in Harris’ case is often calcified myth, extricated from social and political experience) for history.” In Griffith’s estimation, “this calcified myth approximates what Edward Said refers to as ‘latent Orientalism.’” See Glyne A. Griffith, “Veiled Politics in West Indian Criticism,” *Kunapipi* Vol. XV No. 2 (1993): 108.

¹⁹⁸ Walcott, “What the Twilight Says” 15.

In explicating their positions on history, Harris and Walcott appropriate to their creative use, the full range of “classical,” aboriginal and “arrivant” influences that are interwoven with numerous Biblical, Victorian and Romantic allusions. The writing of the British Romantics was particularly influential among Caribbean writers as is evidenced in the works of both Harris and Walcott. For just as Wordsworth and his contemporaries who were writing during the French Revolution espousing its ideals of liberty, fraternity and brotherhood of all mankind, challenged their predecessors (such as Defoe and Swift) by ascribing to values and ideas especially related to the primacy of nature and the importance of language in giving voice to “men of low and rustic life”¹⁹⁹ so too some Caribbean artists appropriated these values and ideas into their project of re-defining the paradigms of history, nation and subjectivity in their writing.

As such, Walcott appropriates the images of Adam and Crusoe to explain the relationship he envisages for the New World man in his landscape, who, according to him, must participate in the process of naming anew and thereby claiming belonging. This process is only possible, according to Walcott when it is recognised that “amnesia is the true history of the New World.” Thus the void or erasure that is history opens the ultimate in creative possibilities since, “[i]f there was nothing, there was everything to be made.”²⁰⁰ In envisaging his role as that of the mythological Adam and Crusoe, the Caribbean artist then escapes the despair of history and comes to inhabit positions of empowerment that allow him to change his circumstances:

My Crusoe, then, is Adam. Christopher Columbus, God, a missionary, a beachcomber, and his interpreter Daniel Defoe. He is Adam because he is the first inhabitant of a second paradise. He is Columbus because

¹⁹⁹ Qtd. in Michael Baron, *Language and Relationship in Wordsworth's Writing* (London and New York: Longman Group, 1995) 4.

²⁰⁰ Walcott, “What the Twilight Says” 4.

he has discovered this new world, by accident, by fatality. He is God because he teaches himself to control his creation, he rules the world he has made, and also, because he is to Friday, a white concept of Godhead. He is missionary because he instructs Friday in the uses of religion; he has passion for conversation. He is beachcomber because I have imagined him as one of those figures of adolescent literature, some derelict out of Conrad or Stevenson.²⁰¹

Tangentially, Walcott also alludes to history's elusive truth quality, which is irretrievably lost in the repetitive waves of the sea that continually erases any vestiges of its existence. Where Walcott's mythological and metaphorical framework draws largely on intertextual references of the classical, biblical and romantic traditions, Harris' tends to bear more relation to the aboriginal and arrivant traditions.

In his seminal essay, "History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas," Harris, explains how his philosophy of history derives its force from the submerged, complex matrix of associations which accrue to and inhere in myths over space and time. As such, drawing on the myth of limbo, Harris illustrates how from its beginnings in the physical strictures imposed by the cramped conditions on the slave ship during the Middle Passage, limbo at one and the same time, finds modern echoes in one of the dances associated with the ritual of Carnival, as well as the phantom limb of amputation that herein comes to symbolise the dislocation and disconnection of forced migration. Harris further finds resonances in the submerged and still censored Haitian vodun, which significantly has made accommodations with the imposed Catholicism of the French colonisers. This is a critical component in Harris' mythological limbo framework which emphasises not only the discontinuities imposed by the uprooting of the myth from its origins but also the creolisation that

²⁰¹ Walcott, "The Figure of Crusoe," *Critical Perspectives on Derek Walcott*, ed., Robert Hamner (Bolder and London : Three Continents Press, 1997)35-6.

occurs as a result of the accretions and accumulation in its journey across the miles from Africa to the Caribbean where new nuances of meaning are acquired and come to inhabit the creative imaginations and the unconscious of the region. Thus as he argues, limbo becomes a fluid human and metaphorical gateway between the Old World and the New thereby facilitating a rapport among various histories, civilisations and cultures but not in a process purposed at a romantic recuperation of origins but rather as an accommodation with and re-constitution of “a new architecture of culture.” As Harris explains:

For limbo (one cannot emphasise this too much) is not the total recall of an African past since that African past in terms of tribal sovereignty or sovereignties was modified or traumatically eclipsed with the Middle Passage and with generations of change that followed. Limbo was rather the renascence of a new corpus of sensibility that could translate and accommodate African and other legacies within a new architecture of cultures.²⁰²

In this process, limbo does not seek “consolidation of an incomprehension of the past” in the way that conventional history dictates but rather moves towards fulfilment of this new architecture of culture. Such fulfilment necessarily involves a “psychic assembly or re-assembly of the muse of the people” which, according to Harris, falls to the Caribbean artist. As a kind of trickster figure, the Caribbean artist is positioned on the threshold of the limbo gateway or according to Harris, “at the heart of the lie of the community and the truth of the community” from which “there emerges the hope for a profoundly compassionate society committed to freedom within a creative scale”.²⁰³

²⁰² Wilson Harris, “History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas,” *Selected Essays of Wilson Harris: The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998) 158.

²⁰³ Harris, “History, Fable and Myth” 166.

Myth thus provides a gateway to the vast submerged influences that have helped to shape the Caribbean imagination and sensibility. Consequently, the precepts that recommended myth with its interdependence on the oral tradition for its longevity over time and space as a plausible aesthetic for re-sensing history also becomes an inescapable factor in the determination of the form and functioning of the various literary and cultural genres available to the Caribbean artist. It is in this context then that Walcott and Harris, like their counterparts, join concerns with history and its conjuncts of time and space with the considerations of form and function not only in opting for specific genres but also in reconstituting or re-assembling “a new kind of drama, novel and poem.”

The philosophical approaches to history espoused by Harris and Walcott have informed Caribbean auto/biographical practice and fashioned some of the narrative strategies employed by creative artists in contending with and transcending the trauma of history. An examination of the trajectory of Caribbean auto/biography from the slave narrative to the complex appropriated forms of the novel, drama and poetry, evinces the artists’ use of myth, metaphor, dream journeys, silence, amnesia, among other strategies as a means of re-entering imaginatively into embedded ancestral histories of the region’s peoples.

Paradox of Print Capitalism

Inasmuch as Anderson and Bhabha have argued that the newspaper and the novel were crucial media for disseminating nation-ness, the Caribbean context presented other challenges, not least of which were the absence of publishing houses in the

region, low literacy levels, retention of the core of the colonial education system, limited educational opportunities, as well as a predominantly oral culture. The implications of these circumstances were vast, and in fact conspired to deter the development of a regional audience for its writers. That publishing houses in metropolitan cities were then keenly interested in writing from the region contributed to the allure of these cities as locations of exile for artists. This was compounded in the Caribbean by the paradoxical situation where critics of the region's literature were initially predominantly expatriate lecturers from Britain in the employ of the University of the West Indies. Not surprisingly, these critics often espoused aesthetic value judgements similar to their counterparts in Britain where the region's literature was generally viewed as quaint and too colourful. Thus, while it is undeniable that the advent of print capitalism can account for the dissemination of the idea of Caribbean nation on some levels and facilitated its rapport in the wider discourse of postcolonial nationalism, the absence of a substantial market, coupled with the low penetrability of overseas markets made literary production largely inaccessible to the region and to the people about whom these novels were being written.²⁰⁴ In light of these circumstances, it is argued here that the dissemination of nation-ness in the Caribbean was not solely dependent on print capitalism but involved the deployment of print and oral presentations that insisted on the assemblages of peoples in order to reach the widest possible cross section of peoples in individual territories and the region as a whole (as obtained during the Federal experiment) to encourage their investment in the notion.

²⁰⁴ See Bruce King, ed., *West Indian Literature* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1995) that provides a comprehensive historical survey of the region's literature.

The colonial education system in the Caribbean was a key obstacle in the development of a taste for literature and art produced by locals as well as the establishment of a cadre of trained critics to complement the growth in literary production. Many historians and critics have pointed to the extent to which the colonial education system alienated its beneficiaries from their local environment. What is more, not unlike other institutions of the state, even after the acquisition of independence, little was done to change the system to better suit the palate of the new nations. Thus, as Helen Tiffin asserts,

Colonial education in the English Caribbean was designed for, and continued to be promulgated in the service of, colonialist control. It thus stressed the universal/imperial at the expense of the local; it fostered and validated the importance, centrality, and excellence of all things English and instilled its pan-colonial obverse, the “cultural cringe”; and since its focus was on a social control whose effective mechanism was the spread of English values, it focussed disproportionately on the language, religion, and, in particular, the literary culture of England.²⁰⁵

That British examinations administered by the Cambridge Local Exams and subsequently, the ubiquitous “island” scholarships were adopted for advancement to secondary and tertiary level education bolstered the acceptance and privileging of British culture and values over local knowledge.

In the post-independence period, as the region established its first University, albeit modelled on the University College of London, lecturers were drawn predominantly from the metropole and interspersed with the recently trained local scholars who had returned to the region, often following training in Britain. By the sixties, the University of the West Indies (UWI) had begun the process of “Westindianization” of

²⁰⁵ Helen Tiffin, “The Institution of Literature,” A. James Arnold, ed., *A History of Literature in the Caribbean* Vol. 2, (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamin’s Publishing Co., 1992-96) 44. Tiffin’s article provides an adequate summary of education in the Caribbean from the abolition of slavery to the post-Independence period.

the curriculum especially in the Faculty of Arts, which also marked the beginning of dialogue between locally based critics and the region's writers exiled in Britain.²⁰⁶

However, as Sylvia Wynter has argued, the cadre of critics from the UWI (both local and expatriate) were not only divorced from the cultural development of the societies in which they functioned but moreover, were more highly valued than the writers who were producing the texts that they critiqued. As she charges, "books, as the products of the writers, have a function, at least in academic circles. There they are transformed into texts. West Indian books have a function in West Indian society. West Indian writers have none."²⁰⁷ This situation, according to Wynter, was in keeping with the position of a "branch plant industry of a metropolitan system" which characterised Caribbean society as a whole, but which also negated the roles of both critic and writer. The paradox of location and attitudes of writers and critics contributed little towards the development of astute critics or a substantial reading audience.

The irony of this situation was not lost on Caribbean writers. In fact, this absence of an attentive reading audience and market for their writing was one of the critical deciding factors that encouraged prospective writers to migrate since the region's stance on their writing effectively negated their purpose and aspirations as writers. As George Lamming explains:

[t]hese men [that is, West Indian writers] had to leave if they were going to function as writers since books, in that particular colonial conception of literature, were not – meaning, too, are not supposed to be - written by natives. Those among the natives who read, their whole introduction to something called culture, all of it, in the form of words came from outside ... [A] writer cannot function; and, indeed,

²⁰⁶ See Edward Kamau Brathwaite, "The Love Axe /1: Developing a Caribbean Aesthetic 1962- 1974," *Bim* 16.61 (1977): 53- 65.

²⁰⁷ Sylvia Wynter, "Talk About a Little Culture," ed., John Hearne, *Carifesta Forum: An Anthology of Twenty Caribbean Voices* (Mona: Institute of Business and Jamaica Journal, 1976) 132.

he has no function as writer if those who read and teach reading in his society have started their education by questioning his very right to write.²⁰⁸

Writers then opted for exile in what turned out to be the alien landscape of the mother country, which did not meet the expectations of “the *idea* of England”²⁰⁹ that had been propagated in the texts of what comprised the foundation of their colonial education. In London, these writers were “discovered” by publishing houses keenly interested in supporting what were initially perceived as quaint narratives by former colonials and which were then thought to serve the purpose of prolonging the memories of world supremacy and power for what was indeed a dying Empire.²¹⁰

Thus, although those Caribbean writers and intellectuals who were simultaneously being educated at some of the élite universities admit to having first encountered novels and other writings by Caribbean authors in the metropolis, others who opted to remain in the Caribbean ironically had greater access to canonical texts that represented alien landscapes, weather conditions and lifestyles rather than those that acknowledged and attested to the realities of the landscapes with which they were familiar. Moreover, the pressures of market availability and sustainability had even at home served to determine in large measure the genres in which aspiring Caribbean writers opted to work. Poetry and the short story became the prescribed and obvious choices for Caribbean writers to increase the opportunities of publication since the print media, consisted primarily of ethnic and national newspapers, with the Sunday

²⁰⁸ George Lamming, “The Occasion for Speaking,” *The Pleasures of Exile* (London: Michael Joseph, 1960) 27.

²⁰⁹ See Lamming, “The Occasion for Speaking,” where he makes this point in relation to his own experience of migration to England as a West Indian writer.

²¹⁰ See Gail Low, ““Finding the Centre?” Publishing Commonwealth Writing in London: The Case of Anglophone Caribbean Writing 1950 – 1965” *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 37.2 (2002) 21-38 for an analysis of related issues.

supplements sporadically providing additional column inches dedicated to such writing.

Newspapers, periodical and magazines first published short stories and poems by several emerging writers. However, while some writers had their work published in the “mainstream” or “national” newspapers from about the 1940s, others were published by ethnic newspapers, which had been established to serve the needs of specific communities. In Trinidad and Guyana, these ethnic newspapers were critical, initially because they provided news of homelands such as India and China; served as a forum for lobbying against punitive or discriminatory laws and further sustained cultural and social practices within these communities and generally offered a forum for voicing their opinions about current issues which would not have been published by the mainstream press. Subsequently, these newspapers also served to nurture literary expression and production by its artists and provided a rapt audience of readers and critics within its pages. In Trinidad and Guyana, many such newspapers were produced within the Indian community and as Kris Rampersad, who had completed extensive research on the role of these newspapers in Trinidad observed, they were integral in fostering writers such as Seepersad and V S Naipaul.²¹¹

In Trinidad, the earliest versions of these newspapers included the *Presbyterian* and *The Indian Koh-i-noor Gazette*. Produced by a Canadian missionary, Reverend John Morton, the *Presbyterian* was published in Hindi and as Rampersad points out was “a vital organ in the Church’s outreach” and efforts to convert Hindus to Christianity.²¹²

The *Koh-i-noor*, much like *The East Indian Herald* and *The East Indian Patriot* that

²¹¹ Kris Rampersad, *Finding a Place: IndoTrinidadian Literature* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2002) 1.

²¹² Rampersad, *Finding a Place* 65.

followed some twenty years after the demise of the former in 1899 and the end of indenture in 1917 were more concerned with agitating for a political voice in the growing awareness of nationalism in their homelands in India as well as in the territories in which they were now resident. Notably, these two newspapers also coincided with the start of literary clubs throughout the territories and thus were at the vanguard of “encourag[ing] East Indians to write stories, photo-plays, poems or any literary work and to speak on their behalf if necessary.”²¹³

In Guyana, comparatively fewer similar publishing ventures were undertaken with the same objectives of clearing space to allow Indian voices and opinions to be heard. Of the negligible archived evidence still available, just three are in evidence: the *Indian Opinion*, *The Guiana Indian* and the *Guyana Review*.²¹⁴ The *Indian Opinion*, which was named after a journal edited by Mahatma Gandhi while in South Africa, was established by the British Guiana East Indian Association (BGEIA) to lobby on behalf of rural and middle class Indians. According to Poynting, the journal “reflects the phase when some sections of the middle class became more conscious of the sufferings of the Indian poor and working class.”²¹⁵ While contributions to the journal illustrate some of the pressing debates within the community at that time, such as their split allegiances to India and Western culture (as opposed to their closer integration into the Guyana) “some of the literary products of the period may have [had] little to do with aesthetic motivation and much to do with securing social recognition.”²¹⁶

²¹³ Qtd. in Rampersad *Finding a Place* 129. This is an excerpt from the *Herald* of September 1, 1919 in which the objectives of the newspaper were stated. The *Patriot* articulated similar objectives.

²¹⁴ Poynting, “Literature and Cultural Pluralism,” 381.

²¹⁵ Poynting, “Literature and Cultural Pluralism,” 381.

²¹⁶ Poynting, “Literature and Cultural Pluralism,” 378. Curiously enough, the *Indian Opinion* was re-launched in May 2003 by the Indian Arrival Committee (IAC) to agitate on behalf of Indo-Guyanese and mixed Indo-Guyanese for recognition of issues affecting these communities. See Ruel Johnson, “IAC Launches Monthly Newsletter” *Guyana Chronicle*, June 08, 2003.

Whereas these early publications laid the foundation for Indian writing, in Trinidad subsequent newspapers such as the *East Indian Weekly*, *The Beacon* and the *Minerva Review* were the media in which Indians first participated in the debates about nationalism in the island and region. Moreover, because of their more literary bent, (especially *The Minerva Review* which was the first journal exclusively devoted to literary development) they enabled recognition of Indian writers and thus facilitated their transition from ethnic newspapers and journals to the non-Indian, “national” or mainstream newspapers and publications. Seepersad Naipaul, father of VS was the first such writer to become a journalist for the *Trinidad Guardian* in 1929.²¹⁷ Ethnic newspapers therefore served an important role in providing spaces for other voices to emerge and first engage with issues specific to the communities while simultaneously also beginning the process of input into national debates.²¹⁸

Apart from the ethnic and mainstream newspapers, pioneering magazines and journals such as *Trinidad*, *The Beacon* and *The Quarterly* as well as *Bim*, *Kyk-over-Al*, *Focus*, *Forum* and *Caribbean Quarterly*²¹⁹ temporarily facilitated both creative (again restricted because of format and space to the short story and poetry) and critical writing by emerging literary and cultural critics whose input was necessary for not only validating the literary and other artistic efforts (eventually theatrical productions were included among these critiques) but also in proposing an alternative critical perspective from the largely derogatory reviews produced by metropolitan critics who were yet unable to grasp the text and context that informed the enterprise of

²¹⁷ Rampersad, *Finding a Place* 158.

²¹⁸ The Chinese community also published their own newspapers and journals although there is little documented evidence that remains. Rare issues remain for instance of the *Chien Chiao: The Chinese in Trinidad*, a journal first issued in December 1944 to serve the needs of the Chinese community.

²¹⁹ Magazine and journal titles listed in Gail Low’s article ““Finding the Centre?” Publishing Commonwealth Writing in London: The Case of Anglophone Caribbean Writing 1950 – 1965,” *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 37.2 (2002) 28.

Caribbean writers. Moreover, while Caribbean artists were scattered across the islands and consequently had limited contact among themselves, London became the meeting point for a vibrant community of artists and intellectuals under the umbrellas of the Caribbean Artists Movement (CAM) and the West Indian Students' Centre during this period.²²⁰

Whereas compact writing forms were customary to suit the limited publishing opportunities in the Caribbean, the demand in the British market was for the social realist novel. As a result, many Caribbean writers who had their creative beginnings in poetry and the short story adopted and appropriated the novel with which they were most familiar to their own ends as they sought to inscribe not only a Caribbean social and political reality and aesthetic but also the then more current experience of being a former colonial in the mother country. Perhaps because market forces dictated the choice of genre, Caribbean writers developed a facility in a wide variety of genres and attempted to make each pliable to the telling of their stories, on occasion even integrating genres within one writing mode.²²¹

Inasmuch as there were difficulties in penetrating the Caribbean market with these novels, this audience was reached through the medium of radio and the BBC's *Caribbean Voices* programme. As one critic has observed, Henry Swanzy, over the period 1943 to 1958 during which he was responsible for editing and producing the

²²⁰ Anne Walmsley, *The Caribbean Artists Movement 1966 – 1972: A Literary and Cultural History* (London and Port of Spain: New Beacon Books, 1992) gives a detailed background to these artistic communities in London and the Caribbean.

²²¹ Kenneth Ramchand's pioneering text *The West Indian Novel and its Background* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970) provides invaluable historical and analytical discussion of the emergence and development of the West Indian novel form as well as on some of the important writers of that period. Reference is made here especially to his discussions in Part I – Life Without Fiction.

programme highlighted the work of more than one hundred and fifty contributors from across the English-speaking Caribbean:

In the life of the programme some 400 stories and poems were broadcast. Listeners were offered stories, poetry, plays, and literary criticism beamed through the short wave band and intermittently re-diffused by local commercial radio stations.²²²

Unfortunately, as Nanton notes, limited attention has been paid to profiling or analysing the audience to which this programme appealed in the Caribbean.

However, given the legendary place that the programme and its longest serving editor hold in the history of Caribbean writing and the critical role that market forces would have played in sustaining it financially, it might be deduced that its stature and appeal extended well beyond the British audience into the various islands it reached through the BBC West Indian Service.

It was therefore through this medium that Caribbean writing contributed to the propagation of the notion of nation in reaching a much wider audience than their actual texts. Radio broadcasts of the writers' work and accompanying critiques aired on *Caribbean Voices* would have attracted listeners based largely on the fact that it inspired an assembly of peoples around their radios to collectively listen to the short stories, poetry and novel excerpts and literary critiques (in some instances by persons whom they would have known) that were featured in the weekly instalments.²²³ Such assembling for entertainment and communal sharing was already an established cultural norm with roots in the oral tradition of story telling. This has translated into gatherings for performances of calypso tents, religious ceremonies and in the 1950s

²²² See Philip Nanton, "What Does Mr Swanzy Want? Shaping or Reflecting? An Assessment of Henry Swanzy's Contribution to the Development of Caribbean Literature" *Kunapipi* Vol. XX No. 1 (1998) 11.

²²³ Such an assembling is suggested by Glyne Griffith, "Deconstructing Nationalisms: Henry Swanzy, Caribbean Voices and the Development of West Indian Literature," *Small Axe* 10 (2001): 1.

and 1960s at political meetings at which politicians conveyed their nationalist messages through stories of heroism against oppressors and the relentless struggle for freedom in community settings such as parks and other places of gathering familiar to the masses.

The political meeting was a critical strategy by which Independence leaders were able to reach the people and it required congregation on their own ‘turf’ and in their own language in order to inspire solidarity with and instil a sense of sharing or being a part of the nationalist movement. Moreover, as was discussed earlier, it is in such interaction between the politician, as performer before an enraptured audience that the re-enactment of ancient forms of biography and autobiography occur according to Bakhtin. By laying bare his whole life (in the context of his individual and communal struggle for freedom) for scrutiny by the public, the ““biographized” individual” was either accepted or rejected:

But the square in earlier (ancient) times itself constituted a state (and more – it constituted the entire state apparatus, with all its official organs), it was the highest court, the whole of science, the whole of art, the entire people participated in it. It was a remarkable chronotope, in which all the most elevated categories, from that of the state to that of revealed truth were realized concretely and fully incarnated, made visible and given a face. And in this concrete and as it were all-encompassing chronotope, the laying bare and examination of a citizen’s whole life was accomplished, and received its public and civic stamp of approval.²²⁴

It is questionable whether *all* the people participated in political meetings held by independence leaders in the region; and the square only constituted the state insofar as the people, in whose name nationhood was being fought, were there given the power of approval or rejection of the political leader. However, as Lamming’s assessment of

²²⁴ Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and Chronotope” 132.

Williams' performance attests, it is illustrative of the kind of interaction to which Bakhtin refers, where, as representative of his peoples, he gives account of the region's history and his role in changing that history as anti-colonial activist and independence leader:

[Williams] turned history, the history of the Caribbean, into gossip so that the story of a people's predicament seemed no longer the infinite barren track of documents, dates, and texts. Everything became news: slavery, colonization, the forgivable deception of metropolitan rule, the sad and inevitable unawareness of native production. His lectures retained always the character of whisper which everyone was allowed to hear, a rumour which experience had established as truth.²²⁵

Invariably, many Independence leaders employed this strategy particularly as it was an integral factor of their charismatic leadership as has been discussed. Moreover, it is evident that *performance*, played a significant role in the transformation of factual analysis into 'gossip.'

Caribbean Voices, as a radio programme functioning in similar fashion as the art of story telling, would inevitably have attracted a wider audience than the text based literary productions. Indeed, some Caribbean writers had already begun to incorporate in their work aesthetics that approximated the story telling tradition and through their use of language, attempted to capture the cadences and nuances of the syntax and tones of the peoples whom they were re-presenting in their novels, poetry and drama productions. Walcott, in explaining the connection between the oral tradition of storytelling and the potency that performance contributes asserts that:

I come from a place that likes grandeur; it likes large gestures; it is not inhibited by flourish; it is a rhetorical society; it is a society of physical performance; it is a society of style. The highest achievement of style is rhetoric, as it is in speech and performance. It isn't a modest

²²⁵ George Lamming, "The Legacy of Williams" *Callaloo* 20.4 (1997): 731.

society. A performer in the Caribbean has to perform with the right flourish.... The recitation element in poetry is one I hope never to lose because it's an essential part of the voice being asked to perform.²²⁶

However, inasmuch as their texts have contributed to the cultivation and spread of the notion of nation, their audience in the Caribbean largely remained within the proportionally small middle classes among whom literacy rates were higher because of easier access to capital and consequently educational opportunities.

Given the circumstances of literary production outlined, it is apparent that other factors which operated in tandem with the emergence of Caribbean writing and which drew heavily upon the oral tradition can account for the spread of nation-ness in the region. These would have included the politician's recourse to public meetings and the performance that such entailed. Further, the calyposes that heralded nationhood (and initially endorsed the pronouncements of the Independence leaders) and traced its developments (and failures) over the period also depended on the assemblies of peoples for the effective oral performances and reached a wider audience than the strict middle classes for whom scribal forms would have had greater legitimate appeal. As such, although the novel has been the primary medium for Caribbean writers, it could not supplant the oral and popular cultural forms such as the calypso and the political meeting which require an assembling of peoples, if only for the practical purposes of surmounting the challenges of literacy levels and inaccessibility of Caribbean writing. Indeed, both the scribal and oral forms functioned in tandem in order to expand the audience to which the idea of nation could be disseminated.

²²⁶ Edward Hirsch, "The Art of Poetry XXXVII: Derek Walcott," *Conversations with Derek Walcott* ed., William Baer (Jackson: Univ. of Mississippi Press, 1996) 105.

Constructing Gendered Realities

Notions of nation, of necessity intersect with issues of identity, race, ethnicity, class and gender. Yet, of all the categories listed, gender is perhaps the most often neglected in the theorisation of nation and identity. However, given the disconnections wrought by the Caribbean's experience of slavery and indenture, and the collapse of normative gender roles since both men and women equally shared the burden of labour in the cane fields or the plantation house, relations between both sexes have been negatively affected owing to the emasculation and defeminisation that resulted. What is more, the breakdown in family life that dethroned men from their dominant positions as heads of household with women as their subservient partners, coupled with the fact that men retained no control over their wives' bodies against the unwanted sexual attentions of plantation owners also contributed to their emasculation. Despite being the centre of these unwelcome attentions, women - Afros, Creoles and Indians - were still found wanting when evaluated against the Victorian ideals of womanhood; a situation that is evident in the historical data and literary works by women writers.²²⁷

The fractures to traditional patriarchy that slavery and indenture instigated have obviously determined the differences in the ways in which women of different ethnicities and races have imagined the Caribbean nation. However, Emancipation, the end of indenture and the prospect of nationhood, witnessed a virtual reconstitution of traditional patriarchal norms. Generally, Afro- and Creole- women enjoyed more

²²⁷ See Hazel V Carby, *Reconstituting Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Novelist* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); *Engendering History: Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective*, eds., Verene Shepherd, Bridget Brereton and Barbara Bailey (London and Kingston: James Currey and Ian Randle, 1995).

domestic and sexual freedoms since their male counterparts often opted to function as free agents on the periphery of the family unit. However, the household largely demarcated the limits of their empowerment. Since Indian women had vastly outnumbered men and had been signatories to contracts, as had their men, they began not only to question their subservient positions within the classically patriarchal Indian community but also “to challenge the idea of monogamy and went about choosing their own husbands and leaving one for the other if it suited them.”²²⁸ With the end of indenture, according to feminist theorist and critic, Patricia Mohammed, there was a re-assertion of the dominance of the Indian male through “a consolidation of the classic patriarchal system brought from India.”²²⁹ It is further argued that Indian women were often complicit with their men folk in reconstituting former classic forms of patriarchy and prescribed gender relations through recourse to the powerful myths of the sacred texts of Hinduism. These texts defined the ideals of womanhood according to adherence to the noble qualities of fidelity and chastity which were with the goddess Sita. These characteristics implicitly distinguished the Indo-Caribbean woman from her Afro- and Creole- counterparts and thus aided the ongoing re-composition of nation within that community.²³⁰

Given that slavery and indenture established the parameters that framed gender relations in the region, Caribbean women had been active participants in the struggle for freedom from as far back as their migrations to the new shores and had been integral to the labour and independence movements. Yet, they remained largely invisible and voiceless in what was initially a strictly male dominated discourse. Not

²²⁸ Patricia Mohammed, “Ram and Sita: The Reconstitution of Gender Identities Among Indians in Trinidad Through Mythology,” *Caribbean Portraits: Essays on Gender Ideologies and Identities* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1998) 396.

²²⁹ Mohammed, “Ram and Sita,” 398.

²³⁰ Mohammed, “Ram and Sita.” This issue is also further explored in Part II.

only were women combatants alongside their male counterparts in the struggle for improved working conditions and remuneration, suffering the same consequences of arrest and incarceration during the Labour Riots of the 1930s but they were also subsequently instrumental in the establishment of political parties. Women also participated in political parties, from their beginnings in labour based organisations, or education and literary clubs and subsequently established women's arms of these parties to lobby for women's rights as well as other social services for the sustenance of the family and community.²³¹

However, several factors coalesced to facilitate Caribbean women in delineating a voice distinct from men's; namely, the influence of the feminist movement in the United States in the late 1960s, education for women and their inclusion in adult suffrage which legally defined them as citizens of the nation. These factors also catalysed the thrust among Caribbean women to begin recuperating "women's history" and to begin to articulate their cultural and national identities, all of which proved rather problematic since it situated women, as illustrated earlier, in that limbo position where they were at one and the same time complicit with and lobbying against the male determined constrictions of nationness. Understandably, the initial emphasis on women's history has since begun to take cognisance of the obvious intersections with men's history and has therefore initiated "an unrelenting dialogue about what constitutes Caribbean manhood and masculinity and womanhood and

²³¹ See for example, Rhoda Reddock, *Women, Labour and Politics in Trinidad and Tobago: A History* (Trinidad: New Beginning Movement, 1994) and Linda Peake, "The Development and Role of Women's Political Organizations in Guyana," *Women and Change in the Caribbean: A Pan-Caribbean Perspective* (Kingston, Indianapolis and London: Ian Randle; Indiana UP; James Currey, 1993).

femininity as it has also been affected by the increasing consciousness of and struggles for gender equality which inform the global discourse.”²³²

Just as female historians, such as Lucille Mathurin Mair, Bridget Brereton, Verene Shepherd, Patricia Mohammed and several others have made strides by writing women into the male dominated historical narratives so too did creative women writers undertake the task of engaging with and contrasting their own realities. Hampered as much by the politics of publication as their male counterparts, particularly since the 1980s, women writers of the region have sought to redress their invisibility and silence through a virtual ‘boom’ in writing. As Carole Boyce Davies suggests, they were concerned with contesting “the linear, phallogentric form of the male text” in order to articulate their own experiences from within their doubly marginalised subject positions. Consequently, this has involved Caribbean women writers in a process of “radical revision and re-definition of what makes a work of art aesthetically female.”²³³

Not surprisingly, women have also resourced the genre of auto/biography as a way of delineating and describing their realities based in history and culture as separate from men’s. They have brought to their project the range of auto/biographical forms: oral histories, testimonies or more explicitly auto/biographical works such as Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), *Voyage in the Dark* (1969) and *Smile Please* (1979), the poetry of Lorna Goodison, *Tamarind Season* (1980) and *Heartease* (1988) and the drama productions of the Sistren Theatre Collective. Like the male writers, Caribbean

²³² Patricia Mohammed, “Towards Indigenous Feminist Theorizing in the Caribbean,” *Feminist Review* 59 (1998): 8.

²³³ Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido, “Introduction: Women and Literature in the Caribbean: An Overview,” *Out of the Kumbla: Caribbean Women and Literature* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1990) 6.

women writers have undertaken the task of subverting the imported but dominant cultural constructs and inserting their own versions and visions of the Caribbean, its landscape and its development independent of the stifling Euro-American cultural influences that have prevailed since the late 1970s. According to Hodge, as writers in general, “there is no fundamental distinction between art and activism.”²³⁴ As such, she avers that “cultural sovereignty” should be an integrated objective of nationhood. Accordingly, Hodge suggests that, “merely to portray Caribbean experience with the power of art is to pluck this experience out of limbo and give it a distinct shape and a name.”²³⁵

In appropriating the auto/biographical genre, Caribbean women writers appear to have placed greater emphasis on the exploration of the coming of age experience and sexual maturation. However, whereas male writers have approached this thematically, it is effectively a tangential experience to their artistic development. Consequently, the female body, for the male writer, has been a space of inscribing male power and prowess with the woman – mother, sister, wife, daughter – as integral yet peripheral to this development. In this configuration, male writers implicitly reproduce the national discourse that designates the woman as “the symbolic repository of group identity.”²³⁶ Her body becoming a metaphor for the nation, the very domain of the man – the womb which nurtures the male writer’s creative sensibilities and through which the nation is regenerated by the transmission of cultural traditions and practices; hence the repetitive association of the landscape with

²³⁴ Merle Hodge, “Challenges of the Struggle for Sovereignty: Changing the World versus Writing Stories,” *Caribbean Women Writers: Essays from the First International Conference* (Wellesley, Mass.: Calaloux Publications, 1990) 202.

²³⁵ Hodge, “Challenges of the Struggle” 207.

²³⁶ Deniz Kandiyoti, “Identity and its Discontents: Women and the Nation,” *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994) 382.

the female physiognomy and the general feminisation of the nation. Referencing

Anderson, Kandiyoti points out:

[N]ationalism describes its object using either the vocabulary of kinship (motherland, *patria*) or home (*heimat*), in order to denote something to which one is 'naturally' tied. Nationness is thus equated with gender, parentage, skin-colour – all those things that are not chosen and which, by virtue of their inevitability, elicit selfless attachment and sacrifice. The association of women with the private domain reinforces the merging of nation/community with the selfless mother/devout wife; the obvious response of coming to her defence and even dying for her is automatically triggered.²³⁷

On the contrary, for women writers, coming of age marks a necessary rite of passage and therefore is more an occasion for interrogating the meaning of sexual maturation and the process of negotiating control over her body, her fertility and sexual health issues. These issues often parallel the private communal experience and response to the movement towards independence as is evident in writers such as Hodge,²³⁸

Kincaid, Oonya Kempadoo²³⁹ and Ramabai Espinet.²⁴⁰

In articulating her experiences, the Caribbean woman writer also demonstrates greater concern with familial relationships. In several instances, a process of slow disentanglement from dysfunctional relationships with mothers, fathers or siblings marks the female writer's maturation and coming into her own true voice. This is evident in Kincaid's complex relationship with her mother that has been the subject of her continuing serial auto/biographies, with Rachel Manley's non-fictional auto/biographical works *Drumblair: Memories of a Jamaican Childhood*²⁴¹ (1997)

²³⁷ Kandiyoti, "Identity and its Discontents," 382.

²³⁸ Merle Hodge, *Crick Crack, Monkey* (London: Heineman, 1970); *For the Love of Laetitia* (New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993).

²³⁹ Oonya Kempadoo, *Buxton Spice* (London: Orion, 1998).

²⁴⁰ Ramabai Espinet, *The Swinging Bridge* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2003).

²⁴¹ Rachel Manley, *Drumblair: Memories of a Jamaican Childhood* (1996; Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2004).

and *Slipstream: A Daughter Remembers*²⁴² (2000) illustrating a similarly dysfunctional relationship with a father, who was one of Jamaica's post-Independence Prime Ministers and by whom she felt deserted and isolated. Inevitably, these relationships mirror the cultural roles assigned to women within the nation and their journeys to individuation, the negotiations and compromises that mediate their coming into voice.

²⁴² Rachel Manley, *Slipstream: A Daughter Remembers* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2000).

PART II



Prismatic Creolisation and the Auto/biography of Caribbeanness

Introduction

Part II extends the examination of nation to its twin concern of cultural identity. It is accepted that Caribbean auto/biographical practice incorporates the construction of both nation and cultural identity. As Stuart Hall argues, the success of independence movements and the contingent process of cultural decolonisation include “the question of defining the people”.¹ In heterogeneous nations such as Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana where the contestation for political and cultural space among the racial and ethnic groups is robust, questions of cultural identity are constantly debated. Several theories, many of which are predicated on modes of syncretism, have been advanced to explain the formation and evolution of Caribbean society; arguably, none has been as influential, enduring or contested as the creolisation model proposed by Kamau Brathwaite. Notwithstanding its well-documented flaws, Part II builds on the kernel of this creolisation model by exploring and developing the “prismatic possibility” at which Brathwaite only hints as an elaboration of his model.² Interestingly, Brathwaite is not the only Caribbean artist to incorporate in his thesis

¹ Hall, “Negotiating” 26.

² Kamau Brathwaite, “Caliban, Ariel, and Unprospero in the Conflict of Creolization: A Study of the Slave Revolt in Jamaica in 1831-32.” *Comparative Perspectives on Slavery in New World Plantation Societies*, eds., Vera Rubin and Arthur Tuden (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1977) 42.

the idea of the prism and its inherent values to expand his conceptualisation of Caribbean society, culture and identity. Dunstan St Omer, the renowned St Lucian painter has also appropriated the prism as the basis of his artistic style and philosophy that he has called Prismism. The prismatic metaphor, which underpins these theories, suggests a spectrum of possibilities for moving from the much critiqued unicentric models of Caribbeanness that dominated the early phase of nationhood towards more polycentric models that capture the ever increasing complexity and fluidity of the contemporary situation.

Part II proposes one such polycentric approach to Caribbean identity, hereafter referred to as the prismatic creolisation model. This model draws on aspects of Stuart Hall's propositions for the re-definition of Caribbeanness to strengthen and modify Brathwaite's foundational thesis. The theoretical framework of prismatic creolisation is further elaborated through comparison with St Omer's philosophy, Prismism and the philosophies of language posited by seminal Caribbean writers and poets such as Brathwaite and Walcott.

Of the two chapters that comprise Part II, Chapter three examines and augments relevant tenets of Hall's re-conceptualisation of Caribbean identity that inform the prismatic creolisation model. Critical to this discussion are some of the debates surrounding Caribbean cultural identity, including the search for origins, the relationship between originary homelands and their diasporic equivalents and the process of evolution of a syncretic cultural identity in the adopted Caribbean space. Cultural identity, like nation, is multifaceted and is enunciated from several subject positions. At the heart of the often vexed debates about cultural identity are issues

pertaining to race, ethnicity and class, with gender and religion coming increasingly into contention. Of these, race and ethnicity are pinpointed for closer examination especially since neither issue has been thoroughly explored in the theories of Brathwaite and Hall and further because they remain central to the debates about identity in the territories under consideration. An investigation into the historical use of colour with its political and culture-specific meanings as have been employed in the psycho-social construction of race and ethnicity in the region provides the point of departure into the discussion of these two components of cultural identity. This approach, it is argued, supplements the existing sociological scholarship by facilitating insight into the emergence of an instinctive body of “emotional knowledge” based on visual indicators such as skin-colour and other phenotypical characteristics, which also inform perceptions of class. It is further asserted that it is precisely such emotional knowledge that reinforces the illogical coding and re-coding of racial stereotypes, which reproduces the antagonistic relations that began with the encounter and recognition of difference among the various peoples in Caribbean space.

Chapter four examines Brathwaite’s creolisation thesis to determine its continued relevance and applicability to the contemporary Caribbean situation and experience. It is suggested that whereas Brathwaite’s proposition of “prismatic possibility” is theoretically undeveloped, in praxis, it is evident in his historiographical approach and in his experimentation with and use of nation language - a practice that he shares with several other Caribbean artists. Nation language, which, it is argued, also relies heavily on the inflection of colour for approximating time and space in capturing the Caribbean landscape and experience, is the background against which St Omer’s

artistic philosophy of Prismism is detailed and compared. The artistic use of colour offers a stark contrast to the political application of colour in the stereotyping of race and ethnicity. The refraction and reflection of colour, which is inherent in the prism, underscores the facility of the prismatic creolisation model to capture and represent the complexity of Caribbean society as well as the history and culture from which Caribbeanness is derived. Drawing on the present situation, the model is aspirational although it describes the general direction towards which the societies are moving in composition and stratification in spite of the cycle of political and social crises that persist.

CHAPTER 3

Re-defining Caribbeanness

The proliferation of electronic messages comprising exhaustive lists of characteristics and cultural customs that purport to define citizenship and belonging either to a particular territory or to the Caribbean region as a whole, is indicative of the prominence of debates surrounding questions of national and cultural identity.

Prefaced by phrases such as: “Yuh know you’re a West Indian if...” these lists often depict the nation in nostalgic and idealistic terms, as remembered by its citizens at home or abroad. What also becomes apparent however, is how such lists contrive to determine questions of authenticity and cultural difference. As Faith Smith points out, “For those who now live another kind of life, this list is a narrative that responds to displacement by offering the possibility of grounding, of certainties that have been lost”.³ In other words, these lists of criteria attempt facilely to resolve large questions such as: Who is a Trinidadian or Guyanese (or who is not); and by extension, who is West Indian or Caribbean?

Debates about national and cultural identity have not only enlivened popular discourse but also much of the region’s scholarship and artistic production. Many scholars have grappled with issues of Caribbean identity or Caribbeanness⁴ particularly since the acquisition of nationhood. However, like nation, definitions of Caribbeanness have been fraught with difficulties, of which the improbable

³ Faith Smith, “Yuh Know You’re West Indian if...”: Codes of Authenticity in Colin Channer’s *Waiting in Vain*,” *Small Axe* 10 (2001): 41-59.

⁴ The terms Caribbean identity and Caribbeanness are used interchangeably in this thesis.

requirement of inclusivity of all the peoples who legally constitute the nation-state has been paramount. While it is asserted that Caribbean auto/biographical practice, as defined in Part I, is as instrumental to the construction of identity as it is to the imagining of nation, thereby offering *some* inclusivity, other challenges arise. For central to the politics of Caribbean identity are the contentious issues of nation (as constructed by locality, region and diaspora), race, ethnicity and class. These are the subject positions from which some of the fiercest demands are launched for equality in the apportioning of the nation's political, economic and cultural recognition and patronage. However, inasmuch as Caribbean auto/biographical practice gestures to the entangled subject positions that describe the construction of identity and its related politics, it provides only the parameters from which a composite and comprehensive schematic might be gleaned.

Sociologist and Cultural Studies specialist Stuart Hall's scholarly work on Caribbean cultural identity has begun the plotting of such a schematic. Throughout his extended engagement with the subject, which is embedded in his auto/biographical history as a Jamaican immigrant *cum* British citizen, he repeatedly interrogates some of the seminal thinking on Caribbean identity. Drawing increasingly on some postmodern thinkers, especially Jacques Derrida's idea of *différance*, Hall argues for the re-conceptualisation of Caribbean cultural identity. Echoes of Hall's re-conceptualisation of Caribbean cultural identity are already evident in the work of some contemporary Caribbean theorists such as Glissant and Benítez-Rojo. Although some of the fundamental tenets of Hall's re-visioning, as outlined below, are accepted as valid and crucial to the proposed theoretical framework of prismatic creolisation, the limitations are also noted.

Four tenets of Hall's re-conceptualisation of Caribbeanness are integral to prismatic creolisation since each brings a more polycentric perspective to the model than is available to earlier theoretical formulations. These are: firstly, the transition from the notion of a search for roots to one of determining the routes of belonging; secondly, that Caribbeanness is defined by a diasporic aesthetic; thirdly, that Caribbeanness is constructed through complex strategies of representation which are embedded in narratives of cosmogenesis; and lastly, that such representation is always circumscribed by politics and relations of power. It is pertinent to note however, that even as Hall's revisions debunk some of the traditional notions of Caribbeanness, he also acknowledges that the fixed, essentialised and rooted values of earlier theories were critical to the construction of counter-identities which, in turn, became the driving forces behind nationalist and decolonisation movements.⁵

Hall's anti-essentialist reading of Caribbeanness is predicated on the fact that the predominantly immigrant population of the region can make no valid claims to authentic roots given that their *routes* return to at least three continents. The hybrid communities that have evolved as a result of the forced and coerced migrations to the region have ensured that identity "can no longer be easily disaggregated into its original 'authentic' elements".⁶ Consequently, the search for "roots" which defined theories such as Césaire's Négritude and Brathwaite's creolisation assumes redemptive significance primarily when understood as mythical or imaginative

⁵ Hall, "Negotiating" 26. Hall's essay, "Negotiating Caribbean Identities" which was published in 2001 is referenced widely here since it is recognised as the most recent refinement of ideas begun in earlier essays such as "Myths of Caribbean Identity," The Walter Rodney Memorial Lecture, University of Warwick, Coventry, October, 1991; "Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation," *Ex-iles: Essays on Caribbean Cinema*, ed. Mbye Cham (New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1992) 220-236; "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," *Colonial Discourses and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994) 392-403.

⁶ Hall, "Thinking the Diaspora: Home-Thoughts from Abroad" *Small Axe* 6 (1999): 6.

journeys of return to origins or “imaginative rediscovery”⁷ of cultural beginnings and resources. Both Césaire and Brathwaite have made actual return journeys to individual countries of Africa that have informed their subsequent work. Their auto/biographical and imaginative chronicling of these journeys are testaments to spiritual awakenings as much as they are discoveries of continuities between ancestral pasts and the present. Brathwaite, for instance, describes his West African experience thus:

I came to a sense of identification of myself with these people, my living diviners. I came to connect my history with theirs, the bridge of my mind now linking Atlantic and ancestor, homeland and heartland. When I turned to leave, I was no longer a lonely individual talent ... And I came home to find that I had not really left. That it was still Africa; Africa in the Caribbean. The middle passage had now guessed its end.⁸

According to Hall, the cultural resources, including lost histories, languages, traditions, marginalised experiences, which are gleaned from such spiritual awakening are in fact “the specific roots of identity”.⁹ Yet, such recuperations emphasise similarities that engender a common unitary identity but fail to recognise the inherent cultural differences that contribute to the region’s “uniqueness”.¹⁰ While such recuperated resources do not constitute Caribbeanness, they do contribute to its *production*. Hence Hall’s contention that Caribbeanness is an ongoing process of becoming and being that takes cognisance of both the past and the future. In this context, Caribbeanness also functions as a “dialogic relationship” between two axes, both of which Hall argues “are simultaneously operative: the vector of similarity and continuity; and the vector of difference and rupture”.¹¹ By ascribing to this notion of a

⁷ Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” 393.

