

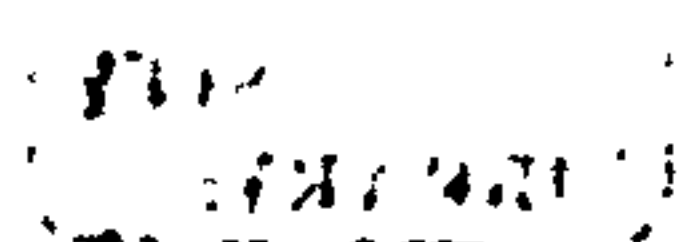
**Creolizing the Canon: Engagements with
Legacy and Relation in Contemporary
Postcolonial Caribbean Writing**

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Abstract

The Caribbean today testifies to the continuing legacy of colonialism and the slave trade. With the almost total eradication of the native inhabitants, the Caribbean population bears the trace of the coerced meeting of disparate cultures in the colonial era. Not only of ethnographic significance, colonialism engendered a process of cultural assimilation which brought the European canon, its modes, genres, and assumptions into the education systems of the New World. It is this legacy, in particular, that this thesis sets out to investigate, tracing the ways in which Caribbean authors have responded to the canonical texts of the coloniser, and how they have rewritten certain genres, modes and the ideological biases that inform them. In Chapter One, the continuing presence of representations of the Caribbean as paradise or Eden – evident, I suggest in my Introduction, in the first works of Caribbean literature, such as James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane* (1764), and later in J. E. C. McFarlane's 'My County' (1929), Tom Redcam's 'My Beautiful Home' (1929), H. S. Bunbury's 'The Spell of the Tropics' (1929) – is revised in the works of Una Marson, Alejo Carpentier, Aimé Césaire, Édouard Glissant, Gisèle Pineau, and Shani Mootoo; while the more direct canonical rewritings of Maryse Condé and Derek Walcott are the subject of Chapter Four.

Behind these readings of the contemporary Caribbean canon lies a fundamental question: what makes these engagements with legacy a postcolonial, rather than counter-colonial, response? In turn, through a critical reading of Peter Hallward's *Absolutely Postcolonial* (2001) in Chapter Two, I argue that the postcolonial may be defined as that which is specific to various colonial legacies and

histories, but not specified by them. In other words, the contemporary postcolonial canon of Caribbean literature does not erase the historical memory of colonialism and cultural assimilation, but it is not limited by the ideological assumptions and subject positions that that order established. Chapter Four elaborates this model, drawing on Glissant's *The Fourth Century* (1997) and David Dabydeen's 'Turner' (1994) to further develop a framework for reading contemporary Caribbean writers' engagements with the European canon, incorporating Michel Foucault's concept of the archive to suggest a theoretical model that accounts for the unique dialogue with history and the canon that postcolonial authors enact.

While this accounts for the nuanced approach to legacy that this thesis supports, a more detailed account of the process and results of this dialogue is offered by the central concept that informs all aspects of this thesis: creolization. As numerous commentators have illustrated this is a cultural, linguistic, ontological, and literary term that focuses on the emergence of a creolized culture/expression/identity/text from the meeting and synthesis of the informing elements. Through the writings of creolization's foremost theorist, Édouard Glissant, I stress that what results from this form of relation is not a sum of its parts, but a wholly new and original existent. In other words, the process of creolization is distinguished by its ability to effect singular forms that remain specific to the elements which engender it – the social, historical, and geographical contexts specific to the site of its articulation – but which, nevertheless, exceeds the limitations of the 'original' components. This fundamental contention is developed through my analysis of Glissant's theoretical expositions, *Caribbean Discourse*

(1981), discussed in Chapter One, and *Poetics of Relation* (1990) outlined in Chapter Two alongside Glissant's poetry and the contributions of Peter Hallward and Derek Attridge.

Importantly, the distinct model of creolization that emerges at the end of Chapter Two as a process of relation that generates new forms, resonates with the poetics of another celebrated Caribbean author and theorist: Wilson Harris. It is through Harris's essays and novels such as *Jonestown* (1996), *The Mask of the Beggar* (2004), and *The Ghost of Memory* (2006) that the significance of my reading of creolization to the Caribbean canon becomes clear. Harris underscores that which Glissant signals in his *Poetics of Relation*: relation and creolization as a creative and imaginative process. In this way, creolization is further refined as a model for the generation of new, singular imaginative forms and original works of literature.

It is at this point that legacy and creolization converge. Where the texts and genres of the European canon are creolized by Caribbean authors, a new and original work emerges that bears witness to the significance of the colonial encounter, but exceeds the possibilities inherent in its discourse. Thus, 'creolizing the canon' effects a double significance: it both points towards a genuinely postcolonial response to the European canon by contemporary Caribbean authors, and designates the generation of a singular, original Caribbean canon, specific to the changing social, cultural, and historical contexts in which it was produced.

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Creolization and the Canon: An Introduction

When Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh, editors of the *Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature* (1996), adopted the phrase 'creolizing the canon' to describe their decision to include often overlooked areas of Caribbean literature in their *Reader* – such as the early twentieth-century pre-boom years (1900-1929), women, Indo-Caribbean writers, and dub poets – they were drawing on a notion of creolization that suggests the incorporation of something different, or other, into the norm, as well as the production of something new and identifiably creolized.¹ From this nuanced conception of the term, it is clear that within the lexicon of Caribbean critics, creolization has grown beyond its associations with linguistic or racial mixing (creole, hybrid, or *métissage*), and encapsulates both the situation and promise of the postcolonial Caribbean. In his exposition of the better-known term, 'hybridity',² Robert Young argues that the concept, derived from biological and botanical usage, gained currency in the nineteenth century alongside a renewed interest in 'the organic paradigm of identity'.³ Such developments are, in Young's

¹ Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh (eds) *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) pp. 13-26.

² By Young's account, in Latin hybridity 'meant the offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar, and hence, as the OED puts it, "of human parents of different races, half-breed"' (Robert Young *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* [London and New York: Routledge, 1995] p. 6). In its more current form, the term hybridity has become one of the cornerstones of postcolonial theory, and is most closely associated with the writings of Homi Bhabha (See *The Location of Culture* [London and New York: Routledge, 1994] chapters 1-6). Bart Moore-Gilbert's *Postcolonial Theory Contexts, Practices, Politics* (Verso: London and New York, 1997) and Robert Young's *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (Routledge London and New York, 1996) give good discussions of Bhabha's writings on hybridity. David Huddart's *Homi K. Bhabha* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006) provides a useful introduction to Bhabha's key terms and critical responses to them. Bhabha's theory of hybridity is considered in Chapter Two of this thesis, see pp. 144-151.

³ Young (1995) p. 4. As Chapter One will go on to argue, it is precisely the rejection of any notion of an original identity (used here by nineteenth century colonialists, but also a hallmark of the *négritude* movement) that Glissant's concept of creolization seeks to achieve.

view, closely linked to the consolidation of the world into a 'single integrated economic and colonial system, the imposition of a unitary time on the world, [which] was achieved at the price of the dislocation of its people and cultures'.⁴ If colonialism created a world where white Europe was brought face to face with its racial other, the consolidation of the world into Occident and Orient divided anthropologists. The history of this debate can be traced through the changing usages of the term 'hybridity'. While labels such as 'miscegenation' or 'amalgamation' were used to refer to racial mixing, 'hybridity', Young argues, indicated the belief 'that the different races were different species'.⁵ Though today few would give credence to such an assertion, and certainly present-day postcolonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha, whose work is closely associated with the term, would not countenance this point of view, Young's study helps to focus the debate on the centrality of race relations to a theory of hybridity.

The dislocation of peoples associated with the colonial era was nowhere so evident as in the Caribbean where the period saw the eradication of the indigenous Amerindians, and, by the end of the eighteenth century, the transportation of over three million enslaved Africans to British, French and Dutch territories,⁶ as well as the influx of indentured labourers from India and China in the nineteenth century. The modern Caribbean population remains a testament to this forced meeting of disparate cultures, but more crucially for the terms of this thesis, it has produced

⁴ Young (1995) p. 4.

⁵ Young (1995) p. 9.

⁶ Silvio Torres-Saillant *An Intellectual History of the Caribbean* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006) p. 17.

what Édouard Glissant refers to as a 'composite culture'.⁷ Partial, impure, and diverse, these features of the Caribbean's composite cultures have created a new discourse on hybridity, namely, creolization, and this thesis sets out to investigate the developing critical application of the concept, as well as its impact on the contemporary Caribbean literary canon. It is a project that surveys a broad range of writers across the linguistic and national boundaries of the Caribbean archipelago and rimlands: from one of the first works of Caribbean literature, James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane* (1764) to Wilson Harris's *The Ghost of Memory* (2006). A poetics of creolization emerges throughout as a central process in the formulation of Caribbean identity, offering a model for the way in which diverse authors relate to inherited literary conventions, historical circumstances, and the landscape in which their writings are situated.

Creolization: the Poetics of Place.

In this thesis, I will argue that the Caribbean landscape, in particular, emerges as an essential influence on and element of creolization. As Edward Kamau Brathwaite has argued, creole identity is specifically a New World concept, 'the result of European settlement and exploitation of a new environment'.⁸ Just as Young warns

⁷ Édouard Glissant *Faulkner, Mississippi*, translated by Barbara Lewis and Thomas C. Spear (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999a) p. 114. For Glissant, 'composite culture' is set against the 'atavistic' model which is formed around the establishment of pure lineage and claims of absolute legitimacy, both territorially and culturally (1999a pp. 114-115). Also see Chapter Three of this thesis, pp. 212-216.

⁸ Edward K. Brathwaite *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770-1820* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) p. xiii. While Braithwaite locates the emergence of creole-Jamaican society in the late eighteenth century, David Buisseret elaborates Brathwaite's study by evidencing the existence of a creole society in Jamaica from the outset of British occupation in 1655 (David Buisseret 'The Process of Creolization in Seventeenth-Century Jamaica' pp. 19-33 in *Creolization in the Americas* edited by David Buisseret and Steven G. Reinhardt [Arlington, Texas: Texas A and M

that even current usage of hybridity as a descriptor of identity runs the risk of reinvoking problematic Victorian debates, 'creole' is firmly associated with the historical experience of colonialism: a point well illustrated by Brathwaite as he traces the etymology of the term to the combination of two Spanish words, '*criar* (to create, to imagine, to establish, to found, to settle) and *colono* (a colonist, a founder, a settler) into *criollo*: a committed settler, one identified with the area of settlement, one native to the settlement though not ancestrally indigenous to it'.⁹ An alternative provenance is offered by Susan Castillo in *Colonial Encounters in New World Writing* (2006), who subscribes to Robert Chaudenson's argument 'that the word "creole" is probably Portuguese in origin, derived from the Portuguese *crioulo*, used to designate the offspring, born in the New World, of European settlers'.¹⁰ By both

University Press, 2000a] pp. 19-20). Furthermore, the link between creolization and environment is not exclusive to Caribbean studies: Daniel Usner's article in the same volume illustrates this correlation in the U.S. (see Daniel H. Usner Jr. 'The Facility Offered by the Country: The Creolization of Agriculture in the Lower Mississippi Valley' in *Creolization in the Americas* edited by David Buisseret and Steven G. Reinhardt [Arlington, Texas: Texas A and M University Press, 2000] pp. 35-62).

⁹ Brathwaite (1971) pp. xiv-xv. This first instance of the word 'criollo' in Latin America, Antonio Benítez-Rojo tells us, appears in Mexico in *Geografía y descripción general de las Indias* (1571-74) by Juan López de Velasco ('Three Words Towards Creolization' pp. 53-61 in *Caribbean Creolization: Reflections of the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature, and Identity* edited by Kathleen M. Balutansky and Marie-Agnès Sourieau [Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998] footnote detailed on p. 167). Like Brathwaite, Benítez-Rojo locates the roots of Caribbean creolization and identity in the plantation: 'the plantation is my old and paradoxical homeland'; 'the plantation is the strange attractor of all possible states of creolization' (1998 p. 54; p. 56).

¹⁰ Susan Castillo *Colonial Encounters in New World Writing, 1500-1786: Performing America* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006) p. 188. Similarly, Mary Gallagher cites the Portuguese origin of 'creole' (Mary Gallagher *Soundings in French Caribbean Writing Since 1950: The Shock of Space and Time* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002] pp. 28-29). For Robert Chaudenson's definition see *Creolization of Language and Culture*, revised in collaboration with Salikoko S. Mufwene, translated by Sheri Pargman, Salikoko S. Mufwene, Sabrina Billings, and Michelle AuCoin (London and New York: Routledge, 2001) pp. 3-4. Chaudenson's study applies a socio-historic approach to examples of creolization drawn from his research on the French Overseas Department of Réunion, a small island to the east of Madagascar that, before colonisation, had no native population (a point emphasised by Françoise Vergès's study of creolization on the island in 'Indian-Oceanic Creolizations: Processes and Practices of Creolization on Réunion Island' in *Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory*, edited by Charles Stewart [Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, 2007] pp. 133-152). Primarily, Chaudenson promotes creolization as a linguistic phenomenon: 'cultural creolization can and should be largely inspired by the methods used in the

accounts, the term is etymologically linked to notions of settling, colonisation, and the New World experience, not, as in the case of hybridity, inter-racial mixing: a point reinforced, David Buisseret points out, by the verb form 'to creolize' which 'is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "to spend the day in a delectable state of apathy", for the English long had the idea that life in the tropics involved an agreeable languor'.¹¹ In this way, both creole and creolize signify a state effected by the New World experience. Moreover, these descriptors of identity are blind to racial distinctions, since, as Braithwaite puts it, 'the designation "born in the New World" would have to include groups such as Caribs, Black Caribs, Cultural Americans *ladinos*, Brazilian *caboclos*, Maroons and others', all of whom existed outwith the plantation system.¹² This point is reasserted by Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau

analysis of linguistic creolization' (p. 196, emphasis in the original); '[l]anguage has been selected in this book as the reference system for the study of creolization. The reason is that descriptions of creole languages and of their genesis are more advanced than those of creole music and literature' (p. 303). To a certain extent this agrees with Glissant's claim that he employs the term creolization because it refers to the creole language (Édouard Glissant 'Creolization and the Making of the Americas' pp. 268-275 in *Race, Discourse and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*, edited by Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford [Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995] p. 269). However, as I will later argue, Glissant's reservations about the ability of the creole language to fully extricate itself from its subordinate position with regard to the French language, indicate the extent to which his creolization theory represents a distancing from linguistic approaches. Rather, what emerges throughout this thesis is a poetics of relation: not just linguistic hybridity, but an imaginative and aesthetic model of creolization in which new works of literature are the result of the ever changing relation between the artist, tradition, and the context from which they write. This is not a rejection of linguistic creolization, but a shift in focus in order to emphasise the equally important forms of cultural and artistic creolization, which, as Richard Cullen Rath points out, tend to be ignored by the linguistic approach: '[s]tudents of cultural creolization have treated it as analogous to linguistic creolization. This analogy is mistaken. Culture is not *like* language; it is integral to language, and language to it' (Richard Cullen Rath 'Drums and Power: Ways of Creolizing Music in Coastal South Carolina and Georgia, 1730-90 pp. 99-130 in *Creolization in the Americas* edited by David Buisseret and Steven G. Reinhardt [Arlington, Texas: Texas A and M University Press, 2000] p. 100, emphasis in the original). In this way, a clear distinction may be drawn between the present study and that of Chaudenson: whereas Chaudenson seeks to identify creole 'products' (such as music, folklore, cuisine, or oral literature) as evidence of creolization; the focus of this thesis is creolization as a process and philosophical paradigm for approaching literature.

¹¹ David Buisseret 'Introduction' pp. 3-17 in *Creolization in the Americas* edited by David Buisseret and Steven G. Reinhardt (Arlington, Texas: Texas A and M University Press, 2000b) p. 6.

¹² Braithwaite (1971) p. xv. As Braithwaite's account illustrates, creole as a graduated racial category was employed in colonial societies (p. 167). Importantly, these are social frameworks and

and Raphaël Confiant in their *Éloge de la créolité* (*In Praise of Creoleness* [1989]); they argue that the term creole ‘was applied to all the human races, all the animals and plants transported to America from 1492 on. There was, therefore, a mistake in French dictionaries which from the beginning of the nineteenth century reserved the word “Creole” for the white Creoles (or Béké) only’.¹³ Given this detachment from racial categories, ‘creole’ does not evoke Victorian anthropological debates associated with hybridity, and by extracting itself from the issue of biological mixing, it does not necessarily assume a politics of heterosexuality as the basis for its functioning.¹⁴

creolization as a process is not primarily concerned with biological hybridity. Mary Gallagher agrees with this position, writing that ‘neither Iberian usage [Spanish or Portuguese] refers exclusively or even principally to racial or heredity considerations. Rather, they both refer primarily to transportation or migration, that is, discontinuity of *location*’ (Gallagher [2002] p. 29. Emphasis in the original).

¹³ Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant *Éloge de la créolité* (*In Praise of Creoleness*) translated by M. B. Taleb-Khyar (Gallimard, 1993) p. 121. *Créolité* is often identified as the movement that has succeeded Glissant’s Antillanité (Caribbeanness, which is the predecessor of the process of creolization Glissant imagines in *Poetics of Relation* [1990]), with *Éloge de la créolité* often regarded as its founding manifesto. Shireen K Lewis’s *Race, Culture, and Identity* (2006) traces the development of Caribbean theory from *négritude*, through *Antillanité* to *créolité*. In particular, Lewis emphasises the ways in which Bernabé *et al* ground their theory in Glissant’s writings (Shireen Lewis *Race, Culture, and Identity: Francophone West African and Caribbean Literature and Theory from Négritude to Créolité* [Lanham and Oxford: Lexington Books, 2006] pp. 90-123). However, as I argue in Chapter Two, although the *Éloge* reveals an indebtedness to Glissant, it predates works such as Glissant’s important *Poetics of Relation* which, in fact, can be read as a rejection of the claims made in *Éloge* (see pp. 159-160 of this thesis). The continuing dialogue between the theories of *créolité* (creoleness: an achieved identity) and Glissant’s creolization (an ever-changing state), suggests that it is misleading to see one as succeeding the other. See H. Adlai Murdoch for a good overview of the developments in Francophone-Caribbean theory, noting the discrepancy between *créolité* and Glissant (H. Adlai Murdoch *Creole Identity in the French Caribbean Novel* [Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001] pp. 10-18). And Mary Gallagher’s ‘The *Créolité* Movement: Paradoxes of a French Caribbean Orthodoxy’ in *Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory*, edited by Charles Stewart (Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, 2007) pp. 220-236.

¹⁴ Young (1995) p. 25. Brathwaite does make reference to creolization as the product of sexual relations between the races. As he writes ‘it was in the intimate area of sexual relationships that the greatest damage was done to the white creole apartheid policy and where the most significant – and lasting – inter-cultural creolization took place’ (1971 p. 303). Clearly visible, mixed raced inhabitants of the New World were an undeniable sign of creolization. However, even in this passage, Brathwaite maintains that creolization is primarily a cultural phenomenon – ‘inter-cultural creolization’ – and not dependent on heterosexual relations. Also see, Stuart Hall ‘*Créolité* and the Process of Creolization’ in Okwui Enwezor (ed) *Créolité and Creolization: Documental11_Platform3* (Ostfildern0Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantze Publishers, 2003a) pp27-41. The question of creolization and heterosexual

Given Brathwaite's recognised authority on the subject of creolization as well as the body of criticism displaying similar findings, it is surprising to find that Rudyard Alcocer's study *Narrative Mutations* (2005), while identifying in creole the same root words *criollo* and *criar*, fails to acknowledge the essential notion of settling in the term's usage.¹⁵ This oversight leads Alcocer mistakenly to conclude that 'creole', and by extension 'creolization', is fundamentally grounded in 'the notion of genesis',¹⁶ preferring instead to promote the concept of hybridity, despite his own acknowledgement that it 'suggests that the cultures and societies in which post-colonial studies are most interested are fundamentally derivative and thereby lesser' and may 'evoke eugenicist and racist dogmas'.¹⁷ However, as Chapter One will argue, creolization in both theory and etymology is concerned with the radical revisioning of a community's sense of its genesis, promoting the impossibility of establishing a clear chronology of one's ancestry. Such a move is shown in Brathwaite's own definition – 'born in the New World'. When Brathwaite refers to 'Caribs, Black Caribs, Cultural Americans *ladinos*, Brazilian *caboclos*, Maroons and others', he is being very specific with his example. The groups he cites are those 'whose development [...] did not involve them significantly [...] in social interaction with others outside their group; did not involve them, to put it another

politics will be returned to in Chapter One of this thesis, where Shani Mootoo's novel *Cereus Blooms at Night* (1996) will be shown to investigate the potential of a creolized sexual identity (see pp. 115-126).

¹⁵ Rudyard J. Alcocer *Discourses of Heredity and Caribbean Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005) p. 9.

¹⁶ Alcocer (2005) p. 9. By genesis Alcocer is referring to 'the basic discursive framework of the human body and its reproduction' (p. 9), and thus is antithetical to the notion of 'digenesis' established by Glissant or Harris's usage of genesis, both of which I discuss in Chapter Three of this thesis, especially pp. 212-216.

¹⁷ Alcocer (2005) p. 14.

way, in the process of “creolization”.¹⁸ If ‘creole’ indicates geographic relocation or settlement in the New World, in Braithwaite’s account ‘creolization’ is pre-eminently a socio-cultural process:

[t]he single most important feature in the development of Jamaican society was not the imported influence of the Mother Country or the local administrative activity of the white elite, but a cultural action – material, psychological and spiritual – based on the stimulus/response of individuals within the society to their environment and – as white/black, culturally discrete groups – to each other [...]. This cultural action or social process has been defined [...] as creolization.¹⁹

Emphasising the cultural aspect of Braithwaite’s term, Dorris Garraway points out that Braithwaite draws his terminology from Fernando Ortiz’s distinction between the processes of ‘acculturation’ and ‘transculturation’ in *Cuban Counterpoint* (1940).²⁰ In this study, Ortiz posits the neologism ‘transculturation’ as a better descriptor of the Caribbean experience: ‘[a]cculturation is used to describe the process of transition from one culture to another, and its manifold social repercussions. But *transculturation* is a more fitting term’ to encapsulate the ‘complex transmutations of culture’ in Cuba.²¹ What distinguishes the Caribbean condition, for Ortiz, is the fact of displacement: ‘all its classes, races, and cultures, coming by will or by force, have all been exogenous and have all been torn from

¹⁸ Braithwaite (1971) p. xv.

¹⁹ Braithwaite (1971) p. 296. More recently, Charles Stewart has suggest that while the term is distinctly linked to location, creolization might also be identified in the ‘physical, cultural, moral, and political changes’ that are experienced by those born in the New World, now living in the Old (see Charles Stewart ‘Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory’ pp. 1-25 in *Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory*, edited by Charles Stewart [Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, 2007] p. 12-13).

²⁰ Dorris Garraway *The Libertine Colony: Creolization in the Early French Caribbean* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005) p. 18.

²¹ Fernando Ortiz *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, translated by Harriet de Onis, introduced by Branislaw Malinowski (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995) p. 98, emphasis in the original.

their places or origin, suffering the shock of this first uprooting and a harsh transplanting'.²² It is this element of loss that 'acculturation' fails to capture:

transculturation better expresses the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another because this does not consist merely in acquiring another culture, which is what the English word *acculturation* really implies, but the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as a deculturation. In addition it carries the idea of the consequent creation of a new cultural phenomena, which could be called a neoculturation.²³

Signifying both loss and regeneration, destruction and creativity in response to a New World relocation, 'transculturation' becomes the direct precursor to Braithwaite's 'creolization'.

By both accounts, unlike the more limited definition of the term creole, the social and cultural intermixing of peoples in the New World is an essential feature of the process of creolization. At the same time, however, creolization is not immediately concerned with racial hybridity, in the sense promoted by Young. Rather, it is a response to the historical situation created by colonialism, the new social, cultural, and natural environment that both coloniser, colonised and transplanted peoples faced. While this might suggest creolization as a historical phase restricted to an acclimatising period of adjustment, Édouard Glissant, who remains creolization's foremost contemporary theorist and whose arguments I explore throughout this thesis, confirms that 'creolization was born' on the plantation, but adds that '[a]lthough the plantation has vanished, creolization is still at work in our megalopolises, from Mexico City to Miami, from Los Angeles to Caracas [...] where the inferno of cement slums is merely an extension of the

²² Ortiz (1995) p. 100.

²³ Ortiz (1995) pp. 102-103.

inferno of the sugarcane or cotton fields'.²⁴ Indeed, this is less a rejection of Brathwaite than an extension of his argument, for Brathwaite also locates creolization in the tension between oppressor and oppressed; a variable form of cultural resistance 'depending on the attitude, aptitude and opportunities of the particular slaves or groups of slave, on the one hand; and on the degree of control exerted by the master or, more effectively, by the white society as a whole'.²⁵ What is key in both accounts is the conflict between the particular experience of certain groups in society and the homogenising 'megalopolises' or colonising mission that seek to overwhelm them.

Introducing the term in his study, *Islands and Exiles* (1998), Chris Bongie explores what the *Oxford English Dictionary* cites as the first occurrence of the word 'creolization' in an English text: 'the subject race had [...] been physically refined by those extraordinary influences of climate and environment which produce the

²⁴ Édouard Glissant 'Creolization and the Making of the Americas' pp. 268-275 in *Race, Discourse and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*, edited by Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995) p. 271; p. 274. Stuart Hall also argues that power relations are essential for the production of creolization. However, he is more cautious in his extension of creolization to incorporate all forms of oppression, arguing that what critically distinguishes creolization as a socio-cultural process from hybridity is its association with colonialism: creolization describes 'the fusion and mixing of forms (hybrid) which arise from cultures that are required to cohabit and interact with other (diasporas). My own view is that creolization has always had a kind of historical specificity, grounded in the conditions of slavery, transportation, colonization, etc.' (Stuart Hall 'Creolization, Diaspora, and Hybridity' pp. 185-198 in Okwui Enwezor (ed) *Créolité and Creolization: Documental1_Platform3* (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2003b) p. 193. However, not only does this ignore the extent to which Bhabha places his vision of hybridity within the colonial encounter in *The Location of Culture*, but Hall's article leads to a further complexity. Crucially, Hall raises the more general concern of the suitability of creolization to apply to any cultural process outside the Caribbean. Yet this debate itself betrays the terms of creolization which function according to the premise of impure, mutable cultures: one cannot promote creolization as a uniquely Caribbean concept without essentializing Caribbean culture. Rather than arguing that creolization displays a 'historical specificity' unique to the Caribbean or Caribbean colonisation, this thesis will argue in Chapter Two that through Glissant, in particular, creolization has been theorized as a concept that is contingent to the specificities of the given historical context in which it occurs. In this way, creolization may be specific to the particular historical experience of colonialism in the Caribbean, but its principles may also be extended to other areas without diluting the historical specificity of its Caribbean form.

²⁵ Brathwaite (1971) p. 224.

phenomena of creolization'.²⁶ Bongie cites here from *Youma* (1890) by Lafcadio Hearn, an author whose own biography resembles an exemplary account of creolization: Hearn moved to America from his native Greece when he was nineteen, settling in Louisiana, and then moved to New York, spent two years in Martinique, before eventually emigrating to Japan in 1890 where he married into a Samurai family and became a Japanese citizen. Hearn's use of creolization is notable, not least for its reference to the 'extraordinary' role of landscape in the process of creolization, but also, as Bongie claims, because it marks 'a new and potentially more positive stage in the apprehension of the phenomena of creolization, laying the foundation for a communitarian thinking that would put into question [...] racial categorizations and cultural sectionalism'.²⁷ Despite revealing a 'commitment to the objective reality of "race"' as hierarchy,²⁸ Bongie argues that Hearn's usage of creolization differs greatly from the already established term, 'creole', with its racial, exclusionary connotations in Louisiana, or its associations with degeneracy as depicted, for example, by Charlotte Brontë's Bertha Mason, Rochester's demented creole wife in *Jane Eyre* (1847).²⁹ As Bongie argues, '[t]he shuttling back and forth in *Youma* between a particular type of settled identity (in

²⁶ Lafcadio Hearn *Youma* (1890), cited in Chris Bongie *Islands and Exiles: The Creole Identities of Post/Colonial Literature* (California: Stanford University Press, 1998) p. 130.

²⁷ Bongie (1998) p. 130.

²⁸ Bongie (1998) p. 133.

²⁹ The association between 'creole' and degeneracy, Benedict Anderson has argued, may be traced back to Enlightenment thinking and writers such as Rousseau and Herder, who saw a correlation between climate and character: 'the Enlightenment also influenced the crystallisation of a fatal distinction between metropolitans and creoles [...]. It was only too easy from there to make the convenient, vulgar deduction that creoles, born in a savage hemisphere, were by nature different from, and inferior to, the metropolitans' (Benedict Anderson *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* [London and New York: Verso, revised edition, 1991] p. 60). It was, in particular, this association between creole and degeneracy that Dominican-born writer, Jean Rhys underscored in her elaboration of the life of the creole wife of Charlotte Brontë's Mr Rochester, Bertha/Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966).

this case, racial) and another (Creole) identity that does and does not correspond to the former – an identity that is (un)like it – anticipates the necessarily duplicitous ways in which we cannot help talking about our own increasingly creolized selves'.³⁰ Read in this way, Hearn's use of creolization as the production of an identity that 'does and does not correspond to the former', becomes a precursor to Bhabha's own related notion of hybridity as the creation of 'a subject of difference that is almost the same but not quite'.³¹

Bringing together the environmental/cultural experience of creolization and the elaborate gradations of creole identity (as an indicator of inter-racial mixing),³² Bongie suggests that early usage of the term creolization destabilises hierarchies of racial difference. This counters Brathwaite's claim that creolization involves the interaction or relation of different groups from their already defined positions, 'as white/black, culturally discrete groups'.³³ And Bongie goes some way to defend the necessity of such positioning, arguing that, the politics of identity are, in any case, difficult to escape and Hearn's focus on the physicality of creolization suggests that it may be understood as offering a further, albeit less exclusionary or fixed, category of racial identity. This sets Hearn's usage of creolization apart from the recent writings of Glissant, who maintains that fixed identity is the antithesis of creolization.³⁴ However, even in this early moment, represented here by Hearn, the crucial relation between creolization, identity and environmental influences is

³⁰ Bongie (1998) p. 133.

³¹ Bhabha (1994) p. 86.

³² Brathwaite provides examples of ten gradations of white-black unions that were employed throughout colonial America (1971 p. 167).

³³ Brathwaite (1971) p. 296.

³⁴ This is a move for which recent writers of *créolité* have been criticised for. See, for example Édouard Glissant *Poetics of Relation*, translated by Betsy Wing (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1997) p. 89.

established: a link that recurs throughout Glissant's *Caribbean Discourse* (1981), as Chapter One will argue.

Canonical Creolizations and the Caribbean Literary Imagination.

Hearn's *Youma* may be the first textual reference to creolization in English, but Silvio Torres-Saillant's *An Intellectual History of the Caribbean* (2006) points to '[o]ne of the earliest documents that reflects the process of creolization that the colonial transaction unleashed in the Caribbean': Silvestre de Balboa Troya y Quesada's 1608 epic poem '*Espijo de patience*' ('Mirror of Patience').³⁵ Written in the Western epic tradition and 'abound[ing] in lively evocations of the flora and fauna, and topography of the island of Cuba',³⁶ Balboa's poem features a cast of white, black, and indigenous peoples who form a crew in order to rescue the kidnapped priest Juan de las Cabezas Altamirano, bishop of Cuba. In a move that would be later mirrored by St Lucian poet, Derek Walcott, and his adaptation of Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad* in *Omeros* (1992) (discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis), Balboa 'tropicalizes the ancient European epic' and produces 'a portrait of creolization that everyday life made evident to him in his Antillean milieu'.³⁷ This early portrait of creolization, then, suggests that the concept may be applied to the ways in which, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Caribbean writers have continued to respond to the canonical texts and modes imported by the European coloniser by rewriting and claiming them for a Caribbean literary tradition and canon. By giving the role of epic hero to a black man, by re-imagining Greco-

³⁵ Torres-Saillant (2006) p. 140.

³⁶ Torres-Saillant (2006) p. 140.

³⁷ Torres-Saillant (2006) p. 141.

Roman deities in the tropical landscape, by recontextualising the European epic, and by conceiving of a mixed race cast, Balboa depicts creolization as an imaginative reaction to the historical reality of living in the Caribbean.

More than three centuries later, this sentiment would be echoed by Glissant: '[t]his phenomenon probably has no political or economic power. But it is precious for mankind's imagination, its capacity for invention'.³⁸ Framing creolization in this way emphasises its status as a creative process that reflects the new experience of the Americas and the situation of the various groups that settled there, something that Brathwaite hints at when he claims that '[t]he failure of Jamaican society was that it did not recognise these elements of its own creativity'.³⁹ Successful creolization involves the artist/community in the reimagining or adaptation of the various cultural forms expressions of all who find themselves in the New World, and it is this aspect, in particular, that links the theoretical writings of Glissant and Wilson Harris. Together, the body of work produced by these two writers represents the most significant contributions to contemporary creolization theory. Glissant's *Poetics of Relation* (1990), introduced in Chapter Two as a refinement of the earlier creolization theory of *Caribbean Discourse*, offers a model of whole-world relating between partial and fluctuating identities. This finds a parallel in Harris's own conviction in an always deferred state of wholeness in which the imagination plays a vital role in the continual generation, or creolization, of new ways of thinking. In this way, the overview of the essays and fiction of Harris in Chapter Three, emphasises the common concerns shared between these two philosophers of

³⁸ Glissant (1995) p. 274.

³⁹ Brathwaite (1971) p. 307.

relation, often overlooked by their critics, and argues that read together, both Glissant and Harris formulate a singular paradigm for the creolization of literature and identity.

This thesis stresses that while creolization may be employed in models of linguistic, political and cultural integration, as in Brathwaite's work, for example, it is enabling primarily as an imaginative resource. It remains one of the most important concepts for contemporary Caribbean philosophy and aesthetics: both universal in scope and unequivocally rooted in Caribbean reality. Silvio Torres-Saillant makes this point, arguing that it is essential that concepts such as creolization, hybridity, or, to refer to another of Bhabha's terms, mimicry, remain rooted in the specific experiences of everyday life in order to counter the homogenising threat of postcolonial studies. As he writes: '[t]he promotion of a set of conceptual paradigms presumably capable of explaining life in the "postcolonial world" displays insufficient regard for the vast geographical, historical, and cultural differences that set the multiple branches of the human family outside the West apart from one another'.⁴⁰ For Torres-Saillant, it is not enough to place Bhabha's theory of mimicry, for example, within a Lacanian tradition without asking whether corresponding native performative strategies of resistance, such as "choteo" (Cuba), "gancho" and "aguaje" (Dominican Republic), "man-of-words" and "trickster"

⁴⁰ Torres-Saillant (2006) p. 139 In this way, Torres-Saillant joins a number of critics who decry the generalising tendencies of postcolonial discourse. Of these commentaries, Peter Hallward's *Absolutely Postcolonial* (2001) stands as one of the most compelling. I look at this work in detail in Chapter Two, pp. 139-144.

(Anglophone West Indies)', might not be better placed as the inevitable and genuine reactions to the historical situation of colonialism.⁴¹

Although creolization's roots in the plantation systems of the New World appear to conform to Torres-Saillant's critique, this is not to say that the intellectual output of the Caribbean be regarded as meaningful only to those who fall within that geographic location. Rather, Torres-Saillant finds in the Caribbean experience the model for our contemporary world:

[t]he Caribbean, centre of the modern world, witnessed the clash of imperial ambitions of Western colonial powers and the cruelty of slavery and other coerced labor, but, that bitter history notwithstanding, therein, emerged a cluster of societies that, though holding a marginal place in the structure of power in the world, exhibit all the greatness and the pettiness of humanity.⁴²

An Intellectual History of the Caribbean structures itself around the duality suggested by Young; that the colonial era effected, on the one hand, the globalisation of culture and economics, imposing a singular or universal concept of history and mankind, and on the other, it caused radical fragmentation and dislocation. Like colonialism, which both fragments and homogenises, postcolonial discourse similarly activates such a paradox. Ostensibly, the field promises to give marginal voices a global platform; at the same time, however, it both reifies a country's status at the centre or periphery, and de-specifies the intellectual paradigms produced: 'repacking them anew and exporting them back to the dependant scholarly economy of the Caribbean. Thus an endemic formulation such as creolization turns into the more costly imported commodity known as

⁴¹ Torres-Saillant (2006) p. 161.

⁴² Torres-Saillant (2006) p. 8.

hybridity'.⁴³ Further, if postcolonialism is generally viewed as a set of retaliatory attitudes against the ex-colonial centre, then it would necessarily include the pro-colonialist perspective.⁴⁴ Given this paradox of postcolonialism, as well as the potential for Caribbean voices to be lost in the generalising sub-category of the postcolonial, Torres-Saillant argues, 'Caribbean scholars [must] face the temptation to secure their legitimacy by reference to the wisdom of the contemporary pillars of the Western tradition', which is to say that they must resist the universalizing reductivism of Western thought which seeks to incorporate marginal voices as a further 'subsection of a global epistemic structure' whereby they are constructed as 'recipient[s] rather than producer[s] of knowledge'.⁴⁵

Yet, resisting universalism through the specific experiences of Caribbean reality is not the same as rejecting all links to Western discursive practices. Indeed, while Torres-Saillant may indeed warn of the dangers inherent in postcolonial studies, he makes it clear that it is equally important to recognise the Caribbean writer's position as heir to those very theorists on whose work postcolonial studies were founded (Sartre, Foucault, Derrida, and Lacan).⁴⁶ In other words, it must be recognised that colonial dislocation has created a situation in the Caribbean whereby its scholars and writers are informed by the traditions of both the colonising and

⁴³ Torres-Saillant (2006) p. 44.

⁴⁴ Torres-Saillant (2006) p. 160.

⁴⁵ Torres-Saillant (2006) p. 44.

⁴⁶ The influence of such thinkers on current postcolonial studies is explored in Charles Forsdick and David Murphy's edited collection, *Francophone Postcolonial Studies* (London: Arnold, 2003). Particularly relevant are Azzedine Haddour's 'The Camus-Sartre debate and the Colonial Question in Algeria' (pp. 66-76), Patrick Williams's "'Faire peau neuve" –Césaire, Fanon, Memmi, Sartre and Senghor' (pp. 181-191), and John McLeod's 'Contesting Contexts: Francophone Thought and Anglophone Postcolonialism' (pp. 192-201).

colonised cultures, as well as that of the ancestral mother-land: as Torres-Saillant argues,

one must recognize oneself as an ambivalent heir, one who accepts the inexorable kinship without ignoring the repository of harm lodged in that inheritance. Unlike normal heirs to the tradition, Antilleans have the delicate task of imagining the story of human culture in a manner that promises to safeguard their creativity from the encroaching might of the West, to which they are nonetheless bound by blood ties. In other words, the need to proclaim the source of their originality, which, stemming from a history of creolization, lies precisely in its propensity to avoid containment within the cultural or intellectual border of any single tradition.⁴⁷

Here Torres-Saillant identifies creolization as the intermixing of dislocated peoples and cultures effected by the colonising mission, and as the source of a distinctly Caribbean creativity. But, if what he identifies as creolization indicates the particular situation of Caribbean identity, it is, by this account, a complex formulation: creolization is at once both the product of many different cultures that converge in one particular moment, and it is a marker and source of something original. The terms here are suggestive of the difficulties faced: ‘source’ and ‘original’ recall Young’s ‘organic paradigm of identity’,⁴⁸ while ‘intermixed’ evokes impurity and uncertain origins. Indeed, the challenge to mediate between a concrete and fluctuating notion of identity, is part of Edward Said’s concern that we need to formulate ‘a theory of connections between part and whole that denies neither the specificity of the individual experience nor the validity of a projected, putative, or imputed whole’, so that by emphasising ‘synthesis or the transcendence of opposites’, we do not ignore ‘the role of geographic knowledge in keeping one

⁴⁷ Torres-Saillant (2006) pp. 103-104.

⁴⁸ Young (1995) p. 4. As this Introduction will go on to argue, it is precisely the rejection of any notion of an original identity (used here by nineteenth century colonialist, but also a hallmark of the *négritude* movement) that Glissant’s concept of creolization seeks to achieve.

grounded, literally, in the often tragic structure of social, historical, and epistemological contests over territory'.⁴⁹ And it is precisely this adherence to both the specificity of the individual existence and the validity of the whole that both Glissant, through his concepts of totality and relation in *The Poetics of Relation* (1990), and Wilson Harris, in terms such as wholeness and cross-cultural, discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Three respectively, attempt to theorise.

The move towards a world of inter-relations, for both Harris and Glissant, entails a clear distancing from static identity formations, without necessarily losing sight of the ways in which people are affected by the social and historical contexts of their lives. Moreover, the rejection of origins and concrete racial identities has led critics like Glissant to challenge *négritude*'s valorisation of a unique African origin: as Shireen Lewis argues in *Race, Culture, and Identity* (2006),

[c]reole identity is constructed by negating all previously established essentialized notions of identity. African fathers, like their European and Asian counterparts, are declared false fathers since ancestral origins are no longer considered exclusive but dispersed and multifaceted. Moreover, [...] ancestral origins are no longer to be found "Elsewhere" but in the Caribbean.⁵⁰

The recognition of both Europe and Africa as 'false fathers' is an important break in Caribbean intellectual history. The black literary and cultural movement known as *négritude*, which Lewis places within the wider context of Modernism's break with the totalizing philosophy of the Enlightenment,⁵¹ began with the determination to

⁴⁹ Said cited by Torres-Saillant (2006) p. 102.

⁵⁰ Lewis (2006) p. 96.

⁵¹ Lewis (2006) p. 23. Most closely associated with the writings of Léopold Senghor, Aimé Césaire, and Léon Damas, *négritude* located the source of alienation, not in the industrial city, but in the estrangement from Africa as the ancestral motherland. Lewis's desire to read the assertion of black and traditional arts as an aspect of Modernism, incorporates the often overlooked contributions made by non-European, non-white artists and thinkers to the movement. However, framing the movement, as she does, entirely from the perspective of a Martinican elite studying in Paris (and involved in the

assert black identity and arts against the grain of colonial or Orientalist discourse. However, as Lewis points out, the movement's identity politics came into conflict with its own aims and produced theories that 'became orthodoxies by presenting themselves as grand narratives of the human experience'.⁵² In the first instance, the politics of *négritude* may be seen to address Said's call for a recognition of both the specificity of human experience and validity of the whole, however, writers such as Glissant have criticised the movement for overemphasising the role of Africa in the celebration of black identity and failing to account for the formation to New World identity.⁵³ In other words, a failure to recognise creolization. Exploring the concept of creolization, then, demands a consideration of the way in which individuals and groups relate to one another, without falling back on essentialist or fixed paradigms of identity. However, it must also be situated in the Caribbean landscape and the historical reality of the plantation society if it is to remain distinct from the 'imported' term hybridity. Accordingly, the importance of locating creolization in the experience of the Caribbean islandscape, is forcefully confirmed in the writings of Glissant.

publication of the 1932 review *Légitime Défense* [pp. 1-23]), risks criticism from Torres-Saillant, who may well ask whether or not the promotion of black identity might have its roots in historical events such as the slave uprising in Haiti.

⁵² Lewis (2006) p. 30.

⁵³ Lewis suggests that *négritude* might be read as a strategic attempt 'to galvanize black people into political action' through 'the essentialization of black identity' (p. 52) in the same way that feminism seeks to work from an unified notion of 'woman'. In this way, argues Lewis, '*Négritude* is not simply a concept of black particularity [...] or of the universalism of black identity [...] but of black particularity as a constitutive part of a universal identity' (p. 54). Locating the particular alongside the universal is an argument that I make in Chapter Two in order to counter Peter Hallward's contention that the writing of Édouard Glissant is in fact as totalising as colonial discourse or indeed *négritude*. However, as I will argue, Glissant's project remains specified in the realities of the Caribbean landscape. Whereas creolization may be defended by such an argument, it is difficult given the geographic spread of black peoples around the world to see how particular experiences can be incorporated into any one theory of black identity without essentializing artificial notions of race.

The increasing prominence of Martinican poet, author and theorist Édouard Glissant within the postcolonial canon has led to a renewed interest in literary depictions of the natural world. Crucially, this reassessment of established tropes intersects with Glissant's major contribution to postcolonial terminology: creolization.⁵⁴ It is in *Caribbean Discourse* that this correlation firmly asserts itself. Depicted throughout his poetry and essays, Glissant finds in the natural world the 'subterranean convergence' of peoples, landscape, and poet, a model for the intermixed and cross-cultural reality of Caribbean life.⁵⁵ However, his later work, *Poetics of Relation*, elaborates creolization theory further, presenting a totality of relations that allow Glissant to designate creolization as a move beyond hybridity or *métissage*: '[c]reolization, one of the ways of forming a complex mix – and not merely a linguistic result – is only exemplified by its processes and certainly not by the 'contents' on which they operate'.⁵⁶ This focus on creolization and relation as a process, as well as his suggestion that what this process actually effects is not merely a sum of its parts, but 'opens on a radically new dimension of reality [...Creolization] does not produce direct synthesis, but "résultantes", results: something else, another way',⁵⁷ is of fundamental importance to the distinct paradigm of creolization that this thesis develops. Throughout Chapters Two and Three, it is suggested that the theoretical works of both Glissant and Harris are

⁵⁴ Though the term is premised initially by Hearne and developed by Brathwaite, the fiction and essays of Glissant represent one of the most sustained engagements with the concept of creolization as a theoretical model.

⁵⁵ Glissant (1999b) p. 66. Glissant's theoretical model in *Caribbean Discourse* is discussed on pp. 57-62 of this thesis, while a selection of Glissant's poetry features on pp. 130-139, 197-206.

⁵⁶ Glissant (1997) p. 89. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁷ Glissant (1995) p. 270. Emphasis in the original. A similar point is expressed by Glissant in 'Beyond Babel' in *World Literature Today* Vol. 63, No. 4, 1989 pp. 561-563 (see p. 561).

directed toward this common end: to cast creolization as the generation of entirely original, singular forms that are nevertheless specific to the historical and environmental contexts in which they are situated.

Throughout this thesis, then, creolization will be promoted not as an alternative to debates of hybridity, but as a radically postcolonial form of hybridity that subverts relations with the colonial past while advocating a renewed understanding of the interrelatedness of landscape, community and self specific to and borne out of the Caribbean itself. This marked distinction between an intermixing that remains a sum of its parts, retaining the ideological biases inherent to them, and a postcolonial creolization that is specific to the history and reality of colonialism, but is not dictated by that static relationship, is drawn, in part, from Peter Hallward's recent critical intervention in the field of postcolonial studies: *Absolutely Postcolonial* (2001). In this work Hallward draws a clear distinction between a counter-colonial stance that is essentially confrontational, locked into a fixed dialogue between self and other, coloniser and colonised on the one hand, and on the other, the view that 'any creative expression is irreducibly specific to (though not specified by) the situation of its articulation'.⁵⁸ In this case, whereas counter-colonial discourse may be cast as the product of empire, the result of cross-cultural contact between coloniser and colonised, its content is entirely defined by the already established relationship between centre and periphery. Glissant similarly applies this distinction in *Caribbean Discourse* when he criticises the 'forced', or 'counter-poetics' of the creole folktale for its 'inability to liberate [it]self totally' from a defensive position,

⁵⁸ Peter Hallward *Absolutely Postcolonial: Writing Between the Singular and the Specific* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2001) p. 62.

characteristic of an oppressed group.⁵⁹ Thus in both cases, there is a failure of the community to escape its designated position as other. What Hallward's option allows for is a discourse that acknowledges specific socio-historic relationships of dominance and exploitation, but which is not wholly determined by these realities. In Chapter Two, I argue that it is this latter model that best fits an understanding of postcolonial creolization as the production of an entirely new entity.

Creole Resistance Versus Postcolonial Relation.

Glissant's concern over the ability of the creole folktale to disassociate itself from the subject positions of colonial discourse, is reflected in his reluctance to embrace the creole language as a potential medium for his vision of Caribbean poetics. Initially, creole language represents a distancing from the racialized discourse of hybridity, towards socio-cultural adaptation to New World society. Indeed, Brathwaite certainly envisions a positive linguistic response of in his celebration of nation language, 'which is the kind of English spoken by the people who were brought to the Caribbean, not the official English now, but the language of the slaves and labourers'.⁶⁰ Robert Young also draws attention to the hybridity of languages presented by Mikhail Bakhtin, for whom 'hybridity delineates the way in which language, even within a single sentence, can be double-voiced'; and that, recalling Bhabha, '[h]ybridity describes the condition of language's fundamental ability to be

⁵⁹ Édouard Glissant *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, translated by J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999b) pp. 128-132.

⁶⁰ Kamau Brathwaite *Roots* (Michigan: Ann Arbor Paperback/University of Michigan Press, 1993) p. 229. However, nation language, for Brathwaite, is not the equivalent of creole language. Rather, it exceeds creole because of its ability not only to mix the languages of Caribbean society, but is an adaptation that also responds to the new environment (p. 260). Brathwaite's privileged term, then, once more reinforces the impact of context and environment, and the creole language itself is cast as a deficient response to the challenge of a creolized Caribbean identity.

simultaneously the same but different'.⁶¹ The development of the various creole languages in the Caribbean was a direct response to the historical experience of the enslaved population. Attributing the point to Mexican author Carlos Fuentes, Brathwaite writes that '[i]t 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'.⁶² Existing initially as an oral language, though finding written form in the pioneering creole poetry of Claude McKay and Louise Bennett,⁶³ the misuse of the coloniser's language produced the 'double-voiced' ambivalence to which Bakhtin refers, and by adapting the master's language, plantation society produced a language that, to evoke Bhabha's phrasing, was 'almost the same, but not quite'.⁶⁴ It is this potentially subversive ambivalence that threatens the coloniser's discourse that, for Bernabé *et al*, still presents itself as an important form of resistance: 'Creole orality, even repressed in its aesthetic expression, contains a whole system of countervalues, a counterculture; it witnesses

⁶¹ Young (1995) p. 20. See M. M. Bakhtin *The Dialogic Imagination* edited by Michael Holquist, translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, Texas: The University of Texas Press, 1981) pp. 304-305, 358-362. For Bakhtin, hybridity designates 'a mixing of various "languages" co-existing within the boundaries of a single dialect' (p. 359). In this way, hybridity designates an intermixing and combination of diverse languages and styles 'into a higher unity' (p. 263), characteristic, Bakhtin argues, of the novel form: the 'distinctive links and interrelationships between utterances and languages, this movement of the theme through different languages and speech types, its dispersion into the rivulets and droplets of social heteroglossia, its dialogization – this is the basic distinguishing feature of the novel' (p. 263). In this case, if, heteroglossia designates the co-existence of various languages and the potential for hybridization, what Bakhtin terms, dialogization, refers to the process of bringing into contact that effects hybridity (p. 361).

⁶² Brathwaite (1971) p. 237.

⁶³ For a detailed discussion of Louise Bennett's creole poems, see Denise deCaires Narain *Contemporary Caribbean Women's Poetry: Making Style* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) pp. 51-88. Aspects of McKay's work is discussed in this thesis, notably his novel *Banana Bottom* (1933) (see pp. 71-77). However, for examples his creole-dialect poetry, see Claude McKay *Selected Poems* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1999), and in particular those poems from the collections *Songs of Jamaica* (pp. 1-9), and *Constab Ballads* (pp. 10-22).

⁶⁴ Bhabha (1994) p. 86.

ordinary genius applied to resistance, devoted to survival'.⁶⁵ For the *créolité* movement, in which the Martinican authors of the *Éloge* are key figures, creole language continues to offer a double-voiced ambivalence that undermines the dominance of standardised French.

Glissant, on the other hand, is less hopeful about the future of creole. It is undoubtedly one of the signs of creolization and conforms to his formula that creolization must produce something new. For this reason 'creole is not a type of pidgin. A pidgin language plays with the elements of *one* language'. 'A creole language, in contrast, does not work with *one* but almost always *two* languages [...]. As long as a creole language continues to combine the forms of two (or more) linguistic traditions, the product of this synthesis is a new kind of expression'.⁶⁶ For Bakhtin, the creolization of two or more languages is categorized as 'unconscious' or 'organic' hybridity, as distinguished from 'intentional' hybridity.⁶⁷ Yet, as Young argues, where 'unconscious hybridity' can produce 'new world views', it is not as politically subversive as the intentional mode: '[i]n organic hybridity, the mixture merges and is fused into a new language, world view, or object; but intentional hybridity sets different points of view against each other in a conflictual structure'.⁶⁸ Glissant's own criticism of creole similarly lies in his doubts over its current potential to subvert. Outlining the development of creole, he writes:

the slave takes possession of the language imposed by his master,
a simplified language [...] and makes this simplification even

⁶⁵ Bernabé *et al* (1993) p. 95.

⁶⁶ Glissant (1995) p. 270. Emphasis in the original.

⁶⁷ Bakhtin (1981) pp. 358-361. Young also references this point and specifically links Bakhtin's unconscious hybridity to Brathwaite's creolization (1995 p. 21).

⁶⁸ Young (1995) pp. 21-22. For this reason, only intentional hybridity witnesses a dialogism (Bakhtin [1981] pp. 360-361).

more extreme. You wish to reduce me to a childish babble, I will make this babble systematic, we shall see if you can make sense of it. Creole would then become a language that, in its structures and its dynamics, would have fundamentally incorporated the derisive nature of its formation.⁶⁹

Rather than challenging the master's disregard for the validity of the slave's own language, creole incorporates that derision into its own structure; it remains, in this form, like the creole folktale, a 'strategy of trickery' that is specified by the historical discourse of colonialism.⁷⁰ As such, creole remains ideologically structured around the same subject positions employed by colonial discourse, unable to develop into something genuinely new: 'what is most apparent in the dynamics of Creole is the continuous process of undermining its innate capacity for transcending its French origins'.⁷¹ If the goal of creole is the transcendence of its status as the 'childish babble' of a slave population, it can no longer position itself in confrontation with the coloniser's language, but rather, as in the case of Haiti, become 'the productive and responsible language of the [...] people'.⁷² This is, of course, the opposite of Bakhtin's celebration of the confrontational, 'intentional' hybridity, but the desire to move away from the continuing dialectic of coloniser and colonised is, as I will argue in Chapter Two, an essential element in the new postcolonial discourse that Glissant aims to initiate.

The response to the environmental and cultural experience of the New World effected by creolization, then, also incorporates an important distancing from the colonial and counter-colonial subject positions. Creolization transcends notions of

⁶⁹ Glissant (1999b) p. 20.

⁷⁰ Glissant (1999b) p. 21.

⁷¹ Glissant (1999b) p. 20.

⁷² Glissant (1999b) p. 21.

cross-cultural mixing because it exceeds the original and introduces new, unpredictable forms: a distinction marked by Glissant's application of a new term to designate this process, 'relation'.⁷³ As Glissant has argued: 'creolization opens on a radically new dimension of reality [...it] does not produce direct synthesis, but "résultantes", results: *something else, another way*'.⁷⁴ To return to the distinction premised earlier, by producing an excess of its component parts and a form whose contents could not have been predicted, creolization may be characterised, according to Hallward's argument, as the generation of new configurations through a relation specific to, not specified by, the context from which it is effected. However, this argument belies the fact that what Hallward offers in *Absolutely Postcolonial* is fundamentally a rejection of postcolonialism as a model that is both post-identitarian and context specific. In particular, Hallward argues that Glissant's notion of creolization can be 'defined primarily by its transcendence of relations with or between specific individuals'.⁷⁵

Chapter Two of this thesis discusses Hallward's particular take on Glissantian theory, reading it against other critics such as Celia Britton, J. Michael Dash, and Chris Bongie, however, for the moment, it should be noted that Hallward's key contention is that, like postcolonial studies in general, Glissant's concept of creolization ultimately tends towards a moment at which creolization itself is transcended and specific differences between individuals and communities become

⁷³ This concept is discussed through out Chapter Two in reference to Glissant's *Poetics of Relation*. See pp.157-174 of this thesis.

⁷⁴ Glissant (1995) p. 270. Emphasis in the original. H Adlai Murdoch's overview of French Caribbean theory similarly points towards the crucial distinction of creativity as a determining difference between creolization and hybridity (Murdoch [2001] pp. 10-13).

⁷⁵ Hallward (2001) p. 67.

void. This reading has serious implications for the model of creolization sketched in this Introduction for, ultimately, Hallward envisions the erasure of the specificities of place and history, and challenges the view of creolization as a process directly linked to the realities of New World and plantation societies. However, throughout works such as Glissant's *Caribbean Discourse*, *A Field of Islands* (1952), *Restless Earth* (1954), and *Dream Country, Real Country* (1985), as these titles suggest, place and landscape occupy a central position in a Glissantian poetics. Like Young, Glissant traces the roots of hybridity to the consolidation of the world into centre and periphery during the colonial period, and Glissant places creolization in the context of both the realities of post-/plantation society (in line with Brathwaite), and the concept of diversity: '[t]his experience of diversity, and the long-unnoted process it spawned, I label "creolization". Creolization is not an uprooting, a loss of sight, a suspension of being. Transience is not wandering. Diversity is not dilution'.⁷⁶ Furthermore, just as, in Young's account, the colonial unification of the world unintentionally effected the contrary response – the radical displacement of peoples – so too has diversity produced an inverse reaction: '[t]he concept of diversity, which expressed itself as one of the poetic dreams of the expanding Occident, and simultaneously as an antidote to the universal empire that this expanding subsumed, is an immediate, real-life experience of the people in the area'.⁷⁷ Glissant's interest in diversity as facilitating creolization reveals the influence of French author and philosopher Victor Segalen on his writing. Importantly, as Chapter Two argues, Segalen offers Glissant a model of exoticism more nuanced than the coloniser's

⁷⁶ Glissant (1995) p. 269.

⁷⁷ Glissant (1995) p. 269.

dream of the exotic other. Here diversity is both colonial desire and a life experience, functioning not only as a sign of imperialism, but as a threat to its coherence. Diversity, the lure of the exotic, was at once the desire of the coloniser and the undoing of his or her belief in the universal order. Segalen remains an important precursor to Glissant, and the dialogue between these two theorists is indicative of the way in which Glissant may be read as adapting and creolizing Western theory. However, bearing in mind Torres-Saillant's caution, one need not necessarily look outside the Caribbean for an example of the exoticising impulse.

Landscape and the Early Caribbean Canon.

Colonialism saw not only the radical redefinition of the Caribbean population, but the appropriation of the landscape itself by the colonial imagination and its reformulation as the site of Europe's lost Eden. As Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Renée Gosson, and George Handley emphasise in their Introduction to *Caribbean Literature and the Environment* (2005): '[o]ne finds ample testimonies from Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, and Fernández de Oviedo likening the Antilles to the Greek "Blessed Isles" and the earthly Paradise'.⁷⁸ Rather than focus exclusively on pastoral representations of Caribbean landscape, this collection represents one of the first sustained attempts to apply a postcolonial perspective to

⁷⁸ Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley 'Introduction' pp. 1-30 in *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture*, edited by Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005) p. 11. Derek Walcott presents this point of view in *Omeros* through the characters of Major Plunkett and his wife, Maud, who both evoke Edenic imagery in reference to the Caribbean (Derek Walcott *Omeros* [London: Faber and Faber, 1990] p. 28, p. 63). Another example of the influence of Eden as an influence on perceptions of the landscape/garden may be found in Antiguan author Jamaica Kincaid's auto-biographical *My Garden (book)*: (London: Vintage, 2000b) pp. 171-177.

ecocriticism, arguing that 'North American ecocritics often inscribe an idealised natural landscape that is devoid of human history and labor [...]. Against the popular grain of U.S. ecocritical studies, we argue that addressing the historical and racial violence of the Caribbean is integral to understanding literary representations of its geography'.⁷⁹ This accusation directed at the idealisation of landscape in current ecocritical practice, however, corresponds precisely to the challenge against those colonial (and colonial inspired) discourses which sought to depict the Caribbean as an idyllic, fecund paradise:⁸⁰ both conceal historical legacies and their role in shaping both environment and people. This thesis is concerned with the contemporary reassessment of the impulse to identify the Caribbean landscape with paradisiacal or Edenic imagery. At the same time, it is important to recognise that the foundational texts of the Caribbean canon, works by pre-1930s poets like J. E. Clare McFarlane, Tom Redcam, H. S. Bunbury, adopt this European perspective and register. As such, the early Caribbean canon may be clearly associated with the Edenic/paradisiacal mindset that sought to erase the hardships of plantation life. Yet, by doing so, these works begin the creolization of literary tropes and challenge Europe's claim as the imperial cultural centre. This process of creolization, of relocating familiar literary conceits to the New World, begins in the Caribbean in

⁷⁹ DeLoughrey *et al* (2005) p. 3. The editors criticise both ecocriticism's undervaluation of social and historic factors in representations of the environment, but also postcolonial criticism's failure to fully engage with environmental issues. As such, the collection seeks to correct this tendency by offering 'a sustained ecocritical focus on the ways in which race, gender, and other social vectors help constitute environmental experience' (p. 5).

⁸⁰ DeLoughrey *et al* provide the example of early traveller's accounts which promote the 'myth of fertility' often associated with the Caribbean (p. 6), as well as James Grainger's poem 'The Sugar Cane' which reframes the Caribbean landscape through the conventions of the georgic idyll (pp. 8-9).

1764 and the publication of what Brathwaite has referred to as ‘the picturesque poem par excellence’:⁸¹ James Grainger’s *The Sugar-Cane*.

James Grainger’s didactic poem, *The Sugar-Cane*, offers a unique contribution to the Caribbean canon: ‘a West-India [*sic*] georgic’.⁸² Grainger was a Scotsman by birth and a graduate of Edinburgh University where he studied medicine. As John Gilmore’s study, *The Poetics of Empire* (2000), suggests, exact dates concerning Grainger’s life are difficult to trace, however, it would seem that Grainger arrived in the Caribbean island of St. Kitts (St. Christopher) in 1759, where he worked as a doctor and married into a prominent creole family.⁸³ It is, however, his literary ambition and, in particular, his poem *The Sugar-Cane*, that suggests Grainger, as David Dabydeen has argued, as ‘the “Father” of Caribbean literature’, by merit of the fact that *The Sugar-Cane* was the first, pre-twentieth century text from the Anglophone Caribbean to assume a place within the Western canon.⁸⁴ In terms of Caribbean literature, Gilmore notes, while small scale literary production did occur within the creole population at the time, the only other work equal to the scope of Grainger’s poem was Nathaniel Weekes’s *Barbados: A Poem* (1754).⁸⁵ Notable in Grainger’s poem, however, is his attempt to relocate the georgic tradition to the Caribbean. As would be expected, then, *The Sugar-Cane* is a didactic poem,

⁸¹ Brathwaite (1993) p. 137. Brathwaite discusses *The Sugar-Cane* and its reification of the Caribbean as a commodity-producing sub-section of the empire on pp. 137-139.

⁸² James Grainger ‘*The Sugar-Cane: A Poem in Four Books. With Notes*’ pp. 86-211 in John Gilmore *The Poetics of Empire: A Study of James Grainger’s The Sugar-Cane* (London and New Brunswick: The Athlone Press, 2000) p. 90.

⁸³ John Gilmore *The Poetics of Empire: A Study of James Grainger’s The Sugar-Cane* (London and New Brunswick: The Athlone Press, 2000) pp. 2-21.

⁸⁴ David Dabydeen ‘Review: Sugar and Slavery in the West Indian Georgic’ pp. 1513-1514 in *Callaloo* Vol. 23 No. 4 2000b (Autumn) p. 1513.

⁸⁵ Gilmore (2000) p. 22

with the chief intention of informing its readers of the best methods and practice of sugar cane cultivation, as is clear from the opening lines of the poem:

What soil the Cane affects; what care demands;
Beneath what signs to plant; what ills awaite;
How the hot nectar best to christallize;
And Afric's sable progeny to treat.⁸⁶

Grainger covers all aspects of sugar production: from planting and cultivation, to the management of slaves and the refinement process. In this respect Grainger is following the model established by Virgil's *Georgics*, and popular contemporary works such as William Somervile's *The Chace* (1735), Christopher Smart's *The Hop-Garden* (1752), John Dyer's *The Fleece* (1757), and James Thomson's *The Seasons* (1730).⁸⁷ Grainger's poem, however, is a 'West India georgic', and this has several implications for the way in which Western influences can be read.

The title page of *The Sugar-Cane* features a Latin epigraph from Marcus Manilius's *Astronomica*: 'and I am the first to attempt to stir with new songs Helicon and its green-topped, nodding woods, bringing strange mysteries, proclaimed by none before me'.⁸⁸ Reading this epigraph against the content of the poem, the Grecian mountain range on which temples to both Apollo and the Muses were built, is reimagined as a cane field; confirming, Gilmore notes, Grainger's belief that 'the cultivation of the sugar cane is a dignified and suitable subject for poetry'.⁸⁹ Within *The Sugar-Cane* itself, this conviction is reasserted:

⁸⁶ Grainger (2000) p. 92.

⁸⁷ Grainger acknowledges these influences in *The Sugar-Cane* (see pp. 90 and 92). See also Gilmore's discussion of these poets ([2000] pp. 25-26 and 29).

⁸⁸ Gilmore (2000) p. 23.

⁸⁹ Gilmore (2000) p. 24. Steven Thomas also locates in *The Sugar-Cane* a degree of this challenge to colonial ideology in terms of Grainger's abolitionist views. However, while advocating the end of slavery, *The Sugar-Cane* simultaneously confirms the fact of the empire and sugar production (Steven W. Thomas 'Doctoring Ideology: James Grainger's *The Sugar Cane* and the Bodies of

Such, green St. Christopher, thy happy soil! –
 Not Grecian Tempé, where Aracadian Pan,
 Knit with the Graces, tun'd his silvan pipe,
 While mute Attention hush'd each charmed rill;
 Not purple Enna, whose irriguous lap,
 Straw'd with each fruit of taste, each flower of small,
 Sicilian Prosperpine, delighted, sought;
 Can vie, blest Isle, with thee.⁹⁰

Grainger here evokes classical mythology and traditional Arcadian imagery that would have been familiar to contemporary readers. By suggesting that these classical images cannot compete, or 'vie', with the fertile, 'happy soil' of St. Kitts, Grainger is elevating the status of a minor region of the British empire to equal that of Ancient Greece, and suggesting it as a subject equally worthy of poetry. It is this process, Dabydeen reminds us, that, two centuries later, Derek Walcott develops in *Omeros*, a work that revises previous representations of Caribbean history and landscape, 'converting abandoned islands and plantations into the stuff of poetry'.⁹¹ Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane* is, then, the beginning of a process of re-evaluating the relationship between the Caribbean writer, the landscape, and the colonial legacies that affect both.⁹²

Empire' pp. 78-111 in *Early American Studies* Spring 2006 pp. 78-79). In the same way, Thomas notes, Grainger's use of the Georgic both idealizes and critiques plantation society (pp. 82-87), arguing that Grainger displays a utopian desire to transform slavery and the framework of plantation society, while simultaneously confirming colonial possession and order.

⁹⁰ Grainger (2000) p. 93.

⁹¹ Dabydeen (2000b) p. 1514. In addition, Emily Williams has noted that Grainger's attempt at the georgic poem 'accurately forecast the fascination of writers and visual artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with the unique character of the Caribbean landscape' (Emily Allen Williams *Poetic Negotiations of Identity in the Works of Brathwaite, Harris, Senior, and Dabydeen: Tropical Paradise Lost and Regained* [New York and Lampeter, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd., 1999] p5).

⁹² The impact of this reassessment is not only evident in late-twentieth century evaluation of the Caribbean landscape presented in Chapter One of this thesis, but may also be located in the works of contemporary authors who address the relationship between the Caribbean individual and the coloniser's landscape. The novels of V. S. Naipaul often broach this subject from the perspective of the colonial subject in the colonial metropolis (London). See, in particular, *The Mimic Men* (1967), *Half a Life* (2001), and *Magic Seeds* (2004). In *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987), however, the

While later authors such as Glissant, as I argue in Chapter One, promote the reclamation of the land by Caribbean peoples, Grainger never questions the fact of British ownership. *The Sugar-Cane* is a celebration of creole plantation society; its purpose to offer the planter the best possible advice for the production of sugar. Gilmore notes that Grainger was desirous of literary fame,⁹³ and the Caribbean appeared to Grainger to offer a unique opportunity for the poetic imagination. As Grainger writes in his preface:

[s]oon after my arrival in the West-Indies, I conceived the design of writing a poem on the cultivation of the Sugar-Cane. My inducements to this arduous undertaking were, not only the importance and novelty of the subject, but more especially this consideration; that, as the face of this country was wholly different from that of Europe, so whatever hand copied its appearance, however rude, could not fail to enrich poetry with many new and picturesque images.⁹⁴

relationship with the English landscape is directly confronted in a novel characterised by Rob Nixon as a 'postcolonial pastoral' (Rob Nixon *London Calling: V. S. Naipaul, a Postcolonial Mandarin* [New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1992] p. 161). By coining this term, Nixon's study implies a translation of European literary terms that may be traced to Grainger, and one may also look to David Dabydeen's *Disappearance* (1993), which highlights intertextual references to Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival*, for another example of this postcolonial pastoral impulse. However, Nixon places a certain limitation on his genre by locating it in *The Enigma of Arrival*. As early as Naipaul's *A House for Mr Biswas* (1961), the author draws attention to the pastoral and the New World: Chapter One of the novel is called 'Pastoral'. In this way Nixon implies that, unlike Grainger's West Indian georgic, a postcolonial pastoral novel does not tropicalise the genre or relocate it in the New World, but concerns postcolonial exile. For further discussion on this and related issues see Sarah Casteel *New World Pastoral: Landscape and Emplacement in Contemporary Writings of the Americas* (Columbia University 2003); Jean Popeau, 'Disappearance' in *The Art of David Dabydeen*, edited by Kevin Grant (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press Ltd., 1997) pp. 99-111; Mark McWatt "'Self-Consciously Post-Colonial": the Fiction of David Dabydeen' in *The Art of David Dabydeen*, edited by Kevin Grant (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 1997) pp. 111-122. And for a good discussion of place in Naipaul, see Ian Baucom *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press) pp. 176-189.

⁹³ Gilmore (2000) p. 21.

⁹⁴ Grainger (2000) p. 89.

Grainger identifies the Caribbean as both wholly different to Europe and novel, which is to say that it is new in terms of what is commonly depicted in literature.⁹⁵ In this sense, Grainger identifies in the Caribbean, precisely what Alejo Carpentier's concept of the 'marvellous real' finds in Latin America: newness. Yet, as I argue in Chapter One, Carpentier's concept of the marvellous has been criticised by Roberto González Echevarría because it depends on the identification of the Caribbean as other: the perspective of the coloniser.⁹⁶ In the same way, by defining the landscape of St. Kitts as wholly different, Grainger is similarly maintaining the colonial perspective. Further, Grainger's claim that the Caribbean is a particularly fertile ground for the literary imagination, so much so that any 'hand' could draw poetry from the surroundings, suggests a careless ease with which poetry may be produced, and in doing so recalls the coloniser's misunderstanding of the fecundity of the Caribbean environment: 'for the soil rejoices [...] and never reject[s] anything that you throw in it; it accepts nothing without giving it back much more abundantly'.⁹⁷ The engagement with the landscape that *The Sugar-Cane* imagines, then, is one in which the coloniser's perspective and ownership of the land is confirmed. Grainger's achievement is not Caribbean, or even creole, repossession, but rather should be remembered as his determination to celebrate the peripheries of the Empire, and its landscape, as worthy of literature.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Brathwaite suggests this when he notes that in *The Sugar-Cane* 'even though its elements are local', the voice of the poem has the effect of transforming the scene 'into something quite "other"' (1993 p. 139).

⁹⁶ Roberto González Echevarría *The Pilgrim at Home: Alejo Carpentier* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990a) p. 128.

⁹⁷ Nicolò Scillacio cited by DeLoughrey *et al* (2005) p. 6.

⁹⁸ Indeed, Gilmore's own position as a Scotsman may account for this desire. By drawing attention to the role played by the Caribbean in the supply of sugar to the British market, and by arguing for its suitability as a worthy subject for poetry, Gilmore suggests that Grainger 'constantly reminds us that

The difference between Grainger's representation of the Caribbean landscape and that of the late twentieth and twenty-first century canon is explicit in the following example. In Book Four of *The Sugar-Cane*, Grainger discusses the treatment of slaves, and in particular, draws a comparison between British and Spanish practices:

How far more happy ye, than those poor slaves,
Who, whilom, under native, gracious chiefs,
Incas and emperors, long time enjoy'd
Mild government, with every sweet of life,
In blissful climates? See them dragg'd in chains,
By proud insulting tyrants, to mines
Which once they call'd their own, and then despis'd!
See, in the mineral bosom of their land,
How hard they toil! [...]
[...]

With these compar'd, ye sons of Afric, say,
How far more happy is your lot? Bland health,
Of ardent eye, and limb robust, attends
Your custom'd labour; and, should sickness seize,
With what solicitude are ye not nurs'd! –
Ye Negroes, then, your pleasing task pursue;
And, by your toil, deserve your master's care.⁹⁹

This is, as Gilmore suggests, an opportunity taken to insult the Spanish ('proud insulting tyrants'), comparing their treatment of the Amerindians with the benevolent, British slave owner.¹⁰⁰ However, the distinction that is drawn is not only between the two rival colonial powers, but also between Amerindian slaves and African slaves. What is notable in this passage is that the particular insult felt by the Amerindians is the fact that they are slaves *in their own land*, that they have come to despise the land that was theirs. The reference to the Spanish as 'proud insulting

Britain is not just England and that the British empire is more than the British isles' (Gilmore [2000] p. 33).

⁹⁹ Grainger (2000) pp. 150-151.

¹⁰⁰ Gilmore (2000) p. 294.

tyrants', can, therefore, be read as an allusion to the insult of forcing the native population to mine their own resources for a foreign power. The African slaves, on the other hand, are fortunate not only because they have compassionate masters, but also, extending the comparison that the poem establishes, because they do not belong to the land.¹⁰¹ Therefore, whereas Glissant later writes specifically with the aim to imagine a connection between the Caribbean landscape and the population in the production of a new, creolized Caribbean identity, *The Sugar-Cane* must be read apart from such a move: the land belongs only to the coloniser and all engagements with the land are regulated by that fact.

The potential within *The Sugar-Cane*, then, lies within the way in which it disturbs Western expectations of the georgic poem and the Caribbean landscape. Grainger does employ classical images and references, but these are limited and, as Gilmore highlights, secondary to the details of Caribbean plants and animals.¹⁰² Again, Grainger's use of tradition forms part of his attempt to justify the suitability of his subject: in one example, cockroaches are likened to harpies, 'they defile whate'er they touch'.¹⁰³ And by suggesting a West-Indian georgic mode, Grainger points the way towards creolized meetings of literary legacies. However, the possibility of locating the beginnings of creolized, or even hybrid, identities in *The Sugar-Cane* is made impossible by the fact that colonial possession of the land is

¹⁰¹ Fernando Ortiz suggests that, in fact, the opposite was true: 'the Indians suffered their fate in their native land, believing that when they died they passed over to the invisible regions of their own Cuban world. The fate of the Negroes was far more cruel; they crossed over the ocean in agony, believing that even after death they would have to recross it to be resurrected in Africa with their lost ancestors' (Ortiz [1995] p. 102).

¹⁰² Gilmore (2000) p. 32.

¹⁰³ Grainger (2000) p. 100.

absolute and there is no space for the transported population to make the Caribbean their own land.

The influence of Grainger's tropicalisation of European literary traditions and the prevalence of idealising sensibilities continues into the 1900-1929 era outlined in Donnell and Welsh's *Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*.¹⁰⁴ Yet, while *The Sugar-Cane* represents an idealisation of one form of society (colonial), it is tempered by the recognition of disease and hardship: as Steven Thomas argues, 'Grainger's poem was not merely a Georgic idyll that naturalized or nationalized the plantation, because that idyll is in the future, and the present was not so idyllic'.¹⁰⁵ In the early twentieth century, Caribbean poetry continued to utilize European-derived literary representations of idyllic or paradisiacal landscapes at the expense of the diseased reality that Grainger's poem remains aware of.¹⁰⁶ For example, Jamaican-creole poet J. E. Clare McFarlane offers in his poem, 'My Country' (1929), a nationalistic expression of an idealised native land that slips easily into

¹⁰⁴ It is not until the 1950s and 1960s boom-period that a distinct Caribbean literary tradition began to take shape, with writers such as George Lamming, Sam Selvon, and Wilson Harris gaining reputations. Much critical attention has been paid to this era, to the detriment of late nineteenth and early twentieth century writers. The roots of Caribbean literature can be traced back to Francis William's "Ode to Governor Haldane" (1795) and Grainger's *The Sugar Cane* (1764), and Donnell and Welsh's *Reader* is an important archive for early nineteenth century material. For a discussion of this era see Donnell and Welsh (1996) pp. 7-9, 13-17, 27-41; and Alison Donnell *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006) pp. 10-76.

¹⁰⁵ Thomas (2006) p. 102.

¹⁰⁶ Grainger's own occupation as a doctor accounts for his particular interest in the diseases that affected the slave population, and in the same year as the publication of *The Sugar-Cane* Grainger also published *Essay on the West Indian Diseases*. *The Sugar-Cane* highlights the realities of plantation life though its advice on the selection and treatment of slaves in book four. Although the *Essay*, does not hold the same canonical significance as *The Sugar-Cane*, as Mary Galvin has argued, changing medicinal practices in response to both the New World condition, environment and its resources was a sign of creolization (see Mary L. Galvin 'Decorations for Carolinians: The Creation of a Creole Medicine Chest in Colonial South Carolina' in *Creolization in the Americas* edited by David Buisseret and Steven G. Reinhardt [Arlington, Texas: Texas A and M University Press, 2000] pp. 63-87). In this way, Grainger's documentation of West Indian diseases and their treatment, might also be taken as further evidence of creolization in the early era.

Western-inspired Edenic discourse. Whereas Aimé Césaire's later depiction of his native land in *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* (1939) presents Martinique as 'desolate bed sore on the wound of the waters' and revealed 'At the brink of dawn', the 'screeches of prattling parrots',¹⁰⁷ McFarlane envisions a very different landscape: 'I have felt thy breath,/Moist with the mountain-dew, and seen thy face/Aflush with Eden's earliest dawn'.¹⁰⁸ Recalling his childhood experiences, McFarlane presents Jamaica as a nourishing mother from whose resources the poet's 'dawning consciousness' has benefited.¹⁰⁹ However, this description is far removed from the harsh realities of plantation life:

[...] well do I recall
 Thy first sweet favour, my first love: a flower,
 Star-like and tender, whose perfumèd breath
 Wafted my soul into the enchanted land
 Of dreams and fairies.¹¹⁰

In the course of his poem, McFarlane does make reference to 'thy hidden pain' and 'burden of thy grief' in connection to his native land, suggesting that whereas Jamaica was once idyllic in the poet's childhood, in adulthood he recognises a troubling aspect.¹¹¹ However, the poem's celebratory ending – 'see thee stand triumphant on the heights,/Steadfast like thine own mountain-range and flush'd/With the bright splendour of a new-born day' – suggests that, ultimately, the state of grief

¹⁰⁷ Aimé Césaire *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, translated by Mireille Rosello with Annie Pritchard (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books Ltd, 1995) p. 73. Discussed pp. 89-98 of this thesis.

¹⁰⁸ J. E. Clare McFarlane 'My Country' pp. 50-52 in *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*, edited by Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) p. 50.

¹⁰⁹ McFarlane (1996) p. 50.

¹¹⁰ McFarlane (1996) p. 51.

¹¹¹ McFarlane (1996) pp. 51-52.

is one to be overcome and 'the o'erpowering harmony' and poet's romantic outlook will prevail.¹¹²

Another Jamaican, Tom Redcam (born Thomas MacDermot) offers a similarly idyllic portrait in 'My Beautiful Home' (1929). Once again, the poem is organised around the poet's expression of love for his native land – 'I sing of the Island I love,/Jamaica, the land of my birth'¹¹³ – then focuses emphatically on an idealised vision of nature – 'kissed by the white-gleaming foam,/And fanned by the balm of the breeze'.¹¹⁴ Again, like McFarlane, the poet's idealism is briefly offset by the recognition of nature's dark side:

I sing of the cloud reaching height,
Of the roar of the wind-waving wood,
Of the torrent descending in might,
Of the sweep of the swift-gleaming flood.¹¹⁵

Redcam hints here of nature's destructive tendency in the form of hurricane or flood, however, these factors remain part of his 'song'. Any suggestion of a fearful reality is, therefore, subsumed by the main thrust of the poem, which is to celebrate the ideal and 'sublime' elements of Jamaica.¹¹⁶

A final example of the prevalence of Edenic discourse in this early era, may be found in H. S. Bunbury's 'The Spell of the Tropics' (1929), which depicts an idyllic Caribbean evening – the time of the day at which 'the spell of the tropics is deepest, Most subtle and sweet their power'.¹¹⁷ Unlike both Redcam and McFarlane, this

¹¹² McFarlane (1996) p. 52.

¹¹³ Tom Redcam 'My Beautiful Home' in *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*, edited by Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) p. 45.

¹¹⁴ Redcam (1996) p. 45.

¹¹⁵ Redcam (1996) p. 45.

¹¹⁶ Redcam (1996) p. 45.

¹¹⁷ H. S. Bunbury 'The Spell of the Tropics' in *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*, edited by Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) p. 56.

poem imagines the position of coloniser overlooking and idealising the conquered land, characterising the island as ‘mistress’ to ‘that northern lover’ who ‘holds them [...] /In the innermost shrines of his heart,¹¹⁸ and ultimately confirms the relocation of Eden:

From beyond the mist-ridden horizons
Of his pallid tempestuous shies,
For that Eden of palms and of moonlight,
And the ocean of love where it lies,
Comes an aches of an infinite longing
That is set to a cadence of sighs.¹¹⁹

Within Bunbury’s poem, as with McFarlane and Redcam, the portrait offered of the Caribbean is as an idealised, Edenic space far removed from the realities of plantation life. To this list might be added Mary Adella Wolcott’s ‘Busha’s Song’ (1929), Astley Clerk’s ‘Islets Mid Silver Seas’ (1929), or Eva Nicholas’s ‘A Country Idyll’ (1929), all of which contribute to this early canon of Caribbean literature and its idealising/paradisiacal discourse.¹²⁰

The absence of plantation life in the works of this early moment overlook the significant social and ecological impact that industrialisation was having on the natural world that poets like McFarlane, Redcam, and Bunbury celebrated. Focusing on Grainger’s subject, Antonio Benítez-Rojo’s contribution to *Caribbean Literature and the Environment*, ‘Sugar and the Environment in Cuba’, replicates the desire to relocate Eden in the New World. The essay opens to a pre-temporal scene, ‘in the Creation’s Fifth Day’, as the author casts his eye over his native land: ‘[m]y look

¹¹⁸ Bunbury (1996) p. 56.

¹¹⁹ Bunbury (1996) p. 56.

¹²⁰ These poems may all be found in Donnell and Welsh’s *Reader* (pp. 42-63). Nicholas is discussed on pp. 56-57 of this thesis.

slows down to take in all of Eden's landscapes: Cuba before Good and Evil'.¹²¹

However, this Edenic vision is quickly undermined by an account of industrialization and deforestation caused by the sugar industry. From the first settlements of Tianos, through the 'Creole Machine' of the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, and the contemporary 'Republican Machine', exploitation of Cuba's natural resources has reduced forest coverage from seventy-two percent in 1518 to just eight percent by the 1960s.¹²² Within representations of the Caribbean as paradise, whether that be in the early accounts of Columbus, the poetry of early-twentieth century Caribbean poets, or the more recent touristic myopia, there is no room for an eco-conscience: 'Cuba is part of the Caribbean basin, the Gates of Paradise that, moved and marvelling, the first European explorers and chroniclers described. Today, nevertheless, the archipelago's ecosystems are fighting for their lives'.¹²³ Myths of the Caribbean's Edenic status come into conflict with environmental issues precisely because they seek to mask the exploitation which lay

¹²¹ Antonio Benítez-Rojo 'Sugar and the Environment in Cuba', translated by James Maraniss, pp. 33-50 in *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture*, edited by Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005) p. 33. By locating his point of departure in the 'Creation's fifth day'. Benítez-Rojo draws a parallel with fellow Cuban author, Alejo Carpentier and his novel *The Lost Steps* (1953) (see pp. 72-75 and 83-85 of this thesis).

¹²² Benítez-Rojo (2005) pp. 35-42. The most significant period of deforestation begins with the sugar and coffee producing 'Creole Machine' and continued into the Republican era although, more recently, re-forestation programmes have begun to reverse the trend bringing coverage up to 18.2 percent in 1991 (p. 46). As well as deforestation, 'the Antilles have seen the extermination of thirty-four mammal, ten reptile, and six bird species' (p. 49). Contemporary Cuban author, Mayra Montero, approaches this issue in her novel *In the Palm of Darkness* (1995) which depicts an academic fact finding mission, reminiscent of that of in Carpentier's *The Lost Steps*. Montero uses this frame to highlight the rapidly diminishing frog populations throughout the Americas. For further discussions of Montero's novel see Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert ' "He of Trees": Nature, Environment, and Creole Religiosities in Caribbean Literature' in *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture*, edited by Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005); and Ángel A. Rivera 'Silence, Voodoo, and Haiti in Mayra Montero's *In the Palm of Darkness*', accessed at <http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/ciberletras/v04/Rivera.html>.

¹²³ Benítez-Rojo (2005) p. 49.

behind the European presence in the New World. As Deloughrey *et al* comment: '[t]he search for an original state of nature outside of industrialized Europe (even while the Caribbean provided the labor and raw materials for this industrialization) hid the effects of environmental violence behind the guise of gendered metaphors of the feminized and maternal "womb" of Caribbean landscapes'.¹²⁴ Although the Caribbean literary response to this has not always succeeded in addressing gendered depictions of the landscape, as my analysis of Alejo Carpentier and Claude McKay in Chapter One will suggest, contemporary writers have sought to challenge the notion of returning to an original state of nature and pioneer DeLoughrey, Gosson, and Handley's project: to address the historical realities that lie behind idealised representations of landscape.

In Chapter One, 'A Macadam Paradise: Creolizing Literary Representations of the Caribbean Landscape', the continuing influence of the early canon's insistence on paradisiacal/Edenic tropes is traced in the works of Una Marson, Alejo Carpentier, Claude McKay, Aimé Césaire, Édouard Glissant, Gisèle Pineau, and Shani Mootoo. Focusing on the celebration of landscape and the rejection of a discourse of pure origins, these writers to different extents represent the contemporary challenge to the idealising gaze that sought to erase the hardships of plantation life. Yet, in doing so, the creolization of European-derived literary tropes that has its roots in James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane*, takes on further significance.

¹²⁴ Deloughrey *et al* (2005) pp. 11-12. While disguising colonial consumption and exploitation of the Caribbean's resources is evident in Edenic discourse, Shona N. Jackson's contribution to the collection argues that in the postcolonial era idealising myths, such as that of El Dorado, have been utilized by nationalist governments in Guyana to similar ends ('Subjection and Resistance in the Transformation of Guyana's Mytho-Colonial Landscape' pp. 85-98 in *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture*, edited by Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley [Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005] pp. 85-87).

Paradise becomes reconfigured as an everyday, 'macadam' reality. In this way, the writers examined contribute to a continuing creolization of literary legacies and effect a reimagining of the discourse of origins. In the course of this chapter, the theoretical output of Édouard Glissant will emerge as the central framework for readdressing the question of origins, offering a model of creolization that functions according to the fragmented impurity of its elements, the model for which Glissant finds in the Caribbean landscape itself.

Chapter Two, 'The Location of Creolization: Towards a Singular Theory of Postcolonial Relation', elaborates the creolization theory presented by Glissant in *Caribbean Discourse* by incorporating his recently translated poetry, as well as in his later exposition, *Poetics of Relation*. I address Peter Hallward's commentary on Glissant's writings, and, in particular, challenge his assertion that in the later moment represented by *Poetics of Relation*, creolization becomes a decontextualising, de-specifying force. Poems taken from collections such as *A Field of Islands* (1952), *Black Salt* (1960), and *Dream Country, Real Country* (1985), are highlighted in order to expose the continuing importance of landscape and context to Glissant's idea of creolization, which emerges in finer detail in the course of this chapter, through the interrogation of such concepts as relation, opacity, *échos-monde* (world-echoes), and totality. This introduction has established a number of creolization's features, however, it is the crucial element of its singularity that is the key contention of Chapter Two. And while Hallward reads singularity as a movement beyond relation, I underline creolization's important function as the generation of an entirely new, unpredictable form. In this way, I argue that the

singularity of creolization is affirmed, not as de-specifying, but as a concept always in relation and always open to mutation. It is to this end that Derek Attridge's thesis in *The Singularity of Literature* (2004) is employed.

Glissant emerges throughout Chapters One and Two as the most influential thinker of creolization, with the *créolité* movement which takes up his lead failing to respond adequately to the nuanced model of relational identity that Glissant's later work promotes. However, the tendency of Glissant's critics to approach him as a Francophone writer, read in relation to other Martinican or Francophone writers, has caused many to overlook the strong parallels between the theories of Glissant and Harris, despite Glissant's own signalling to the contrary.¹²⁵ Chapter Three, 'The Unfinished Digenesis of the Imagination: Creolization Theory and the Writings of Wilson Harris', addresses this deficit. Harris's intricate theories of the whole-world's interconnected existence; the continually shifting relation between consciousness and unconscious; his Jungian inspired use of archetypes and the collective unconscious in novels such as *Jonestown* (1996), *The Mask of the Beggar* (2004), and *The Ghost of Memory* (2006), as well as his celebration of the creative potential of the cross-cultural imagination, are all brought to bear on the unique model of creolization that this thesis argues for. In this way, I stage a relation between the writings of Glissant and Harris to effect a singular, distinctly Caribbean poetics of creolization.

¹²⁵ In a recent interview Glissant identifies Césaire, Carpentier, and Harris as the three writers he shares most in common with (Glissant cited in Tirthanker Chanda 'The Cultural "Creolization" of the World: an Interview with Edouard Glissant' *Label France* No. 38 2000 [January], http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/label_france/ENGLISH/DOSSIER/2000/15creolisation.html accessed online 15/01/07).

The final chapter of this thesis, 'The Archive and The Archivist: Towards a Creolizing Relation with the Canon', returns to the issue of literary legacies raised in Chapter One in order to develop a framework for reading contemporary Caribbean writers' engagements with the European literary canon and its modes that agrees with the distinct model of creolization already established. I argue that Michel Foucault's exposition of the role of the archive in regulating and effecting cultural discourse in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) provides the foundations for a system of postcolonial readings of European texts and artworks, and the production of new, singular works of literature. The chapter opens with Maryse Condé's rewriting of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) in *Windward Heights* (1995), and Derek Walcott's creolization of Homer in *Omeros* (1990), as two examples of the prevalence of intertextual relating within the Caribbean canon, while Glissant's novel *The Fourth Century* (1997) and David Dabydeen's poem 'Turner' (1994), are identified as examples of the founding of a new, postcolonial Caribbean archive. In this model of canonical relating, the creative writer adopts the role of archivist, reading and rewriting the legacies of both coloniser and colonised, while being free to create his or her own text, specific to the historical contexts and realities of their situation, but which transcends that relation in new and unpredictable ways.

Throughout, creolization emerges as a creative response to our postcolonial world. An effect of radical displacement and the interaction of diverse cultural groups, creolization theory surfaces in the writings of Caribbean authors and theorists precisely because the Caribbean's own disparate racial, cultural, and linguistic make-up offers a microcosm of the contemporary situation. Yet, the

implications of creolization theory are not bound by geographic scope nor limited in their impact to the Caribbean canon only. Rather, what this thesis suggests is that while contemporary Caribbean responses to creolization have led to a renewal of literary tropes and a re-engagement with the landscape as a source of poetic inspiration, creolization itself offers a model of whole-world relating in which the creative dialogue with both historical and literary legacies witnesses the production of new, original works of literature: the unpredictable, singular creolization of the canon.

Chapter One

A Macadam Paradise: Creolizing Literary Representations of the Caribbean Landscape

The storyteller's cry comes from the rock itself.
He is grounded in the depths of the land; therein
lies his power. Not an enclosed truth, not
momentary succour. But the communal path,
through which the wind can be released.¹

The conflation of Eden and the New World not only disguised the exploitation of its resources, as current ecocritical perspectives suggest,² but it also betrayed, more generally, the power relations that existed between coloniser and colonised. Derek Walcott makes this point as he draws a comparison between the figures of Adam and Crusoe, both of whom are faced with the need to adapt to their New World environment. In this situation, Walcott argues, the coloniser, Crusoe, has to create a different kind of identity for himself: 'on his island [Crusoe] doesn't know the names of the plants that he is living among. He doesn't know the names of the natives that he may find there. So he renames them, probably from what he already knows [...] by associating what he is looking at with another image from the old world'.³ This renaming has a great deal of significance for the relationship between the Caribbean and its image as Europe's Edenic paradise: it is the repetition of an already established discursive practice, and by reframing the Caribbean in the

¹ Édouard Glissant *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, translated by J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999b) p. 237.

² See, for example, Antonio Benítez-Rojo 'Sugar and the Environment in Cuba', translated by James Maraniss in *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture* edited by Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005) pp. 33-50, and on pp. 41-43 of this thesis.

³ Cited in George B Handley "'The Argument of the Outboard Motor": An Interview with Derek Walcott' pp. 127-139 in *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture*, edited by Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005) p. 134.

discourses of Eden/Arcadia, the coloniser forces the landscape to signify through an imposed, foreign order. Adam, on the other hand, 'really has to begin from the immediate surroundings that are there'.⁴ For Walcott, both perspectives are common to the poet: what

has to be undertaken is a vocabulary that may be the same word, or same noun, but in the context of this idea of discovery, and immediacy, and freshness, and exploration, then that noun has to acquire its own identity in the poem. I don't think that's very different from, say, the naming of either the explorer or the naming that is already there in the mind of the native.⁵

Walcott does, of course, recognise the ideological perspective with which Crusoe is aligned: a discrepancy that draws him closer to Adam as the archetypal figure of the New World poet.⁶ What is clear at this late point in his career (Handley's interview was conducted in 2001), is that by reverting to Adam, he is not diminishing the importance of historical legacy, for, Walcott argues, 'the idea of Adam contains original sin. I am talking about someone looking at a morning that is unspoiled, not devastated by any means, and the feeling that one can rechristen things, rename things'.⁷ The past is a given: what Walcott imagines is a representation of the Caribbean landscape that does not rely exclusively on already established European

⁴ Walcott cited in Handley (2005) p. 134.

⁵ Walcott cited in Handley (2005) p. 134.

⁶ In earlier works, Walcott more expressly conflates the two figures. For example, in 'The Figure of Crusoe' (1965) he writes that '[m]y Crusoe, then, is Adam [...]. He is Adam because he is the first inhabitant of a second paradise' (Derek Walcott 'The Figure of Crusoe' pp. 33-40 in *Critical Perspectives on Derek Walcott* edited by Robert D. Hamner [Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997a] p. 35). Walcott's later sensitivity to the ideological biases which Crusoe brings to the New World is indicative of his changing critical perspective on the role of history in the shaping of the Caribbean. In 'The Caribbean: Culture or Mimicry' (1974) Walcott writes that, in the Caribbean 'history is irrelevant, not because it is not being created, or because it was sordid; but because it has never mattered' (Derek Walcott 'The Caribbean: Culture or Mimicry?' pp. 51-57 in *Critical Perspectives on Derek Walcott* edited by Robert D. Hamner [Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997b] p. 53). However, with the publication of *Omeros* (1990), a more ambiguous dialogue with historical legacy was presented (see pp. 291-298 of this thesis), and it is this point of view that emerges in Handley's interview, cited here (conducted in 2001).

⁷ Walcott cited in Handley (2005) p. 133.

models, though it remains aware of them, and as such, Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Renée Gosson, and George Handley note, envisions a poetics that gives authors a 'more originary claim to the significance of their landscapes in a way that destabilizes the colonial gaze'.⁸ Importantly, the destabilization of 'the colonial gaze' is not effected by merely giving 'new names for old things, or old names for old things, but the faith of using the old names anew'.⁹ Walcott envisions the creolization of 'old names' as they are brought into relation with new contexts and environments. What is significant here is that the challenge to colonial idealisations of the landscape does not erase the legacy of slavery and colonialism, 'original sin'. Rather, Walcott's New World poet challenges colonial discourse by adopting 'old words' and giving them new significance in his surroundings. That which the coloniser has seen through already established terms (Eden, for example), becomes distorted as it is forced to signify in new, slightly different ways.¹⁰

I open this chapter with Walcott's vision of the New World poet as it foregrounds the primacy of creolization as adaptation to the Caribbean environment, but also as a discourse that circles around the idealistic image of Eden/paradise. As I argued in my Introduction, early creole poets such as J. E. Clare McFarlane, Tom Redcam, and H. S. Bunbury utilized such imagery in order to reproduce an idyllic vision of the Caribbean that often neglected the realities of plantation life. Poems such as Redcam's 'My Beautiful Home' (1929) are the foundations of the

⁸ Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley 'Introduction' p. 1-30 in Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley (eds) *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005) p. 11.

⁹ Derek Walcott 'What the Twilight Says' p. 3-35 in Derek Walcott *What the Twilight Says: Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998a) p. 9.

¹⁰ This is of course what Homi Bhabha suggests happens to all colonial stereotypes. See *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) pp. 66-84.

contemporary Caribbean canon, and, as this chapter illustrates, recent writers such as Alejo Carpentier, Aimé Césaire, Édouard Glissant, Gisèle Pineau, and Shani Mootoo have all produced works that return to the paradisiacal vision characteristic of these poets, in order to redress the biases expressed and subvert the coloniser's gaze. In doing so, the importance of landscape to the Caribbean imagination is reconfirmed, not as a site of unspoilt beauty, or a nation's origins, but as both a model for and factor in a continuing creolized reality. Paradisiacal and Edenic tropes are themselves subject to a process of creolization as they are forced to relate in new ways to Caribbean life and the historical legacies that shape it.

Creolization, as it will emerge throughout this chapter, is a process founded on an understanding of every cultures' impurity. To envision a world of creolizing identities, is to view that world as composed of peoples of a heritage so intermixed as to render it indeterminate. This perspective emerges from the theoretical writings of Édouard Glissant who, as I will argue, finds his model for such a vision in the diverse landscape of the Caribbean. Where creolization challenges a culture's claim of inherited legitimacy, of its imperviousness to the influence of others, landscape offers an example of mutability. However, this is not the biological hybridity that Robert Young identifies:¹¹ creolization is fundamentally a process, not a result, and moreover, it is one which extends beyond genetics into all aspects of what Glissant refers to as the totality.¹² Signs of creolization in literature become apparent as those legitimizing tropes, such as Eden, become altered or incorporate new, unexpected

¹¹ Robert Young *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia) pp. 1-4, referenced on pp. 1-2 of this thesis.

¹² See Édouard Glissant *Poetics of Relation*, translated by Betsy Wing (0Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), and Chapter Two of this thesis, pp. 157-174.

elements. The early poets show signs of this change: pain and grief emerge in McFarlane's 'My Country'; a storm threatens in Redcam's 'My Beautiful Home'. These references signify a challenge to the colonial perspective outlined by DeLoughrey *et al* that held the Caribbean islands to be a fertile paradise.¹³ In twentieth-century works such as Césaire's *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* (1939), Glissant's *The Ripening* (1958), or Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night* (1996) this process is amplified to reveal a truer account of the reality of Caribbean life, but also to further dispel the colonial/touristic mindset. In this process, however, a new, creolized landscape aesthetic emerges in which these Edenic/paradisiacal literary tropes are rewritten in order to accommodate the historical violence of colonialism, the devastation wrecked by industrialization, and the specific oppressions that affect Caribbean communities. While the early poets – McFarlane, Redcam, and Bunbury – fall short in many respects, their work represents the beginnings of this process: a gradual adaptation of Western canonical modes and frameworks that begins, as I argued in my Introduction, with James Grainger's poem *The Sugar Cane* (1964) as the first notable attempt to rewrite European representations of its idyllic empire.

The influence of Grainger's poem and its use of classical references is evident in the early twentieth-century era of Caribbean literature. The works of Redcam, McFarlane, and Bunbury discussed in Chapter One, adopt an idealised perspective that draws on notions of Eden. More expressly classical is Eva Nicholas's poem 'A Country Idyll' (1929). In the eyes of the Western reader, this poem may initially challenge their expectations of a typical pastoral scene with its 'exotic' context – 'Fragrant loads of green pimento/On the barbecue,/Crushed green leaves among the

¹³ DeLoughrey *et al*. (2005) pp. 5-10.

berries/Giving perfume too'.¹⁴ However, this displacement or re-contextualisation of the pastoral does not confront the primacy of the European perspective. Rather, it confirms a reading of the Caribbean as a care-free paradise – 'Am'rous breezes', 'Hill tops crowned with golden sunshine', and 'Gay pimento pickers'¹⁵ – as well as the suitability of a Western literary genre to express it. Thus when Nicholas bemoans her inability to adequately express 'Mother Nature fair',¹⁶ while in the context of the poem this refers to a limitation of language – 'my voice is feeble;/Locked within my breast? I must keep this joyous music,/Ever unexpressed'¹⁷ – this might be re-read as a comment on her failure to, as Donnell and Lawson note, 'differentiate the Jamaican nation from the imperial mother-land and to authenticate a language and experience of its people'.¹⁸ In other words, Nicholas presents a romanticised view of country life, and although that mimicry does affect a small degree of ambivalence, to apply Bhabha's paradigm,¹⁹ by transposing the traditional Western idyll to an exotic context, ultimately it reinforces Western perceptions of the New World as Eden and fails to forge a poetics of landscape that is specific to Caribbean experience.