⁸ Brathwaite, “Timehri” 347.

⁹ Hall, “Negotiating” 37.

¹⁰ Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” 394.

¹¹ Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” 395.

dialogic relationship, Hall's re-conceptualisation of Caribbeanness also refutes the binary oppositions underpinning earlier theories. In explicating the interplay of similarities and differences, Hall contends that identity is produced through the continuous but arbitrary play of difference of all the cultural resources that become available through the tracing of routes.¹²

Hall asserts that the Caribbean has been a crucible for the fusion of various cultural heritages which has succeeded in creating a diasporic aesthetic that is arguably the most distinguishing feature of Caribbeanness. In developing this second tenet of his re-visioning of Caribbeanness, Hall, drawing on Brathwaite's creolisation thesis, argues that Caribbean culture and identity have evolved through a process of "integration, assimilation and cross-influence".¹³ This process has progressed from the retention of traditions and customs that survived slavery, albeit influenced and transformed by the colonising cultures, to the stage of assimilation that effectively "dragg[ed] the whole society into some imitative relationship with the other culture that one could never quite reach."¹⁴ The third stage - cross-influence - has involved what Hall refers to as the "renegotiation" of Africa.¹⁵ In this latter stage, which is a synthesis of the first two, Hall asserts that rather than merely accomplishing an unproblematic return to African origins, movements such as Négritude, the Harlem Renaissance and Rastafarianism have sought to establish another kind of modernity that negotiates a place for itself within the boundaries of the "mainstream". Hall defines this as "a vernacular modernity" which is a cumulative of the varied tones and

¹² Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" 397.

¹³ Hall, "Myths" 4. These three terms, integration, assimilation and cross-influence revise Brathwaite's proposal of the process of acculturation and interculturalisation as the driving forces of creolisation. This is discussed further in the next chapter.

¹⁴ Hall, "Negotiating" 29.

¹⁵ Hall, "Negotiating" 31.

cadences that have influenced and inflected black musics, for instance.¹⁶ More precisely, as Hall points out, previously silenced voices are allowed to emerge and are delineated by their distinctly hybrid nature. This hybridity, which is a consequence of their specific historical experiences is further interwoven with the cultural assimilation of colonising cultures. As a by-product of these experiences, vernacular modernity is illustrative of the symbolic and redemptive power of the imaginative return to origins that invests Caribbeanness with its diasporic aesthetic. As Hall deduces:

The diaspora experience ... is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing themselves anew, through transformation and difference.¹⁷

Thus, the experiences of rupture, displacement, loss and forced (or voluntary) migration that have characterised and informed the imagining of the Caribbean as diasporic space are repeated and consequently reproduced in contemporary diasporic situations worldwide.

At this juncture, it is important to point out that while Hall's analysis is based almost exclusively on the Afro-Caribbean experience, similar conclusions can be drawn with respect to other races and ethnicities regarding the substantive issues of attitudes to adopted homelands, the re-discovery of roots, the psychic return to origins, and the process of "cross-influence" that initiates a re-negotiation of the motherland. These attitudes are in evidence in much of the literature and other cultural products of other groups. For instance, of the Indian indentured labourers, the second largest group of

¹⁶ Hall, "Negotiating" 34.

¹⁷ Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" 402.

arrivants to the region, some seventy-five percent made the conscious choice to stay in the Caribbean at the end of their contracts despite the in-built clause that facilitated their return to India.¹⁸ The ready availability of land, guaranteed employment and the unpalatable idea of returning to “an ascribed low position in a traditional caste hierarchy” have been identified among the reasons that made the Caribbean a more attractive alternative for re-creating home.¹⁹ It is generally acknowledged that substantial cultural retentions were sustained within the Indo-Caribbean community largely because of the contractual terms and conditions of indentureship that did not legislate against it; and the comparative segregation of the group from the rest of the society during that period. As such, India retained its symbolic place as the motherland with its rich cultural resources gradually being adapted to the Caribbean space (consciously or unconsciously) through the mutual influence of other cultures. Similarly, the main religions of Hinduism and Islam as well as the cuisine, music and dance were gradually adapted and adjusted to the vibrant and diverse cultural environment and had already become so distinct from the ‘original’ that those who returned then (and now) to the motherland were generally regarded as having become “polluted”.²⁰ The desire for return is thus also expressed through psychic journeying in the literature and art of Indo-Caribbeans although many continue to make the actual journey for pilgrimage, business, cultural exchanges or study. Whereas the Middle Passage and the story of Exodus have become tropes of the desire for return to the motherland and freedom from enslavement for Afro-Caribbeans, the *kala pani*²¹ has assumed similar significance for Indo-Caribbeans. According to Aisha Khan, the *kala*

¹⁸ Brinsley Samaroo, “Chinese and Indian ‘Coolie’ Voyages” 18.

¹⁹ Vertovec, *Hindu Trinidad* 73.

²⁰ Vertovec, *Hindu Trinidad* 73.

²¹ Aisha Khan observes that, “Prior to the modern era’s indenture migrations, *kala pani* figured in Hinduism’s ideology of purity and its preservation through avoidance of travel too far afield from one’s place of belonging.” See Khan, *Callaloo Nation: Metaphors of Race and Religious Identity Among South Asians in Trinidad* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004) 123.

pani, or crossing of the dark waters, has come to be associated in the Indo-Caribbean imagination with the homeland and

emphasizes their relationship to the estate and the dignity of labor, the maintenance of religious and cultural knowledge that kept a distinct racial character in this displaced population (*vis-à-vis* Euro and Afro), and the possession of mental acuity and awareness, also viewed as crucial forms of knowledge.²²

As such, the *kala pani* as well as the careful record of rituals, traditions and cultural retentions that have shaped and sustained the community are prominent features in the literature and art of Indo-Caribbeans. Of accounts of return journeys to India, Naipaul posits perhaps one of the best-known, if controversial non-fictional auto/biographical narratives in *An Area of Darkness* (1964).²³ Whereas Naipaul expresses a bittersweet relationship to his motherland that captures the fissures between ancestral memory and reality, others have offered snapshots that are more favourable. In terms of music, the cross-over popularity of chutney soca (or soca chutney) and pichakaaree²⁴ songs are other examples of distinct cultural forms that have emerged from within the Indo-Caribbean community. As stated in the previous chapter, the process of recording the history and cultural retentions among other communities, such as the Chinese, Euro-Creoles, Portuguese and Syrian-Lebanese is in progress.

The third critical tenet of Hall's re-visioning is his assertion that the construction of Caribbeanness involves questions of representation through which the past, present and future are negotiated. This is arrived at largely through acts of memory and

²² Khan, *Callaloo Nation* 123.

²³ V S Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness* (1964. London: Picador, 2002).

²⁴ Pichakaaree has been described as a folk song associated with Phagwa. According to Caribbean cultural critic Ravi Ji, "[p]ichakaaree is originally a syringe-like instrument which is associated with Phagwa. It is used to squirt abeer or fellow participants in Phagwa. Many folk songs refer to Lord Krishna playing Phagwa with the gopis – cowherds with a pichakaaree. Pichakaaree has recently become a genre of folk song arising out Phagwa in Trinidad. Ravi Ji, "Unchecked Freedom is Like Careless Driving," *Trinidad Guardian* April 20, 2004.

mythopoeia, borne out in the liberatory philosophies of history based in myth that have been espoused by Caribbean artists and theorists such as Harris, Walcott and Glissant as discussed in Chapter two. The construction of Caribbean cultural identity is thus also contingent on these historically grounded myths that have defined the region. Consequently, Hall's contention that notions of cultural identity acquire validity or "truth" through complex strategies of representation that are aimed at legitimising the existence and evolution of a people is congruent with the evidence available in the region's cultural production. As Hall explains:

[Q]uestions of identity are always questions about representation. They are always questions about the invention, not simply the discovery, of tradition. They are always exercises in selective memory, and they almost always involve the silencing of something in order to allow something else to speak.²⁵

To conceive of cultural identity as the invention of tradition accounts for the popularity of the electronic messages described above for instance, and the predilection for the genre of auto/biography, in the ways in which it has been appropriated to the task of exploring notions of nation and cultural identity in the region. For as Hall further explains:

Silencing as well as remembering identity is always a question of producing in the future an account of the past; that is to say, it is always about narratives, the stories cultures tell themselves about who they are and where they came from.²⁶

Given that notions of Caribbean nation and identity are necessarily historically bound constructs such stories of cosmogenesis proliferate across races and ethnicity and are embedded in the range of representative auto/biographies described in Part one.

²⁵ Hall, "Negotiating" 26.

²⁶ Hall, "Negotiating" 27.

However, such self-defining narratives often take cognisance of countervailing narratives that facilitate the recognition of self, or as Hall describes it:

Far from coming from the still small point of truth inside us, identities actually come from outside; they are the way in which we are recognized and then come to step into the place of the recognitions others give us. Without the others there is no self, there is no self-recognition.²⁷

These narratives are invariably subject to the dictates of changing historical circumstances and as a result, influence the ways in which Caribbeanness is conceived in different generations or eras. But more than that, Hall also notes the “profound misrecognition of one’s own identity” that occurs simultaneously with formulations of the self and the other acquires credibility through the continuous repetition.²⁸

The final tenet of Hall’s re-visioning, which is important to prismatic creolisation, is his reminder that relations of power are intricately implicated in the politics of representation.²⁹ Colonisation has been the starting point for the entrenchment of a complex system of social stratification that has determined the dominance (or subordination) of various “races” and ethnicities based primarily on access to wealth as well as on the subliminal codification of a hierarchy of skin colour (or pigmentocracy) and other phenotypical characteristics. The potency of this system cannot be overemphasised particularly in relation to the two territories under consideration. The exploration of these issues surrounding race, ethnicity, class and gender, which follows is illustrative of the increasingly complex interplay of power in the definition and evolution of these national and cultural spaces.

²⁷ Hall, “Negotiating” 30.

²⁸ Hall, “Negotiating” 31.

²⁹ Hall, “Negotiating” 28.

It is pertinent, however, that while Hall's contribution to the redefinition of Caribbeanness is indispensable, limitations are evident. Scepticism has been expressed, for example, about Hall's classification of the Caribbean as a diaspora - a classification also adopted and accepted by this thesis. Sociologist Robin Cohen, who has taken issue with Hall's classification, has however also advocated the delimitation of the term from its traditional but restrictive application to the Jewish experience as well as its casual "untheorized or undertheorized" usage.³⁰ In proffering a differentiated understanding of the term, Cohen suggests five "qualifying adjectives" each of which encompasses varying characteristics of diaspora, namely victim, labour, trade, imperial and cultural.³¹ Distinguishing between the Caribbean as a specific geographical space comprising mainly arrivant peoples who subsequently became its citizenry, on the one hand, and the communities of its peoples who have since migrated from the region to the United States, Britain and Europe on the other, Cohen proposes that only the latter group might properly constitute what he describes as a "cultural diaspora". According to Cohen, four key characteristics distinguish the cultural diaspora:

First, there should be evidence of cultural retention or affirmations of an African identity. Secondly ... literal or symbolic interest in "return". Thirdly, ... cultural artefacts, products and expressions that show shared concerns and cross-influences between Africa, the Caribbean and the destination countries of Caribbean peoples. Fourthly ... indications that ordinary peoples abroad – in their attitudes, migration patterns and social conduct – behave in ways consistent with the idea of a cultural diaspora.³²

To assign the label of diaspora to both categories of Caribbeans – at home and abroad – but particularly to the former, as Hall and others do, proves problematic for Cohen.

His objections are based on the fact that the population of arrivant peoples were

³⁰ Robin Cohen, introduction, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, (London: UCL Press, 1997) x.

³¹ Cohen, *Global Diasporas* 29.

³² Cohen, *Global Diasporas* 144.

obviously not indigeneous to the region thereby obviating their inclusion in accordance with the traditional definition of the term that dictates that, “[s]ettler and immigrant societies are normally conceived as points of arrival, not departure, sites of a renewed collectivity, not of dissolution, emigration and dispersion”.³³ Further, Cohen argues that given the diversity of peoples, the Caribbean comprises a cross section of diasporas including trade (Chinese, Syrian, Lebanese), victim (Africans), imperial (Indians) and labour (Africans and Indians) as differentiated by his re-visioning of the term. Moreover, he asserts that the atypical lack of interest in physically returning to homelands also challenges conventional thinking about diasporas.

That it is problematic to define the Caribbean region as a diaspora within the strict, conventional parameters of the term is indisputable. That the region reflects a cross section of diasporas in keeping with Cohen’s formulation, is also irrefutable. At the same time, however, in undertaking the necessary exercise of delimiting the term’s meaning Cohen suggests what are credible characteristics for determining the nature of diaspora that the Caribbean constitutes; suggestions that are in fact invaluable to the further elucidation of Hall’s arguments. It is evident that both Hall and Cohen have addressed the virtual indifference to a literal return since each has recognised that the desire is primarily in a symbolic or psychic return journey to homeland; a preoccupation that is apparent in much of the cultural production of the region. What remains to some irreconcilable with the idea of diaspora, is Caribbean peoples’ arrivant status in the region. Hall is not oblivious to this discrepancy but, as explanation, details the emergence of the idea of diaspora in the Caribbean

³³ Cohen, *Global Diasporas* 137.

imagination through an examination of the transformation, by the Rastafarian movement, of the biblical story of Moses leading his people out of bondage and back to freedom in the promised land.³⁴ It was, as Hall explains, the appropriation of this story of Exodus to the dire circumstances of slavery that ensured its adoption as one of the foundational and trans-historical myths of the region. When applied metaphorically to the Caribbean experience, Hall notes:

This is the ur-source of that great New World narrative of freedom, hope and redemption which is repeated again and again throughout slavery – the Exodus and the ‘Freedom Ride’ ... In this metaphor, history – which is open to freedom because it is contingent - is represented as teleological and redemptive: circling back to the restoration of its originary moment, healing all rupture, repairing every violent breach through this return. This hope has become for Caribbean people, condensed into a sort of foundational myth. It is, by any standards, a great vision. Its power - even in the modern world - to move mountains can never be underestimated.³⁵

Evidently, Hall’s application of the term draws on such nuances and although this does not negate the fact that Caribbean peoples were not autochthonous to the region, it elaborates an important point, acknowledged by Hall and Cohen, which is that culture is the arena in which the Caribbean diaspora is distinguished. In establishing belonging to their New World space, Caribbean peoples have resorted to culture as the medium through which human dignity and freedom are re-affirmed. This gives credence to Hall’s advancement of the notion of a diasporic aesthetic (a term he attributes to Kobena Mercer) as descriptive of the cultural output of the region.³⁶ Critic, Michael Gilkes’ coined term “creative schizophrenia” perhaps reflects a

³⁴ An extended examination of notions of diaspora and its appropriation to the history of Caribbean peoples is detailed in Hall’s essay, “Caribbean Culture: Future Trends” *Caribbean Quarterly* 43.1 (1997): 25-33.

³⁵ Hall, “Thinking the Diaspora” 4.

³⁶ Hall, “Thinking the Diaspora” 8.

similar attempt to encapsulate the process of transformation and coalescence of these disparate artistic influences.³⁷

Nonetheless, confirmation of whether the Caribbean satisfies the requirement of being a “travelling culture” through the replication of cultural practices in metropolitan locations is a valid enquiry and “test” of cultural diaspora suggested by Cohen. Part three attempts such an investigation. Suffice it to say, however, that some tangible networks are evident in the continuing transatlantic migrations and the substantial contribution of remittances to the annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of several territories.

Another limitation that is evident in Hall’s re-conceptualisation of Caribbeanness was mentioned earlier: that is, his emphasis on the African diasporic element, its role and influence in the region - a common critique also made of Brathwaite’s creolisation thesis. Further, Cohen’s tests of African retentions as a prerequisite for the Caribbean cultural diaspora illustrate a similar emphasis. Undoubtedly, from Hall’s and Cohen’s work on the subject, both are mindful of and sensitive to the arrival of the various other races and ethnicities, their contributions to and the reciprocal cultural exchanges that have been determining factors in the evolution of this diasporic aesthetic, which Hall particularly advocates. From the survey of Hall’s scholarship on Caribbean identity that informs this thesis, however, there is little evidence of any comprehensive analysis of other groups. Some might attribute such an omission to the general presumption of the Caribbean as an exclusively African space. Although certain circumstances merit such a critique given that Afro-Caribbeans comprise the

³⁷ Michael Gilkes, “Creative Schizophrenia: The Caribbean Cultural Challenge,” Walter Rodney Lecture, University of Warwick, Coventry, December, 1986.

predominant group in the region, it is arguable whether this would have been Hall's singular implicit presumption. It is suggested rather, that such emphasis might be explained when account is taken of the fact that Hall privileges and weaves his auto/biographical experience into what might be viewed as a somewhat sentient re-visioning of identity politics. As such, Hall, who acknowledges his racial admixture, simultaneously self-identifies with his African heritage – an inescapable empirical factor in the context of Britain where he has spent the longer part of his life.³⁸

Cohen's emphasis might be attributed to the constraints of the breadth of the case study on which his conclusions are drawn.

In similar vein, Hall as one of the founding members of the Marxist oriented New Left Movement and who has devoted much of his scholarly investigation to the issues of race and class in the context of Britain, again, perhaps because of auto/biographical considerations, only alludes to the implications of these two variables in the dynamics of power relations in the Caribbean.³⁹ Neither does he address the intersections with ethnicity, gender and religion. These are the salient gaps identified in Hall's theorisation that will be rectified in the remainder of this chapter. Particular attention will be given to race and ethnicity, two of the more contested aspects of identity politics in the region as they are expressed in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana.

While it is acknowledged that class, gender, religion and sexuality are as significant to the construction of Caribbeanness and are inevitably touched upon; comprehensive analysis of these components is beyond the scope of the thesis.

³⁸ Kuan-Hsing Chen, "The Formation of a Diasporic Intellectual: An Interview with Stuart Hall" *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. Ed. David Morley et al (London, New York: Routledge, 1996): 491- 495.

³⁹ In at least one instance, however, Hall undertakes some intensive exploration of the impact of race and class in Caribbean society in an early essay, "Pluralism, Race and Class in Caribbean Society," *Race and Class in Post-colonial Society: A Study of Ethnic Group Relations in the English-Speaking Caribbean, Bolivia, Chile and Mexico* (Paris: UNESCO, 1977) 150-181.

Colouring Caribbeanness

Race and ethnicity have long been at the epicentre of much of the popular and scholarly debates about Caribbean identity and nation politics. In the popular arena, such discussions are seldom spared the effluvium of invidious racial prejudices. Talk show programmes, which have become the forum for airing such discussions, have served to solidify the polarisation of the two major groups of Afro- and Indo-Caribbeans, to the exclusion of middle minority groups, particularly during marked politically sensitive periods in each territory. In Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago where the liberalisation of the media has resulted in the emergence of a spate of ethnic oriented radio stations, talk shows – often hosted by ill-informed and biased commentators - are proving to be especially detrimental to the improvement of race relations.

Conversely, some Caribbean scholars have tempered their analyses on race and ethnicity by contextualising their theorisations in the specific historical circumstances that have contributed to aggravated race relations in the region. Some measure of objectivity has usually accrued to such approaches. Traditionally, scholarly investigation of the two subjects has been dominated by Social Scientists who have often presumed the sufficiency of Western models of thought for the Caribbean historical and cultural situation. This has been coupled with an adherence to the empirical demands of their fields with dependence on standard research tools such as surveys, participant observation and personal interviews from which data is extracted, interpreted, and conclusions reached. Although much of the scholarship has provided very constructive insights into the understanding of race and ethnicity as they are

manifested in the Caribbean, much more depth and detail might be gleaned by including the critical cultural dimension. In fact, George Lamming, Caribbean writer and critic has lamented the absence of culture as an integral component of research emanating from at least one Social Science department of UWI, observing that its work “unfortunately ... tends to be constrained within a statistical prison that has not allowed for that kind of vision of culture.”⁴⁰ Sociologist Rhoda Reddock, whose primary research concern has been with examining the previously ignored gender dimension in Caribbean sociological investigation, expands Lamming’s criticism, stating that:

Third World scholarship on the interconnections of ethnicity, class, gender and culture are largely absent, in particular with respect to relations among what North Americans refer to as ‘people of colour’. This is so although ethnic tensions have been the cause of bloodshed and civil war in many of our societies.⁴¹

As such, even as some Social Scientists have avoided the cultural dimension while debating whether its amorphous nature could be subjected effectively to the neat empirical measurements and analyses of their disciplines, others have begun to pursue pioneering research on the region that considers the specificities of culture. Among this group of Social Scientists are included Reddock, Patricia Mohammed, Aisha Khan, Shalini Puri, Daniel Segal, Kevin Yelvington and Selwyn Ryan whose research is relevant in this respect. The incorporation of culture in their consideration of race and ethnicity usually has been accompanied by the adoption of a decidedly social constructionist approach and an engagement with more organic concepts of societal

⁴⁰ Lamming, “Caribbean Labor, Culture and Identity,” *Caribbean Cultural Identities*, ed. Glyne Griffith, spec. issue of *Bucknell Review* Vol. XLIV, No. 2 (2001): 18.

⁴¹ Rhoda Reddock, “Contestations Over National Culture in Trinidad and Tobago: Considerations of Ethnicity, Class and Gender,” *Caribbean Portraits: Essays on Gender Ideologies and Identities*, ed. Christine Barrow (Kingston: Ian Randle Press, 1998) 415.

formation and reciprocal influence such as creolisation, douglarisation and cross cultural poetics.

In the Humanities, other challenges have become apparent in the exploration of race and ethnicity that are perhaps symptomatic of continuing societal tensions. Some literary and cultural critics, such as Kenneth Ramchand, Jeremy Poynting and Gordon Rohlehr have observed that the region's literary production reveals a mutual lack of knowledge of the Other given the absence of or clumsy attempts at depicting credible portraits, interactions and relationships among the various races and ethnic groups in any range of situations. As Ramchand asserts:

West Indian novelists tend to base their fictions upon the racial groups they grew up in; not because they are writing to or on behalf of those groups but in the first place *because they know those groups best* [my emphasis]. In general, therefore, the Indian character either does not appear, or is peripheral in works by non-Indian writers. Novels by writers of Indian origin, on the other hand, are peopled mainly by Indian characters. Such works yield up to readers who already possess the facts (either from first hand experience or from documentary sources) impressions and insights into the facts such as the novel form is peculiarly fitted to give.⁴²

Of course, there are notable exceptions to this criticism. Included in an often-quoted short list are Edgar Mittelhölzer, Samuel Selvon, George Lamming, Roy Heath, Earl Lovelace, Merle Hodge and Ramabai Espinet. Ramchand has lauded Lovelace's *The Dragon Can't Dance* as a landmark novel that made a quantum leap in the depiction of the encounter of characters of both the Afro- and Indo- Trinidadian communities in the predominantly Afro-Trinidadian district of Laventille. According to Ramchand, Lovelace had broken down barriers by giving the male Indo-Trinidadian protagonist, Pariag "political significance in West Indian society" thereby making him pivotal to

⁴² Kenneth Ramchand, "An Approach to Earl Lovelace's Novel Through an Examination of Indian-African Relations in *The Dragon Can't Dance*" *Caribbean Quarterly* 32.1 (1986): 2.

the plot and consciousness of the novel.⁴³ In Ramchand's estimation, by emphasising the "cultural and personal", Lovelace also banished the party politics underlying some of the antagonisms between the two groups.⁴⁴ Noting that before Lovelace's novel, only Lamming and Naipaul had ventured to examine the corrosive relations particularly between the Afro- and Indo- Caribbean communities, Ramchand also observed that many previous novels had succumbed to negative stereotypical representations that further betrayed the lack of personal and cultural knowledge and understanding of the Other. Poynting, who has concurred with Ramchand's substantive arguments, objects to what he perceives as the critic's implicit undervaluing of earlier texts by Selvon and Ismith Khan.⁴⁵

However, the mutual lack of knowledge is also reflected in other segments of the society. For even as Rohlehr has suggested that the calypso, as a multiethnic product⁴⁶ has been historically more engaged with the tensions surrounding race and ethnicity in Caribbean society, he has also pointed to the recourse to stereotyping and caricature that has informed the popular art form:

"Race" calypsos are a special variant in that they dramatize the latent or open conflict between identifiable ethnic groups – Blacks, Whites, Chinese, East Indians ...

⁴³ Ramchand, "An Approach to Earl Lovelace's Novel" 5.

⁴⁴ Ramchand, "An Approach to Earl Lovelace's Novel" 5.

⁴⁵ Jeremy Poynting, "'The African and the Asian Will Not Mix': African-Indian Relations in Caribbean Fiction- A Reply," *Wasafiri* No. 5 (1986):15-16. Poynting charges that "in valuing *The Dragon Can't Dance* so highly, Ramchand seems to me to undervalue the work of Selvon, Ismith Khan and George Lamming, which he tends to treat with as prehistoric prefaces to Lovelace's novel." While this is a relatively minor point in the context of Ramchand's larger objectives in the referenced article, Poynting does provide detailed analyses of earlier texts that were similarly concerned with the exploration of inter-ethnic relations to defend his position.

⁴⁶ Gordon Rohlehr, "Calypso and Caribbean Identity" *Caribbean Cultural Identities*, ed. Glyne Griffith, spec. issue of *Bucknell Review* Vol. XLIV, No. 2 (2001): 58. Rohlehr argues that "the calypso itself is a product of processes originating in various cultures and evolving out of various ethnic groups or ethnic communities. Its entire history has been one of a certain degree of multiethnicity and it has therefore developed flexibility and is constantly, of course, undergoing change."

Race calyposes trade on stereotyping, and employ caricature and humour based on the mockery of accent, music or gestures of the other race. They measure, or betray, the uncertainty with which the races have regarded each other; a latent atavistic mistrust, and the competition which has always been taking place against a background of chronic unemployment, poverty and dispossession on the part of the broad masses of people, and authoritarianism, patronage and manipulation on the part of those small elitist groups who control their destiny. Such racial attitudes are, of course, tempered by the fact that all groups partake of the same education, and are caught up in the same rush of events, cultural pressure from the metropole, and the same directionless futility of politics at home.⁴⁷

Rohlehr has further suggested that “there has been no true dialogue” among the groups.⁴⁸

Like the literary and cultural critics, historians have also attended to questions of race and ethnicity in their research. As noted in the previous chapter, historians have been recording the arrival, settlement and contributions of specific races and ethnicities to the region especially since the attainment of nationhood. Others have also been examining the nature of interactions among the various communities and the circumstances that gave rise to antagonisms during the pre- and post- independence periods; for example, Bridget Brereton’s *Race Relations in Colonial Trinidad 1870 – 1900* (1979),⁴⁹ and Brackette Williams’ *Stains on My Name, War in My Veins: Guyana and the Politics of Cultural Struggle* (1991)⁵⁰. Mervyn Alleyne’s recent text *The Construction and Representation of Race and Ethnicity in the Caribbean and*

⁴⁷ Gordon Rohlehr, “‘Man Talking to Man’: Calypso and Social Confrontation in Trinidad 1970 – 1984” *My Strangled City and Other Essays* (Port of Spain: Longman Trinidad, 1992) 324-5.

⁴⁸ Rohlehr, “‘Man Talking to Man’” 324.

⁴⁹ Bridget Brereton, *Race Relations in Colonial Trinidad 1870 – 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

⁵⁰ Brackette F Williams, *Stains on My Name, War in My Veins: Guyana and the Politics of Cultural Struggle* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991).

the World (2002)⁵¹ is one of the most comprehensive studies thus far that incorporates a linguistic perspective on the subject.

In addition to the limitations outlined above, what is common to much of the scholarship across disciplines are the theoretical and analytical debates pertaining to issues such as the validity of race as a scientific category, contested definitions of “race” and “ethnicity” and whether the two can be considered as separate categories or are subsumed within each other. It is however, not the objective here to rehearse or appraise the numerous debates. Rather some fundamental parameters have been agreed for the purpose of this thesis: primarily that both race and ethnicity are accepted as socially and historically constructed categories in keeping with contemporary thinking. As Michael Banton has posited, “[r]acial categories are constructed from evidence of physical difference, more particularly complexion and physiognomy ... Ethnic categories and groups are based on their members’ belief in their common ancestry”.⁵² Werner Sollors has reinforced the argument for the constructedness of ethnicity by invoking the term “invention” as used by Ernst Gellner and Eric Hobsbawm to bolster his assertion that like nation and nationalism, ethnicity too is an invented modern phenomenon.⁵³ Further, race is accepted as one of several criteria of ethnicity which is privileged in the Caribbean context given its greater persuasiveness as the category around which notions of kinship, common cause and belonging among groups is both established and disrupted as will be illustrated. Indeed as Best has asserted, “ethnicity is automatic solidarity” and is

⁵¹ Mervyn C Alleyne, *The Construction and Representation of Race and Ethnicity in the Caribbean and the World* (Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2002).

⁵² Michael Banton, *Racial Theories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 197.

⁵³ Werner Sollors, ed., introduction, *The Invention of Ethnicity* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) xiii - xvi.

fundamental to understanding Caribbean social relations and reciprocal influences.⁵⁴

The conceptual positions adopted, in part, dovetail with the social constructionist approach of contemporary social science thinking.

Notwithstanding the above, it must be acknowledged that in the Caribbean debates that consider the definitions and distinctions between race and ethnicity are typically academically bound. In popular discourse, attention to such distinctions is rare. In the public domain, these terms are used interchangeably with preference generally being given to “race”, which has more potency for provoking a groundswell of emotion and instinctively galvanising ethnic group solidarity. A tendency to blur the distinction between race/ethnicity and religious persuasion is also not uncommon among Muslim and Hindu Indo-Caribbeans.⁵⁵ Increasingly, the terms “race” and “racial” have become the shorthand descriptors for any range of perceived or real discriminatory practices, entrenched economic and social inequalities or even culturally different traditions. As such, when deployed in popular Caribbean discourse the term “race” tends to be ambiguous, denoting a homogeneous Other. The misappropriation of these terms largely belies a wider deficiency in the vocabulary that has evolved in the discourse of Caribbean race and ethnicity. Although this deficiency has contributed to the force of race as a signifier, ironically it is the invocation of colour - with its attendant assemblage of tones, shades and hues relevant to the pigmentation of the skin - that connotes the full weight of historical, cultural, social and politically specific representations of race and ethnicity as

⁵⁴ Best, “Race, Class and Ethnicity” 8-9.

⁵⁵ Aisha Khan recounts anecdotal evidence to this effect from a colleague at the UWI (St Augustine) when discussing her research on the construction of religious identities among Muslim and Hindu Indo-Trinidadians. She states: “my colleague shared with me that in her university classes students frequently ‘confuse,’ as she put it, religion and race in their essays. Moreover, she said, on forms or questionnaires she has seen them write down their religion when asked to note race.” See Khan, *Callaloo Nation* 2.

categories. Certain colours of the spectrum, with their culture-specific nuanced meanings have been adapted to compensate for the limitations of vocabulary. As such, cognisant of Hall's assertion of the pivotal function of strategies of representation to the act of constructing identity, it is argued that the investigation of the use of colour and colour derived terms in the construction of race and ethnic stereotypes is imperative to any attempt at understanding the psycho-social contexts and emotional knowledge that fuel the visceral sentiments that underpin the continuing mutual antagonisms and cloud debates pertaining to the imagining of nation and cultural identity. Not only does such an investigation expand on some of the existing empirical and historical scholarship but also illustrates some of the ambivalences and fissures inherent in the application of colour terms. Further, while on the one hand, it is evident that such codification of colour has produced an essentialised knowledge of the Other, it has also highlighted how other variables such as class, education and professional achievements disrupt conventional stereotypes and psycho-social values attributed to variations in shades of colour. Conversely, the comparative investigation of colour as it is deployed in the region's artistic production is starkly divergent in what it reveals through its re-imagining and re-presentation of colour from the shackles of conventional sociological meanings. What emerges is a fluid, more productive application with inherent prismatic possibilities that more accurately captures the contemporary situation in the region – an outcome that is rendered impossible in the psychosocial adoption of colour in racial and ethnic discourses.

Colour has been a central, constitutive characteristic in the definition of Caribbean landscape, psyche, culture, and identity. This is not unique to the region. The intensity and vibrancy of colour that has been synonymous with the Caribbean landscape has always provoked comment as perusal of travelogues, diaries, other historical documents, as well as contemporary literature attests. In this way, colour has also been used in the formulation of knowledge about the region and derivatively about its peoples. Political independence also witnessed the use of colour in the definition of national character and subsequently in the complicit branding of the territories as desirable tourist destinations. Markedly, the correlation between the landscapes' colour (and climate) with the perceived qualities and characteristics of the indigenous and arrivant peoples evident in early travelogues has been sustained and transferred into a repertoire of knowledge about Caribbean race and ethnicity.

From Columbus, the 'discoverer' of the 'second Paradise', to contemporary travel writers and tourists, the Caribbean landscape has itself been a derivative source of cultural knowledge about the natives and arrivants. Some critics have noted shifts in the representation of the Caribbean landscape in the coloniser's imagination that reflected the changing intellectual movements and methods of engagement with the region. Mimi Sheller has periodised these changes into three main categories: first, the production of nature that marked the early centuries of discovery and the acquisition of botanical knowledge, secondly, the eighteenth century emphasis on the scenic economy which added "a painterly aesthetic" dimension to the mirage of tropical landscape and lastly, from the nineteenth century that witnessed the return of

the landscape as “‘wild’ nature and the bodily experience of immersion in it”.⁵⁶

Perhaps a combination of these three approaches to representing the Caribbean landscape has survived in the imaginations of latter day tourists. What is common across these epochs is the markedly contrasting, often ambivalent responses from the peoples who first encountered each other in the region to the intensity and variegation of colour.

To the coloniser, the landscape was both unimaginably beautiful and horribly terrifying in its density, fecundity, and changeability. Lady Nugent, in the journal recording her stay in Jamaica makes frequent observations about the beauty and fecundity of the landscape:

All the country is flat, but very pretty ... I am told that the scenery of the interior is quite beautiful, and this I can well imagine, from the lilac-coloured mountains, and the variety of ground and tints, that I see from my window.⁵⁷

In spite of its undeniable beauty, Nugent also makes linkages between the lushness and colour of the landscape and the unpredictable, volatile weather patterns that breed despondency, disease, and death.⁵⁸ Nugent also observed, “how congenial the climate is to their [that is the slaves’] colour” affording them good health and longevity as compared with the frequent illnesses that plagued the planter class.⁵⁹ By making the association between skin colour and the landscape’s climate Nugent hints

⁵⁶ Sheller, *Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies* (London, New York: Routledge, 2003) 37-38. In similar vein, John A Murray has referred to two periods: “the homocentrism of the Age of Conquest” that was based on a literal interpretation of the Old Testament and a “biocentric outlook of the current Age of Conscience”. Murray, introduction, *The Islands and the Sea* (New York, Oxford: OUP, 1991) 6.

⁵⁷ Maria Nugent, *Lady Nugent’s Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica from 1801-1805*, ed. Philip Wright (Mona, Jamaica: UWI, 2002) 17.

⁵⁸ Nugent noted that “I cannot tell what it is, but this climate has a most extraordinary effect upon me; I am not ill, but every object is, at times, not only uninteresting, but even disgusting. I feel a sort of inward discontent and restlessness, that are perfectly unnatural to me.” Nugent, *Lady Nugent’s Journal* 17.

⁵⁹ Nugent, *Lady Nugent’s Journal* 96.

at wider held perceptions of the coloniser - that is, that the untamed, bountiful landscape mirrored the reputed uncivilised, wild behaviour patterns of the indigenous and colonised peoples. The ambivalent relationship to the landscape and its inhabitants survived the emancipation of the slaves. Curiously, whereas the European Creoles grew to appreciate and even find solace in the landscape, the European born colonial administrators and settlers retained their ambivalence. Jean Rhys' fictional novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* captures this contrasting relationship. Contrary to Antoinette's obvious admiration and contentment in a landscape with which she is familiar having been born in the Caribbean, her English born husband's initial impressions reveal a mixture of awe and apprehension:

The road climbed upwards. On one side the wall of green, on the other a steep drop to the ravine below ... There was a soft warm wind blowing but I understood why the porter had called it a wild place. Not only wild but menacing. Those hills would close in on you ... Everything was too much, I felt as I rode wearily after her. Too much blue, too much purple, too much green. The flowers too red, the mountains too high, the hills too near.⁶⁰

While ample evidence has survived to trace the ways in which representations of the Caribbean landscape were formulated in the imaginations of the colonising populations, there is an equivalent silence in both the slave and indenture narratives, which may be attributed to the heavily political agendas and the mediated circumstances that facilitated their recording. However, with the transition from colonies to sovereign nation states, the coloniser's gaze has shifted to that of the tourist. For the tourist, the overwhelming colour that sheaths the natural habitat calls to mind nostalgic memories of the quaintness associated with colonial landscapes of Empire. Ironically, in much the same way that natural resources were extracted from the region during colonialism and imperialism to fund the development and expansion

⁶⁰ Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* 42.

of British and European interests, many Caribbean territories have been complicit in branding the region to satisfy the insatiable desire for recapturing that elusive Edenic paradise. As such, the cliché of the idyllic, virginal landscape replete with intensely colourful scenery and the much sought after sun, sea, sand, and sex have been propagated as part of the tourism package. The growth of the niche market for ecotourism further affirms the cliché of the virginal landscape of a prelapsarian period and capitalises on the rise in consciousness about ecology and environmental issues. Whereas the industrialised world has had the biggest negative impact on the environment, some yet “untouched” areas are still secreted in the interiors of many developing countries.

The silence of the slave and indentured narratives in representing or referencing the landscape, its beauty and colour in the circumstances of forced and coerced labour is broken by many Caribbean writers, painters and other fine artists. Among the writers, many such as Harris, Brathwaite and Walcott have voiced their objections to the complicity of nation-states in maintaining inequality through the unfair terms and conditions of work and the objectification of its peoples and cultures that underpin the region’s tourism industry. In her text, *A Small Place*, Jamaica Kincaid undertakes a sustained caustic analysis of the problematic relationship between tourism and continued economic (under)development as well as the attendant debasement of the landscape, environment, cultural practices and products. Apart from Kincaid’s cynically crafted insights into the views of the nationals about tourists, she also paints a bittersweet portrait of Antiguan geography and landscape that has fallen prey to the vagaries of tourism development:

Antigua is beautiful. Antigua is too beautiful. Sometimes the beauty of it seems unreal. Sometimes the beauty of it seems as if it were stage

sets for a play, for no real sunset could look like that; no real seawater could strike that many shades of blue at once; no real sky could be that shade of blue – another shade of blue, completely different from the shade of blue seen in the sea ... no real flowers could be these shades of red, purple, yellow, orange, blue, white ... It is as if, then, the beauty – the beauty of the sea, the land, the air, the trees, the market, the people, the sounds they make - were a prison, and as if everything and everybody inside it were locked in and everything and everybody that is not inside it is locked out.⁶¹

For Kincaid, as the independent observer with privileged insights, the island's beauty is imbued with rapturous colour that renders it as almost surreal set as it is against the harsh history and continued economic hardship and exploitation. Contrary to the coloniser and tourist for whom the Caribbean landscape was visualised through the lens of acquisition and consumption, from the national's perspective, it has been the backdrop for brutality and dehumanisation, although simultaneously engendering ownership and pride in belonging as is suggested in Kincaid's analysis.

Colour has also been co-opted into the independence project assuming symbolic meaning in the design of flags and other emblems of the nation. Generally, the colours selected for national flags in the Anglophone Caribbean particularly have integrated the natural elements, with the aspirations, perceived temperament of its peoples, and their history of slavery and colonialism. Accordingly, the colours red, white and black of the national flag of Trinidad and Tobago are representative of the elements of fire, water and earth. While red is symbolic of the vitality of the lands and its peoples, to black is attributed qualities of strength, unity of purpose and wealth of the land. White represents the sea that bounds the islands and purity of aspirations of its peoples.⁶² The Guyanese flag also utilises the three colours of the Trinidad and

⁶¹ Kincaid, *A Small Place* (New York : Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988) 77-79.

⁶² *Celebrating Forty Years of Independence*. National Library of Trinidad and Tobago. August, 2002. <http://www.nalis.gov.tt/Independence/NatSymbols>.

Tobago flag with gold and green added. Red, in this instance represents the “zeal and dynamic nature of the nation-building”; white, the potential of the rivers and other water courses, and black the endurance of the peoples. Gold and green symbolise the territory’s mineral wealth; agriculture and forestry respectively.⁶³

The mobilisation of these colours to define nationhood has not achieved as wide circulation or instinctive association especially among younger citizens as might have been anticipated. Rather, the colours that are immediately identifiable as having some Caribbean connection, more specifically with Jamaica (which some still mistakenly hold as being synonymous with “the Caribbean”) are the red, yellow, green and black of the Rastafarian movement and by extension, reggae music popularised by its main exponents Bob Marley and the Wailers. This emblematic colour scheme borrows from those colours associated with the Garvey movement, and the Jamaican national flag “to create their Pan-African” motif.⁶⁴ In the same way that the global branding of the Caribbean island as idyll has gained currency, so too have the Rasta colours been popularised largely as a result of the proliferation of a range of tourist-type souvenir items. The enduring iconic images of Marley with whom these colours are also closely identified have further served to solidify the subliminal association of the Rasta colours with the Caribbean island brand.

In similar vein, Carnival, which has become a diasporic celebration has also been tagged for marketing purposes as a spectacle of colour or the more banal “carnival is colour”. Religions have also been influential in determining the affective meanings of

⁶³ Edwin Ali, *The Rise of the Phoenix in Guyana’s Turbulent Politics* v.

⁶⁴ Neil J. Savishinsky, “African Dimensions of the Rastafarian Movement” *Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader*, eds. Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, William David Spencer and Adrian Anthony McFarlane (Kingston: Ian Randle Press, 1998) 134-135. Savishinsky offers further explanations for the selection of colours and their associations with Africa, the Garvey and Pan-African movements.

colours in the national and cultural domain. Invariably, religious festivals and other rituals have attributed differing meanings even to the same colour. Nonetheless, secular festivals such as Carnival often draw on the colour-coded meanings attributed to the sacred in their presentations of national and universal themes. The plethora of colour that has characterised the Caribbean landscape and imagination has been elaborated in relation to its peoples, giving rise to the mythical perception of the “rainbow nation” that is premised on notions of equality and inclusivity.

In its pervasiveness in the Caribbean and other landscapes, colour has been influential not only in symbolisation but also in establishing “precise values ... through associative learning”.⁶⁵ Given that “seeing comes before words”⁶⁶ as John Berger proposes, such learning follows the “primordial perception” of colour which explains partially how colour as witnessed in the natural landscape is translated into perceptions about temperament and cultural attributes of peoples inhabiting that space. Alleyne corroborates this view arguing that:

Colour discrimination is an innate human attribute that emerges very early in physical and cognitive development. It then requires precise inputs from the physical and cultural environment to determine the precise dissection of the spectrum and the meanings to be assigned to the divisions. This ability would then apply to race insofar as the most salient feature of race is skin colour.⁶⁷

This is borne out in Nugent’s observations of the suitability of the black and brown peoples as opposed to white people such as herself to the landscape and climate; an idea with which Nugent may have been familiar from the colonial texts that created the West Indies in the British and European imaginations. In formulating her perceptions of difference in terms of skin colour, Nugent establishes three points in

⁶⁵ Alleyne, *Construction and Representation* 5.

⁶⁶ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC and Penguin Books, 1972) 7-10.

⁶⁷ Alleyne, *Construction and Representation* 18.

the colour spectrum: white and black that are located at opposite ends, and brown that is perceived as being located in the middle of these end points. Apart from these three colours, two others, red and yellow, have also been added to the mere eight colours that the average English speaker is said to codify from the vast colour spectrum.⁶⁸

However, colour is not the single determinant in the construction of race and ethnicity; other phenotypical characteristics such as hair texture, shape of nose, lips, eyes and torso are all indexed for purposes of establishing what might be considered as “factual” information about a person’s social position in the hierarchy. As a rule, the approximation of whiteness, that privileged the physical features associated with European ideals of beauty were perceived as indicators of wealth, social and political status. This rule of thumb was encapsulated in one of the rhymes made popular during the Black Power period in North America that translated into the Caribbean context with minor variations:

If you’re white, that’s all right
 If you’re brown, stick around
 If you ain’t red, you’re dead
 If you’re black, stand back

The pigmentocracy entrenched in this rhyme and learned through the informal and subliminal cultural knowledge transfer across generations is founded on certain preconceived notions of purity (authenticity) and miscegenation. The colours black and white were meant to be representative of the “pure races” that were thought to have been transplanted in the New World. Curiously, no particular colour was associated with Indo-Caribbeans during indenture; this has since changed given the concerted efforts to delineate a distinct identity by this community. Brown and red betrayed the multiple permutations of “mixing” which were thought to have occurred

⁶⁸ Alleyne, *Construction and Representation* 2.

exclusively within the adopted landscape. According to Daniel Segal, “[t]his ‘mixing’ was thought to have produced not simply a ‘coloured’ population, but more complexly, a ‘coloured middle class’” that effectively filled the middle gap between the blacks and whites located at the base and apex of the scale respectively.⁶⁹ Of the colours adapted to the vocabulary of Caribbean race and ethnicity, each is carefully constructed with encoded meanings that may shift from territory to territory. The main colours, which have been in circulation since the pre-independence period are decoded below explaining the intuitive knowledge that is invoked when they are enunciated in relation to race and ethnicity. As Fanon, Hall and others have argued correctly, the self is recognised or experienced primarily in relation to otherness.⁷⁰ To this end, the de-codification of the colour terms inevitably involves the examination of how stereotypes of the Other were fixed within and among the different communities and transferred from slavery and indenture to Emancipation and independence when persisting inequalities and competition for scarce resources ensured their continuity.

Black

As a pigment used in painting, black has been the basis for many experiments resulting in various shades of black with prefixes such as ivory, Spanish, and lamp. Like its opposite counterpart white, black is vital to the mixing of other colours and in creating shading and highlights. Still, in the context of Western art, literature and culture, black has come to connote a range of negative qualities epitomised in such terms as black market, blackmail, blacklist, black magic and black comedy. The

⁶⁹ Daniel Segal, “‘Race’ and ‘Colour’” 86.