In the 1930s Caribbean literature begins to distance itself from expressly paradisiacal imagery and present a more apparent challenge to the inherited European canon. In the works of Una Marson, a more radical re-evaluation of

¹⁴ Eva Nicholas (1996) 'A Country Idyll' pp. 60-61 in *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*, edited by Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh (London and New York: Routledge) p. 60. Donnell also discusses Nicholas's 'A Country Idyll' in *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006) p. 61

¹⁵ Nicholas (1996) p. 60

¹⁶ Nicholas (1996) p. 61

¹⁷ Nicholas (1996) p. 61

¹⁸ Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh (eds) (1996) *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature* (London and New York: Routledge) p. 37

¹⁹ For Bhabha colonial mimicry generates a disturbing degree of ambivalence and as a result threatens the coherence of the coloniser's ideology (Bhabha [1994] pp. 85-92).

European literary conventions can be found than in the previous era.²⁰ For example, her poem, 'Jamaica' (1930), in the first instance, appears to confirm the traditional pastoral vision. In the second line, Marson evokes 'the Muse' to inspire her account of her 'lovely Island',²¹ and the verses that follow recall the paradisiacal vision offered by McFarlane and Nicholas:

And when Diana rising o'er yon hill
Sheds her pale light, while all the earth is still,
Ah, then, what bliss to wander hand in hand
Like lovers 'neath the bowers in Fairyland.²²

Donnell and Lawson suggest that resistance to the English pastoral may be found in Marson's 'positive inversion' of the snowy English landscape – 'No fields and streams are covered o'er with snow'²³ – but that this is ultimately undermined by the poem's recourse to Eurocentric views and 'fashioning of the Jamaican climate as "one long summer"'.²⁴ However, there is some resistance to colonial discourse to be found in this representation of the Jamaican landscape. In the opening line Marson refers to Jamaica as 'Island of the Western Sea', and later as 'Fair Island of the West'.²⁵ Whether the term is meant to suggest a Jamaica that lies to the west of Europe (alluding, perhaps, to Columbus's mistake), or, more likely given the capitalization, that Jamaica belongs to the West, either way the island is being read

²⁰ Una Marson is one of the foundational figures of contemporary Caribbean women's writing. For a commentary on Marson's influence on Caribbean women's writing see Denise deCaires Narain (2002) *Contemporary Caribbean Women's Poetry: Making Style* (London and New York: Routledge) pp. 1-21.

²¹ Una Marson (1996b) 'Jamaica' p. 130 in *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*, edited by Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh (London and New York: Routledge) p. 130

²² Marson (1996b) p. 130

²³ Marson (1996b) p. 130

²⁴ Donnell and Lawson (1996) p. 119

²⁵ Marson (1996b) p. 130

from the Western point of view, and, as such, the poem can be seen to ironically expose the idealising view of the coloniser.

Marson's critique becomes more direct in her poem 'In Jamaica' (1931), which once again employs an ironic register that foregrounds Jamaica Kincaid's technique in *A Small Place* (1988).²⁶ Once again Marson establishes a sun-drenched paradise where 'the darkies smile on in Jamaica,/And whistle or sing all the day'.²⁷ However, this allows her to introduce an aspect of social criticism:

O! it's a glorious life in Jamaica
For the man who has merely enough,
But it's a dreary life for the beggars,
And the large slums are all pretty rough.
It's a gay life too for the children
Not poor, and whose skin is light,
But the darker set are striving
And facing a very stiff fight.²⁸

Within this paradise there is division between rich and poor, black and white. The pleasant 'lazy life'²⁹ suggested in the opening stanza, gives way to an image of slums and a fight for survival. The Western tourist's point of view, in particular, comes under criticism in the following stanza:

O, it's a wonderful life in Jamaica
For the tourists who visit this shore,
There's golf, there's dancing, and swimming,
And charms that they ne'er saw before.
They call it a garden of Eden,
They love the fair hills of St. Ann,
And they say on the white sand of Mo. Bay
They get such a wonderful tan!³⁰

²⁶ See pp. 189-190 of this thesis.

²⁷ Una Marson (1996c) 'In Jamaica' p. 131 in *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*, edited by Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh (London and New York: Routledge) p. 131

²⁸ Marson (1996c) p. 131

²⁹ Marson (1996c) p. 131

³⁰ Marson (1996c) p. 131.

Eden forms part of the tourist's perspective, a lens through which the Caribbean is viewed, but one that stands in complete contrast to Marson's reference to the slums and poverty that lies behind the tourist's world of golf and sunbathing. As such, Marson's poem represents what Donnell terms a 'politicisation of the pastoral' that draws attention to Western biases and critiques the view of the Caribbean as paradise.³¹ Marson's poetry, then, marks an engagement with tradition that revises the biases on which those traditions have been founded.

By acknowledging the poverty behind the tourist's view, Marson offers what Edward Said has identified as a 'contrapuntal reading': that is to say a re-reading of a text, or in this case, a tradition of representing the Caribbean as paradise, that acknowledges the relations of power that lie behind it.³² This is the difference between Grainger's revision of the georgic in *The Sugar-Cane* which disturbs the expectations of his British readers, but nevertheless confirms the colonial relationship, and Marson's politicisation of the pastoral which challenges the exploitive relationships that inform representations of the Caribbean as paradise. To read *The Sugar-Cane* contrapuntally would necessarily involve a reassessment of the poem in light of its unquestioning acceptance of slavery, but also the economic and ecological problems that the sugar industry has created in the contemporary Caribbean.³³ Tropicalising a literary tradition is not the equivalent of creolizing the canon. Creolization incorporates all the elements that are specific to a writer's

³¹ Donnell (2006) p. 103. Donnell discusses this in relation to the later poems of Olive Senior (pp. 94-104).

³² Edward Said *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993) pp. 78-79.

³³ See pp. 41-43 of this thesis and Antonio Benítez-Rojo (2005) 'Sugar and the Environment in Cuba', translated by James Maraniss p. 33-50 in *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture* edited by Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press).

environment, including the power relations that inform that context. Grainger's 'West-India georgic'³⁴ may point the way towards postcolonial dialogues with tradition, but a properly creolized landscape aesthetic involves a much more radical engagement. The challenge to mythologized landscapes must be seen to recognise the ways in which land and people are defined in relation to historical circumstances. Yet, this awareness of historicity is not the same as establishing a community's legitimate claim to a particular land: as DeLoughrey *et al* comment, '[t]he destabilizing of atavistic origins inevitably provides a framework for discussing hybridity and creolization'.³⁵ Accordingly, the rejection of origin is a fundamental priority to the model of creolization established by Édouard Glissant in his collection of essays, *Caribbean Discourse* (1981), in which dispossession results not from alienation from the 'mother land' or the site of pure origins, but the historical inability for Martinicans to discover their island.

Creolizing Landscape, Literature, and Caribbean Discourse.

In the writings of Glissant, there is a concerted attempt to debunk nostalgic longings for Edenic landscapes, such as those articulated by Nicholas, McFarlane, Redcam, and Bunbury, but also a rejection of all forms of discourse that celebrate pure racial or cultural origins; this, J. Michael Dash notes, 'marks a significant departure from the Caribbean's fixation with prelapsarian innocence, an origin before the Fall of the

³⁴ James Grainger 'The Sugar-Cane: A Poem in Four Books. With Notes' pp. 86-211 in John Gilmore *The Poetics of Empire: A Study of James Grainger's The Sugar-Cane* (London and New Brunswick: The Athlone Press, 2000) p. 90. Discussed pp. 31-37 of this thesis.

³⁵ DeLoughrey *et al* (2005) p. 16.

New World.³⁶ Glissant views the impulse to identify with a primordial source, or 'the *longing for the ideal of history*',³⁷ as directly related to a linear ordering of history that relegates the Caribbean to the margins: 'it is a matter of learning the natural Genesis, the primordial slime, the Eternal Garden, and embarking [...] on a journey to an ordering-knowledge'.³⁸ Thus to impose upon a landscape a myth of genesis is to force it into an alien and stifling notion of time and legitimacy that does not correspond to Caribbean reality:

our diverse histories in the Caribbean have produced today another revelation: that of their subterranean convergence [...]. The implosion of Caribbean history (of the converging histories of our people) relieves us of the linear, hierarchical vision of a single History that would run its unique course. It is not this History that has roared at the edges of the Caribbean, but actually a question of the subterranean convergence of our histories. The depths are not only the abyss of neurosis but primarily the site of multiple converging paths.³⁹

History, for Glissant, is not only the combined result of the collective experience, but, more importantly, it is inextricably linked with the 'subterranean' landscape on which that collective exists. Glissant's rejection of pure origins and Edenic imagery, then, is not a disavowal of the importance of landscape in the literary imagination. On the contrary, the relationship with the land

becomes so fundamental in this discourse that landscape in the work stops being merely decorative or supportive and emerges as a full character. Describing the landscape is not enough. The individual, the community, the land are inextricable in the

³⁶ J. Michael Dash 'Introduction' pp. xi-xlv in Édouard Glissant *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, translated by J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999) p. xii.

³⁷ Édouard Glissant *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, translated by J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999b) p. 79.

³⁸ Glissant (1999b) p.73. Glissant returns to issues of genesis as the legitimising discourse of an atavistic community in *Faulkner, Mississippi* (1996). See Édouard Glissant *Faulkner, Mississippi*, translated by Barbara Lewis and Thomas C. Spear (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999a) pp. 114-116, and pp. 212-216 of this thesis.

³⁹ Glissant (1999b) p. 66.

process of creating history. Landscape is a character in this process.⁴⁰

If, as Glissant argues in his later study, *Faulkner, Mississippi* (1996), composite cultures such as the Caribbean's utilize a different kind of genesis mythology to imagine their relationship with the land on which they co-exist – a 'digenesis', as he terms it – then landscape plays a fundamental role in the articulation of such discourse.⁴¹

Where Glissant embraces the natural world as a creative force, other Caribbean theorists, such as Antonio Benítez-Rojo, reject the potential of landscape to offer a fruitful site for the postcolonial consciousness in favour of the chaos and carnival of the city.⁴² Like Benítez-Rojo, Glissant similarly celebrates notions of disorder, but finds the exemplary model for this in the 'convulsive, unregimented', baroque extravagance of the Caribbean landscape.⁴³ For both theorists, the major challenge to linearity and Western-privileging historical discourses clearly presents itself in the idea of disorder. Yet, whereas Benítez-Rojo in *The Repeating Island* (1992) bases his vision of Caribbean identity in what Silvio Torres-Saillant might regard as, the Western-imported concept of chaos theory,⁴⁴ Glissant finds his framework for

⁴⁰ Glissant (1999b) pp. 105-106.

⁴¹ Glissant (1999a) pp. 114-115.

⁴² See Antonio Benítez-Rojo *The Repeating Island*, translated by James E. Maraniss (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2nd edition, 1996a) pp. 1-29. Dash discusses Benítez-Rojo's contribution to Caribbean theory and, in particular, his celebration of the city as a more suitable model for Caribbean identity than, for example, landscape (J. Michael Dash *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context* [Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1998] p. 8-9).

⁴³ Dash (1999) p. xv. Dash argues that such considerations begin to surface primarily in Glissant's *Soleil de la conscience* (*The Sun of Consciousness*, 1956) and are presented in opposition to the order of the European pastoral vision.

⁴⁴ See Silvio Torres-Saillant *An Intellectual History of the Caribbean* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) p. 44, also cited on p. 18 of this thesis. Describing his application of chaos, Antonio Benítez-Rojo writes that 'within the (dis)order that swarms around what we already know of as Nature, it is possible to observe dynamic states or regularities that repeat themselves

creolization in the unregulated, non-hierarchical relations characteristic of his native landscape. Moreover, Benítez-Rojo's field of chaos designates the replication of features, in which, as he argues:

every repetition is a practice that necessarily entails a difference and a step toward nothingness (according to the principle of entropy proposed by thermodynamics in the last century); however, in the midst of this irreversible change, Nature can produce a figure as complex, as highly organized, and as intense, as the one that the human eye catches when it sees a quivering hummingbird drinking from a flower.⁴⁵

This statement reveals the fundamental discrepancy between Benítez-Rojo's chaos theory and Glissant's creolization: the principles of entropy, as Glissant's predecessor as a poet of relation, Victor Segalen forcefully argued, designates an inevitable progression to lukewarm uniformity: the end of diversity and the triumph of the same.⁴⁶ The complex relations that the natural world offers, in Glissant's account, do not threaten to progress towards 'nothingness', but signify an ever changing, endlessly opaque model of difference and creolization.⁴⁷

The vision of chaos that Benítez-Rojo finds in the city space surfaces in Glissant's untamed landscape of the Caribbean, which is presented in *Caribbean*

globally' (1996a p. 2). However, although Benítez-Rojo is employing 'Nature' as a central paradigm for chaos theory, his usage of the term is distinct: '[w]hen I speak of Nature in the island, I do so in integral terms: Indians and their handicrafts, nuggets of gold and samples of other minerals' (p. 6). Nature here is more akin to native product, which is indicative of Benítez-Rojo's socio-historic approach in *The Repeating Island*.

⁴⁵ Benítez-Rojo (1996a) p. 3.

⁴⁶ Glissant refers to Segalen as one of the first poets of relation (1997 p. 27), and I discuss both Segalen's concept of exoticism and his influence on Glissant on pp. 186-196 of this thesis. The opposition between the diverse and the same is the subject of Victor Segalen's *Essay on Exoticism: An Aesthetics of Diversity*, translated and edited by Yaël Rachel Schlick, foreword by Harry Harootunian (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002). Whereas, for a specific discussion of Segalen's rejection of entropy and the second law of thermodynamics see Charles Forsdick *Victor Segalen and the Aesthetics of Diversity: Journeys Between Cultures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) p. 190.

⁴⁷ Opacity is a concept Glissant discusses in *Poetics of Relation* (pp. 189-194), and which I discuss in more depth in Chapter Two of this thesis alongside the question of diversity and totality (see pp. 174-185).

Discourse as directly contrasting to the idealistic vision of early New World poets such as McFarlane, Redcam, and Bunbury. Clearly evoking the pastoral sensibility that such poets represent, Glissant writes: 'the language of my landscape is primarily that of the forest, which unceasingly bursts with life. I do not practice the economy of the meadow, I do not share the serenity of the spring'.⁴⁸ Dash identifies the key link between Glissant's language of the forest and the imagining of community when he argues that, for Glissant, nature is not 'simply *décour consentant* [consenting scenery] or pathetic fallacy. Land is central to the process of self-possession'.⁴⁹ In Glissant's poetic vision, the landscape becomes the 'subterranean' site on which the collective experience may converge, and find the model for their composite, creolizing existence.

However, if it is the case that Glissant's postcolonial landscape aesthetic is created specifically in opposition to a European one, this is problematic: it merely reinscribes the binaries which constructed the colonial self and landscape as other. Glissant avoids this trapping through his use of creolization theory, which in his writings takes the form of the 'cross-cultural imagination', or, to adopt Barbadian poet and historian Kamau Brathwaite's phrase, 'submarine roots':

We are the roots of a cross-cultural relationship.

Submarine roots: that is floating free, not fixed in one position in some primordial spot, but extending in all directions in our world through its network of branches.

We, thereby, live, we have the good fortune of living, this shared process of cultural mutation, this convergence that frees us from uniformity.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Glissant (1999b) p. 146.

⁴⁹ Dash (1999) p. xxxv.

⁵⁰ Glissant (1999b) p. 67.

This world-vision of cross-cultural relationships is an intermingling of experiences that is exemplified in Glissant's conceptualisation of the Caribbean landscape. It deconstructs the notion of pure categories of identity with its focus on instability and flux, rejecting entirely the possibility, or even longing for, pure racial and cultural origins:

creolization demonstrates that henceforth it is no longer valid to glorify 'unique' origins that the race safeguards and prolongs [...]. To assert that peoples are creolized, that creolization has value, is to deconstruct in this way the category of 'creolized' that is considered as halfway between two 'pure' extremes.⁵¹

Thus a cross-cultural poetics firmly rejects the colonial desire to locate a myth of genesis, or prelapsarian innocence in the Caribbean island-space. This does not mean that a Caribbean individuals should deny their status as 'ambivalent heirs' to both European and African traditions;⁵² rather, Glissant argues, '[h]e must *recognise*' their heritage while understanding that as a result of history '*another reality* has come about', a cross-cultural identity in which both African and European elements of postcolonial identity coexist through a synthesis in which 'each element is enriched'.⁵³ A creolizing poetics, then, rejects essentialist positioning; avoids the use of creationist myths of pure origins; and favours fluid, unstable notions of identity and character that are viewed as inseparable from the landscape and community in which they are entangled.

⁵¹ Glissant (1999b) p. 140.

⁵² Silvio Torres-Saillant *Caribbean Poetics: Toward an Aesthetic of West Indian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) pp. 103-104.

⁵³ Glissant (1999b) p. 8. Emphasis in the original.

Retracing Lost Steps.

In his study of Latin American fiction, *Myth and Archive* (1990), Roberto González Echevarría proposes Alejo Carpentier's *The Lost Steps* (1953) as the founding text of the modern Latin American archive.⁵⁴ Yet its importance to this chapter lies in its engagements with and eventual rejection of literary tropes representing paradisiacal innocence and purity. Despite his Cuban background, Carpentier's novel is clearly set in the South American continent, though the exact location remains undisclosed.⁵⁵ The text presents itself as an allegory of return – the successful, well-educated native returning after many years spent in the West – and as such, *The Lost Steps* strikes a parallel with earlier works of Caribbean literature such as Claude McKay's *Banana Bottom* (1933) where the protagonist's reintegration with her native community is achieved despite her education abroad.⁵⁶ However, the distinction that Carpentier makes with *The Lost Steps* is between a return to one's native land, on the one hand, and the desire for the return to an ahistorical, idealised origin, on the other. In this way, Carpentier engages with those discourses, such as *négritude*, that reject the historically situated reality of the Caribbean region for an Edenic vision of an unspoilt paradise or original Africa, and in doing so helps

⁵⁴ Roberto González Echevarría *Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990b) pp. 3-4. Echevarría's appropriation of the term 'archive' is explored in Chapter Four of this thesis as an essential theoretical model for the way in which postcolonial authors approach and respond to literary and cultural legacies (see pp. 308-311).

⁵⁵ Echevarría suggests that the city visited by Carpentier's protagonist is most likely Venezuela's coastal capital, Caracas, due to a striking parallel with Carpentier's own experience there: like his protagonist, Carpentier was caught in the middle of a military coup during a visit to Caracas and trapped in a hotel for several days (Roberto González Echevarría *The Pilgrim at Home: Alejo Carpentier* [Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990a] p. 163).

⁵⁶ *Banana Bottom* is discussed later in this chapter (pp. 71-77). I suggest that McKay's rendering of Bitá's return is particularly problematic given his personal failure to live in his native Jamaica as an educated writer.

Glissant to define theory of creolization as a process borne out of the real experience of the Caribbean landscape.⁵⁷

That Echevarría and Glissant both identify the importance of *The Lost Steps* is particularly revealing given that Carpentier remains best known for his earlier works, such as *The Kingdom of this World* (1949), and in particular his theory of the 'marvellous real'. As a concept, the marvellous real is a direct attempt to fashion a literary aesthetic suitable for New World experience, and as such Carpentier delineates his term from the closely associated 'magical realism'. The magical realists of Europe, those that Franz Roh first identified in 1924, in Carpentier's view, are involved in the wilful manipulation of reality: 'what he [Roh] called *magical realism* was simply painting where real forms are combined in a way that does not conform to daily reality'.⁵⁸ Impossible images such as Chagall's flying cows, or upside-down people; magical realism points towards unexpected combinations of a series of everyday things. Carpentier sees this as an inferior version of his marvellous realism, referring to such works as 'simply expressionist painting'.⁵⁹ By implication, Carpentier suggests that magical realism juxtaposes familiar objects in order to express something of the artist's mental state. On the other hand, the experience of the marvellous cannot be willed, or conjured, but 'the marvellous

⁵⁷ For Glissant's discussion of *The Lost Steps*, see *Caribbean Discourse* pp. 81-83.

⁵⁸ Alejo Carpentier 'The Baroque and the Marvellous Real' pp. 89-108 in Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris (eds) *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995a) p. 102.

⁵⁹ Carpentier (1995a) p. 102.

begins to be unmistakably marvellous when it arises from an unexpected alteration of reality (the miracle), from a privileged relation of reality'.⁶⁰

For Carpentier, this 'privileged relation of reality' is the reserve of the Latin American writer whose 'duty is to depict this world, [...] interpret it ourselves'.⁶¹ Like Walcott's New World Adam, intoxicated by the 'enormous wonder' of his surroundings,⁶² Carpentier's notion of the marvellous real celebrates the repossession of Americas in terms that suggest newness and awe. As he argues, the 'extraordinary is not necessarily lovely or beautiful. It is neither beautiful nor ugly; rather, it is amazing because it is strange. Everything strange, everything amazing, everything that eludes established norms is marvellous'.⁶³ Whereas for Roh, magic realism challenges our preconceived notions of what is possible, for Carpentier, novelty and the marvellous present themselves in the day-to-day lives of the people.⁶⁴ There is, once again a parallel to be drawn with Walcott, who rejected

⁶⁰ Alejo Carpentier 'On the Marvellous Real in America' pp. 75-88 in Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris (eds) *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995b) pp. 85-6.

⁶¹ Carpentier (1995a) p. 106.

⁶² Derek Walcott 'The Muse of History' pp. 36-64 in Derek Walcott *What the Twilight Says: Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998b) p. 38.

⁶³ Alejo Carpentier (1995a) p. 101. Carpentier coined the term marvellous realism in 1949 in his Introduction to his novel *The Kingdom of This World*.

⁶⁴ Martinican René Méné, co-founder of *Tropiques* with Aimé and Suzanne Césaire, celebrates a similar notion of marvellous realism in Caribbean culture and arts in his article 'Introduction au merveilleux' (*Tropiques* No.3, October 1941 [an English translation of this article may be found in Michael Richardson (ed) *Refusal of the Shadow: Surrealism and the Caribbean*, translated by Michael Richardson and Krzysztof Fijalkowski (London and New York: Verso, 1996) pp. 89-95], Richardson's 'Introduction' to this volume similarly notes the parallels between surrealism more generally and Carpentier [pp. 12-14]). As Celia Britton explains, for Méné '[s]ituating "le merveilleux" in this specifically Martinican context – in a culture, in other words, in which magic figured prominently in folktales and in the day-to-day beliefs of the inhabitants – provided an opportunity to relate to European surrealism on a more equal footing. Here, rather than just imitating European ideas, they are in the privileged position of living in society in which "le merveilleux" is not something exotic or exceptional but permeates the whole of the popular culture. They can, so to speak, turn on its head Breton's formulation of "le merveilleux quotidien": in the Caribbean, it is not just that everyday things can be magical, but that (really) magic things happen everyday' (Celia Britton *Race and the Unconscious: Freudianism in French Caribbean Thought* [Oxford: LEGENDA,

Crusoe's naming of the environment because it was embedded in an already established, European order: a case of translating the novelty of the New World into the familiarity of the Old. Yet in order to distance himself from European culture, Carpentier, conversely, took recourse in Oswald Spengler's account of a universal history with no fixed centre and the decline of the West. As Echevarría notes,

Spengler provided the philosophical ground on which to stake the autonomy of Latin American culture and deny its filial relation to Europe [...It] spoke directly to the Latin American's wish to declare himself free from European tradition; a position, in short, that would allow him to bypass the reflexivity of European thought to reach a spontaneous culture grounded on the landscape – on the *terra mater*.⁶⁵

The desire to locate culture within one's immediate surroundings is an impulse clearly evident in Carpentier's marvellous real, although it is ironic that Carpentier should wish to distance himself from his European ancestry (Carpentier's parents

2002] p. 11). In this way, Ménil is closer to the surrealism of Pierre Mabilie, whose *Mirror of the Marvellous* (1940), Britton points out, Ménil drew on to develop his own 'ethnographic dimensions of "le merveilleux"' (p. 9). A close friend of André Breton, Mabilie himself had Caribbean connections: during the Second World War he worked as a surgeon in the Caribbean and was appointed French Cultural Attaché to Haiti (providing the official arrangements for Aimé Césaire's visit to Haiti in 1944 [A. James Arnold *Modernism and Negritude: The Poetry and Politics of Aimé Césaire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1981) p. 69; and Dash has discussed the importance of both Mabilie and Breton to the Francophone Caribbean in 'Carai-be Fantôme: The Play of Difference in the Francophone Caribbean' *Yale French Studies*, No.103, 2003 pp. 93-105]). However, what is important for the aspect of 'the marvellous' developed by Ménil and Carpentier, is that for Mabilie, the marvellous was to be uncovered in all aspects of life: '*the marvellous is everywhere*. In things it appears as soon as one succeeds in penetrating any object whatever. The most humble of them, just by itself, raises every issue. Its form, which reveals its individual structure, is the result of transformations which have been going on since the world began. And it contains the germs of countless possibilities that will be realized in the future' (Pierre Mabilie *The Mirror of the Marvellous: The Classic Surrealist Work on Myth* translated by Jody Gladding [Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions International, 1998] p. 14). Corresponding to Carpentier's claim that 'everything that eludes established norms is marvellous', for Mabilie, the marvellous is that which exceeds current knowledge, an otherness that lies outside of comprehension but which is suggested in 'the perceptible feeling [that] survives at the moment of discovery' (p. 14), through dreams (p. 17), the natural world (p. 22), and folklore as a sign of the collective unconscious (pp. 27-29). In this way, Mabilie's concept of the marvellous points towards the later themes of Glissant and Harris (see pp. 156-157, 188-189, 248 of this thesis).

⁶⁵ Echevarría (1990a) p. 56. Michael Richardson also notes Spengler as an influence (1996, pp. 12-13. For a further discussion of Carpentier's concept of marvellous realism, see Echevarría (1990b) pp. 125-130. A. James Arnold similarly cites Spengler's *Decline of the West* as an influence on Aimé Césaire and his *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* (1981 p. 22).

were both French, and Carpentier himself spent long periods of his adult life in France),⁶⁶ through the writings of a German philosopher. Nevertheless, Echevarría argues that the concept of marvellous realism failed to fulfil its aims on a more fundamental level, insofar as '[t]o assume that the marvellous exists only in America is to adopt a spurious European perspective, since it is only from the other side that alterity and difference may be discovered'.⁶⁷ To view the everyday lives and environments of the Americas as marvellous replicates the coloniser's desire to read the islands as a paradise altogether different from their industrialized homelands. It restates Columbus's wonder without including the element of 'original sin' that was central to Walcott's argument.

The lack of historical perspective in the marvellous real is, according to Echevarría, what distinguishes this earlier moment of Carpentier's work from *The Lost Steps*.⁶⁸ By trying to establish an order that denies the 'filial relationship to Europe', Carpentier's marvellous realism attempts to return to a state of nature prior to history and fails to realise the key argument that DeLoughrey *et al* put forward in *Caribbean Literature and the Environment*: that one's sense of belonging in the Caribbean

is conditioned by an always incomplete knowledge of nature and human histories and therefore necessitates recreating a sense of place in the present [...S]ince every step forward in forging a new identity and sense of place from the fragments created by

⁶⁶ Antonio Benítez-Rojo gives a good account of Carpentier's biographical details in order to read *The Lost Step*, in Lacanian terms as a rejection of the Law of the Father and search for the Mother (Antonio Benítez-Rojo 'Alejo Carpentier Between *Here* and *Over There*' in *Writing the Nation: Self and Country in the Post-Colonial Imagination* edited by John C. Hawley [Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 1996b] pp. 44-56).

⁶⁷ Echevarría (1990a) p. 128. Richardson formulates a similar criticism when he writes that '[t]he problem with Carpentier's conception of an independent American sensibility is that it leaves intact the power relations actually in force in the world' (1996, p. 13).

⁶⁸ Echevarría (1990a) pp. 154-171.

New World experience means leaving behind an imagined whole.⁶⁹

Though this comment is directed more generally at the issue of origin in Caribbean literature, it applies equally to Carpentier's work, for it is precisely this need to locate one's imagination in 'a sense of place in the present' that can be found in his novel *The Lost Steps*.

In *The Lost Steps*, Carpentier's nameless protagonist, a composer and academic of Latin American origin, now living in New York, sets out on a journey back to his native land with his mistress, Mouche, in order to research primitive musical instruments. There is a clear sequence of 'steps' involved in this journey: a regression from the metropolis of New York, to an unnamed Latin American city, then on through outposts and jungle trails, until he reaches, what he regards as, the source genesis itself. This quest up river, through the Latin American jungle to the source, is not only an exploration of uncharted lands, but also the travelling back through history. The narrator comes to realize that as he ventures further and further up stream, 'dates were [...] losing figures. In the headlong flight the years emptied, ran backwards, were erased'.⁷⁰ This regression culminates in the discovery of a pre-temporal paradise in which the narrator believes he can recover the lost balance in his life. Looking out at the landscape he describes the sight: '[t]he waters have just been divided, the Dry Land has appeared, the green grass has come forth and for the first time, the lights to rule the day and the night have been tried out. We are in the

⁶⁹ DeLoughrey *et al* (2005) pp. 20-21.

⁷⁰ Alejo Carpentier *The Lost Steps*, translated by Harriet de Onís (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968) p. 161.

world of Genesis, at the end of the Fourth Day of Creation'.⁷¹ The paradise that Carpentier evokes at this point is not the Garden of Eden of the Western pastoral tradition, but world before man (created on the sixth day), more akin to the 'spontaneous fecundity' of Pan's wild Arcadia than the regimented Eden.⁷² However, while the novel's insistence on revealing, in reverse, the course of history from this primordial state to modernity unsettles the Edenic vision in this way, in doing so the narrator comes close to creating his own legitimizing creationist myth for the 'marvellous' Caribbean reality he witnesses.

The Lost Steps traces a clear path from contemporary North America to genesis in the heart of the jungle. However, it is precisely the impossibility of knowing or capturing genesis that thwarts any attempt at formulating a coherent myth of origin. As Glissant's reading of *The Lost Steps* argues,

myth once had the function of revealing as it became more obscure. 'Knowledge' is more than difficult, untenable: it cannot be gained. The hero will have to return to the demands of the 'here and now' (which is, not the known, but the done), so renouncing the notion, the beginning of history. These kinds of failure matter. Failure leaves a trail that permits others to go forward. The literary work, so transcending myth, today initiates a cross-cultural poetics.⁷³

It is not so much the notion of a myth of origins that Glissant and Carpentier reject, but, rather, a clear and legitimising mythology of genesis. Glissant's vision of creolization, in response, privileges the concept of digenesis: an impure origin that

⁷¹ Carpentier (1968) p. 168.

⁷² Simon Schama *Landscape and Memory* (London: Fontana Press, 1996) p. 517. Schama's study of the changing usage of pastoral imagery suggests that Arcadia has gone through a number of transformations that have been telling of the condition of society. He argues that '[t]here have always been two kinds of Arcadia: shaggy and smooth; dark and light; a place of bucolic leisure and a place of primitive panic' (p. 517). This wild landscape, then, presents a threat to the order of Eden-behind-walls which, simultaneously, tries to tame it.

⁷³ Glissant (1999b) p. 83

cannot be located any degree with certainty. It is a digenesis that Glissant finds in *The Lost Steps*: an origin so diffuse and tangled, opaque and unknowable that once the narrator leaves it, the path that traces the route back to the source has been erased.

The failure to which Glissant refers is tied up in this attempted return after the narrator is lured back to the city by the prospect of getting enough paper and ink to complete his musical score for *The Odyssey* (and in order to tie up loose ends, such as his marriage). He journeys once more to the river that leads upstream to the source, only to find that his new mistress, Rosario, has married another man and that the secret entrance to that primordial world is immersed under flood waters: 'I had made the unforgivable mistake of turning back, thinking that a miracle could be repeated, and on my return I found the setting changed, the landmarks wiped out, and the faces of the guides new'.⁷⁴ By Glissant's account, it is the impenetrable density of the forest in *The Lost Steps* that, like history itself, evokes the narrator's desire to understand, but also challenges the 'transparency' of the coloniser's genesis-ordering version of history.⁷⁵ Glissant further comments that

[t]he idea behind *The Lost Steps* by Alejo Carpentier, according to which going upstream towards the source of the river is also to go back through time to a primordial period, across accretions or accumulations of time and space. The longing for history in this case is not legitimacy of the Faulkner variety, but innocence; it is however the same harrowing absence. Yes, history is desire; and what it desires, as we see here, sometimes is misleading. For Carpentier's hero is obsessed because he once touched paradise.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Carpentier (1968) p. 243.

⁷⁵ Glissant (1999b) pp. 82-83.

⁷⁶ Glissant (1999b) p. 81.

By adopting a framework that is structured around a regression into history, *The Lost Steps* would seem to suggest a linear model of history, contrary to a Glissantian position. However, leaving the narrator waiting for re-entry into the jungle, Glissant's claim that '[t]here is no clear path, no *way forward*, in this density. You turn in obscure circles until you find the primordial tree',⁷⁷ illustrates the way in which Carpentier's novel challenges linearity and forces alternative approaches. The narrator believes that he desires simplicity, paradise, innocence, but there is no chronology that can lead to this: history, like desire, is a marker of absence.

The Return of the Native: *The Lost Steps* and *Banana Bottom*.

Earlier, I offered *The Lost Steps* as a counterpoint to previous literary manifestations of return, such as Claude McKay's *Banana Bottom*, which tells the story of a young native girl, Bitá Plant, who, after being raped as a child, is sponsored by the local missionary family, the Craigs, to be educated in England. As a result, Bitá becomes part of Priscilla Craig's civilizing project, intended to continue the proselytizing mission, when in fact, on her return home, Bitá rediscovers her connection with the community and rejects the missionary's ambitions for her future. In the first instance, the relative ease with which McKay's protagonist, Bitá, readjusts to life in her native Banana Bottom, stands in contrast to the way in which Carpentier's novel suggests the difficulty of living both as a native and as an artist: the protagonist's need for pen and ink is presented as the key motivation for his return. By contrast, in *Banana Bottom* Bitá is permitted to fulfil both the expected role of a wife and has access to a range of materials to stimulate her intellect. However, a closer

⁷⁷ Glissant (1999b) p. 83. Emphasis in the original.

consideration of *Banana Bottom* reveals that this resolution is achieved only by means of a gendered approach to the return trope. Bitá's status as a married woman facilitates reintegration with the community, a point that stands in direct contrast with McKay's real life experience as an educated writer in Jamaica.

In his preface to the novel, Claude McKay draws attention to the fact that the character of Squire Gensir is based on a real life figure, Walter Jekyll. Though the novel seeks to undermine the missionary presence through the figure of Priscilla Craig, Europeans are not discounted outright, and in the character of Squire Gensir a paradoxical development emerges, for it is through this upper class, white, English gentleman that McKay further develops his attack on colonialism. The narrator describes Gensir, whose presence in the village of Banana Bottom is explained by his attempt to collect and record native songs, as the man before whom 'it generally had been said that Negroes were inartistic. But he found artistry where others saw nothing because he believed that wherever the imprints of nature and humanity were found, there were also the seeds of creative life'.⁷⁸ It is under his influence that Bitá becomes increasingly vocal in her criticisms of Priscilla Craig's ambitions for her and, ultimately, culminates in her rebellion against the missionary's wishes.

Wayne Cooper's biography of McKay, *Claude McKay, Rebel Sojourner* (1990), documents the real-life figure of Walter Jekyll. Born the son of a gentleman, he studied at Cambridge then travelled extensively, worked on translations of philosophical works, and moved in literary and intellectual circles of the day (Cooper claims that he was linked to Robert Louis Stevenson who borrowed his

⁷⁸ Claude McKay *Banana Bottom* (London: Pluto Press, 1986) p. 310.

name for *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*)⁷⁹ before settling in Jamaica where he met McKay, who became his protégé. It was in Jamaica that Jekyll began to collect native songs and stories, and it was his promotion of these as legitimate artistic expressions that influenced McKay to adopt the creole dialect in his poetry. The significance of this to McKay's early work should not be overlooked, for before McKay's early creole poems, as Copper notes, 'no black West Indian educated in the British imperial tradition had ever before attempted to use a local dialect as his primary poetic medium'.⁸⁰ Thus, Bitá's relationship with Gensir mirrors that of McKay and Jekyll: Gensir encourages Bitá to take pride in herself and to value her way of life; Jekyll encouraged McKay to take pride in his native heritage and to see that his own voice, his own dialect, had as much creative and aesthetic worth as any other. This is an important parallel to establish for McKay uses Bitá to visualize the circumstances in which the educated native is able to return home and to find a place within that community, something which McKay in his own experience was unable to do. However, it is only because of Bitá's position as a woman that this is achieved. McKay's portrayal of return, ultimately, employs problematic representations of Bitá's close relationship with nature, landscape, and community, and relegates her place in the novel to the private sphere.

The correlation of Bitá and landscape is made explicit by the narrative; indeed her surname is Plant, and this becomes the central image associated with her. She is described variously as 'precious *flowering* of a great work', a 'decorous *cultivated*

⁷⁹ Wayne F. Cooper *Claude McKay, Rebel Sojourner in the Harlem Renaissance. A Biography* (New York: Schocken Books, 1990) p. 23.

⁸⁰ Cooper (1990) p. 35.

young lady', and a '*transplanted* African peasant girl'.⁸¹ Yet as the novel progresses and Bitá is lured back to her 'roots', to her homeland, the metaphor changes and Bitá becomes a wild plant mirrored in the beautiful, but sprawling flower collection in the garden of her childhood home, where 'the flowers grew all ways, struggling and blooming over and under one another'.⁸² It is this wild plant imagery, in particular, that McKay employs to emphasise Bitá's innate connection to her home and its landscape – 'she had grown out of that soil, his own soil [her father's], and had gone abroad only for polishing'.⁸³ This relationship with the soil facilitates her complete return to the community: as Richard Priebe writes, 'Bitá is presented [...] as an archetypal earth mother figure whose soul is rooted deeply in the soil and the communal spirit of those who make their living from it'.⁸⁴ By creating Bitá as an 'earth mother' or goddess figure who has sprung from the ground, McKay finds a means to create an Arcadian landscape and celebrates the simple life of the peasant. Banana Bottom itself is an unusually fertile area and 'although the region had been under cultivation for generations, it still preserved its pristine aspect of virgin backwoods. Anything that was cultivatable in that island could be grown in Banana Bottom'.⁸⁵ What is discernible here is McKay's attempt to romanticise his childhood home, something which Wayne Cooper notes as he discusses McKay's exile from Jamaica and its effect on his work:

in the future, the Jamaica he [McKay] would recall would not be the class-ridden colony of hard poverty and limited opportunity

⁸¹ McKay (1986) p. 11. My emphases.

⁸² McKay (1986) p. 51.

⁸³ McKay (1986) p. 234.

⁸⁴ Richard Priebe 'The Search for Community in the Novels of Claude McKay' pp. 22-30 in *Studies in Black Literature* Vol 3 1972 p. 27.

⁸⁵ Priebe (1972) p. 185.

he had written about in his socially conscious dialect poems. It would be the proud, lovely, independent island land he had enshrined forever as part of that lost, idyllic childhood of his imagination.⁸⁶

This sense of displacement and lack resulting from his exile drives McKay's creation of Bita: the native who can return to the idyllic landscape of her childhood (and McKay's). However, as Wayne Cooper points out, 'despite his emotional loyalty to the Jamaican peasantry [...h]e could not adequately express through his dialect persona all those aspects of his own intellectual and literary experiences that he had assimilated as an educated colonial. His education claimed a part of his being'.⁸⁷ Thus it is clear that McKay sought not to reject his Western education and return home, but wished to live as both a native and an educated man. Yet, when in 1911 McKay in fact returned home to work his father's land, he found himself unable to reintegrate back into the community. He wrote that 'people knew that I was a poet, and that made me different, although I wanted so much to be like them'.⁸⁸ The following year McKay would leave Jamaica never to return, and later reflecting on this period wrote that 'there had really been the dominant desire to find a bigger audience. Jamaica was too small for high achievement'.⁸⁹

It is this sentiment that echoes throughout *Banana Bottom*. It is apparent in the villagers' perception of Crazy Bow: '[t]he peasants took Crazy Bow as a fine fiddler for the hill country, but laughed at the idea of greatness in him. Greatness could not exist in the backwoods. Nor anywhere in the colony. To them and to all

⁸⁶ Cooper (1990) p. 62.

⁸⁷ Cooper (1990) p. 47.

⁸⁸ Cooper (1990) p. 47.

⁸⁹ Cooper (1990) p. 58.

the islanders greatness was a foreign thing';⁹⁰ it is in Bitá's cousin Bab who, faced with limited career prospects, leaves for America; and it exists in a parallel to Bitá's own story: 'an English nobleman had sponsored the education of a pure black student at one of the great English universities. The student won high honours and wrote poems in Latin. But when he returned to the colony and his patron tried to experiment with him by placing him on the basis of his education, the social obstacles proved insurmountable'.⁹¹ Here, as in McKay's own experience, social barriers limit what an educated native can achieve, especially in the public sphere. Thus the state of being in exile was a necessary condition for McKay in order for him to exist as a writer: 'Jamaica was too small for high achievement'.⁹² And yet, McKay's turn to the idyllic recreation of his childhood home reveals a continuing desire to overcome feelings of displacement and lack, all of which motivate his creation of Bitá.

Unlike the previous characters, Bitá finds a way to exist within the native community in which she was brought up without abandoning her education. However, this is not without certain limitations, for, although she is an outsider by merit of her education, she is still affected by the existing power relations in society. After her move away from the mission house, Bitá is twice threatened: she almost becomes the victim of a ritual beating as part of the Obi-fetish dance; and on another occasion she is threatened by a white landowner's son, Marse Arthur. In both cases she is helpless and is rescued by Jubban, her father's drayman and, later, her husband. In this way it is suggested that in order to facilitate her return and

⁹⁰ McKay (1986) p. 8.

⁹¹ McKay (1986) p. 29.

⁹² Cooper (1990) p. 58.

reintegration, Bitá has to secure protection against the threatening forces in society – the ancestral, African practice of Obeah, the continuing domination by European colonisers, and the social codes and norms of the native community. Jubban proves himself willing and able to protect her and so she chooses to become Jubban's wife, which is 'in no way a hindrance to the intellectual side of her life'.⁹³ This is coupled with the passing of Squire Gensir who bequeaths to her his house containing all his books and musical instruments, enabling Bitá to continue her studies in private. Ultimately, this resolution allows McKay to bring together the notion of Bitá as a child of nature, which the accumulating plant imagery has enforced, and her educated self – 'her music, her reading, her thinking were the flowers of her intelligence and he [Jubban] the root in the earth upon which she was grafted, both nourished by the same soil [her father's]'.⁹⁴ Bitá's place within the community is granted in this case because her education is to be kept within the realm of the private. Her public role as a woman is that of a wife and, later, a mother, and as such conforms to traditional gender roles. Therefore, whereas McKay and the other characters cited as 'versions' of Bitá's situation were unable to find their place within the community, Bitá is able to construct for herself a traditional, public role and keep her education in the realm of the private.

DeLoughrey *et al* draw attention to the 'assumed one-to-one relationship between woman and land (and island) [that] was one of the originary tropes of

⁹³ McKay (1986) p. 313.

⁹⁴ McKay (1986) p. 313.

colonial Caribbean discourse'.⁹⁵ Clearly, McKay's association of Bitá with the natural world can be read as reconfirming this brand of colonial discourse. However, although the opposition I have staged between McKay and Carpentier certainly reveals a clear divergence between the two in terms of the motif of return; both authors reveal a tendency toward the easy conflation of women and landscape, as well as the re-enforcement of stereotyped gender roles. Throughout *The Lost Steps*, as in *Banana Bottom*, a correlation is established between woman and the natural world. The protagonist's journey is made not only through time and landscape, but it is clearly a movement towards intimacy with 'Mother Nature'.⁹⁶ Beginning his journey with his mistress, Mouche, the closer the protagonist gets to the source the more drawn he is to the native woman, Rosario, who is described as 'all woman and nothing but woman',⁹⁷ and the more his interest in Mouche declines:

with every hour the girl was taking on stature in my eyes as I noticed how she established links with her surroundings. Mouche, on the contrary, was proving utterly alien, revealing a total lack of adjustment between herself and everything around her. An aura of exoticism was thickening around her, creating a distance between herself and others [...].

Rosario, in contrast, was like St Cecilia or St Lucy back in her rightful setting in a restored old stained-glass window [...]. Relationships became established between her flesh and the ground we were treading [...]. I felt myself more and more drawn to Rosario, who grew more beautiful by the hour – in contrast to Mouche, who was receding into the distance she had created.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ DeLoughrey *et al* p. 11. For further discussion of the confluences of woman and landscape see Louise H Westling *The Green Breast of the New World: Landscape, Gender and American Fiction* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1996).

⁹⁶ Antonio Benítez-Rojo discusses this aspect of *The Lost Steps* in Lacanian terms as a searching for the Mother (see Antonio Benítez-Rojo [1996b] pp. 44-56).

⁹⁷ Carpentier (1968) p. 178.

⁹⁸ Carpentier (1968) pp. 96- 97.

Within this passage, Mouche, who at this point has been mistaken for a prostitute by the native guides, wanes in the narrator's interest proportionally to his increasing desire for the saint-like Rosario. The novel here is constructed around two polar stereotypes of women's sexual promiscuity/chastity: the prostitute and the virgin. The portrayal of Rosario as a chaste/saintly figure is further reinforced by the association made between her and the wrongly slandered Geneviève of Brabant, the story of whom she is reading. However, this portrayal of Rosario is false: as the narrator admits, 'she did not hide the fact that she had lived with other men'.⁹⁹ Instead his estimation of Rosario's worth is based on 'a new scale of values' that the narrator has been compelled to create to comprehend 'a woman who was all woman and nothing but woman', whose links to the landscape are made express by the narrative. It becomes clear that this 'new scale of values' is based on the estimation of a woman's worth in relation to her ability to fulfil the man of whom she is a possession: 'she hung on my words, my thirst, my silence, or my rest, with a solicitude that filled me with pride at being a man. There the woman "serves" the man in the noblest sense of the word'.¹⁰⁰ In this way, Carpentier's novel restates the correlation of woman and landscape, highlighting the patriarchal ideology that views both as objects of possession.

If the pinnacle of this scale is the compliant woman/landscape, at the opposite end is Mouche, though not because of her cosmopolitanism. Where female sexuality is defined by its relationship to the male that it 'serves', a sexuality which excludes that male standard represents the most severe aberration of the 'natural' order. In a scene

⁹⁹ Carpentier (1968) p. 163.

¹⁰⁰ Carpentier (1968) p. 139.

which once again places Mouche and Rosario in polar opposition to one another, the narrator explains the cause behind the violent exchange between the two women:

Mouche, with that vanity of her body which she never missed an opportunity to display, urging her, under the pretence of doubt about the firmness of her flesh, to take off that slip that in her rustic modesty she had kept on. Then the insinuations, the subtle provocation, this display of nakedness, the praise of the firmness of her breasts, the smoothness of her belly, the gesture of affection, and the last step, which suddenly made clear to Rosario an intention that outraged her deepest instincts.¹⁰¹

Here Mouche is accused of acting on a lesbian impulse which was suggested at the outset of the journey, as the narrator comments of her relationship with a fellow guest at the besieged hotel:

I could not bear the perfidy, the hypocrisy, the mental picture conjured up of this hidden and pleasurable 'something' these women might be sharing behind my back [...]. In spite of the fact that I had told myself a thousand times that the bond between Mouche and me were a habit of the sense, and not love, I found myself ready to play the role of outraged husband.¹⁰²

Thus when Mouche is sent back home, feverish and in the hands of a lusty botanist, it is because of the narrator's suspicion of her lesbianism. The narrator displays fear and intolerance of a female sexuality that excludes the male, that happens behind his back. The 'desire' of the narrator, to which Glissant refers, is not only, or even primarily, that of a simplicity of life, but for an ideal of female sexuality, of which Rosario is the embodiment.

Both *Banana Bottom* and *The Lost Steps* reveal a desire to feminize the landscape and express nostalgia for a prelapsarian innocence which results in the fixing of female characters in positions of subordination. Yet whereas McKay's

¹⁰¹ Carpentier (1968) p. 136.

¹⁰² Carpentier (1968) p. 64.

narrative uncritically exploits this in order to fulfil his own project, Carpentier illustrates the fallacy of such a move. Just as the narrator of *The Lost Steps* is unable to return to the heart of the jungle, he is unable to reclaim Rosario who has now married another man and is pregnant. Thus the dream of innocence and valorisation of a feminine ideal are part of the same mythology that the novel rejects.

Africa and the Caribbean Literary Imagination.

The Lost Steps offers a re-evaluation of Carpentier's earlier work: while 'marvellous realism' failed to extricate itself from the coloniser's wonderment at the New World landscape, the lack of historical perspective that the genre offered is addressed by *The Lost Steps*' framework. The question of return to origin raised by both Carpentier and McKay highlights the continuing impact of the Edenic/paradisiacal discourse characteristic of the early Caribbean canon. While the idealisation of landscape in the early moment may be traced to European influence and education, it is equally important to recognise that the mythological presence of Africa in the Caribbean imagination as similarly problematic for the concept of creolization.

The celebration of Africa as lost homeland and origin occupies a distinct place in the Caribbean canon through the writers of *négritude*.¹⁰³ However, this tendency

¹⁰³ Shireen Lewis ([2006] pp. 1-23) locates the roots of the movement in the Paris based group of Martinican writers that included Etienne Léro, René Ménil, Jules-Marcel Monnerot, Auguste Thésée, and Simone Yoyotte, responsible for *Légitime Défense* in 1932. This publication marks the beginnings of a movement that would later be known as *négritude*. However, *Légitime Défense* should not be directly equated with *négritude*. Discrepancies exist between the political ideologies of this group of Martinican writers and the key figures of the *négritude* movement: Leopold Sedar Senghor (Senegal), Aimé Césaire (Martinique), and Léon Damas (French Guiana) (See Lewis [2006] p. xix, and Mireille Rosello 'Introduction' pp. 9-68 in *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* by Aimé Césaire, translated by Mireille Rosello with Annie Pritchard [Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books Ltd, 1995] pp. 34-36). Indeed, even this latter group should not be taken as a cohesive whole: as A. James Arnold outlines, Senghor's narrow, political *négritude* is distinct from Césaire's glossing of personal

to read Africa as the source of alienation and the site of pure racial origins to which one can imaginatively return, is equivalent in its effect to the poetry of McFarlane, Redcam, and Bunbury: it fails to effectively engage with the actual situation faced by the Caribbean people by focusing on an idealised construct. Given this shortcoming, Glissant's theory of creolized Caribbean identity is marked by a clear rejection of the impulse to identify with Africa as the motherland and sacred site of lost origins, what Glissant would term as 'the *longing for the ideal of history*'.¹⁰⁴ For Glissant, *négritude*'s celebration of African origin is nothing other than a gesture of 'diversion': a strategy of avoidance, of looking elsewhere (a place other than the native land) in order to recognise oppression or to find a solution. As Glissant argues,

[t]he universal identification with black suffering in the Caribbean ideology (or the poetics) of negritude also represents another manifestation of redirected energy resulting from diversion. The historical need for the creolized peoples of the small islands of the French Caribbean to lay claim to the 'African element' of their past [...] very quickly surpassed, so much so that Césaire's negritude poetry will come into contact with the liberation movement among African peoples and his *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* [sic] will soon be more popular in Senegal than in Martinique. A peculiar fate. Therein lies the diversion: an ideal evolution, contact from above.¹⁰⁵

The detachment inherent in diversion, Glissant argues, is an irresolvable paradox: one cannot solve the community's problems if one looks elsewhere: diversion 'leads nowhere',¹⁰⁶ which, for Glissant, means that it offers no vision of the future of the

and collective black identity (Arnold [1981] p. 33). In particular, 'Césaire has been at pains to dissociate himself from the possibility of a racist interpretation of this own version of negritude. He has insisted that it is not a biological but a historical concept' (Arnold [1981] p. 37).