⁷⁰ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* 109-140.

negative stereotyping of the enslaved and indentured peoples by the colonisers was integral to the colonising project since it maintained their subjugation and regulated control. Undoubtedly, this was a reciprocal process purposed by the colonised at resisting such subjugation as opposed to maintaining power. Negative stereotyping of blacks was circulated through art and literature of the colonising countries and in part, validated the colonising project. In the same vein, art critic Albert Boime has observed that the contrasting stereotyping established between black and white played on the religious opposition of good and evil:

The racial opposition of black and white derives from the color scale; the famous *chiaroscuro*, or light and dark polarity, is intimately associated with the religious dualism of Good and Evil; and the compositional isolation of figures or inanimate motifs that is central to the semiotics of Western art becomes decoded as exclusionary in the political sense.⁷¹

Black, associated as it was with Africans (and “non-whites”) was thus inextricably connected to enslavement. In its association with the dark-skinned slave, black encoded an assortment of negative traits, which cumulatively suggested that African (or Black) people were ultimately inferior and of a sub-human breed. Black people were profiled as being “unjust, cruel, barbarous, anthropophagous, traitors, liars, thieves, drunkards, proud, lazy, unclean, unchaste, jealous to fury and cowardly”.⁷² While these traits were held as being common to all black people, “Quashee”, deployed as the archetypal figure of black masculinity was also “evasive... childlike and distrustful” as well as appearing “kind, cheerful and a songster”.⁷³ Black

⁷¹ Albert Boime, *The Art of Exclusion: Representing Blacks in the Nineteenth Century* 2.

⁷² Williams, *History of the People* 111. Robert J Moore corroborates the circulation of these traits among the colonials in Guyana in his essay, “Colonial Images of Blacks and Indians in Nineteenth Century Guyana” *The Colonial Caribbean in Transition: Essays on Postemancipation Social and Cultural History*, eds. Bridget Brereton and Kevin A Yelvington (Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad: UWI Press, 1999) 126-158.

⁷³ Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002) 102.

femininity – a misnomer given its colonial constitution - shared similar contradictory qualities: loud, vulgar, lascivious, promiscuous, ungainly, coarse and strong as well as simpleminded and cheerful.⁷⁴ Although the black slave woman was stereotyped as a “defeminised neuter unit” and the strong matriarch, she was also sexualised as exhibiting exotic charms exemplified in the image of the “Sable Queen”.⁷⁵ Even so, unflattering comparisons made between the black slave woman’s phenotypical characteristics and that of the white, brown/mulatto and subsequently Indian indentured women abound. Interestingly, parties on either side of the emancipation debate manipulated these stereotypes; the missionaries who were arguing the case for abolition tweaked the prevailing stereotypes to reflect the black Christian who retained their child-like simplicity but was also found to be capable of feelings and thought, partial to learning, guidance and cohabitation in a family unit.⁷⁶

With the introduction of Chinese, Portuguese and Indian indentured labourers, these stereotypes gained further currency as the colonials maintained control by sewing the seeds of discord among the communities. The caste system, already integral to the Hindu indentured labourers was subsequently also embraced by the Muslim segment. Based on a hierarchy of skin colour that also privileged lighter tones, caste easily

⁷⁴ Historian Hilary Beckles notes that “[t]he predominant image associated with the representation of the black woman was that of great strength – the symbol of blackness, masculinity and absence of finer feelings. Her sexuality was projected as overtly physical ... hence brutish and best suited to the frontier world of the far-flung plantation. Out there social immorality, perversity and promiscuity were maintained by her on account of her possession of satanic powers that lured white men away from association with their virtuous white females –hence the existence of the mulatto community within slave society”. Beckles, introduction, *Centering Woman: Gender Discourses in Caribbean Slave Society* (Kingston: Ian Randle; Princeton: Markus Weiner; Oxford: James Currey, 1999) xx.

⁷⁵ Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650-1838* (Kingston: Heinemann Caribbean, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, London: James Currey, 1990) 11-13. Bush presents a cogent analysis of the shifting stereotypes of black slave women during the period of her study.

⁷⁶ Hall, *Civilising Subjects* 108.

integrated into the existing colonial stratification of colour and race.⁷⁷ The Hindi translations for black used in reference to African people were many: *kala*, *kala bhoot*, *koray* and *hubshi*. Subsequently, *creole*, *creoni*, *kilwal* and *kidwahl* were added to refer to Africans, sometimes bearing derogatory connotations. The *hubshi*, who could only belong to the lowest caste, was considered inferior by any standards. Consequently, the *hubshi* is “feckless, childish, vain, pompous, promiscuous.”⁷⁸

These stereotypes are also embedded in popular myth. As Kusha Haraksingh points out:

[B]y each of the standards of birth, occupation and customs, it seemed to the indentured Indians that Negroes were hopelessly polluted. Indians quickly invented a myth about the origin of Negroes. They were supposed to have been adherents of Ravana in his inglorious struggle against Rama. The monkey-God Hanuman, faithful servant of Rama, tied a burning cloth to his tail and swished it through the air. The flames darkened the skins of Ravana’s followers and curled their hair. Negroes were therefore to be identified with the ungodly and polluted.⁷⁹

This myth formulates further negative traits based on occupational pursuits:

If a man engages in an occupation which is ritually impure, he pollutes not only himself but also the group to which he belongs. After the abolition of slavery, many Negroes entered the trades, leather-work being a favourite choice. To the Indians, however, leather represented a defiled substance and the man who handled leather was ritually defiled. Similarly, to eat the flesh of swine or cattle was to be polluted. Generally, Negro habits which were strange to Indians, seemed ritually dangerous and unacceptable. Accordingly, in the Indian scheme of things, Negroes were accorded a position almost beyond the pale.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Colin G. Clarke, *East Indians in a West Indian Town: San Fernando, Trinidad, 1930-70* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1986) 89-91. Clarke explains that among the Hindus, the caste system in Trinidad (and undoubtedly in Guyana as well) recognised high, medium and low castes that reflected the varna system of India. Thus, “[v]arnas are ranked hierarchically: the highest, is the Brahmin, followed by the Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra.” The higher castes were light complected, the lower castes were dark.

⁷⁸ David Lowenthal, *West Indian Societies* (New York, London, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1972) 161.

⁷⁹ Qtd. in Selwyn Ryan, *The Jhandi and the Cross: The Clash of Cultures in Post-Creole Trinidad and Tobago* (St Augustine, Trinidad: Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, UWI, 1999) 29.

⁸⁰ Qtd. in Ryan, *The Jhandi and the Cross* 30.

Of course, given that these stereotypes are animated in myth and actually endorse others already in circulation ensures deep resonance within these communities. Interestingly, correlations in behaviours and phenotype were made between lower caste, dark-skinned Charmars and Madrassis and the *hubshis*; hence Haraksingh further contends that critical to understanding race relations in Trinidad (and undoubtedly in Guyana as well) is the acknowledgement that there is an “Indian view of things”.⁸¹ Confusingly, Haraksingh argues that the racial antagonisms cannot be attributed to colonial stereotypes but rather to the implications of considering Black people as part of the Indian caste system in which they might only be perceived “as an untouchable in fact”.⁸² While it is valid to consider the role that caste played in the perception of Africans by Indian indentured labourers, it is contended that the myths that propel these images of African people function very much in the mode of stereotype. Although no complementary myths of the Indians by Africans have so far been unearthed, the stereotypes advanced about the indentured labourers, particularly the Indians, are as toxic.

Brown

For the painter, brown is derived by mixing either orange and black or red, yellow and black. Red and yellow, on the other hand are used in mixing other colours. In Caribbean parlance these three colours: brown, red and yellow, connote miscegenation - the results of black and white ancestry. Moreover, whereas all three colours are ambiguous indicators of class and societal positioning, red and yellow particularly tend to have derogatory undertones. In suggesting possible reasons for

⁸¹ Qtd. in Ryan, *The Jhandi and the Cross* 30.

⁸² Qtd. in Ryan, *The Jhandi and the Cross* 30.

“red” acquiring such meaning in the Caribbean, Richard Allsopp points out that in many West African languages, “the same word indicates ‘red, brown and yellow’ and may be used in reference to skin colour distinguishing from black.”⁸³ Inasmuch as red and brown bear more contemporary significance, brown and yellow have greater historical resonance since they were used interchangeably with mulatto to distinguish the progeny of black and white sexual relations during slavery. Curiously, the colonising classes recognised just two “shades” of brown, namely the mulatto and sambo; whereas the slaves recognised four distinct shades of separation between black and white: mulatto, quadroon, mustee and musteephino. In sum, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, people of brown, red and yellow tones were considered as being socially and culturally situated in the middle of the hierarchical pyramid between blacks who occupied the lowest rank and the whites at the top. In the position of being “white but not quite” and *definitely* not black, browns were peculiarly placed to destabilise the well-established stereotypes and power balance between blacks and whites. However, as Shalini Puri posits, contrary to the Latin American experience, in the Caribbean, browns or mulattos were comfortably absorbed into the social strata and as such did not disrupt the racial stratification as might have been expected.⁸⁴

The whites’ stereotype of the browns might be summarised in the comments of the early historian of the Anglican Church who assessed them as “inauspicious in the circumstances of their birth ... physically weaker than the Negroes, and intellectually

⁸³ Richard Allsopp, ed., *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* (Mona, Kingston: UWI Press, 1996) 469.

⁸⁴ Shalini Puri, “Canonized Hybridities, Resistant Hybridities: Chutney Soca, Carnival, and the Politics of Nationalism” *Caribbean Romances: The Politics of Regional Representation*. Ed. Belinda J. Edmondson. (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 1999) 18.

weaker than the whites.”⁸⁵ This epitomises the ambivalent and often contradictory attitudes and resentment of the whites. For the blacks, their resentment stemmed from the browns’ preferred allegiance to the whites, which, particularly in the post emancipation period facilitated access to certain social and economic privileges of such association, much in the same way as it had increased the probability of manumission during slavery. Moreover, since such access was premised (as in the case of the black middle class) on the imitation of British and European values, culture and language it fostered attempts at “passing for white” by browns who were invariably positioned at the margins of both the white *élite* and black middle classes. Stereotyping of the browns thus fixed them as being “treacherous, fickle, and unstable, clever, but lacking in moral worth.”⁸⁶ The independence struggle however helped to forge alliances between the brown and black middle classes in their campaign to replace the white ruling *élite*.

While brown slave men were accorded negligible representation in British and European literature and art, brown slave women were regarded as “highly sensuous” and often associated with “imagery of fruit”.⁸⁷ The brown slave woman’s phenotypical characteristics, which in most cases approximated white European norms, compared favourably when contrasted with her black and white female counterparts. Citing examples of Mary Wiggins and Joanna, two brown slave women who were mistresses of plantation owners, Bush illustrates how they were depicted as radiating irresistible beauty comparable with white women of Renaissance art:

⁸⁵ Brereton, *Race Relations* 196.

⁸⁶ Brereton, *Race Relations* 103.

⁸⁷ Patricia Mohammed, “‘But Most of All Mi Love Me Browning’: The Emergence of the Mulatto Woman as the Desired in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Jamaica” ed. Jacqueline Stevens. *Differentiating Caribbean Womanhood*. Working Paper No. 3. (Mona, Kingston: Centre for Gender and Development Studies, Mona Unit, UWI, 2000) 20.

Her face was full of native modesty ... with cheeks through which glowed, in spite of her darkness of her complexion, a beautiful tinge of vermillion, when gazed upon. Her nose was perfectly well-formed, rather small; her lips a little prominent.⁸⁸

Appreciated for her skill as a nurse, housekeeper and mistress, the brown slave woman was therefore a sought after commodity by the European male and consequently benefited from such relationships. The brown male slave was not as fortunate since he was viewed primarily as a threat to male patriarchy and white supremacy.⁸⁹ In the circumstances, ambiguity perhaps captures the stereotypical view held of browns in Caribbean society: “the master of the in-between and ... a gatekeeper of sorts.”⁹⁰ Such ambiguity was epitomised in the characteristic ambivalence that bred a preferred allegiance to the privileged white élite and fostered attempts at “passing for white” while maintaining a healthy distance from the black lower classes.

Given that brown has historically been a signifier of miscegenation in Caribbean society, it is curious that it has been the preferred colour of self representation selected by Indo-Caribbeans for whom purity has retained almost tyrannical significance. Although there had been no particular colour associations made when the Indian indentured labourers were introduced into Caribbean society, they were considered as “non-white”. During the struggle for independence and thereafter, Indians were thought to share a similar political agenda and were included under the undifferentiated label of black. This position was strenuously challenged during the Black Power movement as discussed in Chapter one. With the intensification of the

⁸⁸ Bush, *Slave Women* 15-17.

⁸⁹ Mohammed, ““But Most of All Mi Love Me Browning”” 20.

⁹⁰ José F. Buscaglia-Salgado, *Undoing Empire: Race and Nation in the Mulatto Caribbean* (Minnesota and London: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2003) 185.

contestation for cultural space from the 1980s, Indo-Caribbeans again highlighted their displeasure with being categorised as “black”. In fact, this was one of the salient issues at one of the earliest Caribbean Hindu Conferences. Noting that the term was popular in the US and Europe in reference to peoples of African descent, it was argued that “black” ignored the historical and cultural specificities of the Indian community and bolstered the perception of the Caribbean as a black space.⁹¹ The choice of brown, intended also to supersede the contradictory term East Indian, was eventually replaced by Indo-Caribbean. Today, it persists as the preferred colour of self-representation despite the fact that it excludes many Indo-Caribbeans who are of darker hues.

In the contemporary Caribbean where the labels Indian and East Indian are still popular in the public domain, many of the stereotypes of the nineteenth century also remain. Some of the colonial representations of the Indian rather resemble those of the African and Amerindians as Williams has pointed out.⁹² As such, it was deemed that the “only independence which the Indian desired was idleness.”⁹³ In spite of the fact that the Indians formed a replacement labour force for the Africans, colonial stereotypes typified them as filthy, given to pilfering, “cunning, mendacious and wife

⁹¹ For a wider discussion of the debates surrounding this issue, see Ryan, *The Jhandi and the Cross* 35-56, and Reddock’s “Conceptualizing ‘Difference’ in Caribbean Feminist Theory,” *New Caribbean Thought: A Reader*, eds. Brian Meeks and Folkes Lindahl (Mona, Kingston: UWI Press, 2001) 196-209. This position is echoed in the work of some South Asian academics. See for example, Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) Chapter 5 for a discussion of this issue as it unfolded among the Asian, African and Caribbean diasporas in Britain.

⁹² Williams, *History of Trinidad and Tobago* 111. According to Williams, “The West Indies must have been a very curious society which could have produced in 1512 against the Amerindians, in 1790 against the Africans, and in 1869 against the Indians exactly the same defamation of character of races which had no previous connection or intercourse and which were drawn from widely separated parts of the world.”

⁹³ Williams, *History of Trinidad and Tobago* 111.

murdering”⁹⁴ while also being “industrious, cheerful, contented, docile and obedient.”⁹⁵ To the emancipated slaves, the Indians primarily represented scab labour since with their introduction, wages were depressed and alternative employment and entrepreneurial opportunities were few. Apart from investing in the stereotypes circulated by the whites, the Africans and browns also contributed their own impressions that included avarice, stinginess, secretiveness and deviousness.⁹⁶

The negative comparisons made between the African and Indian by the colonials also influenced the stereotyping of the women. Froude, expressing the hope that Indians would become permanent residents and labourers, remarked of the Indian women in particular, “[t]hey are picturesque additions to the landscape, as they keep to the bright colours and graceful drapery of India. The grave dignity of their faces contrasts remarkably with the broad, good-humoured, but common features of the African.”⁹⁷ While such stereotyping situated the black slave woman in the inferior position, both black, brown (and Indian women) were found lacking when pitted against the Victorian ideals of womanhood.

White

In Western art, white has been constituted with values in counter distinction to black. Thus, even though it functions like black, in mixing, shading and highlighting other colours on the palette, its symbolic meaning contrasts diametrically with black. White therefore denotes divinity, beauty, perfection, innocence, light and superiority; hence

⁹⁴ Moore, “Colonial Images of Blacks and Indians” 147.

⁹⁵ Lowenthal, *West Indian Societies* 160.

⁹⁶ Lowenthal, *West Indian Societies* 161.

⁹⁷ Froude, *The English in the West Indies* 65.

the expressions white as snow, white lie, white information, white witch and white magic. When used in relation to race and ethnicity, it is virtually impossible to suggest a ready list of stereotypes that fixes white into a typology. As Richard Dyer argues:

One cannot come up with a limited range of endlessly repeated images, because the privilege of being white in white culture is not to be subjected to stereotyping in relation to one's whiteness. White people are stereotyped in terms of gender, nation, class, sexuality, ability ... but the overt point of such typification is gender, nation, etc. Whiteness generally colonises the stereotypical definition of all social categories other than those of race. To be normal, even to be normally deviant (queer, crippled), is to be white. White people in their whiteness, however, are imaged as individual and/or endlessly diverse, complex and changing.⁹⁸

From this vantage point, Dyer further argues that whites function as a “human norm”⁹⁹; they are “‘just’ human.”¹⁰⁰ Consequently, the identification of whiteness as a racial category becomes unnecessary since it is automatically *understood* as a feature of human normativity. This is evident in much of Caribbean discourse and popular culture where other epithets are used to signify whiteness, such as French Creole, *béké*, buckrah and botha. These epithets all gesture to the historical role played by white people as slave/plantation owners and oppressors of non-white peoples. In effect, these terms correlate with the positions of wealth, authority and privilege enjoyed by whites in the region, although the group is much more differentiated along lines of class and notions of purity: the French positioned themselves as being of superior breeding and stock over the British and other European colonisers; together, the British and European born (represented today in the expatriate community) are “pure whites” as opposed to the local born whites. Further distinctions were also made on the basis of wealth, gender, class, occupation, nation of origin and ‘shades of

⁹⁸ Richard Dyer, *White* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997) 12.

⁹⁹ Dyer, *White* 1.

¹⁰⁰ Dyer, *White* 2.

white' evident particularly in the case of the Portuguese of Madeira, the Spanish descendants from Venezuela and Jews.

Because as Dyer argues, white people are conceived as individuals as opposed to a racial or ethnic group, fixed stereotypes are not in evidence in the sparse writing by non-whites about their experiences as slaves and indentured labourers. Instead, patterns of behaviour which are individually attributed emerge. Caribbean writers have treated similarly with the subject of the white community; often elaborating on their superior positions in Caribbean societies but seldom with forensic examination. Naipaul adopts a creative approach to this subject in his novel *The Mimic Men* where he dissects the extent to which white superiority has been insidiously established so that family names were important indicators of socio-economic status. As such, both of his characters Deschampsneufs and Browne are consciously aware of the social status bequeathed by their family names; for Kripalsingh, however, there is only bewilderment. "Browne" affirmed lowly status while Deschampsneufs inspired all the trappings and security of wealth, status and respectability and imbued its bearers with seemingly unflappable confidence. Thus the character, Ranjit Kripalsingh explains:

Of Deschampsneufs, in fact, I already knew a little. Soon I was to know more. His distinction was vague but acknowledged by all. The teachers handled him with care. Uniformed servants, one male, one female, brought his lunch to school in a basket and spread it on a white tablecloth on his desk. He had taken me once to his house and to see the grape-vine that grew on the trellis in his drive. He told me it was the only one on the island and was very special and historical. He had also shown me his Meccano set. Grape-vine and Meccano sets were accordingly things which I at once put beyond my ambition, just as, until that moment, they had been outside my knowledge; they were things that befell a boy like Deschampsneufs.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ V S Naipaul, *The Mimic Men* (London: Penguin Books, 1969) 92.

It is significant that Naipaul selected a French name; a name with historical resonance, “one of our old French families”¹⁰² which explains why Kripalsingh “already knew a little” of them. In Trinidad, as elsewhere, in the cultural clash of rival colonisers, the French had claimed and imposed their superiority among colonising nations although collectively the minority white élite exercised power over the non-white subordinate population.¹⁰³ Consequently, the term French Creole has survived in reference to the collective group of undifferentiated white Creole and expatriate communities who today represent captains of industry, holding controlling influence over economic and social policy and as such are recognised as the real political power brokers.

Where Naipaul’s school aged character, Kripalsingh establishes the accepted status quo, Kincaid introduces the thoughts of contemporary islanders in response to the tourists; tourists who like the expatriate communities (predominantly employees of multinational corporations) are features of the so-called “global village” and who in their transience, economic and political influence and dominance resemble in some ways the absentee planter of the colonial period. In giving voice to these thoughts, Kincaid disrupts this status quo of superiority and assumed dominance. In searing prose, Kincaid counters the stereotypes that inform such assumptions and social exchanges with the “natives”:

Since you are a tourist, a North American or European – to be frank, white – and not an Antiguan black returning ... you move through customs with ease ...

An ugly thing, that is what you are when you become a tourist, an ugly, empty thing, a stupid thing, a piece of rubbish, pausing here and there to gaze at this and that, and it will never occur to you that the

¹⁰² Naipaul, *Mimic Men* 77.

¹⁰³ See Brereton, *Race Relations* 34-63.

people who inhabit the place in which you have just paused cannot stand you, that behind their closed doors they laugh at your strangeness (you do not look the way that they look); the physical sight of you does not please them; you have bad manners (it is their custom to eat their food with their hands; you try eating their way, you look silly; you try eating the way you always eat, you look silly); they do not like the way you speak (you have an accent) ... They do not like you. *They do not like me!* That thought never actually occurs to you. Still, you feel a little uneasy.¹⁰⁴

In view of the above excerpts from Naipaul and Kincaid, it is evident that representations of white people in some Caribbean writing establishes the dominance of the élite minority community but ensures that the thoughts of the subordinated peoples emerge to counter received stereotypes of non-whites.

In the differentiated white community, those considered as inhabiting the lower strata of that group are in fact subjected to stereotyping by the élites as well as by other races and ethnicities. This is applicable to the Portuguese and Spanish and latterly, in the instances of the Chinese and Syrian/Lebanese who have been incorporated as “honorary whites.” In Guyana particularly, the stereotypes of the Portuguese were deeply held resulting from the business practices that gave them unfair competitive advantages in the retail sector over the emancipated blacks.¹⁰⁵ These advantages that accrued because of their affinity with whites and their initial acceptance of jobs rejected by slaves prompted the label “white niggers.”¹⁰⁶ They were further typified as being mean, contemptible and grasping. White élite society to which they were annexed at the margins, socially despised them for their choice of trade tagging them

¹⁰⁴ Kincaid, *A Small Place* 4; 17.

¹⁰⁵ For discussions about the source of antipathy against the Portuguese in Guyana and the wider Caribbean see Brian L. Moore, “The Social Impact of Portuguese Immigration into British Guiana After Emancipation,” *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present*, eds. Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd (Princeton: Markus Weiner; London: James Curry; Kingston: Ian Randle, 1996) 152-160; Williams, *Stains on My Name* 142-154 and Lowenthal, *West Indian Societies* 178 – 212.

¹⁰⁶ Lowenthal, *West Indian Societies* 201.

as “greasy pedlars, and greasier salt-goods-shop-keepers.”¹⁰⁷ Similar stereotypes were also attached to the Chinese and Syrian/Lebanese, albeit with less enthusiasm, given that they too quickly transitioned from indentured labourers to retail traders with ease and added advantages for success that were denied the freed slaves in such enterprise.

It becomes obvious, based on the analysis of the colour-coded terms above that when articulated in the public domain especially in the context of contentious political discussions, loaded terms such as “black people” and “white people” call to the fore the spectre of these specific social, historical and political prejudices that have taken root since the “discovery” of these territories. Having survived colonialism, these metonyms of race and ethnicity have been supplemented and updated reflecting perhaps the intensifying competition for equitable shares of the national pie. As such, Blacks like to party, spend money wildly, are heavily involved in criminal activity, are underachievers and lack ambition in comparison to their Indian counterparts. Indians are grasping, disingenuous, given to thieving, are pathological liars and involved in white-collar crime. The Syrian/Lebanese are portrayed as “money hungry”, all are “wealthy because they are narcotraffickers” and “belong idiosyncratically to the commercial sector, and should not depart therefrom”.¹⁰⁸ All make vigorous claims to victim hood. In Guyana, where nationhood has been characterised by internecine racial conflict and physical violence, these stereotypes have been encrusted with even greater venom from which some “noble truth” is suspected as being confirmed about the Other. Even as difference is calibrated by

¹⁰⁷ Lowenthal, *West Indian Societies* 201.

¹⁰⁸ Ramon Mansoor, “The Story of the Syrians and Lebanese in Trinidad and Tobago: Challenges and Opportunities” Cultural Studies Conference on Cross Culturalism and the Caribbean Canon. University of the West Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad, January 7 – 10, 2004. 5.

nuances of shade and hue, the stereotypes encoded in the colour-terms assume homogeneity. However, miscegenation has given birth to “new” peoples who defy such stringent classifications.

Whereas brown and red have been appropriated to colour the mixed population, not everyone might be so classified. The offspring of Indian and African parentage – douglas - may be located in any one of these colour codes if skin colour is used as the singular marker.¹⁰⁹ However, because of the stigma often attached to douglas in some quarters their categorisation is often determined on the basis of perceived low economic status. This has encouraged some douglas of lighter complexion to self-identify as that amorphous category of “Spanish” to which more status and respectability is attributed.¹¹⁰ On the contrary, the Amerindians who are predominantly of lighter complexions are not accorded the same respectability or acceptance as the browns or “Spanish” peoples. Rather, they are also categorised based on their low economic status in Guyanese society.

Consequently, inasmuch as the experience of nationhood has helped to further entrench these stereotypes, the instabilities and ambiguities inherent in the typologies also remain intact. Furthermore, social mobility has been far less rigid than during the

¹⁰⁹ Reddock traces the meaning of the term dougla to the Sankshipt Hindi Shabdasagar (Abridged Hindi dictionary). Here the term first signifies “‘the progeny of inter-varna marriage’, acquiring the connotation of ‘bastard,’ meaning illegitimate/son of a prostitute, only in a secondary sense. This is not a widely popular usage however and is probably limited to certain sections of north India.” Reddock further notes that in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, the term has negative connotations and “derived primarily from its semantic emergence within the context of the Hindu caste system where inter-caste/inter-varna and inter-religious unions were for the most part taboo.” Reddock, “‘Douglarisation’ and the Politics of Gender Relations in Contemporary Trinidad and Tobago: A Preliminary Exploration.” *Contemporary Issues in Social Science: A Caribbean Perspective* 1 (1994): 101.

¹¹⁰ As Aisha Khan has asserted, “The category ‘Spanish’ is multivalent, and simultaneously refers to both one ethnic rubric, and many, diverse individual members who qualify, as it were, through various means ... for example, through various combinations of appearance (phenotype); background (ancestral lineage, name, locales of origin, cultural traditions); social class; personal comportment; self-identification; assessment and attribution by others.” Khan, “What is ‘a Spanish’?” *Trinidad Ethnicity*. Ed. Kelvin A. Yelvington (London: MacMillan Caribbean, 1993) 201.

colonial period largely because of expanding education opportunities, economic fortunes (or failures) of the nation-states thereby disrupting the social hierarchies that these stereotypes sought to legitimise. As such, the competition for scarce resources, cultural recognition and belonging have been far more intense.

Contesting Creole Culture

When South African Bishop Desmond Tutu first visited Trinidad and Tobago in May, 1987 he described it as a “rainbow country”. As witness to such an ecumenical gathering of peoples of various races and ethnicities represented in almost every hue, shade and tone of colour, Tutu understandably saw parallels with the post-apartheid South Africa which he could then still only imagine and anticipate; a South Africa that would celebrate difference and unity in diversity as this gathering seemed to represent. The timing of Tutu’s visit and observations were fortuitous coming as they did just five months into the term of governance of the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR). The NAR, as the first political party to defeat the PNM at the polls after some thirty years, had campaigned on policies of inclusivity, “one love” and transparent government. As a coalition of opposition parties, the NAR’s parliamentary representatives and membership reflected the interests of a wide cross section of races, ethnicities and political ideologies in the territory; a feat never previously or subsequently achieved.¹¹¹ Consequently, the rainbow metaphor acquired

¹¹¹ The NAR coalition comprised political parties that represented various race/ethnic or class interests without any unifying ideology of any sort. Included among these parties were the Tobago based Democratic Action Committee (DAC), the Organisation Alliance for Reconstruction (ONR) that was largely middle-class, the Tapia House Movement which represented radical intellectuals from the 60s and 70s joined for the first time by the leadership and membership of the Indian based parties, the

immediate and lasting resonance not only within Trinidad and Tobago but also in other ethnically and culturally diverse territories such as Guyana and Suriname specifically and the wider Caribbean region generally.

Inasmuch as the metaphor has been eagerly co-opted as part of the unifying nationalist discourse joining the range of other colourful adjectives prevalent in the region's tourism marketing, debates have been ignited intermittently about its applicability to and representativeness of these territories. Theologian and cultural critic, Burton Sankeralli is incisive on this point; observing that black is not a colour of the rainbow, he argues:

The term "rainbow people" does not refer to the oppressed African and Indian masses. It does not refer to the third of the population who live below the poverty line. The "rainbow people" are the racially mixed, largely high-colour, bourgeois, neo-European third tribe as they seek to project their own vision of themselves onto the society. For these people, Trinidad is paradise. This "rainbow people" nonsense is in reality rooted in racist ideology ... and is willingly articulated by its mouthpiece in the media and elsewhere.¹¹²

In its harshness, Sankeralli's critique nonetheless is illustrative of the rejection of labels that facilely promote the perception of "unity in diversity". The rainbow metaphor effectively obliterates from its all-embracing vision those who are inevitably excluded and marginalised owing to the inherent inequalities of society. His analysis in fact, raises pertinent issues related to the ways in which such metaphors (including, the melting pot and callaloo country) are used to entrench social and cultural hierarchies that fix people of different colours, race/ethnicities, class and gender into specific positions thereby securing the status quo and interests

United Labour Front (ULF) and the Democratic Labour Party (DLP). For analyses on the success and failures of the NAR see Selwyn Ryan, *Pathways to Power: Indians and the Politics of National Unity in Trinidad and Tobago* (St Augustine, Trinidad: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1996), and Kirk Meighoo, *Politics* Chapter 5.

¹¹² Burton Sankeralli, qtd. in Ryan, *The Jhandi and the Cross* 242.

of the national élite.¹¹³ The tensions created by the imposition of such hierarchies and the instinctive resistance that results prompts other questions about the negotiation of citizenship, belonging and identity by those relegated to the margins. That Sankeralli locates both oppressed Africans and Indians at the margins of such discourse disrupts the traditionally held view that the dominant Creole culture encapsulates *all* African derived religious and cultural practices. Sankeralli's formulation of these hierarchies suggests accurately that the fates of these groups of oppressed peoples transcend race/ethnicity and are enjoined predominantly on the basis of class.

As discussed in Part one, resistance to these social and cultural hierarchies has occurred primarily in the arena of culture promoting what Rohlehr has termed "competitive ethnicity". According to Rohlehr, "competitive ethnicity" has been a common feature of Guyanese life and is marked by "a struggle for visibility, for tangible recognition in terms of state and private funding, promotion, and acceptance in the eyes of others."¹¹⁴ The dominant Creole culture, that encompasses the triad of Carnival, calypso and steelband, has been the focus of much of this struggle.

Although associated with the numerically dominant Afro-Caribbeans, local whites or French Creoles, mulattos, and other minorities such as the Chinese, Syrians and Lebanese - all subsumed under the label of Creole - were also actively involved in these cultural forms. Moreover Carnival, calypso and steelband have also been consistently promoted internationally as the pre-eminent national and regional culture and as such have benefited from substantial funding from both state and business enterprises. The invisibility of Indo-Caribbean cultural forms in Trinidad and Tobago

¹¹³ Shalini Puri, "Canonized Hybridities, Resistant Hybridities" 12-38. Puri examines here several strands of discourse on cultural hybridity in the Caribbean illustrating how they function to secure than disrupt the interests of the ruling national élite.

¹¹⁴ Rohlehr, "Calypso and Caribbean Identity" 57.

and Guyana has been the source of fierce contention. That Indo-Caribbean cultural forms have traditionally been excluded from the umbrella term, Creole, is a key point of controversy.

“Creole” has been used loosely thus far and at this point requires some qualification. Creole has not been precisely defined and its etymology remains obscure. Some critics have attempted to place its beginnings in two Spanish words: *criar* and *colon*; in translation, the first means “to create, to imagine, to found, to settle”, and the latter “a colonist, a founder, a settler.”¹¹⁵ These words merged into *criollo* confirmed the meaning of “a committed settler, one identified with the area of settlement, one native to the settlement though not ancestrally indigenous to it.”¹¹⁶ While this has been accepted as one of the plausible derivations of the term, its meaning notably varies across the Americas and from territory to territory in the Caribbean. In the Caribbean, Creole has variously been used to describe Europeans and Africans born in the region as opposed to those born at home; it has also been applied to cuisine, language, cultural and religious practices, style associated with their descendants in the region.¹¹⁷ In current usage, Creole, according to the *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* has been condensed to mean “[o]f, belonging to or typical of the life-style and culture of today’s black West Indians.”¹¹⁸ Creole also has other current usages in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana as has been explained above. Not only is it used by Indo-Caribbeans to describe Afro-Caribbeans and mulattos but it is also used by Indo- and

¹¹⁵ Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens: Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Caribbean* (Mona, Kingston: Savacou, 1985) 10.

¹¹⁶ Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens* 10.

¹¹⁷ For an interesting exploratory survey of the possible etymology and various meanings of the Creole, see Carolyn Allen, “Creole: The Problem of Definition” *Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture*, eds. Verene A. Shepherd and Glen L. Richards (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle; London: James Currey, 2002) 47-63.

¹¹⁸ Allsopp, *Dictionary of Caribbean* 177.

Afro-Caribbeans to describe locally born descendants of European ancestry, hence French, Spanish or Euro Creoles. What is consistent in the prevailing meanings of the term is its signification of nativisation or indigenisation as a consequence of uprooting from homelands and transplantation by force or coercion to adopted spaces and the experience of colonisation. As some accounts suggest, “evident in the etymology [of the term] are fragmentation, obscurity, possible invention or corruption, and adaptation.”¹¹⁹

Inasmuch as Carnival, steelband and calypso are the defining markers of Creole culture they have significantly impacted on the prevalent conceptualisations of Caribbeanness regionally and internationally. Further, because Creole culture is perceived by Afro-Caribbeans as having been born and nurtured by resistance to slavery and colonialism, it has reinforced the feeling among some Afro-Caribbeans of “the Caribbean Sea as their ethnic lake and [the presence of Indo-Caribbeans] in the region as an unwelcome intrusion.”¹²⁰ Indo-Caribbeans have objected to such constructions of Caribbeanness that relegate them to the margins and engender feelings of alienation within their adopted homelands where they have toiled and contributed in various spheres of life. Since the 1980s when a revival of Indo-Caribbean consciousness grew, such objections have intensified. In assessing the tensions between the groups, writer Ismith Khan has correctly asserted that for Indo- and Afro-Caribbeans what constitutes Caribbean identity and culture would differ for each. Khan argues further that neither group could lay claim to a national culture since the Afro-Caribbeans had acquired political power devoid of a cohesive national culture while Indo-Caribbeans had been ignored despite their significant

¹¹⁹ Allen, “Creole” 50.

¹²⁰ Ryan, “East Indians, West Indians” 151.

contributions. As Khan elaborates, the marginalisation of Indo-Caribbeans extends beyond the symbolism of culture to all apparatus of the nation-state:

The failure of the Indian population to acquire its equal and proportionate representation in the government and governmental agencies of this republic is alarming and disappointing ... There are more recent arrivals of immigrant groups to this area than the Indians who have contributed far less to the growth and development of this area, and who have secured for themselves most, if not all, of the advantages that the area promises, and looking at the growth change and development of the area, it becomes clear that the question is one of common Identity (sic) because there is nothing like a National Culture with which to identify.

Now, this is not to say that the Caribbean is a cultural void, far from it, each ethnic group has contributed its share of cultural heritage to the whole, but that whole is shared by some of the people some of the time – Christmas, Carnival, sports and sporting events, yet there are aspects of this complex combined cultural matrix that remain exclusive to each group.¹²¹

These sentiments are echoed in Guyana where Mashramani festivities mark the annual commemoration of the territory's status as a Co-operative Republic. 'Mash', as it is popularly referred to parallels Carnival festivities in other territories but is not considered as representative of all Guyanese peoples:

There has always been a myth that the Caribbean is comprised exclusively of African peoples. Of course, the Caribbean has been perceived as the place of sun, rum-and-coca cola, calypso, steel band and reggae. It is perceived as a homogeneous people with a common feeling, history, food music and other essentials of culture. Close observation shows that this assumption is false; but nevertheless, the perception is being communicated, sanitized out of a presumed ignorance, or insensitivity to the other inhabitants, or there is policy of a deliberate alienation of the excluded, or there may be a combination of reasons. Carnival in Trinidad and Mashramani in Guyana are examples of present day exhibition of this alienation, which is not reflective of the inhabitants ... For too long East Indians have not been given their true place in the history of the region.¹²²

¹²¹ Ismith Khan, "Image and Self Image in West Indian Writing" *Indians in the Caribbean*, ed. I. J. Bahadur Singh (London: Oriental University Press, 1987) 47.

¹²² Gary Girdhari, "The Shattered Link, Perceptions, Realities and Social Distance" *Guyana Journal* <http://www.guyanajournal.com/shatlink.html>.

Both Khan and Girdhari also advance a view held by many Indo-Caribbeans that acceptance as a “true true” Caribbean is predicated on the assimilation of Creole culture at the expense of Indian cultural norms and values. Opting for assimilation into Creole culture, which usually occurs with the migration to urban centres from rural districts, has also often involved withdrawal from their rural Indo-Caribbean compatriots.

Even in 2005, with the now annual commemoration of Indian Arrival Day, while many Indo-Caribbeans applaud their progress and success in the professions, scholarly pursuits, private enterprise and even in national politics, where in both territories Indo-Caribbeans have been serving in some of the highest constitutional positions such as Prime Minister, President and Chief Justice in the past decade, contention remains over the equality of representation in the national culture and state apparatus. Indeed, in Guyana where Cheddi Jagan has been succeeded by Bharath Jagdeo as President, racial tensions remain at a stalemate with each group claiming injustices at the hands of the other. This has led to the formation of special interest lobby groups whose objectives broadly include the increase of awareness about racially targeted crimes and the struggle for justice and equality.¹²³

¹²³ In Guyana, these groups respectively represent sectional interests of Indo-Guyanese and Afro-Guyanese. They include Rise, Organise and Rebuild (ROAR), Guyanese Indian Heritage Association (GIHA), ASCRIA and African Cultural Development Association (ACDA). Strategic alliances have also been cemented between Indo-Caribbeans in Guyana and Trinidad under the diasporic organisation Global Organisation of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO). These groups function in addition to state bodies such as the Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC) in Guyana. In Trinidad and Tobago, recently formed group, National Association for the Empowerment of African People (NAEAP) and the Emancipation Support Committee have been most vocal on issues pertaining to Afro-Trinidadians. The SDMS and GOPIO are the most vocal groups representing interests of Indo-Trinidadians. Inasmuch as these groups are perceived as representing the views of their respective communities, others within these communities often disassociate declaring that they do not speak on behalf of **all** Afro- or Indo- Trinidadians. In 2004, a new collective representing more than twenty individuals and groups in Trinidad and Tobago established a Non-Governmental Organisation by becoming signatories to an eight-point Principles of Fairness framework aimed at easing divisiveness, discrimination of all persuasions and racial/ethnic tensions. The group is loosely referred to as Principles of Fairness.

Among the Afro-Caribbean community, few dispute that Indo-Caribbeans were excluded (consciously and unconsciously) from constructions of Creole culture particularly after Independence. While some attribute this to the historical circumstances which heralded the arrival of Indians to Caribbean society as indentured labourers, on fixed-term contracts who were not expected to become a settled community, others argue that their unwillingness to fraternise with Afros (a situation exacerbated by the geographical separateness) served to cement the notion of the community as transient; sojourners with no lasting interest or commitment to the New World space. Many writers, artists and intellectuals across ethnicities have been grappling with these competing notions of culture. Lloyd Best takes a philosophical view, explaining that:

Indians in the Caribbean are indeed in an unequal existential situation compared with Africans. This is not because we wish it so or only (or even mainly) because of the differences in numbers but because there is no way we can escape paying our dues to the logic of history – to the imperatives of timing and sequencing and placing in human affairs. There is such a thing as an Afro-Saxon (which is merely an African in America compelled by his historic location to practice European institutions). What nowhere exists is an Indo-Saxon. The interculturalisation into which the Indians were inducted at the moment of their entry was by then not even three-sided. By then it had become many-sided (sic) (so much so that the one thing it could not be was many splendoured). So it is that even if there were no other people in Trinidad and Tobago save Indians, their predicament in the Caribbean, in the Atlantic, and in America would, I suspect, scarcely be different.¹²⁴

Although the concept of the Indo-Saxon remains debatable when comparisons between the rural and urban Indo-communities are considered,¹²⁵ Best's analysis is

¹²⁴ Qtd. in Ryan *The Jhandi and the Cross* 49-50.

¹²⁵ Naipaul has observed for instance that, "The Indians have become colonial almost without knowing it. And that is the second paradox; that this process of becoming colonial should have occurred at a time when others were rejecting the whole apparatus of mental or spiritual or cultural colonisation. This delayed process of decolonisation has not been understood, least of all by the Indian community." Naipaul, "A Plea for Rationality", *Indians in the Caribbean*. Ed. I.J. Bahadur Singh (London: Oriental University Press, 1987) 22.

plausible in so far as it illustrates the already complexly formed societies into which Indo-Caribbeans were introduced. It was in these circumstances that Indo-Caribbeans were forced to begin negotiating representation and inclusion, initially as a minority community as well. Yet, what accounts for the differential position of Indo-Caribbeans as compared to other communities of late arrivants such as the Chinese, Portuguese or Syrian-Lebanese to which Ismith Khan makes reference above? Perhaps explanations lie in a confluence of circumstances including the easier access and assimilation into the dominant Euro-Creole sector of other late arrivants based on the systemic colour stratification discussed above and in the fact that these other communities were more advantageously positioned to access capital to fund entrepreneurial activity. In other words, while all communities were incorporated into the already existing structure of unequal power, other late arrivant groups ascended into the upper strata whereas Indo-Caribbeans, like Afro-Caribbeans, as former indentured labourers and slaves respectively were largely located in the lowest strata.

Writer Earl Lovelace, who addresses the question of cultural representation offers some explanation through recourse to history while also making the distinction between cultural forms that emerged in the region as opposed to those that were transplanted. He explains:

I believe that in the crucible of our Caribbean experience, we had been forced to transcend certain things African. I see these traditions as Caribbean because here is where they were born and it is here that their future begins ... Let me say further that it is the Africans who have laid the groundwork of a Caribbean culture – those Africans who struggled against enslavement and continued their struggle against colonialism, and the reason they did so is that they had to. They had no choice but to become Caribbean and address the Caribbean landscape and reality. No other group had to. The Europeans didn't have to. Whether in the Caribbean, as adventurers or plantation owners or indentured servants themselves, Europeans retained their king, their parliament, their pope and bishops, their architecture, their laws, their form of clothing, their

games. They retained their culture. They couldn't change it because it was through their institutions at home that they were culturally and politically empowered. In fact, what they did was to impose their institutions upon the countries they subdued.

The Indians also were tied to their culture because in this new land where they were strangers, it gave them a sense of being. They had their pundits and Divali and Hosay and their weddings and teeluck and had no reason to want to change them. Their religion gave them a hold on self in a situation where without it they would have been purely economic animals, and quite naturally they held to it. There has been, so far, nothing dignified to put in its place. Whether those old forms are going to endure in the midst of modernity and with the fact of their increasing political power, which should demand a greater national concern instead of a sectional one, is a question now being debated.¹²⁶

Lovelace's latter position echoes an earlier observation made by Naipaul:

Everything which made the Indian alien in the society gave him strength. His alienness insulated him from the black-white struggle ... His religion gave him values which were not the white values of the rest of the community, and preserved him from self-contempt; he never lost pride in his origins. More important than religion was his family organisation, an enclosing self-sufficient world absorbed with its quarrels and jealousies, as difficult for the outsider to penetrate as for one of its members to escape.¹²⁷

Notwithstanding the ethnic antagonisms and divisions, it would be fallacy to suggest that harmonious relations are non-existent. While these attitudes are in evidence, daily life demands some level of cooperation to effect any range of transactions and communal activities. In effect, the antagonisms exist in tension with collaboration. In fact, despite the ongoing cultural contestations, Indo- and Afro- Caribbeans have been participants in coquettish encounters that have produced new distinctly Caribbean cultural forms- hybrids of cultural traditions of each group.

¹²⁶ Earl Lovelace, "The Ongoing Value of Our Indigenous Traditions" *Earl Lovelace- Growing in the Dark: Selected Essays*, ed. Funso Aiyejina (San Juan, Trinidad: Lexicon T'dad Ltd., 2003) 34-35.

¹²⁷ Naipaul, *The Middle Passage* 79.

Even as Carnival has been characterised as an exclusive domain of the Afro-Creole community, critics have charted the participation of Caribbeans of Indian and Chinese descent in the festivities.¹²⁸ Sankeralli has suggested an affinity between the *leela* or play, “a dance of energy, a drama staged by Brahman” and the notion of ‘playing mas’.¹²⁹ In Guyana, participation in Mashramani is more problematic. Unlike Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago that evolved organically from the colonial encounter with the French in the eighteenth century, Mashramani was decreed as a celebration of Guyana’s Co-operative Republican status in 1970 by then President Forbes Burnham. Coined from the Arawak word, *mashiri mehi* meaning “voluntary work done cooperatively or cooperative work followed by a spree” Mashramani has adopted, with varying success, some of the core features of Carnival, with closer resemblance to the festivities in Barbados and Jamaica where it was also instituted in the post-independence period.¹³⁰ Mashramani has been criticised as an African celebration with unfortunate causal relations with lasciviousness, vulgarity and political opportunism.¹³¹ In Trinidad and Tobago where a cross section of races and ethnicities participate in Carnival, the chorus of dissenting voices tends to be as diverse emanating usually from religious leaders of various faiths concerned with the moral decay of society. Of these religious bodies, the SDMS is consistent in its

¹²⁸ See for example, Burton Sankeralli, “Indian Presence in Carnival” *The Drama Review* 42.3 (1998): 203-212; and Carlisle Chang, “Chinese in Trinidad Carnival” *The Drama Review* 42.3(1998):213-219.

¹²⁹ Sankeralli, “Indian Presence” 203. Sankeralli posits that despite the diversity of religious persuasion among the Indo-Caribbean community (Hinduism, Islam, Presbyterianism, Christianity) “the core of East Indian spirituality is Hinduism, especially as disclosed in the notion of *leela* (also spelt *lila*), or play.