¹⁰⁴ Glissant (1999b) p. 79.

¹⁰⁵ Glissant (1999b) p. 24.

¹⁰⁶ Glissant (1999b) p. 23. Emphasis in the original.

community living on their native land. Rather, Glissant envisions a different model of return: '[w]e must return to the point from which we started. Diversion is not a useful ploy unless it is nourished by reversion: not a return to the longing for origins, to some immutable state of Being, but a return to the point of entanglement, from which we were forcefully turned away; that is where we must ultimately put to work the forces of creolization, or perish'.¹⁰⁷ On this point Glissant is clear: a Caribbean poetics of creolization must not seek to identify with a lost, tribal African past or with an universal, essentialised African identity, as was promoted by Senghor, but must look to the 'point of entanglement' with the Caribbean landscape itself.¹⁰⁸ This process does not replace the valorisation of Africa with a corresponding celebration of the native land, rather the very possibility of 'some immutable state of Being' is refuted. As was argued previously, Glissant rejects identification with an immutable, primordial source as the legitimate site of the community's genesis. This is not say that historical memory is dismissed from Glissant's vision of Caribbean discourse. Rather, the experience of colonialism is recognised – '[t]he land on the other side of the ocean (our land) thus became for us an intolerable experience' – but so too is the claim that if the black-Caribbean cannot make 'the land on the other side' his own, then there is none other in which he can: 'the traded population became a people on this land. Then came the real dispossession, with the first saucepan of the first plowshare, paid for by a planter with spices, with indigo, or with tobacco. In this barter the country went astray'.¹⁰⁹ For Glissant, 'the real dispossession' is not

¹⁰⁷ Glissant (1999b) p. 26.

¹⁰⁸ Lewis (2006) discusses Senghor's construction of an essentialized black identity as a fixed, immutable core (pp. 50-54).

¹⁰⁹ Glissant (1999b) p. 38.

alienation from the 'mother land', site of pure origins, but the historical inability of Martinicans to discover their own island.

Rejecting both *négritude*'s claim to Africa as the site of unspoilt racial origin and the Europe's fixation with prelapsarian innocence and paradise, Glissant's theory of creolization attempts to distance itself from the very possibility of asserting unique cultural or racial origins. It deconstructs pure categories of identity with its focus on instability and flux, rejecting entirely the possibility, or even longing for, pure racial and cultural origins: '[t]he idea of creolization demonstrates that henceforth it is no longer valid to glorify "unique" origins that the race safeguards and prolongs. [...] To assert that peoples are creolized, that creolization has value, is to deconstruct in this way the category of "creolized" that is considered as halfway between two "pure" extremes'.¹¹⁰ If colonialism promoted a unitary, undifferential ontology, so *négritude* advanced an African equivalent. Creolization represents the movement beyond fixed and immutable origins, whether they be European or African. Yet, this is not a rejection of the importance of context in Glissant's fiction and theory, rather, he finds the model for his new vision of genesis in the Caribbean landscape itself and in the influential writings of both Alejo Carpentier, as I have outlined, and Aimé Césaire.

Debunking Exoticism: Césaire's *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*.

If Glissant finds in Carpentier's *The Lost Steps* the means to critique the longing for an idealised version of history and *négritude*'s desire to locate black agency in a return to an African origin, it is in the poetry of fellow Martinican, Aimé Césaire,

¹¹⁰ Glissant (1999b) p. 140.

that he encounters an honestly realized representation of Caribbean life. Yet this belies a tension: Césaire is a central figure in the *négritude* movement, coining the very term in 1935 in *L'Étudiant Noir*, a journal launched by both Césaire and Leon Damas,¹¹¹ but giving it its clearest expression in his poem *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*. The *négritude* ideology criticised by Glissant does surface in *Notebook*, Lewis argues, as the poet laments 'his people's alienation from their African heritage'.¹¹² But it is also important to read *Notebook* in the intended context: Martinique, the poet's native land. Read in this way, the poem forms part of the attack on the idealising gaze of the coloniser/tourist.

From the outset, Césaire clearly attempts to debunk exoticist imaginings of Martinique as Edenic paradise.¹¹³ The opening line which is repeated throughout, 'At the brink of dawn', suggests that this is a discourse about returning to a lost point of origin and innocence, an image which is destroyed in the description of the island as a 'desolate bed sore on the wound of the waters', where 'flowers of blood' wither, not bloom, and the 'screeches of prattling parrots' resound.¹¹⁴ As Mireille Rosello points out, 'the resulting vision [of the island] is unexpectedly violent and

¹¹¹ Robin D. G. Kelly "Poetry and the Political Imagination: Aimé Césaire, Negritude and the Applications of Surrealism" pp. vii-xvi in Aimé Césaire *A Tempest*, translated by Richard Miller (New York: Theatre Communications Group, Inc, 2002) p. viii.

¹¹² Lewis (2006) p. 38.

¹¹³ Jeannie Suk's detailed reading of *Notebook* argues that it may be read as an intentional confrontation with 'the legacy of European exoticism that projected a distant elsewhere as a realm of return to primal rejuvenation and wholeness' (Jeannie Suk *Postcolonial Paradoxes in French Caribbean Writing: Césaire, Glissant, Condé* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001] p. 31). Suk details Césaire's rejection of exoticism, and while this may be stressed as an influence on Glissant, it is important to recognise the ways in which exoticism the term takes on a slightly different meaning in the equally influential writings (for Glissant) of Victor Segalen (see pp. 186-196 of this thesis for further discussion). Further commentary on Césaire and exoticism: see Emile Snyder 'Aimé Césaire: The Reclaiming of the Land' in *Exile and Tradition: Studies in African and Caribbean Literature*, edited by Rowland Smith (New York: Dalhousie University Press, 1976) pp. 31-43.

¹¹⁴ Aimé Césaire *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, translated by Mireille Rosello with Annie Pritchard (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books Ltd, 1995) p. 73

sordid. The native land of the *Notebook* is a sick paradise [...]. The picture of a cane-cutter crushed to death by a locomotive or “the suddenly grave animality of a peasant urinating on her feet, her stiff legs parted” ruthlessly shatters the idealised version of the pastoral peasantry’.¹¹⁵ Césaire’s imagery may certainly offend the pastoral vision of McFarlane, Redcam and Bunbury, however, in doing so, fills the space that J. M. Coetzee argues is wanting in the pastoral vision: the place of the black labourer.¹¹⁶ For both Césaire and Glissant the recognition of the black peasant is key to the new proposed relationship between self, community, and landscape. And, as Glissant would argue, such an aesthetic must necessarily include deprivation: ‘[t]he world is ravaged, entire peoples die of famine or are exterminated [...]. These are part of the everyday realities that a cross-cultural poetics must take into consideration’.¹¹⁷ Césaire’s rejection of discourses that attempt to revere an idealised landscape, turns its criticism briefly towards those ‘madly idiotic attempts to resuscitate the splash of gold of privileged moments, the umbilical cord restored to its frail splendour’, which do not lead to any solution (a ‘diversion’ that leads nowhere, for Glissant), but only ‘making me aware of my present misery’.¹¹⁸ In this case, the veneration of a fantasy landscape only extenuates the current state of decay of the ‘real’ land and does nothing to relieve that situation. While the fantasy

¹¹⁵ Mireille Rosello ‘Introduction’ pp. 9- 68 in Aimé Césaire *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*. Translated by Mireille Rosello with Annie Pritchard (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books Ltd, 1995) p. 57.

¹¹⁶ J. M. Coetzee *White Writing: On The Culture of Letters in South Africa* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988) p. 5. Coetzee’s focus is on the pastoral influence in South African literature, exploring the failure of the myth of Eden, in Europe’s imagination, to adapt to Africa. For Coetzee, it is the newness of the New World that makes it a better candidate for European Edenic representations (p. 2). Nevertheless, Coetzee finds in more general pastoral representations an exclusion of the harsh realities of plantation life, relevant to Césaire’s critique (p. 3).

¹¹⁷ Glissant (1999b) p. 254.

¹¹⁸ Césaire (1995) p. 79.

continues, the native land remains fixed as a diseased, base space in which even the stars have no resonance: 'At the brink of dawn, the great immobile night, the stars deader than a burst baleful'.¹¹⁹

However, *Notebook* does not reject 'reversion' or the notion of return outright; rather, as Glissant argues, it authorizes 'by diversion the necessary return to the point where our problems lay in wait for us'.¹²⁰ Glissant's *Caribbean Discourse* is clear that forms of diversion that overcome the limitations of a 'strategy of trickery',¹²¹ and authorize a return to the native land, can potentially lead towards creolization. *Notebook* offers a degree of this promise insofar as, despite its close association with *négritude*, the poem is structured around an imaginative return to the native land, not to Africa:

we have never been amazons of the King of Dahomey, nor
princes of Ghana [...], nor Madhis, nor warriors. We do not feel
the itch of those who used to hold the spear in our armpits. And
since I have sworn to suppress nothing in our history [...], I will
admit that for as long as I can remember we have always been
quite pathetic dishwashers, shoeshiners with no ambition, looking
on the bright side, rather conscientious witch-doctors, and the
only undeniable record we ever broke was at endurance under the
whip.¹²²

Césaire's sense of irony is tangible here as he veers between the stereotypes of the noble savage and the happy slave, and both A. James Arnold and Nick Nesbitt have commented on the way in which *Notebook* both evokes racist attitudes and critiques them.¹²³ Importantly, while Glissant's critique of *négritude* is grounded on the fact

¹¹⁹ Césaire (1995) p. 79. A balafo is a musical instrument, a type of xylophone, used in West Africa.

¹²⁰ Glissant (1999b) p. 25.

¹²¹ Glissant (1999b) p. 22.

¹²² Césaire (1995) p. 105.

¹²³ For Arnold, this paradox asserts itself as a dialectical tension (see Arnold [1981] pp. 155-168). In Nesbitt's analysis, *négritude* thus forces 'an alienated subject [...] to confront itself as a reified object, a subjectivity in fact already constituted by society itself' (Nesbitt [2003] p. 22, see also pp. 22-27).

that it seeks to return to a state before the historical fact of slavery, to a pretemporal origin such as is depicted in Carpentier's *The Lost Steps*, in the above extract, by contrast, Césaire's poetic vision is clearly historicised: the stereotypes themselves function metonymically for the process of colonization and enslavement that have marked his native land and people. *Notebook* engages, then, not so much with an abstracted notion of Africa, but with Martinique: 'the point of entanglement, from which we were forcefully turned away'.¹²⁴

Reintegration with a historically situated Martinique drives the *Notebook's* speaker to confront the sick paradise rendered in the poem. Establishing a model that Glissant would adopt for his own novel *The Ripening*, Dash argues that 'Césaire presents a dense field of relationships that allows the individual consciousness to grow with the discovery of landscape, akin to Claudel's notion of *co-naissance* (in which observer and observed coexist)'.¹²⁵ It is this unique relationship between individual and landscape, where the process of self-awareness, of a renewed consciousness is directly linked with the space in which that consciousness exists, that is essential in Glissant's fiction and essays.¹²⁶ Whereas Carpentier can be read as critiquing certain discourses of landscape, Césaire's *Notebook* begins to formulate a new understanding of the process through which identities can be formed in

¹²⁴ Glissant (1999b) p. 26.

¹²⁵ Dash (1999) p. xxxvi.

¹²⁶ For Nesbitt, the communion with the landscape is a limiting of the individual: 'in its affirmation of autonomy, an increasingly isolated poetic subject must turn *towards* a "reconciliation with nature" and the irrational as a means of recovering this lost subject-object unity. And yet such a gesture abandons the sought-after individual autonomy and self-preservation, strips the subject of its free will' (Nesbitt [2003] p. 88). Certainly, in the case of Glissant, I will later argue, there is a move away from the position that the individual is to some extent determined by their relation with the landscape, and for Césaire there is a relationship of equality as the speaker stands hand in hand with his country. In both cases, individual autonomy can not be conflated with isolation and the complete freedom to self-determination. To exist is necessarily to exist within a particular context and history: to suggest otherwise is only a further form of diversion.

relation to landscape. To this end, Césaire's poem traces the growth of consciousness in relation to the rediscovery of the native land. This process is initiated as the poem's narrator starts to identify features of the landscape within himself: 'So much blood in my memory! In my memory are lagoons. They are covered with death's heads. They are not covered with water lilies. In my memory are lagoons'.¹²⁷ Here the relationship between the landscape, the collective's history (here the legacy of slavery and colonialism), and the individual consciousness is formed, shedding light on Glissant's assertion that '[o]ur landscape is its own monument: its meaning can only be traced on the underside. It is all history'.¹²⁸ Not only is landscape the process through which present identities are formed, but it is a tool for the recollection of the community's past. This association is continued in *Notebook* as the narrator, celebrating the 'strange pride',¹²⁹ he feels growing within him, proclaims that 'my négritude is neither a tower nor a cathedral/it reaches deep down into the red flesh of the soil/it reaches into the blazing flesh of the sky'.¹³⁰ Once again, but more forcefully, the poem asserts that Martinican identities are inextricably linked to the soil and sky of their native land, and once more this land is expressed in painfully humanised terms.

The poem's motif of return culminates in the perfect unity of the speaker and his native land:

And now we are standing, my country and I, hair in the wind, my hand small now in its enormous fist and strength is not within us, but above us in a voice piercing the night and the audience like the penetrance of an apocalyptic wasp. And the voice pronounces the

¹²⁷ Césaire (1995). p. 101.

¹²⁸ Glissant (1999b) p. 11.

¹²⁹ Césaire (1995) p. 111.

¹³⁰ Césaire (1995). p. 115.

Europe has been stuffing us with lies and bloating us with
pestilence for centuries.¹³¹

This passage marks the unity between the individual consciousness (the ‘I’ of the poem), the landscape, and the polyphonic expression of the community that is sounded both in the various histories told in the course of the poem and here as the great voice from above. This is a unity, however, that the poem expresses as a possession. Though this passage suggests the co-existence of the self and the landscape (of observer and observed), this reading neglects the significance of ‘my country and I’. Reflecting Césaire’s own eventual political role in Martinique, the speaker assumes the role of representative: “‘My mouth will be the mouth of those grief’s which have no mouth, my voice, the freedom of those that collapse in the dungeon of despair’”.¹³² The problematics of one voice claiming to speak for all, particularly in a poem in which, as Rosello argues, the absence of women is notable,¹³³ are difficult to ignore, and the specific and diverse oppressions that impact members of the community to different degrees according to gender, race, sexuality, age, as my later analysis of Gisèle Pineau and Shani Mootoo will argue, are subsumed under the authority of Césaire’s representative narrative.

Césaire’s contribution to *négritude* has, in this chapter, been reframed in light of the *Notebook*’s contribution to the rejection of a Caribbean paradise, as well as foregrounding a new relationship between the individual and the landscape. Yet, *Notebook* remains problematic for writers like Glissant and Carpentier, for although the poem recognises the historically situated reality of the Caribbean environment,

¹³¹ Césaire (1995). p. 125.

¹³² Césaire (1995) p. 89.

¹³³ Rosello (1995) p. 37.

ultimately, Césaire seeks to return his native land to a form of original purity, albeit in the Caribbean and not Africa. Dash makes this point when he argues that ‘the most important neologism in his epic *Cahier* is not the word “*négritude*” but, rather, “*verrition*”, the word that brings the poem to a close’.¹³⁴ Translations of this key term differ: Eshleman and Smith adopt ‘*veerition*’ from the Latin verb ‘*verri*’ (to sweep or scrape a surface).¹³⁵ These important connotations, Dash argues,

ha[ve] much to do with Césaire’s poetics of erasure and pure origins [...]. His poem ends, therefore, with the fiery tongue of the night, spurting out of the reanimated volcano, destroying the past and creating the ground for a new world space. This is the fiery tongue that speaks the new world into existence, producing the founding word.¹³⁶

Rosello’s own translation of ‘*verrition*’, ‘*revolution*’,¹³⁷ encapsulates the full force of the clearing envisioned by Césaire by associating it with ‘*revolution*’, as well as, perhaps, something of his political convictions;¹³⁸ whereas, the sense of movement offered in ‘*veerition*’ – both in the verb ‘*veer*’ and the action implied by the suffix – is present in the association with ‘*revolve*’. Later, Césaire rearticulates his vision. In *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950) he writes: ‘the problem is not to make a utopian and sterile attempt to repeat the past, but to go beyond. It is not a dead society that we want to revive. We leave that to those who go in for exoticism.’

¹³⁴ J. Michael Dash ‘Anxious Insularity: Identity Politics and Creolization in the Caribbean’ pp. 287-299 in *A Pepper-Pot of Cultures: Aspects of Creolization in the Caribbean*. Edited by Gordon Collier and Ulrich Fleischmann, (*Matatu* 27-28; Amsterdam and New York: Editions Rodopi, 2003a) p. 293. The *Notebook* closes with the lines ‘and that great black hole where I wanted to drown a moon ago/this is where I now want to fish the night’s malevolent tongue in/its immobile revolution [or ‘*verrition*’ as it has elsewhere been translated]’ (Césaire [1995] p. 135). James Clifford similarly highlights the importance of this particular neologism to readings of Césaire’s *Notebook* (see James Clifford *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, Art* [Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1988] pp. 175-178).

¹³⁵ Césaire (1995, translator’s glossary pp. 148-149).

¹³⁶ Dash (2003a) p. 293.

¹³⁷ Césaire (1995) p. 135.

¹³⁸ Césaire was a member of the French Communist Party until 1956.

Nor is it the present colonial society that we wish to prolong [...]. It is a new society that we must create'.¹³⁹ In order to meet Glissant's requirements, however, this new society, must not be founded on the clearing away of past and present Martinique, but a creolization of that impure and diverse origin.

The apocalyptic, revolutionary vision with which the poem closes, then, returns to a politics of what Glissant terms reversion – 'the obsession with a single origin' and the possibility of an immutable and 'absolute state of being',¹⁴⁰ – as Césaire conceives of the potential to circle back (revolve) to a pure, unspoilt condition (albeit a future potentiality, as Arnold notes).¹⁴¹ The Caribbean, not Africa, becomes the location of absolute origin and legitimizing genesis. Although this conforms in some degree to Glissant's demand to return to the point of entanglement, it problematically creates, as Dash argues, a 'sovereign territory on which a new social order can be grounded'.¹⁴² What *Notebook* effects, then, is a legitimizing mythology and unique founding moment of the community's genesis, as opposed to a composite culture's impure and unrepresentable digenesis.¹⁴³ By envisioning the possibility of a state beyond historicity and clearing a completely new, blank space *Notebook* forgoes the possibility of creolization which functions always as the transformation, not erasure of historically situated identities. This feature of *Notebook* marks the limits of its compatibility with Glissant's project. It

¹³⁹ Aimé Césaire *Discourse on Colonialism*, translated by Joan Pinkham (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1972) p. 31.

¹⁴⁰ Glissant (1999b) p. 16.

¹⁴¹ The significance of 'immobile revolution' is important in this respect. As Arnold writes, '[t]he motionless veerition' realizes the proper end of a poem with respect to which all revolution is future (Arnold [1981] p. 168).

¹⁴² Dash (2003a) p. 293.

¹⁴³ Glissant's distinction between genesis and digenesis is outlined in *Faulkner, Mississippi* (Glissant [1999] pp. 114-115, 194-195). See also pp. 212-216 of this thesis.

may offer a new model for the relationship between the individual consciousness and the landscape, and frees Caribbean discourse from exoticising impulse of New World poets like McFarlane, Redcam, and Bunbury, but by imagining a revolutionary clearing of historical legacies, Césaire's poem runs contrary to Glissant's poetics of creolization.

From Solitude to Solidarity: Édouard Glissant's *The Ripening*.

The movement of Césaire's speaker from alienation to an eventual return to a unique point of origin, is echoed in the story of Thaël in Glissant's first novel, *La Lézarde* (*The Ripening* [1958]).¹⁴⁴ While Césaire presents a 'sick' version of paradise in *Notebook*, *The Ripening* opens with a much more recognisable scene: that of the solitary shepherd in his isolated, mountain Arcadia, in this case, the mountains of Martinique. However, the novel which follows is not a lament of the passing of this innocent world, but an illustration of the infeasibility of preserving such a state. Just as was found in Carpentier's *The Lost Steps*, once man leaves his secluded idyll there is no return.

Glissant's use of landscape in *The Ripening* establishes many traits that are recognisable in later works such as *Caribbean Discourse*. In particular, the unique qualities of the Caribbean landscape that inform Glissant's poetics of creolization

¹⁴⁴ The Lézarde is the name of the important river that flows through the village of Lambrianne, in which the novel is set. Alain Baudot notes that the French 'le lézarde' translates as both 'lizzard' and 'crack', 'which Glissant calls the *cassure or break*' (Édouard Glissant: A Poet in Search of His Landscape' pp. 584-588 in *World Literature Today* Vol. 63, No. 4, 1989 p. 584). While 'ripening' and 'crack'/'break' appear antithetical, both point towards the political situation in the novel: the progress towards that final moment of self-determination, a breaking away from the colonial motherland. *The Ripening* is also discussed in this edition of *World Literature Today* by Sylvia Wynter 'Beyond the Word of Man: Glissant and the New Discourse of the Antilles' pp. 637-648, especially p. 638; J. Michael Dash 'Writing the Body: Édouard Glissant's Poetics of Re-membering' pp. 609-612; Wilbert J. Roget 'Land and Myth in the Writings of Édouard Glissant' pp. 626-631.

become apparent in this early novel as it envisions a natural environment characterised by movement and flux:

[t]he land in the vicinity of the town of Lambrianne is stunningly beautiful. [...] Thaël keeps on looking: the slope here gently freshening into green and the slashes of dark green in the distance [...]. To the west, a cluster of upright bamboos joined the guava trees after intervals of broken shade; to the east, however, a curtain of rain was approaching like thousands of darts descending on the valley. The sun had just appeared (Thaël had outdistanced it) behind the huge embankments on either side of the road.¹⁴⁵

This passage conveys an Impressionistic contrast between fleeting movements of light and shade that satisfy Glissant's desire to convey the fluctuating, profuse nature of a Caribbean landscape opposed to the order of the European pastoral. As Glissant explains,

the prevailing force is not that of the spring and the meadow, but rather that of the wind that blows and casts shadows like a great tree [...]. As one says that a painter at work sees the light on his subject change with the movement of the sun, so it seems to me, as far as I am concerned, that my landscape changes in me.¹⁴⁶

This passage from *Caribbean Discourse*, based on a lecture Glissant delivered in 1973, highlights the continuing emphasis that Glissant places on movement, for to deny it is to fix the natural world in a static point in history, a fictitious order of things. However, it also suggests the importance of the observer in the scene: 'my landscape changes in me'. Here Glissant seems to employ a tactic that was identified in Césaire's *Notebook*, the identity of the subject grows in relation to its increasingly intimate relationship with the landscape. Both suggest a reclamation of the native land in face of colonial dispossession. In *The Ripening*, not only is it the case that a relation is effected between landscape and individual, but at this early stage in his formulation of a Caribbean

¹⁴⁵ Édouard Glissant *The Ripening*, translated by Michael Dash (London and Kingston: Heinemann, 1985) pp. 19-20.

¹⁴⁶ Glissant (1999b) p. 145.

landscape aesthetics, Glissant suggests different degrees of the impact of this relationship.

In *The Ripening*, Glissant is beginning to explore the importance of landscape and to formulate what would by *Caribbean Discourse* become a theory of the interrelatedness of landscape, self, and community. Proleptic passages in the novel suggest that the individual can read the course of his life in the features of the landscape. For example, as Thaël reaches the plains his eyes trace the path towards town, witnessing a panoramic vision of the landscape hampered only by ‘the word SLAUGHTERHOUSE painted in huge letters obstruct[ing] the lower left side of his view’,¹⁴⁷ foreshadowing the act of murder he will later commit. At other times, there are moments when the beauty and vibrancy of the landscape seem out of sync with the poverty that the novel testifies to: a four year old child leads emaciated oxen across land while ‘the forest was a kaleidoscope of colour’.¹⁴⁸ And there is also the recurrent suggestion that the land and the river coerce the individual into carrying out an act: ‘[h]e did not want to become a yes-man, but he would do it. It was as if the land around him [...] had already dictated consent’.¹⁴⁹ Three contrary propositions are offered here: the landscape is a ‘text’ for the individual to read; the landscape is discontinuous with the lives of the people who inhabit it; the landscape is an independent character with a will of its own to which the individual is subject.

This early novel is in itself a process by which Glissant explores his own feelings about his native land. In it the characters, the landscape (both the natural and political landscapes), and the narrative voice are in the process of becoming, of ‘ripening’, as the title of the English translation suggests:

¹⁴⁷ Glissant (1985) p. 21.

¹⁴⁸ Glissant (1985) p. 30.

¹⁴⁹ Glissant (1985) p. 34.

I do not know that this country is like a new fruit, slowly (slowly) opening, gradually revealing under a thick and mysterious skin the full richness of the pulp which is offered to all who seek and all who suffer. I do not yet know that a man only fulfils himself when he savours the meaning of the land in his own story [...], nor do I know that the irreversible flow leads to the delta of our fantasies, to the dawn of a true and painful knowing.¹⁵⁰

Thaël's journey from mountain to the plains, from a shepherd's Arcadia to the town, is a documentation of the journey from solitude to solidarity. As he becomes integrated into a group of political activists led by Mathieu, he is asked to kill a government official who is planning to sell the land by the river. Not only is Garin, the official, an enemy of the people by merit of his plans to sell the lands on which they live, but his house is built directly on top of the source of the river, and when Thaël finds him, he is described as 'planted in the spring, like a tree trying to deprive the river of its fertility, or at least to defile the river, the fields, the peoples themselves'.¹⁵¹ Garin is thus presented as enemy of both the people and the land itself, and this is reflected in both the sea's role in his death (Thaël and Garin begin to fight while on a boat, but it is the sea that takes Garin and spares Thaël), and the community who corroborate Thaël's story when he faces trial. These series of events correspond to the growth of Thaël's consciousness, an 'irreversible' process that leads 'to the dawn of a true and painful knowing'.¹⁵² Thaël's progression from solitary mountain dweller to member of the community is facilitated by the realisation that 'they had to conquer the earth they bore within them [...]. For the land never ceased to give of itself [...]. He had discovered a fundamental truth; he had been transformed from a man of the mountains into a peasant'.¹⁵³ As he begins to grasp

¹⁵⁰ Glissant (1985) p. 33.

¹⁵¹ Glissant (1985) p. 76.

¹⁵² Glissant (1985) p. 33.

¹⁵³ Glissant (1985) p. 49.

the significance of the land, so too does he come to value the community that is part of the land, for the town of *The Ripening* does not exist in opposition to the natural world, it is part of it: as Thaël tries to explain to Garin at various points, ‘I say this town has a charm, simply because it is not a town after all [...]. It grows out of the ground like a flower [...]. Deep down inside they [the inhabitants] are aware of the land around them’; ‘the town is like a field to be ploughed [...]. It is all one whole, in a state of flux’.¹⁵⁴ The world of Lambrianne is not expressed in terms of the traditional pastoral opposition between town and countryside; here the tension is between those who have a notion of the interdependency between self and the landscape, and those who deny it.

The impulse towards communal solidarity is powerful in *The Ripening*, and Thaël’s identification with the people of Lambrianne marks a further stage in his awakening. He discovers that it was not the land which compelled him to leave his mountain home, but rather his desire for community: ‘I came for this, for this revelation. I really felt that there was something lacking up there in the mountains. [...] I wanted to talk, to be with others, that’s why I came, that’s where my passion lay’.¹⁵⁵ However, whereas in *Notebook* reintegration with the community and land marks the emergence of a full consciousness, at this point in the novel Thaël is still tempted to return to his mountain seclusion, for he has not yet come to a ‘painful state of knowing’:

it was indeed a strange twist of fate for him to come down to the plain, driven to urgency, his heart filled with a passion born and nurtured in the silence, in the undisturbed monotony of the mountains, and for him to get to know this county [...]. Looking at the plains submerged in sunlit water, he felt the Lézarde had invaded his soul just as surely as it had inundated that land, that he could no longer live on the plain, sharing everyone’s misery [...]. He would have to go back to the mountains in order not to abandon his world,

¹⁵⁴ Glissant (1985) pp. 97- 98; p. 98.

¹⁵⁵ Glissant (1985) p. 48.

in order to isolate himself resolutely [...]. Yet he felt at once that such a solitude would be unbearable, that he could not forget what he learnt on the plain, the need to fight, the slow struggle through which his people [...] were reaching out towards true self definition. He experienced at the same time nostalgia for the solitude of the mountains.¹⁵⁶

There is a vacillation in this passage between the longing for innocence and the recognition of the painful reality of the relationship between the community and the land. Thaël has not yet learnt, as the other members of the group have, 'to open [his] eyes to the unimaginable poverty of this land',¹⁵⁷ and as such cannot fully understand the nature of either the landscape or 'his people'. So Thaël, repeating the mistake of Carpentier's protagonist, attempts to return to the mountains with Valérie, in the belief that their love will save him from the solitude.

Glissant presents this return to the mountains clearly as an attempt to revisit a prelapsarian state of innocence and isolation far from the political and cultural realities of the town. The longing that Thaël experiences is for a life apart from the misery he has witnessed. However, as Thaël reaches his home with Valérie by his side he calls out to his dogs who, in their long period of hunger and solitude, react to the sound of his voice by attacking Valérie, killing her. Desolate Thaël begins to sing 'deep inside' a song from his childhood:

'Oh Martinique, Oh green hills, Oh sunsets of gold and crimson, isle of love, pearl of the Caribbean Sea ...' and as he recited the words of the song, it occurred to him that they were all lies [...].

'Do you see, Valérie, what they are singing? How it is filled with lies. Yes, you can see them clearly now. They have no time for the leprosy, the yaws, the tuberculosis, the malaria, and the other evils in this rotten land. You can see them now, can't you? That we deceive ourselves if we believe that it is all over. We have barely begun.'¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Glissant (1985) p. 139.

¹⁵⁷ Glissant (1985) p. 23.

¹⁵⁸ Glissant (1985) pp. 193-194.

This moment marks Thaël's full realisation of a Caribbean consciousness and the recognition of the deficiency of the paradisiacal outlook of poets like Nicholas or Redcam. The awareness of suffering, the dark elements that the early poets struggled to fully accommodate into their vision, is captured by the 'painful state of knowing' that is essential to Glissant's understanding of creolization. There is no celebration of purity and an absolute rejection of prelapsarian innocence. Rather a Césairean 'sick paradise' confronts both Thaël and the reader, and Glissant's novel celebrates the new relationship between the landscape and the community, and the process of becoming that is an exercise of coming to understand 'the meaning of the land in [one's] own story'.¹⁵⁹ Reconstruction in the face of trauma cannot be achieved through reversion to an idealised, unique state of being, nor by diversion, of looking elsewhere for the source of a community's problems: rather, creolization comes into effect only through the relating of community, landscape and the individual in full consciousness of the 'true and painful' contexts of that moment. It is this qualification in particular that resonates with the writings of Gisèle Pineau and Shani Mootoo: authors who envision a poetics of creolization that negotiates the specific abuses and oppression faced by individual members of the community. Moreover, both writers engage with the paradisiacal tropes employed in early works of the Caribbean canon and reimagined by Marson, Césaire, and Glissant. What results, in accord with Glissant, is an aesthetic that recognises the importance of landscape to the literary imagination, but reformulates and creolizes the coloniser's paradise.

¹⁵⁹ Glissant (1985) p. 33.

Patriarchy and Paradise: Rebuilding Macadam Dreams.

Glissant takes as his starting point Alejo Carpentier's deconstruction of the longing for pure, unspoilt origins in order to provide an alternative model of genesis.

However, he does not address all the failings of Carpentier's narrator. *The Lost Steps* suggests a correlation between the idealisation of landscape and women, evident in the narrator's exaggerated fear of lesbian sexuality and romanticisation of Rosario.

Though Glissant avoids explicitly feminising his landscape, the celebration of political and cultural integration that *The Ripening* depicts, ignores, like Césaire's *Notebook*, the gendered positions that characters assume within the community.¹⁶⁰

Given Claude McKay's reinforcement of gender-biased social roles in *Banana Bottom*, it is clear that within Caribbean communities the differing positions of men and women should be acknowledged in order to give a clearer picture of the 'true and painful reality' that exists. To this end, both Gisèle Pineau and Shani Mootoo offer distinct contributions to a gendered poetics of creolization and landscape.

¹⁶⁰ Ben Heller has discussed as a recurring characteristic of Caribbean literature the tendency to represent the environment as female, suggesting that although 'the meditation on landscape in this novel [Glissant's *The Ripening*] is complex, frequently crossing gender barriers, Glissant does tend to figure the landscape as feminine, and to figure his female characters in terms of the landscape': the river is, 'a prudent lady', a 'naked girl', while Mycéa's spiritual condition is linked to water (Ben A. Heller 'Landscape, Femininity, and Caribbean Discourse' pp. 391-416 in *MLN* Vol.2 No.3 1996 p. 401). However, Glissant's association of the female with *water* imagery in particular may be distinguished from the ideological impulse exposed by Carpentier in the desire to link a woman's body and the landscape. In the same way that, for example, Wilson Harris' fiction exposes and utilises the archetypal significance of the feminine as a source of creativity and genesis, rather than providing any definite commentary on gender politics, so too might Glissant's use of water imagery be read in light of its psychic/archetypal significance. (Harris' use of archetypes is discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis [pp. 226-244]; for commentary on Harris' female archetypes, see Mark McWatt 'The Madonna/Whore: Womb of Possibilities' in *The Literate Imagination: Essays on the Novels of Wilson Harris*, edited by Michael Gilkes [London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1989] pp. 31-44). For a brief commentary on the centrality of Glissant's female characters, with a particular focus on his novel *Mahogany* (1987), see Bernadette Cailler 'Édouard Glissant: A Creative Critic' in *World Literature Today* Vol. 63, No. 4, 1989 pp. 589-592.

French-Caribbean author, Gisèle Pineau, is often cited among the élite of the *créolité* movement headed by Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant. Yet, her inclusion in this group belies a fundamental difference between Pineau and the authors of *Éloge de la créolité*. The displacement felt by Pineau's female protagonists – whether it be Mirna returning to Guadeloupe after three years at a French university in *The Drifting of the Spirits* (1993), or Mina's seemingly pathological sexual encounters in an oppressive Parisian suburb in *The Devil's Dance* (2002) – is indicative of Pineau's own exile.¹⁶¹ Unlike the other *créolité* authors, Pineau was born in Paris, only returning with her parents to Guadeloupe at the age of fourteen.¹⁶² Thus where Bernabé *et al* state that they are '[n]either Europeans, nor Africans, nor Asians, we proclaim ourselves Creoles',¹⁶³ Pineau has stated 'I was born in Paris. I am Parisian. But I was in exile'.¹⁶⁴ If *créolité* may be read as valorising creole as an identitarian category equal to that of European or African, as Glissant maintains it can,¹⁶⁵ Pineau's claim highlights the difficulty of achieving a unified, stable identity: she is both Parisian and an exile of Guadeloupe. Neither is it the case that her return to Guadeloupe resolved these feelings of displacement: '[w]hen I came to the Antilles, I didn't speak Creole like everyone else, I rolled my Rs, I was different, thus automatically pushed aside, just as I had

¹⁶¹ Njeri Guthrie's article, 'Horizon's Adrift: Women in Exile, at Home, and Abroad in Gisèle Pineau's Works' in *Research in African Literatures* Vol 36, No. 1, Spring 2005 pp. 74-90, offers an insightful reading of Mina's pathological behaviour as a critique of the oppression suffered by minority groups in the metropolis.

¹⁶² Pineau would spend the next twenty years in Guadeloupe. She now lives in Paris (Nadege Veldwachter 'An Interview with Gisèle Pineau' pp. 180-186 in *Research in African Literatures* Vol 35, No. 1, Spring 2004 pp. 180 and p. 182).

¹⁶³ Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant *Éloge de la créolité (In Praise of Creoleness)* translated by M. B. Taleb-Khyar (Gallimard, 1993) p. 75.

¹⁶⁴ Veldwachter (2004) p. 182.

¹⁶⁵ Glissant (1997) p. 89.

been in France'.¹⁶⁶ As in the case of Claude McKay, racial and familial ties alone do not always secure a return to one's native land, and creoleness reveals itself as just as exclusionary and essentialized as the identarian categories it replaces. However, if *créolité*, as Glissant has argued, relies on 'generalizing concepts',¹⁶⁷ Pineau's own biography suggests a closeness to the more fluid notion of identity. As Lucia Suarez argues: '[h]er writing advocated an individuality enriched by two communities, structured by multiple cultural inheritances'.¹⁶⁸ This individuality and freedom from a close identification with any one community, affords Pineau a critical stance on the position of women in Caribbean communities and the discourses of landscape and paradise which surround them.

Macadam Dreams, originally published as *L'espérance-macadam* (1995), engages with tropes of paradise and idealism in order to establish a correlation between the devastation wrought by a cyclone and the violent experiences of rape and incest. As Pineau herself explains:

L'espérance-macadam relates the violence that is done to women and girls. I have met many people who were victims of incest and it is an injury about which, as a woman, I couldn't keep silent. I wrote *L'espérance* to show the human being in this violence, bounced around like a canoe at sea, wounded by the hurricanes, like an island, like Guadeloupe. At the time I was thinking about writing this book, we had Hurricane Hugo. That was 1989. After spending the night praying and struggling against the elements, the next day, when we opened the doors and saw the land with its devastated features, I told myself that Guadeloupe had been raped [...]. That cyclone had fallen upon Guadeloupe the way a father raping his daughter falls upon her.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Veldwachter (2004) p. 183.

¹⁶⁷ Glissant (1997) p. 89.

¹⁶⁸ Lucia M Suarez. 'Gisèle Pineau: Writing the Dimensions of Migration' in *World Literature Today* Vol 7 No. 3/4 Summer 2001 p. 10.

¹⁶⁹ Pineau cited by Veldwachter (2004) p. 181. Themes of incest also recur in Pineau's other works *Devil's Dance* and *The Drifting of the Spirits*, a thematic concern which she relates to her own experiences as a psychiatric nurse.

Pineau's vision clearly approximates what Glissant has referred to as a 'true and painful knowing';¹⁷⁰ a realisation of the Caribbean as a land marked by poverty, violence, and destruction, not as an Edenic or paradisiacal refuge. As in the case of Thaël, for whom true knowledge can be discerned only once he discovers his connection to the land and the community, for Pineau's protagonist, Eliette, the discovery of her own story is a slow and painful process initiated by the impending arrival of Hurricane Hugo and the fulfilment of the Haitian fortune-teller's prediction that although she would never have a child of her own, she would care for a niece. Yet, while Thaël's enlightenment is gained through the various stages of his journey, the linearity of which is emphasised by the progression of the river he follows from source to sea, Eliette's narrative reflects the nature of the cyclone: circular, disconnected, and disordered.

The novel's opening scene finds Eliette among the ruins of her cabin in Savane Mulet following the passage of Hurricane Hugo: '[a] few belongings hung in the sky. A mattress a top a miraculous straight pole, amidst all the others, bent, decapitated, flung to the ground'.¹⁷¹ The surreal image of belongings suspended in mid air testifies to the violence inflicted by the passing of the hurricane: reality itself appears to have been disrupted. In fact, the violence of the hurricane permeates all aspects of *Macadam Dreams*, from the discontinuous memories of Rosette, the shifting narrative perspective between characters and from first to third person narration, down to the askew chapter numbers. Pineau herself has commented on her

¹⁷⁰ Glissant (1985) p. 33.

¹⁷¹ Gisèle Pineau *Macadam Dreams*, translated by C. Dickson (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003) p. 1.

clear intention to emphasise the force of the hurricane: 'I wanted to bring to life the forces of nature, their violence, and the violence of human beings. I wanted to evoke the whirling winds of the cyclones through a circular construction that grows denser and denser until you see the father commit this act of violence'.¹⁷² This paradoxical arrangement by which the increasing density of the narrative leads to clarity and revelation, is tentatively structured around the two most notable cyclones to affect Eliette – that of 1928 and Hurricane Hugo in 1989. In the first instance, Eliette's inability to clearly recall her past appears to be the result of her childhood encounter with the cyclone of 1928: 'so bad that she'd been unable to speak for three full years, it [a rafter] had wounded her in the head and the belly, had dispossessed her of all her faith in herself'.¹⁷³ However, it becomes increasingly apparent that this version of events is the creation of her mother, Séraphine:

the truth is, Eliette didn't remember a thing. It was her mama who had always told her about the night when Guadeloupe had capsized in the cyclone and been smashed to bits. She called that nightmare the Passage of the Beast. And better to burn the story into Eliette's mind, she was constantly rehashing the memory of the head and belly wound, the bloodstained sheets.¹⁷⁴

Séraphine's compulsive retelling of this story in order to 'burn' her version of events into Eliette's mind, is part of her wish to forget the truth of the past: that the bloodstained sheets were the result of Eliette's rape by her father, tellingly known as Ti-Cyclone. Pineau's intentional and quite straightforward association between cyclone and rape in *Macadam Dreams* potentially sets up the act of rape as an occurrence as devastating and violent as a cyclone, but also as disinterested and

¹⁷² Pineau cited by Veldwachter (2004) p. 181.

¹⁷³ Pineau (2003) p. 88.

¹⁷⁴ Pineau (2003) p. 88.

naturally occurring. Certainly, this much is suggested in what little is revealed of the thoughts of Ti-Cyclone and Rosan, the son of Ti-Cyclone who is responsible for the other rape detailed in the novel (reinforcing, perhaps, violence as a natural, inherited disposition). Both characters show little remorse in their actions; Ti-Cyclone, it is noted, had ‘even forgotten Séraphine and her little Eliette as he grew older’.¹⁷⁵ Yet reading the novel’s depiction of rape in this way does little justice to Pineau’s text, for in it her focus is not the violence of hurricane or rape, but the aftermath and people’s response to tragedy. In this way, linking together rape and the cyclone in Séraphine’s tales, her unsuccessful attempt to shield her daughter from the memory of that night, is exposed for what it is: a poor response to violence that, in turn, prevents Eliette from coming to terms with what happened to her.

Eliette’s recovery of the memory of ‘the Passage of the Beast’ is triggered by the gradual revelation of Angela’s story. The parallels between these two narratives – that of Eliette’s rape by Ti-Cyclone, and the more sustained sexual abuse of Angela by her father, Rosan – affords Pineau the opportunity to assert the cyclonic structure of her narrative, the image of ‘the beast’ surfacing in both accounts.¹⁷⁶ However, once again Pineau is interested in the response to violence, and Séraphine’s attempt to hide the truth finds a parallel in the character of Rosette, Angela’s mother, whose storytelling and dreams stop her from recognising Rosan’s abuse. As Eliette comments, ‘Rosette was a kind girl. She walked a straight path,

¹⁷⁵ Pineau (2003) p. 208.

¹⁷⁶ Séraphine constantly refers to ‘the Passage of the Beast’ when referring to the night Eliette was raped. Similarly, Angela, unable to associate her father with the man who enters her room at night, thinks of him as ‘the beast’ (Pineau [2003] p. 153).

dreamt of a better world – a sort of paradise’.¹⁷⁷ Whereas Séraphine’s fabrication is nevertheless faithfully rooted in violence and devastation, Rosette refuses to acknowledge painful reality, substituting it instead with fantasies of paradise. Even when being interviewed by the police, Rosette finds a means of escape: ‘[s]he answered all the questions docilely while her mind rambled in an autumnal landscape munching on apples and pears’.¹⁷⁸ The reference to ‘apples and pears’ and ‘an autumnal landscape’ is indicative of just how far removed she is from the reality of the situation in Guadeloupe. The image is reasserted a few pages later where she wishes her own death, seeing it as a means to become ‘a free, liberated woman’, with access to ‘the apples and pears’ of the vast garden of heaven and ‘where she would have never been forced to imagine Rosan pulling down Angela’s panties’.¹⁷⁹ Though Séraphine’s fabrication allows her to, initially, avoid the reality of her husband’s actions, she recognises the violence done to Eliette’s body (in the form of the rafter); Rosette, on the other hand, rejects knowledge of both the act of abuse and the scars. Séraphine’s account at least accepts the fact of cyclone even if it refuses to name it; Rosette rejects both, a point enforced ultimately by her refusal to acknowledge the approaching threat of Hurricane Hugo.

Clearly, both Rosette and Séraphine mask reality, but the distinction that I am making is between a fantasy that nevertheless is grounded in the painful and specific realities of the Caribbean environment and society (to recall Glissant’s point in *The Ripening*), and one that is not. Throughout, Rosette’s escapism is significantly bound to discourses of paradise and utopia:

¹⁷⁷ Pineau (2003) p. 164.

¹⁷⁸ Pineau (2003) p. 120.

¹⁷⁹ Pineau (2003) p. 138.

all that time she'd been exalting in her paradise, busily hanging stars in the sky. Walking back up the slopes of the valley of tears to enter the kingdom of the ancestors, return to Mother Africa with Beloved. Surely her eyes had been elsewhere, picking flowers in Eden, stroking lions, and speaking with birds. Or maybe she was dancing to reggae music, lifting her knees high – one of Bob's numbers, a Gregory Isaacs or Prince Jazzbo tune.

*Step forward, youth, and let I tell you the truth
Step forward, youth ...*

Seen nothing, heard nothing.¹⁸⁰

Turning a blind eye, 'seen nothing, heard nothing', throughout the novel is the response of the community to the various acts of violence levelled at women. Yet, Rosette's claim to ignorance is here clearly linked to utopian, or idealistic discourses: paradise/Eden; the return to Africa with the Rastafarian prophetess, Beloved; and reggae music. Pineau presents these as three related tropes and, like Glissant and Césaire before her, critiques the desire to capture lost innocence and purity at the expense of recognising the real and present ills of society.

In a very clear way, Rosette's obsession with reggae music allows her to isolate herself from the outside world: literally she shuts herself up in her cabin and listens to her records all day. While this physically isolates her, paradoxically, she imagines great freedom as she listens:

[s]he drifted up, began running, walking, pedalling in the air, moving forward, forever forward. Suddenly, she was far from Savane and all of its misery. Free, despite the battles she fought to put food on the plates [...]. 'No woman no cry ...' She was a woman, by God! A Negress that stood tall. There was nothing left to fear. The eyes of the Almighty were upon her! Glory be to Jah-God! Yes, justice will be done in Babylon. One day there would not be the slightest recollection of a crime in Savane. And the

¹⁸⁰ Pineau (2003) p. 176. Emphasis in the original.

macadam dreams in these parts would give way to a dream never before seen in the world.¹⁸¹

Significantly, Rosette associates justice with forgetting – ‘there would not be the slightest recollection of crime’ – while the narrative itself goes on to insist on retelling the crimes of Savane – ‘she forgot the child thrown to the bottom of Nèfles Bridge, the three piles of rotten christophines, Glawdys’s gray eyes [...]. She no longer saw the mangled baby in Rosan’s arms’.¹⁸² The narrative, therefore, restates the particular crimes of the community in the face of the more generalizing, Rastafarian concept of Babylon. By adopting this position, Rosette herself no longer has to dwell on the specific acts of violence, and her own complicity with them. This over simplification or diversion is confirmed as her mental flight evokes images of slave ships and maroons until ‘crime’ comes to represent the historical situation of all black people, and “‘Revolution! ...’” as the only chance to ‘escape eternal sorrow’ and ‘be reborn far from macadam dreams’:¹⁸³ ‘yes, Lord, her people would finally rise up, free themselves from the mire of the ancient curse and that, yes, Lord, blacks would be seen as men on this earth’.¹⁸⁴ However, blind faith in the Revolution’s, or as in the case of Césaire’s *Notebook*, ‘revolution’s’, promise of escape and reparations, like Rosette’s own refusal to engage with the community and specific crimes committed there, glosses over the particularities of the individual lives in need of rebuilding.

¹⁸¹ Pineau (2003) pp. 117-118.

¹⁸² Pineau (2003) p. 118.

¹⁸³ Pineau (2003) p. 119. Glissant also criticises the identification with a universal, essentialised notion of black identity (Glissant, 1999b p. 24.)

¹⁸⁴ Pineau (2003) p. 118.

The passage's reference to the novel's title, 'macadam dreams', is particularly revealing of the need to focus on individual lives, rather than a general notion of black empowerment. Clearly, Rosette regards her fantastical dreams of drifting away, eating apples and pears in paradise, as the very antithesis of the macadam dreams of Babylon/Savane.¹⁸⁵ Everyday, ordinary, unremarkable dreams are indeed set in contrast to the 'autumnal landscapes' of Rosette's fairytales. However, this is a novel about the importance of macadam dreams; of recognising suffering and abuse, and rebuilding one's life. As Pineau has commented, her novels are about 'learning to come to terms with one's past. As living human beings, despite the sexual violence (in *L'espérance*), death (in *Chair piment*), we cannot remain in the past'.¹⁸⁶ Pineau gives this point expression in *Macadam Dreams* through the words of Eliette's godmother, Anoncia: '[t]here'll be other cyclones, lots of them. And no one can do nothing about that, even the great scientists in France. No one can stop them. Just predict them. And a body will just have to lie low and then stand back up again, rebuild, dress the wounds, try and look forward to tomorrow's dreams'.¹⁸⁷ The inevitability of the cyclone and, by association, male violence against women is too easily accepted in this statement. There is a sense that female characters like Eliette should accept their situation passively – just 'lie low'. However, Pineau's most forceful critique is reserved for diversionists, idealistic characters like Rosette who fail to acknowledge that there is no guarantee that the Revolution will end the

¹⁸⁵ Renée Larrier notes that in Guadeloupe *macadam* not only refers to the material used to surface roads, but is also the name of a staple dish of spicy cod and rice, often eaten by the poor (Renée Larrier *Autofiction and Advocacy in the Francophone Caribbean* [Gainesville: The University Press of Florida, 2006] p. 98). As such, this second meaning adds Caribbean specificity while enforcing the connotations of everyday reality, but also, Larrier suggests, of 'resilience' given its association with poverty (p. 98).

¹⁸⁶ Gisèle Pineau in Veldwachter (2004) p. 183.

¹⁸⁷ Pineau (2003) p. 213.

individual instances of abuse and violence: an important warning for Césaire and Glissant who fail to acknowledge the ways in which women find themselves vulnerable within the communities both writers valorise.