¹³⁰ Allsopp, *Dictionary* 374.

¹³¹ This perspective was gleaned from several letters to the Editor and columns by social analysts in the *Stabroek News* online edition in February 2004 and 2005. These letters and commentaries debated whether Mashramani was exclusively an African celebration among other issues. See for example, Elizabeth Alleyne, “Mashramani is Not Only Celebrated by Guyanese of African Descent” 15 February, 2005, Ryhaan Shah, President, GIHA, “Mashramani is Vulgar and is Not National” 18 February, 2005; Emile Mervin, “Mashramani Should Be a National Cultural Event” 10 February, 2004, Al Creighton, University of Guyana, “Whither Mashramani?” 15 February, 2004, “Mashramani: An African Festival?” 4 April, 2004, “Mashramani has been Subject to Cultural Transformation” 18 April, 2004. Rajin Persaud, “GIHA’s Argument is that the PPP has Falsely Promoted Mashramani as a National Festival” 27 April, 2004.

condemnation and attribution of such decay to the ‘carnival mentality’ of Afro-Trinidadians. Even as the SDMS posits unsubstantiated correlations between the purported underachievement of Afro-Trinidadians as opposed to the comparative success of Indo-Caribbeans based on the participation of the former in Carnival activities, paradoxically, in recent times, the organisation has also been concerned with disclaiming the festival’s reputed origins in Africa or Europe. Instead, as the President of the SDMS has asserted Carnival has its roots in Goa, India.¹³²

Musical derivatives such as chutney-soca and pantar have also evolved as a result of the participation of Indo-Caribbeans in Carnival. Chutney-soca, according to Satnarine Balkaransingh is a musical fusion of “the traditional instruments and rhythm” of chutney with “the basic 4.4 beat to the bar, a western linear rhythm instead of the Indian cyclical rhythm” which takes it into the realm of soca.¹³³ The music also fuses Bhojpuri Hindi and English words which confirmed its cross cultural appeal. Pantar, on the other hand is a fusion of the sitar and steelpan and is still found predominantly in Trinidad and Tobago. Sitarist, Mungal Patassar and steelpan player and arranger, Len ‘Boogsie’ Sharpe, have pioneered the musical form. As Patassar explains:

¹³² Satnarayan Maharaj, “Carnival Not from Africa” *Trinidad Guardian* January 19, 2005. Maharaj asserts that: “Carnival is not an African festival. Not even a “Trini thing” as some will have us believe. There was carnival in Goa, India, long before this festival began to emerge in the Caribbean.” Inasmuch as Maharaj’s thesis of the claims made about the origins of Carnival is askew, it is not entirely improbable that there would have been similar celebrations in India especially when the context of fertility festivals is added. However, further research could only help to clarify and inform Maharaj’s hypothesis. In similar vein, assertions by Noor Kumar Mahabir that tassa drums are the fore runners of the steelband, requires further research. Some pannists and tassa drummers have agreed that there has been collaboration between the two but none can confirm that the tassa inspired the steel drum.

¹³³ Satnarine Balkaransingh, “Chutney Crosses over into Chutney Soca in Trinidad and Tobago Carnival” *Identity, Ethnicity and Culture in the Caribbean* Ed. Ralph R. Premdas (St Augustine, Trinidad: UWI, School of Continuing Studies, 1999) 50. Balkaransingh’s article outlines the emergence of chutney soca as an art form.

When Boogsie and I started in 1978, we found that there was never a meeting place between the African and Indian music, except for Shorty's use of the rhythm in his creation of soca. Boogsie and I found the sitar and the pan blended well together to give a unique sound because they are both vibrating instruments ... The two together absorb each other's vibrations and merge harmoniously. In pantar, the pan takes its place as an instrument equal in status to other instruments. Percussion and the marriage between the sitar and pan are of paramount importance, but percussion must compliment the melody. Percussion is often perceived in the banal sense in most music, but in pantar, it helps to create the underlying spirituality – a combination of the Indian and African identities. In other words, a Trinidadian identity.¹³⁴

The Muharram festival popularly referred to as Hosay in the Caribbean has been another site of cross cultural participation by various ethnicities and religious persuasions. Similarly, there have been collaborations and affinities that have enjoined the religious practices of African derived Orisha religion and the Hindu Kali worship.¹³⁵

While the evolution of these cross cultural forms has been subverting the conventional parameters by which national culture and belonging have been defined as a wider proportion of the society accepts them, for some they have proved to be especially problematic. Since these hybrid cultural products have been emerging primarily from collaborations among the traditionally marginalised masses at the lower strata of society, conservative nationalists – both Afro-Saxons and Indo-Saxons - have been most vociferous in denouncing them as “creolised” or “douglarised” and consequently corrupt forms of their supposedly “pure” antecedents. These objections are not

¹³⁴ Mungal Patassar, qtd. in Ryan, *The Jhandi and the Cross* 179-80.

¹³⁵ For further examination of the cross cultural participation in these religious observances see for example, Ajai Mansingh and Laxmi Mansingh, “Hosay and its Creolization” *Caribbean Quarterly* 41.1 (1995): 25-39; Frederick Ivor Case, “The Intersemiotics of Obeah and Kali Mai in Guyana.” *Nation Dance: Religion, Identity, and Cultural Difference in the Caribbean*. Ed. Patrick Taylor (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001) 40-53 and Dale A. Bisnauth, *History of Religions in the Caribbean* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1996).

surprising as they mirror the traditional Euro-Creole, Afro-Saxon and conservative Indo-Caribbeans rejection of cultural practices identified as being specifically African derived or folk traditions. Ironically, this has included even the annual Carnival festivities that have now acquired middle and upper-class respectability perhaps owing to its value as a profitable tourism product and as unifying cultural artefacts. This is the common ground shared by the oppressed African and Indian masses who Sankeralli describes as being absent from the inclusive rainbow nation. What are the possibilities for re-visioning Caribbeanness apparent in the evolution of these new cultural traditions in spite of the tensions between antagonisms and collaboration that hold these societies in tact? Chapter four examines such theoretical possibilities.

This chapter has proposed parameters for the re-definition of Caribbeanness based on relevant aspects of Stuart Hall's scholarship on the region. The exploration of the intersection of subject positions of race, ethnicity, class and gender as distilled through colour and manifested in the construction of Caribbeanness supplements a weakness in Hall's scholarship. These revisions not only consolidate and elaborate the re-definition of Caribbeanness outlined but moreover, establish a historical backdrop and contemporary schematic of social stratification, relations of power and sites of contestation in the societies being compared. The critique of Brathwaite's creolisation thesis and the counter proposal of prismatic creolisation that follow are informed by the context established here.

CHAPTER 4

Metaphors of Creolisation

Both anticolonial and postcolonial theories concerned with cultural formation and change in the context of contact among diverse races and ethnicities have resorted to a range of metaphors. These metaphors have often been derived from branches of the sciences and include amalgam, mixture and compound from Chemistry or from botany root, rhizome and hybrid for example. These terms are appropriated by cultural theory to describe the process by which cultures and cultural identities interact and are shaped by such interaction to create syncretic or hybrid modes. Several such theories in current circulation: hybridisation, multiculturalism, transculturation and creolisation have been applied to various postcolonial contexts with different degrees of success.

Of the variant models of creolisation, Kamau Brathwaite's creolisation or creole societies theory that relies primarily on metaphors of seeds, roots, plants and such has been selected for the purposes of this thesis primarily because it is formulated based on the specific historical and cultural genealogy of the region. While other theories such as Glissant's Antillanité, Bernabé et al's Créolité or Benítez-Rojo's chaos theory as exemplified in his text, *The Repeating Island*, are similarly founded, arguably none has been as influential, enduring or contested as Brathwaite's creolisation model. Its influence has been attributed in large measure to its rigour, adaptability and the fact that thus far, "no competing model has yet emerged with the power to

explain the obvious and, despite the politically engineered ethnic polarisation, arguably deepening cultural integration of Caribbean societies.”¹³⁶ Yet it remains the subject of intense critical debate, contestation and revision as scholars engage with various weaknesses in its formulation. The intention here is to join that debate by reviewing some of the salient critiques to assess the validity and applicability of Brathwaite’s creolisation thesis to the contemporary Caribbean situation. Finally, Brathwaite’s attempt to refine and modify his thesis by introducing the prism as an alternative metaphor is examined to determine the extent to which it succeeds in reflecting the changing dynamics of these societies.

Taking Jamaican society during the period 1770 to 1820 as his analytical context, Brathwaite proposes that cultural interaction between European and Africans peoples, all “newcomers to the landscape and cultural strangers” to each other but in legal relations of dominance and subordination, was signally important to the development and evolution of Creole society. The process by which the society coalesced “into a tentative cultural norm” is what Brathwaite has called creolisation. The combined forces of the two stimuli, ac/culturation and inter/culturation catalysed this process of cultural interaction and transformation. According to Brathwaite, acculturation describes the “yoking (by force or example, deriving from power/prestige) of one culture to another” while the latter interculturalisation is “a more reciprocal activity, a process of intermixture and enrichment, each to the other.”¹³⁷ For the Europeans, as interculturalisation suggests, the reciprocal absorption of African cultural norms, behaviours speech and style was involuntary, unconscious and gradual and influenced in part by personal and illicit sexual relationships. Africans, as the enslaved

¹³⁶ Shepherd and Richards, introduction, *Questioning Creole* xiv.

¹³⁷ Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens* 11.

subordinate class in plantation society were thus forced to acculturate or conform to European cultural norms achieved through a combination of strategies that included socialisation, communalisation and imitation by which they were inducted and “seasoned” into society. Brathwaite argues that despite the subordination and submergence of African cultural traditions and values as a result of the assimilation and mimicry of European culture, there emerged a parallel indigenisation process or “native creativity” that has helped to shape the culture of the region.¹³⁸ The cultural norm that evolves as a result of this process is “because of the complex historical factors involved in making it (mercantilism, slavery, materialism, racism, superiority/inferiority syndromes) ... not whole or hard ... but cracked, fragmented, ambivalent, not certain of itself, subject to shifting lights and pressures.”¹³⁹

Emancipation altered the terms of negotiation of the creolisation process between Europeans and the now freed African and Creoles. As Brathwaite observes, plantation society was itself also irrevocably transformed into a more diverse complex with the introduction of indentured labourers from China, Portugal, and India. The new arrivants, as Brathwaite argues had to “adjust themselves to the existing creole synthesis and the new landscape.”¹⁴⁰ The adjustment to Creole society was problematic; the Chinese were more readily interculturated into creole society, according to Brathwaite while for the Indians it was more a process of “selective creolisation” or “in – rather than inter –culturation.”¹⁴¹ Selective creolisation was thought to have facilitated the Indian’s relation of “his own notion of cultural norms

¹³⁸ Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens* 16. According to Brathwaite, “creative ambivalence” ensured that imitation was succeeded by initiation and invention. The Jonkonnu / Carnival tradition in the region is cited as an example of the tensions that govern this process between mimicry and native creation or indigenisation of cultural products.

¹³⁹ Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens* 6.

¹⁴⁰ Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens* 11.

¹⁴¹ Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens* 54.

to the master-culture of Euro-America” from which he “select/adapts in order to modernize.”¹⁴²

Brathwaite’s creolisation thesis has been contested on many fronts but especially in its proposal of cross cultural dynamics as it relates to the more heterogeneous societies that began to emerge after Emancipation. From that perspective then: how applicable is Brathwaite’s model to contemporary Caribbean society which is even more complexly stratified and heterogeneous than during the period on which his model is based? Several critics have alluded to the fact that Brathwaite’s model bears little relevance to the heterogeneous societies of the southern Caribbean such as Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname but is more accommodating to the predominantly homogeneous societies of the Eastern and Hispanophone Caribbean.¹⁴³ Others, such as Nigel Bolland have observed that the model dissolves into dualisms and requires a dialectical approach in order to become more representative of and applicable to societies that are more complex.¹⁴⁴

With respect to the first critique, Brathwaite’s theory is indeed constricted in its scope since his analyses are based on Jamaica, which like St Lucia and St Vincent is more homogeneous and where the integration of indentured labourers of various ethnicities was less problematic for several reasons including their comparatively smaller numbers. Brathwaite’s model does succumb to the scholarly challenges of attempting

¹⁴² Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens* 54.

¹⁴³ See for example, Rhoda Reddock, “Contestations Over Culture, Class, Gender and Identity in Trinidad and Tobago: ‘The Little Tradition’” *Questioning Creole* 111-129; Puri, “Canonized Hybridities” 12-38; and Anton Allahar and Tunku Varadarajan, “Differential Creolization: East Indians in Trinidad and Guyana” *Indo Caribbean Review* 1.2 (1994): 123- 139.

¹⁴⁴ O. Nigel Bolland, “Creolization and Creole Societies: A Cultural Nationalist View of Caribbean Social History” *Intellectuals in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean* Vol. 1. Ed. Alistair Hennessy (London: Macmillan, 1992) 50-79 and “Reconsidering Creolization and Creole Societies.” Conference: (Re)Thinking Caribbean Culture. UWI, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, June 5-7, 2001.

to theorise the region as a single entity with little attention to the differences that intersect with the commonalities across the region. Thus, although he is careful to note that his model would probably have been differently conceived had Trinidad or Guyana been its primary context this caution is obscured by the prevailing perception that it is all encompassing.¹⁴⁵ This weakness is crucial since it has skewed some of the theoretical assumptions and omitted rigorous analysis with respect to the inclusion of late arrivants into the “socio-cultural continuum” comprising four hierarchical categories as illustrated in Figure 1 below.¹⁴⁶

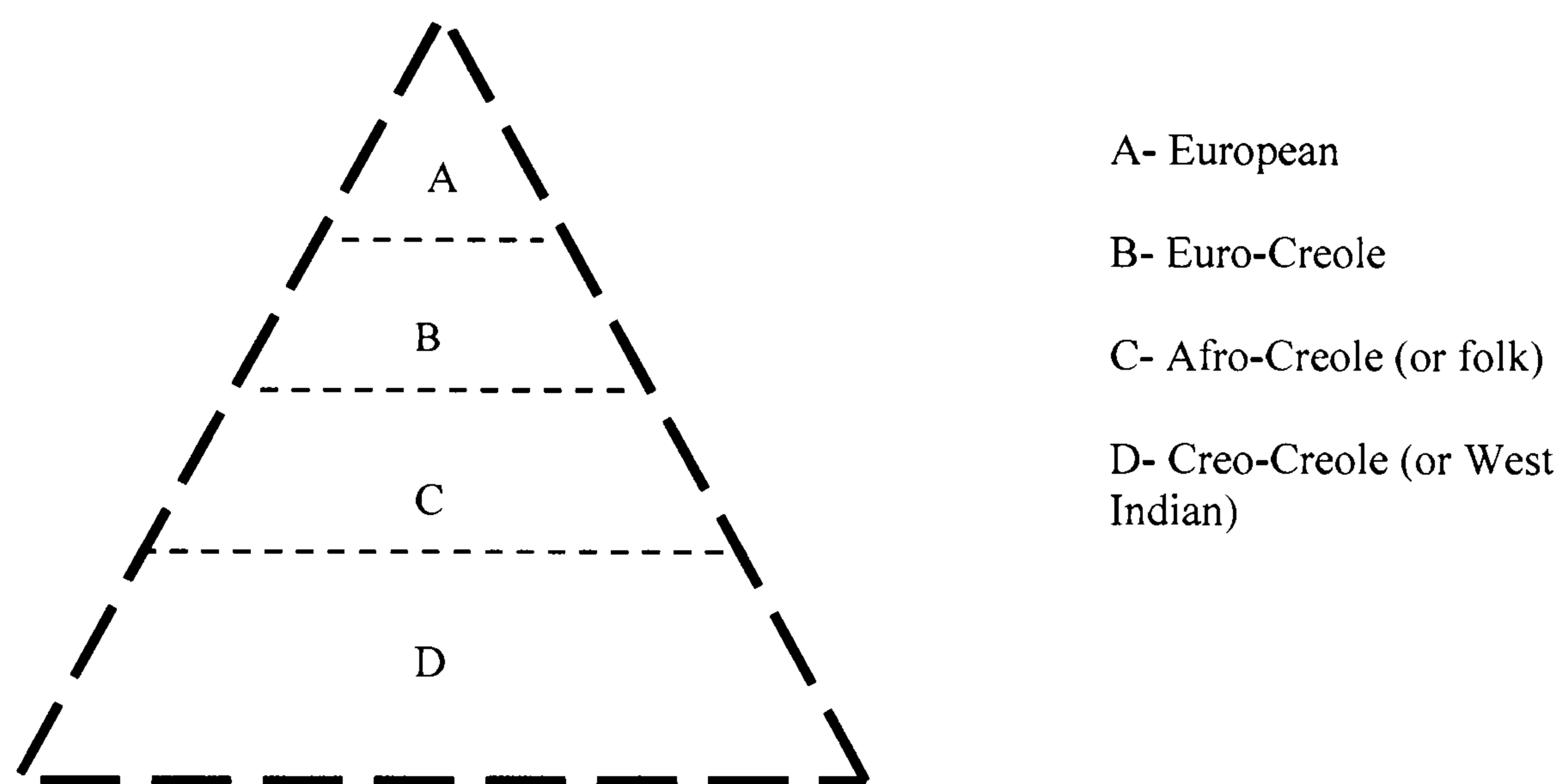


Figure 1.0 Brathwaite's Orientation Model of Jamaican society

Inasmuch as this is illustrative of post-emancipation Jamaican society, the limitations of Brathwaite's theoretical context become immediately apparent. Disproportionate emphasis is placed on the white/brown/black complex even though by this time societies were being diversified with the arrival of Asian indentured labourers.

Brathwaite is also especially vague when describing the process by which the new

¹⁴⁵ Brathwaite, in the first footnote referenced in the Introduction confirms that “I would go further and say that this monograph, conceived and written in Jamaica, would possibly have had a different shape/selection (aesthetic) if written say in Trinidad or Guyana: less simply black/white oriented cultures. Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens* 66.

¹⁴⁶ Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens* 25. The illustration devised based on the categorisations detailed here by Brathwaite.

arrivants were incorporated into this model. Observing that locally born Chinese and Jews were being creolised, Brathwaite argues that because their positions were already shifting from “‘inferior’ to ‘superior’ – race becoming class” they were not necessarily being integrated into society.¹⁴⁷ Concomitantly, while he acknowledges that the Indians had been contributing to “new configurations of creole” Brathwaite does not suggest how or where they might be properly located within society. To some, this ambiguity has been attributed to a conflation of the experience of “selective creolisation” in Jamaica where, for various reasons, assimilation occurred as a natural progression, with that of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana where attitudes to creolisation are at least ambivalent or hostile.¹⁴⁸ However, this deficiency has not escaped critics and has been compounded by this implicit assumption of automatic assimilation into Creole culture and society, which emphasised the white/brown/black continuum to the marginalisation of the Indian. Shalini Puri is nonetheless incisive in her critique:

[I]n his reference to East Indians, Brathwaite appears uninterested in making the useful distinction between acculturation and interculturalisation that he makes in regard to black-white creolization. In fact implicit in his discussion of Indians in Trinidad are three contradictory and unspecified claims: that Indians are simply “assimilated” into Creole society; that although they are creolised, they do not thereby become Creoles; and that with their advent the Caribbean became a “plural” society.”¹⁴⁹

Critiques of creolisation have not been contained within academia; and as Mohammed points out, an appreciation of the antagonisms that have shaped relations between Indo- and Afro- Caribbeans explains the “anathema which greets the suggestion of

¹⁴⁷ Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens* 53.

¹⁴⁸ See Sheila Rampersad, “Douglarisation” 77-85 for further discussion of the comparative experiences of creolisation in Jamaica and Trinidad. Rampersad also elaborates on the theory of douglarisation and dougla poetics, a model of cultural transformation initially developed by Shalini Puri in her articles, “Race, Rape, and Representation: Indo-Caribbean Women and Cultural Nationalism” *Cultural Critique* 36 (1997): 119-163 and in “Canonized Hybridities” 12-38.

¹⁴⁹ Puri, “Canonized Hybridities” 20.

acculturation, especially from the Indian population.”¹⁵⁰ In the public domain, creolisation, like the emergent theory, douglarisation or dougla poetics (which modifies the former) has been interpreted exclusively as assumed cultural assimilation and consequently, has been simplified to signify the “Africanisation of Indians.”¹⁵¹ As such, for both conservative Indo- and Afro- Caribbean cultural nationalist elements, the question of cultural purity and authenticity is red flagged with public debate being defined by the invocation of colonial stereotypes. For the conservative Indo-Caribbeans, creolisation is considered to be an integral part of a concerted effort aimed at obliterating authentic Indian culture through its forced “mixing” with what is considered hopelessly polluted and inferior Creole forms. In this regard, calls have been made for a semantic differentiation to be recognised between assimilation and “integration”, which is preferred; integration carrying the inference of being “separate but equal.”¹⁵² For the Afro-Caribbeans, creolisation poses the prospect of conceding dominance in the cultural space to accommodate and acknowledge the contributions of Indo-Caribbeans and other ethnicities to the modification and transformation of Creole cultural forms. Such concessions are similarly perceived in Afro-Caribbean conservative quarters as cultural loss and eventual annihilation.

Of the second criticism, that of the creolisation thesis collapsing into dualisms, Bolland has proposed dialectical thinking as an option for rectifying this weakness. Bolland argues that although Brathwaite articulates a dialectical foundation for his model, inevitably it falls into binaristic modes of white/black, master/slave and

¹⁵⁰ Mohammed, “The ‘Creolisation’ of Indian Women” 130.

¹⁵¹ Rampersad, “Douglarisation” 55.

¹⁵² See Puri, “Canonized Hybridities” 25. Drawing on the example of the response of conservative Indo-Caribbeans to the participation of an Indo-Caribbean female chutney artist in Carnival, Puri observes that, “[b]y the logic of conservative cultural nationalists, the demand must not be that carnival be Indianized or douglarized, but that a conservative monolithic Indian culture be given the *same* national status as carnival.”

colonial/creole that negate the interdependencies that give meaning to each category. Consequently, the Creole society model ignores what Bolland posits as “the contradictions and conflicts that are inherent in the relationship between these elements, a relationship that actually defines the nature of the constituent parts”.¹⁵³ Given this dialectical formulation, Bolland asserts, creolisation would become a process of contention rather than homogenisation. Richard Clarke counters Bolland’s proposal stating that Brathwaite’s model is “in fact a supreme example of applied dialectical thinking ... of dialectical theory and praxis conjoined.”¹⁵⁴ Clarke further posits that:

within the field of vision permitted by a dialectic problematic
 Brathwaite offered here a seminal account of the complex dialectic of identity, class, nationality, ethnicity and race to be found in the Caribbean (and by extension, in any multicultural/multiracial society) as well as a persuasive map of the way forward. He was able, in other words, to show that economic class is not the only basis for social inequality which in fact manifests itself in many forms, nationality, ethnicity and race being three other and inter-related determinants...¹⁵⁵

If Clarke gives a spirited defence of Brathwaite’s consistency in theoretical praxis, if nothing else, he elsewhere critiques a prevailing sentiment detected not only in the Creole society model but also in the poet/historian’s scholarship generally: its essentialism, evident in the privileging of Africa, a search for roots by which process it is anticipated an authentic unitary cultural identity might be discovered. This is another significant weakness of Brathwaite’s creolisation model and a familiar critique of some of the theoretical and scholarly work dating from the pre- and post-independence periods in the region. The futility of such essentialisms and the concomitant construction of a single, common identity have been discussed in the

¹⁵³ Bolland, “Reconsidering” 2.

¹⁵⁴ Richard L. W. Clarke, “Towards a ‘New Parochial Wholeness’: Brathwaite’s Dialectical Model of Creolisation” *For the Geography of a Soul: Emerging Perspectives on Kamau Brathwaite* (Trenton, NJ and Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 2001) 205.

¹⁵⁵ Clarke, “Towards” 205.

previous chapter. It is not accidental that these discourses coincided with the expansion of nationalist movements when it was both politically expedient, if naïve to accentuate commonalities in the new nation states. It is one of the proposed tenets of Hall's re-conceptualisation of Caribbeanness.

In view of the foregoing: does Brathwaite's creolisation model retain any relevance to the contemporary Caribbean situation? It is the contention of this thesis that despite its grave limitations, Brathwaite's creolisation model, at its core, still posits a persuasive and feasible premise for the theorisation of cultural change and transformation in the Caribbean. The twin catalysts of acculturation and interculturalisation might be interpreted in more expansive terms given the dynamics that continue to drive the creolisation process. While the idea of acculturation conjures the prospect of cultural annihilation when viewed within the confines of insular territorial and regional politics, what is often glossed in some critiques is the fact that the term was initially used by Brathwaite to explain the process of complicity and resistance that had characterised the relationship between slaves and European colonisers; subsequently perpetuated in the relationships of colonised/colonising, élite/subordinate or local/metropolitan classes. The same contradictory relationship was continued when the indentured labourers were introduced to the region, which Brathwaite indeed neglects to assess. When juxtaposed to the contemporary Caribbean situation where the region has been bombarded with and subsumed by American cultural imperialism that has replaced European imperialism: Does acculturation not explicate that relationship of American dominance, so reminiscent of colonialism, which the region negotiates by employing similar strategies of complicity, compliance and resistance? Does it not also provide some insight into the

relationships that emerge between nationals and expatriates linked to multinational co-operations who by dint of their economic inputs exert considerable influence on any range of policies pursued by the state? From this vantage point, it is argued, acculturation maintains some theoretical resonance albeit with limited and specific reference to the new colonial relationships of a globalised world.

Interculturation, much more than “integration” – even with its accreted localised inferences – also more accurately explicates the process of involuntary or unplanned exchange through which cultures interact and are reciprocally enriched. Inasmuch as resistance to such cultural evolution and transformation has been sustained particularly by those for whom the status quo of cultural antagonisms and separateness are beneficial, it has not succeeded in stemming what is effectively an inevitable and natural progression of cultural change. Indeed, drawing from relatively comparable circumstances, writer and critic Salman Rushdie has averred, it is as a result of just such “hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas ... [that] *newness enters the world.*”¹⁵⁶

For all of its inadequacies, Brathwaite’s model, like its antecedents, has been integral and necessary to the evolution of scholarship on Caribbean cultural change and identity. Its strengths lie precisely in these two catalysts – acculturation and interculturation – around which the thesis pivots as well as in the historical and cultural genealogical knowledge on which it is founded; and its contextualisation of the unequal power relations by which the dynamics of cultural change are

¹⁵⁶ Salman Rushdie, “In Good Faith” *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticisms 1981-91* (London: Granta Books, 1992) 394.

circumscribed. None of this would have been possible without the re-visioning of Caribbean historiography to which Brathwaite was a key contributor and which sought to include for the first time the voices of those formerly marginalised and disenfranchised. Nonetheless, Brathwaite, in his attempts to improve his model has dwelt particularly on refining and modifying the definitions of these two catalysts to reflect the cumulative impact of colonialism on the creolisation process over the historical period from slavery to post-emancipation to the pre-independence. In his article, "Caliban, Ariel, and Unprospero in the Conflict of Creolization: a Study of the Slave Revolt in Jamaica in 1831-32" Brathwaite proposes a prismatic as opposed to a linear, progressive approach to Caribbean historiography that considers as many variables and perspectives as possible so as to arrive at a more comprehensive view of the interactive process. As he asserts:

My model of creolization has therefore in many senses been considerably extended; it has become, for one thing less linear and "progressive," more prismatic, and includes more comprehensively than formerly a sense of cultural interaction not only among all elements of the "tropical plantation," but also between these elements at certain metropolitan aspects (look at popular music for instance) of the continent.¹⁵⁷

Brathwaite's transition from metaphors of roots to the visual metaphor of the prism highlights a conceptual leap in his thinking about cultural interaction and transformation; a shift from linearity and gradual progression towards a unitary cultural identity to one that considers wholeness or "prismatic possibility."¹⁵⁸ Yet there are contradictions apparent in his analysis of the theoretical shifts that the prismatic approach will effect on his model. Brathwaite asserts that:

The prismatic concept ... conceives of all resident cultures as equal and contiguous, despite the accidents of political history, each

¹⁵⁷ Brathwaite, "Caliban, Ariel" 41.

¹⁵⁸ Brathwaite, "Caliban, Ariel" 42.

developing its own life-style from the spirit of its ancestors, but modified – and increasingly so – through interaction with the environment and other cultures of the environment, until residence within the environment – *nativization* – becomes the process (creolization) through which all begin to share a style, even though that style will retain vestiges (with occasional national/cultural revivals back towards particular ancestors) of their original/ancestral heritage.¹⁵⁹

While this initially appears to encompass the interaction of the range of cultures in the Caribbean, further examination of the argument reveals limitations placed on the groups included as well as a contradictory assertion of a quadrilateral approach to historiographical process that would take account of “collage, metaphor, nonarchival sources which have their own shape, their own pressure of outline.”¹⁶⁰ Even as Brathwaite argues that his recourse to a prismatic approach expands his examination of the creolisation process from “slavery ... through to the shadow of independence and in prismatic space” his proposed shift from the continuum of white/brown/black is extended to the “aboriginal, maroon and multivariate: the various orientations of the fixed and mixed”; in other words, the inclusions reach *backward* to indigenous populations and their combinations to the exclusion again of the new arrivants of the post emancipation period.¹⁶¹

This can be attributed to the limited scope defined for this study which also preceded the arrival of indentured labourers, that being the 1831-32 slave rebellion in Jamaica. Although Brathwaite’s parameters of inclusivity do not embrace the breadth of communities that had congregated in the Caribbean before independence the prismatic approach that Brathwaite articulates is exemplified in the historiographical praxis demonstrated in this article - an attempt to include as many perspectives, sources,

¹⁵⁹ Brathwaite, “Caliban, Ariel” 42.

¹⁶⁰ Brathwaite, “Caliban, Ariel” 43.

¹⁶¹ Brathwaite, “Caliban, Ariel” 43.

voices and interpretations in the analysis of the period rather than the linear progression associated with western historiography. This is at the crux of what Brathwaite proposes and what the shift to a prismatic metaphor brings to the refinement of the intercultural process in particular. However, as illustrated, there is little development of the concept's theoretical underpinnings. Consequently, it is argued that developing the theoretical core of the prismatic concept, opens up significant possibilities for revising and refining this aspect of Brathwaite's creolisation thesis thereby increasing its relevance to the contemporary Caribbean situation and experience of cultural change and transformation.

Prismatic Creolisation Model

The prismatic creolisation model is proposed as a corrective supplement to Brathwaite's creolisation thesis by rectifying its weaknesses identified above and in so doing enabling its applicability to the contemporary Caribbean situation and experience and by extension, Caribbeanness. But, what constitutes the contemporary Caribbean situation with respect to Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana? What is its socio-cultural or ethnic composition? How is it different from Brathwaite's "orientation model" on which his creolisation thesis is founded? In Guyana, six "races" are acknowledged: Amerindians, Europeans, Africans, Chinese, Portuguese and East Indians. It is pertinent that these categories assume "pure" racial and ethnic origins with no recognition of mixed ethnicities, which in Guyanese creole is referred

to as “no nations.”¹⁶² Of significance too is the fact that the Portuguese are identified as a separate category to the Europeans. Alternatively, Lloyd Best has suggested nine “distinct electoral tribes” based on the “planks of ethnic bonding ... race, proletarian ‘class’, colour, religion, continent of origin, island of affiliation”:

The “unadulterated” Afro-Saxon core; the Black Power or Garveyite fringe, unwilling to sacrifice the African connection; the Butlerites committed to Trade Union solidarity; the Tobagonians loathe to lose their island identity; the “unadulterated” Hindu core; the Presbyterians; the devotees of Islam; the French Creoles holding desperately to the aristocracy of colour; and the Nowherians to whom all the others seem anathema.¹⁶³

Since these categories have specific relevance to Trinidad and Tobago, Amerindians who constitute a distinct segment in Guyana are not reflected.

Figure 2 below suggests a generic illustration of societal composition and stratification in both territories. The dotted lines of the external pyramid gesture to diasporic and other interdependent intra- and extra- regional relationships of these territories; the dotted lines within gesture to the possibilities for social mobility both upward, downward and very occasionally laterally. The extent to which social mobility occurs in any direction is dependent on a number of variables such as economic growth, intra- and extra- regional migration and hypergamy. Given the differential rates of economic growth in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, opportunities for upward mobility are increased in the former.

¹⁶² Brackette Williams explains that “‘No Nation’ refers to a local belief that, if for some reason all Guyanese were forced to leave Guyana, persons of mixed ancestry would be unable to make an unambiguous claim to historically derived rights to another nationality and would thus become people without a nation.” Williams, *Stains* 129.

¹⁶³ Best, “Excellent Choice for New Dispensation” *Trinidad Express* online, 19.02.05 <http://www.trinidadexpress.com/index.pl/article?id=62477521>.

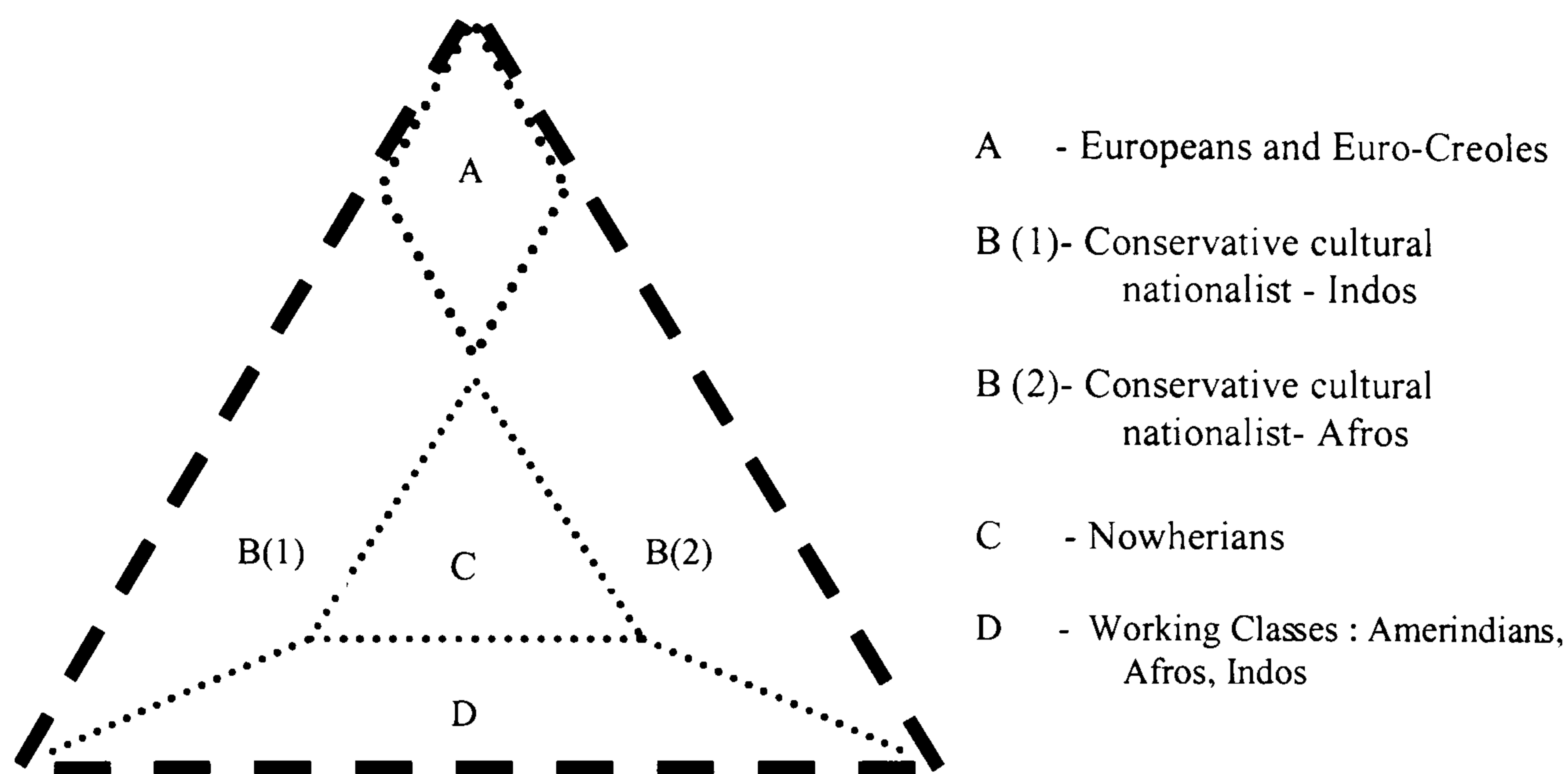


Figure 2.0 – Prismatic Creolisation Model - Contemporary Trinidad and Tobago and Guyanese society

Of the five categories proposed the Europeans and Euro-Creoles correspond to the white population discussed in the previous chapter. The Europeans being the expatriates of various European countries, whereas the Euro-Creoles would be the local whites and honorary whites including the French Creoles, Chinese, Portuguese and Syrian Lebanese. This category represents the local élite. The two categories of conservative cultural nationalists each represents those of the major ethnic groups of Indo- and Afro- Caribbeans for whom the maintenance of authentic cultural values and norms is paramount. They span the middle classes.

The Nowherians are an eclectic group that cross cut ethnicities and include the middle class segment of variant mixed populations. They traditionally do not subscribe to the ideological or political philosophies that unite the individual conservatives and as such comprise the voting segment of the public for whom “none of the above” would be the preferred option to any of the race-based political parties. With antagonisms perpetuated by the conservatives, this group holds increasing political sway. The working class is as eclectic a group that also cross cuts ethnicities and in respect of

Guyana includes the substantial Amerindian population. They comprise the urban and rural poor occupying the lowest strata of society. Tobagonians are included across the stratification categories and like the Nowherians can sometimes hold electoral sway.

The societal and hierarchical composition illustrated in the model of contemporary Caribbean society is distinguished from Brathwaite's Orientation model in Figure 1 in at least two respects. Brathwaite's model represents Jamaican society in the immediate post-emancipation period with emphasis placed on the white/brown/black continuum. Social stratification, as noted is rigid and curiously Brathwaite's categories appear implicitly to suggest a gradient of West Indian authenticity with the Creole Creole being the only segment identified as West Indian with the Afro-Creoles described as the "folk". The Euro-Creoles gesture to the locally born white population. Brathwaite however does not suggest any criteria by which the Creole Creole might be so distinguished. With the exception of the European/Euro-Creole category, the model of contemporary Caribbean society, Figure 2, assumes that all are citizens of the nation states. Again, the same distinction is made between the European born expatriate and the locally born "French Creole". Apart from that, the social stratification suggests more fluidity, which as mentioned previously is dependent on education and employment opportunities, hypergamy and socialisation into the upper classes.

Figure 2 encapsulates the historically constructed categories and social stratification of the contemporary Caribbean situation as epitomised in two of the more heterogeneous societies of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. It is this dynamic

situation that prismatic creolisation engages and attempts to theorise. To the task, prismatic creolisation brings the inherited theoretical framework contained in the schematic of four fundamental tenets that constitutes the proposed re-definition of Caribbeanness based on Stuart Hall's scholarship on Caribbean identity as detailed and extended in the previous chapter. These tenets re-define and supplant the weak aspects of Brathwaite's thesis outlined above and as such form a requisite building block of the theoretical framework of prismatic creolisation. In broadening the definition of Caribbeanness initiated in Brathwaite's creolisation model, Hall underscores those characteristics shared with identity politics generally as well as those features that describe its specificity. In summary, what Hall brings to the definition of Caribbeanness is the understanding that self-definition is entirely subject to personal choice at any given moment. Such fluidity allows the individual to privilege any of the available subject positions – race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, sexuality - as circumstances might demand. Group belonging is also circumscribed by individual choice which intersects and interacts among other individuals or groups. It is through a similar matrix of possibilities in such exchanges that self-recognition is facilitated. Moreover, Caribbeanness, which is historically constructed within the crucible of slavery, indenture and colonialism, has ensured the primacy of race and ethnicity as the most contested components in its epistemology. The narratives of origin and evolution that further inscribe cultural traditions bear out these tensions. Inevitably, the amorphous nature of Caribbeanness can perhaps be distinguished and approximated by its relational and diasporic aesthetics that inhere in the national and cultural production of the region. Hall's schematic intersects with Brathwaite's creolisation thesis at this juncture as he supersedes Brathwaite's core

concepts of acculturation and interculturalization – that describe cultural interaction and change with his own terms – integration, assimilation and cross influence.

However, the multiple cultural interactions, which these various terms purpose to describe are perhaps best encapsulated in Brathwaite's appropriation of the prismatic metaphor. As Robert Baron observes:

Prismatic works well as a metaphor for creolization because of its association with refraction and the multiplicity of colors and shapes seen in the prism ... In this metaphor, refraction through a prism offers an alternative to a linear approach to the interaction of cultures. The colors refracted through a prism mix in a spectrum in a manner that is not fixed, rigid, or predictable.

Metaphors of and for creolization should allow for continuous interplay and an ever-emerging dynamism that escapes the relative fixedness imputed to more fully formed and seemingly stable cultures.¹⁶⁴

The prismatic metaphor therefore facilitates the refinement of the cultural interactions that these terms – acculturation, interculturalization, integration, assimilation and cross influence - attempt to conjure and which Brathwaite demonstrates through his historiographical practice. Whereas Hall's re-definition of Caribbeanness strengthens and expands creolization's theoretical framework, it is argued that the elaboration of the prismatic metaphor enriches the meaning and substance of the revised foundational thesis confirming its conceptual shift from unicentrism to polycentrism.

Brathwaite is not the only Caribbean artist/scholar to have proposed the prismatic metaphor as a viable option for thinking about Caribbean culture and identity.

Dunstan St Omer, recognised as St Lucia's premier painter and designer of his

¹⁶⁴ Robert Baron, "Amalgams and Mosaics, Syncretisms and Reinterpretations: Reading Herskovits and Contemporary Creolists for Metaphors of Creolization" *Journal of American Folklore* 116.459 (2003): 92-3.

country's nation flag has also articulated a philosophy of painting based on the inherent values of the prism. He has called his philosophy Prismism. Fundamental to St Omer's philosophy is a meditation on and re-interpretation of colour and form. While he interrogates the use and meaning of colour associated with European art styles generally, his focus is concentrated especially on the early twentieth century styles of Impressionism and Cubism. St Omer's artistic philosophy marks the first point of elaboration of prismatic creolisation; the second is derived from a comparative analysis of philosophies of language posited by seminal Caribbean writers and poets on the one hand, and St Omer's Prismism philosophy on the other. Through Prismism, St Omer proposes other epistemological meanings of colour that subvert conventional stereotypical meanings as have been discussed in the previous chapter. In so doing, Prismism suggests other constructions of Caribbeanness that reflect the more dynamic exchanges and interactions that perhaps approximate the contemporary experience. Prismism also brings ethical and moral dimensions to bear on the elaboration of the prismatic creolisation model.

Prismism and the Auto/biography of Caribbeanness

Comparisons of literature and musical forms such as the calypso, chutney soca, reggae or dancehall are not uncommon in Caribbean scholarship since they facilitate textual analyses of the written word and apprehension of a wider variety of voices. What is rare are comparisons of seemingly disparate symbolic systems such as language or literature and the fine/visual arts – painting in this instance. Several

reasons might be advanced to explain the preference for the former comparative scholarship. One of the principal and debilitating reasons is the fact that negligible research has been done on Caribbean fine/visual arts or any special aspects such as colour, technique, or related philosophies that would obviously have shaped its development. This has been changing in the Hispanophone Caribbean; however, the Anglophone, Francophone and Dutch Caribbean are still very much at the embryonic stages of research. Accessibility to collections or individual paintings produced at different periods which might be representative of styles or techniques and from which coherent patterns of development might be gleaned is another hindrance to research since many rare or even contemporary paintings are privately owned. One published text, Veerle Poupeye's *Caribbean Art* is thus far the most detailed survey that attempts to periodise and thematise the development of artistic movements across the linguistic blocs.¹⁶⁵

In spite of these constraints, it is asserted that the advantages to be derived from a comparative analysis of the symbolic systems of word and image as exemplified in the philosophies of language and painting posited by Caribbean artists are many. Firstly, because Caribbean artists are for the most part multi-disciplinarians as mentioned before, some have been dabbling in both art forms. For instance, not only has Walcott honed his poetic craft in tandem with his experimentation with painting, but also painters such as Leroy Clarke and the batik artist and fabric designer Valerie Belgrave have experimented with poetry and novel writing respectively. Of course, artists have acknowledged that their expertise lies predominantly in one art form although they continue to improve their techniques in both. Inevitably, the cross

¹⁶⁵ Veerle Poupeye, *Caribbean Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998).

fertilisation across art forms can only be beneficial. Belgrave who is formally trained as a painter observes of her experiments with the two art forms:

I have also incorporated in the novel [Ti Marie] the elements that permeate my visual work. In addition to the expected strong sense of nationalism and racial pride and concern for the oppressed, I have used powerful female characters, I have emphasized the landscape, and I have combined the abstract, in this case idealism and symbolism, with the practical.¹⁶⁶

Exploration of the visual imagery rendered by Caribbean painters and other fine/visual artists also yields insight into other interpretations and versions of the region's landscape, culture and identity. In the repertoire of images and philosophies underpinning their craft, Caribbean painters represent their own auto/biographical versions of Caribbeanness that both intersect with and refract from the more familiar literary versions inscribed by the writers, poets and intellectuals. As with the writers and poets, the work of these visual artists is also influenced by and inflected with their own auto/biographical experiences that invariably inform their philosophies and the ways in which they engage with the historical, socio-economic and political environment which they represent. The contribution of painters and fine/visual artists to the definition of Caribbean aesthetics also coincides with and enriches the literary aesthetics.