Rosette's failure lies in her inability to ground her dreams, her future in the real world. The criticism here is of course the same as that which Glissant levelled against *négritude*. Celebrating the return to mother Africa as an ideal state is, as Glissant argues, to ignore the real and present problems of one's native land, effectively a diversion. In *Macadam Dreams*, the return to Africa is similarly critiqued through the Rastafarian ideology inherent in Rosette's reggae music, but also in the small community of Rastafarians with which she becomes temporarily involved: it was said 'they'd drunk too much pure Ital tea and that they sought neither bread nor job because they fed on a herb that gave them light, opened the gates to paradise, and beat the drums of love and the dream country in Africa that had been founded across the seas'.¹⁸⁸ The induced flight into paradise, 'the dream country of Africa', is exposed as a form of escapism and refusal to acknowledge one's physical conditions, a fallacy that even Rosette becomes aware of: 'other memories brought home the whole mockery of Beloved's paradise: the hungry children, the rancid oil, the garden of the early days – abandoned, the laziness of Ras Gong, the useless words, the contempt of Delroy, the madness of Zaudit, who saw life only through ganja tea'.¹⁸⁹ Paradise is exposed as a mockery because it is a refusal to respond to the real and specific conditions of one's life.

¹⁸⁸ Pineau (2003) p. 7.

¹⁸⁹ Pineau (2003) p. 133.

The danger in such a belief is made apparent through Beloved, the group's prophetess, who leads the group up a mountain during a violent storm, claiming 'that Jah had revealed the path to her. To return to the state of original purity, they – the Lord's anointed, the earth-coloured brothers and sisters – must eat the earth itself, the earth whence they came. They all ate earth, for seven days [...] wearing their teeth down on the rocks of creation'.¹⁹⁰ Like Carpentier's protagonist in *The Lost Steps* and Thaël in Glissant's *The Ripening*, the journey away from civilization towards an isolated natural world is once again represented as a search for original purity. And like these precursors, Beloved's quest is exposed as absurd, many of the group falling ill with colic and dying of exhaustion and malnutrition. On the seventh day the group is finally decimated by the storm and swelling river. Although Beloved believes right up to the moment of her death that she has 'returned to the Garden of Eden',¹⁹¹ the true trauma of the incident is evident in the appearance of the two sole survivors of 'the purification of the Great Return. They came back broken, emaciated, ragged, nearly jumping out of their skins when anyone asked what had become of the tribe'.¹⁹² In such moments Pineau is clearly working within that tradition of Caribbean literature suggested by this thesis which identifies and critiques paradisiacal discourse and the idealisation of Africa as the site of purity and origin. In *Macadam Dreams* such fantasies prevent characters from responding to the real issues which affect the people of the Caribbean. Whereas Pineau seems to suggest the inevitability of domestic violence and rape, her focus is fundamentally on the reaction to devastation and those idealistic discourses that prevent her female

¹⁹⁰ Pineau (2003) p. 136.

¹⁹¹ Pineau (2003) p. 137.

¹⁹² Pineau (2003) pp. 134-135.

characters from accepting the past. Beloved's faith prevents her from accepting the abuse she receives from her partner, Delroy, just as Rosette dreams of autumnal landscapes and black liberation rather than acknowledge the truth about Rosan. Both characters are, to some extent, aware of oppression – the ills of Babylon or the slave trade – but, as Glissant's concept of 'diversion' suggests, they 'must look for it *elsewhere* in order to be aware of it'.¹⁹³ As such they, like all misled by diversion, are alienated from the particular circumstances of their own community and, therefore, are unable to rebuild their lives: '[d]iversion *leads nowhere*'.¹⁹⁴

For Glissant diversion is a failure to 'live in one's country' and as such offers no grounds for creolization.¹⁹⁵ Similarly, Pineau suggests in *Macadam Dreams* that the community's, and in particular, Eliette's, poor response to violence and devastation leads to the failure of the creolization project. Throughout the novel Eliette is painfully aware of the fact that she has never been able to conceive a child, and of all the memories that haunt her it is that of the child she almost adopted, Glawdys, that is one of the most painful. Glawdys is described as possessing a

beauty [which] was peculiar and magical, that girl had inherited nothing from her mama, except for the smile. Some said that the seven wise men from the slaughterhouse had mixed their blood so that she would take on equal parts of each of them, the best parts. Black Negress with green eyes, straight nose, thick, purple lips, and long, curly, straw-coloured hair, Glawdys baffled everyone who tried to pin point her race.¹⁹⁶

Uncertain of the father, Glawdys's mother identifies 'the seven wise men from the slaughterhouse' as responsible, each of whom represent a different racial group from

¹⁹³ Glissant (1999b) p. 23.

¹⁹⁴ Glissant (1999b) p. 23.

¹⁹⁵ Glissant (1999b) p. 23.

¹⁹⁶ Pineau (2003) p. 40.

the Caribbean: 'Black man, Indian, mulatto, white man, *chabin*, Carib, and coolie-bastard'.¹⁹⁷ Although the 'best parts' of all the races are here identified, Glawdys's racial ambiguity and 'magical appearance' suggest her as an archetype of a creolized identity, conforming to Glissant's claim that creolization forgoes the possibility of identifying unique racial origins and 'deconstruct[s] in this way the category of "creolized" that is considered as halfway between two "pure" extremes'.¹⁹⁸ However, Glawdys is rejected by her mother and taken in by another woman, Eloise, whose mental instability and paranoia causes her to keep the child locked away or tied up in the front yard. Instead of confronting this situation, Eliette and the community ignore Glawdys's suffering: '[I]like everyone else in Savane Mulet, Eliette heard her yapping all day long. Of course, she could have stepped up, chided the cruel stepmother, and freed the innocent child [...]. But she lacked the necessary strength and courage. She was always putting off D-day till tomorrow'.¹⁹⁹ For seven years Glawdys is subject to her stepmother's abuse. As a result:

the golden colour of her curls was already fading. For lack of sunshine, her hair now shone like pinch-beck. From staying shut up in the dark cabin, her green eyes took on the glaucous colour of the marshes in Grande-Terre. From purple, her lips turned the disquieting blue of the high seas. Even the ebony black of her skin became dull and ashen, lost its lovely sheen.²⁰⁰

Abuse and the failure of the community to respond to the situation cause the visible markers of Glawdys's creolized identity to fade. As I suggested in my Introduction, creolization theory transcends purely racial mixing (a biological function) and implicates a process of transformation bound to the politics of place and

¹⁹⁷ Pineau (2003) p. 37.

¹⁹⁸ Glissant (1999b) p. 140.

¹⁹⁹ Pineau (2003) p. 43.

²⁰⁰ Pineau (2003) p. 42.

environment. Similarly, here Pineau illustrates that creolization cannot be sustained where the community fails to acknowledge and engage with the real and present issues of their environment.

Pineau elaborates the problematic discourse of paradise and innocence exposed by Carpentier, Césaire, and Glissant. However, she is careful to distinguish between those diversions which mask reality and other ‘macadam dreams’ which enable characters, particularly Eliette and Angela, to rebuild their lives after the hurricane. Paradise, then, is not rejected outright; but it is a paradise firmly located in the real circumstances of the land: a macadam paradise. This particular distinction is evident in the ambivalent character of Joab, Eliette’s stepfather and the founder of Savane-Mulet. To Joab, ‘Savane is the Good Lord’s paradise’.²⁰¹ However, his pastoral vision is regenerative, as Séraphine tells Eliette: ‘[y]ou wanted to disappear from their sight, you told me they pierced through you and stripped you. With the animals in his paradise, Joab showed you each day that by God, you couldn’t remain a prisoner to old fears and that life here on earth also had its advantages and kinds turns’.²⁰² Joab’s paradise enables Eliette to regain something of her confidence, allowing her to find her voice after three years of silence. But this paradise is not located in an imagined, idealised or hoped for elsewhere, rather it is simply the natural world and its inherent regenerative power. After the passing of Hurricane Hugo and out of the devastation of the land, Pineau finds hope: ‘[o]n the hills the still, leafy green trees were waiting too, in awed calm. Tomorrow, they said amongst themselves, we’ll count those who’ve been broken, who’ve been left on the ground

²⁰¹ Pineau (2003) p. 96.

²⁰² Pineau (2003) p. 96.

[...]. Tomorrow we'll grow new limbs'.²⁰³ The resolute determination to rebuild is reflected in Eliette, the 'old new mama who was already thinking about a roof to cover Angela's head [...]. She'd probably have to rebuild. Yes, there was still a way to get it back on its feet, old Joab's paradise of macadam dreams'.²⁰⁴ Again Pineau is drawn to Glissant. In *The Ripening*, Thaël's isolated paradise is rejected in favour of the community which co-exists with the natural environment. Certainly like Césaire, Glissant depicts a 'sick paradise', for to do otherwise would be to idealise place in exactly the same way Thaël does up until Valérie's death. Similarly, while rejecting the idealisation of purity and innocence, *Macadam Dreams* also privileges a sick, 'macadam' paradise; identifying in it a regenerative power that accepts the suffering of both landscape and people, and allows them to rebuild, to 'grow new limbs', *despite* what has passed. As Pineau states: 'I didn't want it to be only ruin, rage, desolation. I wanted there to be hope [...] because that's what matters, showing that we can rebuild ourselves. Never forget, but rebuild'.²⁰⁵

Creolizing Sexual Identities: *Cereus Blooms at Night*.

Gisèle Pineau's association of the indiscriminate violence of the natural world with the sexual abuse of women in the community, is both a break with and reinforcement of the conflation of landscape and the female body evident in Carpentier and McKay. By likening a cyclone ravaging the land to Rosan's abuse of his daughter, Pineau is obviously reasserting the analogy between a woman's body and the land. However, as can be found in Carpentier, the idealisation of landscape

²⁰³ Pineau (2003) p. 202.

²⁰⁴ Pineau (2003) p. 215.

²⁰⁵ Gisèle Pineau in Veldwachter (2004) p. 181.

is firmly critiqued, forcing the characters to position themselves securely in the historic and social realities specific to their lives. By doing this, Pineau challenges those discourses which obscure exploitative power relations in favour of an easy or idealistic association between land and paradise, or land and the female body.

Sexuality in *Macadam Dreams* provides the stage on which this struggle between reality and idealisation is exposed. However, sexuality itself is presented as a relatively stable, albeit violent and exploitative, concept: heterosexual relations are firmly established as the norm, bar the subtle suggestion of Joab's homosexuality – he 'was of the female type'.²⁰⁶ Shani Mootoo's novel *Cereus Blooms at Night*, on the other hand, provides a reassessment of the assumption of heterosexual relations as the given basis of relation and creolization in Caribbean literature. As such, this novel both evokes and undermines the biological perspectives which relate hybridity, and to a lesser extent, creolization to miscegenation, and points the way towards a fiction of creolization that moves beyond stable and 'pure' categories of identity in the same way that Glissant takes us beyond race and legitimate filiations. Where *Macadam Dreams* assumes heterosexual relations as the given standard, Mootoo's novel questions the coherence of sexual identities while, like Pineau, Glissant, Césaire, and Carpentier, interrogating Edenic representations of the landscape.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ Pineau (2003) p. 94.

²⁰⁷ Alison Donnell raises the issue of sexuality in *Cereus*, and comments on the lack of critical discussion around sexuality within Caribbean literature and society (see Donnell [2006] pp. 232-244, pp. 181-249). Further discussions of *Cereus* can be founded in Isabel Hoving 'Moving the Caribbean Landscape: *Cereus Blooms at Night* as a Re-imagination of the Caribbean Environment' in Elizabeth M DeLoughrey, Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley (eds) *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005) p. 154-168; Vivian M. May 'Dislocation and Desire in Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night*' in *Studies in the Literary Imagination* Vol 37. No. 2, Fall 2004 pp. 97-123; Vivian M. May

By locating her novel in the fictional town of Paradise, Mootoo clearly engages with previous literary representations of the Caribbean landscape in idealised terms, such as can be found in the early twentieth-century era and in poets such as McFarlane, Redcam, and Bunbury. The story concerns the life and history of a resident of the local nursing home, Mala Ramachandin, who has been subject to a lifetime of sexual and physical abuse by her father. For many years, as in Pineau's novel, the community have turned a blind eye to 'a woman whose father had obviously mistaken her for his wife',²⁰⁸ and as a result Mala is primarily an isolated, introverted character. The community's failure to intervene in the abuse is metaphorically suggested by Mala's walled garden which literally obscures the house from the outside world. However, if the garden can, in this way, be suggested as complicit with the covering-up of Mala's story, it also acts as her refuge:

[w]hen Pohpoh arrived at Mala's fence she knew she had reached a refuge. She grabbed one of the rotting fence posts and scaled it with magical speed. Instead of landing in the stinging nettles she was caught by a soothing mess of aloe vera. This yard was different from the others. The plants were not arranged in any order and no path seemed to exist [...]. Pink morning light was too weak to illuminate the trees and plants in the chaotic garden but Pohpoh didn't care. She knew the yard better than any in her neighbourhood.²⁰⁹

This passage reveals the pathological detachment Mala has from her past: here she is unable to reconcile her present self with the memory of her past – Pohpoh is her childhood nickname, but appears here as a separate character. Yet for both Mala and

'Trauma in Paradise: Wilful and Strategic Ignorance in *Cereus Blooms at Night* in *Hypatia* Vol 21, No. 3, Summer 2006 pp. 107-135; and Miriam Pirbhai 'Sexuality as (Counter)Discourse and Hybridity as Healing Practice' in *The Journal of Caribbean Literatures* Vol 4 No. 1, Fall 2005 pp. 175-184.

²⁰⁸ Shani Mootoo *Cereus Blooms at Night* (London: Quality Paperbacks Direct, 1998) p. 109.

²⁰⁹ Mootoo (1998) p. 176.

Pohpoh, despite the subjugation faced in the family home, the garden appears to offer a site for resistance: '[s]he knew the yard better than any in her neighbourhood'. However, Mootoo does not establish an easy dichotomy between home and oppression on the one hand, and garden and refuge on the other. Nor is a binary established between the tamed, civilized garden and the disorder depicted above.²¹⁰ Rather, Mootoo is foregrounding a more ambiguous natural space.

Isabel Hoving's essay 'Moving the Caribbean Landscape' considers Mootoo's representation of landscape, arguing that '[a]t first sight, the yard recalls the image of the lost Garden of Eden, which European explorers wanted to recognize in the lush Caribbean islands they visited for the first time. At second sight, however, there is something seriously wrong with this lost jungle paradise'.²¹¹ This double recognition is registered by one of the novel's characters, Otoh, who notes that 'except for the odours he would have sworn he was in a paradise'.²¹² Emphasising the garden's ambiguity, as neither Edenic paradise nor unexplored jungle, allows Mootoo to move beyond such idealising binaries, and this ambivalence is extended even into the site of Mala's abuse, the family home, which is not set in contrast to the natural world, but, becomes part of it:

[f]ruit trees and hot pepper trees had sprung wherever birds and insects dropped their seeds. A patch of bright orange, sweet-smelling roses and a profusion of night-blooming cereus plants were the only ornamentals in the yard. The roots of the cereus, like desperate grasping fingers, had bored through the damp wall of the house. It was no longer the wall that supported the succulent but rather the other way around.²¹³

²¹⁰ This is a point discussed by May (2004) p. 103, and Hoving (2005) pp. 156-157.

²¹¹ Hoving (2005) p. 154.

²¹² Mootoo (1998) p. 155.

²¹³ Mootoo (1998) p. 115.

By refusing the binary opposition between home and garden, the natural world and the social world, according to Vivian May, the novel forces readers to 'recognise how seemingly separate or different forms of violation intertwine and reinforce one another [...]. Each story is incomplete without the others: each fragment gains meaning in relation to, not in isolation from, each other'.²¹⁴ The description offered here by May clearly depicts a process through which textual meaning is creolized, brought into relation in order to discern a new relevance, and certainly the ambivalent, in-between composition of the garden/house suggests itself as a hybridized entity. However, the process of creolization is not achieved by the novel's characters, save Tyler who narrates Mala's disjointed ramblings, 'fashioning a single garment out of myriad parts'.²¹⁵ Mala, on the other hand, remains, more or less, an isolated character and the fragments of her story are brought into relation only through the text itself. Her inability to creolize her own memories, most clearly shown in her failure to recognize Pohpoh as her childhood self, calls in to question May's assertion that above all the garden of *Cereus* 'is a place of pleasure, even resistance, for in it not only does Mala dare to remember all that has happened to her in her life but she strategizes, always, to find a way to *survive*'.²¹⁶ Reading the garden space as a site of resistance, undermines May's own conviction that Mootoo refuses to construct her novel in terms of binary oppositions and ignores the failure of the natural world to effectively challenge abuse.

²¹⁴ May (2004) p. 113.

²¹⁵ Mootoo (1998) p. 105.

²¹⁶ May (2004) p. 103. Emphasis in the original.

Mala's ability to blend into her environment is noted by several characters,²¹⁷ however, it is the parallel established between her speech and nature that is most significant. When Mala first arrives at the nursing home the only communication she makes with her carer, Tyler, are 'perfect imitations' of insects and birds.²¹⁸ Later in the novel, it becomes clear that, to Mala, sound is merely the expression of feelings evoked by her experience of nature:

[a] flock of seagulls squawking overhead might elicit a single word, *pretty*, that verbalization, she came to understand, was not the feeling itself but a name given to the feeling [...]. Eventually, Mala all but rid herself of words [...]. Every muscle of her body swelled, tingled, cringed or went numb in response to her surroundings – every fibre was sensitized in a way that words were unable to match or enhance.²¹⁹

Rather than signifying a privileged communion with nature, Mala's abandonment of language marks her radical isolation from society. As Donnell argues, Mala retreats 'not only from society which has already withdrawn from her – but from language – the basic link to the social world – embedding herself more deeply and securely in a natural world'.²²⁰ Though there is a sense of pleasure depicted in this extract, I would suggest that Mootoo does not characterise the garden as a place of resistance because, like her depiction of the house, it too is a rather more ambiguous site, yet one ultimately which fails to lead to an adequate response to Mala's trauma.

The ambiguous nature of the garden is embodied in the cereus plant which forms a central part of the narrative. A night-blooming flower, the cereus is

²¹⁷ On first sight, Otoh notes that Mala 'blended into the background of leaves and gnarled, twisted limbs' (Mootoo [2006] p. 155), a view confirmed later on by the policemen who fail to notice her presence (p. 178).

²¹⁸ Mootoo (1998) p. 24.

²¹⁹ Mootoo (1998) p. 126.

²²⁰ Donnell (2006) p. 234.

described as having a scent with ‘two edges – one vanilla-like sweetness, the other a curdling’.²²¹ This duality establishes an equivalence between the plant and the garden as a whole, which is described as both paradise-like and marked by the smell of decay. Primarily, the cereus is associated with pleasure: those who smell it, human or animal, are intoxicated, ‘mesmerized by the smell’.²²² The pleasure that the cereus bloom incites, however, is not liberating, as May suggests. Rather, nature is presented above all, as it is in *Macadam Dreams*, as an indifferent creature. The novel’s narrator, Tyler, notes this when he reveals his ‘true nature’ to Mala by putting on the nurse’s dress that she has stolen for him:

[w]hen I stepped out from behind the curtain, I saw that Miss Ramchandin had made herself busy [...]. She glanced at me, made no remark and kept right on building the tower. At first I felt horribly silly, like a man who had put on women’s clothing for sheer sport and had forgotten to remove the outfit after the allotted period of fun [...].

Just as I was hoping the tower would come crashing down and extinguish me forever, a revelation came. The reason Miss Ramchandin paid me no attention was that, to her mind, the outfit was not something either to congratulate or scorn – it simply was. She was not one to manacle nature, and I sensed that she was permitting mine its freedom.²²³

This is a key passage for it is suggestive not only of Mootoo’s ambivalent attitude toward sexuality in the novel, but of the novel’s treatment of the natural world. What Tyler fears others would find perverse, Mala is apparently indifferent to. And it is this wish not to pass judgment, to simply let things be and not ‘manacle nature’, that is mirrored in Mala’s treatment of her own garden in which trees and plants are

²²¹ Mootoo (1998) p. 152.

²²² Mootoo (1998) p. 135.

²²³ Mootoo (1998) p. 77.

permitted to grow 'wherever birds and insects dropped their seeds'.²²⁴ The cereus plant, too, makes no note of where boundaries exist between the natural world and the social world, as it is the plant that is primarily identified as encroaching on the house. Miriam Pirbhai may argue that the plant's slow erosion of the house represents a form of resistance to the father's abuse,²²⁵ yet this too undermines Mootoo's desire to avoid staging a clear binary of power relations. Rather, as the above extract shows, nature does not make moral judgements: reading the cereus's destruction of the house as retribution would, conversely, enforce this view.²²⁶

Although nature's neutrality is presented in a relatively positive light above, accepting Tyler's sexuality, in the first case, and in the second, by not imposing artificial, aesthetic restrictions on the growth of plants, the carelessness with which nature 'drops her seed' is mirrored by the way in which Mala's father 'mistook Pohpoh for Sarah', his wife.²²⁷ Whereas in *Macadam Dreams*, Rosan explicitly acknowledges that his abuse is directed against his own daughter, believing he has the right to Angela before any other man, Mootoo presents incest more ambiguously here by suggesting a casual confusion of daughter for wife. This is not to say that *Cereus* treats Chandin's abuse as any less devastating, nor that Tyler should be condemned for dressing in drag. Rather, Mootoo's point, like Pineau's, is that the natural world is one characterised by the absence of morality: the cyclone will indiscriminately ravage the land, just as the seed will fall wherever it will. Nature is indifferent and will condemn neither cross-dressing nor incest. Therefore, by

²²⁴ Mootoo (1998) p. 115.

²²⁵ Pirbhai (2005) p. 178.

²²⁶ In any case, it should also be remembered that the cereus does not succeed in destroying the house; rather, the home and all reminders of Mala's abuse are destroyed by the fire started by Otoh.

²²⁷ Mootoo (1998) p. 65.

‘embedding herself more deeply and securely in a natural world’,²²⁸ Mala momentarily escapes but offers no real resistance to her father’s abuse, for there is no moral judgement that can be made in that sphere. Only with reintegration into the social world can characters begin to rebuild their lives after devastation. Yet this too, for both Mootoo and Pineau, is problematised as it is the prejudices of the community that can prolong and leave unchallenged situations of abuse.

What both novels ultimately enforce is the necessity of a society with a conscience, one that protects vulnerable members without impinging on the equality of all. Mootoo’s discussion of sexuality with *Cereus* clearly points to this need.

Tyler comments early on in the novel that

[o]ver the years I pondered the gender and sex roles that seemed available to people, and the rules that went with them [...]. I was preoccupied with trying to understand what was natural and what perverse, and who said so and why. Chandin Ramachandin played a part in confusing me about these roles, for it was a long time before I could differentiate between his perversion and what others called mine.²²⁹

Although society establishes a moral code, Mootoo’s novel also puts to question ‘who said so and why’. While nature refuses to pass comment on either Chandin’s abuse or Tyler’s drag, it should not be the case that society must necessarily condemn both. Mootoo complicates her novel once again by questioning the prejudices that inform codes of morality, particularly around issues of sexual identity, and establishes the need to ‘differentiate’ between Chandin’s ‘perversion’ and what is regarded as Tyler’s. In this respect, Donnell argues, *Cereus* broaches a subject often ignored by Caribbean writers despite its continuing political relevance,

²²⁸ Donnell (2006) p. 234.

²²⁹ Mootoo (1998) pp. 47-48.

and points toward the failure of current theoretical models of creolization, such as that of Glissant, to accommodate the radical ambivalence achieved by *Cereus*'s depiction of sexuality.²³⁰

The intolerance of many Caribbean societies toward sexual diversity is evident in the disdain levied against Tyler by the community: the matron initially gives him only cleaning jobs despite his nursing qualifications and he is only given charge of Mala because the rest of the staff refuse. The novel's celebration of the relationship between Tyler and Otoh, in the first instance, appears to promise a more accepting society. However, Donnell is right to pose the question 'whether [this relationship] actually participates in that act of containment by representing a romance between an anatomically heterosexual couple at its centre?'.²³¹ Although this union of two cross-dressing characters appears liberating, it belies the fact that this is a coupling of a male (Tyler) and a female (Otoh). However, I would argue that Otoh and Tyler's relationship does agree with the 'macadam-creolization' that this chapter has promoted. If, as I have suggested, 'macadam dreams' are preferable to fantasy, and a 'sick' paradise is better suited than the Edenic vision in order to facilitate the staging of a new relationship between self, community, and landscape; then a poetics of creolization, in order to fulfil these terms, must similarly remain rooted in everyday experience: a 'macadam' creolization. This is where *Cereus* anticipates Chapter Two of this thesis, and in particular the postcolonial model of creolization that may be found in Glissant's poetry and later essays. While the other authors examined in this

²³⁰ Donnell evidences the extreme hostility towards gay and lesbian individuals throughout Caribbean societies, highlighting in particular, governmental policies that have reinforced discrimination (2006 pp. 181-245).

²³¹ Donnell (2006) p. 240.

chapter depart from previous literary representations of the Caribbean landscape as paradise, but fail to respond to the challenge of specific and individual subject positionings within the community, Mootoo's *Cereus* offers a clear example of the way in which pre-established, hierarchical categories may be transcended. As Donnell has argued, despite the fact that this is a union between, anatomically speaking, a male and a female, Otoh and Tyler 'represent a more radical category of experience and alliance', suggesting a departure from the 'oppositional construction of homo- and heterosexuality', which encourages the reader to rethink society's designation of 'natural' and 'unnatural' sexual identities.²³² What Mootoo seems at pains to underscore is the fundamental ambivalence of her characters. In the case of Otoh, for example, it is revealed that this is a character whose very name is derived from the very vocabulary of hybridity as suggested by Homi Bhabha – 'neither the one thing nor the other',²³³ – for he is characterised as having 'this trait of weighing "on the one hand" with "but on the other" [which] earned him a name change. He began, though through no choice of his own, to be called Otoh-boto, shortened in time to Otoh'.²³⁴ Otoh and Tyler's ambiguity is a move beyond categorisation, and, therefore, the relationship that the novel ultimately endorses, is one in which an individual's identity as well as their experiences of oppression, community, gender, and landscape are permitted to creolize without hierarchy or determinate results. Furthermore, within a world of creolizing relations, Mootoo suggests, morality cannot be based on notions of natural legitimacy or purity, for, as her novel shows, nature is an indifferent creature. Instead morality must be founded on consensus and

²³² Donnell (2006) pp. 240-241.

²³³ Bhabha (1994) p. 33.

²³⁴ Mootoo (1998) p. 110.

judgement, but also on an acknowledgement of ambiguity, opacity, and the creolized status of all identities, communities, and cultures.

Mootoo, Pineau, Glissant, and Carpentier all present a poetics of creolization that recognise the important role played by historical and social forces in that process: a macadam-creolization firmly located in Caribbean reality. Glissant is clear that creolization is always contextualised by both place and past, and configured according to the true and painful reality of the present, not to an idealised vision of a Caribbean paradise. Nor is it a process that will lead to the eventual transcendence of colonial trauma, the means towards 'revolution'. Carpentier opens up this path by rejecting the return to an ideal, pre-temporal state, and Pineau restates this by underlining the dangers behind the idealisation of landscape. In *Cereus* there is a similar engagement with tropes of paradise that allows Mootoo to argue, alongside Glissant, that creolization must not be understood simply as the indiscriminate mixing of identities or characteristics, but rather that it must be contextualised by society and environment. With this chapter, I have suggested that not only is landscape an important element in the writings of Carpentier, Césaire, Glissant, Pineau, and Mootoo, but it is a means to challenge and reclaim landscape from exoticising colonial representations. In Chapter Two, landscape takes on a further dimension that occupies a central position in the world of creolizing relations that Glissant's poetry and essays imagine.

Chapter Two

The Location of Creolization: Towards a Singular Theory of Postcolonial Relation

The sea had intermingled the men who had come from so far away, and the land to which they were delivered had strengthened them with a different sap. And the red lands had mixed with the black lands, the rock and lava with the sand, the clay with the flash of flint, the backwaters with the sea and the sea with the sky, giving birth in the battered calabash floating on the waters to a new human cry and a new echo.¹

Édouard Glissant's *Caribbean Discourse* (1981) is located within that post-*négritude* moment which sought to distance itself from the idealisation of pure, legitimate racial origins. However, as its title suggests, it remains rooted in the specificities of a distinctly Caribbean reality. It is such an understanding that allows Jeff Humphries to argue that Glissant remains the most influential author and essayist in the Francophone Caribbean, particularly evident in the work of Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant, Daniel Maximin – a group Humphries refers to as 'thinkers of "Antillianity"' – precisely because 'Glissant's work is grounded in the Antilles, not in European theory'.² Chapter One of this thesis illustrated the way in

¹Édouard Glissant *The Fourth Century*, translated by Betsy Wing (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001) p. 292.

² Jeff Humphries 'Introduction' pp. xi-xxxiv in Édouard Glissant *The Collected Poems of Édouard Glissant*, edited and translated by Jeff Humphries with Melissa Manolas (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) p. xii. Though Antillanité signifies the extent to which these authors – Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant, Daniel Maximin – ground their poetics in a Caribbean reality, Chamoiseau *et al* are more commonly referred to as part of the *créolité* or creoleness movement. Antillanité, on the other hand, is a term used to refer to Glissant writings (particularly the early phase that includes *Caribbean Discourse*). Given Glissant's critique of *créolité*, it is important to draw a distinction between these two schools of thought. For a good outline of these developments see Shireen K. Lewis *Race, Culture, and Identity: Francophone West African and Caribbean Literature and Theory from Négritude to Créolité* (Lanham and Oxford: Lexington Books, 2006). Daniel Racine outlines the importance of landscape to Antillanité in 'The Antilleanness of Édouard Glissant' in *World Literature Today* Vol. 63 No. 4 1989 pp. 620-625. Other articles to highlight the significance of specificity and landscape to Glissant's writing in this same edition of *World Literature Today* include: Alain Baudot 'Édouard Glissant: A Poet in Search of his Landscape'

which *The Ripening* (1958) and *Caribbean Discourse* are clearly 'grounded' in a distinctly Caribbean landscape, and the present chapter will further elaborate this in reference to Glissant's poetry and later theory. At the same time, Humphries's comment implies that the postcolonial Caribbean might be read entirely apart from Western discourse, that Glissant may be clearly delineated from European theory. Yet, as I will argue in this chapter, while Glissant's poetics of creolization is indeed Caribbean in context, the vision of a cross-cultural relations he depicts is not limited to a narrow geographic scope, and important Western influences may be traced in his work, notably that of Victor Segalen. The value of diversity and the reassessment of the concept of difference that Glissant finds in Segalen contributes to a more nuanced model of creolizing relations than was found in *Caribbean Discourse*. Primarily, Glissant articulates these refinements in *Poetics of Relation* (1990) as a theory of unrestricted, cross-cultural 'relating' whereby the process of creolization may be understood as a radical form of postcolonial hybridity. The 'poetics of relation' that Glissant envisions is opposed to 'forced', or 'counter-poetics' (such as the creole folktale) which reveal an inability to move beyond a defensive, already defined, and fixed position, and as such conforms to the counter-colonial/postcolonial distinction premised in my Introduction.³ Throughout this chapter, creolization emerges as a movement beyond fixed positions because it produces something more than the sum of its parts: something unpredictable and

pp. 584-588; Frederick Ivor Case 'Édouard Glissant and the Poetics of Cultural Marginalization' pp. 593-598; Sylvia Wynter 'Beyond the Word of Man: Glissant and the New Discourse of the Antilles' pp. 637-648; J. Michael Dash 'Writing the Body: Édouard Glissant's Poetics of Re-membering' pp. 609-612.

³ Édouard Glissant *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, translated by J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999b) pp. 128-132. See pp. 23-26 of this thesis.

singular. And it is on this issue that I will bring to bear the commentaries of Peter Hallward and Derek Attridge. By Hallward's account in *Absolutely Postcolonial* (2001), the singularity of creolization emerges as progress towards the eventual transcendence of specific differences between relating components. On the other hand, Attridge's *The Singularity of Literature* (2004) revitalises the concept of the singular as designating the production of new works of literature, rather than reconfigurations of previous texts.⁴ In this way, Attridge's model of literary production fulfils Glissant's demand that creolization does not only produce a synthesis, or sum of its parts, but 'opens on a radically new dimension of reality'.⁵ Importantly, this does not lead to the eventual erasure of difference in Glissant's theory of whole-world relations. Rather, the singular effects of creolization conform to the formulation premised by Hallward: that is to say, they remain specific to but not specified by the situation of their articulation. Furthermore, while Hallward's critique emphasises Glissant's use of Gilles Deleuze in order to premise the deterritorializing singularity of a rhizomatic model of relations, this chapter maintains the fact of location and highlights Glissant's rejection of the inevitable progression toward a voiding of difference through his use of the philosophies of another French thinker: Victor Segalen. Drawing on Segalen's celebration of diversity and absolute rejection of entropic stagnation, Glissant's refinement of the individual's relation to both place and the other as an opacity, represents an

⁴ Chapter Four of this thesis offers examples of recent Caribbean texts that explore this intertextual relationship: Maryse Condé's *Windward Heights* (1995) (pp. 279-291) and Derek Walcott's *Omeros* (1990) (pp. 291-298).

⁵ Édouard Glissant 'Creolization and the Making of the Americas' pp. 268-275 in *Race, Discourse and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*, edited by Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995) p. 270.

engagement with Western theory that might in itself be recognised as a form of creolization.

Restless Earth: Landscape in the Poetry of Édouard Glissant.

Throughout his career, and despite the fact that he, like so many other Caribbean writers, has found it necessary to leave the region in order to pursue a literary and academic career (Glissant himself has held the position of Visiting Professor of French Literature at the City University of New York since 1995), Glissant has consistently placed the Caribbean islandscape at the centre of his poetic vision and philosophical project. For to locate one's struggle anywhere else, in Glissant's view, is nothing more than an act of 'diversion' that '*leads nowhere*'.⁶ Glissant's point of departure in *Caribbean Discourse*, and throughout his novels, poems, plays and essays, is his native land, Martinique. However, for Glissant, Martinicans suffer from a particularly prevalent form of diversion. Unlike much of the Anglophone Caribbean, the French colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe have not become independent. In fact, it was under the political influence of Aimé Césaire that Martinique gained the status of French Overseas Department in 1946, and in 1958 chose to remain so. Reliance on the political and economic leadership of the *metropole*, combined with a failure to develop a self-sustaining economic base on the island, means that Martinicans are more likely to look to Paris than Fort-de-France for solutions (a quintessential feature of 'diversion'). Though Glissant's personal political persuasions have never been absolute, he has consistently

⁶ Glissant (1999b) p. 23. Glissant's concept of diversion is discussed in more detail on pp. 82-84 of this thesis.

criticised Césaire's endorsement of departmentalisation, and his own political activities reflect an ideological commitment to Martinican independence.⁷ Though Glissant's critique of contemporary Martinique is clearly located in his concerns over the political, economic, and cultural implications of departmentalisation, in his poetic vision the effect is visible in the landscape itself:

I remember the lingering fragrances that lay thick in my childhood world. I feel that then all the surrounding land was rich with these perfumes that never left you: the ethereal smell of magnolias, the essences of tuberose [...]. All these flowers have disappeared, or almost. There barely remains along the roads, as far as smells go, the sudden sugary blanket of hog plums in whose wake you can get lost [...]. The land has lost its smells. Like almost everywhere in the world.

The flowers that grow today are cultivated for export. Sculptures, spotless, striking in precision and quality [...]. These flowers delight us. But they have no fragrance. They are nothing but shape and colour.⁸

Glissant here appears to slip into a nostalgic reverie for a childhood Arcadia, though he rejects that 'these thoughts on flowers are [...] a matter of lamenting a vanished

⁷ In 1956 Glissant formed the 'Front-Antillo-Guyanais' with Paul Niger, calling for independence from France and re-integration into the Caribbean region; the Algerian crisis led Glissant to back the FLN's separatist revolution against France; and after a French government imposed exile from Martinique in 1959, Glissant returned in 1965 to found the Institut Martiniquais d'Etudes (1967-70) and a political journal, *Acoma* (1971). See J. Michael Dash *Édouard Glissant* (Cambridge: The University of Cambridge Press, 1995) p. 14.

⁸ Glissant (1999b) pp. 51-52. This statement gains greater significance given Daniel Racine's observation that Martinique's original Caribbean name was '*Madinina*, meaning "the island with beautiful flowers"' (Racine [1989] p. 621). Given this association between flowers and Martinique, the island itself may be read as having lost its substance through the colonial exchange Glissant envisions. Moreover, the reduction of the natural object to a mere commodity, presented here by Glissant, strikes a parallel with Aimé Césaire's term 'thingification'. For Césaire, the colonial relation is one purely of domination and submission 'which turn the colonizing man into a classroom monitor, and army sergeant, a prison guard, a slave driver, and the indigenous man into an instrument of production' (Aimé Césaire *Discourse on Colonialism*, translated by Joan Pinkham [New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1972] p. 21). There is no human contact in this exchange, it is devoid of anything above or beyond the relation of production. In this way, colonialism results in the 'thingification' of the coloniser and the colonized, both of whom are recognised as assuming different functions in the means of production. Glissant, then, extends this process to include the natural world: the flower signifies nothing more than a particular stage of production.

idyll in the past'.⁹ But it is, nevertheless, a past or reversion that is located in the Caribbean landscape. By his account, a people dislocated from their land, who seek leadership or solutions 'elsewhere', are comparable to a landscape without substance, out of which nothing but empty forms can be created: 'the Martinican seems to be simply passing through his world, a happy zombie'.¹⁰ Though in the political sphere Glissant is vocal in his challenge French dominance, his creative expression is absent of counter-colonial rhetoric, and rather, it seeks to forge a 'creative link between nature and culture [...] vital to the formation of a community'.¹¹ *Caribbean Discourse* does not advocate Martinican isolationism, but a re-evaluation of the past that centres on the relationship between the community and the land.

The pervasive presence of landscape is clearly felt in the titles of Glissant's poetry collections, which include *A Field of Islands* (1952), *Restless Earth* (1954), *The Indies* (1955), and *Dream Country, Real Country* (1985).¹² In *A Field of Islands*, for example, Glissant's second published collection of poems, fragments, rather than coherent verses, accumulate to produce images and motifs as the poet's mind wanders through the spaces of island and sea as he sits in his study. Seeking out definitive meaning from poems such as these is difficult, as Glissant himself has defended his right to opacity and defies his critics with the claim, 'a poem understood is a poem done with'.¹³ However, this unwillingness to let meaning rest

⁹ Glissant (1999b) p. 52.

¹⁰ Glissant (1999b) p. 59.

¹¹ Glissant (1999b) p. 63.

¹² These works were originally published in French as *Un Champ d'îles* (1952), *La Terre inquiète* (1954), *Les Indies* (1955), and *Pays rêvé, pays réel* (1985). Humphries notes that although these dates might not agree with some accounts, they have been provided by Glissant himself (2005, p. xxxiii).

¹³ Humphries (2005) p. xxxiii.

is tied up with Glissant's rejection of legitimacy, static formations of identity and, by extension, his celebration of creolization.

In order to challenge the reader's desire to locate absolute meaning in his poems, Glissant employs a fragmented structure that forces his readers to relate parts to one another, rather than simply follow a logical progression. In addition, Glissant offers no mediating authority or unified poetic voice to guide his readers, a technique that may be traced to the (European) influence of Stéphane Mallarmé.¹⁴ Evidence of this style may be found in *A Field of Islands*, where the centrality of the poetic voice is immediately displaced as the poet refers to himself in the third person – 'Here is the beginning of that clay in the heat of the heart, moving; a present times of islands harmonizing. O you! dreaming your face among them (beautiful, so beautiful)'.¹⁵ In a move that recalls Aimé Césaire's *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* (1939), in which the speaker imagines himself standing hand in hand with his country,¹⁶ the displaced poet, sitting in his room composing these words, projects a vision of himself on to the landscape. However, unlike Césaire's poem, the displacement of the speaker/poet becomes increasingly exaggerated as he becomes a notable absence:

From this work, however, you are absent. Absent, who are there,
like a bay! You get up, and it is as though one were seeing the
sudden breath of air take shape and defies the heavy flight of the
gaze (beautiful, so beautiful). Absent who are every presence!
When you walk upon the horizon, the blood that walks in the
earth finally rests and becomes a spring at the extremity of

¹⁴ See Dash (1995) p. 33 and Humphries (2005) p. xiv.

¹⁵ Édouard Glissant *The Collected Poems of Édouard Glissant*, edited and with an introduction by Jeff Humphries, translated by Jeff Humphries with Melissa Manolas (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) p. 33.

¹⁶ Aimé Césaire *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, translated by Mireille Rosello with Annie Pritchard (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books Ltd, 1995) p. 125. Also cited on pp. 89-90 of this thesis.

thickets. You smile so gravely that water comes back to you; and that spring has unbridled the eternity of light. O you, absent from this work, but you alone are in it. While you sleep in this plain, memory incurs the whirlings of the tree, and its higher blood. All prose becomes leaf and accumulates in the dark its bedazzledness. Make it leaf of your hands, make it prose of obscurity, and bedazzled by your breakings.¹⁷

The absence of the poet is here heightened by his own awareness that, in fact, he alone is in it. Such a tension arises from Glissant's reluctance to assume the role of representative, to act as the voice of the many. Again this points towards an ideological discrepancy between Glissant and Césaire, who, in *Notebook* (and, bearing in mind his own political career, one might add) assumes the role of spokesperson: 'My mouth will be the griefs which have no mouth, my voice, the freedom of those that collapse in the dungeon of despair'.¹⁸ Not only does the assumption of authority suggest, Dash argues, a certain arrogance or short-sightedness on the part of the artist who thinks that his voice alone can represent the community,¹⁹ but, more crucially, I would emphasise that it implies that one single voice, one absolute interpretation (of a community, of a poem) can be imposed.

Whereas Césaire's *Notebook* progresses towards an increasing co-existence of poetic voice and landscape, and Glissant himself in *The Ripening* toys with the view that the landscape may coerce the individual, in his poems, Glissant's ethereal speaker claims to represent neither the people nor the landscape. To varying degrees, both Césaire and Glissant appear to anticipate W. J. T. Mitchell's claim that 'we should think of landscape, not as an object to be seen or a text to be read, but as a

¹⁷ Glissant (2005) pp. 34-35.

¹⁸ Césaire (1995) p. 89.

¹⁹ Dash (1995) pp. 4-5.

process by which social and subjective identities are formed'.²⁰ However, while Césaire's formation of identity through landscape elevates the self until it stands side by side with the country, for Glissant land and seascapes form part of the non-hierarchical process of creolization through which subjective identities emerge. At the same time, whereas a connection between self and landscape is envisioned in Glissant's poem, the poetic voice is not determined by that relation. This marks a crucial distinction between Glissant's poetry and prose: in his first novel, the landscape appears to exert a coercive force over the individual, in *A Field of Islands*, and beyond, the poet is self-consciously aware of his freedom: 'O you, absent from this work, but you alone are in it'.²¹ Throughout, the poem is painfully conscious of the specific realities out of which its lines are produced, yet here this converse presence and absence of poetic authority testifies to the postcolonial freedom with which Glissant can approach the Caribbean landscape.

To return to the long passage cited from *A Field of Islands*, while the form of the poet remains cast as a shadowy, uncertain presence, the poem itself takes shape as an element of the natural world: 'prose becomes leaf'. This association of poem with landscape is present from the outset: 'Oh, out of this language that is every stone, enfleshed and raising flesh up over itself, out of this violent and gently obscure language that is the root, endowed with flesh and pushing flesh underneath itself, here is the rough draft';²² and later 'Every word is an earth/Whose subsoil

²⁰ W. J. T. Mitchell 'Introduction' pp. 1-5 in *Landscape and Power*, edited by W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994) p. 1.

²¹ Glissant (2005) p. 35.

²² Glissant (2005) p. 33.

must be searched/Where a movable space is kept/Burning, for what the tree says'.²³

The reference in this extract to 'subsoil' echoes Glissant's claim in *Caribbean Discourse* that '[o]ur landscape is its own monument: its meaning can only be traced on the underside. It is all history'.²⁴ It is in the landscape, as well as in representations of the landscape, that the poet finds historical perspective. Yet, in both examples, the meaning must be searched for. In the Caribbean, the particular experience of colonialism has created a history of absences: the virtual eradication of native Amerindians, the unaccounted victims of the Middle Passage. But, as in Glissant's poem, these absences are a paradoxical presence: 'Absent who are every presence'. The landscape in this case is not merely a text in which traces of history may be read, or in which the specific experiences of Caribbean peoples may be documented. Both these positions would implicate Glissant in the 'spokesperson' position. Rather, landscape 'is its own monument' to various histories and legacies, but one with which the poet imaginatively engages in the production of a poem.

This is a motif that recurs throughout his later poetry collections: *Black Salt* (1960), for example, opens with the following evocation:

To the sea

For the salt it signifies.

*Splendour and bitterness yet again. Affliction of lights upon the expanse.
Profusion. Theme, pure idea, bound with sea foam, with salts. Monotony:
tireless clamour ruptured by the cry.*

*There is – on the delta – a river where the word accumulates, the poem –
and where salt is purified.*²⁵

²³ Glissant (2005) p. 40.

²⁴ Glissant (1999b) p. 11.

²⁵ Glissant (2005) p. 101. Emphasis in the original. *Black Salt* was originally published in French as *Le Sel noir*. Meredith M. Gadsby's recent study, *Sucking Salt* (2006), draws attention to the metaphoric application of salt in Glissant's poetry, and as symbol for survival throughout Caribbean literature, for example, in the works of Fred D'Aguiar, Toni Cade Bambara, and Nalo Hopkinson. As she writes, *Black Salt* 'focuses on the salt of history, memory [...] and the sea. This sea is seasoned and salted with the bodies and histories of those buried in it' (Meredith M. Gadsby *Sucking Salt*:

In this poem salt occupies a hybrid location: not quite sea, not quite land, but something which signifies the continual opposition and meeting of the two. For Glissant, the ocean represents the ever-impinging demand of history: in the case of the Caribbean, it is the witness to the slave trade and displacement of peoples. As he writes in *The Restless Earth*: ‘The ancestor speaks, it is the ocean, it is a race that washed the continents with its veil of suffering’.²⁶ The importance of sea imagery to the Caribbean identity is captured in Glissant’s second novel, *The Fourth Century* (1964), wherein the histories of the Longué and Béluse families are traced back to the genesis of these lineages: the moment when the two ancestors step off the slave ship onto the island. In this novel, the ocean is the ambivalent source to which all genealogies lead.²⁷ To be sure, this represents a painful reminder of the atrocities and losses suffered during the Middle Passage, but for Glissant an authentic consciousness can only come with ‘the dawn of a true and painful knowing’.²⁸ As a result, Glissant’s poetry, like Césaire’s *Notebook*, is filled with painful imagery – ‘Oh all this place is dead’;²⁹ or again: ‘as far as suffering is concerned it belongs to all: everyone has its vigorous sand between their teeth’.³⁰ History and sea are combined to emphasise that just as the archipelago and coastlands have been shaped

Caribbean Women Writers, Migration, and Survival [Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2006] p. 38). In addition, Diva Barbaro Damato has identified ‘accumulation’ as a central motif of Glissant’s landscape aesthetics, signifying the ‘appropriation of reality by means of repetition, of probing [...]. When the relationship between people and its surroundings is obliterated by the intervention of another culture [...], this people’s process of conquest of its own space must necessarily occur by means of accumulation’ (Diva Barbaro Damato “The Poetics of the Dispossessed” pp. 606-608 in *World Literature Today* Vol. 63, No. 4, 1989 p. 607).

²⁶ Glissant (2001) p. 50.

²⁷ *The Fourth Century* is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four of this thesis, pp. 314-322.

²⁸ Édouard Glissant *The Ripening*, translated by Michael Dash (London and Kingston: Heinemann, 1985) p. 33.

²⁹ Glissant (2005) p. 44. Extract taken from *A Field of Islands*.

³⁰ Glissant (2005) p. 50. Extract taken from *The Restless Earth*.

by the force of the sea, so too has the Caribbean experience been shaped by history. Yet, it is out of this painful presence of history, the sea, that Glissant's poetry is formed. To return to the imagery of *Black Salt*, – 'a river where the word accumulates, the poem'³¹ – the salt deposited on the shore, accumulating at the delta, becomes the very stuff and substance of the poem. Once again, the language of poetry is being linked back to the landscape, waiting, to return to the earlier passage, for its 'subsoil' to be 'searched'. However, the excavation of the word/landscape in this case does not involve tracing it back to some unique origin or idea: the Longué and Béluse lineage in *The Fourth Century*, cannot be traced back to Africa. Rather, history is fragmented, unqualified, and illegitimate. As suggested in Chapter One of this thesis, for Glissant, history cannot be conceived of in terms of a single, uninterrupted linear narrative.³²

Glissant would not fully articulate his theory of creolization until *The Poetics of Relation*, and in *Caribbean Discourse* it remains interchangeable with *métissage*, or 'cross-cultural' mixing: as Glissant writes in his earlier work 'the poetics of creolization is the same as a cross-cultural poetics: not linear and not prophetic: but woven from enduring patience and irreducible accretions'.³³ Though this earlier term lacks the complexity of the form of creolization promoted in *The Poetics of Relation*, 'subterranean convergence' remains at the heart of Glissant's theory. 'Submarine roots', Glissant's world-vision of cross-cultural relationships is an

³¹ Glissant (2005) p. 101.

³² As Glissant writes in *Caribbean Discourse*: 'Caribbean history (of the converging histories of our people) relieves us of the linear, hierarchical vision of a single History that would run its unique course. It is not this History that has roared at the edges of the Caribbean, but actually a question of the subterranean convergence of our histories' (Glissant [1999b] p. 66). In Chapter Three of this thesis, Glissant's challenge to linearity is explored in more depth, though his concept of a digenesis (see pp. 212-216).

³³ Glissant (1999b) p. 142.

intermingling of experiences, a fluid and contingent identity that is reflected in the opaque, indeterminate nature of the seascapes and landscape that he depicts.³⁴ His is a universal vision, though not an absolute one, that is located in the Caribbean context from which Glissant writes, evoking '*another reality*', a cross-cultural, hybrid identity in which 'each element is enriched'.³⁵ This other reality is not the sum of its parts, rather it is dependent upon a relation with what Derek Attridge would term 'otherness'. Elaborating this premise, this chapter will argue that the creolization that Glissant envisions in his later work is implicated in the continual generation of original, singular forms, and that this is achieved through the ceaseless relation between the known world and the unknown other. However, by flagging location and singularity as basic features of creolization, I point towards Peter Hallward's recent commentary on Glissant and the status of postcolonial studies.

Peter Hallward and the Challenge to Postcolonial Theory.

Creolization's place within the postcolonial Caribbean canon has been characterised in this thesis as inherently bound to the specific realities of life in the region. For writers faced with European representations of the Caribbean as unspoilt paradise, or *négritude*'s celebration of Africa as pretemporal origin, the relationship between self and environment, both depicted according to 'true and painful' reality, lies at the heart of recent challenges to such idealism.³⁶ In Glissant's poetry, the landscape is presented as the text of historical memory from which the specific realities of

³⁴ Glissant (1999b) p. 67. Glissant's use of Brathwaite's 'submarine roots' is discussed on p. 61 of this thesis.

³⁵ Glissant (1999b) p. 8.