Notwithstanding the obvious symbiosis between these two symbolic art forms and the obvious benefits that would accrue to a comparative analysis some caution is warranted. Some critics and practitioners alike have noted the privileged status accorded to painting that brackets it into the respectable category of "high culture" as

¹⁶⁶ Valerie Belgrave, "On Combining Batik Art and Novel Writing" *Caribbean Women Writers: Essays from the First International Conference*. Ed. Selwyn R. Cudjoe (Wellesley, Mass.: Calaloux Publications, 1990) 318.

opposed to the assessment of popular forms such as calypso, parang or chutney soca as “low culture”. It is pertinent that the first acquires the validation of the ruling élite for whom painting, its ownership and access to exhibition spaces are par for the course; on the contrary, the popular forms in which the middle and working classes are more heavily involved receive the disapprobation of the same ruling class. These divisions have their genesis in Matthew Arnold’s definition of culture as the “best that has been thought and said in the world” which has been absorbed in Caribbean society. Christopher Cozier, visual artist, curator and art critic gives some insight into how these superficial divisions set parameters of acceptance and in so doing regulate what is perceived as Caribbean art:

The art space in the Caribbean is an owned space controlled by a comfortable alliance between an expatriate and local élite. It’s all about building the ‘nation’ and protecting or preserving the ‘culture’. Public and audience for this kind of idea of art are in conflict. The artist exhibits and sells to this alliance which then mandates to the public that it is ‘art’ and their ‘culture’. Being just an ordinary person who grew up here on one of these islands and having become an artist because I was lucky enough to be able to develop rather than to suppress the ability to survive, I often feel that I am imposing on this alliance.¹⁶⁷

Cozier’s assessment charges complicity on the part of the social élite and the state in mediating and legitimising what is accepted as Caribbean art through the manipulation of audience and creation of artificial market demand. As such, the definition of Caribbean aesthetics in the fine/visual arts is subjected to and manipulated by ideals of authenticity to a much greater extent than is perhaps possible

¹⁶⁷ Annalee Davis, “A Conversation with Christopher Cozier” *Small Axe* 6 (1999): 148-150. Ironically, some more conventional artists view Cozier, (and other “conceptual” visual artists) as catering to the expatriate community. Pat Bishop, musicologist and painter has observed that Cozier and others “form another ‘school’ in which their allegiances turn upon urban sophistication and the phenomenon of “happenings” and “installations”. They find a public among expatriates and those locals who wish to keep up with the cutting edge of “progressive” local tastes.” Bishop, “Painting in Trinidad and Tobago” *Trinidad and Tobago through the Eye of the Artist: From Cazabon to the Millennium 1813-2000* (Port of Spain: Independence Cultural Committee, 1997) xix.

in literary production. Value judgements made on the basis of the extent to which artistic production satisfies these ideals of authenticity also effectively determines what is good or bad art. Similar value judgements are also imposed on other art forms deemed to be “popular”.

To compare painting and literature which are perceived as being two art forms within the domain of “high culture” could also have the disadvantage of not necessarily yielding as varied insights into the construction of Caribbean culture and identity. However, artists such as Cozier have not only helped to create alternative exhibition spaces but in the practice of their art, have integrated aspects of so called “high” and “low” cultures by bringing techniques and skills of the Carnival arts, for instance, to bear on their “formal” art. As he explains:

Performance and costume are central to an understanding of Caribbean art, especially in the south [Caribbean], where objects and actions have equal agency in the public space. The public has art and they do not need painters to render their spaces and activities in a static form to elevate it or to make it valid as a form of cultural production. There is a visual syntax to the way we arrange a yard, a shop, a living room
...¹⁶⁸

This is not unique to Cozier’s generation of visual artists; from the cluster of artists on whom information was readily available and who are referenced hereafter, such influences and practices are common. Cross fertilisation among the range of cultural influences that invariably encompasses the intersections of the sacred and secular, the “sophisticated” and the popular is apparent in much of the work available for the period since the mid-twentieth century. What is more, this style of texturing visual production with the range of expressions available to Caribbean artist has been employed by both formally trained artists as well as those who are largely self taught.

¹⁶⁸ Davis, “A Conversation” 150.

Additionally, most of the painters referenced also emerged during the pre-independence period and were thus instrumental in the initial fashioning of Caribbean aesthetics. Cozier, like more contemporary visual artists such as Wendy Nanan and Eddie Bowen emerged during the period of post-independence disillusionment; they have been concerned with challenging and re-fashioning the idea and meaning of Caribbeanness through their work. Their work thus counters the early work of earlier generation of painters, who like the writers and poets were enthusiastic and optimistic about the prospect of independence. These sentiments have heavily influenced their work. In view of the selection of painters/visual artists and the fact that the proposition is founded primarily on St Omer's philosophy of Prismism, which in its conception is aimed at admitting multiple perspectives, it is argued that a less limiting perspective is possible.

Given the scarcity of information on Caribbean art generally, to attempt to produce a coherent historical background would be both futile and false. Even the label *Caribbean Art* is misleading. As painter/scholar Kenwyn Crichlow observes, “[t]he early artists in the region Edna Manley, Hector Hyppolite, Wilfredo Lam et al rarely, if ever used the term ... and certainly never met to discuss or publish the bases of their aesthetic ideologies.”¹⁶⁹ In the absence of consensus on the definition of Caribbean art by its practitioners of the immediate pre-independence period it is difficult to establish a historical starting point even from this time. Unsurprisingly, information before the independence period is even thinner.

¹⁶⁹ Kenwyn Crichlow, “Re-Connecting/Inventing the Spiritual: The Art of Bernadette Persaud” introduction, exhibition pamphlet, *Bernadette Persaud: Recent Paintings*. National Museum of Trinidad and Tobago, January 7-25, 2004. n.p.

In Trinidad and Tobago, records reveal information on just two nineteenth century painters, Michel-Jean Cazabon (1813-88) and Theodora Walter (1869-1959). The first was formally trained in Paris and lived and worked in both Trinidad and Martinique. A small collection of his watercolours is housed at the National Museum in Trinidad.¹⁷⁰ Walter was the daughter of English water colourist Theodore Walter and a Trinidadian mother. Like her father she worked with water colours primarily and as Art Historian and member of the Art Society of Trinidad and Tobago Geoffrey MacLean has noted, “Walter’s botanical paintings and simple landscapes are all that remain from that period.”¹⁷¹ In Guyana, there is no record of artists before the early twentieth century. The beginning of an art movement stimulated interest in the fine arts and eventually was consolidated under the umbrella organisation, the British Guiana Arts and Craft Society which has been described by artist, Denis Williams as “an unashamedly paternalist colonial institution.”¹⁷² Guyanese artists associated with this period were self taught and include E. R. Burrowes, Hubert Moshett, Samuel Broodhagen, David Shing and Guy Sharpels.¹⁷³ The Guianese Art Group replaced this Society in the early 1940s. The parallel period in Trinidad saw the emergence of artists such as Hugh Stollmeyer, Boscoe Holder, M.P. Alladin and Alfred Codallo as well as the formation of the Society of Independents that was superseded by the Trinidad Art Society. With their beginnings coinciding with the embryonic stages of independence, it is not surprising that the main objectives of these Art Societies were the development of national movements.

¹⁷⁰ Poupeye, *Caribbean Art* 43.

¹⁷¹ Geoffrey Maclean, “History of Art of Trinidad and Tobago” 1998.
<<http://www.latino.si.edu/rainbow/pages/History.html>>.

¹⁷² Denis Williams quoted in Stephanie Harvie, “The Search for a Guyanese Identity: The Evolution of the Fine Arts in Guyana with Specific Reference to the Works of Aubrey Williams”, Masters by Research, University of Warwick, 1993. 22

¹⁷³ Harvie, “The Search for a Guyanese Identity” 21.

Just as the first generation of Caribbean writers and intellectuals was committed to giving voice for the first time to the Caribbean experience and being involved in shaping their destinies, identities and nations outside of the strictures of colonial governance, so too Caribbean visual artists undertook to represent the region's landscape and peoples in ways that contested the traditional, dominant European representations. Influenced by the political and cultural renaissance that decolonisation commenced, the re-interpretation of history also became a primary concern. Painters of this period in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago included Aubrey Williams, Denis Williams, Stanley Greaves, Bernadette Persaud and Sybil Atteck, Leroy Clarke, Isaiah James Boodhoo, Carlyle Chang and Peter Minshall respectively. In St Lucia, Dunstan St Omer was part of this pre-independence movement. United in this objective, these visual artists resourced many neglected aspects of the region's history, cultural and religious heritage in their quest to re-define Caribbean aesthetics.

Poupeye, notes that:

Cultural self-affirmation was deemed a critical part of decolonisation and art was recognised as a powerful nation-building tool. The schools that emerged in this context were primarily concerned with the exploration of indigenous aesthetic values and national identity. Many artists and intellectuals turned towards the culture of the masses as the paradigmatic national culture.¹⁷⁴

Consequently, the work of these visual artists reflects an engagement and experimentation with a range of influences – indigenous, European and Caribbean – which have informed their versions of Caribbean aesthetics. For example, Aubrey Williams' contact with Amerindian culture in his youth and early adult life was the logical imaginative resource and inspiration in his fashioning of a Caribbean aesthetic. While Persaud's early work was concerned with reproducing idyllic landscapes that

¹⁷⁴ Poupeye, *Caribbean Art* 50.

coincided with Burnham's militarisation of Guyana. In their own way, these landscapes provided a satirical backdrop to the country's independence experience. More recently, Persaud has been appropriating images of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism to symbolise similar disquiet with the current political landscape.¹⁷⁵ Boodhoo's work also reflected a contemplation of varied religious influences while Chang and Minshall combined their interests in and influences of the Carnival arts in their renderings of Caribbeanness; both have also designed and led their own carnival band productions.

Inasmuch as a coherent art history of the region is virtually impossible, there are still commonalities as well as differences in technique and approach that are apparent from any survey of the artistic production currently available. Crichlow, for instance, suggests that there is a sufficiently clear vision shared by artists that properly distinguishes a Caribbean style founded largely in an engagement with the spiritual:

[I]n spite of the fundamental contradictions, a clear vision, a 'canon' if the term may be so used, of Caribbean art style may be observed in any survey of the paintings in the region. Prominent among these is the manifestation of forms for the imagining of Caribbean spirituality. This 'canon' is rooted though not exclusively so, in the underground, hidden religious practices of communities and represents a major force in the formation of identities in the complex cultural processes that impact our plural societies. The visual grammar of this 'canon' may be remarkably varied, not only in its framing of diverse Re-presentations of iconic form, ritual processes or ceremonial aspects of religious practices but often in the personal construction of spiritual experiences. Despite these various ways, picturing spiritual vision may often be either affirmations of revolutionary identity or revivals of debarred traditions, and for many artists and performers in this 'canon', artistic endeavour may be an occasion for subaltern 'painting back', for *Re-connecting/inventing* the spiritual, or a purer, less spoilt space were (sic) authenticity as a kind of transcendence, may be achieved. For some others in this convention, art making is an occasion for seeking out the divine.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ See Poupeye, *Caribbean Art* 130; and Crichlow, "Re-Connecting/Inventing the Spiritual" n.p.

¹⁷⁶ Crichlow, "Re-Connecting/Inventing" n.p.

What is also constant in the breadth of artistic production of the region, however, is the inescapable and extraordinarily intense colour and beauty of Caribbean landscapes as sources of inspiration and influence to the region's visual artists. Influenced by their landscapes, many visual artists have experimented with colour, either in their explorations of the spiritual or the folklore or other scenic presentations. Colour in cultural productions such as Carnival contrasts with its use in religious festivals such as Hosay and Phagwa; the vibrancy of colour that animates these festivals are further contrasted with the stark emphasis on light (over darkness) as represented in the observances of Divali, Eid-ul-Fitr and Christmas. In the process of re-inventing the spiritual then the sacred and secular meanings of colour have intersected and refracted in the "painting back" of alternative versions of cultural identities as Crichlow argues. In so doing, Caribbean visual artists have been fashioning their own versions of Caribbeanness while also contesting the received meanings attributed to colours in various spheres.

Again, as John Gage points out, "although ... non-European cultures have dominated in the ethno-linguistic studies of colour-terms" there has been a paucity of research on colour in these cultures.¹⁷⁷ Scholarship from the region is also sparse as it relates to the investigation of colour employed by visual or even literary artists.

Notwithstanding, it is evident from the work of painters such as Camille Pissaro, whose sojourn to the Caribbean island of St Thomas in early life is thought to have influenced his engagement with colour as a Neo-Impressionist, to the region's current painters and visual artists that colour has a pivotal position in their artistic

¹⁷⁷ John Gage, *Colour and Meaning: Art, Science and Symbolism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999) 12.

endeavours.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, just as some of the region's historians, poets and writers have been re-visioning history through alternative lenses, so too some of its visual artists, (like their counterparts world wide) have been bringing another perspective to their engagement with colour; a perspective that contributes to the re-visioning of its sociological and historical meanings in their artistic production. European painter, Bridget Riley suggests that the visual artist experiences two distinct systems of colour both of which function in tandem during the creative process. The first, she calls "perceptual colour" which is common to all sighted human beings in the experience of colour in nature; the second, "pictorial colour" is the system by which the painter interprets and translates colour from pigments on the palette into pictorial representations.¹⁷⁹ It is argued that the emphasis placed by the artist in balancing these two ways of perceiving colour perhaps determines the extent to which that process of re-visioning occurs.

Leroy Clarke and Dunstan St Omer are two Caribbean painters whose works have involved explorations of the divine and experiments with colour albeit from explicitly different perspectives. For each of these painters, the former born in Trinidad, the latter in St Lucia, their artistic journeys to delineating distinctly Caribbean aesthetics in their paintings have also resulted in their elaboration of philosophies of art and society. These philosophies, inevitably engage with issues concerning the construction of nation and cultural identity which retain their significance in the ongoing debates in the Caribbean.

¹⁷⁸ Poupeye, *Caribbean Art* 43.

¹⁷⁹ Bridget Riley, "Colour for the Painter" *Colour: Art and Science*. Eds. Trevor Lamb and Janine Bourriau (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 31-2.

Clarke, who was born in 1938, eleven years after St Omer, has enumerated a vast range of influences on his art. These would include not only the European painters such as “Rembrandt, Durer, Michelangelo and Da Vinci of those huge books in the Central Library”¹⁸⁰ but also Caribbean artists such as Aubrey Williams, Denis Williams, Sybil Atteck, Carlisle Chang, Michel-Jean Cazabon, Alf Cadallo (the illustrator of folklore), and Wilfredo Lam. In addition to these artists, Clarke also admits to being influenced by writers such as Harris and Walcott, as well as Mas’ men such as George Bailey, Cito Velasquez and Peter Minshall. Clarke further credits his upbringing in a loving family in one of the tougher communities of Port of Spain and his exposure to its blend of cultures for shaping his sensibilities and awareness of his Africanness:

Gonzales was something else, country in town – goats, cows, donkeys, fowls, ducks ... The majority of the population was African and, in a small section near Boucaud Hill, East Indians settled, some lived in ajoupas. Cultural differences abound that found expression in the style of our ‘manners’. Religion, smells, clothes, work, ceremonies, Hindu and Muslim rites, Hosay, Shango, Shango Baptist, Shouters, Anglican, Catholic ... Gonzales had the pose of a dramatic happening in the midst of an invisible audience of ancestral watch-dogs! That gave Gonzales a mysterious air. It had Obeah!¹⁸¹

In much the same way that Peter Minshall’s mas’ presentations such as his first trilogy: “River” (1983), “Callaloo” (1984) and “The Golden Calabash: Princes of Darkness and Lords of Light” (1985) were visual performance narratives that addressed the issues of ecology, harmony among the various races and ethnicities and the threat of nuclear war respectively, so too Clarke’s oeuvre that now spans more than thirty years charts the development of his philosophy of Caribbean art, culture, nationalism and identity. Declaring his dedication to art as akin to that of “having a

¹⁸⁰ Leroy Clarke, “Moments: An Autobiographical Note.” *Of Flesh and Salt and Wind and Current: A Compilation of Works by and about Leroy Clarke*. Researched and Compiled by Caroline C Ravello. (Port of Spain: The National Museum of Trinidad and Tobago, 2003) 113.

¹⁸¹ Clarke, “Moments” 113.

mission”, Clarke further argues that his vocation has been an experience of “art languaging his life.”¹⁸² His evolution of a Caribbean aesthetic has drawn heavily from the symbolism of Africa, Caribbean folklore, Amerindian heritages, Orisha and the local landscape. From his first exhibition, *Fragments of a Spiritual* (1972) to *Douens* (1973-75) to the **El Tucuche** series: *El Tucuche I: De Maze – A Single Line to My Soul* (1988), *El Tucuche II: De Eye Am* (1989), *El Tucuche Approaching Apotheosis* (1990) and *El Tucuche IV: Utterances* (1991) as well as the *Pantheon* series, Clarke has been involved in a continuous dialogue with the Caribbean’s fragments, its shipwrecks that have influenced post-independence politics and the development of its peoples, culture and identities. In his primary concern with the dislocation and rootlessness of Afro-Caribbean peoples, Clarke’s artistic philosophy bears some correlations with Brathwaite’s scholarship and creative work, particularly as it relates to arriving at that wholeness of spirit and being ruptured through dislocations and migrations.

More than St Omer, who accepted his vocation as a painter while the majority of the Caribbean’s territories were still colonies of Britain, Spain or France, Clarke’s devotion to art coincided exactly with the acquisition of independence. His work, however, is bereft of any of the unbridled celebration or enthusiasm with which nationhood was met. Rather, from his first exhibition, *Fragments of a Spiritual* Clarke has been interrogating not just the process of decolonisation but the region’s unpreparedness for the responsibilities of independence. According to Clarke, the paintings that comprise this exhibition were first publicly displayed at The Studio Museum of New York in 1972 where he had been domiciled as artist in residence.

¹⁸² Leroy Clarke, Personal interview, 7 January, 2004.

They had emerged following the painful dissolution of his first marriage and separation from his son.¹⁸³ The recognition of the debilitating effects of personal disintegration eventually found metaphorical expression through art for the spiritual fragmentation of Caribbean peoples wrought through centuries of plantation slavery and colonialism. The series, *Fragments*, echoed some of the ideas of writers such as Fanon and Césaire whose works were then gaining currency as the region sought to theorise its post-colonial condition. Clarke explains that:

Looking at us – African people in particular – with a very critical eye, I saw that we had become fragmented in spirit. As individuals we no longer seemed to occupy the world with a sense of wholesomeness. Our spirit was fragmented ... In that work [*Fragments*] I set out to explore this fragmentation – the work showed mutilated forms in dull juxtapositions of starts and stops, jarring nerve ends. A chief symbol of the work, for example, was the shortened fingers and toes like exposed roots.¹⁸⁴

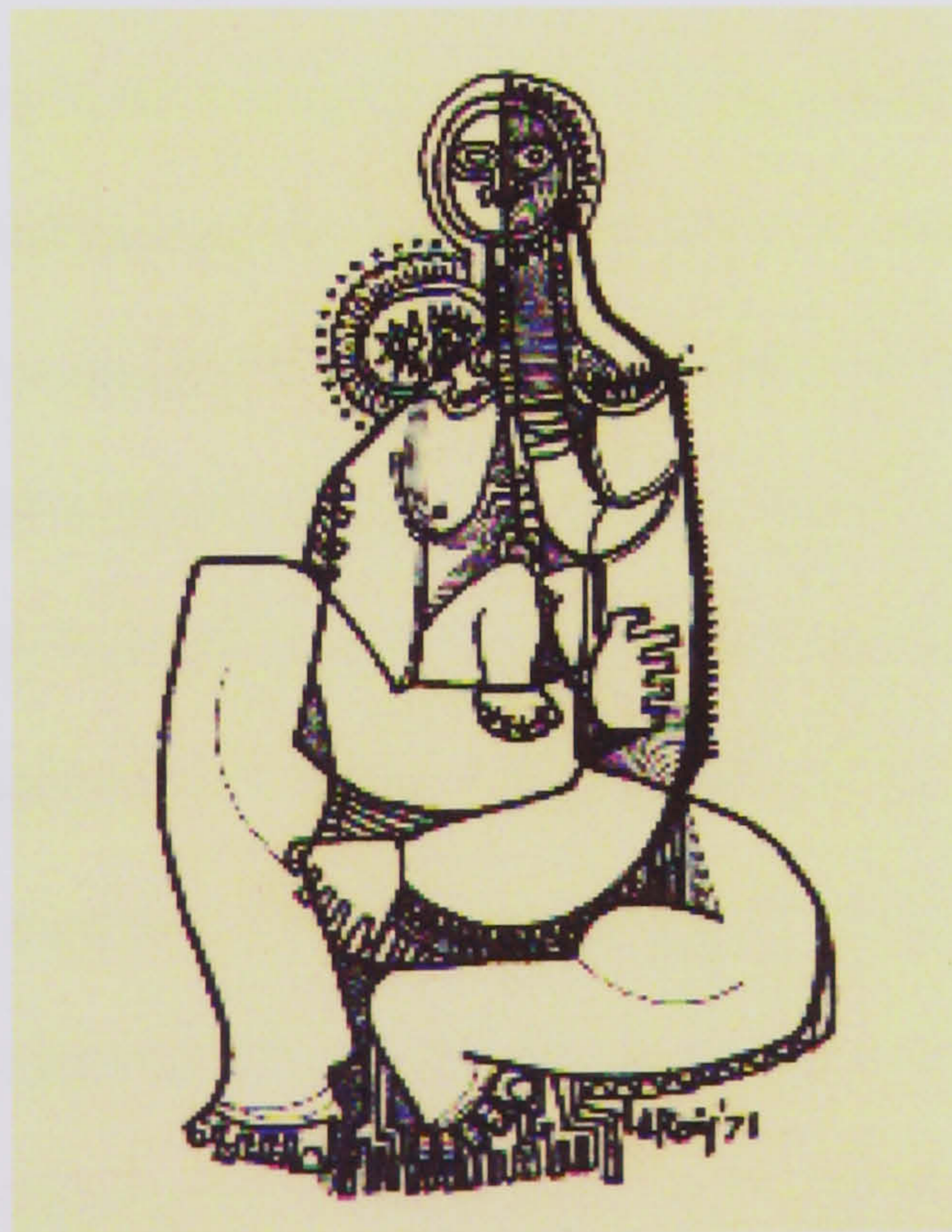


Figure 3.0 *From the series Fragments of a Spiritual*

¹⁸³ Leroy Clarke, Personal interview, 7 January, 2004.

¹⁸⁴ Leroy Clarke, "Douens: De Enigma of Denial." *Of Flesh and Salt and Wind and Current: A Compilation of Works by and about Leroy Clarke*. Researched and Compiled by Caroline C Ravello. (Port of Spain: The National Museum of Trinidad and Tobago, 2003) 120.

A minimalist style of black ink line drawing against stark white backgrounds is the main technique employed by Clarke in *Fragments* as is evident in the example at Figure 3 above. In this piece, Clarke depicts in outline the nurturing body of a mother protectively enfolding a child-like figure that remains in foetal position almost indistinguishable from and wholly dependent on the mother's body. With the cropped fingers and toes, the drawing suggests the stunted growth while the juxtaposition of dark and light shadowing gestures to the frustrated desire to escape such stagnation and move into the light of wisdom and continuity.

Clarke's succeeding series of paintings and poetry, *Douens* extends the metaphorical and philosophical framework begun in *Fragments*. Interrogating the received images and associated mythology of the folklore characters of Trinidad, Clarke decided to re-interpret and re-draw some of the more popular characters in his art as he imaged them in relation to the current societal conditions plaguing society. Clarke questioned for instance, the denigration of the African matriarch as alluded to in the folkloric characters of the Soucouyant and the La Diabliesse who were represented as "miserable, old grandmothers", filled with wicked intentions and with the deathly powers of sucking the blood of unsuspecting people or turning into balls of fire (as in the case of the La Diabliesse).¹⁸⁵ These image-narratives were wholly inconsistent with Clarke's experience as a youth in the embracing and nurturing community of east Port of Spain where mothers and grandmothers were selfless in their caring and fostering their own offspring as well as those in the wider community.

¹⁸⁵ Clarke, Personal interview, 7 January, 2004.

Douens, from which the series takes its title refer to the mythological characters of “children who died before they were baptised or given a name. They are aborted spirits. They dwell in the twilight of no-name and backward-turned feet.”¹⁸⁶ Drawing on this repertoire of folkloric mythology, Clarke re-interprets the narratives to tell another story - that of the nation’s stasis; the painfully slow pace of progress and development of the Caribbean peoples and societies. Whereas Brathwaite and Naipaul have referred to this condition as “rootlessness” and “placelessness” respectively, Clarke has coined the term “douenophilia” meaning “a growth disease in which the personality’s evolution towards maturity is arrested.” In extending the coinage, Clarke adopts the coinage to refer to the society’s stasis dwelling in “douendom.”

It is in “douendom” that the folkloric characters find their home as symbols of the apparatus of stasis. The retinue of characters, including the soucouyant, La Diablasses and Mama D’Glo all assume symbolic meaning separate from their traditional folkloric associations. Thus as the critic Simon Lee explains, for Clarke:

the soucouyant [is re-interpreted] as a symbol of the institutions sucking out the blood of and souls of people. “Mama D’Glo” symbolized man’s lust and covetousness, while “La Diablasses” commented on the debilitating consumerism purveyed by advertising and media.¹⁸⁷

The painting, “Weavers of the Dust” at Figure 4.0, which is one of the central pieces of this series *Douens* encompasses Clarke’s re-working of the native folklore mythology to his commentary on Trinidad and Caribbean society. The painting which is estimated at some eight feet by fifteen feet depicts a large entangled

¹⁸⁶ Clarke, “Douens” 120.

¹⁸⁷ Simon Lee, “Mental Archaeology of the Psyche.” *Of Flesh and Salt and Wind and Current: A Compilation of Works by and about Leroy Clarke*. Researched and Compiled by Caroline C Ravello. (Port of Spain: The National Museum of Trinidad and Tobago, 2003) 94-5.

background of forest, teeming with dark, skeletal, hollow characters. As is typical of Clarke's work, a central, dominant, masked character acts as the pivotal point around which the various elements are built and intertwined. It is at this focal point that Clarke uses his 'brightest' colours. The *mask* is painted in a mixture of textured, matted tones of red, orange and yellow with hints of dark, deadness in the pupils. These, the most brilliant colours blend into the much darker, variegated tones of forest green, midnight blue and hints of brown in which the skeletal images are presented. These skeletal images are all hollow. They are hooded and lodged in shadows which give the sense of these figures being shrouded in death. Their eyes appear dead, and without the capacity of vision. There is the overpowering idea of stark decomposition of both human and animal forms to the minutest degree of amoebas. This gestures to biblical allusions of "dust to dust; ashes to ashes" because of the presentations of these minute organisms and the pervading organic theme evident in the work.

Essentially, all the figures in the painting are local, folklore characters. The central character is the Socouyant which Clarke uses metaphorically to convey the idea of this character sucking the life blood of all the other life forms depicted. This is in keeping with the overwhelming sense of decay and decomposition that prevails as the life blood, depicted by the use of the red, orange and yellow tones at the centre is generated seemingly from the other figures from whom there is correspondingly an increasing darkness. The darkness encompasses the remainder of the painting. Moreover, at the outermost edges of the painting are the stark white-boned skeletons that also emphasize the various levels of decay occurring. Within the entangled web of decay, there is a suggestion of a low, mournful murmur of the former life forms as they travail ever closer towards a slow, painful death. The lack of vision perhaps can

also be interpreted as the lack of imaginative creativity evident among the new ruling class in the Caribbean to effecting real change in the society.



Figure 4.0 *Weavers of the Dust* from the series *Douens*

The examination of Clarke's artistic philosophy reveals some similarities and differences with St Omer's. Both artists bring to bear on their art the whole gamut of experiences and influences of their coming of age to their painting and philosophies of art. However, what is of greater significance for this thesis are the biographical narratives which they construct in relation to nation and cultural identity. In their depictions and commentaries on the colonial and postcolonial conditions in their individual territories and the wider Caribbean, each painter places emphasis on different aspects of their artistic technique, form and functionality as they inform the philosophies they aim at explicating. Thus, for Clarke whose primary concern in the period of postcolonial disillusionment which he inhabited and which informed his art is what appears to be the perennial stasis of society in Trinidad and the Caribbean, the native folklore is more suited for portraying and elaborating on his proposition of douendom.

His paintings then are inhabited by the folkloric characters that symbolically represent the psychopathologies that ail the society. In his technique, Clarke also places special emphasis on certain areas. The social anthropologist and critic J D Elder describes these areas as including a dominance of symbolism; the use of dark monochromes; the use of geometric space; the de-emphasis of outline and the deviation of physiognomic figuration and a proliferation of biomorphism restricted to the female body.¹⁸⁸ Inasmuch as Clarke uses colour to convey mood, density and texture, his philosophy is constructed largely around the re-interpretation of the folkloric characters. This runs counter to St Omer's Prismism which is predominantly a

¹⁸⁸ J D Elder, "Towards a Caribbean Aesthetic." *Of Flesh and Salt and Wind and Current: A Compilation of Works by and about Leroy Clarke*. Researched and Compiled by Caroline C Ravello. (Port of Spain: The National Museum of Trinidad and Tobago, 2003) 90.

meditation on the re-interpretation of colour and form that effectively provide avenues for expanding the conventional thinking on race and ethnicity in the region.

What is more, Clarke insists on his Africanness (as distinct from his blackness) and his concern for his diasporic peoples who he argues were “in the deep blight of colonialism ... touched by an impotence that continues to overshadow the spirit of our imaginations.”¹⁸⁹ St Omer, to the contrary seeks a framework that acknowledges and respects his blackness (as a reflection of his ethnicity) in equality with all others. The painters also differ in religious persuasion. Clarke being a devotee of the Orisha faith since his mid-teens. It is this faith that he credits for providing him with his vision not only for the frailties of his peoples but also for their redemption. St Omer remains an avowed Roman Catholic - his vision too being attributed to his faith. It is pertinent that both painters, in spite of their critique delineate solutions for the challenges that they outline; Clarke with his proposition of El Tucuche – the subject of his subsequent series of exhibitions - is imbued with symbolic significance as the second highest mountain in Trinidad and consequently, the end point of the journey to redemption which he envisions for his people.¹⁹⁰ St Omer’s is an enduring vision of hope in achieving equality for his Caribbean peoples as before God. It is pertinent that both these painters in their divergent ways provide visual tableaux that amplify to varying degrees the notions of nation and cultural identity detailed by Hall and Brathwaite. Their artistic philosophies intersect at different junctures, for example on

¹⁸⁹ Clarke, “Moments” 115.

¹⁹⁰ The critic Michael Harris explains of the *El Tucuche* series and its accompanying philosophy, “The ascent of El Tucuche is therefore the difficult struggle to escape from douendom, the struggle to find identity and authenticity as individual and as a people. When we have as a people realised our true identity and live according to the dictates of that truth we would have attained the summit of El Tucuche.” Harris, “Making Fragments Whole Again.” *Of Flesh and Salt and Wind and Current: A Compilation of Works by and about Leroy Clarke*. Researched and Compiled by Caroline C Ravello. (Port of Spain: The National Museum of Trinidad and Tobago, 2003) 74.

questions of race and ethnicity, fragmentation and wholeness, narratives of belonging and being, with those articulated by Hall, Brathwaite and a host of other Caribbean artists and intellectuals. Of note too, is the fact that while each painter gleans inspiration and motivation from the particularities of his individual territory, their visions are far from insular; rather there is the overriding concern for the wider Caribbean and the diaspora.

Inasmuch as Clarke interrogated received folkloric narratives, St Omer, a devout Roman Catholic, has been conducting an ongoing dialogue on the representation of the divine. St Omer's work is unmistakably auto/biographical as it charts his search for spiritual meaning that parallels his search for personal and communal identity. Monsignor Patrick Anthony, also a scholar on the work of St Omer and Walcott, avers that for "Dunstan ... it was a theological journey. It was not just an artistic journey ... [it was also] his understanding of the Divine, of the deity."¹⁹¹ St Omer's engagement with questions of art, identity and his Caribbean reality are expressed in his quest for ways in which the Divine might be represented in the context of his own Caribbean experience as opposed to through the images and representations bequeathed by European art.

Born in St Lucia in 1927, on the twenty-fourth of October, St Omer demonstrated extraordinary interest and ability in drawing from an early age. One of his earliest recollections of drawing is at age nine, when he reproduced from a photograph in a British magazine of German troops entering Denmark's capital, Copenhagen at the

¹⁹¹ Anthony, Personal interview 6 January, 2004.

start of the Second World War.¹⁹² None of his father's friends who saw the drawing believed that the young St Omer had been capable of such a competent depiction. At St Mary's College, St Omer first encountered Walcott and subsequently, both became apprentices to Harold Simmons, renowned as the father of St Lucian art and culture. Simmons provided the pair with access to his studio, paints, brushes and other equipment as well as his example as an artist. Simmons had already begun to paint the St Lucian landscape and its peoples and as St Omer recalls:

It was at his [Simmons'] studio that for the first time we saw black people in art. We saw portraits of black people, landscapes of St Lucia, coconut trees and ladies in local head gear, fishermen – as opposed to the European thing. It was there that we realised that to be of any significance, you have to be yourself.¹⁹³

As such, Simmons' main injunction to his apprentices was to "Paint your own experiences. Paint what you see."¹⁹⁴ Together, St Omer and Walcott also began to experiment with different techniques and styles influenced by the paintings and artists whose works were included in Simmons's collection of texts on Greek mythology and Renaissance art.¹⁹⁵ The exhilaration of artistic endeavour coupled with the optimism of independence that was sweeping the region prompted both St Omer and Walcott to make the solemn commitment to capture on canvas and in poetry, every aspect of the St Lucian landscape, its peoples and the environment generally. Walcott's poem

Another Life records this vow:

But drunkenly, or secretly, we swore,
disciples of that astigmatic saint,
that we would never leave the island
until we had put down, in paint, in words,
as palmists learn the network of a hand,
all of its sunken, leaf-choked ravines,

¹⁹² Qtd. in Christine Charlemagne, "Dunstan's Inner Strokes" *St Lucia Star* < <http://www.stluciarstar.com/monday/monJan17-05/feature.htm> >.

¹⁹³ Qtd. in Charlemagne, "Dunstan's Inner Strokes".

¹⁹⁴ Qtd. in Charlemagne, "Dunstan's Inner Strokes".

¹⁹⁵ St Omer, "Interviewed with David Dabydeen" 1999.

every neglected, self-pitying inlet
 muttering in brackish dialect, the ropes of mangroves
 from which old soldier crabs slipped
 surrendering to slush,
 every orche track seeking some hilltop and
 losing itself in an unfinished phrase,
 under sand shipyards where the burnt-out palms
 inverted the design of unrigged schooners,
 entering forests, boiling with life
*goyave,orrosol bois-cano, sapotille.*¹⁹⁶

In many ways, this undertaking was sacred since the pair determined to record what Walcott refers to in the first manuscript of his prose poem as the “spiritual history of a people”.¹⁹⁷ Like Walcott, St Omer’s early style and techniques reflected those of classical European painters. Yet, Walcott acknowledging that his own skill was in poetry and not painting, had detected a certain unique quality to St Omer’s style and technique already emerging as he, “Gregorias would draw/ with the linear elation of an eel/ one muscle in one thought.”¹⁹⁸

Indeed, as a painter St Omer progressed from imitating the Masters to delineating his own style and technique. As such, whereas his early work such as the *Rape of Castries* reproduced the native landscape using a classical style, St Omer’s later work demonstrates bold advances made in his paintings using his style called Prismism. Many strands of influence coalesced in the development of Prismism; not least of which are the changing socio-political situation that independence inaugurated as well as the movement of liberation or contextual theology that was sanctioned with the Second Vatican Council in 1962.

¹⁹⁶ Walcott, *Another Life* 194.

¹⁹⁷ Qtd. in Patricia Ismond, *Abandoning Dead Metaphors: The Caribbean Phase of Derek Walcott’s Poetry* (Mona, Kingston: UWI Press, 2001) 146.

¹⁹⁸ Walcott, *Another Life* 201.

In the Caribbean contextual theology was itself influenced from several directions: first by the Black American Liberation theology that took hold after the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X; by the Latin American movement that was considerably more militant in its struggles against the oppression of the poor, marginalised majority; by the peculiarly South African strand that sought liberation from apartheid; and the African theology of *cultural* liberation (as opposed to the social and economic justice and equality of that in South Africa and the Americas).¹⁹⁹ As elsewhere, liberation theology in the Caribbean addressed the specific historical and cultural experiences of the region, for the first time from the perspective of the poor and not from that of global theology, which was oriented towards the Western experience.²⁰⁰ The Second Vatican Council, which reflected the concerns of liberation theology, had animated St Omer's determination to discover his own painting style since, as Anthony notes, it allowed Churches worldwide the freedom to choose artistic styles of adornment of the buildings once "due reverence" was observed.²⁰¹ This decree resulted in St Omer's commission by the Bishop of Castries for an altarpiece.

This commissioning coincided with the culmination of St Omer's own earnest search for a style that would "express the world in a way that would give individual form to my work."²⁰² While Michelangelo's classical style applied in Church murals provided

¹⁹⁹ Anthony, Personal interview, 6 January, 2004.

²⁰⁰ As one liberation theologian, Jon Sobrino has suggested, "the agenda of European theology has been more interested in thinking about and explaining the truth of faith, whereas for liberation theologians faith runs parallel to real life and is in dialectical relationship with it. Thereby the meaning of faith and doctrine is illuminated at the same time as the world's wretched condition is confronted and alleviated. Commitment to the poor becomes the context of reflection, and so practical discipleship becomes the dynamic within which theological understanding takes place. Understanding of God and the world is a gift of grace and means an altered perspective in a life of service to those who are the least of Christ's brothers and sisters." See Christopher Rowland, introduction, *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*. Ed. Christopher Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 3.

²⁰¹ Anthony, "Gregorias!"

²⁰² St Omer, "Unpublished interview by Dabydeen" 1999.

an obvious template, it was Cubism and Impressionism that consumed St Omer's attention; the former most likely because of its debt to African art (in its masks), its commitment to three-dimensional form, space sensations and multiple light sources.²⁰³ However, St Omer had soon concluded that Cubism was a "bankrupt" style since in practise it rejected colour and resorted primarily to blacks and greys as epitomised in the early work of Picasso and Georges Braque.²⁰⁴ Art historian John Golding in reviewing the development of Cubism explains that in making the break with Paul Cézanne and the Neo Impressionists, Braque and Picasso excised colour from their palettes:

Significantly, whereas colour had been the focal point and the basis of Cézanne's art and technique, the Cubists now abandoned colour in favour of an almost monochrome palette, in Picasso's case because colour seemed secondary to the sculptural properties of his subjects, in Braque's because he felt it would 'trouble' the spatial sensations with which he had become obsessed.²⁰⁵

Impressionism with its emphasis on light, use of vibrant colour and disjointed enlarged brush strokes was much more amenable to St Omer. This investment in and privileging of colour with emphasis on complementary contrasts has informed St Omer's style.

By the late 1950s, St Omer's meditations on the representations of Divinity and questions of cultural identity and nation were resolved in his artistic style Prismism. Prismism, as its name indicates is based on the inherent structural forms, principles and values of the prism wherein light is dispersed into a spectrum. Conceptually it draws on some features of both Impressionism and Cubism but places great emphasis

²⁰³ See John Golding, "Cubism" *Concepts of Modern Art: From Fauvism to Postmodernism*. Ed. Nikos Stangos (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981. 50-78.

²⁰⁴ St Omer, "Telephone interview" 3 October, 2003.

²⁰⁵ Golding, "Cubism" 57.

on light, intensity and vibrancy of colour. Light, as St Omer argues is a fundamental life source and muse for the Caribbean artist and as such is integral to Prismism. He states that:

Being a St Lucian in a beautiful country in the tropics, I began to see art through the prism of colour and light, as the Impressionists had. As a child of light it was only natural for me to take that step further in considering the idea of the prism as a way to realise the joys of the tropical landscape with its pure colour ... With the colour, you can almost actually see the sun. I also started using brush strokes in the same way as the Impressionists did. The way [Vincent] Van Gogh used larger, broader strokes, I made my own ever larger. I also began to use the palette knife instead of the brushes to paint my landscapes. In a way, the brush strokes are abstract but the paintings are realistic.²⁰⁶

In adopting this position, St Omer's Prismism admits multiple light sources that in refraction and reflection produce a spectrum of brilliant, bold colours much in the same way as Impressionism had envisaged. As he asserted, "with a style like this you can say anything [since] with the play of colours, you can communicate ideas and by the way they behave, you can get answers much in the same way that mathematics works."²⁰⁷ To map this thought mathematically, one might conclude that meaning is constructed not only at the points at which light intersects the structure of the prism but also at all the resulting intersections of colour.

St Omer's Prismism achieves its apotheosis in the religious murals and altarpieces that have become his hallmark. These murals elucidate St Omer's musings on the representation of divinity that conjoined with his stirrings of black consciousness emboldened by the independence and Black liberation theology movements.

Ascribing to the biblical view that mankind was made in the image and likeness of God, St Omer questioned why representations of divinity bore no resemblance to him

²⁰⁶ St Omer, Telephone interview 3 October, 2003.

²⁰⁷ St Omer, Telephone interview 3 October, 2003.

or his peoples. He asserts, “we do not argue with the other man if he says that Christ is his brother, but He can’t be our brother and not be our colour too.”²⁰⁸ Thus, his commissioning to produce a mural at the Roseau Church, Jacmel in St Lucia resulted in the now famous prismatic composition of the mural of the Holy Family. The Church, which is among those built in the late 1950s during an ambitious building programme undertaken by the Bishop Gachet, the first Bishop of St Lucia. Bishop Gachet initiated this programme following his attendance at the Second Vatican Council where the thrust towards indigenisation of the Church worldwide was agreed. St Omer discovered a firm support of his murals which were incorporated as part of the indigenisation programme. Given the historical period of their construction, these churches were reflections more of the native architecture rather than the more ornate architecture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries usually associated with cathedrals constructed during colonial times in the Caribbean. Rather, the churches reflect a more modest architecture suited to considerations of a tropical climate and aesthetics of the island. With its unevenly plastered walls forming the canvas for St Omer’s murals, the painter has intuitively adjusted his technique in application of colour and definition of form by use of palette knives and broad brushes. The result is a textured but very structured mural that captures the prismatic formations of divine figures it seeks to represent. The density and fecundity of the landscape is also emphasised with the painters adaptation of the canvas to his complex depictions of divinity.

The mural, which is reproduced in miniature at Figure 5 below, is some eight hundred square feet in size and represents St Omer’s first major undertaking “to reflect

²⁰⁸ St Omer, Telephone interview 3 October, 2003.

divinity according to his experience.”²⁰⁹ As such, the Holy Family is depicted as black against the background of typical St Lucian scenery. Describing it as “a modern Renaissance altar piece” St Omer asserts that, “for the first time black people were seen in heaven.”²¹⁰ As examination of the mural as reproduced in Figure 5 illustrates, the Madonna dominates the Holy family and holds the infant Jesus in her embrace. Joseph is to her right. The three however are surrounded in a scene of rural St Lucia that also recalls the opening stanzas of Walcott’s *Omeros*: “the banana-green of the valley, fishermen mending their nets, the conch-blower, symbol of the apocalyptic angel with golden trumpet, bèlè dancers, chantwèl and native musicians.”²¹¹ What is less obvious in the reproduction below are the African masks that are employed to represent the faces of Mary and the infant Jesus; the first an African mother-mask, the latter “the smooth divinity of the African antelope’s face”.²¹² Anthony explains that St Omer adopts the African masks since he argues that in the absence of any “authentic” images “when you are representing persons of such divine status, you have to resort to what the arts permit you... stylised [forms].”²¹³ St Omer’s stylised representations actually draw on traditions in some West African countries wherein divinity is symbolised by young deer.²¹⁴ Even more radical in the composition above, is the depiction of the infant Christ administering the Eucharist to his mother Mary. As Anthony explains, this depiction makes a theologically radical statement since “for Catholics, communion is the memorial of the adult Christ ... It is a memorial of his death on the cross, not the infant Jesus. To have the infant holding

²⁰⁹ Anthony, Personal interview, 6 January, 2004.

²¹⁰ St Omer, Telephone interview, 3 October, 2003.

²¹¹ Anthony, “Gregorias!”

²¹² Anthony, Personal interview 6 January, 2004.

²¹³ Anthony, Personal interview 6 January, 2004.

²¹⁴ Anthony, Personal interview 6 January, 2004.

the host” and administering him was at the time considered as being almost heretical.²¹⁵



Figure 5.0: *Holy Family Mural, Roseau Church, Jacmel, St Lucia*

In addition to the African masks in the representation of divinity is St Omer’s innovative use of black not only to represent his St Lucian peoples but also to capture the illumination of holy rays and halos to reflect light. While St Omer has been concerned that representations of divinity should acknowledge the experience of black people, his undertaking has entailed more than the mere substitution of white with

²¹⁵ Anthony, Personal interview 6 January 2004.

black; rather what it has been is an ongoing engagement with black as a valid *colour* of the spectrum and painter's palette, and further the divestment of black of its traditional negative connotations by investing it with luminous qualities and possibilities. Black thus also becomes a source and conduit of light in the context of the repetitive structures of the prism in the mural. St Omer's treatment of black as a colour and as one capable of luminosity, actually recalls debates in European art from the Renaissance period.²¹⁶ According to Gage, the French painter Henri Matisse was one of the main exponents of black as a colour on the spectrum as evinced in his work over the period of the first World War:

[t]he notion of black as a *light* is so novel, so paradoxical and so radical, that it invites a more thorough circumstantial examination. A recent perceptualist analysis links the development of the idea to Matisse's move from a well-lit room to a dark studio in the autumn of 1913, and appeals to the laws of the simultaneous and value contrasts which make the lights look lighter as they abut on the areas of dark ... Certainly Matisse recalled that 'blacks and their contrasts' first came to be exploited in *The Moroccans*, and in addition, a prolonged inspection of Matisse's sizeable paintings will induce a strong, luminous after-image of the blacks.²¹⁷

Intriguingly, St Omer's prismatic murals have had a similar reception as articulated by Monsignor Anthony: "When you see them [the murals] ...he makes you view in such a way that you say: 'yes, that is true!' It is ... his technique and methodology [that] forces you into consciousness and awareness."²¹⁸ For St Omer, experimentation with black as a colour acquires much more political meaning and is an important facet of his prismatic philosophy. By investing black with luminous qualities, which could be distilled in the portrayal of holy rays of divinity, St Omer recuperates the colour

²¹⁶ As Gage explains, "The concept of black as a colour (not simply as a darkener) had been much debated in painterly circles since the Renaissance, and had been more or less generally accepted by the close of the nineteenth century." Gage, *Colour and Meaning* 234.

²¹⁷ Gage, *Colour and Meaning* 234-5. *The Moroccans* refers to one of Matisse's paintings of praying figures against a black background completed in 1913/4. Gage here links his investigation to the scientific debates about black light as advanced by Gustave Le Bon.

²¹⁸ Anthony, Personal interview 6 January, 2004.

from its traditional pejorative associations. Consequently, this conjunction between art and religion in St Omer's work succeeds in debunking European classical aesthetics that entrenched white as the primary light source and the colour of beauty and holiness. Thus, black people who had been banished to the periphery of British and European art and art criticism²¹⁹ assume the centre position in St Omer's prismatic compositions. Moreover, St Omer's experimentation with colour, style and technique as constituted in his prismatic practice paints against the grain of European art and in so doing not only traverses through his search for spiritual truth and the representation of the divine but also imagines and affirms other routes to Caribbean identity as Crichlow has posited.

So what exactly does St Omer's Prismism bring to the conception of prismatic creolisation? Although conceived in the period preceding independence, Prismism has been adaptable to the rapid evolution of Caribbean societies - from plantation to colonial to independent societies. This has been possible largely because conceptually, Prismism elaborates on the dynamic interactions among the variety of cultures and peoples that have fuelled the process of change, transformation and evolution of new cultural formations and construction of identities in the Caribbean. In adopting the prism as the metaphor and principle structural form of Prismism, St Omer has succeeded in capturing the very randomness and dynamism of these cultural exchanges and interactions which the range of terms: acculturation, interculturalisation, integration, assimilation, cross influence, have failed to grasp in their entirety. In its conception, Prismism also escapes the binary oppositions of Brathwaite's creolisation thesis again because of the process by which it proposes that cultural exchanges occur

²¹⁹ See David Dabydeen, *Hogarth's Blacks: Images of Blacks in Eighteenth Century English Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).

in the region. Moreover, although Prismism offers a multiplicity of perspectives and points of interaction St Omer does not ascribe necessarily equal status to all elements or variables of interaction; rather in his philosophy, he proposes *harmony* among the elements which as he states is the contribution that his Christianity brings to his art. Consequently, what remains implicit to his philosophy are the inherent inequalities that history has bequeathed which must be transcended in order to arrive at harmonious relations among the cultures congregated in the region. Such inequalities extend further to the region's precarious position in the global economy. Here, Prismism conjoins with the main tenets of Hall's re-conceptualisation of Caribbeanness.

But Prismism also brings ethical and moral dimensions to the construction of Caribbeanness that have not been emphasised in many earlier theories. For St Omer, as for any number of Caribbean artists, his religion is critical to his art. In linking religion and art so inextricably, artists such as St Omer invest their artistic production with the ethical and moral concerns of their faiths, which sometimes correlate with universally shared values. The inclusion of ethical and moral dimensions consequently raise questions about the responsibilities of the individual not just as an autonomous being but also in respect to the immediate community, wider society, nation, region and international communities. Given the current emphasis on establishing separate independent identities for which due recognition and equality of status are lobbied among all other competing identities, ethical and moral considerations are imperative.²²⁰ The ethical and moral dimensions of identity on

²²⁰ In his recently published text, Kwame Anthony Appiah raises many questions about the role of ethics and morals in the construction of identities particularly as they relate to the responsibilities of the individual and the national and international communities. Much more comprehensive discussions are

which Prismism insist provide not only a basis for dialogue among the competing ethnic and cultural communities but also the means by which some balance between individual or communal responsibilities and human rights might be established; responsibilities that extend beyond the individual and immediate community to include the national and international communities. These ethical considerations are critical to the conception of Caribbeanness – especially in the context of competing ethnicities as exists in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana – since they provide a position from which shared values might be agreed.

Prismism is, however, vulnerable to criticism that it excludes people of other faiths or atheists given its grounding in Roman Catholicism and its associated representations of divinity. However, it is primarily in the style and technique that underpin Prismism that it suggests the interactions and transformation derived from cultural contact.

Moreover, to emphasise the artist's faith exclusively as the basis for disqualifying his artistic philosophy is to underestimate how deeply imbricated it is in the politics of decolonisation. Through the philosophical position that he declares in his artistic style and technique, St Omer revisions and reclaims Roman Catholicism for a Caribbean context and audience – not so much in altering the tenets of the faith, but definitely in confronting its past that has been undeniably implicated in the enslavement, indenture and dehumanisation of Africans and other non-white peoples. In rendering his counterposing images of divinity that challenge those inherited from European art, St Omer also subverts the previously untrammelled linkages between holiness, beauty, purity and divinity. Indeed, rather than blindly accepting his faith, St Omer argues that “[i]f you cannot question your Christ then you are not worthy of

required to do justice to Appiah's central arguments and will be included in further research projects. See Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005).

Him.”²²¹ Furthermore, the liberation theology that anchors St Omer’s philosophy had also been the catalyst for the start of the ecumenical movement as evinced in the formation of the Caribbean Council of Churches. Ecumenism, as Anthony explains had a much wider meaning than its current limitations within the Christian Church. However, when first deployed in the context of the CCC (and the locally established Inter-religious organisations in some territories) ecumenism was conceived as an inclusive framework in which dialogue could be established across the religious divides in the region and on universally relevant issues. As such, it might be argued that while St Omer’s Roman Catholicism brings ethical and moral dimensions to his philosophy, are these not values that are considered by all religions whether monotheistic or polytheistic and indeed familiar to atheists as well?

As has been argued above, the prismatic creolisation model offers, with the four tenets of Hall’s re-conceptualisation of Caribbeannnes as well as St Omer’s Prismism, a corrective supplement to Brathwaite’s creolisation thesis by which it becomes a more effective and relevant tool for understanding and theorising contemporary Caribbean society and identity. However, prismatic creolisation also elaborates on Brathwaite’s nation language thesis when compared with the philosophies of language articulated by Brathwaite and other seminal writers and poets such as Walcott and Harris. As Brathwaite’s adoption of the prismatic metaphor is evident in his historiographical praxis, so too in his use of language in his creative work.

²²¹ St Omer, Telephone interview 3 October, 2003.

Nation Language in Technicolour

The landscape in its vibrant and colourful intensity has been an inspiration to the Caribbean's fine/visual artists as much as to its poets and writers; the one rendering the region in visual images, the other through words or language. Walcott has repeatedly testified to this asserting that, "[v]isual surprise is natural in the Caribbean; it comes with the landscape, and, faced with its beauty, the sigh of History dissolves."²²² However, this is no easy rendering of the Caribbean in postcard perfect tourist imagery or mere indulgence in art for its own sake. Rather, just as the Cuban painter, Wilfredo Lam has determined that his art was in itself "an act of decolonization"²²³ so too other Caribbean writers and poets have been convinced that language – even the coloniser's language - was one of the most revolutionary tools which they could bring to the resistance to enslavement and their struggle for freedom. Brathwaite has affirmed that:

It was in language that the slave was perhaps most successfully imprisoned by his master, and it was in his mis(use) of it that he perhaps most effectively rebelled. Within the folk tradition, language was (and is) a creative act in itself; the word was held to contain a secret power...²²⁴

Similarly, Caribbean women writers have also testified to the revolutionary power of language as Merle Hodge has explained:

For me, there is no fundamental contradiction between art and activism. In particular the power of the creative word to change the world is not to be underestimated ...

The power of Caribbean literature for positively affecting the development of the Caribbean is an untapped resource. Caribbean

²²² Walcott, "The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory" *What the Twilight Says; Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998) 68.

²²³ Qtd. in Poupeye, *Caribbean Art* 9.

²²⁴ Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770 – 1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971) 237.

fiction can help to strengthen our self-image, our resistance to foreign domination, our sense of the oneness of the Caribbean and our willingness to put our energies into the building of the Caribbean nation.²²⁵

Thus, the image and the word, two symbolic systems of representation have been recruited to the Caribbean artist's political project of decolonisation. By appropriating both image and word as inherited from the coloniser, these artists have inscribed and rendered themselves into being and visibility according to their own imaginative terms. As the realisation of a painting style and engagement with colour have been critical to the fine/visual artist, so too language has been a primary concern for the writer/poet. For each, the process of delineating other styles and techniques has been integral to defining Caribbean aesthetics that contest the colonisers' imposed representations of them as Other.

Nation language is the term coined by Brathwaite to describe the colonising languages as they are used in the Caribbean; nation language, as distinct from dialects, which he argues have pejorative connotations. Nation language distinguishes itself from the "official" European languages as it is the "language used by the slaves and labourers, the servants who were brought in by the conquistadors."²²⁶ As such, Brathwaite further asserts that nation language has been influenced by the semantic and stylistic forms of West African languages such as Ashanti, Congo and Yoruba which were submerged since the European languages – English, Spanish, French and Dutch – were enforced as the languages of "public discourse and conversation, of obedience,

²²⁵ Merle Hodge, "Challenges of the Struggle for Sovereignty: Changing the World Versus Writing Stories". Ed. Selwyn R. Cudjoe. *Caribbean Women Writers: Essays from the First International Conference* (Wellesley, Mass.: Calaloux Publications, 1990) 202/203.

²²⁶ Brathwaite, *History of the Voice* 5-6.

command and conception.”²²⁷ As Brathwaite points out, in time, the European languages as well as the submerged languages adapt to each other and the new environment resulting in the transformation of the European languages as used by both the colonised and the coloniser in the former colonies. Consequently, in the case of the Anglophone Caribbean, English as a nation language exhibited certain difference:

English it may be in terms of some of its lexical features. But in its contours, its rhythm and timbre, its sound explosions, it is not English, even though the words, as you hear them, might be English to a greater or lesser degree.²²⁸

According to Brathwaite, nation language also encapsulates key features of language use in evidence in the region particularly its orality and emphasis on “total expression”. In its orality, nation language reflects the oral tradition of the poetry and culture itself. As Brathwaite argues:

It is based as much on sound as it is on song. That is to say, the noise that it makes is part of the meaning, and if you ignore the noise (or what you would *think* of as noise ...) then you lose part of the meaning. When it is written, you lose the sound or the noise, and therefore part of the meaning.²²⁹

The second feature, total expression, refers to the interaction necessary to effect communication: that is, “the noise and sounds that the maker makes are responded to by the audience and are returned to him. Hence, we have the creation of a continuum where meaning truly resides.”²³⁰

Interestingly, Brathwaite invokes the visual metaphor of the prism to explicate the process by which the vestiges of ancestral languages of the Amerindians, Chinese,

²²⁷ Brathwaite, *History of the Voice* 7.

²²⁸ Brathwaite, *History of the Voice* 13.

²²⁹ Brathwaite, *History of the Voice* 17.

²³⁰ Brathwaite, *History of the Voice* 19.

East Indians and Africans adapted to and transformed the European languages.²³¹ There is the implicit assertion that these languages were assimilated into the synthesis of European and African languages that would have occurred prior to the introduction of later arrivants. Again, although Brathwaite does not develop the prismatic possibilities in his nation language thesis, it is in evidence in his poetry as in his historiographical praxis. Moreover, Caribbean linguist and writer, Pamela Mordecai has also argued that Brathwaite and other Caribbean writers demonstrate what she calls “prismatic vision”. Mordecai defines prismatic vision as “a non-linear style of cognition.”²³² Mordecai further explains that

in the creole cultural tradition, the act of knowing involves an awareness not merely of oppositions, or sets of oppositions, but of varieties of implications, meanings (associative, adjacent, opposite, or otherwise) and consequences, in any event, problem, statement or situation. It is a way of knowing that values and preserves ... ‘close connections with the particularities of person, place and time’ ... For that reason, it is not reductive, but preserves and tolerates varieties, differences, oppositions ...

The process of thought that follows any act of knowing must therefore handle ... multiplicity. It cannot be linear, because it must accommodate, not just multiplicities, but varieties of uncomfortably related, criss-crossed, and contrapuntal elements. If one is constrained to describe it, it must be seen as some kind of gathering, containing possibilities and arriving at a holistic understanding that often resolves nothing but holds related facets together, in a single ‘prismatic’ structure.²³³

Mordecai’s formulation expands the theoretical foundation of Brathwaite’s nation language thesis by explicating the non-linear, multiple perspectives manifested in the enunciation of language to construct Caribbean reality. The prismatic structure or vision of language to which Mordecai alludes conjoins here with St Omer’s

²³¹ Brathwaite, *History of the Voice* 6.

²³² Pamela Mordecai, “Images for Creativity and the Art of Writing in *The Arrivants*,” *For the Geography of a Soul: Emerging Perspectives on Kamau Brathwaite*. Ed. Timothy J. Reiss (Trenton, New Jersey, Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 2001) 21.

²³³ Mordecai, “Prismatic Vision: Aspects of Imagery, Language and Structure in the Poetry of Kamau Brathwaite and Derek Walcott,” diss., University of the West Indies (Mona), 1997, 17-18.

proposition of Prismism; whereas Mordecai stresses the semantic and stylistic use of language, St Omer engages additionally with colour, style and technique as are apparent in the literary production of many writers and poets. The prismatic approaches that Mordecai and St Omer propose provide a basis for comparison with the experiments with nation language undertaken by many Caribbean writers and poets in their work.

In the case of Brathwaite and Walcott in particular, the first in his experiments with nation language has produced what he calls his Sycorax video style, while for Walcott, there has been a gradual progression that parallels his development as a poet wherein he yearns in the early stages of honing his craft to forge “a language that went beyond mimicry”²³⁴ then to arriving at the “style past metaphor”²³⁵ then latterly to “that light beyond metaphor.”²³⁶ These two poets have on one level engaged with oppositional qualities inherent in light and darkness as well as with shadow and colour – all fundamental to St Omer’s Prismism. On another level, it is through the language strategies that they deploy in their craft that the prismatic possibilities are fully realised. The engagement with light, darkness and shadow is an inevitable step towards the realisation of these prismatic qualities in nation language. Harris, for instance, whose experiments with language have resulted in his proposal of a “language of the unconscious” argues for a re-visioning of the qualities inherent in light, darkness and shadow much in the vein of St Omer. Such re-visioning, according to Harris could dispel the absolutes enforced by language and literary genres such as tragedy, epic or satire and facilitate unfettered access to resources of the imagination that lie “beyond language”. He asserts:

²³⁴ Walcott, “What the Twilight Says” 15.

²³⁵ Walcott, “Nearing Forty” *Collected Poems* 136.

²³⁶ Walcott, *Omeros* 271.

...we need to revise our understanding of the nature of Shadow as the luminous dimensionality of Night in counterpoint with the originality of stars and suns. Our tendency is to seize upon Light as an absolute tool through which to refine the arts of violence and to make visible those we would maim or kill. Let us take one thread in the tapestry of counterpoint between luminous Night and stars and sun. That thread has light year resonances but it may be defined with a degree of simplicity as a relationship between 'live absences' and 'presences.' At the heart of such relationships exist curious signals within landscapes, riverscapes etc that seem passive (wholly subject to manipulation by us) but containing a living deposit of the action of unconscious memory. That deposit in a landscape is in itself mysterious in that though we have, at one level, put it there ... we ourselves are receptacles of deposited resources that lie 'beyond language,' beyond the hubris of a one-sided, biased discourse with nature which reinforces a conscription of nature(s) as perfectly natural. The 'beyond' of language infuses partial discourse with an *unfinished* genesis of the Imagination, a ceaselessly unfinished dialogue between ourselves and the complexity of tradition.²³⁷

Like Harris and other Caribbean writers and poets, Brathwaite's and Walcott's Sycorax video style and arrival at the light past metaphor are purposed at abandoning the strict paradigms of inherited languages and literary genres so as to approximate the multiple cadences, tones, nuances of intonation and inflections that colour and cohere in nation language. Their poetic oeuvres bear witness to these experiments revealing varying measures of success in each instance.

Brathwaite's Sycorax video style has been applied in his poetry since 1986 and has been facilitated by technology – the personal computer. Comparing his poetic production on the computer as "writing in light", Brathwaite argues that his video style approximates oral quality of nation language. Discussing this proposition, which he first makes in his poem, "X/Self's Xth Letters from the Thirteen Provinces,"²³⁸ Brathwaite explains:

²³⁷ Wilson Harris, "Living Absences and Presences," 1-2.

²³⁸ Brathwaite, "X/Self's Xth Letters from the Thirteen Provinces" *X/Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) 80-87.

What I was saying there was that technology makes nation-language *easier* ... the ‘global village’ concept, the message is the medium and all that ... The poem was saying that the computer has made it much easier for the illiterate, the Caliban, actually to get himself visible ... Because the computer does it all for you. You don’t have to be able to type, you can make mistakes and correct them or leave them, *you can see what you hear*. When I said “writing in light”, that is the main thing about it -the miracle of that electronic screen means that the spoken word can become visible in a way that it cannot become visible in the typewriter where you have to erase physically ... The computer has moved us away from scripture into some other dimension which is ‘writin in light’. It is really nearer the oral tradition than the typewriter is ... The computer is getting as close as you can to the spoken word.²³⁹

In the Sycorax video style, nation language assumes the proportions of “word sculpture” as Brathwaite tweaks font sizes, typeface choices, arranges text on the page in ways that typically ignores the usually left-aligned margins of the book – all to approximate the orality and multiple inflections of the spoken word.

Whereas Brathwaite experiments with the presentation of the text on the page, Walcott, ascribing initially to a fierce apprenticeship to the canonical poets gradually traverses the course from the ornate language of mimicry that characterises his early work to language so tonally accurate in its capture of the Caribbean tongue in *Omeros* that it can only be concluded that he achieves that language that is the light past metaphor. Walcott has claimed not only standard English as his own but also all the fragmented languages of the region. He has contended that:

I do not consider English to be the language of my masters. I consider language to be my birthright. I happen to have been born in an English and a Creole place, and love both languages. It is the passion, futility and industry of critics to perpetuate this ambiguity. It is their profession. It is mine to do what other poets before me did, Dante, Chaucer, Villon, Burns, which is to fuse the noble and the common

²³⁹ Qtd. in Stewart Brown, “‘Writin in Light’: Orality-thru-typography, Kamau Brathwaite’s Sycorax Video Style” *The Pressures of the Text: Orality, Texts and the Telling of Tales*. Ed. Stewart Brown (Birmingham: Birmingham University African Studies Series, 1995) 126.

language, the streets and the law courts, in a tone that is true to my own voice, in which both accents are heard naturally.²⁴⁰

While *The Star-Apple Kingdom* with its colourful character Shabine marks that middle point in Walcott's experimentation with language when he is perhaps writing in that style past metaphor, it is *Omeros*, that bears witness to the poet's mastery of language. This poem artistically reassembles the strands in the web of histories that formulates and underpins the New World present tense. Walcott draws on the entire spectrum of language - from the ornate metaphorical language of the epic to the St Lucian Creole - and explores the range of creative influences - from the classical Western epic tradition to the orality of the African storyteller and Myal. All these languages are thatched into a layered tissue that reflects the dynamic interplay of languages as they are imbued with the poet's magical power to create using *his* word. This new language, this new word which gives birth to that textual creation of the landscape and seascape of the island of St Lucia making it emblematic of all other Caribbean islands. Notwithstanding his mastery of poetic language in *Omeros*, Walcott has insisted that: "I am only one-eighth the writer I might have been had I contained all the fragmented languages of Trinidad."²⁴¹

Although the approaches to language articulated by Brathwaite and Walcott do not obviously reference colour, their poetry and critical practice illustrate their sensitivity to and deployment of light and colour in capturing the landscape and culture that are the source and context of their artistic production. As Mordecai rightly argues, the language strategies employed by these poets and other Caribbean writers are informed

²⁴⁰ Sjöberg, "An Interview with Derek Walcott" *Conversations with Derek Walcott*. Ed. William Baer. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1996) 82.

²⁴¹ Walcott, "The Antilles" 69.

by a prismatic vision that consciously or unconsciously grapples with the multi-lingual, ethnic and cultural features of Caribbean space and experience. Moreover, it is just such prismatic vision that invests language with the capability of bearing the burden of trauma of history that is so integral to any representation of Caribbeanness as discussed in Part one. By implementing the literary strategies that have become the hallmarks of their experiments with language, writers and poets such as those referenced here, attempt to approximate the power and vitality of the painted or visual image which provokes responses beyond those of which the written or spoken word is capable. In other words, the prismatic vision exemplified in the work of such writers attempt to capture what has been referred to as the emotional knowledge that is often tapped in the encounter with the visual image. As Hall explains:

... many of the image's 'effects' operate, not just 'discursively', but at the symbolic and psychic level of the unconscious. The symbolic power of the image to signify is in no sense restricted to the conscious level and cannot always easily be expressed in words. In fact, this may be one of the ways in which the so-called 'power of the image' differs from that of the linguistic sign. What is often said of the power of the image is indeed that its impact is immediate and powerful even when the precise meaning remains, as it were vague, suspended – numinous. In noting this, we register the image's capacity to connote on a much broader symbolic field, to touch levels of experience which seem remote or 'archaic', beyond the purely rational level of awareness, and which disturbs the very way in which they exceed meaning.²⁴²

As such, Brathwaite's Sycorax video style and Walcott's language that approaches the light past metaphor complement and conjoin with St Omer's Prismism to elaborate and enhance the understanding of the construction of Caribbeanness in the contemporary situation. The prismatic creolisation model espoused here revises the conceptualisation of Caribbeanness on cultural and linguistic levels much as its antecedent model.

²⁴² Hall, introduction to Part III, *Visual Culture: The Reader*. Eds. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (London: Sage Publications, 1999) 311.

PART III

*Windrush and Her Descendants:
Caribbeanness in Diaspora*

Introduction

Migration has remained central to the Caribbean experience since the initial forced and coerced transplantations of peoples from different continents to the region from the fifteenth century. Today, as Shalini Puri points out, “[o]ften, between ten and sixty percent of Caribbean populations may live outside their nations of origin.”¹ However, it was at the end of the Second World War, which coincided with the agitations for independence in the Caribbean that migration to the mother country, Britain and to the US, then the emerging superpower, peaked. Part III concerns itself with the migrations to Britain from the region that began in the immediate postwar period and examines the extent to which the Caribbean community meets the criteria of a cultural diaspora in accordance with the criteria detailed by Robin Cohen as discussed in Part II. This examination inevitably requires an engagement with questions of Caribbean cultural identity in diaspora and the ways in which it has resisted, metamorphosed and been reconstituted in the British context.

¹ Puri, introduction, *Marginal Migrations: The Circulation of Cultures within the Caribbean*. Ed. Shalini Puri (London: Macmillan Caribbean, 2003) 1.

It is argued that whereas the first arrivants inscribed themselves simultaneously into the Caribbean and British national imaginations, the subsequent generations have been understandably more concerned with negotiating citizenship and belonging to the nation of their births. While ancestral identification with the Caribbean remains strong, as Hall explains, for subsequent generations of Caribbeans the region is just one of many locations of associational identification. Contemporary generations have therefore not only written back to their antecedents and the moment of arrival that they inscribed, but have also engaged with the current debates concerning the terms on which integration into Britishness might be negotiated and the contradictory politics of recognition (and invisibility) of marginalised communities. Inevitably, these British Caribbeans have been articulating new modes of cultural expression with which they negotiate Britishness and construct their own identities in ‘multicultural’ Britain. Both Caribbean auto/biographical practice and prismatic creolisation that have been proposed as analytical frameworks provide constructive interpretations of the Caribbean diaspora experience in Britain.

The Chapter is divided into two sections entitled: “Disappointed Guests” and “Where are you from?” The first section outlines the historical context in which migration to Britain occurred and some of the problems encountered by the new arrivants. It also begins the examination of how the Windrush generation began to inscribe themselves into the national imagination. The second section explores the construction of Caribbean cultural identity in diaspora.

CHAPTER 5

Disappointed Guests

June 2004 marked the sixtieth anniversary of D-Day, when Nazi-occupied Western Europe was liberated and the end of the Second World War heralded. Much pomp and ceremony accompanied the anniversary's commemorations since it was recognised that those ceremonies would be the last at which many of the veterans would be present given their advancing age. It was also an anniversary of firsts: the first time that a German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder was present; and with the end of the Cold War, the first time that Russia's role as an ally was publicly acknowledged, again with the attendance of the country's President, Vladimir Putin at the commemorations. There was added poignancy to the event as well, since the commemorations elicited comparisons of a "just" war against the ongoing, controversial war in Iraq. To underscore the point, some media houses juxtaposed testimonies from war veterans against those of recently bereaved family members who had lost relatives in Iraq. Nonetheless, acknowledging the poignancy and patriotism evoked by the commemorative ceremonies, historian and social commentator, Tristram Hunt observed that after sixty years, the event was making the transition from memory to history especially as the oral testimonies of veterans that re-constructed the events by way of personal experience would soon be impossible. Locating the event in its historical context, Hunt suggests that it is "worthy to take its

place with Stalingrad, El Alamein, and Berlin in the pantheon of Second World War military heroism.”²

These commemorations held further significance as they provided an opportunity to remember and to re-inscribe the event in the collective imagination of contemporary generations of British and Europeans for whom the intricate particulars and import of the War may either have been blurred or completely lost. Most of all, it also provided an opportunity for these nations to pay tribute not only to the surviving veterans who fought so valiantly but also to those who lost their lives in battle. However, it is pertinent, that even as tribute was being paid to the Allied troops who fought and died alongside British and European soldiers, only the Americans and Canadians were afforded pride of place in such tributes. Notably absent from the numerous commemorative supplements, television documentaries and photo-journals of the mainstream print and electronic media were references to the Allied troops from former colonies. In sum, there was a patent absence of representation of non-white troops, whether from the Caribbean, India or Africa; or even among the Americans and Canadians. What stories might their testimonies reveal? How would their experiences compare with those of their British and European counterparts? Perhaps the answers to these questions may never be known since these voices have been effectively silenced from the D-Day master narrative.

Such silences and invisibility are not uncommon in spite of the fact that Black people have had a presence in Britain for more than four hundred years; in fact, some historians such as Peter Fryer even assert that “there were Africans in Britain before

² Tristram Hunt, “One Last Time They Gather, the Greatest Generation” *The Guardian* 6 June, 2004. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/secondworldwar/story/0,14058,1232606,00.html>>

the English came here. Some were soldiers in the Roman imperial army that occupied the southern part of our island for three and a half centuries.³ This invisibility is juxtaposed against a contradictory visibility or recognition on which British (and European) colonial and imperialist projects were dependent for the construction of the Other to regulate and control its colonies.⁴ This dichotomy is evident also in approaches to British art history and criticism where in spite of the representation of Blacks in the works of acclaimed painters such as Hogarth and Turner, a corresponding blindness is apparent since critics remain silent about their presence even as they produce copious analyses on various other aspects of the compositions. In a study published in 1987, Dabydeen points out that:

Such *colour blindness* on the part of art historians appears to be pervasive: apart from the silence of Hogarth scholars, nothing yet has been published on the image of blacks in English art generally, and a mere handful of books exist on the broader subject of the black presence in European art, even though there are literally thousands of paintings, prints and drawings to be examined.⁵

While art critics and historians ignore the presence of Black people in the repository of British art, the travel narratives and other historical documents of colonialism have been fastidious in their construction of Blacks as inferior, subordinate subjects.

That these silences on the role of the non-white Allied troops have prevailed even as conscientious efforts were made to heal the rifts with the “enemies” of World War II are curious and speak volumes about the way in which Englishness and Britishness

³ Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London and Sydney: Pluto Press, 1984) 1. See also: Folarin Shyllon, “The Black Presence and Experience in Britain: An Analytical Overview” *Essays on the History of Blacks in Britain: From Roman Times to the Mid-Twentieth Century*. Eds. Jagdish S.

⁴ Edward Said argues that “All cultures tend to make representations of foreign cultures the better to master or in some way control them. Yet not all cultures make representations of foreign cultures *and* in fact master and control them. This is the distinction I believe, of modern Western cultures.” Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 120.

⁵ David Dabydeen, *Hogarth’s Blacks* 9.

are imagined in multi-cultural Britain. For Britain had actively recruited many servicemen and women from former colonies to serve in the Allied forces, the merchant navy and war industries during the Second World War. While some were repatriated to the colonies after the War others remained in Britain.⁶ Concomitantly, the postwar period had witnessed also an increasing trend of migration from the colonies. Britain had literally opened her borders to encourage migration from former colonies to fill the gap in the labour market resulting from the War. Migration was facilitated initially by the 1948 Nationality Act that not only conferred citizenship on immigrants of colonies and former colonies but as Fryer points out “their British passports gave them the right to come to Britain and stay for the rest of their lives.”⁷

Thus on another June date (the 22nd) in 1948, the *SS Empire Windrush*, a former German leisure ship returned to Tilbury docks carrying four hundred and ninety-two West Indian immigrants. The arrival of these immigrants is erroneously considered to mark the beginning of black Britain. Although generally portrayed as a monolithic group of black West Indians, the *Windrush* immigrants were a racially and ethnically mixed group and whereas many came from Jamaica, there were among them at least fifty-one Trinidadians.⁸ Furthermore, one female passenger had been discovered most likely among the twenty stowaways.⁹ While reasons for migration among this mixed group were various, the high unemployment rates and weak economies in the

⁶ According to Lydia Lindsey, “Black men and women served with the understanding that their return passage was guaranteed, but by June 1948 only about 3,500 had been repatriated ... To further complicate matters, many West Indians refused to be repatriated. But the West Indians servicemen who were ready to return to their homes with their new English wives could not do so because priority was given to Canadian servicemen.” See Lindsey, “Halting the Tide: Responses to West Indian Immigration to Britain, 1946-1952” *Journal of Caribbean History* 26.1 (1992): 70.

⁷ Fryer, *Staying Power* 373.

⁸ Lindsey, “Halting the Tide” 68.

⁹ Lindsey, “Halting the Tide” 69. James Procter corroborates Lindsey’s findings. See Procter, general introduction, *Writing Black Britain 1948 – 1998: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*. Ed. James Procter (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000) 3.

Caribbean provided persuasive incentives for many. Lindsey explains that, “there was a surplus of labour in the West Indies. Unemployment was roughly 25 percent; in 1946 about 30 000 men and women were looking for jobs and could not find them.”¹⁰ Most notably, apart from those who came specifically to secure better lives through improved employment opportunities, others, such as Lamming and Selvon migrated to Britain with the specific intention of becoming writers – a journey made by several other writers and artists from the region.

Lamming captures the prevailing sentiment among Caribbean immigrants in the postwar period when he describes it as a “journey to an expectation”. Chronicling the journey to Tilbury and then on to Waterloo, Lamming reminisces on the moment of arrival:

England lay before us, not as a place, or a people but as a promise and an expectation. Sam [Selvon] and I had left home for the same reasons. We had come to England to be writers. And now we were about to be anchored in Southampton, we realised that we had no return ticket. We had no experience in crime. Moreover, our colonial status condemned us fortunately to the rights of full citizenship ...

The emigrants were largely men in search of work. During the voyage we had got to know each other very well. The theme of all the talk was the same. It had to do with some conception of a better break. We lived between the deck ... and the communal dormitory where we slept, wrote letters, or simply wondered what would happen.¹¹

These expectations were also encapsulated in calypso and verse. Aldwyn Roberts, the Trinidadian calypsonian who performed under the sobriquet, Lord Kitchener and made the historic journey on the *Windrush* wrote a calypso which not only mythologised Britain’s capital city but also illustrated the measure of loyalty that immigrants from the colonies still harboured for the mother country. The calypso,

¹⁰ Lindsey, “Halting the Tide” 67.

¹¹ Lamming, “Journey to an Expectation” 212.

which was performed for the media after his disembarkation is one of those defining moments of the arrival of West Indians:

London is the place for me, London that lovely city
You can go to France or America, India, Asia or Africa
But you must come back to London city.¹²

Inasmuch as Lamming and Selvon as well as other Caribbean writers succeeded in realising their aspirations to become writers and were at the vanguard of Caribbean writing in Britain and the Caribbean (albeit not without some hardship) for many of their fellow travellers, the journey to an expectation rapidly transformed into disillusionment with both the *idea* and grim reality of life in Britain. Lamming muses on this disillusionment, explaining that,

The West Indian arrives here as a man reprieved from the humiliation of this arrangement which he had known all his life. He sees this new place as an alternative: open, free with equal chance for any British citizen; and since the white hands do nigger work, it certainly looks as though the colour screen has been removed once and for all.¹³

Contrary to such expectations, Britain posed a complex racial quagmire for the black immigrants from her colonies. While skin colour in the Caribbean had been understood according to a finely calibrated scale, in Britain, two colours were of consequence: black and white. Moreover, the increasing number of black immigrants had evoked fears of the unknown, of being “swamped”, of being denied the rights due to its indigenous citizenship and most of all of miscegenation. Reflecting on British attitudes towards migration as evinced in photographic records of that period, Stuart Hall explains:

¹² Lord Kitchener, “London is the Place for Me” (1948) *Writing Black Britain* 19.

¹³ Lamming, “Journey to an Expectation” 218.

Black migration is constructed as a *problem*. But I had forgotten how persistently in these early days there was constructed, at the centre of the problem - the problem of the problem, so to speak – the core issue: *miscegenation*. It is as if in the middle of the vast number of ways of representing the Black presence, in words, in images, one topic, virtually unspoken, lay at the centre of the discourse, driving those who contemplated it crazy, like a shadow across the collective unconscious. In the mirror of that imagery - screaming to be spoken: the trauma of black and white people, together, making love, finding their sexuality with each other and having children as the living proof that, against God and Nature, *It Worked*.¹⁴

Racism proved to be pervasive and pernicious, manifesting itself in myriad ways.

From outright rejection for employment opportunities for which immigrants were well qualified, to being forced to accept unskilled jobs as a result of sheer desperation.

Immigrants were also largely excluded from suitable housing and social clubs and

pubs on account of their colour. In the decades after the arrival of the *Windrush*

generation, objections to their presence intensified as conservative white nationalists

such as Enoch Powell formally organised and lobbied for the amendment of Britain's

immigration policies to exclude the black immigrant. Asian immigrants from the

Caribbean also experienced discrimination. As Steven Vertovec illustrates from the

testimony of one Indo-Caribbean migrant: "initial accommodation was far more

difficult to gain than a job. Racism in the housing market was blatant and rife at a

time when 'No Coloureds' signs frequented the windows in London lodging

houses."¹⁵

Indo-Caribbean migrants were also more socially isolated than Afro-Caribbean

migrants since they were fully accepted neither by their Afro-Caribbean counterparts

¹⁴ Stuart Hall, "Reconstruction Work: Images of Postwar Black Settlement" (1984) *Writing Black Britain* 92. Falorin Shyllon elaborates on this issue.; see "The Black Presence and Experience in Britain" 214-217.

¹⁵ Steven Vertovec, "Indo-Caribbean Experiences in Britain: Overlooked, Miscategorized, Misunderstood". *Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora*. Eds. Winston James and Clive Harris (London: Verso, 1993) 172.

nor by the Indian immigrants from India. Furthermore, the inscription of *black* as the primary descriptor of the immigrants – black West Indians, Black Britons, or Black British – virtually erased their existence. Vertovec explains that Indo-Caribbean migrants who attempted to socialise with the predominantly Afro-Caribbean migrants at the West India Student Centre in Earls Court, “often encountered the ignorance and exclusion by small islanders - especially the many from Barbados who never had encountered Indo-Caribbeans before.”¹⁶ Selvon also recounts his own experience of being excluded by Indians:

[T]ruth is even stranger than fiction, for when I applied to the Indian High Commission in London for a job, I was told that I was not an Indian because I came from Trinidad and was not born in India ... There were great difference in mentality and temperament between us ... and they were cautious to establish any relationship. I was more at ease with the Anglo-Indians as we had a common familiarity with Western culture ... Differences extended even to the food they ate. In all my years in England, I never came across the kind of curry we eat in Trinidad.¹⁷

The racism and exclusionary practices that attended post war migration from Britain’s colonies and former colonies eventually gave rise to the 1958 Notting Hill riots and discriminatory policing policies that disproportionately targeted Blacks and sanctioned Special Patrol Groups and the police’s right to randomly stop and search anyone. Succumbing to the public pressure, the British government gradually closed its borders to Black immigration by enacting legislation: the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 was amended in 1968 and again 1971 having the effect of revoking the Nationality Act.¹⁸ Contending that Britain had successively used and discarded Black labour whenever necessary over centuries, Folarin Shyllon argues

¹⁶ Vertovec, “Indo-Caribbean Experiences in Britain” 173.

¹⁷ Samuel Selvon, “Three into One Can’t Go: East Indian, Trinidadian or West Indian?” 9.

¹⁸ Shyllon, “The Black Presence and Experience in Britain” 215.

that in the post war period, Britain again conveniently forgot the reasons that had precipitated the wave of migration: the two World Wars and the role that Blacks and Asians had played in defending the empire:

Britons forgot – and still forget – the vast numbers of Afro-Asian British subjects who perished in two World Wars in defence of their empire, and that other army of honest hard-working labourers, skilled workers, sailors, messengers, clerks, nurses, doctors, singers and other musicians, actors, sportsmen and so on who so sustained and enriched British society. In a word, they forget that Blacks are men and women.¹⁹

This collective amnesia and invisibility that persist in spite of the upheaval that occasioned postwar settlement by Black and Asian immigrants are features of British literature and art of that period. Like the art historians and critics, few texts written by postwar indigenous writers reflect or engage with the issues of postwar migration or the repercussions in society. In an unscientific survey of British literary production since the 1950s, Caryl Phillips notes that just two writers have recognised the changing face of Britain and attempted to reflect it in their work. Yet, these writers: Colin McInnes and Shelagh Delaney, who escaped the blindness that handicapped others, based their representations predominantly on stereotypes particularly those associated with the sexuality of blacks.²⁰ Making the comparison with representations of Britain in the writing of Caribbean migrants, Phillips argues that not only did they portray black *and* white characters but they did so with a recognition of their humanity:

When George Lamming, or Naipaul or Soyinka or Wilson Harris, or many other Caribbean and African writers sat down to write about

¹⁹ Shyllon, “The Black Presence and Experience in Britain” 215.

²⁰ Caryl Phillips, “Kingdom of the Blind” *The Guardian* 17 July, 2004 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk>> Phillips observes that “The more one reads of MacInnes, however, the clearer it becomes that it is the sexual frisson of the black newcomer that must initially have attracted him to the subject, and at times one wonders if MacInnes is capable of talking about black lives in Britain without recourse to sexuality.”

Britain in this period, they included white as well as black characters. And when they imagined white people, they did not think of them as trapped within the confines of a particular stereotype. In other words, they did not see white people as merely mean-spirited or racists or violent. These writers were generous, and responsible enough, to see them first and foremost as people.²¹

However, this is the historical and socio-cultural context that produced the literature of Caribbean postwar migrants. Their work was inevitably concerned with their impressions on arrival and their subsequent experiences as citizens and migrants. It is the contention of this thesis that given these circumstances, particularly their virtual (in)visibility in spite of the generally held perception of them as “the colour problem”, that Caribbean migrants were impelled to write themselves into being. Concurrently, with the prospect of independence increasingly becoming a reality in the colonies, these writers were also concerned to inscribe Caribbean identities and begin to shape Caribbean aesthetics, as discussed in Part I. Auto/biography, as defined earlier was therefore the preferred genre through which these writers - like their counterparts in the diaspora, could inscribe self and imagine the nations to which they then held simultaneous loyalties and desires of belonging. These writers mobilise the various forms and modes of the genre as well as a number of strategies in their auto/biographical writings. Their engagement with issues of race and class were important aspects of their imagining of Britain as of the Caribbean. So how did they imagine Britain?

For these writers, Britain had already been constructed in their imaginations from the colonial education that had been part of their growing up in the Caribbean. This mythical idea of Britain now competed with the lived experience that was

²¹ Phillips, “Kingdom of the Blind”.

circumscribed by marginalisation, unemployment or underemployment, deplorable accommodation and race. Because Caribbean immigrants had settled in London, the city is also a significant point of identification. Jean Rhys deploys a gloomy, depressing portrait of the city through her character Anna Morgan:

It was as if a curtain had fallen, hiding everything I had ever known. It was almost like being born again. The colours were different, the smells different, the feeling things gave you right down inside yourself was different. Not just the difference between heat and cold; light, darkness; purple, grey. But a difference in the way I was frightened and the way I was happy. I didn't like England at first.²²

Selvon, like Rhys is attentive to the differences in weather and colour as contrasted with the vibrancy of colour of the Caribbean in his evocation of a grim London that assaults the senses:

One grim winter evening, when it had a kind of unrealness about London, with a fog sleeping restlessly over the city and the lights showing in the blur as if is not London at all but some strange place on another planet.²³

The same subtlety with which the city is evoked is apparent in the descriptions of the colour problem. Lamming elaborates: "They notice a cold stare, an enigmatic sneer, the built-in compliment which is used to praise, and at the same time remind them who and what they are."²⁴ In his auto/biography, *Inward Hunger*, Eric Williams recounts a similar experience while a student at Oxford University:

Some days later I passed one of the Fellows in the street. He was one of Britain's then leading author-politicians, a household name in certain British circles. He eyed me so curiously when he passed, without speaking, that I glanced back. I found that he was standing still, looking at me; on seeing me he went his way. For the fun of it I looked back a few yards further on. There he was again, standing still looking at me, looking at me. I thereupon stopped, turned around, and

²² Jean Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark* (1934. London: Penguin, 1969) 7.

²³ Samuel Selvon, *Lonely Londoners* 23.

²⁴ Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* 218.

looked at him ... he will always remind me of those children in my first Christmas vacation in London who used to touch me as they passed me in the street and say 'First luck.'²⁵

Together with the historical record that has inscribed the arrival and endurance of Caribbean peoples to Britain, marked by the docking of the *SS Windrush* in June 1948, these fictional and non-fictional, prose, poetry and memoirs all contribute to the imagining of British nationhood. The construction of British nationhood has shifted and changed since that moment of arrival. The articulation of the ever changing British nation has been undertaken by the descendants of the *Windrush* who appropriate other forms such film, photography and drama to their compendium of auto/biographical practice.

Where are you from?

The contradictory (in)visibility that has located Black Britons in a liminal space in the British national imagination is also evident in the scholarship. Just as the literary articulation of "multicultural" Britain has been delegated as the responsibility of the non-white writers, so too has its scholarly investigation.²⁶ Given the politics of academia and publishing, there has not been a wealth of scholarship devoted to investigating the changing face of Britain: this against all the daily evidence and political discussions that dominate the media. In fact, most of the artistic production by minorities has been collected under the ambiguous and undifferentiated labels that

²⁵ Williams, *Inward Hunger* 47.

²⁶ Procter notes that "postwar writing ... remains one of the most critically neglected cultural formations in the Britain today. The neglect may be gauged in the fact that there is still no book-length historical survey of postwar black British cultural production available." See Procter, *Writing Black Britain* 8.

include black as the main adjective. Black, which as Mike Phillips explains resonates more from the specific historical circumstances of the Civil Rights Movement in the US and the Pan-Africanism in Ghana.²⁷ However, as Phillips points out, “when they say ‘black writing’, most people in Britain are referring either to the skin colour of the author or to a bundle of characteristics associated with the Caribbean, Africa and black America.”²⁸ In this way, black as a signifier has been emptied even of its ideological moorings in Civil Rights and Pan Africanism and gestures merely to the mass of non-white communities that include Caribbeans, Africans and Asians, with “Asian” now functioning similarly as an all-embracing signifier for Indian and Chinese ancestry.

These circumstances have served to obfuscate the differential production of Britishness as imagined by this wide cross section of minority Britain when subsumed under the label Black British Writing. Not only does it include Caribbean writers such as V S Naipaul and Wilson Harris but also Wole Soyinka, Ben Okri, Salman Rushdie and Hanif Kureishi – all of whom write from different historical backgrounds and literary and cultural traditions. These circumstances make research in this area tricky especially since the examination of the works of one or two writers may not yield a holistic view of what is constructed as an ambiguous field of study. Moreover, there is no cohesive literary *tradition* that might be proposed as unifying this body of work.²⁹ However, as is evident from the discussion in the foregoing section, auto/biographical practice has been privileged in much writing by minorities in

²⁷ Mike Phillips, *London Crossings: A Biography of Black Britain* (London and New York: Continuum, 2001) 143.

²⁸ Phillips, *London Crossings* 147.

²⁹ Procter reports the findings of one critic who asserts “there is no real tradition of ‘immigrant writing’ in Britain the way there is in the United States’ [which] is indicative of a much larger cultural amnesia in this area.” See Procter, *Writing Black Britain* 8.

Britain as a framework for breaching the boundaries of (in)visibility. The genre has also ensured that these writers contend with the questions of coming of age as Black British and reconciling this subject position with their ancestral identities.

Consequently, apart from the leanings to auto/biographical practice, the subject matter of much of their fiction and non-fiction writing has been centred on what Phillips envisages as the key issues of the twenty-first century:

The irony is that black writing may be standing at the gateway to a subject matter which informs a number of what will be crucial global issues for this new century. The relationship between nationalism, ethnicity, nationality and citizenship, for example, or between different kinds of conflicting identities, both public and private.³⁰

If only because of their beginnings as migrants (either by way of their parents or as children) these have traditionally been the subjects with which Black and Asian British writing have engaged albeit utilising a variety of strategies that often reflect a hybrid of literary and cultural influences.

In extracting Caribbean writers from this 'canon' it also becomes evident that most of the scholarship on their writing has been concentrated on the *Windrush* generation, perhaps because they inaugurated West Indian writing which then enjoyed its moment of celebrity as the new quaint fiction writing by colonial subjects. Very little is available on the subsequent generations. This may be attributed to several factors not least of which is that contemporary Black British artists have experimented much more with visual and performative genres of expression than with the literary modes in which their antecedents excelled. As such, the *Windrush* writers still comprise the largest body of writing by British Caribbeans; accomplished contemporary writers

³⁰ Phillips, *London Crossings* 143.

include John Agard, David Dabydeen, Caryl Phillips, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Benjamin Zephaniah, Joan Riley, Andrea Levy and Zadie Smith. However, increasingly Black and Asian British artists have been experimenting with film, photography, theatre and music – the last in which they have gained the most recognition. Nonetheless, their subject matter – negotiating nation and identity has remained the same. Moreover, as will be illustrated below, they have also mobilised auto/biographical practice as a fundamental strategy of imagining and representing themselves against the persistent stereotypes of slavery that were re-invented during the wave of postwar immigration. As Ian Baucom points out, the British Nationality Act of 1981 which sought to regulate citizenship and define Britishness by annexing it to ancestry also succeeded in changing the question that established belonging from: “where were you born?” to “who are your parents?”³¹ He explains:

[T]he Nationality Act defined the nation’s community of belonging according to the principle of ‘patriality.’ To be British, it mandated, one had to trace a line of descent to an ancestor born on the island. In effect, the law thus drew the lines of the nation rather smugly around the boundaries of race and erased the present as a space available for new engenderings of national identity. If the nation must express a relation to its past, the act suggested, then that past is the past of biology, not of history.³²

If the *Windrush* generation was forced to confront the bigotry that on the one hand conveniently conferred citizenship on colonial subjects and on the other negated those rights implicit in that legal status, subsequent generations have had to negotiate citizenship and belonging that was their birthright through their ancestry. As such, the question persists: where are you from?

³¹ Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton and New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999) 13.

³² Baucom, *Out of Place* 195.