³⁶ Glissant (1985) p. 33. Writers such as Glissant, Gisèle Pineau, and Shani Mootoo are discussed in Chapter One of this thesis in light of this argument.

existence are drawn. However, the association between creolization and location that has been premised in this thesis is challenged by Peter Hallward's contention that this is characteristic of Glissant's early writings only, and that later stages of his work are marked by an abandonment of the nation 'in favour of a kind of self-asserting, self-constituting singular immediacy on the Deleuzian or Spinozist model'.³⁷ What Hallward is attempting in his study is a radical redefinition of the way in which both Glissant and creolization have previously been read. If his account is accepted, then Glissant's *oeuvre* can be characterised as moving toward a singular reality that is completely detached from the specificities and demands of landscape or nation: relation and creolization as fundamentally non-relational and deterritorializing.³⁸ As such, Hallward's argument contests the way in which Glissant and creolization have been presented in this thesis, and although I will redress Hallward's reading of creolization as a decontextualising force, the debate will help further refine the term. In particular, his study will draw attention to the notion of singularity as the defining aspect of postcolonial relation.

Hallward's central thesis in *Absolutely Postcolonial* – that 'postcolonial' designates a de-specifying tendency – is not a criticism levelled solely at Glissant, but rather Hallward attempts to rewrite the terms of debate in postcolonial studies at large. It is in this area that Hallward elaborates his distinction between the singular

³⁷ Peter Hallward *Absolutely Postcolonial: Writing Between the Singular and the Specific* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2001) p. 67

³⁸ Dorris Garraway raises a similar concern when she argues that 'the generalized espousal of creolization theory has arguably obscured the local specificity of the concept' (Dorris Garraway *The Libertine Colony: Creolization in the Early French Caribbean* [Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005] p. 17). However, against these readings of Glissant, H. Adlai Murdoch's '(Re)Figuring Colonialism: Narratological and Ideological Resistance' *Callaloo*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1992 pp. 2-11, stresses the specificity of Glissant's writing.

and specific; key terms, I will argue, for understanding creolization.³⁹ In particular, this debate originates in Hallward's refinement of the very concept of postcolonial as distinct from counter-colonial or anti-colonial: '[w]hereas both colonial and counter-colonial configurations operate in the medium of division and conflict, the postcolonial is generally associated with a more consensual, more harmonious, diaspora, cultural synthesis and mutations [...]. The postcolonial is an open-ended field of discursive practices characterised by boundary and border crossings'.⁴⁰ This agrees with Glissant's distinction between a counter-poetics that remains fixed in a position of antagonism, and a poetics of relation, or 'border crossings'. The counter-colonial movement is thus read as a reversal of the terms of colonialism and as such continues to function within those static, already prescribed categories of identity.⁴¹ The postcolonial, on the other hand, witnesses the dissolution of binaries and hierarchies, and shifts the terms of discourse away from the confrontation of centre and periphery. The challenge, however, Hallward notes, is not further to refine the

³⁹ The distinction between singular and specific that Hallward premises in *Absolutely Postcolonial*, is also employed in his study of the philosophy of Alain Badiou, *Badiou: A Subject to the Truth* (2003). Hallward finds in Badiou's ontology precisely the same movement towards the evacuation of relationality that he locates in postcolonialism and Glissant: 'Badiou everywhere affirms "the end to relations [*liens*], the absence to self of the unrelated"' (Peter Hallward *Badiou: a Subject to Truth* [Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003] p. xxxi). For discussions of Hallward's impact on postcolonial studies, see for example William Boelhower's review of *Absolutely Postcolonial*, which argues that Hallward provides a much need reassessment and clarification of the key terms of postcolonial studies, and as such makes this 'a major book' and 'will prove a watershed for future postcolonial debate' (William Boelhower 'Review' pp. 569-574 in *Textual Practice* Vol. 16 No. 2 2002 p. 574). A brief, but useful commentary on Hallward may also be found in Andy Stafford's article: 'Franz Fanon, Atlantic Theorist; or Decolonization and Nation State in Postcolonial Theory' in *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (London: Arnold, 2003) pp. 166- 177. Another brief summary of Hallward's influence with a particular focus on the writings of Homi Bhabha may be found in David Huddart *Homi K. Bhabha* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006) pp. 166-168.

⁴⁰ Hallward (2001) p. xiv.

⁴¹ Wole Soyinka offers further support for this distinction in his critique of *négritude*, which 'trapped itself in what was primarily a defensive role', that 'stayed within a pre-set system of Eurocentric intellectual analysis both of man and society and tried to re-define the Africa and his society in those externalised terms' (Wole Soyinka *Myth, Literature and the African World* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976] p. 129, p. 136).

terms of the postcolonial debate: 'rather than add my voice to the chorus calling for an ever more specific form of postcolonial theory, one ever more attuned to the particularity of discrete sequences, I will claim than the singular orientation of the postcolonial undermines its every aspiration to specificity in advance'.⁴² While Hallward's study does, in one sense, take stock of the postcolonial debate thus far, what his discussion in fact achieves is a rejection of the fundamental assumptions of the field. What he is suggesting here is that the postcolonial is irremediable: whereas the colonial and counter-colonial may indeed have been characterised by their over-specification of the subject, postcolonialism has progressed in precisely the opposite direction, the absolute limits of which are marked by the wholly non-relational and the singular:

[a]s in every singular configuration, a distinctly postcolonial procedure will operate without criteria external to its operation. And ultimately, it will act even in the absence of *others* as such. Singular configurations replace the interpretation or representation of reality with an immanent participation in its production or creation: in the end, at the limit of 'absolute postcoloniality', there will be nothing left, nothing outside itself, to which it could be specific.⁴³

⁴² Hallward (2001) p. xiv.

⁴³ Hallward (2001) p. xii. Emphasis in the original. This model of singularity is emphatically derived from Deleuze. As Spivak explains, 'Gilles Deleuze's notion of singularity is both complex and simple. In its simplest form, the singular is not the particular because it is an unrepeatable difference that is, on the other hand, repeated – not as an example of a universal but as an instance of a collection of repetitions. Singularity is life as pure immanence' (Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak 'Scattered Speculations of the Subaltern and the Popular' pp. 475-486 in *Postcolonial Studies* Vol.8 No.4 2005 p. 475). . For a more detailed account of Deleuze's philosophy, see Hallward's recent study *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* (2006). Although his focus in this work is no longer limited to the distinction between the singular and the specific, a brief overview of his introduction reveals a similar vocabulary to that employed in *Absolutely Postcolonial*. For Hallward, at the heart of Deleuze's ontology is creativity: '[c]reativity is what there is and it creates all that there can be. Individual facets of being are differentiated as so many distinct acts of creation' (Peter Hallward *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* [London and New York: Verso, 2006] p. 1); 'all existent things or processes exist in just one way, as so many distinct acts of creation or so many individual *creatings* [...] that these creations are themselves aspects of a limitless and consequently singular creative power' (p. 2. Emphasis in the original). Hallward finds in Deleuze's 'creativity' the singularizing, non-relational, de-specifying force (it 'lead[s] out of the world' [p. 3]) that he affirms in Glissant.

Detached from historical, cultural and political specificities, the ‘absolutely’ postcolonial becomes a dangerous prospect, promoting the same all encompassing, myopic world-view reminiscent of the colonising project. The solution to this, however, is not to make urgent the call ‘for an ever more specific form of postcolonial theory’, as Hallward contends, for ‘any viable theory of the specific (which is to say: any theory that allows for the *situated* articulation of genuinely universalisable principles) can only be developed in direct confrontation with the singular configurations active in its time’.⁴⁴ As a result, Hallward’s celebration of the specific is developed as a challenge to the most active contemporary singular configuration: the postcolonial.

Addressing the de-territorializing impact of the absolutely postcolonial, and articulating a theory that would surface again in his later study of the philosophy of Alain Badiou, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth* (2003), Hallward ultimately argues for the recognition that ‘any creative expression is irreducibly specific to (though not specified by) the situation of its articulation’.⁴⁵ The ‘creative expression’ Hallward here considers is understood through its specific relations with society, environment, and individuals. However, and this is the crucial qualifier, it is not specified by this relation. Cautious of the hierarchies of difference that played such a formative role in colonial discourse, Hallward stresses that the relation he envisions ‘is value

⁴⁴ Hallward (2001) p. xii. Emphasis in the original.

⁴⁵ Hallward (2001) p. 62. In *Badiou*, Hallward asks ‘[m]ight it be possible, in partial competition with Badiou’s conception of the generic, to develop a notion of the *specific* as an emphatically subjective orientation – but one that is precisely, specific to (rather than specified by) those objectifying conditions that enable it to exist’ (Hallward [2003] p. xxxv, also see pp. 271-291).

neutral'.⁴⁶ Though Hallward seems reluctant to name this enterprise, I want to suggest that his distinction, conversely, offers a more meaningful articulation of the postcolonial as opposed to the colonial or counter-colonial models. In this case, both colonial and counter-colonial identities and relations are entirely specified by the terms of colonial discourse. On the other hand, the postcolonial moves beyond these fixed positions, and while it always remains specific to the violence and legacies of colonialism, it is not specified by them; the terms of postcolonial discourse are not pre-established by or limited to the colonial contexts from which they emanate. This distinct function of context and culture, and the singularising effect of relation that feed Hallward's reading of Glissant, may be traced to his reading of Homi Bhabha's *Location of Culture* (1994). While for Hallward, Bhabha offers a preliminary example of the evacuation of difference towards a singular reality, the terms employed in *The Location of Culture*—hybridity, *différance*, and the Third Space—also provide the background to the distinct theory of creolization that this thesis pursues.

Difference Versus Diversity: Bhabha and the Politics of Cultural Hybridity.

Glissant's critique of French departmentalisation stems from the assimilationist motivations that lie behind the French model of the nation state. Where citizenship is defined, to employ Hallward's definition, as 'all of those who, whatever their cultural origin or "way of being", collectively *decide* to assert (or re-assert) the right of self-determination',⁴⁷ ethnic, cultural, and national difference falls away. This may

⁴⁶ Hallward (2001) p. 333.

⁴⁷ Hallward (2001) p. 127. Emphasis in the original.

indeed seem like an ideal state, however, it also leads to the kind of diversion that Glissant so thoroughly criticises: Martinicans look to Paris not Fort-de-France for solutions because they are French citizens, not Martinican or Caribbean. Such blindness to the differences between metropolis and colony, has not only helped to create the 'happy zombie' of Martinique,⁴⁸ but has contributed to what many critics are beginning to address as the failure of Francophone studies to contribute to the postcolonial debate.⁴⁹ As Charles Forsdick and David Murphy argue:

[o]ne cannot underestimate the role of Republican ideology in shaping French resistance to postcolonialism. Since the French Revolution, French national identity has rested on the abstract notion of citizenship, which claims to transcend issues of race, gender, and class, in order to create a society of equal citizens. Many French intellectuals are deeply distrustful of any cultural development that appears to threaten the cherished 'universal' values of the Republic.⁵⁰

The privileging of a 'universal' notion of citizenship as a primary point of identification inhibits discussions of complex identity politics. Republican ideology, therefore, has led to the de-specification of critical thought, exactly the problem Hallward identified at the heart of postcolonialism.⁵¹ However, if the centrifugal

⁴⁸ Glissant (1999b) p. 59.

⁴⁹ Forsdick and Murphy's *Francophone Postcolonial Studies* (2003) and Murdoch and Donadey's *Postcolonial Theory and Francophone Literary Studies* (2005) both make important contributions to this area.

⁵⁰ Charles Forsdick and David Murphy 'Introduction: the Case for Francophone Postcolonial Studies' pp. 1-16 in *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (London: Arnold, 2003) p. 9.

⁵¹ Alejo Carpentier's novel, *Explosions in a Cathedral* (1962), exposes the influence of French Republican and Revolutionary ideology in the Caribbean. By fictionalising the historical figure of Victor Hugues (1761-1826), a French merchant who established himself in Saint-Dominguez and later, after the Revolution, was appointed as civil commissioner to Guadeloupe, Carpentier's novel highlights the contradictions between the Revolutionary commitment to a universal brotherhood and the emancipation of slaves, and the authoritarian rule by guillotine – Carpentier's novel in fact opens with the shipping of the first guillotine to the Caribbean. Yet, while the failure of Revolutionary ideology is evident in the actions of the European characters, Carpentier also points towards its significant influence on the Haitian Revolution, a subject explored in more detail in his earlier novel, *The Kingdom of this World* (1949). For further discussion of the relationship between the French and

force of the French model of citizenship may be criticised for its failure to recognise racial or cultural distinctions, Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* presents a very different sort of challenge to the contemporary nation state.

Where Hallward grounds his critique in a distinctly French conception of statehood, Bhabha utilizes a more recognisably British model of the citizenship: liberal multiculturalism. Though Bhabha has become instantly recognisable by the terms hybridity, mimicry, and the stereotype, elaborated in *The Location of Culture*, his concern with the various misrepresentations and distortions of colonial identity stem from the much more immediate issue of difference and diversity in contemporary nation-states. In his view, liberal multiculturalism has effected, at least in the West, the political valorisation of cultural diversity within the modern state. Yet this is a problem for Bhabha as cultural diversity implies that cultures are composed of monolithic, static, pre-given contents; as he puts it, '[c]ultural diversity is also the representation of a radical rhetoric of the separation of totalized cultures that live unsullied by the intertextuality of their historical locations, safe in the utopianism of a mythic memory of a unique collective identity'.⁵² Here diversity forgoes the possibility of hybridity: multiculturalism encourages each 'part' to view itself as isolated and impervious to the influence of the other elements that together form the political state. Therefore, before one can begin to explore hybridity as a key function of our postcolonial world, diversity must be replaced with a model that

Haitian Revolutions see: Rodger Little 'Seeds of Postcolonialism: Black Slavery and Cultural Difference' in *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (London: Arnold, 2003) pp. 17-26; Laurent Dubois 'In Search of the Haitian Revolution' in *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (London: Arnold, 2003) pp. 27-34.

⁵² Homi K. Bhabha *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) p. 34.

opens culture up to the intermixing and intertextuality so closely associated with hybridity and creolization. Bhabha does this by juxtaposing diversity with difference: '[c]ultural diversity is an epistemological object – culture as an object of empirical knowledge – whereas cultural difference is the process of the *enunciation* of culture as “knowledgeable”, authoritative, adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification’.⁵³ The performative, or enunciatory, aspect of the production of culture is essential to Bhabha’s model, for ‘cultural difference is a process of signification through which statements *of* culture or *on* culture differentiate, discriminate and authorize the production of fields of force, reference, applicability and capacity’.⁵⁴ In contrast to the model of the French citizen-state, whereby unity is premised on a single term of identification, this shift to conceiving of culture as a process performed or spoken, destabilises the coherence of the state and negates the very possibility of a single originary or unitary culture, and ‘splits’⁵⁵ the authority of cultural identification: ‘[t]he reason a cultural text or system of meaning cannot be sufficiently unto itself is that the act of cultural enunciation – the *place of utterance* – is crossed by the *différance* of writing’.⁵⁶ The Derridean concept of *différance* allows Bhabha to argue that the traditions and texts of a given culture must be continually repeated and translated through performance, a claim that is particularly relevant to my discussion of Attridge later in this chapter. However, Bhabha illustrates that in the process of translation, the unitary authority of the originary culture fragments as

⁵³ Bhabha (1994) p. 34. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁴ Bhabha (1994) p. 34. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁵ Bhabha (1994) p. 35.

⁵⁶ Bhabha (1994) p. 36. Emphasis in the original.

different contexts and perspectives inflect the enunciatory process. As Bhabha explains,

[t]he pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and You designated in the statement. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot 'in itself' be conscious. What this unconscious relation introduces is an ambivalence in the act of interpretation. The pronominal I of the proposition [...] remains a spatial relation within the schemata of strategies of discourse. The meaning of the utterance is quite literally neither the one nor the other.⁵⁷

This is to say, then, that the meaning is hybrid. *Différance*, the politics of translation that affects the enunciative process of culture, which is itself located in the concept of cultural difference as a signifying process, produces hybridised cultural identities. However, what Bhabha describes here is not simply the synthesis of two parts, rather, the utterance is altered by its passage through the Third Space and emerges as 'neither the one nor the other'. Elsewhere, Bhabha has clarified his position, revealing that, like creolization,

the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are *inadequately understood through received wisdom*.⁵⁸

In this way, as I will later argue, just as creolization effects that which exceeds current limitations of known discourse, so too hybridity produces paradigms and structures that are 'inadequately understood' by current knowledge. Moreover,

⁵⁷ Bhabha (1994) p. 36.

⁵⁸ Homi Bhabha 'Interview With Homi Bhabha: The Third Space', interviewed by Jonathan Rutherford pp. 207-221 in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990) p. 211. My emphasis.

Glissant's assertion that creolization 'is only exemplified by its processes and certainly not its "contents"',⁵⁹ corresponds to Bhabha's conviction that hybridity is not a third state (this would be the 'hybrid', equivalent to the 'creolized'), but a process/space. The Third Space of hybridity, then, might itself, as Bhabha hints, be properly termed a passage: designating both a conceptual space (passage-way), and a passing-through that effects a transformation (rite-of-passage). Moreover, that this passage functions at an unconscious level, indicates a form of relation that foregrounds the dialogue between self and other, on which, as I will later highlight, Attridge bases his theory of literary production.⁶⁰

If the play of *différance* effects an ambivalence that challenges colonial authority, for Hallward, Bhabha's privileging of the term undermines his celebration of cultural difference, claiming that ultimately *différance* becomes an alternative to specific differences between individuals. In this way, Bhabha's presentation of hybridity tends towards 'an essentially singular category of difference'.⁶¹ Hybridity, in this case, is not produced through the interaction of two individuals, or cultures differentiated from one another. Rather culture is itself produced through various enunciatory performances that form biases: culture as the autogenic effect of *différance*. As a result specific differences between individuals or cultures are only a consequence of these instances of performance, and hybridity the product of the play of *différance* according to which these enunciations function: or, as Hallward

⁵⁹ Glissant (1997) p. 89.

⁶⁰ Charles Stewart similarly suggest a correlation between Bhabha's hybridity and creolization on the grounds of its production of an unexpected, new existent though passage through the Third Space (Charles Stewart 'Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory' pp. 1-25 in *Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory*, edited by Charles Stewart [Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, 2007] p. 19).

⁶¹ Hallward (2001) p. 24.

puts it, '[s]pecific individuals are here always derivative, a result'.⁶² Furthermore, since the individual is defined or differentiated from other individuals, on the basis of enunciation and the function of *différance* that governs that act, Hallward suggests that 'it is difficult to see how this individuation does anything more than equate any particular individual with an instance of enunciation itself. More than any other writer in the field, Bhabha seems to have trouble remembering Brathwaite's simple point – that "it is not language but people who make revolutions"'.⁶³ Even if every enunciation may be seen as specific to its site of articulation, it remains an isolated and individual moment that contains no element above or beyond its articulation. Addressing the element of isolation in his theory, Bhabha reveals that it is his hope that 'the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an *international* culture based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*'.⁶⁴ If this is to become a coherent model, and the location of any given postcolonial culture is to be anything more substantial than the sum of endless enunciatory moments, a more detailed account of international/intercultural connections is needed: a framework that Glissant provides, I will suggest later in this chapter, with his concept of a whole-world of relations.

To examine more closely Hallward's criticism of Bhabha – that specific individuals or differences are merely the derivative result of enunciatory moments and *différance* – conversely, reveals a new direction. By Hallward's own account, a singular configuration cannot produce specific formations, but rather effects only

⁶² Hallward (2001) p. 24.

⁶³ Hallward (2001) p. 27.

⁶⁴ Bhabha (1994) p. 38. Emphasis in the original.

more singular configurations. However, if singular enunciations could be reconceptualised as effects grounded in specific contexts and in reference to specific differences between individuals, Hallward would find little to argue with. Of course, his refinement of the term 'singularity' makes this impossible. But Hallward's account of Bhabha has inadvertently suggested model of creolization: an effect produced not from the tension between conflicting differences (this would be a counter-poetics), but, as Bhabha suggested, in the play of *différance* wherein difference exists as unknowable or incommensurable process; creolization as an unconscious relation between two positions, coloured by the conditioning elements and contexts that characterise that passage. All that remains is a recasting of the term 'singular', and it is precisely to this end that Derek Attridge's *The Singularity of Literature* may be deployed.

Relocating the Singular.

Attridge's project in *The Singularity of Literature* is not an intended confrontation with Hallward. In fact, his refutation of Hallward's conception of the singular is reduced to a footnote. However, this footnote points towards a fundamental revision of the terms of the debate regarding the singular, as in it Attridge distances himself from Hallward's claim that singularity is an entity completely without relations outside of itself.⁶⁵ Instead, for Attridge, it is an essential element in the creation of literature: 'I see invention as inseparable from singularity and alterity; and I see this trinity as lying at the heart of Western art as a practice and as an institution': 'what I am trying to shed light on is not at bottom a matter of psychology, consciousness, or

⁶⁵ Derek Attridge *The Singularity of Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004) p. 155.

subjective experience, but of structural relations, or, better, shifts between different structural relations and possibilities and constraints they bring into being'.⁶⁶ Like Bhabha, whose theory of culture is based not on the conflict of two coherent entities, but the play and reverberations produced by enunciation, Attridge claims that original works of literature (original enunciations) are derived from shifting structural relations. Therefore, although Attridge's study does not engage directly with either Bhabha or Glissant, what his central thesis addresses is the way in which *différance* can effect entirely new meanings that are more than the sum of their parts. This is the crucial distinction that may be located in creolization theory: Glissant himself stresses, that hybridity or *métissage* becomes creolization when a 'new and original dimension' results.⁶⁷ Describing the shifts in structural relations that generate artistic production, Attridge writes:

[t]he creative writer registers, whether consciously or unconsciously, both the possibilities offered by the accepted forms and materials of the time, and their impossibilities, the exclusions and prohibitions that have sustained but also limited them. Out of the former emerge reworkings of existing modes, out of the latter emerges the otherness which makes these reworkings new works of literature.⁶⁸

Originality, in this case, does not mean that the object bears no relation to existing forms; neither is it the case that re-working existing models produces only a sum of its parts. Rather, Attridge suggests that something happens when existing forms are brought into relation with 'otherness', at which point the new work becomes

⁶⁶ Attridge (2004) p. 2; p. 18.

⁶⁷ Glissant writes that '[i]t is not merely an encounter, a shock (in Segalen's sense), a *métissage*, but a new and original dimension allowing each person to be there and elsewhere, rooted and open' (Édouard Glissant *Poetics of Relation* translated by Betsy Wing [Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1997] p.34).

⁶⁸ Attridge (2004) pp. 20-21.

singular because it exceeds the possibilities offered by current models. This, I suggest, is fundamental to understand Glissant's concept of creolization.

The terminology that Attridge employs in his study may be misleading when applied to postcolonial debates. The other is not the colonial other assumed by Edward Said's critique of Orientalism: it is not strictly speaking a subject in any sense of the word. Rather, it is that which exists outwith society's discourse; that which leaks through the gaps and fuels the creation of new works of literature:

[t]he otherness that is brought into being by an act of inventive writing therefore [...] is not just a matter of perceptible difference. It implies a wholly new existent that cannot be apprehended by the old modes of understanding, and could not have been predicted by means of them; its singularity, even if it is produced by nothing more than a slight recasting of the familiar and thus of the general, is irreducible.⁶⁹

Although he does not use the term itself, Attridge casts the creative writer as part of the process of creolization. Working with the varying discourses of culture to produce a text, translating in the broadest sense of the word, the writer must seek out 'gaps in the material, strains and tensions that suggest the pressure of the other'.⁷⁰ The other in this case is not another person, it is simply that which lies outside the current limits of understanding: a 'Third Space' of which one cannot be conscious of, to evoke Bhabha. As such it is impossible to define, to know, or to predict, for as soon as it is comprehended it ceases to be other. However, it has a key function in the production of literature. Where otherness is not sought, the subsequent text will be merely the sum of all its parts, repeating that which already exists. On the other hand, where the other is part of the project a new, singular formation results. This is

⁶⁹ Attridge (2004) p. 29. Also see Attridge's article: 'Innovation, Literature, Ethics: Relating to the Other' *PMLA* Vol 114 No. 1 Special Topic *Ethics and Literary Study* January 1999 pp. 20-31.

⁷⁰ Attridge (2004) p. 36.

a process that fulfils Glissant's claim that what marks creolization is not intermixing *per se*, but a relating of existing parts that creates a 'new and original dimension'.⁷¹ Creolization must effect newness, therefore what defines both creolization and new works of literature is their singularity.

For Bhabha, the Third Space of hybridity is both an unknown/unconscious function and a passage through which the utterance is subject to change. Similarly, for Attridge the other marks an incommensurable designation and a process that effects an entirely original form. Although Attridge claims the irreducible nature of the singular, his departure from Hallward is explicit: the other, in Attridge's account, is premised on a *relation*: '[t]o be "other" is necessarily to be "other than" or "other to" [...]. Moreover, it is only other in the set of circumstances within which a particular encounter takes place';⁷²

this complicates the account of singularity which I have just given. If the other is always and only other *to me* (and hence to my culture [...]), I am already in some kind of relation to it, and for two entities to exist in relation to one another is to share some general framework, however minimal [...]. Otherness, that is, is produced in an *active* or *event-like* relation – we might properly call it a *relating*: the other as 'other to' is always and constitutively in the process of turning from the unknown into the known, from the other into the same.⁷³

In complete contrast to Hallward's account, for Attridge singularity is both grounded in relation and the specific circumstances of its articulation. It is always constituted in the continual process of incorporating and relating, and similarly, although Attridge does not discuss Glissant, it is a fundamental characteristic of creolization and Glissant's 'poetics of relation'. By further contrast, whereas Hallward argues for

⁷¹ Glissant (1997) p. 34.

⁷² Attridge (2004) p. 29. Emphasis in the original.

⁷³ Attridge (2004) p. 29. Emphasis in the original.

the immutability of the singular, as the previous quote from Attridge suggests, the singularity he envisions is not fixed or static, but open to change. Otherness is in a constant relation, an unceasing process of creolization: as Attridge explains, it 'always offers the possibility of imitation, translation, parody, and forgery. The singular work is therefore not merely *available* for translation but is *constituted* in what may be thought of as an unending set of translations'.⁷⁴ The process described here may be characterised as unceasing relating because the other in constituting that which is always just outside of comprehension is continually subject to change as elements of it become known. The very moment that the other is recognised, the point at which 'its otherness is registered in the adjustments I have to make in order to acknowledge it',⁷⁵ it becomes incorporated into cultural discourse, thereby ceasing to be other.

In this paradigm the other is emphatically relational and mutable: '*[o]nly in relating to me is the other other*'.⁷⁶ As such singularity 'is generated not by a core of irreducible materiality or vein of sheer contingency', as Hallward's argument might suggest, 'but by a configuration of general properties that, in constituting the entity (as it exists in a particular time and place), go beyond the possibilities pre-programmed by a culture's norms'.⁷⁷ By this account, colonial and counter-colonial discourse might be understood as that which continues to be drawn from the known discourse of colonialism. This is why Glissant rejects counter-poetics: the terms of the discussion are already established, subject positions are fixed, and the results are,

⁷⁴ Attridge (2004) p. 73. Emphasis in the original.

⁷⁵ Attridge (2004) p. 30.

⁷⁶ Attridge (2004) p. 30. Emphasis in the original.

⁷⁷ Attridge (2004) p. 63.

therefore, predictable. The postcolonial, on the other hand, while it draws from or translates existing configurations, it is not limited (specified) by them: positions are not fixed, the results are unpredictable. Therefore the postcolonial is differentiated from counter-colonial by its singularity, an effect that is produced by the relation with otherness, or in other words, by creolization. Further, this process is not divorced from context: '[i]f I succeed in responding adequately to the otherness and singularity of the other, it is the other *in its relating to me* – always in a specific time and place –to which I am responding, in creatively changing myself and perhaps a little of the world as well'.⁷⁸ Another fundamental difference with Hallward, whose critique rested on the de-specifying nature of postcolonialism. As I argued earlier, what is needed to redress Hallward's redefinition of Glissant and postcoloniality is a theory of the singular in which context, whether that be social, historical, or environmental, remains part of the process. This is what, in my view, Attridge provides: singularity, always in relation and specific, but nevertheless unpredictable and new.

The location of creolization regains its importance in this model, but this relation is not of the defining sort Glissant suggests in *The Ripening*. Rather, landscape is a place wherein, to adapt Attridge once more, the poet might seek out 'gaps', 'strains and tensions that suggest the presence of the other'.⁷⁹ Returning to

⁷⁸ Attridge (2004) p. 33. Emphasis in the original.

⁷⁹ Attridge (2004) p. 36. Or, for Pierre Mabilie, the task is to search for 'gaps where we can penetrate the marvellous. There are a great many of them. In certain places, where the mystery is less carefully guarded, it seems accessible, either because nature lets us detect the elements' unrest there or because humankind has succeeded in taking control of the barrier: the inside of craters [...], mist covered countries' (Pierre Mabilie *The Mirror of the Marvellous: The Classic Surrealist Work on Myth* translated by Jody Gladding [Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions International, 1998] p. 9). Mabilie presents the marvellous as an absolute otherness, but one that may be accessed by through extraordinary sights, uncommon emotion (although the marvellous itself is a collective drive [pp. 31-

the poems I premised earlier, Glissant writes: ‘Absent, who are there, like a bay! You get up, and it is though one were seeing the sudden breath of air take shape’;⁸⁰ or again ‘For the salt it signifies’.⁸¹ The extract from the opening poem of *Black Salt*, the latter quotation here, does not need to explain what the salt signifies, it is the fact that it does signify that is important. The landscape is portrayed as a potential source for the production of ideas, of poetry. In the former quote, this signifying presence is depicted by a gap, an absence. It may be, as I argued earlier, the absence of the poet in the work, but importantly it is defined as an otherness that is marked by the natural world. The bay is both absent and there, air is both formlessness and a shape. These tensions that Glissant finds in the landscape signify places in which the other may be related to. Landscape itself is not the other, but it plays a role in defining the context that separates self from other – ‘it is other *in its relating to me* – always in a specific time and place’, as Attridge argued.⁸² In other words, because it marks the boundary at which relation with the other begins, it is suggestive of the contradictory presence of the other. A poetics of relation in which creolization as a singular process is effected, must then be located in a specific time and place not only to contextualise that relation, but to gain access to the otherness upon which singularity depends.

33]). Importantly, landscape and the natural world have a role to play in evoking the necessary feelings and ‘gaps’ that lead to the recognition of the marvellous: ‘there is a link between the marvellous and the natural elements, the marvellous and place’ (p. 22); ‘[t]he external world can play a variety of roles in producing that emotion. It can be primarily important when it’s a matter of unusual spectacles [...]. It is no longer we who are appealing to indifferent or hostile nature, but nature that speaks and provokes our unease. Even though the marvellous should not be confused with the exceptional, with natural wonders or supernatural phenomenon, *these are doors into the mystery*’ (p. 45. My emphasis). Presenting the landscape as access to the other, Mabile’s surrealist project resonates with Glissant’s later presentation of the poet’s experience of his surroundings. For details on Mabile’s link to French Caribbean writers, see pp. 66, 156-157, 188-189, 248 of this thesis.

⁸⁰ Glissant (2005) p. 34.

⁸¹ Glissant (2005) p. 101.

⁸² Attridge (2004) p. 33. Emphasis in the original.

Édouard Glissant: Poet of Relation.

Attridge's account of the singularity of literature as the production of entirely new paradigms, accords with Glissant's theory of creolization precisely because it envisions the generation of originality from the relation of already existing forms and an absolute otherness.⁸³ This is an important qualification of the term that clearly delineates it from Young's usage of hybridity: while Young argues that colonialism sparked anthropological debates that circled around the possibility of racial hybridity, Glissant is clear that '[w]hen we speak about creolization, we do not mean only "*métissage*", cross-breeding, because creolization adds something new to the components that participate in it'.⁸⁴ Creolization presents itself as something radically different from definitions of hybridity such as "of human parents of different races, half-breed".⁸⁵ Again, Glissant is unequivocal: it is

easy to see why creolization, and not *métissage* or crossbreeding, accurately describes the process originated here by the contacts and conflicts of cultures [...]. Creolization is unpredictable, whereas the immediate results of crossbreeding are more or less predictable. Furthermore, creolization opens on a radically new dimension of reality [...Creolization] does not produce direct synthesis, but "*résultantes*", results: *something else, another way*.⁸⁶

⁸³ This reference to 'absolute otherness' points towards the terminology employed by Derrida in his reading of Levinas: 'Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas'. In this essay, absolute otherness emerges as that which is totally other to the ego/consciousness: 'there is no way to conceptualize the encounter [with the absolutely-other]: it is made possible by the other, the unforeseeable "resistant to all categories" [...]. The infinitely-other cannot be bound by a concept, cannot be thought on the basis of a horizon; for a horizon is always a horizon of the same' (Jacques Derrida *Writing and Difference*, translated, with an introduction and additional notes by Alan Bass [London: Routledge, 1978] p. 94).

⁸⁴ Glissant (1995) p. 269.

⁸⁵ Robert Young *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) p. 6.

⁸⁶ Glissant (1995) p. 270. Emphasis in the original. See also Édouard Glissant 'Beyond Babel' pp. 561-563 in *World Literature Today* Vol. 63, No. 4, 1989 p. 561.

Attridge's account of singularity has allowed me to present creolization, as Glissant would have it, as a process of relating that creates a new, unpredictable entity.

However, as Glissant conceives it, this new state is not a finished formation that once realized remains static and unchanged ever after. What is at issue is not what is created by creolization *per se*, but, rather how it works. Creolization is not a state of being that can be achieved, but a continually shifting process that is experienced. As Glissant proclaims in *Poetics of Relation*:

Creolization, one of the ways of forming a complex mix – and not merely a linguistic result – is only exemplified by its processes and certainly not by the 'contents' on which they operate. This is where we depart from the concept of creoleness. Though this notion covers (no more and no less) that which accounts for creolization, it goes on to propose two further extensions. The first opens onto a broader ethnocultural realm, from the Antilles to the Indian Ocean. But variations of this sort do not seem to be determining factors, because the speed with which they change in Relation is so great. The second is an attempt to get at Being. But that would constitute a step backward in comparison with how creolizations can function. We propose neither humanity's Being nor its models. We are not prompted solely by the defining of our identities but by their relation to everything possible as well – the mutual mutations generated by this interplay of relations. Creolization brings into Relation but not to universalize; the principles of creoleness regress towards negritudes, ideas of Frenchness, of Latinness, all generalizing concepts – more or less innocently.⁸⁷

It is worth quoting at length this declaration of creolization, for it encapsulates Glissant's insistence on the fundamental process of relation, as well as distinguishing between his notion of creolization and creoleness (*créolité*) as celebrated by his former students Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant in their 1989 creole manifesto *Éloge de la Créolité (In Praise of Creoleness)*: '[n]either Europeans, nor Africans, nor Asians, we proclaim ourselves

⁸⁷ Glissant (1997) p. 89. Emphasis in the original.

Creoles'.⁸⁸ Glissant's prompt reply to those he helped to avoid 'the trap of Negritude' and define 'Caribbeanness',⁸⁹ which somewhat mimics their own declarative style, clearly objects to the authors' depiction of creole as an identity as equivalent to essentialised notions of being European, African, or Asian. As Chris Bongie writes, the *créolité* authors repeat 'a foundationalist politics of identity grounded in claims of authenticity [...which] clearly affirms a New World identity that is logically equivalent to the Old World identities that are being renounced'.⁹⁰ For Glissant, creolization is not a declaration of identity, the product of Old World meets New, but 'is only exemplified by its processes', 'the interplay of relations' between all possible identities.

This presents a further refinement of the term. Whereas what distinguishes creolization is the singularity of its effects, the term properly designates a process of relating in the same way that, for Bhabha, the Third Space of hybridity does not refer to a definite location, but a passage. In order to underline this distinction, Glissant posits the term 'relation' as the functioning of creolization: '*creolization brings into*

⁸⁸ Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant *Éloge de la créolité (In Praise of Creoleness)* translated by M. B. Taleb-Khyar (Gallimard, 1993) p. 75. The proclamational, even revolutionary, style of the opening line of *Éloge* is reinforced by its striking similarity to an address given by the South American general, 'El Libertador', Simon Bolivar (1783-1830), to the Congress at Angostura in 1819: '[w]e are not Europeans [...] we are not Indians; we are but a mixed species of aborigines and Spaniards. Americans by birth and Europeans by law, we find ourselves in a dual conflict' (Bolivar cited in Stephan Palmié 'The "C-Word" Again: From Colonial to Postcolonial Semantics' pp. 178-200 in *Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory*, edited by Charles Stewart [Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, 2007] p. 70: Chris Bongie, similarly notes the closeness of these two quotations [Chris Bongie *Islands and Exiles: The Creole Identities of Post/Colonial Literature* (California: Stanford University Press, 1998) p. 444]). Palmié cites Bolivar as providing one of the first, clear signs of the emergence of a notion of 'creole' founded on heterogeneity and hybridity ([2007] p. 70). However, it is Bolivar's celebration of a distinct, definable, and independent creole identity that is carried through by the authors of *Éloge*.

⁸⁹ Bernabé *et al* (1993) p. 83.

⁹⁰ Bongie (1998) p. 64. For further discussion of the problematic ideology of the *créolité* movement see Maeve McCusker "'This Creole Culture, Miraculously Forged": The Contradictions of "Créolité" in *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (London: Arnold, 2003) p. 112-121.

relation'. Elaborating this concept, Celia Britton explains that '[t]o exist "in relation" is to be an element of an ever-changing and ever-diversifying process and to be nothing over and above this: in other words, to lack any permanent, singular, autonomously constituted essence'.⁹¹ This, however, sounds like Bhabha's individual derived from the performance of culture. Despite the fact that Hallward sets his reading of Glissant apart from critics such as Britton,⁹² her description of relation comes close to Hallward's own terms: to exist in relation is to exist according to the logic of *différance*. Moreover, the process that Britton envisions is, at heart, de-contextualising: the subject that is in the process of relation is nothing other than this process, the subject is nothing other than pure *différance*. Margaret Atwood succinctly articulates the problem with the latter position: one 'may become free floating, a citizen of the world [...], but only at the cost of arms, legs, or heart'.⁹³ Yet just because Glissant asserts a non-essentialized model of identity, this does not necessarily reduce the individual to an effect of relation. Rather, what Glissant argues creolization is, is a process that produces a 'complex mix' that is 'not merely a linguistic result', in other words it is not merely an enunciation or effect of *différance*. Furthermore, when Glissant claims that '[w]e are not prompted solely by the defining of our identities but by their relation', this does not imply that identities cannot be defined, nor that they are constituted only by relation. Rather, Glissant is concerned to look at the way in which relation functions and its impact on

⁹¹ Celia M. Britton *Édouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory: Strategies of Language and Resistance* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999) p. 14.

⁹² Hallward (2001) pp. 66-71.

⁹³ Margaret Atwood cited by Silvio Torres-Saillant *An Intellectual History of the Caribbean* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006) p. 4.

identities. Relation, as I have already argued through Attridge, is always a relating to: context (the arms, legs, and heart) is important.

Britton is not attempting to argue against creolization, as Hallward does, and her closeness with the reading that this thesis has presented, will become clearer in my discussion, for example, of Glissant's concept of opacity. However, her comment on relation is problematic, and does threaten to contradict her assertion that relation is, above all, 'a relation of equality', which is to say a relation of differences without hierarchy.⁹⁴ In this latter example, relation retains a sense of the specific differences between individuals; in the former, all that constitutes individuals is the process of relating, therefore difference is merely a (non-specific) difference of degrees of relation. What Britton bases her former reading of relation on, I would argue, is the concept of totality that Glissant discusses alongside relation. For by acknowledging the totality of relation, it would seem that the next logical step to argue that totality is 'nothing over and above' relation. This is the connection that Hallward makes in order to claim that Glissant offers a theory of relation 'defined primarily by its transcendence of relations with or between specific individuals'.⁹⁵

The closeness of the two concepts in question (relation and totality) is developed in Glissant's *Poetics of Relation*. Relation is the privileged term, even above the associated notion of totality: '[t]he difference between relation and totality lies in the fact that relation is active within itself, whereas totality, already in its very concept, is in danger of immobility. Relation is open totality; totality would be

⁹⁴ Britton (1999) p. 11.

⁹⁵ Hallward (2001) p. 67.

relation at rest'.⁹⁶ For Glissant, being at rest denotes stasis, that an object or subject is now complete. Yet wholeness cannot be realized because, to frame this within Attridge's model, if it were this would mean that there was no otherness lying outside comprehension, it would already be assimilated. Wholeness is a final state, the end of creolization. Thus wholeness is not what Glissant has in mind when he refers to totality, nor is his planetary vision a route to uniformity.⁹⁷ He does acknowledge, however, that his concept is in risk of immobility, and the same might be said of creolization. They both suggest a logic of progression, that there is some end point at which the perfect creolized state will exist, encompassing all the relations that exist within the totality. However, this is why context is vital. Otherness, as Attridge illustrated, is contingent to time and place. In the same way, relation is conditional to the specific context of that relating. Since these spatial and temporal contexts are themselves always changing, creolization can never be finished and otherness will always 'exist' in some form.⁹⁸

Nick Nesbitt's analysis of Glissantian ontology further confirms the centrality of relation to his thought by reading Glissant's key terms – relation, opacity, totality – as a further refinement of a 'two-hundred-year-old dispute' that he traces back to

⁹⁶ Glissant (1997) p. 171.

⁹⁷ Walter D. Mignolo posits a similar distinction when he argues that Glissant distinguishes between worldness (a global scale of relating identities) and globalization (the erasure of specificity). See Walter D. Mignolo *Local Histories/ Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000) pp. 40-41 and p. 77.

⁹⁸ Wilson Harris, as I shall argue in Chapter Three, makes a similar point when he envisions the model of continual creolization inherent in alchemy: 'the revisionary cycle which Jung identifies with ancient alchemy [...]. The nigredo is the unknown land; the albedo is the dawning light; and the cauda pavonis are the colours of the peacock. But then the colours of the peacock go back to the nigredo and it becomes a different place' (Harris cited by Alan Riach 'Interview with Wilson Harris, 1990' pp. 33-66 in Alan Riach and Mark Williams (1992) *The Radical Imagination: Lectures and Talks by Wilson Harris* (Liège, Belgium: L3 – Liège Language and Literature) p. 62). See pp. 220-221 of this thesis.

Hegel and Kant.⁹⁹ In his reading of Glissant's term 'relation, Nesbitt finds that "relation" expresses the differentiated totality in which objects [...] take their place, becoming comprehensible, the "*tout-monde*", where objects develop their determination in relation one to another'.¹⁰⁰ In other words, relation operates according to the logic of a Hegelian dialectic in which each object is delineated according to a negative differentiation from other objects within the totality. The crux of this debate, Nesbitt argues, lies in the 'epistemological status or "knowability" of the Other'.¹⁰¹ Whereas Kant places a limit on access to the other, drawing a clear distinction between objects as the products of human reason and 'things-in-themselves' – the unknowable, that which lies beyond the limits of 'the realm of appearance' –, Hegel's attempt to theorise a dialectical movement that will resolve itself in the realisation of an absolute whole equivalent to his concept of the divine, disputes this logic.¹⁰² Hegel's critique of Kant reveals a contradiction in the status of the 'thing-in-itself': the very act of recognising it as unknowable, as a limit, is to place it within a framework in which it is necessarily no longer completely other. As Nesbitt comments:

Hegel has argued, any posited, differentiated entity exists only through its negation of its other (so that like salt, which exists only as the 'negation' of pepper, the world of absolute reason is conceivable only in its opposition to another (noumenal) realm it does not encompass). On the other hand, the noumenal as a realm beyond representation cannot exist, because even to state that it *is* not, that it *is* only a limit, is always already to posit it as a representation, as a determined entity.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Nick Nesbitt *Voicing Memory: History and Subjectivity in French Caribbean Literature* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003) p. 43.

¹⁰⁰ Nesbitt (2003) p. 42.

¹⁰¹ Nesbitt (2003) p. 42.

¹⁰² Nesbitt (2003) pp. 42-44. For a good overview of Hegel's ontology see Frederick Beiser *Hegel* (London and New York, 2005), especially pp. 142-189 on dialectical movement.

¹⁰³ Nesbitt (2003) p. 43.

According to the logic of dialectical negation, the field of relation that Nesbitt identifies in Glissant is a determining of qualities of the object through its difference from other objects in the totality. However, as the former extract suggests, a contradiction emerges in the logic of the noumenal realm: it both exists as the necessary negation of 'the world of absolute reason' and, as the same time, it cannot be known to exist.

A similar paradox is identified by Attridge, whose opposition of known and other, in this respect, bears a resemblance to the Hegelian negative dialectic. For Attridge the designation 'the other' is a delicate point of reference: '[i]f the other is always and only other *to me* [...], I am already in some kind of relation to it, and for two entities to exist in relation to one another is to share some general framework'.¹⁰⁴ The very fact of a common 'framework', means that the other is no longer properly other, as Derrida explains: 'there is no way to conceptualize the encounter' with the absolutely-other, it 'cannot be bound by a concept, cannot be thought on the basis of a horizon; for a horizon is always a horizon of the same'.¹⁰⁵ For Hegel, the impossibility of a separation of the infinite and the finite, or divine and the world, leads him to conclude, as Frederick Beiser points out, that '[t]he true infinite must therefore include the finite, so that the divine encompasses the entire universe'.¹⁰⁶ However, this model results in the singular, immanent reality that Hallward has so thoroughly criticises.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, in Attridge's schemata,

¹⁰⁴ Attridge (2004) p. 29. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁰⁵ Derrida (1978) p. 94.

¹⁰⁶ Beiser (2005) pp. 143-143.

¹⁰⁷ Indeed, Hallward draws this comparison between Glissant and Hegel (see Hallward [2001] pp. 77-79).

the other is not absolute (total, complete in itself), although it is absolutely-other-to. The permeability of the other is the foundation for its relationality: it is always a threshold, a passage (to recall Bhabha's description of the Third Space of hybridity), in which the other or unknown becomes incorporated into the known. Rather than viewing this as a contradiction – the other cannot be both other and recognised as such – Attridge casts otherness as unfinished, mutable, and relational.

Glissant, similarly, refuses to cast otherness as absolute, just as he rejects that totality signifies a complete, static wholeness. To this end, Nesbitt notes, 'opacity' becomes a crucial concept, and this chapter will proceed to incorporate opacity into the model of creolizing relations that I have developed.¹⁰⁸ However, to return briefly to the issue of relation as dialectical negation, flagging Hegel's dialectic as the logic of relation, in the first instance, appears to place Glissant's ontology within a framework of binary relations. However, while Nesbitt argues that relation designates a 'becoming comprehensible' within the totality through a process of negative differentiation, this does not necessarily imply binary oppositions. As Nesbitt explains: 'Hegel's vision of a contradictory and differentiated dialectical totality thus forms an infinitely extensive network of relationships across both time and space'.¹⁰⁹ The object becomes comprehensible not only through a single, binary negation/relation, but 'it is constituted as a *multiplicity* of differentiations'.¹¹⁰ This distinction points towards the scale of relation that Glissant envisions when he refers to totality, which should not be misunderstood as a move towards universality. Rather, Glissant emphasises the unfinished nature of totality by drawing the focus

¹⁰⁸ Nesbitt (2003) pp. 42-45; see pp. 174-185 of this thesis.

¹⁰⁹ Nesbitt (2003) p. 176.

¹¹⁰ Nesbitt (2003) p. 176. Emphasis in the original.

away from the end result: '[i]n Relation the whole is not the finality of its parts'.¹¹¹ Totality is not completion, rather it is a state of relation that is 'open', unlimited in its scope. Therefore, relation is a refinement of the term totality that more aptly serves Glissant's purposes. Just as creolization replaces the limited concept of *métissage*, relation amplifies totality: '[l]et us say this again, opaquely: the idea of totality alone is an obstacle to totality'.¹¹² This is not necessarily a move away from Hallward's critique of totality as de-specifying in agreement with Britton's characterisation of relation as an unrestricted, non-hierarchical relating of individuals. Rather, I am suggesting that what Glissant terms relation and what he terms totality are fundamentally the same, but that relation better serves Glissant's purpose: totality signifies something complete, an end result; relation contains within it the scope of totality, but also an infinite openness and unending differentiation.

Indicative of the way in which totality is envisioned as an all-encompassing state of relation, Glissant employs three phrases – *la totalité-monde*, *les échos-monde*, *le chaos-monde* – that are linked to the attempt here to describe the 'place' of the individual in totality. Allowing these terms to function as neologisms, Betsy Wing explains that they may be understood as 'identities of the world. The world is totality, echoes, and chaos, all at once, depending on our many ways of sensing and addressing it'.¹¹³ Glissant asserts that philosophical attempts to comprehend the world have detected the contradictory co-existence of order and chaos, 'that excessiveness of order and measured disorder exist as well'.¹¹⁴ Stability within this

¹¹¹ Glissant (1997) p. 192.

¹¹² Glissant (1997) p. 192.

¹¹³ Glissant (1997) pp. 216-217. Translator's note.

¹¹⁴ Glissant (1997) p. 92.

conception of reality cannot be achieved by identifying and fixing any component, but through an appreciation of the patterns of interdependence and relation that 'piece together the interactive totality. These unities are not models [fixed and essentialised entities] but revealing *échos-monde*'.¹¹⁵ At this point Glissant is acknowledging the need to have 'arms, legs, and a heart': within the play of relation it is necessary in order to express an opinion, to take a position, to 'construct unities'.¹¹⁶ However, these are not absolute and final, but unfinished, partial, and subject to mutations through continued relation. Unities that conform to the latter model are designated *échos-monde* for that term encapsulates both the all-encompassing state of relation and the fragility of these positions. Above all they are reactions to the specific contexts and realities that individuals and communities face, but they are unities because they signify the way in which those situations may be expressed in relation to all other elements of the totality. This is why Glissant argues that every individual makes a 'sort of music and each community as well'; that '[t]hought makes music'.¹¹⁷ Music, in this case, is a harmonising of *échos-monde*, a sense of the pattern that relation forms as well as the ability to sense when these movements are in tune with one another.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Glissant (1997) p. 93.

¹¹⁶ Glissant (1997) p. 93.

¹¹⁷ Glissant (1997) pp. 93-94..

¹¹⁸ This reference to music suggests a strong link to the writings of Wilson Harris, which I discuss in Chapter Three. As with Harris, the music Glissant refers to is not human music, but a harmony of relations within the totality, the example for which Harris finds in the Cairb bone-flute. See, Wilson Harris 'The Schizophrenic Sea', pp. 15-26 *The Womb of Space: The Cross-Cultural Imagination* (Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1983a), pp. 24-26, and 'New Preface to *Palace of the Peacock*' pp. 53-57 in *Selected Essays of Wilson Harris: The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination*, edited by Andrew Bundy (London and New York: Routledge, 1999) pp. 53-54. Music is discussed in relation to *Palace of the Peacock* pp. 260-267 of this thesis.