For V S Naipaul, this question was met with utter puzzlement, when an encounter with an Indian national on his first trip to Paris forced Naipaul, probably not for the first time, to confront that sometimes indelicate question: “You are coming from - ?” The puzzlement that greets his self-conscious answer: “Trinidad, [i]n the West Indies” emphasised the irony of his colonial ‘identity’ as a West Indian East Indian – a status that changes imperceptibly to East Indian West Indian with the integrationist movement towards independence and nationhood in the Caribbean. Reflecting on this irony, Naipaul observed:

[T]o be Latin American or Greek American is to be known, to be a type, and therefore in some way to be established. To be an Indian or East Indian from the West Indies is to be a perpetual surprise to people outside the region. When you think of the West Indies you think of Columbus and the Spanish galleons, slavery and the naval rivalries of the eighteenth century. You might more probably, think of calypsos and the Trinidad carnival and expensive sun and sand. When you think of the East you think of the Taj Mahal at the end of a cypress-lined vista and you think of holy men. You don’t go to Trinidad, then, expecting to find Hindu pundits scuttling about country roads on motor-cycles; to see pennants with ancient devices fluttering from temples; to see mosques cool and rhetorical against the usual Caribbean buildings of concrete and corrugated iron; to find India celebrated in the street names of one whole district of Port of Spain; to see the Hindu festival of lights or the Muslim mourning ceremony for Husein, the Prophet’s descendant, killed at the Battle of Kerbela in Arabia thirteen hundred years ago³³

But the West Indies are part of the New World and these Indians of Trinidad are no longer of Asia. The temples and mosques exist and appear genuine. But the languages that came with them have decayed³⁴... To be an Indian from Trinidad, then, is to be unlikely and exotic. It is to be a little fraudulent. But so all immigrants become.³⁵

Similarly, more than thirty years later, the Kittian born British immigrant writer Caryl Phillips re-enacts a similar but fictional encounter with a national of Ghana who

³³ V S Naipaul, “East Indian” *The Overcrowded Barracoon and Other Articles* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1972) 30–38; 33 and 35.

³⁴ Naipaul, “East Indian” 33..

³⁵ Naipaul, “East Indian” 35.

makes the more direct inquiry: “Where are you from?” Phillips’ fictional persona considers the question from the perspective of one already wholly “doubly diasporised”³⁶:

The question. The problem question for those of us who have grown up in societies which define themselves by excluding others. Usually us. A coded question. Are you one of us? Are you one of ours? Where are you from? Where are you really from? And now, here on a plane flying to Africa, the same clumsy question. Does he mean, who am I? Does he mean do I belong? Why does this man not understand the complexity of his question? I make the familiar flustered attempt to answer the question. He listens and then spoils it all. “So my friend, you are going home to Africa. To Ghana.” I say nothing. No, I am not going home.³⁷

These excerpts are quoted at length since they illustrate the peculiar confusion among some immigrants about relationships to originary homelands, homelands of birth and of migration. Naipaul, confronted with the question about his belonging to his land of birth is left flummoxed. How does he explain to a stranger that despite his phenotypical characteristics that would, for all intents and purposes, identify him as a citizen of India or other Asian country that he in fact belongs to the erroneously called West Indies. For Phillips, similarly, the problem is one of (un)belonging since, again his ancestry suggests the possibility of him being a citizen of an African country, namely Ghana in this instance, while in fact, his routes have taken him from Africa, to St Kitts, on to Britain and further still to the US. Of significance is the sense of fraudulence shared by Naipaul and Phillips’ narrative personas in considering this troublesome matter of identity in the Caribbean and the diaspora. Underpinning these sentiments are questions of authenticity and belonging; questions that, according to

³⁶ Stuart Hall, uses this term to refer to Caribbean immigrants who have settled in Britain or other metropolitan countries. Their first migration being that to the New World from their ancestral homelands.

³⁷ Caryl Phillips, *The Atlantic Sound* 98.

Phillips' do not arise for the supposedly 'rooted' person for whom home remains indisputably that one place to which return is always possible and indeed obligatory.

As Phillips's first person narrator says of his Ghanaian character Ben:

Like me, he is, in part, the product of British imperial adventures. Unlike me, he is an African. A Ghanaian. A whole man. A man of one place. A man who will never flinch at *the* question, 'Where are you from?' A man going home. Stupefied with drink and despair, Ben is returning home. And, in spite of his present predicament, I envy his rootedness.³⁸

Contrary to this experience of 'rootedness', for the displaced, decentred communities, such as those of former colonies of whom Naipaul and Phillips are representative, 'home' and the relationships that exist between their originary and adopted homelands are necessarily complex, fluid and continuously under dispute. This is inevitable since memories and ties to former homelands gradually adapt and metamorphose to suit the new environments. Consequently, the landscapes of their adopted homelands reflect the elision of fragments of images of the African, Asian and European continents – all cultural heritages that have been changed and innovated and which provide the psychic bridges that link an ever fading past to the more urgent present. According to Naipaul, this experience is consistent with immigrant and settler populations:

Immigrants are people on their own. They cannot be judged by the standards of their older culture. Culture is like language, ever developing. There is no right and wrong, no purity from which there is decline. Usage sanctions everything.³⁹

The dilemma of identity that these exchanges reveal reflects something of the lived experience of Caribbeans and other minorities in Britain. As explained earlier,

³⁸ Phillips, *The Atlantic Sound* 100.

³⁹ Naipaul, "East Indian" 37.

whereas the *Windrush* generation identified more closely with the Caribbean territories of their birth and the region as a whole more than they did with their adopted home, Britain, the succeeding generations have located their identities in a series of associational identifications that look back to Africa or India, the Caribbean territories of their parents' birth (and the region as a whole) as well as to Britain. In light of the politics of race and marginality that have circumscribed their belonging to the British nation-state, these associational identifications are intersected most deeply by race, class and gender as well as sexuality and religion. How are all these points of identity negotiated in terms of Britishness that has not only been defined according to ancestry but also to race? Have these negotiations inflected or impacted the construction of Britishness?

Stuart Hall argues that the diasporic aesthetic that distinguishes Caribbean culture and identity is also in evidence in the ways in which contemporary British Caribbeans have been negotiating their Britishness. He cautions, however, that the relationship between the Caribbean and its diaspora in Britain must be conceived in terms of "one diaspora to another" rather than "in terms of origin to pale copy, primary source to pale reflection."⁴⁰

Consequently, Hall argues that contemporary British Caribbeans, in spite of their continuing marginalisation, (in)visibility, unemployment among other things, unlike the earlier generations, have been constructing and imagining "a variety of ways of being black which were undreamt of in our philosophy."⁴¹ Such re-constructions of

⁴⁰ Hall, "Thinking the Diaspora" 9.

⁴¹ Hall, "Caribbean Culture: Future Trends" 27.

blackness and Britishness do not limit them to their present location or circumstances.

According to Hall they have been negotiating their identities as “global ethnics”:

They are ethnics in the sense that they have a very strong identity to, and links with, the cultures from which they come, especially as they have been reconnected to it through the most advanced modern technology. So they know what is moving and shaking in the local cultures and they have built their own different but remodelled local cultures for themselves. But at the same time they have a much wider notion of what is the global community to which they belong. Please don't think I am trying to romanticize it. I am not telling you they are having a wonderful time ... They are not ... I am talking about survival strategies.⁴²

Hall further contends that evident among contemporary British Caribbeans is a certain confidence in “living in their blackness in a white society as never before” although their speech especially reflects their antecedents:

[I]n speech, accent, ... they are in a sense more at home, and in a sense not at home. And there are all kinds of ways in which one can see their distancing and sense of alienation from the culture which does not nurture them ... Their actual cultural interchange with this often hostile white society is fluid and open and constantly being reconstructed.⁴³

These observations raise important issues in relation to the “tests” advanced by Robin Cohen by which the Caribbean might be considered as constituting a cultural diaspora. To recap briefly, Cohen has suggested four tests for determining the extent to which Caribbean culture and identity are affirmed, reproduced and created as a diasporic identity. These include: evidence of cultural retention; symbolic interests in return; cultural artefacts, products and expressions that show shared interests and influences with Africa, the Caribbean and destination countries (in this instance,

⁴² Hall, “Caribbean Culture: Future Trends” 28.

⁴³ Hall, “Caribbean Culture: Future Trends” 28.

Britain), and fourthly, that in attitudes, and social conduct, ordinary peoples behave in ways consistent with the idea of cultural diaspora.⁴⁴

Several critics have confirmed Hall's observations in respect of the *Windrush* generation as well as their descendants. Whereas their descendants have been, as Hall suggests, much more confident and adventurous in their negotiations with and constructions of British Caribbeanness, the *Windrush* generation actually established the tradition to which their descendants still refer and moreover, have elaborated and re-constituted the *styles* in which they have imagined Caribbeanness and Britishness – both of which were articulated by the first generation as they looked in both directions: back to their Caribbean homelands and forward in their present circumstances in Britain. The advances in technology such as the World Wide Web, competitive prices for telecommunication services and the electronic media (including online editions of newspapers) have all made communication immediate and helped to concretise the cultural and familial exchanges and connections.

These technological advances have also bolstered the volume of remittances to the Caribbean. This practice is so entrenched among minority communities, including Caribbeans that a number of companies have been founded that compete with the traditional financial sector in facilitating these transactions. Remittances are estimated as contributing significantly to the Gross Domestic Product of Caribbean territories. As Girvan reports:

By the early 1990s the overseas population was sending home in remittances an amount equal to 71 percent of the value of exports in the case of the Dominican Republic, 32 percent in the case of Haiti, 29 percent in Jamaica and 17 percent for Barbados ... In Jamaica

⁴⁴ See Part II, 150.

remittances have been the fastest growing source of foreign exchange inflows in the 1990s. Hence the Caribbean diaspora is undoubtedly an important source of household income in many of these societies as well as a major aspect of people-based integration within the social life of the region itself.⁴⁵

These economic contributions to Caribbean homelands also translate in the cultural arena. Dancehall and its earlier forms, ska and reggae, that emerged from Jamaica have been another important point of contact between the two diasporas. However, as Hall asserts, in the Caribbean diaspora in Britain, dancehall has been further influenced and inflected by other cultural contacts and finding a captive audience among the white community as well:

Dancehall is now an indigenised diasporic musical form – one of several black musics winning the hearts and souls of some white London ‘wannabe’ (that is ‘wannabe black’!), who speak a mixture of Trench Town patois, New York hip-hop and estuary English and for whom ‘black style’ simply is the symbolic equivalent of modern street credibility ... What is now known as jungle music in London is another ‘original’ crossover ... between Jamaican dub, Atlantic Avenue hip-hop and gangsta rap and white techno (as *bangra* and *tabla-and-bass* are crossover musics between rap, techno and the Indian classical tradition).⁴⁶

The same syncretism that is evinced in the reggae and dancehall is repeated with calypso music. Moreover, all these musics are showcased at the Notting Hill carnival that has become a permanent fixture on the cultural calendar since the riots of 1958. But Carnival, while still associated predominantly with Trinidad and Tobago has been transformed into a very diasporic event. Trinidad Carnival has been replicated in at least sixty cities in Europe and North America.⁴⁷ Keith Nurse confirms that these

⁴⁵ Girvan, “Reinterpreting the Caribbean” 15.

⁴⁶ Hall, “Thinking the Diaspora” 11.

⁴⁷ Keith Nurse, “Globalisation and Trinidad Carnival: Diaspora, Hybridity, and Identity in Global Culture” *Identity, Ethnicity and Culture in the Caribbean*. Ed. Ralph Premdas (St Augustine, Trinidad: UWI, School of Continuing Studies, 1999) 95.

Carnivals facilitate cultural exchange and nurture the diasporic and ‘home’ equivalents:

The transplantation of Trinidad carnival to create the overseas Caribbean carnivals has contributed to the growth of a cultural industry with strong export capability. The overseas carnivals have also evolved to play an important socio-political and cultural role for the Caribbean diaspora. Carnival as a cultural activity is not just about merriment, colourful pageantry, revelry and street theatre. Carnival is born out of the struggle of marginalised peoples to shape a cultural identity through resistance, liberation and catharsis. It is these values that have facilitated its replication wherever the Caribbean diaspora is found. It has acted as a bond between the diasporic community and those at home, promoting much travel and contributing to a pan-Caribbean identity.⁴⁸

With the exception of the desire to ‘return’ which has been discussed in Part II, all the other evidence presented above confirms that the Caribbean passes Cohen’s four tests. What is also in evidence is how Caribbean diasporic culture has also been transformed and metamorphosed by the reflection and refraction of influences not only from its Caribbean equivalent but also by the variety of ‘local’ cultures with which it is in continuous contact. The model of prismatic creolisation proposed in Part II also serves to describe the random, fluid interactions and exchanges of cultures in the British diaspora *in spite of* the racial hostilities that function to separate them. As Hall confirms, Black British identities are “the outcome of their own autonomous formation ... the logic that governs them involves the same processes of transplantation, syncretization and diasporization that once produced Caribbean identities, only now operating in a different space and time frame ... in the time of *difference*.”⁴⁹ Furthermore, in the increasingly heterogeneous context of London (where the largest proportion of British Caribbeans has settled) the cultural influences have multiplied since the arrival of the *Windrush* generation. This is evident in the

⁴⁸ Nurse, “Globalisation and Trinidad Carnival” 81.

⁴⁹ Hall, “Thinking the Diaspora” 10.

literature. Selvon's London, which signified the beginning of multicultural Britain has been transformed to Zadie Smith's London where more than three hundred languages are spoken and the ethnicities have multiplied exponentially. Smith gestures in this excerpt to the progression of just such heterogeneity from the moment of Caribbean postwar migration to contemporary times:

This has been the century of strangers, brown, yellow and white. This has been the century of the great immigrant experiment. It is only this late in the day that you can walk into a playground and find Isaac Leung by the fish pond, Danny Rahman in the football cage, Quang O'Rourke bouncing a basketball, and Irie Jones humming a tune. Children with first and last names on a direct collision course. Names that secrete within them mass exodus, cramped boats and planes, cold arrivals, medical checks. It is only this late in the day, and possibly only in Willesden, that you can find best friends Sita and Sharon, constantly mistaken for each other because Sita is white (her mother liked the name) and Sharon is Pakistani (her mother thought it best - less trouble). Yet, despite all this mixing up, despite the fact that we have finally slipped into each other's lives with reasonable comfort ... despite all this, it is still hard to admit that there is no one more English than the Indian, no one more Indian than the English.⁵⁰

The historian Richard Weight who has investigated the stasis and change in British nation identity over the period 1940-2000 also notes the extent to which immigrants of the postwar period have inflected the construction of British identity through their musics, food and even the changes to the English language.⁵¹ He concludes that:

[t]hese developments do signify something positive. Despite centuries of endemic and often vicious racism, ethnic minorities did not, on the whole, see themselves as victims. With what can only be described as a bulldog spirit, they forced their way into the English consciousness as citizens who enriched the life of the nation.⁵²

⁵⁰ Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (2000. London: Penguin, 2001) 326-327.

⁵¹ See Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940 – 2000* (London: Macmillan, 2002) 713-719.

⁵² Weight, *Patriots* 716-717.

CONCLUSION



'The Auto/biography of the Now'¹: Whither Caribbean Nation and Identity?

For small nation states such as those in the Caribbean, the globalisation of capital has served only to intensify the multitude of challenges with which they have been confronted since independence; independence which theoretically held prospects for freedom, political and economic autonomy and self-determination. Numerous indicators point to failure; to the collapse of the fledgling nations: further economic contractions owing to structural adjustment, shrinking existing and potential markets for Caribbean export products (bananas, tourism), difficulties in meeting debt repayments to international lending agencies, political instability, rising racial and ethnic antagonisms, increasingly sophisticated criminal activity, a dearth of social and political leadership. The disillusionment that followed independence has been superseded by an indulgence in the rhetoric of doom and gloom. Conveying this general sentiment among the people, many popular artists continue to advance apocalyptic visions and predictions of the fate that awaits individual territories and the region as whole. Even as he offers some prescriptions for change, economist and social commentator, Lloyd Best has reminded that:

[t]here is no law that says that any society should survive and prosper.
The large majority of human societies have gone under – disappeared

¹ The title is borrowed and adapted from the 2001 compact disk of the chantwel / calypsonian, David Rudder.

from the slate of history forever forgotten. And there is no law that says that we are going to do any differently.²

In other words, the auto/biography of the now that is currently being articulated in public discourse in the printed and electronic media, the artistic productions by visual/fine artists, writers, poets and calypsonians is heavily textured by images of defeat, decay and death.

The calypsonian whose work has the benefit of immediacy that is not possible for writers or poets has been among the most prolific contributors to this auto/biography. Their auto/biographical chronicling of the region's history has been littered with apocalyptic images that have, according to Rohlehr shifted from describing one moment of apocalypse to suggesting a progression of disintegration towards destruction:

The idea of the Apocalypse has been a constant one in post-independence Caribbean music. One grew accustomed, since the late sixties, to Jamaica's politics being discussed in the music in terms of a deathless confrontation between the cohorts of Zion and those of Babylon, as well as the imagery of blood and fire, the recurrent prophecy about the burning city and hope for ultimate judgement that would in Jah Rastafari's good time, be visited upon the workers of iniquity.

In Trinidad, the apocalyptic vision existed in political poetry after 1970, glowing a sombre dull red in those whose hopes for the Black revolution had become shattered by the defeat of Black Power ... The number of apocalyptic calypsoes grew steadily after 1975 as calypsonians changed from predicting explosions to describing disintegration.

Many people began to recognize that the Apocalypse was taking place, not as a single comprehensive moment of explosion, but in slow motion. Its indices were the human and material dereliction in the city,

² Best, "Reflections on the Reflections" *Independent Thought and Caribbean Freedom: Essays in Honour of Lloyd Best*. Ed. Selwyn Ryan (St Augustine: Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, UWI, 2003) 427.

the demoralization and rotting edges of the town which V S Naipaul ... described as sitting 'like lead on my spirit.'³

David Rudder, acknowledged in the region as one of the more politically and socially engaged practitioners of the art form, has in the last decade of the twentieth century alone, weighed in on the predicament facing the Caribbean and its peoples and imploring remedial action to stave off the impending disaster. Some of his darker songs that have warned against social decay include "1990" that has chronicled dramatic world events such as the end of the Cold War, the massacre of Tiananmen Square, and the static position of Caribbean nations and noted that these events did not necessarily effect equally dramatic changes since the economic and political inequalities remained the same; "Hosay" (1991) which reflected on this tragi-comic coup d'état in Trinidad and Tobago in 1990 that coincided with the commemoration of the Hosein festivities and was perpetrated by a black Muslim organisation - Rudder here intoning that having had the veil of innocence rudely ripped away from the mythical island paradise "Now Trini know uzi diplomacy/ Now Trini know slr love".⁴ "Another Day in Paradise" (1995) and "The Madman's Rant" (1996) each pointed to the deep social and political malaise that pervade society.

It is against this background, that this thesis has proposed the re-imagining of Caribbean nation and identity. Such re-imagining, it has been argued, is critical to the region's recovery from this prolonged period of stasis and the very survival of what has been Caribbean civilisation; Caribbean civilisation founded in a modernity that began with its "discovery" and the forced and coerced transplantation of peoples to provide labour for the sugar industry. As has been noted, because the acquisition of

³ Rohlehr, "Apocalypse and the Soca Fires of 1990" *The Shape of that Hurt* 305.

⁴ These calypsos are all recoded on Rudder's 3-compact disk set, *David Rudder: No Restriction, The Concert* (1996).

nationhood was envisaged as an end in itself insofar as colonial rule was ended, little energy had been expended in defining the actual goals of nationhood or the decolonisation process. Consequently, the vacuum left by colonialism – its institutions, models of government and cultural norms, for instance – was merely filled by the ruling national élite. In suggesting Caribbean auto/biography and prismatic creolisation as constructive conceptual tools by which the imagining of nation and identity might be re-conceived, this thesis has attended closely to the specificities of the region's history and culture. This has been necessary in contextualising evolving Caribbean society (as evidenced in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, which are the territories under comparison) characterised in the contemporary situation as an increasingly complex mix of races, ethnicities, languages, religions and ideologies. It is precisely the absence of such specific historical and cultural foregrounding, it is argued, that limits the applicability and value of many Western and even postcolonial theories that are often privileged in scholarly analyses of the region.

Since Caribbean auto/biographical practice threads through much of the region's cultural production as is evident in the range of forms, modes, political, social and cultural functions, the genre offers insight into the multiple subject positions and perspectives from which nation is imagined by the various peoples who constitute the Caribbean. The genre has served as a site of sustained contestation of the received knowledges of colonialism as it registered the 'coming into voice' of the region's peoples as subjects of history and creative expressions. In so doing Caribbean auto/biography has been instrumental in inserting the recuperated histories from below and in inscribing self and agency in the process. As discussed, there are

limitations to the genre as a conceptual tool. Nation, as a concept, retains its exclusive quality insofar as it establishes boundaries by which some are admitted and others excluded from not only the nation-state but also from access to its resources. Consequently, inasmuch as Caribbean auto/biography facilitates a wider range of dissenting and consenting voices to the dialogue through which the construction and imagining of nation is agreed, some remain outside the boundaries of such discourse.

With respect to the notion of Caribbeanness, this thesis has suggested prismatic creolisation as a revised tool by which the formation and evolution of Caribbean society and identity might be understood. Drawing on four key tenets of re-conceptualisation suggested by Stuart Hall as well as the artistic philosophy, Prismism elucidated by the Caribbean painter, Dunstan St Omer, prismatic creolisation provides a corrective supplement to Kamau Brathwaite's influential creolisation thesis. Prismatic creolisation not only considers the economic inequalities and ethnic antagonisms that have circumscribed the social and cultural interactions among Caribbean peoples but also the less hierarchical, more fluid stratification of the heterogeneous contemporary situation. The prism, the visual metaphor that has been appropriated to these theories underscores the non-linear, random exchanges that have typified the nature of cultural interactions that have created the syncretic Caribbean identities.

Inasmuch as it is posited that Caribbeanness is perhaps most distinguished by a diasporic aesthetic that marks its social and cultural productions, the final Part of this thesis addresses the question of how Caribbeanness is re-constituted in the diasporic context of Britain. The overarching argument is that whereas the *Windrush*

generation began to negotiate Britishness by inscribing themselves into the national imagination, succeeding generations have increasingly been establishing different parameters by which they imagine themselves as citizens belonging to what is routinely described as 'multicultural' Britain. Of necessity, the first generation began the process of establishing a tradition that has since been nebulously entitled Black British literature (which effectively encapsulates literature written by minorities of various ancestry). Contemporary generations have not only written back to their antecedents and the moment of arrival in Britain, but have moreover engaged with the current debates concerning the terms on which integration into Britishness might be negotiated and the contradictory politics of recognition of marginalised communities. Inevitably, new modes of cultural expression have been emerging from these generations with much less emphasis being placed on the genres of poetry and literature that were privileged by earlier generations and more on immediate forms such as music, for instance. As Hall has observed, current generations have been defining "varieties of ways of being black."⁵ It is pertinent that both Caribbean auto/biographical practice and the prismatic creolisation model advanced in this thesis provide constructive insights into the investigation of Caribbeanness in the British diaspora.

Since limitations have necessarily been imposed to determine the scope of the thesis, some important areas of research have not been fully explored. For instance, while it is acknowledged that the critical issues of race and ethnicity are further elaborated by their intersections with gender, sexuality and religion in the construction of Caribbean nation and identity, they have not been examined. Caribbean literature and other

⁵ Hall, "Caribbean Culture: Future Trends" 27.

cultural production have been largely muted particularly on the subject of alternative sexualities; however, some recent prose fiction, such as Patricia Powell's *A Small Gathering of Bones*,⁶ Lawrence Scott's *Aelred's Sin*⁷ and Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night*⁸ have been exploring these subjectivities and articulating the ways in which nation and identity are imagined from these perspectives. That some Caribbean nation states have begun the process of re-defining the parameters by which gender and sexuality have traditionally been understood is illustrative of the growing awareness of the marginalisation of these voices.⁹

Other areas of research that would enable the expansion and enhancement of the research undertaken in this thesis include further investigation into Caribbean visual and fine arts; the use of colour in the production of such art and most of all, how they elucidate the construction and auto/biographing of Caribbeanness. Moreover, whereas the visual and fine arts produced by Caribbeans in the British diaspora have not been examined here, such investigation would be instructive in understanding other ways in which they have been negotiating Britishness. What is more, this investigation would also provide another template of comparison by which the continuities and discontinuities in how Caribbeanness is imagined by Caribbean peoples at home and abroad.

⁶ Patricia Powell, *A Small Gathering of Bones* (Oxford: Heinemann Educational, 1994).

⁷ Lawrence Scott, *Aelred's Sin* (London: Allison and Busby, 1998).

⁸ Shani Mootoo, *Cesreus Blooms at Night* (London: Granta, 1998).

⁹ I am referring here to the draft policy of gender and sexuality that has been issued in Trinidad and Tobago. Although some of the recommendations proposed in the draft policy have been met with much opprobrium by some religious bodies, the draft policy has certainly initiated discussions of taboo subjects such as abortion, homosexuality and transgender. Similar draft policies (albeit containing somewhat less daring recommendations) have been proposed in Jamaica and Dominica.

This thesis, (as well as this Conclusion) began by highlighting the grave challenges that have been confronting Caribbean nation states in the forty odd years since winning independence. The pessimism that surfaces in response to these challenges has also been noted. The question that perhaps persists is whether there is any hope for the region's survival. Fortunately, such intense pessimism coexists with an indomitable optimism in the Caribbean. The indicators of doom and gloom are counterposed by those that bode well for the region's survival. After some forty years of stalled attempts at regional integration through organisations – from the Federation to CARICOM – there are encouraging signs that economic (albeit not political) integration might be realised, if only on account of absolute necessity. In April 2005, the long awaited Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) was launched thereby bringing the realisation of the Caribbean Single Market Economy (CSME) that would enable the free movement of labour closer into view. Trade links and technical cooperation on various levels with Latin American countries, for instance have also deepened. Certainly, reservations exist in larger more economically viable territories particularly about the influx of labour from smaller, struggling territories - not unlike those that eventually resulted in the collapse of the West Indian Federation. However, globalisation makes integration increasingly an imperative for the survival of the region as a whole.

Whereas political and economic integration have been difficult for the region, culture and sport have been much less contentious unifying forces. Cricket remains perhaps the only game in which the Anglophone Caribbean presents a unified team comprising members of various territories. These team efforts have enjoyed a spell of prodigious success over some ten years in the 1970s and 1980s. As if foreshadowing

the crisis of civilisation of which Best speaks, the team has been experiencing an equivalent spell of defeat in the last decade causing much demoralisation among Caribbean peoples. David Rudder, whose calypsos have forewarned of the disintegration of Caribbean society, had since the mid-eighties also pointed to the team's decline. Recently, he has attributed this decline to the fact that few current players are aware of the deep historical and cultural resonances of the game in Caribbean life and imagination. He notes that Brian Lara, arguably the best batsman to have emerged in the region in the past decade, stands at thirty-six, on the cusp of the last generation of players for whom the game holds such significance.¹⁰ Yet, Rudder, in his calypso, "Rally 'Round the West Indies" - the unofficial cricketing anthem of the region - even as he registers the team's declining fortunes simultaneously recuperates that history from erasure in the popular imagination. Imploring Caribbean peoples to keep faith with the team, Rudder invokes two of C.L.R. James' seminal texts: the first references *The Black Jacobins* and the second, his auto/biographical text on cricket, *Beyond the Boundary* in which James records the development and shaping of his fiercely anticolonial, Marxist sensibility that began in the context of colonial Trinidad and Tobago. In the first verse, Rudder recalls the leaders of the Haitian revolution to communicate that equally capable players would eventually replace the now retired legendary batsmen. The language is deliberately combative and reminiscent of the anticolonial rhetoric that depicted the unequal struggle for freedom and self-determination against the colonising power in just such terms:

Some of the old generals have retired and gone
And the runs don't come by as they did before

¹⁰ Qtd. in "Rudder had a Feeling ... and Lara's Sense of History Did the Rest", Terry Joseph, *Trinidad Express*, 16 April, 2004.

But when the Toussaints go (don't you know) the Dessalines come
We've lost the battle but yet we will win the war¹¹

He further intones:

This is not just cricket
This thing goes beyond the boundary
It's up to you and me to make sure that they fail
Soon we must take a side
Or be lost in the rubble
In a divided world that don't need islands no more
Are we doomed forever to be at someone's mercy?
Little keys can open up mighty doors.

The infectious chorus and bridge invite the continued support and dedication of West Indian peoples not just in the team but also in a revitalised vision of Caribbeanness:

Rally, rally round the West Indies
Now and forever
Rally, rally round the West Indies
Never say never

Pretty soon the runs are going to flow like water
Bringing so much joy to every son and daughter
Say we're going to rise again like a raging fire
As the sun shines you know we goin' to take it higher
Rally, rally round the West Indies
Now and forever
Rally, rally round the West Indies

It is exactly such a fighting sensibility for survival that has characterised the region's experience of plantation slavery, colonialism and independence. Even as many defining moments have opened and closed various phases of the independence experience, there has been no dénouement thus far. Given the region's indomitable spirit and will to survive, it is more than likely that Caribbean nation and identity, like its cricket, will be re-constituted to cope with the challenges presented by late capitalism.

¹¹ Rudder, "Rally 'Round the West Indies"

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Anthony, Patrick, A.B. E-mail 20 October, 2003.

---. Personal interview. 06 January, 2004.

Clarke, Leroy. Personal interview. 23 December, 2003 and 07 January, 2004.

Cozier, Christopher. E-mail 11 September, 2003.

---. Telephone interviews. 29 December, 2003 and 02 January, 2004.

Look Lai, Walton. Personal interview. 12 January, 2004.

Reddock, Rhoda. Personal interview. 30 December, 2003.

Ryan, Selwyn. Personal interview. 05 January, 2004.

St Omer, Dunstan. Unpublished interviewed by Professor David Dabydeen. 1999.

St Omer, Dunstan. Telephone interview. 03 October, 2003.

Radio Broadcast:

The Forgotten Colony. Written and presented by David Dabydeen. Produced by David Olusoga. Parts 1 and 2. BBC Radio 4. London. 27 November, 2001 and 04 December, 2001.

DVD:

The Face: Jesus in Art. Written by Dr James Clifton. Produced and directed by Craig MacGowan. DVD. Beckmann Visual Publishing, 2001.

Unpublished Works:

Harvie, Stephanie. "The Search for a Guyanese Identity: The Evolution of the Fine Arts in Guyana with Specific Reference to the Works of Aubrey Williams." Masters by Research. Centre for Caribbean Studies, University of Warwick. 1993.

- Mordecai, Pamela Claire. "Prismatic Vision: Aspects of Imagery, Language and Structure in the Poetry of Kamau Brathwaite and Derek Walcott." Diss. University of the West Indies, Mona, 1997.
- Poynting, Jeremy. "Literature and Cultural Pluralism." Diss. University of Leeds, 1985.
- Rampersad, Sheila. "Douglarisation and the Politics of Indian/African Relations in Trinidad Writing." Diss. Nottingham Trent University, 2000.
- Sillery, Jane L. "Salvaging Democracy? The United States and British Guiana 1961 – 1964." Diss. Oxford University, December, 1996.

Secondary Sources:

- Adorno, Theodor W. *Prisms*. Trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber. London: Neville Spearman, 1967.
- Ahmad, Aijaz. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. London: Verso, 1992.
- Aiyejina, Funso, ed. *Earl Lovelace - Growing in the Dark: Selected Essays*. San Juan, Trinidad: Lexicon Trinidad Limited, 2003.
- Ali, Edwin. *The Rise of the Phoenix in Guyana's Turbulent Politics*. n.p. 1997.
- Allahar, Anton and Tunku Varadarajan. "Differential Creolization: East Indians in Trinidad and Guyana." *Indo Caribbean Review* 1.2 (1994): 123 – 139.
- Allahar, Anton. "Popular Culture and Racialisation of Political Consciousness in Trinidad and Tobago." *Identity, Ethnicity and Culture in the Caribbean*. Ed. Ralph R. Premdass. St Augustine, Trinidad: UWI, School of Continuing Studies, 1999. 246- 273.
- , ed. *Caribbean Charisma: Reflections on Leadership, Legitimacy and Populist Politics*. Kingston: Ian Randle Press, 2001.
- Allen, Carolyn. "Creole: The Problem of Definition." *Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture*. Eds. Verene A. Shepherd and Glen L. Richards. Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle; London: James Currey, 2002. 47-63.
- Alleyne, Mervyn C. *The Construction and Representation of Race and Ethnicity in the Caribbean and the World*. Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2002.

- Allsopp, Richard, ed. *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*. Mona, Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 1996.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and the Spread of Nationalism*. 1983. Rev. ed. London: Verso, 1991.
- Anderson, Linda. *Autobiography*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Andrews, William L. *African American Autobiography: A Collection of Critical Essays*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993.
- Anthony, Patrick, A. B. "Dunstan St Omer: The Man and his Madonnas." 16 October, 2002.
- . "Gregorias!: Dunstan St Omer, Artist." n.p.
- Appiah, K. Anthony and Amy Gutmann, eds. *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *The Ethics of Identity*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin. *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. 1989. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Baer, William, ed. *Conversations with Derek Walcott*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1996.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by MM Bakhtin*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- Balkaransingh, Satnarine. "Chutney Crosses over into Chutney Soca in Trinidad and Tobago Carnival." *Identity, Ethnicity and Culture in the Caribbean*. Ed. Ralph R. Premdass. St Augustine, Trinidad: UWI, School of Continuing Studies, 1999. 47-53.
- Ball, John Clement. *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.
- Balutansky, Kathleen M and Marie-Agnès Sourieau, eds. *Caribbean Creolization: Reflections on the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature and Identity*. Gainesville: University of Florida; Kingston: UWI Press, 1998.
- Banton, Michael. *Racial Theories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Baptiste, Fitzroy. "The Federal Process in the West Indies as seen by the United States, 1947 – 1962." *Social and Economic Studies* 48.4 (1999):185-210.

- Baron, Robert. "Amalgams and Mosaics, Syncretisms and Reinterpretations: Reading Herskovits and Contemporary Creolists for Metaphors of Creolization." *Journal of American Folklore* 116 (459): 88-115.
- Barron, Michael. *Language and Relationship in Wordsworth's Writing*. London and New York: Longman Group, 1995.
- Barrow, Christine. *Caribbean Portraits: Essays on Gender Ideologies and Identities*. Kingston: Ian Randle Press (in association with the Centre for Gender and Development Studies), 1998.
- Baucom, Ian. *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity*. Princeton and New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Baugh, Edward. *Derek Walcott - Memory as Vision: Another Life*. London: Longman, 1978.
- . "The Poem as Autobiographical Novel: Derek Walcott's *Another Life* in Relation to Wordsworth's *Prelude* and Joyce's *Portrait*." *Awakened Conscience- Studies in Commonwealth Literature*. Ed. C.D. Naramsimhaiah. Hong Kong: Heinman, 1978.
- . "Painters and Painting in *Another Life*." *Critical Perspectives on Derek Walcott*. Ed. Robert Hamner. Bolder and London: Three Continents Press-Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997. 239-250.
- Beckford, George L. *Persistent Poverty: Underdevelopment in Plantation Economies of the Third World*. New York, London: Oxford University Press, 1972.
- Beckles, Hilary and Verene Shepherd, eds. *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996.
- Beckles, Hilary. *Centering Woman: Gender Discourses in Caribbean Slave Society*. Kingston: Ian Randle; Princeton: Markus Weiner; Oxford: James Currey, 1999.
- Belgrave, Valerie. "On Combining Batik Art and Novel Writing." *Caribbean Women Writers: Essays from the First International Conference*. Ed. Selwyn R Cudjoe. Wellesley, Mass.: Calaloux Publications, 1990.
- Benjamin, Joel et al. Eds. *They Came in Ships: An Anthology of Indo-Guyanese Prose and Poetry*. Leeds: Peepal Tree, 1998.
- Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: BBC and Penguin Books, 1972.
- Berlant, Lauren. *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

- Bernabé, Jean, Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant. "In Praise of Creoleness." Trans. Mohamed B. Taleb Khyar. *Callaloo* 13 (1990): 886 – 909.
- Best, Lloyd. "Independent Thought and Caribbean Freedom: Thirty Years Later." *Caribbean Quarterly*. 43.1 (1997): 16-24.
- . "Origins of Confusion." *Daily Express* 10 January, 2002.
<<http://www.trinidadexpress.com/opinion.asp?mylink=2002-01-10\opinion/Lloyd%20Best.htm&mydate=2003-01-10&mypage=opinion=Lloyd%20Best.htm>>.
- . "Race, Class and Ethnicity: A Caribbean Interpretation." Third Annual Jagan Lecture, York University, Toronto, Canada, 3 March, 2001. Toronto: CERLAC Colloquia Paper, 2004.
- . "Excellent Choice for New Dispensation." *Daily Express* 19 February, 2005.
<<http://www.trinidadexpress.com/index.pl/article?id=62477521>>.
- Benítez-Rojo, Antonio. *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*. 2nd. ed. Trans. James Maraniss. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Bhabha, Homi K., ed. *Nation and Narration*. London and NY: Routledge, 1990.
- . *The Location of Culture*. London and NY: Routledge, 1994.
- Bhattacharya, Baidik. "Naipaul's New World: Postcolonial Modernity and the Enigma of Belated Space." *Novel* 39.2 (2006) 245-267.
- Birbalsingh, Frank, ed. *Frontiers of Caribbean Literature in English*. Warwick Caribbean Studies Series. London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1996.
- Bishop, Pat. "Painting in Trinidad and Tobago." *Trinidad and Tobago through the Eye of the Artist*. Port of Spain: Independence Cultural Committee, 1997.
- Bisnauth, Dale. *A History of Religions in the Caribbean*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1996.
- Boime, Albert. *The Art of Exclusion: Representing Blacks in the Nineteenth Century*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1990.
- Bolland, O. Nigel. "Creolization and Creole Societies: a Cultural Nationalist View of Caribbean Social History." *Intellectuals in the Twentieth-Century*. Vol. 1. Ed. Alistair Hennessy. London: Macmillan, 1992. 50-79.
- . "Reconsidering Creolization and Creole Societies." Conference: (Re)Thinking Caribbean Culture. University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, June 5-7, 2001.
- Bomford, David, Jo Kirby et al. Eds. *Art in the Making: Impressionism*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990.

- . "The History of Colour in Art." *Colour: Art and Science*. Eds. Trevor Lamb and Janine Bourriau. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. 7–29.
- Bornat, Joanna. "Is Oral History Auto/biography?" *Auto/Biography* 3.1; 3.2 (1994): 17- 30.
- Boyce-Davies, Carole and Elaine Savory Fido. Eds. *Out of the Kumbla: Caribbean Women and Literature*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1990.
- . *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Brannigan, John. "'The Regions Caesar Never Knew': Cultural Nationalism and the Caribbean Literary Renaissance in England." *Jouvert*. 5:1 (2000). <<http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v5il/bran.htm>>.
- Brathwaite, Edward, Kamau. *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy*. Oxford: OUP, 1973.
- . *Contradictory Omens : Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Caribbean*. Kingston, Jamaica: Savacou, 1974.
- . "Caribbean Man in Space and Time." *Savacou* 11/12 (1975): 1-11; 106-108.
- . *Mother Poem*. Oxford, London, New York: OUP, 1977.
- . "Caliban, Ariel, and Unprospero in the Conflict of Creolization: A Study of the Slave Revolt in Jamaica in 1831 –32." *Comparative Perspectives on Slavery in the New World Plantation Societies*. Eds. Vera Rubin and Arthur Tuden. New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1977.
- . *Sun Poem*. Oxford, New York, Toronto, Melbourne, OUP, 1982.
- . *The History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry*. London and Port of Spain: New Beacon Books, 1984.
- . *X-Self*. Oxford and New York: OUP, 1987.
- . "The Poet and His Place in Barbadian Culture." Bridgetown, Barbados: Central Bank of Barbados, 1987.
- . *The Zea Mexican Diary: 7 September, 1926 – 7 September, 1986*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993.
- . "Timehri." *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*. Eds. Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson-Welsh. London & New York : Routledge, 1996.

- Braxton, Joanne, M. *Black Women Writing Autobiography: A Tradition Within a Tradition*. Philadelphia ; Temple University Press, 1989.
- Brennan, Timothy. "The National Longing for Form." *Nation and Narration*. Ed. Homi K. Bhabha. London and New York: Routledge, 1990. 44 – 70.
- Brereton, Bridget. *Race Relations in Colonial Trinidad 1870 – 1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- . *A History of Modern Trinidad 1783-1962*. Kingston, Port of Spain, London: Heinemann, 1981.
- Brown, Stewart, ed. *All are Involved: The Art of Martin Carter*. Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2000.
- . "'Writing in Light': Orality-thru-typography, Kamau Brathwaite's Sycorax Video Style." *The Pressures of the Text: Orality, Texts and the Telling of Tales*. African Studies Series No. 4. Birmingham: Birmingham University, Centre for West African Studies, 1995. 125-136.
- Bruss, Elizabeth W. *Autobiographical Acts: The Changing Situation of Literary Genre*. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1976.
- Burnett, Paula, *Derek Walcott: Politics and Poetics*. Gainesville: University of Florida, 2000.
- Burton, Richard D E. "The Idea of Difference in Contemporary French West Indian Thought: Négritude, Antillanité, Créolité." *French and West Indian: Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guiana*. London : Macmillan Caribbean (Warwick University Caribbean Studies), 1995.
- Buscaglia-Salgado, José F. *Undoing Empire: Race and Nation in the Mulatto Caribbean*. Minnesota and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- Bush, Barbara. *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650 – 1838*. Kingston: Heinemann Publishers (Caribbean); Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press; London: James Currey, 1990.
- Callinicos, Alex. "Wonders Taken for Signs: Homi Bhabha's Postcolonialism." *Post-Modernity: Marxism and Postmodernism*. Eds. Mazud Zavarzadah, Teresa L Ebert and Donald Morton. Washington: Mazonneuve Press, 1995. 98 – 112.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Case, Frederick Ivor. "The Intersemiotics of Obeah and Kali Mai in Guyana." *Nation Dance: Religion, Identity, and Cultural Difference in the Caribbean*. Ed. Patrick Taylor. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001. 40 – 53.

- Chamberlin, J Edward. *Come Back to me my Language*. Kingston: Ian Randle Press, 2000.
- Chang, Carlisle. "Chinese in Trinidad Carnival." *The Drama Review* 42.3 (1998): 213 – 219.
- Charlemagne, Christine. "Dunstan's Inner Strokes". *St Lucia Star*.
<<http://www.stluciarstar.com/monday/monJan17-05/feature.htm>>
- Chatterjee, Partha. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*. London: Zed Books, 1986.
- . *The Nation and its Fragments : Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993.
- Cheah, Pheng. "Grounds of Comparison." *Diacritics* 29.4 (1999): 3-18.
- Chen, Kuan-Hsing. "The Formation of a Diasporic Intellectual: An Interview with Stuart Hall." *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. Eds. David Morley et al. London, New York: Routledge, 1996. 484-503.
- Chinosole. *The African Diaspora and Autobiographics: Skeins of Self and Skin*. New York, Washington, Baltimore, Bern: Peter Lang, 2001.
- Chinweizu. *The West and the Rest of Us: White Predators, Black Slavers and the African Elite*. 1975. Lagos: Pero Press, 1987.
- Chrisman, Laura. *Postcolonial Contraventions: Cultural Readings of Race, Imperialism and Transnationalism*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003.
- , "Nationalism and Postcolonial Studies." *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Ed. Neil Lazarus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 183- 198.
- Christian, Barbara. "The Race for Theory." *Cultural Critique* 6 (1987): 51-63.
- Clarke, Colin G. *East Indians in a West Indian Town: San Fernando, Trinidad, 1930-1970*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1986.
- Clarke, Leroy. "Moments: An Autobiographical Note." *Of Flesh and Salt and Wind and Current*. Researched and compiled by Caroline C Ravello. Port of Spain: The National Museum and Art Gallery of Trinidad and Tobago, 2003. 112-117.
- . "Douens: De Enigma of Denial." *Of Flesh and Salt and Wind and Current*. Caroline C Ravello, researched and compiled. Port of Spain: The National Museum and Art Gallery of Trinidad and Tobago, 2003. 120-122.

- Clarke, Michael. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms*. Oxford: Oxford U P, 2001.
- Clarke, Richard L. W. "Towards a 'New Parochical Wholeness': Brathwaite's Dialectical Model of Creolisation". *For the Geography of a Soul: Emerging Perspectives on Kamau Brathwaite*. Ed. Timothy J. Reiss. Trenton, New Jersey and Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 2001. 203-218.
- Cohen, Robin. *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. London: UCL Press, 1997.
- Cobham, Rhonda. "The *Caribbean Voices* Programme and the Development of West Indian Short Fiction: 1945 – 1958." *The Story Must be Told: Short Narrative Prose in the New English Literatures*. Ed. Peter O. Stummer. Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 1986. 146 – 160.
- Cozier, Christopher. "Between Narratives and Other Spaces." *Small Axe* 6 (1999): 19-36.
- Cudjoe, Selwyn R. *Resistance and Caribbean Literature*. Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1980.
- . *Beyond Boundaries: The Intellectual Tradition of Trinidad and Tobago in the Nineteenth Century*. (Wellesley, Mass.: Calaloux; Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts, 2003).
- Culler, Jonathan. "Anderson and the Novel." *Diacritics* 29.4 (1999): 20 – 39.
- Dabydeen, David and Brinsley Samaroo, eds. *India in the Caribbean*. (London: Hansib Publishing Ltd., 1987.
- Dabydeen, David. *Hogarth's Blacks: Images of Blacks in Eighteenth Century English Art*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987.
- . "From Care to Cambridge." *Displaced Persons*. Eds. Kirsten H Peterson and Anna Rutherford. Sydney: Dangaroo, 1988. 137-141.
- . *Coolie Odyssey*. London: Hansib and Dangaroo, 1988.
- . "On Not Being Milton: Nigger Talk in England Today." *Crisis and Creativity in the New Literatures in English*. Eds. Geoffrey Davis and Hena Maes-Jelinek. Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi, 1990.
- . "Teaching West Indian Literature in Britain." *Studying British Cultures: An Introduction*. Ed. Susan Bassnett. London: New Accents-Routledge, 1997. 135-151.
- . *The Intended*. (Martin Secker-Warburg, 1991) London: Vintage, 2000.