Glissant offers a more reflective account of this relationship in a chapter of *Poetics of Relation* entitled 'The Black Beach': 'I thought how everywhere, and in how many different modes, it is the same necessity to fit into the chaotic drive of totality that is at work, despite being subjected to the exaltations or numbing effects of specific existences'.¹¹⁹ The chaotic image with which this extract opens, the infinite 'modes' and expressions of individuals and communities (what Glissant terms *échos-monde*) offers a sense of the unpredictable, 'immeasurable intermixing of cultures',¹²⁰ (*chaos-monde*) that form part of relation (the chaotic drive of totality). The identity of the speaker exists as part of the totality he describes as he simultaneously attempts to appreciate the whole picture. Yet this attempt to glimpse the patterns and movements of relation, importantly, does not demand the rejection of 'specific existences', a conviction Glissant reasserts more forcefully: '[i]dentity as a system of relation [...is] a form of violence that challenges the generalizing universal and necessitates even more stringent demands for specificity'.¹²¹ For Martinicans, for whom a root identity is impossible (in other words, an identity rooted in the ancestral homeland), the need for specificity, for fixed signifiers of identity, 'is a strict requirement and must be defined as closely as possible'.¹²² But this call for specificity should not be mistaken for a return to essentialism, which, Britton argues, is thoroughly rejected by Glissant: '[e]ssence is revealed as complicit with the coercive universalism of the West'.¹²³ Relation, on the other hand, involves the internal division of different societies that nevertheless does not fix them as

¹¹⁹ Glissant (1997) p. 124.

¹²⁰ Glissant (1997) p. 138.

¹²¹ Glissant (1997) p. 142.

¹²² Glissant (1997) p. 144.

¹²³ Glissant (1997) p. 15.

separate, reified entities. It recognises the reality of different cultures (defined not as political or ethnic groupings, but ‘as “natural” phenomena’ of interaction)¹²⁴ but orders them in no hierarchy: ‘culture calls to mind what it is that divides us from all otherness. It is a discriminating factor, with no ostensible discrimination. It specifies without putting aside’.¹²⁵ Here Glissant appears to anticipate Attridge insofar as both identify otherness as that which lies outwith culture’s own specifying discourse. Relation is a singular move beyond what is currently possible within discourse. But this ‘beyond’ is not absolute, it is entirely contingent to what is known. In other words, what is other is determined by what it is other to in a specific time and place. As a result, creolization, Glissant’s radical and unrestricted form of *métissage* or hybridity, is the non-hierarchical and unpredictable mixing within the context of particular cultures.

Poetics of Relation, as both Britton and Hallward highlight, privileges the concept of relation. This is not a departure from creolization in itself, for creolization forms the ever-changing ‘*mutual mutations generated by this interplay of relations. Creolization brings into Relation*’.¹²⁶ Creolization, then, is the process through which relation is effected. In the same way, creolization as the ‘*forming of a complex mix*’¹²⁷ exists only insofar as elements are brought into relation with one another. Yet, whereas in *Caribbean Discourse* Glissant is concerned with a New World reality, in *Poetics of Relation* the link between relation and the whole-world/totality suggests a planetary vision. It is this departure that allows Hallward to make the

¹²⁴ Glissant (1997) p. 161.

¹²⁵ Glissant (1997) p. 161.

¹²⁶ Glissant (1997) p. 89. Emphasis in the original.

¹²⁷ Glissant (1997) p. 89. Emphasis in the original.

distinction between the more acceptable, specific-orientated, anti-singular phase characteristic of Glissant's early career (1956-1981) and the 'deterritorialized, "rhizomatic" reality' of his more recent work.¹²⁸ Essentially, the distinction being made by Hallward is between 'an engagement with the constrained relation between and among others [and the move] toward inclusion in one all-embracing self-differentiation (which is never, of course, to be confused with mere uniformisation)',¹²⁹ but it is an argument dependent almost exclusively on the assumption of a Deleuzian framework. In Hallward's view, Glissant appropriates Gilles Deleuze unequivocally: '[l]ike Deleuze, Glissant arrives at a theory of *la Relation* defined primarily by its transcendence of relations with or between specific individuals'.¹³⁰ For Hallward, Glissant's abandonment of Martinican nationalism coincides with a rejection of territory in favour of a nomadic existence. Yet, I would argue, this misrepresents Glissant's adaptation of Deleuze.

Comparing Hallward's commentary on both the early and late phases of Glissant's career, it becomes clear that it is not relation or even totality *per se* that are at issue. Even in the early moment, the totality is present in Glissant's thinking: as Hallward highlights, 'to come into consciousness of one's place in the *Totality* is to cultivate one's positioned relation *with* the others that compose this totality'.¹³¹ Here Hallward is outlining Glissant's theory of totality as it is in the early work, and in this case it is clear that both relation and totality are specific to situated sites of articulation. Totality and relation in themselves are not, therefore, de-territorializing:

¹²⁸ Hallward (2001) p. 69.

¹²⁹ Hallward (2001) p. 68.

¹³⁰ Hallward (2001) p. 67.

¹³¹ Hallward (2001) p. 73.

‘[an] expressive part of the whole must, at this stage in Glissant’s work, remain attached to its point of view, lest it be swept into pure chaotic formlessness’.¹³² The distinction Hallward makes, then, when he comes to critique Glissant’s later writings, is in the rhizomatic, nomadic ‘deterritorialised plane of immanence’ that Hallward finds in Glissant’s use of Deleuze.¹³³ However, as Andrea Schwieger Hiepko points out, although Glissant utilizes the terminology of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, theirs is a ‘completely different notion. For them, the rhizome is in fact an abstract model for the philosophy of immanence in which the question of identity is not taken into account’.¹³⁴ For Glissant, the rhizome is not a challenge to rootedness (location), despite its opposition to root:

Deleuze and Guattari have examined the notions of the root and perhaps of rootedness. The root is single, taking and killing everything around it; they set it up in opposition to the rhizome, which is a root that has been diffracted and which extends in a network into the ground or into the air, without any root being able to get in its way as some irremediable predator. The notion of the rhizome would thus maintain the fact of rootedness but would challenge the idea of a totalitarian root. Rhizomatic thought would follow the principle of what I call a poetics of relation, according to which all identities extend into a connection with the other.¹³⁵

¹³² Hallward (2001) p. 74

¹³³ Hallward (2001) p. 67

¹³⁴ Andrea Schwieger Hiepko ‘Creolization as a Poetics of Culture: Édouard Glissant’s “Archipelagic” Thinking’ pp. 237-259 in *A Pepper-Pot of Cultures: Aspects of Creolization in the Caribbean*, edited by Gordon Collier and Ulrich Fleischmann (*Matawù* 27-28; Amsterdam and New York: Editions Rodopi, 2003) p. 243. This point is also made by Isabel Hoving ‘Gardening in the Jungles of Post-Coloniality: Representing Multiculturality and Hybridity’ pp. 211-220 in *Bridges Across Chasms: Towards a Transcultural Future in Caribbean Literature* edited by Bénédicte Ledent (Liège, Belgium: L3 – Liège Language and Literature, 2004) p. 215.

¹³⁵ Glissant cited in Hiepko (2003) p. 243. In addition, as Alain Baudot highlights, Glissant’s presentation of the tree in his texts does not emphasise its verticality, but ‘its roots, and not the shaft of its trunk, nor the splayed claws of its branches – the tree remains all-embracing, seldom rigid, matrix more than mast’ (Alain Baudot ‘Édouard Glissant: A Poet in Search of His Landscape’ pp. 584-588 in *World Literature Today* Vol. 63, No. 4, 1989 p. 584). Thus the rhizomatic aspect of the tree is underscored by Glissant, as is the importance of rootedness, that is to say, the roots of the tree.

In this description, it is the root that suggests itself as a singular entity ‘killing everything around it’; it colonises rather than effecting a relation with its surroundings. The rhizome offers an alternative model to the totalitarian root. It is exempt from the process of invasion and domination characteristic of the root and, like the model of postcolonialism advocated in this thesis, is not limited to either a confrontational relationship with its environment, nor by any other pre-established framework. Moreover, it ‘maintain[s] the fact of rootedness’, of place: it, like the postcolonial, effects a process of relation between self and other that is context-specific, but in no way specified by the given situation.

Shireen Lewis restates Hiepko’s point on this matter, surmising that ‘[e]ven though Glissant adopts Deleuze and Guattari’s basic concept of the rhizome he rejects the association with nomadology [...]. Glissant does not conceptualize the rhizome as deterritorialized as much as he sees it as lacking a single root’.¹³⁶ Glissant deploys this language of place in *Poetics of Relation*, arguing that relation is ‘[t]he position of each part within this whole; that is, the acknowledged validity of each specific Plantation yet at the same time the urgent need to understand the hidden order of the whole – so as to wander there without becoming lost’.¹³⁷ The specific and the located within the whole are necessary in order to avoid ‘becoming lost’, but the whole is not the singular totality Hallward depicts. Even in Glissant’s earliest novel, *The Ripening*, Hallward locates a Deleuzian singularity which erases

¹³⁶ Shireen K. Lewis *Race, Culture, and Identity: Francophone West African and Caribbean Literature and Theory from Négritude to Créolité* (Lanham and Oxford: Lexington Books, 2006) p. 87.

¹³⁷ Glissant (1997) p. 131. Harris, as I argue in Chapter Three, takes a similar approach. In novels such as *Jonestown* (1996), *The Mask of the Beggar* (2003), or *The Ghost of Memory* (2006), his presentation of specific acts of violence and inhumanity demand that they are recognised as archetypes common to all humanity (see pp. 226-291 of this thesis).

all differences: '[t]he sea is the perfect *espace lisse* [smooth space] in Deleuze's sense, a space where nothing moves, nothing *advances*, because everything is moving'.¹³⁸ Not only is this untrue in a very literal sense, but is contradicted by Glissant himself: 'the Caribbean Sea is a sea that "diffracts" [...], a place of passage, of transience rather than exclusion, an archipelago-like reality [...characterised by] relativity, the fabric of a great expanse, the relational complicity with the new earth and sea. It does not tend toward the One, but opens out onto diversity'.¹³⁹ The sea suggests an ever-diffracted relationality that does not lead towards the dissolution of difference and diversity. Rather difference is maintained and new creolized realities are continually produced as singular (in Attridge's sense), finite instances relative to their particular location in 'the fabric of the great expanse'.

Opacity and the Other.

Hallward reads *Poetics of Relation* as deterritorialising and singularising to the extent that the end-game of creolization is the erasure of difference between entities. In this respect, he views Glissant's notion of opacity as a sign of a totalising relation: like the opaque, 'Relation has no determinate "content"'.¹⁴⁰ Without 'determinate "content"' or clear and specific differences, then, 'all reality exists at the same level, and all binaries tend toward their own elimination within a single place of immanence, of all-compatible singularities'.¹⁴¹ Therefore, because opacity and relation effect the erasure of all differences, they can be characterised as

¹³⁸ Hallward (2001) p. 87.

¹³⁹ Glissant (1995) pp. 268-269.

¹⁴⁰ Hallward (2001) p. 122.

¹⁴¹ Hallward (2001) p. 120.

singularizing. However, opacity for Glissant presents itself as a means to retain diversity and denotes a non-hierarchical notion of difference, in contrast to transparency, which Glissant associates with a legitimizing knowledge that ensured the West's superiority: '[t]ransparency no longer seems like the bottom of the mirror in which Western humanity reflected the world in its own image. There is opacity now at the bottom of the mirror, a whole alluvium deposited by populations'.¹⁴² Glissant demonstrates his argument by considering the function of translation and the literary text: the author must translate his 'poetic intention' into the written word, the process of which, 'actually renders it opaque [...]. The text passes from a dreamed-of transparency to the opacity produced in words'.¹⁴³ As Chapter Three will argue in reference to the writings of Wilson Harris, here Glissant confirms that the production of new works of literature involves the translation of cultural discourse through the mediating artistic consciousness. With the uncertain opacity of the literary product, Glissant is certainly drawing from the Derridean conception of language (also employed by Bhabha): the transition from intention to received meaning causes a split in the authority of the text. Textual meaning is rendered opaque by the necessary transition into language through the Third Space of enunciation; or in other words, textual meaning may be *perceived* as opaque in the experience of the reader. Glissant, Bhabha, and Attridge all converge on this point. Opacity is undecipherable, unknowable; it is the product of, what Bhabha refers to as

¹⁴² Glissant (1997) p. 111.

¹⁴³ Glissant (1997) p. 115.

the 'unconscious relation',¹⁴⁴ between self and other that creates ever-diversifying, singular forms of difference through relation.

Opacity, like singularity, is not a concept reserved solely for literature, but is employed as a political statement. Glissant argues that traditional understandings of difference demand that the other be knowable (transparent) and quantifiable. These features of colonial and counter-colonial ideologies present the other's difference as different from, or different to, the self's norm. Glissant's concept of difference rejects this comparative element and demands 'the right to opacity that is not enclosure within an impenetrable autarchy but substance within an irreducible singularity'.¹⁴⁵ That each individual has the right to opacity does not lead to a world absent of communal relations nor a blanketing sameness, but rather individual differences are unknowable and therefore equal (equally opaque): 'I thus am able to conceive of the opacity of the other for me, without reproach for my opacity for him. To feel solidarity with him or to build with him or to like what he does, it is not necessary for me to grasp him'.¹⁴⁶ This helps address what might be read as the most problematic aspect of Attridge's account for postcolonial studies. Attridge's concern, to be sure, is the singularity of *literature*, but he also leaves room in his study for acknowledging the singularity of individuals: '[t]his process of relating to the other person through openness to change is not dissimilar, then, to the one that occurs when a writer refashions norms of thought to realize a new possibility in a poem or an argument'.¹⁴⁷ When one acknowledges a commonality with another person, one

¹⁴⁴ Bhabha (1994) p. 36.

¹⁴⁵ Glissant (1997) p. 190.

¹⁴⁶ Glissant (1997) p. 193.

¹⁴⁷ Attridge (2004) p. 33.

is recognising, Attridge argues, ‘the familiar contours of human being, which is to say I assimilate him or her into my existing schemata of understanding’.¹⁴⁸ If, however, in this process one ‘remain[s] aware, or become[s] aware through an act of attention, of some failure in the process of assimilation, [...then one] may be responding to the singular otherness of the other person’.¹⁴⁹ This may indeed result in the production of creolized identities – ‘respect for the singularity of the other person requires that *each time* we encounter him or her we do so with a readiness to be creative in our response [...It] is heterogeneous to me and interrupts my sameness’¹⁵⁰ – and Attridge promotes an ‘openness’ towards singularities of the other. Reference to assimilation might appear to sit uncomfortably in the postcolonial project, but it is in not the self or other person *per se* that the singular other may be located, but, more precisely, in the relation between the two. The singular element of literature or the other only exists as an effect of relation that ceases to be singular as soon as it is recognised as such, and at that moment it becomes integrated into the known cultural discourse of the reader/self. The singular, then, exists in a brief moment of relation that lies between the wholly unknowable other and the assimilated (no longer) other: singularity is produced when the relation generates a new creolized entity, be it an identity or expression (an *échos-monde*), that ‘go[es] beyond the possibilities pre-programmed by a culture’s norms’.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Attridge (2004) pp. 32-33.

¹⁴⁹ Attridge (2004) p. 33.

¹⁵⁰ Attridge (2004) p. 33. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁵¹ Attridge (2004) p. 63.

In this case, to refer to the 'other person' as singular becomes problematic. Attridge states that 'the other is other because it has not yet come into being';¹⁵² a dictum that sits perfectly well with the notion of a creolizing relation between self and otherness in literature. On the other hand, to claim that the other person does not exist until brought into relation with the self is difficult to justify. It is not possible to respond 'to the singular otherness of the other person' because singularity does not exist in the other person, but only in '[t]his process of relating to the other person'. The process in itself is essential to the relational aspect of the singular, but what Glissant's contribution emphasises is that what is acknowledged by the receiving self is *only* the opacity of the other-person (the otherness of the other-person) that is produced in that particular instance of relation, as opposed to pre-determined categories of identity to which all are subjected. Opacity is always only ever opaque *to me*, its singularity is relational. But, importantly, the specifying contents of that state remain unknowable, un-interpretable. This third term, then, fulfils the criteria of the singular but attributes to the other person a status beyond relation. For to acknowledge the other as opaque is to realise the existence of an unknowable otherness without assimilating all differences or 'grasp[ing] him' in his entirety. The singularity of the other, then, refers to the potential latent in the relation between self and other to produce a singular, equally opaque, and creolized reality.

Opacity emerges as a crucial concept to the thesis of creolization presented in this study. The account presented earlier in this chapter focused on a field of relational subjectivities and expressions that conforms to Glissant's assertion that what marks creolization is its existence primarily as a process. However,

¹⁵² Attridge (1999) p. 23.

emphasising the singularity of creolization's effects leads to two possible conclusions: firstly, that there is a general relation between *échos-monde* that merely produces synthesis, and, as a distinct process, another form of relation – the relation of self and other, known and unknown – that effects singularity. This is to place a strict limit on the scope of creolization: in this case, it becomes a rather unique, uncommon event. However, incorporating the concept of opacity enlarges the field of relation and leads to a second premise: because one's relation to another (or another *échos-monde*) is a relation to opacity, it is always a relation between the known self and the unknown other. By designating an irreducible, unassimilated otherness, opacity represents Glissant's way of refusing to envision a constraint to creolization.

Nick Nesbitt similarly identifies opacity as a refusal to limit relation insofar as it represents 'the irreducibility of otherness' that 'provides the critical passage beyond the circularity of the Hegelian dialectic.'¹⁵³ While Hallward argues that, as with Hegel, opacity forms part of a dialectical movement towards its 'eventual dissolution' in the realisation of the immanent totality, Nesbitt reads opacity as 'a barrier and a limit to an all-encompassing reason, [that] implies that the reified world of productive human subjects, in which the objects we produce and claim to understand confront us as alien entities, is historical, not an absolute'.¹⁵⁴ And as a result, 'opacity as a given of human experience is not an ontological absolute but an effect of the increasing commodification of experience. The subject cannot overcome this opacity by dissolving regressively into undifferentiated unity with

¹⁵³ Nesbitt (2003) pp. 43-44.

¹⁵⁴ Hallward (2001) p. 78; Nesbitt (2003) p. 44.

society or nature'.¹⁵⁵ What is essential for my reading of Glissant, is that Nesbitt's presentation of opacity may be distinguished from that of Hallward on the grounds that for Hallward opacity is an autogenous element in the immanent, singular totality that will eventually resolve itself. For Nesbitt, however, the dialectical movement of relation will never complete itself because opacity is not absolute, but continually effected by historical experience. This is to posit a similar logic to Attridge's claim that the other is always an other-to that continually alters in relation to new contexts: for Attridge, the dialectic of known and unknown can never resolve itself because the limit of each is not static, but founded on an always incomplete relation.

The incomplete dialectic of relation is an important counter to Hallward's reading of Glissant. However, reading opacity as a function in the generation of singular forms is to take a slightly different approach from critics like Britton, who affirms opacity as a distinctly political notion, as 'a defence against *understanding*',¹⁵⁶ which, she argues, allows Glissant to praise William Faulkner, whose

black characters are only ever represented from the outside and thereby are taken as 'evidence of the author's honesty in recognizing the limits of his own understanding and "dramatically taking on board the Other's *opacity* to oneself"'. More importantly, Faulkner's blind spot locates and reveals the 'real density' of the black Other's presence as it resists assimilation and confronts him with a barrier that he will never cross.¹⁵⁷

Read in this way, Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* where, what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak describes as, the notably 'unfinished story' of Christophine, Antoinette's black nurse from Martinique, signifies not only 'the limits of its own [i.e. the text's]

¹⁵⁵ Nesbitt (2003) p. 45.

¹⁵⁶ Britton (1999) p. 19.

¹⁵⁷ Britton (1999) p. 21. Emphasis in the original.

discourse',¹⁵⁸ and the novelist's fear of re-enacting imperialism by turning the other into a self, but marks too, Rhys's recognition of the opacity of her character. What Britton describes as a 'barrier' can be more accurately understood as inaccessibility: Christophine's opaqueness dramatises the inaccessible difference that Rhys acknowledges and accepts without having to 'grasp' her. Similarly in Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms At Night* (1996), the discrepancy between Otoh's biological sex and his/her perceived gender, is portrayed as a source of ambivalence: '[s]o flawless was the transformation that even the nurse and the doctor who attended the birth, on seeing him later, marvelled at their carelessness on having declared him a girl'.¹⁵⁹ Mootoo stresses, as I suggested in Chapter One, the ambivalence of her characters by making her readers aware of the difference between perception and biological fact. Otoh is both female (denoting a biological categorisation) and masculine (a cultural performance).¹⁶⁰ Mootoo's novel creates a perceived ambivalence or opacity because, like Christophine, Otoh (and his/her gender) cannot be fully grasped. Opacity becomes a strategy that leads not only to the transcendence of comparative and essentialist notions of difference, but offers, what Britton suggests is the 'only possible mode of resistance to the stereotype' as defined by Bhabha, for 'it confronts the stereotype's attempt to fix racial difference with a self-representation that cannot be fixed because it is deliberately

¹⁵⁸ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1999) p. 129; p. 130.

¹⁵⁹ Shani Mootoo *Cereus Blooms at Night* (London: Quality Paperbacks Direct, 1998) p. 110. I discuss this character on p. 125 of this thesis.

¹⁶⁰ The destabilisation of gender that Mootoo's novel effects agrees with Judith Butler's reading of the drag act (see *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* [London and New York: Routledge, 1990] pp. 128-141).

unintelligible'.¹⁶¹ Opacity certainly resists the fixed markers of identity to which Britton draws attention; however, Bhabha's notion of the stereotype contains within itself its own mode of resistance: an inherent ambivalence which ultimately undermines the dualism of self and other on which the colonial stereotype is founded.¹⁶² I would suggest, then, that rather than viewing opacity as a mode of resistance to specified identities, Glissant's use of the term can be primarily understood as offering an understanding of difference that does not rely upon quantitative judgements and scale.

To understand each other as opaque, as singular, is to appreciate the term's importance to Glissant's notion of creolization: opacities that 'coexist and converge, weaving fabrics. To understand this truly one must focus on the texture and the weave and not the nature of its components'.¹⁶³ As such, opacities may be seen as equivalent to *échos-monde*. Where *échos-monde* designate forms of expression or understanding amongst many other relating unities, opacity refers to the non-essentialised, fluid identity that exists in relation. As with *échos-monde*, the focus on 'texture and weave' is not a denial of one's ability to assert a position, but to appreciate that identity is partial, not absolute, and is always subject to creolization. Chris Bongie has criticised creolization for what he sees as its inability to facilitate the expression of opinion or bias. As he writes, 'we simply cannot do away with the sort of non-relational, exclusionary thinking that is the basis of conventional identity politics and its received wisdom: affirmations of fixed identity are inevitable, and that every such affirmation – even that of a "creole identity" –

¹⁶¹ Britton (1999) p. 24.

¹⁶² Bhabha (1994) pp. 66-67.

¹⁶³ Glissant (1997) p. 190.

necessarily betrays the “unceasing process of transformation”¹⁶⁴ Here Bongie pinpoints the obvious concern: to become politically engaged is to become an enunciating subject, and the enunciatory subject is necessarily trapped by or assimilated into the pre-determined terms of language. However, by stressing the commonality between opacity and *échos-monde*, I would argue that Glissant is suggesting that positions can be taken, but they are not absolute, nor are they impervious to change. Language is constituted through pre-determined meanings, but these are subject to play or *différance* and as such they produce meaning in the same way as an *échos-monde*: that is to say it is fragile, impure, and relational. The positions that one takes, or language one uses, is subject to continual re-evaluation and translation. Although Bongie is right to be cautious of the necessary positioning involved in the enunciation of identity, his argument does not necessarily hold that such an act halts creolization and leads to the reification of identities. Rather, each new stance or translation will give rise to the moment wherein, in order to move beyond the current possibilities offered by contemporary cultural discourse, it becomes necessary to become aware of the other and re-immense the self in the process of creolization. Further, the need to establish a momentary relation to something fixed is, in fact, essential to Attridge’s model of singularity: it is only from a particular context that singularity can enter into relation. The previous extract from Glissant’s ‘Black Beach’ alludes to this as the speaker looks out at the sea and thinks of how many different ‘modes’ fit into totality, ‘despite being subjected to the exaltations or numbing effects of specific existences’.¹⁶⁵ In this later moment,

¹⁶⁴ Bongie (1998) p. 11.

¹⁶⁵ Glissant (1997) p. 124. Also see p. 169 of this thesis.

individual specificities (opacities) can no longer be understood apart from the whole: they coexist but are not erased.

Relocating Glissant's theory of creolization offers the opportunity to respond to Hallward's challenge to postcolonial theory and move towards an understanding of the postcolonial as specific to, but not specified by the socio-historic realities that contextualise the space of enunciation. In terms of the works explored in Chapter One, by this account, postcolonial Caribbean authors' reassessment of various European representations of the island space as paradise/Eden are expressive of a relationship that is specific to various former colonising countries or discourses, but not specified by that relationship. They transcend the coloniser's representations, and as a result the 'macadam' paradises that authors such as Glissant, Pineau, and Mootoo depict are not counter-colonial responses to colonial exoticism, but a creolization of their relationship with the past and the canon of Caribbean literature. Contrary to Hallward's account, postcolonial literature can be defined by its ability to creolize its relation with the specific realities of place. For Glissant, while the nation (or at least popular nationalism) becomes less prominent in his writing, as Hallward argues, landscape remains a fundamental trope. From its first appearance in *The Ripening*, to his essays in *Caribbean Discourse*, and throughout his poetry collections, landscape is consistently presented as both expressive of, and an element in Glissant's poetics of creolization. The landscape is re-imagined as a site in which the gaps and absences that are indicative of the presence of the other, can be uncovered. Opacity, too, is suggestive of these gaps in knowledge: it reveals unknown or unassimilated aspects

of difference. But it is the access to the absolute other, the act of relating to the unknown that makes creolization both singular and properly postcolonial. It produces an *échos-monde* that exceeds current limitations.

Exoticism and the Relation to the Other.

Hallward, it has been argued, is overly reliant on the link between Glissant and Deleuze. The nomadic model of rhizomatic existence that Hallward identifies in Deleuze and Guattari combined with Glissant's disappointment with Martinican nationalism, allows him to present relation as a fundamentally non-specific, deterritorialized process. In response, this chapter has highlighted the emphasis that Glissant places on location, but it should also be stressed that creolization as the relation between self and other in a specific context need not only occur in the native land. It is obvious from the colonial encounter alone that this is not the case as both the native and the coloniser are creolized by the interaction. The relation that effects singularity, however, is distinct from the rhizomatic reality of Deleuze and Guattari's nomad because it remains specific to context. Dependence on a Deleuzian approach to relation not only leads Hallward to reject the essential role played by location and context in Glissant's work, but overlooks the important influence of other philosophers. In particular, the preservation of otherness, albeit in an opaque form, has an important precedent in the discourse of exoticism. In Chapter One, exoticism was discussed as an idealising discourse, and texts such as Una Marson's 'In Jamaica' (1931) or Aimé Césaire's *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* were seen to present a direct challenge to the exoticising imagination of the West

that sought to claim the Caribbean islands as an Edenic paradise. In turn, in *The Ripening* Glissant clearly aligns himself with Césaire by means of his own recognition of the poverty belied by the palm trees and white sands of his native land: a ‘macadam’ paradise. However, exoticism is not wholly discounted by Glissant, and, in particular, French writer Victor Segalen’s particular glossing of the concept, as Yaël Rachel Schlick points out, is formative to Glissant’s own theory of creolization and relation.¹⁶⁶

Written over a period of fourteen years (1904-1918), Segalen’s *Essay on Exoticism* valorises the exotic through a series of poetic fragments or ‘prose poems’,¹⁶⁷ a style of composition that can be clearly traced in Glissant’s essays and poetry. Segalen’s appraisal of the term sets out to ‘strip the word exoticism of its exclusively tropical, exclusively geographical meaning. Exoticism does not only exist in space, but is equally dependent on time’.¹⁶⁸ Calling to mind Carpentier’s disillusioned protagonist in *The Lost Steps* (1953), Segalen’s exoticism refers to temporal, not merely geographical, movement.¹⁶⁹ Yet, whereas Carpentier’s protagonist ultimately believed that he could become part of a native community and

¹⁶⁶ Yaël Rachel Schlick ‘Introduction’ pp. 1-6 in Victor Segalen *Essay on Exoticism: An Aesthetics of Diversity*, translated and edited by Yaël Rachel Schlick, foreword by Harry Harootunian (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002) p. 1. A more general consideration of Segalen’s exoticism is offered by Chris Bongie in *Exotic Memories: Literature, Colonialism, and the Fin de Siècle* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991) pp. 109-116. And James Clifford offers a succinct overview of Segalen’s major works and concepts in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1988) pp. 152-163.

¹⁶⁷ Victor Segalen *Essay on Exoticism: An Aesthetics of Diversity*, translated and edited by Yaël Rachel Schlick, foreword by Harry Harootunian (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002) p. 14.

¹⁶⁸ Segalen (2002) p. 18.

¹⁶⁹ Harry Harootunian also discusses this: see ‘Foreword’ pp. vii-xx in Victor Segalen *Essay on Exoticism: An Aesthetics of Diversity*, translated and edited by Yaël Rachel Schlick. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002) p. xii. *The Lost Steps* is discussed on pp. 67-71, 78-81 of this thesis.

integrate his life with the other's, Segalen is clear that the exot remains apart. As Harry Harootunian notes: '[u]nlike earlier exoticists, fixed on and indeed enslaved by the object and racing for identification with it, Segalen confessed that he never desired to be Chinese [his area of study]'.¹⁷⁰ Rather, exoticism is constituted through a continual relation or translation between self and other: 'my exoticism [...] is a matter of stubborn bias, because it is initially obscure and latent and extended outward toward "things", in sum to the "eternal world", to the Object in its entirety'; a mode of expression of 'one's vision by an instantaneous, continuous *translation* that would echo one's presence'.¹⁷¹ It is in light of Segalen's view of the 'indeterminate' space of exoticism that Glissant's celebration of the poet should be read: '[w]hen a poet travels to infinite realms where there is no country, he opens a more deserving relation, in this space of an absolute elsewhere where everyone can strive to join it'.¹⁷² Hallward offers this quote as evidence of Glissant's Deleuzian deterritorialization, however, I would argue that it reveals the influence of Segalen rather than Deleuze, and gestures towards a space of exoticism, unrestricted travel, and absolute otherness.

For Segalen, placing exoticism within a relation between observer and observed, self and other was a huge departure from the contemporary 'pseudo-Exots' such as Pierre Loti or Lafcadio Hearn.¹⁷³ As Charles Forsdick points out;

[i]n its initial and perhaps most common usage, 'exotisme' is considered to describe an element of quality (of the exotic object or person) which strikes the perceiving self as inherently foreign or different (i.e. an essential, alluring exotic-ness). Such

¹⁷⁰ Harootunian (2002) p. xiv.

¹⁷¹ Segalen (2002) p. 15. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁷² Glissant cited by Hallward (2001) p. 78.

¹⁷³ Segalen (2002) p. 29.

essentialist notions of exotic-ness depended on the excision of the observer's subjectivity from processes of description. Since they ignore the dynamics of the relationship of self and other by fixing its two poles, sustained investigation of issues of perception and identity is prevented.¹⁷⁴

Segalen, like the later Glissant, was highly critical of the threat posed by the French assimilation policy,¹⁷⁵ however he directs his strongest criticism against the earlier exoticists who simply 'expressed what they saw, what they felt in the presence of unexpected *things* and people'.¹⁷⁶ What such accounts fail to do is precisely the staging of a translation, a relation between self and other, in favour of a Romantic exoticism that sought to view the other either as a 'backcloth on which to project the self or to the role of the object of a self-centred quest'.¹⁷⁷ This self-interested approach forgoes the possibility of relation: the other is incorporated into the totalising gaze of the self and its diversity is lost.

Segalen levels the same critique at the figure of the tourist. The revolution of the tourist industry in Segalen's time is, as Forsdick illustrates, neatly encapsulated by the success of Thomas Cook:

Thomas Cook had presented commercial travel as a means of eradicating warfare [...]. It is, however, precisely this utopianism which Segalen attacks in alarming terms, claiming that the flaws of mechanization of travel is that it brings people into contact without conflict [...T]ourism can be an act of assimilation and normalisation. Thomas Cook boasted that on the Nile cruise breakfast would be 'a country house meal' and breakfasters would receive their post 'just as you would at home' [...]. The cosy sameness of home [...] is imposed on the otherness of the exotic periphery. Tourism renders the exotic banal.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ Charles Forsdick *Victor Segalen and the Aesthetics of Diversity: Journeys Between Cultures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 33-34.

¹⁷⁵ Forsdick (2000) p. 42.

¹⁷⁶ Segalen (2002) p. 14. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁷⁷ Forsdick (2000) p. 47.

¹⁷⁸ Forsdick (2000) p. 201. Similarly, for Pierre Mabilie, the marvellous cannot be accessed by sticking to the tourist maps and official routes, but via 'enigmatic plans' that 'permit the discovery of

The tourist reduces the exotic to the Same, and, crucially, is not exposed or brought into contact with 'real' otherness, but rather, 'a stage-managed version of it'.¹⁷⁹ A similar critique is brought against the tourist by Antiguan author Jamaica Kincaid, for whom '[a] tourist is an ugly human being'.¹⁸⁰ In *A Small Place* (1988), the tourist holidaying in the Caribbean, like those cruising on the Nile, experiences the stage managed version of the island that is mediated through the stereotyping exoticism that sees only palm trees and clear water: 'the water is pale, silvery, clear, so clear that you can see its pinkish-white sand bottom. Oh, what beauty! Oh, what beauty!'.¹⁸¹ Kincaid juxtaposes this sentiment with the reality of a 'sick paradise' that echoes Césaire's depiction of his own native land:

[y]ou must not wonder what exactly happened to the contents of your lavatory when you flushed it. You must not wonder where your bath- water went to when you pulled out the stopper [...]. Oh, it might all end up in the water you are thinking of taking a swim in; the contents of your lavatory might, just might, graze gently against your ankle as you wade carefree in the water, for you see, in Antigua, there is no proper sewage-disposal system. But the Caribbean Sea is very big and the Atlantic Ocean is even

a mysterious castle, not far from the well-trodden paths, hidden by undergrowth and thickets' (1998, p. 2). Indeed, given Mabilie's insistence on the intoxication 'of discovery' and 'disorientation' felt by the experience of the marvellous, there is much to suggest a commonality with Segalen's travelling exot. However, while this is the case, Mabilie's marvellous is an experience available to the many – from the scientist uncovering new discoveries to 'the uneducated' as 'they go ecstatic over the wonders of modern technology without understanding them' (p. 14) – Segalen's exot, on the other hand, suggests himself/herself as a more privileged figure.

¹⁷⁹ Forsdick (2000) pp. 200-201.

¹⁸⁰ Jamaica Kincaid *A Small Place* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000a) p. 15.

¹⁸¹ Kincaid (2000a) p. 13. Kincaid's criticism of the tourist, as with Segalen, is not an emphatic rejection of travelling elsewhere. In *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya* (2005), Kincaid's autobiographical experience of the authentic landscape as completely other (the exot's experience) is privileged above that of the stage-managed tourists: 'I was expecting the landscape to conform to the landscape with which I was familiar [...]. But this was not so [...]. The Himalaya destroys notions of distance and time' (Jamaica Kincaid *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya* [Washington: National Geographic Society, 2005] p. 37). Moira Ferguson also discusses Kincaid's attack on the tourist in *Jamaica Kincaid: Where the Land Meets the Body* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1994) pp. 77-106.

bigger; it would amaze even you to know the number of black slaves this ocean has swallowed up.¹⁸²

Coming into contact with beauty that ‘seems as if it were stage sets for a play,’¹⁸³ the tourist is ignorant of the reality of life in Antigua, turning ‘their own [the native’s] banality and boredom into a source of pleasure’.¹⁸⁴ For Segalen, however, the tourist’s unquestioning, naïve gaze is in itself a source of banality, appropriating the other into the sameness of the self. This indicates some of the problems in adopting Segalen’s exoticism for postcolonial studies. On the one hand, his criticism of the fixing gaze of the Romantic exotic is echoed by writers like Kincaid who argue that ‘[i]t 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 were locked out’.¹⁸⁵ It is clear by Kincaid’s account, as it is in Forsdick’s reading of Segalen, that self and other are here fixed between two poles that forgo the possibility of any relation. On the other hand, Segalen’s insistence on taking pleasure in ‘the feeling which Diversity stirs in us’,¹⁸⁶ would, in the first instance, appear to suggest that like Kincaid’s tourist, he takes pleasure in the other’s poverty.

Segalen’s celebration of diversity reflects his more general preoccupation with the process of relation: the interplay of ideas and translation. Taking as a starting point ‘[o]ne of the simplest, crudest manifestations of Diversity, as it appears to

¹⁸² Kincaid (2000a) pp. 13-14.

¹⁸³ Kincaid (2000a) p. 77.

¹⁸⁴ Kincaid (2000a) p. 16.

¹⁸⁵ Kincaid (2000a) p. 79.

¹⁸⁶ Segalen (2002) p. 47.

man'¹⁸⁷ – the natural world – Segalen argues that 'we do not see, feel, or taste nature with great aesthetic joy until we have experienced a separation or a difference from it'.¹⁸⁸ Diversity, therefore, depends on separation, the recognition of the object as other. Where the Romantics viewed the natural world as an extension of the self (in an aesthetics of pathetic fallacy), the exot perceives only '*the utterly irreducible difference which exists between two beings*' or things as he is brought into contact with them.¹⁸⁹ As in Bhabha's account, difference is here cast as a process of relation:

in philosophy, the *subject* and the meaning of ideas are less important than the way they are linked, than the elegance with which they are set in motion and developed, in short, that their *play*. What is properly philosophical is only the *play of ideas*, just as what is profoundly pictorial is the splendour of lines and colours. The interweaving of ideas in the field of philosophy is equivalent to the mixing that is essential to the creation of orchestral or pictorial compositions.¹⁹⁰

In this shift from fixed subjects to a focus on play and relation, the witnessing of weave and pattern, the roots of Glissant's notion of creolization can be clearly identified. In redefining the exotic, Segalen, Forsdick argues, 'does not simply restate the platitude that recognition of the other is a moral obligation but transforms it into a coherent aesthetic and a first step towards a "poétique de la Relation"':¹⁹¹ he does not deny the difference of the other, seeking to make it knowable; nor does he cast it, to recall Bhabha, as signifying 'disorder, degeneracy'.¹⁹² The exotic is

¹⁸⁷ Segalen (2002) p. 66.

¹⁸⁸ Segalen (2002) p. 31.

¹⁸⁹ Segalen (2002) p. 33. Emphasis in the original. Unlike Bhabha, Segalen does not draw a clear distinction between difference and diversity, rather both terms mark the boundary between self and other.

¹⁹⁰ Segalen (2002) pp. 36-37. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁹¹ Forsdick (2000) p. 97.

¹⁹² Bhabha (1994) p. 66.

nothing other than that which is outside the self, and the relation that is established between the exot and the exotic is not an act of appropriation: '[e]xoticism is therefore not an adaptation to something; it is not the perfect comprehension of something outside one's self that one has managed to embrace fully, but the keen and immediate perception of an eternal incomprehensibility'.¹⁹³ In this case, translation is a celebration of separation and of the exot's appreciation of 'the wonderful sensation of feeling both what they are and what they are not'.¹⁹⁴ Exoticism both stages a relation between self and other, and preserves the separation between the two. Further it is this 'eternal incomprehensibility' that establishes the exotic as the predecessor to Glissant's concept of opacity and clarifies his reference to the 'absolute elsewhere' through which the poet travels. Like Segalen's exot, the poet revels in the opacity of the exotic while retaining a sense of his own specific existence.

From the outset of the *Essay*, the exotic is defined as that which lies outside the self: '[d]efinition of the prefix *Exo* in the most general sense possible. Everything that lies "outside" the sum total of our current, conscious everyday events'.¹⁹⁵ Characterizing the exotic in this way anticipates Attridge, who argued, 'the creative writer registers, whether consciously or unconsciously, both the possibilities offered by the accepted forms and materials of the time, and their impossibilities'.¹⁹⁶ Here singularity resides in the author's ability to relate to that otherness which lies outwith the self, that which is excluded from cultural discourse.

¹⁹³ Segalen (2002) p. 21.

¹⁹⁴ Segalen (2002) p. 20.

¹⁹⁵ Segalen (2002) p. 16.

¹⁹⁶ Attridge (2004). pp. 20-21.

But importantly this singularity is not absolute, nor without relations, as in Attridge's account, for 'the other is always only other *to me*':¹⁹⁷ a continually shifting process of relating to the exotic, in Segalen's sense, in a specific time and place. The debate staged in this chapter between Hallward and Attridge focused on creolization's ability to produce singularly new configurations. Hallward's key contention that it was the influence of Gilles Deleuze on Glissant's work that marked creolization as de-specifying. However, highlighting Segalen as precursor to both Glissant and Attridge emphasises that the singularity of creolization is not de-contextualising, but contingent to time and place.

The difference between Segalen's exoticism and the rhizomatic, deterritorialised singularity of Deleuze is most explicit in Segalen's rejection of 'the Kingdom of the Lukewarm; that moment of viscous mush without inequalities, falls, or reboundings' that triumphs in the decline of diversity.¹⁹⁸ This encroaching sameness, the self immediacy of Hallward's singular, is what Segalen refers to as entropy, which is emblematic of the decline of the exotic, the disappearance of the different into the same.¹⁹⁹ Forsdick notes that,

[t]he key term is 'tiède' [lukewarm], precursory to the Sartrean notion of the 'visqueux' in *La Nausée* – neither hot nor cold, lacking in the differentiation and alteration of extremities on which Segalen's exoticism depends. Even before the word 'entropy' is written, however, these themes are discernible in his constant aversion to the sea. In *Équipée*, the sea absorbs the marked difference of individual rivers in a process of rapid dissolution. The nature of the ocean as a heat sink (as opposed to

¹⁹⁷ Attridge (2004) p. 29.

¹⁹⁸ Segalen (2002) p. 57.

¹⁹⁹ Entropy is, as I noted earlier (pp. 59-60), a concept that Antonio Benítez-Rojo draws on in his *The Repeating Island* (Antonio Benítez-Rojo *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, translated by James E. Maraniss [Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2nd edition, 1996a] pp. 1-29). In this way, Benítez-Rojo's theory of relations stands slightly at odds with that of both Glissant and Wilson Harris.

heat source) is a particularly clear illustration of the levelling processes and homogeneous distribution of energy implied by the second law of thermodynamics.²⁰⁰

The homogenising sea is one of the tropes that Hallward utilises in his attack on Glissant – ‘the perfect *espace lisse* [smooth space]’.²⁰¹ This totalizing space is precisely that against which Segalen is directing his exoticism. Exoticism does not concede to the lukewarm or the smooth, it is a relation of contrast and friction where the self is exposed to a singular relation with the other.

Segalen’s critique of progression towards the lukewarm, becomes, in Glissant’s later writing, a model of totality that is not stasis or completion, and this is indicative of the way in which Glissant elaborates Segalen on a number of levels. In *Poetics of Relation*, Segalen is lauded as one of ‘the first poets of Relation’.²⁰² As I have argued, the relation with the other that Segalen conceives of is one in which otherness is contingent to time and place, a crucial premise for singular creolization. Above all, however, Segalen reminds Glissant that what is at issue is an imaginative relation, a *poetics*. As Glissant argues:

Segalen’s crucial idea was that encountering the Other superactivates poetic imagination and understanding. Of course, from that moment on there could be no question of hierarchy in pursuit of relations with the other. Let me point out, however, that Segalen does not merely describe recognition of the other as a moral obligation (which would be a banality) but he considers it an aesthetic constituent, the first edict of a real poetics of Relation.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Forsdick (2000) p. 190.

²⁰¹ Hallward (2001) p. 87. Emphasis in the original.

²⁰² Glissant (1997) p. 27.

²⁰³ Glissant (1997) p. 29.

Here Glissant confirms what I have suggested is an essential element in creolization: the role of otherness in stimulating the creative imagination.²⁰⁴ As with Attridge's model of literary production, the relation with the other is not a matter of ethics, as Emmanuel Levinas argues, but is 'that which beckons or commands from the fringes of my mental space as I engage in a creative act'.²⁰⁵ Glissant, Attridge, and Segalen all converge on this point, and *Exoticism* (or the *Aesthetics of Diversity*) should be understood in this context of an imaginative relation. In the same way that Segalen's subtitle draws attention to the creative element of his thesis, Glissant employs the term 'poetics' because creolization brings disparate elements into relation as an imaginative response. This relation, as Glissant argues, 'is not merely an encounter, a shock (in Segalen's sense), a *métissage*, but a new and original dimension allowing each person to be there and elsewhere, rooted and open'.²⁰⁶ This is indicative of the way in which Glissant can be seen to adapt, or creolize, Segalen's theory of exoticism.

If, as James Clifford has argued, Segalen's vision of exoticism is a failure, its fault lies not only in the exot's ultimate inability to escape his own subjectivity, which is the grounds of Clifford's criticism,²⁰⁷ but that Segalen's polarization of self

²⁰⁴ This points to a fundamental commonality shared between Glissant and Wilson Harris: the imagination as creative response to a world of relation (see Chapter Three in reference to the writings of Wilson Harris).

²⁰⁵ Attridge (1999) p. 23. John Hawley notes that 'in the Relational theory of Édouard Glissant, for example [we find] interpretations of human interaction that, some would argue, parallel those described by such philosophers as Mikhail Bakhtin and Emmanuel Levinas [...insofar as they all view] the self as a *process*, rather than any scholastic essence' (John C. Hawley 'Introduction' p. x-xxv in *Writing the Nation: Self and Country in the Post-Colonial Imagination*, edited by John C. Hawley [Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996] p. xxi. Emphasis in the original). Yet, whereas Levinas premised a moral relationship between the self and other person, in the essays of Victor Segalen, as I have argued, the other is not only the other person, but all that is exterior to the self. It is this enlarged notion of the other that informs Attridge's account of the singular.

²⁰⁶ Glissant (1997) p. 34.

²⁰⁷ Clifford (1988) p. 163.

and other underplays the fluidity of identity, as well as the fragility of the other ('the other as other is always and constitutively on the point of turning from the unknown into the known, from the other to the same').²⁰⁸ Relation, on the other hand, retains the sense of incomplete understanding, but emphasises the ever-renewed process of relating. Otherness 'is premised on an *relation*', an encounter that 'is always *singular*',²⁰⁹ and because this relation effects singular forms, it impacts on both self and other: 'when I experience alterity, I experience not the other as such (how could I?) but the remoulding of the self that brings the other into being as, necessarily, no longer entirely other'.²¹⁰ This is why Glissant specifies that he is not merely envisioning 'an encounter, a shock', but the creation of something new through the process of creolization. That creolization does not proceed towards another 'Kingdom of the Lukewarm' is explained by Glissant's adherence to opacity, diversity and his rejection of an absolute totality. Whereas Glissant appropriates the concept of the diverse, and to a certain extent opacity from Segalen, the overriding importance of relation marks a departure from his precedent.²¹¹ A poetics of relation does not just encounter the other, it relates to otherness always as an unknowable, incommensurable designation in ways that produce new, singular configurations.

²⁰⁸ Attridge (1999) p22.

²⁰⁹ Attridge (1999) pp. 21-22.

²¹⁰ Attridge (1999) p. 21.

²¹¹ Forsdick points out that Glissant's 'call for a right to opacity is a search for acceptance of the ultimate impenetrability of otherness. In terminology and content this would seem close to Segalen's ideas. The work also implies, however, a distancing from Segalen's' (Forsdick [2000] p. 96).

Dream Country, Real Country.

The role that the imagination plays in the process of creolization can be understood in terms of the way in which both Segalen and Glissant depict the inter-relation of the real and the imagined. For Segalen, the real is experienced through a process of translation wherein the sensations evoked by an experience are inflected by the imaginary.²¹² In the same way, representations of the exotic are subject to this staged tension between the real, direct experience and the imagined which, Forsdick notes, ‘in its most extreme form depends on intertextuality and the propagation of stereotypes: i.e. individuals (such as the Noble Savage, the Mad Turk) and geographical areas (such as the Orient [...]). Perpetuation of the exotic inevitably depends on such elements of imagination’.²¹³ In this case, ‘perpetuation of the exotic’ (the fact of its singularity being continually renewed) is achieved in the constant staging of the relation between the known (real) and the other (imagined). Confronted with the exotic object and the possibility of rendering it as a representation, the exot is involved in processes where the other is normalised into his field of understanding. Yet where elements resist assimilation, or deny comprehension, the imagination is employed, here drawing from problematic stereotypes to fill in the gaps. In a Glissantian aesthetic, on the other hand, recourse to Orientalist stereotypes is avoided through the naming of that unknowable element as an opacity. However, like Segalen, Glissant remains interested in the relationship between the real and the imaginary, and how the tension between the two mediates our perception of the world. Such a concern can be traced throughout

²¹² Forsdick (2000) p. 94.

²¹³ Forsdick (2000) pp. 35-36.

his poetry collections, but is none so evident in the tellingly named *Pays rêvé, pays réel* (*Dream Country, Real Country* [1985]).

Establishing the importance of relation between real and imagined clearly parallels Humphries's claim that:

Dream Country, Real Country is a meditation on the way in which what we call the real is shaped by human imagination, becoming finally indistinguishable from it [...]. The poet sits in a quiet room, which is open to the island outside, and 'constructs' the Antilles of his imagination and of the world beyond. Poetic consciousness is defined as the dialectical conversation or intermingling of these two things that are really only one, and the poem as the trace or residue of that conversation.²¹⁴

As with the poetry collections discussed earlier in this chapter, landscape is a critical element in Glissant's poetic vision. Here the landscape features as a marker of 'the real' and the division from otherness: a separation that is altered as it both forms are brought into relation with one another through the mediating poetic imagination. Yet as with every representation of the opaque other, the real and imaginary inform the process of creolization in which 'something else' is produced. In the previous quotation, Humphries reconfirms Glissant's view that the poetic imagination is the medium through which creolization is stimulated by the encounter with the other, adding that the poem itself, then, stands as a testimony of that 'intermingling'.

Dream Country, Real Country is a long poem divided into eight cantos, of which both the first and the last are entitled 'Country', giving the whole work, as Juris Silenieks has noted, a circularity.²¹⁵ Yet this ostensible coherence belies a work

²¹⁴ Humphries (2005) p. xxxi.

²¹⁵ Juris Silenieks 'Pays rêvé, pays réel: Review' p. 995 in *The French Review* Vol 59, No. 6 Special Issue on Quebec 1986 (May) p. 995.

that lacks any ‘rigid thematic, casual, or chronologic organization’;²¹⁶ rather it traces opaque voices and movements between the poet’s ‘real’ Martinique and the mythical ancestral lands. The split between the real and the imagined is staged by Glissant’s equally opaque ‘glossary’ offered at the end of the poem. This section is divided into three elements, the first of which glosses some of the Martinican terms referred to in the course of the poem. However, it is the second and third, ‘Legend’ and ‘Real’, that offer a sense of the poem’s structure, despite Sileniek’s criticism. These two sections could be read as the poem’s character list, as both add further detail to the voices encountered during the course of the poem. The division, however, distinguishes those mythical voices that the poem associates with ancestral memory, from the ‘real’ voices of Mathieu, Mycea, and Thäel, who are representative of the Martinican people.²¹⁷

The poem opens in the real country, but immediately the reader is confronted with a brief vision of the Middle Passage:

We raged at your holds the wind peopled
 Your high rails for counting the bodies
 We spelled our herd of cries from the wind
 You who know how to read around the landscape of words
 where we wandered
 Detached from us who cry out our blood to you
 And on this bridge hail the trace of our feet.²¹⁸

Several elements combine here to suggest the memory of the Middle Passage: ‘[w]e raged at your holds’, ‘herd of cries’ instantly creates an image of a slave ship.