- Dabydeen, David and Brinsley Samaroo, eds. *Across the Dark Waters: Ethnicity and Indian Identity in the Caribbean*. London : Warwick Univ./Macmillan Caribbean, 1996.
- Davis, Annalee. "A Conversation with Christopher Cozier – Interview." *Small Axe* 6 (1999): 147-156.
- Davis, Gregson, ed. "The Poetics of Derek Walcott : Intertextual Perspectives." *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Spring Vol. 96 No. 2, 1997.
- Deosoran, Ramesh. "The 'Caribbean Man': A Study of the Psychology of Perception and the Media." *India in the Caribbean*. Eds. David Dabydeen and Brinsley Samaroo, London: Hansib/University of Warwick, 1987. 81-115.
- Dietrich, Maria, Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Carl Pedersen, eds. *Black Imagination and the Middle Passage*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Döring, Tobias. *Caribbean-English Passages: Intertextuality in a Postcolonial Tradition*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Dyer, Richard. *White*. London and New York : Routledge, 1997.
- Edmondson, Belinda, ed. *Caribbean Romances: The Politics of Regional Representation*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 1999.
- Elder, J D. "Towards a Caribbean Aesthetic." *Of Flesh and Salt and Wind and Current: A Compilation of Works by and about Leroy Clarke*. Researched and Compiled by Caroline C Ravello. Port of Spain: The National Museum of Trinidad and Tobago, 2003. 88-90.
- Evans, Jessica and Stuart Hall, eds. *Visual Culture: The Reader*. London: Sage, 1999.
- Equiano, Olaudah. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Oluadah Equiano, or Gustavas Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*. London, 1789.
- Espinet, Ramabai. *The Swinging Bridge*. Toronto: HarperFlamingoCanada, 2003.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. 1952. (trans. Charles Lam Markmann) London: Pluto Press, 1986.
- . *The Wretched of the Earth*. 1961. (trans. Constance Farrington), London: Penguin Books, 1967.
- Farred, Grant. "You Can Go Home Again, You Just Can't Stay: Stuart Hall and the Caribbean Diaspora." *Research in African Literatures* 27.4 (1996): 28-48.
- Ferreira, Jo-Anne S. *The Portuguese of Trinidad and Tobago: Portrait of an Ethnic Minority*. St Augustine : ISER, University of the West Indies, 1994.

- Feyno, Mario. "The Greatness Thrust upon Eric Williams." *Caribbean Quarterly*. 47.4 (2001): 49 – 57.
- Finnegan, Ruth. *Oral Literature in Africa*. London: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1970.
- Fisher, Cary. "The Twilight of Colonial Rule in the British West Indies: Nationalist Assertion vs Imperial Hubris in the 1930s." *Journal of Caribbean History* 30.1-2 (1996): 1-27.
- Froude, J. A. *The English in the West Indies or the Bow of Ulysses*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1888.
- Fryer, Peter. *Staying Power: Black People in Britain since 1504*. NJ: Humanities Press, 1984.
- Gage, John. *Colour and Meaning: Art, Science and Symbolism*. London : Thames and Hudson, 1999.
- . *Colour and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1993.
- Gates, Henry Louis, ed. *'Race' Writing and Difference*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- Gilkes, Michael. "Creative Schizophrenia: The Caribbean Cultural Challenge." Third Walter Rodney Memorial Lecture. Coventry : Warwick University, Centre for Caribbean Studies, December, 1986.
- Gilmore, Leigh. *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony*. Ithaca and London : Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London and New York: Verso, 1993.
- . *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures*. London and New York: Serpent's Tail, 1993.
- . *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures and the Allure of Race*. London: Penguin Books, 2000.
- Girdhari, Gary. "The Shattered Link: Perceptions, Realities and Social Distance." *Guyana Journal* < <http://www.guyanajournal.com/shatlink.html>>
- Girvan, Norman, "Reinterpreting the Caribbean." *New Caribbean Thought: A Reader*. Eds. Brian Meeks and Folkes Lindahl (Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2001) 3-23.
- Glissant, Édouard. *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*. Trans. J. Michael Dash. 1989; Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1999.

- . *Poetics of Relations*. Trans. Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, 1997.
- Golding, John. "Cubism." *Concepts of Modern Art*. Ed. Nikos Stangos. London: Thames and Hudson, 1994.
- Goveia, Elsa V. "The Social Framework." *Savacou* 2 (1970): 7-15.
- . *A Study of the Historiography of the British West Indies to the End of the Nineteenth Century*. Washington: Howard University Press, 1980.
- Griffith, Glyne A. "Veiled Politics in West Indian Criticism." *Kunapipi* XV.2 (1993):104-112.
- . *Deconstruction, Imperialism and the West Indian Novel*. Kingston: UWI Press, 1996.
- , ed. *Caribbean Cultural Identities*. Spec. issue of *Bucknell Review* Vol. XLIV, No. 2 (2001): 5- 178. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 2001.
- . "Deconstructing Nationalisms: Henry Swanzy, *Caribbean Voices* and the Development of West Indian Literature." *Small Axe* 10 (2001): 1-20.
- Gundara, Jagdish S. and Ian Duffield, eds. *Essays on the History of Blacks in Britain from Roman Times to the Mid-Twentieth Century*. Aldershot: Avebury, 1992.
- Hall, Catherine. *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002.
- . "What is a West Indian?" *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*. Ed. Bill Schwarz. Manchester and New York: Manchester UP., 2003.
- Hall, Stuart. "Pluralism, Race and Class in Caribbean Society." *Race and Class in Post-colonial Society: A Study of Ethnic Group Relations in the English-speaking Caribbean, Bolivia, Chile and Mexico*. Paris, UNESCO: 1977. 150-182.
- . "Myths of Caribbean Identity." The Walter Rodney Memorial Lecture. Coventry: University of Warwick, Centre for Caribbean Studies, 1991.
- . "New Ethnicities." *'Race', Culture and Difference*. Eds. James Donald and Ali Rattansi. Milton Keynes : Sage, 1992(a).
- . "Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation." *Ex-iles: Essays on Caribbean Cinema*. Ed. Mbye Cham. Trenton, New Jersey : Africa World Press, 1992(b). 220-236.

- . "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. Eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994. 392-403.
- . Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'? *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Eds. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay. London: Sage Publications, 1996. 1-17.
- . "Caribbean Culture: Future Trends." *Caribbean Quarterly*. 43.1 (1997): 25-33.
- . "Thinking the Diaspora: Home-Thoughts from Abroad." *Small Axe*. 6 (1999): 1-18.
- . "Negotiating Caribbean Identities." *New Caribbean Thought: A Reader*. Eds. Brian Meeks and Folke Lindahl. Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2001.
- . "Political Belonging in a World of Multiple Identities." *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice*. Eds. Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Hamner, Robert. "Conversation with Derek Walcott." (1975) *Conversations with Derek Walcott*. Ed. William Baer. Jackson: Univ. of Mississippi Press, 1996. 21-33.
- , ed. *Critical Perspectives on Derek Walcott*. Bolder and London: Three Continents Press- Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997.
- Haraksingh, Kusha R. "Structure, Process and Indian Culture in Trinidad." *Immigrants and Minorities*. 7.1 (1988): 113 – 122.
- Harney, Stefano. *Nationalism and Identity: Culture and the Imagination in a Caribbean Diaspora*. Kingston: Univ. of the West Indies Press, 1996.
- Harris, Michael. "Making Fragments Whole Again." *Of Flesh and Salt and Wind and Current*. Researched and compiled by Caroline C Ravello. Port of Spain: The National Museum and Art Gallery of Trinidad and Tobago, 2003. 72-74.
- Harris, Wilson. "The Unresolved Constitution." *Caribbean Quarterly*. 4: 1-2 (1968): 43-47.
- . "Metaphor and Myth." *Myth and Metaphor*. Ed. Robert Sellick. Adelaide: Centre for Research in the New Literatures in English, 1982. 1-14.
- . "Some Aspects of Myth and the Intuitive Imagination." *Explorations : A Selection of Talks and Articles 1966 – 1981*. Mundelstrup: Dangaroo Press, 1981. 97-105.
- . *Explorations: A Selection of Talks and Articles 1966 –1981*. Mundelstrup: Dangaroo Press, 1981.

- . *The Womb of Space: The Cross-Cultural Imagination*. Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1983.
- . *The Guyana Quartet*. London: Faber and Faber, 1985.
- . *The Carnival Trilogy*. London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1993.
- . "Living Absences and Presences." *"Return" in Post-Colonial Writing: A Cultural Labyrinth*. Ed. Vera Mihailovich-Dickman. Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1994.
- Harrison, Charles. *Essays on Art and Language*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 2001.
- Hawley, John C. *Writing the Nation: Self and Country in the Post-Colonial Imagination*. Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1996.
- Hearne, John, ed. *Carifesta Forum : An Anthology of Twenty Caribbean Voices*. Mona : Institute of Jamaica, 1976.
- . "Singular and Collective Securities: An Introduction to Carifesta Forum." *Carifesta Forum : An Anthology of Twenty Caribbean Voices*. Mona : Institute of Jamaica, 1976.
- Henry, Paget. *Caliban's Reason : Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy*. New York, London: Routledge, 2000.
- Higman, B. W. *Writing West Indian Histories*. Warwick University Caribbean Series. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999.
- Hill, Donald R. *Calypso Callaloo : Early Carnival Music in Trinidad*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993.
- Hintzen, Percy C. *The Costs of Regime Survival: Racial Mobilization, Elite Domination and Control of the State in Guyana and Trinidad*. Cambridge : Cambridge UP, 1989.
- . "Charisma and Guyana's Response to Western Capitalism." *Caribbean Charisma: Reflections on Leadership, Legitimacy and Populist Politics*. Ed. Anton Allahar. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2001. pp. 121-154.
- . "Race and Creole Ethnicity in the Caribbean." *Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture*. Eds. Verene Shepherd and Glen L. Richards. Kingston : Ian Randle, Oxford: James Currey, 2002. 94-110.
- Hirsch, Edward. "The Art of Poetry XXXVII: Derek Walcott." *Conversations with Derek Walcott*. Ed. William Baer. Jackson, Miss.: University of Mississippi Press, 1996. 95-121.
- hooks, bell. *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*. New York : The New Press, 1995.

- Homberger, Eric and John Charmley, eds. *The Troubled Face of Biography*. London: Macmillan Press, 1988.
- Hornung, Alfred and Ernstpeter Ruhe, eds. *Postcolonialism & Autobiography*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998.
- Hulme, Peter. *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean 1492-1797*. London and New York: Methuen, 1986.
- Hutchinson, John and Anthony D Smith, eds. *Nationalism*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Innes, C. L. *A History of Black and Asian Writing in Britain 1700 – 2000*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Ismond, Patricia. *Abandoning Dead Metaphors: The Caribbean Phase of Derek Walcott's Poetry*. Kingston: UWI Press, 2001.
- . "Another Life: Autobiography as Alternative History" *Journal of West Indian Literature* 4.1 (1990): 41-49.
- . "Woman as Race-Containing Symbol in Walcott's Poetry." *Journal of West Indian Literature* 8.2 (1999): 83-90.
- Jagan, Cheddi. *Forbidden Freedom: The Story of British Guiana*. London: Hansib Publishing Ltd., 1989.
- . "Multiculturalism in Guyana." *Indo Caribbean Review* 2.1 (1995): 1-7.
- . *The West on Trial: My Fight for Guyana's Freedom*. St John's: Hansib Caribbean, 1997.
- James, CLR. *The Black Jacobins*. London: Vintage Books, 1963.
- James, Louis, ed. *The Islands In Between: Essays on West Indian Literature*. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968.
- James, Winston and Clive Harris, eds. *Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora*. London: Verso, 1993.
- James Alexander, Simone A. *Mother Imagery in the Novels of Afro-Caribbean Women*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001.
- Jameson, Frederic. "Third World Literature in the Era of Multicultural Capitalism." *Social Text* 15 (1986): 65 – 88.
- Jenkins, John Edward. *The Coolie: His Rights and Wrongs*. New York: George Routledge and Sons, 1871.
- . *Lutchmee and Dilloo: A Study of West Indian Life*. London : Macmillan: 2003.

- Jha, J C. "The Indian Heritage in Trinidad." *Calcutta to Caroni: The East Indians of Trinidad*. Ed. John Gaffar La Guerre. London : Longman Caribbean, 1974, 1-23.
- Johnson, Linton Kwesi. *Inglan is a Bitch*. London: Race Today Publications, 1981.
- Juneja, Renu. *Caribbean Transactions: West Indian Culture in Literature*. London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1996.
- Kandiyoti, Deniz. "Identity and its Discontents: Women and the Nation." *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994. 376 – 391.
- Khan, Aisha. "What is 'a Spanish'?": Ambiguity and 'Mixed' Ethnicity in Trinidad." *Trinidad Ethnicity*. Ed. Kevin A. Yelvington. Warwick Caribbean Studies Series. London : Macmillan, 1993. 180-207.
- . *Callaloo Nation: Metaphors of Race and Religious Identity Among South Asians in Trinidad*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Khan, Ismith. "Image and Self-Image in West Indian Writing." *Indians in the Caribbean*. Ed. I.J. Bahadur Singh. London: Oriental University Press, 1987. 45- 62.
- Kincaid, Jamaica. *A Small Place*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988.
- . *The Autobiography of My Mother*. London: Vintage, 1996.
- . *Annie John*. 1986. London: Vintage, 1997.
- . "In History." *Callaloo*. Vol. 20.1 (Winter, 1997): 1-7.
- . *My Brother*. London: Vintage, 1998.
- King, Bruce. *V S Naipaul*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993.
- . ed. *West Indian Literature*. 2nd edition. London: Macmillan Education, 1995.
- Knight, Franklin and Colin A. Palmer, eds. *The Modern Caribbean*. Chapel Hill and London: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1989.
- Knight, Franklin. *The Caribbean : The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism*. 2nd ed. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1990.
- La Guerre, John, ed. *Calcutta to Caroni: The East Indians of Trinidad*. London: Longman, 1974.
- Lamb, Trevor and Janine Bourriau, eds. *Colour: Art and Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

- Lamming, George. *The Pleasures of Exile*. London: Michael Joseph, 1960.
- . "The Legacy of Williams." *Callaloo* 20.4 (1997): 731-736.
- . "Caribbean Labor, Culture, and Identities". *Caribbean Cultural Identities*, Spec. issue of *Bucknell Review* Vol. XLIV, No. 2 (2001): 17 – 31.
- Lawrence, K.O. "A Note on the Suspension of the Constitution of British Guiana (1953)". *The Journal of Caribbean History* Vol. 29.1 (1995): 59-76.
- Lawson-Welsh, Sarah. "Critical Myopia and Black British Literature: Reassessing the Literary Contribution of the Post-Windrush Generation(s)." *Kunapipi* XX.1(1998): 132-142.
- Lazarus, Neil. *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- , ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Lee, Simon. "Mental Archaeology of the Psyche." *Of Flesh and Salt and Wind and Current*. Researched and compiled by Caroline C Ravello. Port of Spain: The National Museum and Art Gallery of Trinidad and Tobago, 2003. 94-95.
- Lejeune, Philippe. *On Autobiography*. Trans. Katherine Leary. Ed. Paul John Eakin. Theory and History of Literature, Vol. 52. Minneapolis : University of Minneapolis Press, 1989.
- Levy, Andrea. *Small Island*. London : Headline – Review, 2004.
- Levy, Judith. *Displacement and Autobiography*. New York; London: Garland, 1995.
- Lewis, Arthur W. *The Industrialization of the British West Indies*. London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1949.
- Lewis, Gordon K. *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*. New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1968.
- . *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: The Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in its Ideological Aspects, 1842 – 1900*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1983.
- Lewis, Linden. "Unravelling the Paradox of Post-colonial Charismatic Leadership in Guyana." *Caribbean Charisma: Reflections on Leadership, Legitimacy and Populist Politics*. Ed. Anton Allahar. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2001. 92 – 120.
- Lindsey, Lydia. "Halting the Tide: Responses to West Indian Immigration to Britain, 1946-1952." *Journal of Caribbean History* 26.1(1992): 62-96.

- Longair, Malcolm. "Light and Colour." *Colour: Art and Science*. Eds. Trevor Lamb and Janine Bourriau. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. 65-101.
- Look Lai, Walton. "CLR James and Trinidadian Nationalism." *C.L.R. James' Caribbean*. Eds. Paget Henry and Paul Buhle. Durham: Duke University Press, 1992. 174-209.
- . *The Chinese in the West Indies 1806 – 1995: A Documentary History*. Mona: The Press, University of the West Indies, 1998.
- . "Origins of the Caribbean Chinese Community." *Journal of Caribbean Studies* 14.1-2 (2000): 25-38.
- Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Lovelace, Earl. *The Dragon Can't Dance*. 1979. Essex: Longman Group Limited, 1986.
- . *Salt*. London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1996.
- . "The Ongoing Value of Our Indigenous Traditions". (1988) *Growing in the Dark: Selected Essays*. Ed. Funso Aiyejina. San Juan, Trinidad: Lexicon Trinidad Limited, 2003. 30- 37.
- Low, Gail. "'Finding the Centre?'" Publishing Commonwealth Writing in London: The Case of Anglophone Caribbean Writing 1950 – 65." *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 37.2 (2002): 21-38.
- Lowenthal, David. *West Indian Societies*. New York, London, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1972.
- Lucie-Smith, Edward. *The Thames and Hudson Dictionary of Art Terms*. London : Thames and Hudson, 1984.
- McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context*. New York and London: Routledge, 1995.
- McKenzie, Earl. "Glissant on Time and History." *Caribbean Quarterly* 48.4 (2002): 62-70.
- Mc Watt, Mark A. "'Omens of Humanity': World Texts and Contexts in Wilson Harris's Critical Writings." *Theatre of the Arts: Wilson Harris and the Caribbean*. Eds. Hena Maes-Jelinek and Bénédicte Ledent. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002. 125-137.
- Mahabir, Kumar. "The Cultural and Political Implications of 'Racial Mixing' in Trinidad and Tobago." <http://www.uct-cmc.co.za/conferences/2005/races/pdf/k_mahabir.pdf>

- Manley, Rachel. *Drumblair: Memories of a Jamaican Childhood*. 1996. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2004.
- . *Slipstream: A Daughter Remembers*. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2000.
- Mansingh, Ajai and Laxmi Mansingh. "Hosay and its Creolisation." *Caribbean Quarterly* 41.1 (1995): 25- 39.
- Mansoor, Ramon. "The Story of the Syrians and Lebanese in Trinidad and Tobago: Challenges and Opportunities." Cultural Studies Conference on Cross Culturalism and the Caribbean Canon. University of the West Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad, January 7 – 10, 2004.
- Manuel, Peter. *East Indian Music in the West Indies : Tān Singing, Chutney, and the Making of Indo-Caribbean Culture*. Philadelphia : Temple University Press, 2000.
- Marcus, Laura. *Auto/biographical Discourses: Theory, Criticism, Practice*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994.
- Marshall, Woodville. "'We Be Wise to Many More Tings': Blacks' Hopes and Expectations after Emancipation." *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present*. Eds. Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd. Princeton: Marcus Weiner, Kingston: Ian Randle, London: James Currey, 1996. 12-20.
- May, Charles E., ed. *Short Story Theories*. 1976. Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1987.
- Meecham, Pam and Julie Sheldon. *Modern Art: A Critical Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Meeks, Brian and Folke Lindahl, eds. *New Caribbean Thought: A Reader*. Mona, Kingston: UWI Press, 2001.
- Meighoo, Kirk P. *Politics in a 'Half-Made Society': Trinidad and Tobago, 1925-2001*. Kingston: Ian Randle; Oxford: James Currey; Princeton: Marcus Wiener, 2003.
- Melville, Pauline. *The Ventriloquist's Tale*. London: Bloomsbury, 1998.
- Menezes, Mary Noel. *Scenes from the History of the Portuguese in Guyana*. London: Sister M N Menezes, 1986.
- Mihailovich-Dickson, Vera, ed. *"Return" in Post-colonial Writing: A Cultural Labyrinth*. Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 1994.
- Miller, David, C. *American Iconology: New Approaches to Nineteenth- Century Art and Literature*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993.

- Mishra, Vijay. "(B)ordering Naipaul: Indenture, History and Diasporic Poetics." *Diaspora*. 5.2 (1996) 189-237.
- Mittelhölzer, Edgar. *A Swarthy Boy*. London: Putnam, 1963.
- Mohammed, Patricia. "Towards Indigenous Feminist Theorizing in the Caribbean." *Feminist Review* 59 (1998): 6-33.
- . "Ram and Sita: The Reconstitution of Gender Identities Among Indians in Trinidad through Mythology." *Caribbean Portraits: Essays on Gender Ideologies and Identities*. Ed. Christine Barrow. Kingston: Ian Randle Press (in association with the Centre for Gender and Development Studies). 1998. 391-413.
- . "'But Most of All Mi Love Mi Browning': The Emergence of the Mulatto Woman as the Desired in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Jamaica." *Differentiating Caribbean Womanhood*. Ed. Jacqueline Stevens. Working Paper No. 3, Mona, Kingston: Centre for Gender and Development, Mona Unit, University of the West Indies, February, 2000. 18-35.
- . "A Very Public Private Man: Trinidad's Eric Eustace Williams (1911- 83)." *Caribbean Charisma: Reflections on Leadership, Legitimacy and Populist Politics*. Ed. Anton Allahar. Kingston: Ian Randle Press, 2001. 155 – 191.
- . "The 'Creolisation' of Indian Women in Trinidad". *Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture*. Eds. Verene A. Shepherd and Glen L. Richards. Kingston: Ian Randle, Oxford: James Currey, 2002. 130-147.
- , ed. *Gendered Realities: Essays in Caribbean Feminist Thought*. Mona: University of the West Indies, 2002.
- Molloy, Sylvia. "The Autobiographical Narrative." *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature: Vol. 2: The Twentieth Century*. Eds. Roberto González Echevarría and Enrique Pupo-Waller. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Moore-Gilbert, Bart. *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics*. London and New York: Verso, 1997.
- Moore, Brian, L. "The Social Impact of Portuguese Immigration into British Guiana After Emancipation." *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present*. Eds. Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd. Princeton: Markus Weiner; London: James Curry; Kingston: Ian Randle, 1996.
- Moore, Robert J. "Colonial Images of Blacks and Indians in Nineteenth Century Guyana." *The Colonial Caribbean in Transition: Essays on Postemancipation Social and Cultural History*. Eds. Bridget Brereton and

- Kevin A Yelvington. *Mona*, Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999.
- Momsen, Janet, ed. *Women and Change in the Caribbean: A Pan-Caribbean Perspective*. Mona, Kingston: Ian Randle Press, 1993.
- Mootoo, Shani. *Cereus Blooms at Night*. London: Granta, 1998.
- Morley, David and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds. *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. London, New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Morrison, Jeff and Florian Krobb, eds. *Text into Image: Image into Text – Proceedings of the Interdisciplinary Bicentenary Conference Held at St Patrick's College Maynooth, 1995*. Amsterdam – Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1997.
- Morrison, Toni. "Memory, Creation and Writing." *The Anatomy of Memory: An Anthology*. Ed. James McConkey. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. 212-225.
- Mudimbe, V. Y. *The Idea of Africa*. Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1994.
- Murray, John A. *The Islands and the Sea*. New York, Oxford: OUP, 1991.
- Naipaul, V. S. *The Middle Passage: Impressions of Five Colonial Societies*. London: André Deutsch, 1962. Rev. ed. London: Picador-Pan Macmillan, 2001.
- . *A House for Mr Biswas*. London: André Deutsch, 1961. London: Penguin Books, 1969.
- . *The Mimic Men*. London: André Deutsch, 1967. London: Penguin Books, 1969.
- . *The Overcrowded Barracoon and Other Stories*. London: André Deutsch, 1972.
- . *Finding the Centre: Two Narratives*. London: Penguin, 1985.
- . "A Plea for Rationality." *Indians in the Caribbean*. Ed. I.J. Bahadur Singh. London: Oriental University Press, 1987. 17-30.
- . *Reading and Writing: A Personal Account*. New York: New York Review Books, 2000.
- Nanton, Philip. "What Does Mr Swanzy Want? Shaping or Reflecting? An Assessment of Harry Swanzy's Contribution to the Development of Caribbean Literature." *Kunapipi* XX.1 (1998): 11-20.
- Nightingale, Peggy. *Journey through Darkness: The Writing of V S Naipaul*. St Lucia, London, New York: University of Queensland Press, 1987.

- Nixon, Rob. *London Calling: V S Naipaul, Postcolonial Mandarin*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Nugent, Maria. *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica from 1801 – 1805*. Ed. Philip Wright. Mona, Jamaica: UWI Press, 2002.
- Olney, James. *Studies in Autobiography*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- . "The Value of Autobiography for Comparative Studies: African Versus Western Autobiography." *African American Autobiography: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. William L. Andrews. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993. 212-223.
- Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologising of the Word*. London and NY: Routledge, 1982.
- Palmer, Colin A. *Eric Williams and the Making of the Modern Caribbean*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
- Parmasad, K V. "By the Light of the Deya." *The Aftermath of Sovereignty: West Indian Perspectives*. Eds. David Lowenthal and Comitas Lambros, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1973. 283-291.
- Parry, Benita. "Signs of Our Times: Discussion of Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*." *Third Text* 28-29 (1994): 5-24.
- Pattison, George. *Art, Modernity and Faith: Towards a Theology of Art*. London: Macmillan, 1991.
- Paul, Annie. "Pirates or Parrots? A Critical Perspective on the Visual Arts in Jamaica." *Small Axe* 1 (1997): 49-64.
- . "Uninstalling the Nation: The Dilemma of Contemporary Jamaican Art." *Small Axe* 6 (1999): 57-78.
- Patterson, Orlando. *The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origins, Development and Structure of the Negro Slave Society in Jamaica*. London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1967.
- Perkins, Margo, V. *Autobiography as Activism: Three Black Women of the Sixties*. Jackson: Mississippi Press, 2000.
- Phillips, Caryl. *The Atlantic Sound*. 2000. London: Vintage, 2001.
- . *The Final Passage*. London : Vintage, 2004.
- . "Kingdom of the Blind." *The Guardian* 17 July, 2004.
<<http://www.guardian.co.uk>>

- Phillips, Mike. *London Crossings: A Biography of Black Britain*. London and New York: Continuum, 2001.
- Pires, B.C. "Walcott: Hard to Judge Own Work" *Q & A with B.C Pires. Sunday Express* 18 September, 2005.
<http://www.trinidadexpress.com/index.pl/article_news?id=102550953>
- Pouchet-Paquet, Sandra. "West Indian Autobiography." *African American Autobiography: A Collection of Essays*. Ed. William L Andrews. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993. 196-211.
- . "Documents of West Indian History: Telling a Story" *Callaloo* 20.7 (Fall 1997): 764-776.
- . *Caribbean Autobiography: Cultural Identity and Self-Representation*. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002.
- Poupeye, Veerle. *Caribbean Art*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1998.
- Powell, Patricia. *A Small Gathering of Bones*. Oxford: Heinemann Educational, 1994.
- Poynting, Jeremy. "'The African and the Asian will Not Mix' (A. Froude): African-Indian Relations in Caribbean Fiction- A Reply." *Wasafiri* No. 5 (1986): 15-22.
- Premdas, Ralph R. "Race, Politics and Succession in Trinidad and Guyana." *Modern Caribbean Politics*. Eds. Anthony Payne and Paul Sutton. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins UP, 1993. 98-124.
- . "Race and Ethnic Relations in Burnhamite Guyana." *Across the Dark Waters: Ethnicity and Indian Identity in the Caribbean*. Eds. David Dabydeen and Brinsley Samaroo. London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1996.
- , ed. *Identity, Ethnicity and Culture in the Caribbean*. St Augustine, Trinidad: UWI, School of Continuing Studies, 1999.
- Prince, Mary. *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave, Related by Herself*. 1831. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993.
- Procter, James. *Writing Black Britain 1948-1998: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000.
- Puri, Shalini. "Race, Rape and Representation: Indo-Caribbean Women and Cultural Nationalism." *Cultural Critique* 36 (1997): 119-163.
- . "Canonized Hybridities, Resistant Hybridities: Chutney Soca, Carnival and the Politics of Nationalism." *Caribbean Romances: The Politics of Regional Representation*. Ed. Belinda J. Edmondson. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999. 12-38.

- , ed. *Marginal Migrations: The Circulation of Cultures Within the Caribbean*. Warwick University Caribbean Studies. Oxford: Macmillan, 2003.
- Ramchand, Kenneth. *The West Indian Novel and its Background*. London: Faber and Faber, 1970.
- . *An Introduction to the Study of West Indian Literature*. Middlesex: Nelson Caribbean, 1976.
- . "An Approach to Earl Lovelace's Novel through an Examination of Indian-African Relations in *The Dragon Can't Dance*." *Caribbean Quarterly* 32.1 (1986): 1-15.
- Rampersad, Kris. *Finding a Place: Indo-Trinidadian Literature*. Mona, Kingston: Ian Randle Press, 2002.
- Ravello, Caroline C., researched and compiled. *Of Flesh and Salt and Wind and Current*. Port of Spain: The National Museum and Art Gallery of Trinidad and Tobago, 2003.
- Ravi-ji. "Unchecked Freedom is Like Careless Driving." *Trinidad Guardian*, April 20, 2004.
- Reddock, Rhoda. "Commentary: *The Quality of Life*." *Trinidad and Tobago: The Independence Experience 1962 – 1987*. Ed. Selwyn Ryan, St Augustine: ISER, University of the West Indies, 1988. 495 – 503.
- . "'Douglarisation' and the Politics of Gender Relations in Contemporary Trinidad and Tobago." *Contemporary Issues in Social Science: A Caribbean Perspective* 1 (1994). Eds. Ramesh Deosaran, Rhoda Reddock and Nasser Mustapha. 98- 124.
- . "Contestations over Culture, Class, Gender and Identity in Trinidad and Tobago: The Little Tradition." *Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture*. Eds. Verene A. Shepherd and Glen L. Richards. Kingston: Ian Randle, Oxford: James Currey, 2002. 111- 129.
- . "Contestations over National Culture in Trinidad and Tobago: Considerations of Ethnicity, Class and Gender." *Caribbean Portraits: Essays on Gender Ideologies and Identities*. Ed. Christine Barrow. Mona, Kingston: Ian Randle Press, 1998.
- . "Jahaji Bhai: The Emergence of a Dougla Poetics in Contemporary Trinidad and Tobago." *Identity, Ethnicity and Culture in the Caribbean*. Ed. Ralph R. Premdad. St Augustine, Trinidad: UWI, School of Continuing Studies, 1999. 185- 210.
- . "Conceptualizing 'Difference' in Caribbean Feminist Theory." *New Caribbean Thought: A Reader*. Eds. Brian Meeks and Folkes Lindahl. Mona, Kingston: UWI Press, 2001. 196 – 209.

- Regis, Louis. *The Political Calypso: True Opposition in Trinidad and Tobago 1962-1987*. Kingston: UWI Press, 1999.
- Reiss, Timothy J. Ed. *Sisyphus and El Dorado: Magical and Other Realisms in Caribbean Literature*. Trenton, NJ and Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 2000.
- , ed. *For the Geography of a Soul: Emerging Perspectives on Kamau Brathwaite*. Trenton, NJ and Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 2001.
- Réjouis, Rose-Myriam. "Caribbean Writers and Language: The Autobiographical Poetics of Jamaica Kincaid and Patrick Chamoiseau." *The Massachusetts Review* 44 1/2 (2003): 213 – 232.
- Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. 1966. London: Penguin, 1997.
- . *Smile Please: An Unfinished Autobiography*. London: Deutsch, 1979.
- Riley, Bridget. "Colour for the Painter." *Colour: Art and Science*. Eds. Trevor Lamb and Janine Bourriau. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. 31-63.
- Roberts, Peter A. *From Oral to Literate Culture: Colonial Experience in the English West Indies*. Kingston: UWI Press, 1997.
- Robinson, Gemma. Ed. *Martin Carter: Collected Poems and Selected Prose*. Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books, 2006.
- Rodney, Walter. *A History of the Guyanese Working People, 1881 – 1905*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981.
- Rohlehr, Gordon. *Calypso and Society in Pre-Independence Trinidad*. Port of Spain: Gordon Rohlehr, 1990.
- . *The Shape of that Hurt and Other Essays*. Port of Spain: Longman Trinidad Limited, 1992.
- . *My Strangled City and Other Essays*. Port of Spain: Longman Trinidad, 1992.
- . "History as Absurdity." *My Strangled City and Other Essays*. Port of Spain: Longman Trinidad, 1992. 17-51.
- . "'Man Talking to Man': Calypso and Social Confrontation in Trinidad 1970 – 1984." *My Strangled City and Other Essays*. Port of Spain: Longman Trinidad, 1992. 324 – 341.
- . "The Culture of Williams: Context, Performance, Legacy." *Callaloo* 20.4 (1997): 849-888.
- . "Calypso and Caribbean Identity." *Caribbean Cultural Identities*, Spec. issue of *Bucknell Review* Vol. XLIV, No. 2 (2001): 55 – 72.

- Roston, Murray. *Changing Perspectives in Literature and the Visual Arts, 1650 – 1820*. Princeton, New Jersey; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticisms 1981 – 1991*. London: Granta Books, 1992.
- Ryan, Selwyn. *Race and Nationalism in Trinidad and Tobago*. Toronto: Toronto Univ. Press, 1972.
- . *The Independence Experience 1962 – 1987*. St Augustine, Trinidad: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1988.
- Ryan, Selwyn and Taimoon Stewart, eds. *The Black Power Revolution: A Retrospective*. St Augustine, Trinidad: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1995.
- . *Pathways to Power : Indians and the Politics of National Unity in Trinidad and Tobago*. St Augustine, Trinidad: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1996.
- . *The Jhandi and the Cross: The Clash of Cultures in Post-Creole Trinidad and Tobago*. St Augustine, Trinidad : Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, UWI, 1999.
- . "East Indians, West Indians and the Quest for Caribbean Political Unity." *Social and Economic Studies* 48.4 (1999): 151-184.
- . "Caribbean Political Thought: From Westminster to Philadelphia." *Contending with Destiny: The Caribbean in the Twenty-first Century*. Eds. Kenneth Hall and Denis Benn. Mona, Kingston: Ian Randle Press, 2000. 248-273.
- . "The Concept of Creole in Caribbean Society: Continuity and Change." *Estados Nacionales, Etnicidad y Democracia en América Latina*. JCAS Symposium Series No. 15. Osaka: The Japan Centre for Area Studies (National Museum of Ethnology, 2002. 271-295.
- . "The Crisis of Governance in Guyana." 2003.
- , ed, *Independent Thought and Caribbean Freedom: Essays in Honour of Lloyd Best*. St Augustine, Trinidad : Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, UWI, 2003.
- . "From Picton to Panday: Doctor Politics in Trinidad and Tobago." *Independent Thought and Caribbean Freedom: Essays in Honour of Lloyd Best*. Ed. Selwyn Ryan. St Augustine, Trinidad : Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, UWI, 2003. 185-210.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. 1978. London: Penguin Books, 1991.

- . *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage, 1993.
- Salkey, Andrew. *Georgetown Journal: A Caribbean Writer's Journey from London via Port of Spain to Georgetown, Guyana, 1970*. London and Port of Spain: New Beacon Books, 1972.
- Sankeralli, Burton. "Indian Presence in Carnival." *The Drama Review* 42.3 (1998): 203-212.
- Samaroo, Brinsley. "Two Abolitions "African Slavery and East Indian Indentureship" *India in the Caribbean*. Eds. David Dabydeen and Brinsley Samaroo. London: Hansib Publishing Ltd., 1987. 25-42.
- . "Chinese and Indian 'Coolie' Voyages to the Caribbean." *Journal of Caribbean Studies* 14.1-2 (2000): 3-23.
- Savory-Fido, Elaine. "Spectrum and Prism: The Language of Contemporary Caribbean Anglophone Poetry." *Bim* 18.69 (1985): 73-78.
- Savishinsky, Neil. "African Dimensions of the Rastafarian Movement." *Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader*. Eds. Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, William David Spencer and Adrain Anthony McFarlane. Mona, Kingston: Ian Randle Press, 1998.
- Schechner, Richard and Milla C. Riggio. "Peter Minshall: A Voice to Add to the Song of the Universe." *The Drama Review* 42.3 (1998): 170 – 202.
- Scher, Philip. "Confounding Categories: The Global and the Local in the Process of a Caribbean Art." *Small Axe* 6 (1999): 37-56.
- Schwarz, Bill, ed. *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003.
- Scott, Lawrence. *Aelred's Sin*. London: Allison and Busby, 1998.
- Seecharan, Clem. *India and the Shaping of the Indo-Guyanese Imagination, 1890s –1920s*. Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 1993.
- . *Bechu: 'Bound Coolie' Radical in British Guiana 1894-1901*. Mona, Jamaica : University of the West Indies Press, 1999.
- . "The Shaping of the Indo-Caribbean People: Guyana and Trinidad to the 1940s" in *Journal of Caribbean Studies*. 14.1-2 (1999 –2000) 61 – 92.
- Segal, Daniel A. "'Race' and 'Colour' in Pre-Independence Trinidad and Tobago." *Trinidad Ethnicity*. Ed. Kevin A. Yelvington. London: Macmillan, 1993. 81-115.
- Sellick, Robert, ed. *Myth and Metaphor*. Adelaide: Centre for Research in the New Literatures in English, 1982.

- Selvon, Samuel. *A Brighter Sun*. 1952. London: Longman, 1985.
- . *The Lonely Londoners*. (1956) London: Longman, 1994.
- . "Three into One Can't Go: East Indian, Trinidadian or West Indian?" *Wasafiri* 5 (1986): 8-11.
- . "Finding West Indian Identity in London." (1988). *Kunapipi* XVII.1 (1995): 58-61.
- Seymour, A. J. "A Commentary on Two Poems". *All are Involved: The Art of Martin Carter*. Ed. Stewart Brown. Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2000. 100 – 105.
- Sheller, Mimi. *Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Shepherd, Verene A and Glen L Richards, eds. *Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture*. Kingston: Ian Randle, Oxford: James Currey, 2002.
- Sivanandan, Tamara. "Anticolonialism, National Liberation, Postcolonial Nation Formation." *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Ed. Neil Lazarus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 41-65.
- Sjöberg, Leif. "An Interview with Derek Walcott." (1983) *Conversations with Derek Walcott*. Ed. William Baer. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1996. 79-85.
- Smith, Anthony D. *National Identity*. London: Penguin, 1991.
- . *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995.
- Smith, Faith. "A Man Who Knows his Roots: J J Thomas and Current Discourses on Black Nationalism." *Small Axe* 5 (1999): 1-13.
- . "Yuh Know You're West Indian if...": Codes of Authenticity in Colin Channer's *Waiting in Vain*." *Small Axe* 10 (2001): 41-59.
- Smith, M G. *The Plural Society of the British West Indies*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974.
- Smith, Raymond T. *British Guiana*. London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Smith, Sidonie and Julia Watson, eds. *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998.
- Smith, Zadie. *White Teeth*. 2000. London: Penguin Books, 2001.

- Soderlund, Walter C. "Cheddi Jagan, the Cold War and Press Images of the Constitutional Crisis in British Guiana, 1953." *Indo Caribbean Review* 1.2 (1994): 109–122.
- Sollors, Werner, ed. *The Invention of Ethnicity*. New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989.
- Sommer, Doris, "'Not Just a Personal Story': Women's *Testimonios* and the Plural Self." *Life/Lines: Theorizing Women's Autobiography*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988).
- . *Proceed with Caution, When Engaged by Minority Writing*. Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader*. Eds. Laura Chrisman and Patrick Williams. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993. 66–111.
- St. Pierre, Maurice. *Anatomy of Resistance: Anticolonialism in Guyana, 1823–1966*. London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1999.
- Stangos, Nikos, ed. *Concepts of Modern Art*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1994.
- Stanley, Liz. *The Auto/biographical I: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/biography*. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1992).
- , "From 'Self-Made Women' to 'Women's Made-Selves'? Audit Selves, Simulation and Surveillance in the Rise of the Public Woman." *Feminism and Autobiography: Texts, Theories, Methods*. Eds. Tess Cosslett, Celia Lury and Penny Summerfield. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Stein, Mark. *Black British Literature: Novels of Transformation*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2004.
- Steiner, Wendy. *The Colors of Rhetoric: Problems in the Relation Between Modern Literature and Painting*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- Sue-A-Quan, Trev. *Cane Reapers: Chinese Indentured Immigrants in Guyana*. Vancouver, British Columbia: Riftwood Publishing, 1999.
- Tajfel, Henri and John L Dawson, eds. *Disappointed Guests: Essays by African, Asian and West Indian Students*. London: Oxford UP, 1965.
- Tal, Kalí. *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Taylor, Patrick, ed. *Nation Dance: Religion, Identity and Cultural Difference in the Caribbean*. Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2001.

- Thakur, Parasam S. "Discrimination of Indo Caribbeans by Indians in North America – A New Hegemony." *Indo Caribbean Review* 2.1 (1995): 9-37.
- Thieme, John. "Naipaul's Nobel." Editorial. *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. 37.1 (2002) 1-8.
- Thomas, Helen. "Black on White: Textual Spaces in Black Britain." *Wasafiri* 29 (1999): 5-7.
- Thomas, J. J. *Froudacity: West Indian Fables Explained*. New Beacon Press, 1889.
- Tiffin, Helen. "Rites of Resistance: Counter-Discourse and West Indian Biography." *Journal of West Indian Literature* Vol. III No. 1 (1989): 28-46.
- Torres-Saillant, Silvio. *Caribbean Poetics: Towards an Aesthetic of West Indian Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Vertovec, Steven. *Hindu Trinidad: Religion, Ethnicity and Socio-Economic Change*. London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1992.
- . "Indo-Caribbean Experience in Britain: Overlooked, Miscategorized, Misunderstood." *Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora*. London: Verso, 1993. 165-178.
- Walcott, Derek. "Caligua's Horse." *Kunapipi*. XI.1 (1989):138-142.
- . *Omeros*. London: Faber and Faber, 1990.
- . *Collected Poems : 1948 – 1984*. London: Faber and Faber, 1992.
- . "Homecoming: Anse La Raye." *The Gulf and other Poems* (1969) *Collected Poems: 1948 – 1984*. London: Faber and Faber, 1992. 127.
- . "Nearing Forty." *The Gulf and other Poems* (1969) *Collected Poems: 1948 – 1984*. London: Faber and Faber, 1992. 136-137.
- . *Another Life*. (1973) *Collected Poems : 1948 – 1984*. London: Faber and Faber, 1992. 43 – 294.
- . "The Sea is History." *The Star-Apple Kingdom*. (1979) *Collected Poems: 1948 – 1984*. London : Faber and Faber, 1992. 364 – 367.
- . "The Star-Apple Kingdom." *The Star-Apple Kingdom* (1979) *Collected Poems: 1948 – 1984*. London: Faber and Faber, 1992. 383 – 395.
- . "The Spoiler's Return." *The Fortunate Traveller* (1981) *Collected Poems: 1948 – 1984*. London: Faber and Faber, 1992. 432 – 438.
- . "Derek Walcott : The Sea is History." *Frontiers of Caribbean Literature in English*. Ed. Frank Birbalsingh. London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1996. 22-28.

- . "Society and the Artist." (1957) *Critical Perspectives on Derek Walcott*. Ed. Robert Hamner. Bolder and London: Three Continents Press, 1997. 15 – 17.
- . "Leaving School." (1965) *Critical Perspectives on Derek Walcott*. Ed. Robert Hamner. Bolder and London: Three Continents Press, 1997. 24 – 32.
- . "The Figure of Crusoe." (1965) *Critical Perspectives on Derek Walcott*. Ed. Robert Hamner. Bolder and London: Three Continents Press, 1997. 33 – 40.
- . "Reflections on *Omeros*." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 96.2 (1997): 229-246.
- . "The Garden Path: V.S. Naipaul." *What the Twilight Says: Essays*. London: Faber and Faber, 1998. 121-133.
- . Walcott, Derek. "What the Twilight Says." *What the Twilight Says: Essays*. London: Faber and Faber, 1998. 3-35.
- . "The Muse of History" in *What the Twilight Says: Essays*. London: Faber and Faber, 1998. 36 – 64.
- . "The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory." *What the Twilight Says: Essays*. London: Faber and Faber, 1998. 65 –84.
- Walmsey, Anne. *The Caribbean Artists Movement: 1966 – 1972*. London and Port of Spain: New Beacon Books, 1992.
- Warner-Lewis, Maureen. "Cultural Confrontation, Disintegration and Syncretism in *A House for Mr Biswas*." *Critical Perspectives on V S Naipaul*. Ed. Robert D Hamner. London: Heinemann, 1979. 94-103.
- White, Hayden. *Tropics of Discourse : Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1978.
- Whitlock, Gillian. "From Prince to Lorde: The Politics of Location in Caribbean Autobiography." *A History of Literature in the Caribbean: Vol. 3 Cross-Cultural Studies*. Ed. James A. Arnold. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamin's Publishing Group, 1997. 325-338.
- Williams, Brackette F., *Stains on My Name, War in My Veins: Guyana and the Politics of Cultural Struggle*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991.
- Williams, Eric. *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago*. 1964. New York: A&B Publishers, 1993.
- . *Inward Hunger : The Education of a Prime Minister*. 1969. Chicago: Chicago Uni. Press, 1971.
- . *The Negro in the Caribbean*. 1942. New York: A&B Books Publishers, 1994.

- Wilson-Tagoe, Nana. *Historical Thought and Literary Representation in West Indian Literature*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998.
- Wynter, Sylvia. "Talk About a Little Culture." *Carifesta Forum: An Anthology of 20 Caribbean Voices*. Mona, Kingston: Institute of Jamaica and Jamaica Journal, 1976. 129- 137.
- . "'A Different Kind of Creature': Caribbean Literature, the Cyclops Factor, and the Second Poetics of the Propter Nos." *Sisyphus and El Dorado: Magical and Other Realisms in Caribbean Literature*. Ed. Timothy J Reiss. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2000. 143-167.
- Yegenoglu, Meyda and Mahmut Mutman. "Mapping the Present: Interview with Gayatri Spivak." *New Formations* 45 (2001 – 2002): 9-23.
- Yelvington, Kevin, ed. *Trinidad Ethncity*. Warwick Caribbean Studies Series. London : Macmillan Caribbean, 1993.
- Yoshiko, Shibata. "Race Consciousness and the Formation of National Identity in Modern Guyana." *Estados Nacionales, Etnicidad y Democracia en América Latina*. JCAS Symposium Series No. 15. Osaka: The Japan Centre for Area Studies (National Museum of Ethnology, 2002. 297-333.
- Young, Robert J. C. *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. *Gender and Nation*. London: Sage Publications, 1997.