However, this stanza also depicts the ‘real’ and immediate experience of a hurricane

²¹⁶ Sileniek (1989) p. 995.

²¹⁷ These characters also appear in *The Ripening*, and *The Fourth Century*, discussed in Chapters One and Four of this thesis respectively (pp. 93-99, 314-322).

²¹⁸ Glissant (2005) p. 183.

on the poet's native island: 'the wind peopled/Your high rails for counting the bodies' suggests the devastation to both the land and the people wrought each hurricane season. There is, then, a simultaneous evocation of both the real (the experienced land) and the imagined (the poetic recreation of historical memory). Yet this stanza also reveals a self awareness of the poem's own literariness, establishing a confrontation between the cries of those suffering – 'We spelled our herd of cries from the wind' – and the detached position of 'You who know how to read around the landscape of words'. In this tension, the reader is made aware of their own role in the poem as interpreter searching for the 'real' meaning behind the words. But once more there is a double movement being performed: on the one hand the reader searches for the real meaning behind the imagined world they are presented with (the 'landscape of words'); on the other, the privileged position of the reader is interrogated by the 'real' suffering of the 'We', from whose painful experience the poem is derived ('spelled' out). In this way, there is no clear privileging of the real or the imagined in this poem, rather they are inseparable, and both are read through the distorting perspective of the other.

Reaching the end of the first stanza, the reader might expect that the poem's 'We' is trying to suggest a national unity of which the poet is a part. However, as Silenieks points out: '[t]he contours of the "nous" [we] are constantly shifting. Sometimes the "nous" seems to be the poet and his land, his people. Sometimes it figures as the repository of collective memories, as the collective consciousness, or

its potential that is yet to be realized'.²¹⁹ Glissant's refusal to establish clearly the parameters of the 'We', is linked to his rejection of the Same:

Let us sing praise to the foam as well as to the manatees
Spirits of abyss and alluvium how
We uproot the Open and encroach on all that is Unique
You who know how, in our filth and our blood, to bury the
writing
In which so many prophetic fissures star into night.²²⁰

The sea in this stanza is not the entropic force that threatened Segalen: it is both the abyss that claimed many on the Middle Passage and a fertile sediment of memories and voices that reject dissolution into sameness and unending openness. The collective voice is not speaking as one voice, from one unique origin. As in Glissant's essays and novels, the search for a community's unique origin is rejected in favour of a focus on fissures and fragmentation.

This is not to say that historical memory is rejected as an outright fiction, but rather, that the imagined past may be brought to bear on the present: 'We crack the county of the past in the fetter of this country/We moor it to this mangrove that feigns memory'.²²¹ Indeed, in the second canto, 'The Country Before', this shift to the past is enacted and mythical figures such Laoka, Milos, and Ichneumon are evoked. These figures appear to exist in the same location, 'the country of the past', however they do not represent the pantheon of one unique ancestral culture. Rather, as François Paré argues, '[t]hese figures, drawing from the various Caribbean migrant cultures, seek to re-appropriate the power of the myth to make sense of the diverse origins and to offer a permanent interpretation of the community's coming to

²¹⁹ Silenicks (1989) p. 995.

²²⁰ Glissant (2005) p. 183.

²²¹ Glissant (2005) p. 184.

the open world'.²²² The 'country of the past' is not only Africa, but is itself composed of the diverse cultures that come together in the Caribbean; neither does the poem reject them outright as harmful attachments to an ancestral purity: Laoka is 'the hidden taste we give to our words', 'And it is Milos and Ichneumon whose word has unlaced/The suffering of the country of the past/From the broken ravine of this present county'.²²³ The past (imagined) exists in 'the broken ravine' of the present (real), and, moreover, it gives additional meaning, 'the hidden taste', to the real and present challenges of the country.

Whereas the poem's reappropriation of 'the power of the myth' can be identified in the creolized mythical figures of Laoka, Milos, and Ichneumon, it also questions the way in which myth is propagated: storytelling. The first storyteller the reader encounters is Ichneumon who is associated with 'The roaring of the past'.²²⁴ However, the 'Song of Thaël and Matthew', a canto thus associated with the 'real', a different sort of storyteller is encountered: 'the man who is forest says I am not Ichneumon'.²²⁵ This canto moves from an initial wish to forget the past – 'the river the sea/Give us life and take away memory'²²⁶ – to this meeting with 'the man who is forest'. In the glossary, Glissant tells us of 'Mathieu. In the green fire of the forest, you meet your double. If you can, try not to stop'.²²⁷ Mathieu's encounter with the man in the forest here echoes Glissant's novel *The Fourth Century*, in which Mathieu and the Papa Longué, the last in the line of a maroon family, converse

²²² François Paré 'Édouard Glissant: A Poetics of Shorelines' pp. 267-276 in *SITES: A Journal of Twentieth Century Contemporary French Studies* Vol 7 Issue 2 Fall 2003 p. 269.

²²³ Glissant (2005) p. 191; p. 192.

²²⁴ Glissant (2005) p. 190.

²²⁵ Glissant (2005) p. 194.

²²⁶ Glissant (2005) p. 193.

²²⁷ Glissant (2005) p. 201.

about their families' histories. *The Fourth Century* is concerned with freeing history from unique origins, just as here the role of Ichneumon is displaced by the maroon, man of the forest. Storytelling is reappropriated from the ancestors of 'the country of the past' and resituated in those of Martinique, a move which allows Mathieu and Thaël to reimagine their own relationship to the past and their country: 'Our ancestors lying all along the spreading grass, carefully/We turn to the country'.²²⁸

The celebration of a renewed contact with the country is continued into the following canto, 'For Mycea', whose very name implies location: "cela" is part of Mycea's fully remembered, non-contracted name, Marie *Celat* [...S]elf, past, and place are all linked in so far as "cela" can be read as "ce là", or "this there", and thus as highlighting the spatialization of the past – constructed as a place or position in space, inflecting the distance of "there" with the deictic proximity of "this".²²⁹ In this extract, Mary Gallagher discusses the role of Mycea in Glissant's novel *La Case du commandeur* (1981), however, drawing attention to the link between location and past has great bearing on *Dream Country, Real Country*. This particular section witnesses the disappearance of the 'We' that featured strongly in the early cantos, replaced by 'I'. Mycea's voice is not the source of this canto, rather, for the first time the poet is clearly speaking, dedicating his words to '[s]he by whom the poet is enraptured, the one he names at every blowing of the wind'.²³⁰ Despite this, the spatialization of the past identified by Gallagher recurs throughout this canto: 'I named you wounded Earth, whose wound is not controllable, and/clothed you in

²²⁸ Glissant (2005) p. 195.

²²⁹ Mary Gallagher *Soundings in French Caribbean Writing Since 1950: The Shock of Space and Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) p. 94.

²³⁰ Glissant (2005) p. 201.

unrooted recitatives from crannies of the past'.²³¹ For the poet, the past is beyond his control, and yet he is free to use non-essentialised elements of it to colour the present. As was suggested earlier, the past is not located in another country, it is brought into articulation through the features and people of land from which the poet draws his poem. At the same time, the converse also holds true: as Silenieks argues, '[t]he "Pays" is not a geographical concept alone, since Antillean time and space in this "terre blessée" are inseparable, constantly intersecting, complementing each other'.²³² On the one hand, if the imagined past takes on a concrete reality in the poem, it does so by means of the 'landscape of words' drawn from the poet's native land. On the other, Martinique itself is not a landscape untouched by history, rather its features (imaginatively rendered by the poem) bear the scar, or 'wound', of the past. In the same way, Glissant refuses to delineate the limits of past or present, real or imagined. Rather, the poem initiates a process that allows elements of each to intersect with each other:

The land has unlaced, blade by blade what yesterday
 You bore as cargo on your overflowing river
 Your hand calls back this pack of rumours into something new
 You are astonished to burn more than old incense.²³³

Real and imagined, past and present retold in this way moves the storyteller's tale beyond its current limits, to 'burn more than old incense': something new is produced as Glissant evokes the imagined, dream country of the past alongside the immediacy of the real country that challenges him to produce a poem that enacts the creolization of fractured Caribbean identities.

²³¹ Glissant (2005) p. 196 .

²³² Silenieks (1989) p. 995.

²³³ Glissant (2005) pp. 196-197.

In the writings of Victor Segalen, an aesthetics of the exotic other incorporates the real and the imaginary, and in doing so presents, Forsdick notes, 'the genesis of the exotic as [...] a dynamic process of relation [that] allows a shift from understanding exoticism on thematic or chronological grounds'.²³⁴ Whereas the pseudo-exot remains mesmerised by the absolute otherness of the object, 'Segalen attempts to offer a transferable, working definition [of exoticism] which depends on a relation between self and radically different other'.²³⁵ As I argued earlier, this relation involves the continued translation of the other into the comprehension of the self. Yet this is not the end of diversity. As Glissant's poem illustrates, the creolization of identities that is effected through the reading and rereading of the real through the imagined does not produce a straightforward narrative. The reader who believes he/she 'know[s] how to read around the landscape of words' is challenged in *Dream Country, Real Country* by the opacity with which he/she is confronted. Segalen sought to reject an earlier mode of exoticism that 'was entirely committed to spatializing territories into fixed, static, and unchanging landscapes that existed in temporalities outside of modernity',²³⁶ with his own brand of exoticism that attempted to 'strip the word exoticism of its exclusively tropical, exclusively geographical meaning. Exoticism does not only exist in space, but is equally dependent on time'.²³⁷ This recognition that the way in which we view the other is inflected not only spatially but temporally, is a fundamental influence on Glissant's poetry, essays, and fiction. In this model there is no nostalgia for an original

²³⁴ Forsdick (2000) p. 36.

²³⁵ Forsdick (2000) p. 39.

²³⁶ Harootunian (2002) p. xi.

²³⁷ Segalen (2002) p. 18.

ahistorical purity to which one can relate; rather relation is always and constutively enacted within a specific location and time (ce là: this there).

Segalen's rereading of exoticism, then, offers Glissant a theory of self and other which emphasises the function of relation. But Glissant does not simply appropriate Segalen's model outright; it is rearticulated through Caribbean history and landscape. As such, the theory turns 'into something new', a creolized version of Segalen's project that continues to 'uproot the Open and encroach on all that is Unique' in the name of diversity, otherness, and renewed relations with the exotic. Reading Glissant in this way challenges the form of singularity that Hallward locates in Glissant and the postcolonial. Exoticism resists the erasure of difference and the disappearance of diversity. On the other hand, Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome may provide a structural opposition to the root and as such offers an ideal model for a world of unrestricted, creolizing relations, but as with exoticism, Glissant adapts the term. Like Segalen, 'Glissant's fear is that, if the ideas of difference and specificity are lost or diluted, then everything risks collapsing into a uniform sameness', however, Dash continues, '[h]e is by no means suggesting a reversion to an unproblematic glorification of rootedness, but restating the importance of a dialectical situatedness in a system of relations'.²³⁸ The relation premised in a Glissantian poetics replaces the unique and unitary root with a rhizome-like-creolization: a creolization is not rootless but located, unrestricted, and singularizing. Glissant substitutes nationalism with a new spatial relation, dependant upon

²³⁸ J. Michael Dash 'Postcolonial Thought and the Francophone Caribbean' pp. 231-241 in *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (London: Arnold, 2003b) p. 234. Dash discusses Segalen's influence on Glissant in *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1998) pp. 33-35.

momentary situatedness within the whole-world/totality. Contrary to Hallward's account, Dash surmises that 'Glissant's point is not that hybridity [or creolization] represents the triumph of a new nomadic postcolonial identity. Rather he imagines a confluence of cultures whose creative energies are generated from the tense interdependence of specific cultures'.²³⁹ Interdependence destabilises the binary of centre and periphery, resulting in a postcolonial politics of location and relation, specific to but not specified by the situation of their articulation.

Creolization has emerged in this chapter as an imaginative engagement with the other that effects a singularly new configuration. It is an argument that runs contrary to Hallward's attempt to redefine Glissant as a Deleuzian writer, but one in which location gains renewed importance. Moreover, by utilizing the arguments of Segalen and Attridge, the focus on creolization as linked to aesthetic production has been underlined. What distinguishes a poetics of relation from a counter-poetics is the ability to seek out and engage with the unknown. Such a poetics is not about absolute statements, but the creation of partial, fragile, *échos-monde* that combine to form patterns and music. In the following chapter, the creative response to relation is reinforced by the writings of Wilson Harris. Reading these two writers together, I argue, gives a clearer sense of the way in which creolization as process may be specifically applied to literature and the Caribbean canon. And although the similarities between Harris and Glissant has received little critical attention to date, Chapter Three will argue that both writers are involved in the refinement of a distinctly Caribbean, but nevertheless universal, concept of singular literary creolization as an imaginative response to the realities of our postcolonial world.

²³⁹ Dash (2003b) p. 235.

Chapter Three

The Unfinished Digenesis of the Imagination: Creolization Theory in the Writings of Wilson Harris

you dream of writing. Of a writing free and sweeping enough to spin sentences without boundaries, words without end – a trail of islands suspended on a watery page, at the edge of over-crowded continents. Free enough to celebrate your awakening to the beauty of a world of stowage and drifting.¹

How does newness enter the world? How is it born?
Of what fusions, translations, conjoinings is it made?²

The previous chapter noted Homi Bhabha's commitment to a theory of difference that exceeds merely isolated or specific instances of enunciation, imagining the establishment of a truly '*international culture based [...] on the inscription and articulation of a culture's hybridity*'.³ Creolization, being grounded in the free reign of relation and respect for the opacity of the other, has been identified by this thesis as a model capable of fulfilling such a demand. Moreover, by incorporating the always changing relation between the self and the absolute other/unknown, creolization effects singular configurations of discourse and identity which are neither static nor hierarchical. Crucially, it is this generation of singularity, combined with a rejection of purity that affirms creolization as the Caribbean's most significant contribution to contemporary postcolonial discourse. While Édouard Glissant's

¹ Daniel Maximin 'Antillean Journey', translated by Kathleen M. Balutansky pp. 13-22 in *Caribbean Creolization: Reflections of the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature, and Identity*, edited by Kathleen M. Balutansky and Marie-Agnès Sourieau (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998) p. 13.

² Salman Rushdie *The Satanic Verses* (London: Vintage Books, 2006) p. 8.

³ Homi K. Bhabha *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) p. 38. Emphasis in the original.

important elaboration of creolization theory has been acknowledged, critical responses to his work have tended to view his contribution in terms of the development of Francophone Caribbean, or, narrower still, Martinican thought, undermining the extent to which creolization and relation are sustained through a Caribbean-wide dialogue.⁴ In particular, the affinities between Glissant and Guyanese writer Wilson Harris have largely been overlooked.⁵ This chapter is a response to this imbalance, emphasizing the shared ground between the two writers, while highlighting Harris's own nuanced account of creolization theory. My intent is not only to suggest commonalities between Harris and Glissant, but to argue that both these writers viewed in dialogue advance a complex, particular account of

⁴ In addition to the writings of Wilson Harris, Cuban author Antonio Benítez-Rojo discusses a form of creolizing relations in his usage of chaos theory to encapsulate Caribbean identity (see *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, translated by James E. Maraniss [Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996b, 2nd edition] pp. 1-81).

⁵ Mary Gallagher has recently argued that creolization theory might be read almost exclusively as the reserve of Martinican thinkers, and that while Harris, Brathwaite and Walcott 'have authored important speculative studies in Caribbean identity and culture, they have not attempted to articulate [...] an overarching, tentacular poetics, that is, a pan-Caribbean – and even global – program of culture that welds an aesthetics and an ethics to an epistemology and an ontology' (Mary Gallagher 'The *Créolité* Movement: Paradoxes of a French Caribbean Orthodoxy' pp. 220-236 in *Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory*, edited by Charles Stewart [Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, 2007] p. 221). This chapter argues against such a reading, presenting Harris's philosophical readings of the human subject in a global, even universal, relation to other subjects and his/her environment, as essential to the imaginative aesthetics of creolization he celebrates. Few works examine the affinities between Glissant and Harris: Barbra Webb's *Myth and History in Caribbean Fiction: Alejo Carpentier, Wilson Harris, and Édouard Glissant* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1992) remains the most sustained comparative study of Glissant and Harris, although her analysis primarily focuses on their fiction, rather than directly addressing their combined contribution to Caribbean creolization theory. Overall, commentary assessing Glissant and Harris as thinkers of creolization is scant, but see Eimer Page 'Historical Consciousness in the Writings of Wilson Harris and Édouard Glissant' in *Bridges Across Chasms. Towards a Transcultural Future in Caribbean Literature*, edited by Bénédicte Ledent (Liège: L3 - Liège Language and Literature, 2004) pp. 47-54; Florence Pannetier-Manckounda 'Re-visiting the Universal: Wilson Harris and Édouard Glissant' in *The Global and the Particular in the English-Speaking World*, edited by Jean-Pierre Durix, Collection "Kaléidoscopes" (Dijon: Editions Universitaires de Dijon, 2002), pp. 80-87; Uwe Schäfer 'Visions Without Presence: Imagination and the Collective Unconscious in the Poetics of Wilson Harris and Édouard Glissant' in *ACOLIT* (Special Issue Post-Colonial Theory and the Emergence of a Global Society) Vol. 3 1998 pp. 65-67.

creolization that enhances our understanding of the ways in which relation is active in the production of singular postcolonial aesthetics.

Glissant, it was argued in Chapter One, bases his theory of creolization on the rejection of pure racial or national origins in favour of opaque identities. Furthermore, his critique of the oppositional confrontation of colonialism and counter-colonial reaction contributes to a growing concern with defining postcolonialism as a movement beyond the continual reinscriptions of colonial subject positions.⁶ These fundamental principles resonate with the writings of Wilson Harris, who, as Stuart Murray comments, 'positions himself firmly against the arguments within postcolonial theory that function through binary oppositions'.⁷ In saying this Murray also recognises, however, commonalities Harris shares with other postcolonial theorists, such as Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak; particularly in the 'in-between', Third Space celebrated by Bhabha.⁸ It is this hybrid ground that this chapter will emphasise in Harris's work, foregrounding the many parallels to be drawn between Harris and Glissant, and the singular paradigm of creolization they adopt.

Bhabha maintains that the Third Space is implicated in any act of communication. The production of meaning is contingent to both 'the *place of utterance*' and the play of *différance*.⁹ The Third Space, then, is the conceptual passage in which language is brought into relation with the context of its performance, as well as the trace of previous configurations: the received meaning,

⁶ See pp. 23-26 and 141 of this thesis.

⁷ Stuart Murray 'Postcoloniality/Modernity: Wilson Harris and Postcolonial Theory' pp. 53-58 in *Review of Contemporary Fiction* Vol 17 No. 2 1997 (Summer) p. 54.

⁸ Murray (1997) p. 54.

⁹ Bhabha (1994) p. 36. See p. 147 of this thesis for further reference to Bhabha's concept.

Bhabha argues is thus hybridised. This can be taken a step further; when passing through the Third Space the enunciation is brought into relation with the other (in this case designating that which lies outwith the current limits of discourse, as I argued in Chapter Two), the creolized 'result' is an entirely original, singular existent, in that it exceeds, as Attridge argues, that which could have been 'apprehended by the old modes of understanding, and could not have been predicted by means of them'.¹⁰ In this model, the only polarisation that is established is between the known boundaries of human discourse and the unknown, the singular otherness that may be invoked to challenge the limits of the known. This polarization emerges in the writings of Wilson Harris through the revisionary, imaginative capacity he celebrates, and the ceaseless relation between the conscious and the unconscious that drives his fiction. Although, as this indicates, Harris shifts the terms of debate slightly, read together, Harris and Glissant both contribute to a singular, Caribbean-derived poetics of creolization. It is this combined account that the title of this chapter captures: 'The Digenesis of the Imagination'. This phrasing in itself is a combination of two terms – Glissant's 'digenesis' and Harris 'unfinished genesis of the imagination',¹¹ – that characterises the way in which the various pre-/colonial

¹⁰ Derek Attridge *The Singularity of Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004) p. 29. Singular is used here in the sense that Attridge employs, which should be distinguished from Peter Hallward's usage. See pp. 151-157 of this thesis for further discussion.

¹¹ Édouard Glissant *Faulkner, Mississippi*, translated by Barbara Lewis and Thomas C. Spear (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999a) p. 195; Wilson Harris 'The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination' an address to Temenos Academy, 1992 in Temenos-Helsinki, Vol.13 1992 pp. 69-85 (reproduced in Wilson Harris *Selected Essays of Wilson Harris: The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination*, edited by Andrew Bundy [London and New York: Routledge, 1999] pp. 248-260). Harris also discusses the term in Wilson Harris 'Creoleness: the Crossroads of a Civilization' pp. 23-35 in *Caribbean Creolization: Reflections of the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature, and Identity* edited by Kathleen M. Balutansky and Marie-Agnès Sourieau (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998) p. 26; and Wilson Harris's 'New Preface to *Palace*' pp. 53-57 in Wilson Harris *Selected Essays of Wilson Harris: The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination*, edited by Andrew Bundy (London and New York: Routledge, 1999) p. 56.

legacies present in Caribbean society and culture may be fruitfully cast in a process of creolization. Digenesis, a concept that Glissant introduces in *Faulkner, Mississippi* (1996), resounds with his previous rejection of purity, outlined in *Caribbean Discourse* (1981). However, as I deploy it in this chapter, the term serves as a meeting point that illustrates the fundamental commonalities between Glissant and Harris, while readjusting the focus of creolization or relation from Glissant's concern with national, social and cultural identities, more resolutely towards literature: the need to create a *fiction* of genesis. This imaginative creative capacity, in particular, characterises Harris's vision of creolization, and throughout this chapter, his essays and novels will be explored in order to draw parallels with Glissant, and to offer a model of writing that enacts the continuing relation of opacities.

Digenesis: The Origins of Creolization.

Glissant's *Caribbean Discourse* and *Poetics of Relation* (1990), while remaining focused on a poetics of creolization throughout, less often directly engage with literary legacies and how they function within relation. His study, *Faulkner, Mississippi* (1996), on the other hand, presents a sustained interrogation of the writings of William Faulkner and identifies the concept of 'digenesis', signifying a return to concerns originally raised in *Caribbean Discourse*. In this work Glissant restates his critique of pure origins and traceable genesis:

[i]n *atavistic* cultures the community takes shape around a genesis, a creation story in which there is uninterrupted lineage from father to son, with no illegitimacy. The community's ontological relationship with territory is so tight that it not only authorizes an aggrandizement of territory – as with Colonialism –

but it also foresees *what is to come, what is going to be conquered, and what is going to be discovered*.¹²

Genesis ensures not only a clear or pure succession, but it also determines a future that is necessarily an uninterrupted continuation of that lineage: a transparent, knowable future closed to creolization and, as such, offers no opportunity to redress past trauma. On the other hand ‘*composite cultures*’, a product of colonialism, ‘do not generate their own creation story but content themselves with adopting myths from atavistic cultures’.¹³ This process is evident in Caribbean adaptations of Europe’s paradise/Eden models such as those identified earlier in this thesis. However, within translations of these modes, such as is premised by James Grainger, Tom Redcam, or the later Una Marson,¹⁴ the stability or coherence of the original version is disrupted by its relocation in the New World, suggesting a poetics of creolization at work. Emphasising the potential within the creolization of a community’s origin, Glissant argues that ‘the sacred “results” not only from an ineffable experience of a creation story but also, from now on from the equally

¹² Glissant (1999a) p. 114. Emphasis in the original. Thierry Fabre provides an interesting application of Glissant’s terminology of atavistic cultures and creolization, comparing the situation of the Caribbean archipelago to the Mediterranean (Thierry Fabre ‘Metaphors for the Mediterranean: Creolization or Polyphony?’, translated by Ruth Morris in *Mediterranean Historical Review* Vol.17, No.1 2002 pp. 15-24.). His conclusion that ‘the idea of creolization is unable to account for family and lineage-based relationships or for the relationship with monotheism which is so remarkable in the Mediterranean world’ (p. 20), stresses the elements of geographical, religious, and familial unity that he argues is wanting in creolization theory. However, while acknowledging that the Mediterranean ‘imposed the idea of the One’ (Édouard Glissant ‘Beyond Babel’ pp. 561-563 in *World Literature Today*, Vol. 63 No.4, 1989 p. 561), Glissant nevertheless envisions a world of ‘archipelagic thought’ that includes both Europe and the Americas (‘From Introduction to a Poetics of the Diverse’, translated by Pierre Joris pp. 119-121 in *boundary 2* Vol.26 No.1 p. 120), and, moreover his concept of digenesis counters Fabre’s claim by offering a creation myth that links territory, community, and the sacred, but nevertheless conforms to the demands of creolization.

¹³ Glissant (1999a) p. 115. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁴ Grainger and Redcam are discussed alongside other early poets in my Introduction, while Marson’s poetry features in Chapter One. See pp. 31-43, and pp. 53-57 respectively.

ineffable intuition of the relationship between cultures'.¹⁵ In this case, rather than rejecting sacred narratives of genesis, Glissant argues that myths of origin are themselves the products of relation, generated by the composite and creolized nature of all cultures.

Glissant's critique of pure origins does not lead him to the conclusion that genesis is a redundant term, but rather it must be seen to proceed 'from a point that is hybrid', and as such constitutes a 'digenesis', 'new type of "origin", which is not about the creation of a world'.¹⁶ Where a culture is constituted from a diversity that has been brought into relation with an other, the origin of that culture may be articulated through a myth of digenesis. Glissant finds an example of this in certain Amerindian legends in which the gods are not cast as absolute and infallible Creators, but as actors involved in a revisionary process of creation and recreation: as a result 'this a Genesis, founding the sacred, but doing so outside the absolute legitimacy of possessing a community when it feels chosen by an unhesitating creator-god'.¹⁷ The concept of digenesis disrupts a community's claim of legitimacy and territory, and refers to a founding moment that is not absolute but a revisionary moment, a repetition that builds to a sense of '[v]ertigo' and 'tells us nothing absolute about how genesis takes place'.¹⁸

¹⁵ Glissant (1999a) p. 115.

¹⁶ Glissant (1999a) p. 195.

¹⁷ Glissant (1999a) p. 195. J. Michael Dash offers another example of digenesis in the Haitian Revolution as a "Europeanization" of St Dominguez', given the profound influence that the ideology of the French Revolution had on the rebellion (J. Michael Dash 'Anxious Insularity: Identity Politics and Creolization in the Caribbean' pp. 287-299 in *A Pepper-Pot of Cultures: Aspects of Creolization in the Caribbean*, edited by Gordon Collier and Ulrich Fleischmann [Matatu 27-28; Amsterdam and New York: Editions Rodopi, 2003a] p. 290).

¹⁸ Glissant (1999a) p. 203; p. 207.

The digenesis of the Caribbean community would lay no claim of legitimacy or right to a particular piece of land, however it would point back towards patterns of creolization, a mythology – not unique, but continually revised – wherein European, African, and Amerindian cultures are brought into relation.¹⁹ Glissant, then, presents a theory of cultural ‘origin’ that is itself creolized, rejecting the absolute, while maintaining a sense of the sacred: ‘[t]he sacred is what is woven in the Diverse and in the Relation’.²⁰ Importantly, Glissant not only characterises myth as an endless revisionary moment while retaining a sense of the sacred at the heart of human communities, he also suggests that the response to historical trauma and displacement is found in the imaginative recreation of a fiction of origin. It is this emphasis in particular that allows Paget Henry to argue that Glissant, like Harris, may be placed in the poeticist faction of the Caribbean philosophical tradition. As Henry explains, what distinguishes poeticists from historicists, the two camps he identifies, is

the role of the self in the project of postcolonial reconstruction. It is an issue that poeticists and historicists have treated very differently. The poeticists make the recovery of the postcolonial self an important precondition for institutional recovery, while the historicists tend to see recovery of the self as following institutional recovery.²¹

Digenesis is a poetic response to the displacement effected by the colonial project, that absolves the self from discourses that enforce absolute authority and legitimacy,

¹⁹ Glissant explores this moment of digenesis in his novel *The Fourth Century*, explored in Chapter Four of this thesis, pp. 212-216.

²⁰ Glissant (1999a) p. 207.

²¹ Paget Henry *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) p. 93. Glissantian poetics are treated only nominally in this study, however a detailed account of the philosophical influences in Harris's theories is offered in Chapter Four. Other poeticists identified by Henry include Aimé Césaire, Claude McKay, Derek Walcott, Sylvia Wynter (Chapter Five). The historicists include C. L. R. James (Chapter Two), Frantz Fanon (Chapter Three), Marcus Garvey, and George Padmore.

prior to the establishment of a new institutional and national framework. In the same way, for Harris, reconstruction lies primarily in the imaginative capacity of humans to revise their relation to a traumatic history, and as such literature is an important site of interrogation throughout his essays.²²

Wilson Harris: The Re-Visionary Imagination

Born in Guyana in 1921, Wilson Harris is best known as a writer of highly original, often challenging poetry, essays, and fiction which range from *Palace of the Peacock* (1960) to his most recent, *The Ghost of Memory* (2006). These works, as Andrew Bundy argues, 'can be treated as a single continuous dream-book, whose text, just like a cycle of dreams over a number of years, is an inflection of thematic clusters and revisitations'.²³ Indeed, Harris's novels are often written in clusters: *The Palace of the Peacock*, *The Far Journey of Oudin* (1961), *The Whole Armour* (1962), and *The Secret Ladder* (1963) form *The Guyana Quartet*; a 'Carib diptych' exploring indigenous legacies includes *The Sleepers of Roraima* (1970), and *The Age of the Rainmakers* (1971); and finally *Carnival* (1985), *The Infinite Rehearsal* (1987) and *The Four Banks of the River Space* (1990) explore themes of folk art, carnival, and masking in the 'The Lord Carnival Trilogy'.²⁴ Yet while Harris has been most prolific in the production of fiction, as Nathaniel Mackey has noted, the themes of his

²² Harris's *Womb of Space* (1983), for example, interrogates a wide range of texts and authors, including, William Faulkner (Chapter One), Edgar Allan Poe (Chapter Two), Ralph Ellison (Chapter Three), and Jean Rhys (pp. 49-54, 59,63) (Wilson Harris *The Womb of Space: The Cross-Cultural Imagination* [Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1983a]). The concept of rebuilding in response to past afflictions can also be found in my discussion of Gisèle Pineau and Shani Mootoo in Chapter One, pp. 100-126.

²³ Andrew Bundy 'Introduction' pp. 1-34 in *Selected Essays of Wilson Harris: The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination*, by Wilson Harris edited by Andrew Bundy (London and New York: Routledge, 1999) p. 13.

²⁴ Bundy (1999) p. 15.

novels are never far away from his philosophy which is centred around the reimagining of the individual's relation to the past.²⁵ Like the Amerindian mythology noted by Glissant, Harris's poetics may be characterised by a continual renegotiation or relating of various pasts to both the present and contingent future. In this case, where atavistic cultures forgo the revisionary potential of creolization and establish a clear and unfaltering genealogy between past, present and (known) future, Harris follows Glissant and, as Dash notes, 'calls into question the possibility of a fixed essence or linear filiations in the Caribbean by using a similar term to Glissant's [digenesis], "unfinished genesis"'.²⁶ It is this always repeated, 'unfinished genesis' that Harris believes lies within the capacity of the imagination, that allies him with Caribbean philosophic and literary interventions in postcolonial theory.

The reassessment of Peter Hallward's critique of Glissant, explored in Chapter Two of this thesis, was premised on a distinction between totality as an absolute that eradicates difference, and totality as the universal play of opaque relations which nevertheless remains context-specific. I want to carry this distinction through into my discussion of Harris, who similarly employs notions of the totality without reinscribing absolute values. Like Glissant, Harris criticises claims of legitimacy, of a community's right to an 'absolute place', and locates in absolutism a belief in racial purity that blocks 'the flow of *measureless cross-culturalities*'.²⁷ In order for

²⁵ Nathaniel Mackey *Discrepant Engagement: Dissonance, Cross-Culturality, and Experimental Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) p. 171.

²⁶ J. Michael Dash 'Anxious Insularity: Identity Politics and Creolization in the Caribbean' pp. 287-299 in *A Pepper-Pot of Cultures: Aspects of Creolization in the Caribbean*, edited by Gordon Collier and Ulrich Fleischmann (*Matatu* 27-28; Amsterdam and New York: Editions Rodopi, 2003a) p. 288.

²⁷ Wilson Harris 'Epilogue: Theatre of the Arts' pp. 261-268 in *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture* edited by Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005) p. 261. Emphasis in the original.

creolization, or cross-culturality, to come into effect, seeming absolutes must come into relation with one another:

[t]he animal state seems absolute in its own right. The divine state seems absolute in its own right. When absolute frontiers, enshrined in absolute separation of animal being and divine being, are broken, a re-visionary momentum is set up within the depth resources of language to question the surfaces of language and the reification of conquest in the name of the divine. When we perceive an animal ingredient in the divine, we find ourselves steeped in plural masks that break an addiction to power.²⁸

The need to ‘perceive an animal ingredient in the divine’, as a challenge to absolute and unchanging identities, accounts for the recurring reference to the pre-Columbian masked deity of Quetzalcoatl in his writings: ‘a human mask or face interwoven with or flanked by a *snake (coatl) and a bird (quetzal)*’.²⁹ By challenging the absolute unity of character, Quetzalcoatl – deity, human, and animal – signals ‘the *partial* nature of all appearances’.³⁰ And it is on this partial or fragmentary nature of identity and discourse, whether in a digenesis or the genesis of the imagination, that creolization is based.

Harris, Glissant, and Bhabha all share this fundamental belief in the partiality of cultures, and make a distinction between multiculturalism, which reifies community groupings, on the one hand, and cross-culturality, on the other.³¹ As Harris explains,

[m]ulti-culturality at best – exercised by a reasonable establishment – signifies an umbrella of tolerance over many different cultures. But reason at times wears thin and that

²⁸ Harris (1999) p. 189.

²⁹ Wilson Harris ‘The Age of the Imagination’ pp. 17-27 in *Journal of Caribbean Literatures* Vol 2 Nos 1-3 2000 (Spring) p. 17. Emphasis in the original.

³⁰ Harris (2000) p. 18. Emphasis in the original.

³¹ For Bhabha it is the distinction between cultural diversity and cultural difference (1994, p. 34, see also pp. 144-151 of this thesis).

umbrella may be dashed by violent conflict. There is an incorrigible focus in multi-culturality. Each culture regards itself as intact (including the dominant culture) and the quest for wholeness lies solely within itself.³²

Harris's rejection of multiculturalism lies in precisely the same grounds as Bhabha's critique of cultural diversity as promoting 'totalized cultures that live unsullied by the intertextuality of their historical locations'.³³ However, implicit in Harris's closing sentence is the notion that whereas a culture must accept partiality and its cross-cultural status, its essential motivation must be recognised as a movement towards a 'wholeness' beyond itself, rather than 'within itself'. Mark Williams and Alan Riach pick up on this strand of Harris's philosophy, noting that 'Wilson Harris requires us to embrace, or at least entertain, a kind of Humanism [...] that reaches back behind the Renaissance and which sees the various branches of human knowledge as connected to a single, central source'.³⁴ Various critics have attempted to classify Harris's philosophical approach: C. L. R. James argues that works such as *Palace of the Peacock* approximate the progression towards a Heideggerian authentic existence; Gregory Shaw rejects James's position, citing Hegel as a more significant influence; while Paget Henry accepts that while both James and Shaw present valid arguments, Harris's philosophy exceeds the Heideggerian or Hegelian frame.³⁵

³² Harris (2000) p. 17.

³³ Bhabha (1994) p. 34.

³⁴ Mark Williams and Alan Riach 'Reading Wilson Harris' pp. 51-60 in *Wilson Harris: The Uncompromising Imagination*, edited by Hena Maes-Jelinek (Sydney: Dangaroo Press, 1991) p. 52. For a further discussion of Harris and spirituality, see Michael N. Jagessar 'Wilson Harris: A Theological Perspective' in *Wilson Harris: The Uncompromising Imagination*, edited by Hena Maes-Jelinek (Sydney: Dangaroo Press) pp. 221-229.

³⁵ C. L. R. James not only argues that Harris adopts Heidegger's concept of authentic existence, but that he may also be situated in a philosophical tradition that includes Sartre, in particular the Sartre of *Being and Nothingness* (1943) (insofar as the choice of an authentic experience may be understood as a political choice), and Karl Jaspers (in that the authentic human reaction is only revealed in an extreme situation) (see C. L. R. James *Spheres of Existence: Selected Writings* [London: Allison and Busby Ltd., 1980] pp. 157-172). Also see Gregory Shaw 'The Novelist as Shaman: Art and Dialectic

However, what remains absolutely fundamental to Harris is this form of humanism identified by Riach and Williams, for it illustrates the extent to which Harrisian poetics represents a move towards wholeness as opposed to fragmentation.³⁶

Ostensibly this might be seen to promote a progression towards the singular totality of the Deleuzian kind: a transcendence of specific differences, as Hallward argued. However Harris's 'wholeness' should be read along the lines of Glissant's totality. Although the risk inherent in both terms, as Glissant notes, is that they are 'in danger of immobility', relation, Glissant's privileged term, is designated as an 'open totality': unceasing, unquantifiable, opaque.³⁷ Similarly, Harris reads 'wholeness' as incomprehensible and unfinished rather than signifying a state of immanence. This perspective is revealed in his discussion of the three stages of alchemy, to which Harris refers in his commentary on the function of the archetypal child of dreams in Amerindian mythology:

first of all, nigredo or blackness – sometimes called *massa confusa* or unknown territory (not to be equated superficially with the colour black, but with an undiscovered realm), second *albedo* or whiteness (again not to be equated superficially with colour white since it means an inner perspective or illumination, the dawn of a new consciousness), third *cauda pavonis* or the colours of the peacock, which may be equated with all the variable possibilities or colours of fulfilment we can never totally realize.³⁸

Encompassing all colours and their possible variations, the colours of the peacock can be read as an opacity, a configuration that is never realized or static. For Harris,

in the Work of Wilson Harris' in *The Literate Imagination: Essays on the Novels of Wilson Harris*, edited by Michael Gilkes (London: MacMillan Caribbean, 1989) pp. 141-151; and Paget Henry (2000) pp. 90-114.

³⁶ Williams and Riach (1991) p. 54.

³⁷ Édouard Glissant *Poetics of Relation*, translated by Betsy Wing (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1997) p. 171.

³⁸ Harris (1999) p. 169. This reference to peacock colours, clearly points toward Harris's first novel *Palace of the Peacock*, discussed on pp. 254-258, 260-291 of this thesis.

alchemization provides a metaphor of creolization in that, he notes, it points to a continual 'dialogue with otherness' that 'has its "immeasurable point" in acceptance of the mystery of grace ceaselessly *within* yet ceaselessly *without* human and natural endeavours'.³⁹ Alchemy signifies the relation of absolute otherness and realised forms that is essential in the generation of singular creolization, while the never totally realized peacock colours signify the opacity of relational subject position, what Glissant would term *échos-monde*.

This reference to alchemy also points towards a further, and, I would suggest more significant, philosophical influence on Harris: Jung, whose theorization of the alchemical process Harris acknowledges.⁴⁰ As Mackey explains: 'Jung, to whose writings on alchemy Harris has repeatedly alluded and referred, writes of "the indescribable and indeterminable nature of this wholeness", explaining that "wholeness consists partly of the conscious man and partly of the unconscious man. But we cannot define that latter or indicate his boundaries"'.⁴¹ This unrealisable wholeness contains characteristics of Glissant's totality: a varying pattern of momentary configurations that is produced in the relation between known and unknown, or, for Jung, consciousness and unconsciousness. Creolization, insofar as it produces a new state of consciousness through the staging of a relating, is akin to this alchemical process. Yet whereas, as Michael Gilkes notes, the endgame of alchemy 'was to transform sinful man [...] into a perfect harmony with God',⁴² for Harris, as

³⁹ Harris (1983a) p. 72. Emphasis in the original.

⁴⁰ For Jung's discussion of alchemy see C. G. Jung *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung Vol 12 Psychology and Alchemy*, edited by Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, Gerhard Adler, and William McGuire, translated by R. F. C. Hull (London, Routledge, 2nd edition, 1969).

⁴¹ Mackey (1993) p. 176.

⁴² Michael Gilkes *Wilson Harris and the Caribbean Novel* (London: Longman MacMillan, 1975) p. 46.

Riach and Williams note, it is part of his attempt to '*envisage* a world in which humans would be fully at home'.⁴³ If genesis, by Glissant's account is a form of diversion that looks elsewhere, to some reified and legitimizing ancestral origin rather than the realities of the contemporary land, then Harris's impulse towards harmony must too be understood as an attempt to theorize the connection between human communities and their surroundings: what Harris refers to as an asymmetric relationship between all things.⁴⁴ It is not a move elsewhere, a transcendence into some ideal other-world or heaven. Considering Harris's spirituality, Michael Jagessar argues that according to the biblical account of Genesis 'God images His own self in humankind and, in so doing, imparts to humanity the ability to image all creation in relation to God'.⁴⁵ In this case, the harmony with God implicit in the goals of alchemy is to be found in humankind's ability to create, to imagine. As for Glissant, a sense of the sacred may be found in the imagination and the always changing human relations in the totality.

The rejection of fragmentation is a fundamental premise for Harris. But so too is it for Glissant and Bhabha, for it signifies a multi-culturalist world view in which communities are cast as non-relational, absolute entities, protected against infiltration by foreigners. The counteraction of 'visualizing totalities', however, rather than positing contrary absolute values, implies an infinite process, not the enforcement of uniformity. As Harris argues:

⁴³ Williams and Riach (1991) p. 54. Emphasis in the original.

⁴⁴ As Harris writes: '*Asymmetric context* implies that the unknowable God mediates between all structures. Thus if one were to say "the sun is a rose" one would visualize – in asymmetric context – an inimitable or unstructured mediation existing between *sun and rose*' (Wilson Harris 'The Frontier on Which *Heart of Darkness* Stands' pp. 262-268 in *Heart of Darkness: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, Sources and Criticism*, edited by Robert Kimbrough, 3rd edition [New York and London: N. W. Norton and Co., 1988] p. 263).

⁴⁵ Jagessar (1991) p. 226.

within the fabric of imaginative exploration we pursue [...] homogeneity is a biological hypothesis that relates all mankind to a basic or primordial ancestor, but as a cultural model, exercised by a ruling ethnic group, it tends to become an organ of conquest and division because of imposed unity that actually subsists on the oppression of others.⁴⁶

Harris is drawing a clear distinction between biological homogeneity on the one hand, and a cultural project of unity or wholeness that should not be equated with sameness, on the other. Therefore, Harris distinguishes his vision of cross-culturality from the forms of hybridity that Robert Young elaborates – the nineteenth century debates over miscegenation and racial purity – and argues for a relational, cultural frame more akin to Brathwaite's model.⁴⁷ By his account, the fact of 'cultural *heterogeneity*' makes available 'the evolutionary thrust' to 'the orders of the imagination'.⁴⁸ It is in this respect that Harris celebrates the writings of William Faulkner;⁴⁹ but more importantly, his distinction between the same and the diverse illustrates the extent to which Harris and Glissant share a similar philosophical vision. For both writers totality and wholeness signify the ideal state of creolization

⁴⁶ Harris (1983a) p. xviii.

⁴⁷ Brathwaite links creolization to the specific context of the New World and the settlers/slaves relation to it (Edward Brathwaite *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770-1820* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971] pp. xiv-xv). See also Robert Young *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995). See pp. 1-6 of this thesis for further reference.

⁴⁸ Harris (1983a) p. xviii. Emphasis mine. Harris's reference to the evolution of the imagination, should not be taken to imply a progression wherein better ways of thinking replace outdated ones. Rather, as with Harris's conception of history discussed later in this chapter, it encapsulates the ever-changing partiality of humanity: 'I used the term evolution to imply a variable bridge' (1983a p. 72).

⁴⁹ This shared appreciation of Faulkner makes a profound link between Harris and Glissant. In a recent interview Glissant identifies Césaire, Carpentier, and Harris as the three writers he shares most in common with: 'regardless of the language we use [...we] all have a common language which comes from a trust in words, in the power of language, in the techniques we have primarily borrowed from Faulkner: accumulation, lists, redundancies, densely packing information, deferred revelations' (Glissant cited in Tirthanker Chanda 'The Cultural "Creolization" of the World: an Interview with Edouard Glissant' *Label France* No. 38 2000 (January), http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/label_france/ENGLISH/DOSSIER/2000/15creolisation.html accessed online 15/01/07). For each author's discussion on Faulkner, see Harris (1983a, chapter 1) and Glissant (1999a).

that exists when all cultures recognise themselves as partial and composite: a point well illustrated by Harris's references to 'the mystery of cross-cultural wholeness steeped in the freedom of diversity'.⁵⁰ A Harrisian wholeness is equivalent to Glissant's totality, each pointing towards an infinite, all encompassing stage of creolization.⁵¹ To be sure, both terms initially appear to establish a status quo, an eventual state of completion beyond further creolization. However, stasis is in neither theorist's mind: the 'connections', the pattern of relations, remain visible within the totality. This is an argument made subtly by Monica Pozzi, who argues that while Harris presents a theory of cross-culturality, 'he is no hybridist' but rather invites us to witness the veils and contradictions of history.⁵² Clearly Pozzi regards hybridity as a perfect amalgamation of two 'originals', to produce a third existent (recalling, perhaps, the botanical notions of hybridity referred to by Young). Instead, she wants to emphasise Harris's insistence on the visible traces and tensions that remain within the process of creolization; a point that is echoed by Glissant. For both theorists totality is not the transcendence of differences between, but a scale of creolization at which point it is no longer possible to individuate original identities, and only the ever changing pattern or peacock colours may be appreciated.

In addition to casting wholeness as a variable, non-absolute state, both Harris and Glissant make an important qualification to their theories: the process of

⁵⁰ Wilson Harris 'Creoleness: the Crossroads of a Civilization' pp. 23-35 in *Caribbean Creolization: Reflections of the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature, and Identity* edited by Kathleen M. Balutansky and Marie-Agnès Sourieau (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998) p. 27.

⁵¹ For further discussion of this point see Hena Maes-Jelinek 'From Living Nature to Borderless Culture in Wilson Harris's Work' pp. 247-260 in *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture* edited by Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey, Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005) p. 248.

⁵² Monica Pozzi 'When the Other is Wilson Harris's' pp. 21-40 in *Resisting Alterities: Wilson Harris and Other Avatars of Otherness*, edited by Marco Fazzini (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004) p. 35.

creolization is unceasing as the play of relation always involves the interaction with the unknown, which, as Jung notes ‘we cannot define’.⁵³ In the alchemical process this element takes the form of grace, ‘the unfathomable catalyst’.⁵⁴ Harris makes this point:

[t]he wedding of grace to animal humanity is a prime aspect of harlequin psyche; and susceptibilities to disease and to therapy of genesis are so interwoven that creation appears decadent or becomes a ceaseless, never-finished dialogue with hidden shadow.

The action of illegitimate grace cannot be proven. It lives in shadow to uproot earth into collaborative curvature or cycles.⁵⁵

This portrayal has much in common with the presentation of creolization as a singular paradigm of the Attridge variety. The ‘harlequin psyche’ (the cross-cultural imagination, or relational identity) witnesses the relation between the known self (‘animal humanity’) and the that which lies outwith the current limits of knowledge; the unknown, or singular other (‘grace’ or ‘hidden shadow’). The regenerative vision that Harris celebrates is to be found within this ceaseless creolization of otherness. Moreover, what he adds to creolization theory, is a concerted attempt to conceptualise the role of the absolute other, which Harris does by reference to spiritual concepts of grace or the Creator. This is not dogmatic, nor does it point to an absolute philosophical position: Harris himself has emphasised that he does not belong to any church.⁵⁶ Rather, Harris’s employment of spiritual concepts highlights the centrality of creation in this work. Where Glissant merely suggests the unknown

⁵³ Jung cited by Mackey (1993) p. 176.

⁵⁴ Harris (1983a) p. 128.

⁵⁵ Harris (1983a) p. 96-97.

⁵⁶ Alan Riach ‘Interview with Wilson Harris, 1990’ pp. 33-66 in Alan Riach and Mark Williams (1992) *The Radical Imagination: Lectures and Talks by Wilson Harris* (Liège, Belgium: L3 – Liège Language and Literature) p. 57.

element in relation – creolization’s ability to effect relations between peoples (and between people and place), and to produce entirely new forms – Harris emphatically identifies a concept that is absolutely other, unknowable, but which may be associated with the peculiar creativity of creolization: both internal and external to (‘ceaselessly *within* yet ceaselessly *without*’)⁵⁷ the human imagination and consciousness.

Harris’s most significant contribution to relation theory, then, lies in his amplification of the role of the creative imagination in the function of creolization, but his references to total concepts such as grace or wholeness, like Glissant, should not be read as a sign of the reinscription of the same. Like Attridge’s singular art work, the human imagination produces wholly new configurations, new ways of thinking, only when brought into relation with the other: ‘the ceaseless dialogue it inserts between hardened conventions and eclipsed or half-eclipsed otherness, within an intuitive self that moves endlessly into flexible patterns, arcs or bridges of community’.⁵⁸ The potential for the continual genesis (or, given its composite roots, digenesis) of the imagination and original creolizations lies in this ‘ceaseless dialogue’ with opaque, unknowable otherness.

Creolization and the Collective Unconscious.

In Harris’s writings, as with Glissant, relating to otherness lies behind creolization. Moreover, Attridge’s dividing line between the limits of cultural discourse and that which exceeds it is suggestive of what Uwe Schäfer has identified in both the

⁵⁷ Harris (1983a) p. 72. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁸ Harris (1983a) p. xviii.

writings of Glissant and Harris: the collective unconscious.⁵⁹ However, while for Glissant, the relational postionality of various *échos-monde* may be imagined in terms of a collective, but not fixed, unity; it is only in the writings of Harris that the collective unconscious assumes its full, Jungian significance.⁶⁰ In the hands of Harris, it is the collective unconscious that marks the unrealised otherness from which new imaginative forms are stimulated. Although the collective unconscious is a term directly raised by Harris, it may be related to a further concept employed by Harris: the Void. Viewing these as relative terms, however, this is to adopt a slightly different approach to that offered, for example, by Paget Henry in *Caliban's Reason*

⁵⁹ Uwe Schäfer 'Visions Without Presence: Imagination and the Collective Unconscious in the Poetics of Wilson Harris and Édouard Glissant' in *ACOLIT* (Special Issue Post-Colonial Theory and the Emergence of a Global Society) Vol. 3 1998 pp. 65-67. There is, however, a distinction to be drawn here between Harris and Glissant: whereas both writers do investigate the notion of a collective unconscious, as Celia Britton highlights, Glissant's evocation of the collective unconscious is more akin to that of Frantz Fanon and Freud, than of Jung (Celia Britton *Race and the Unconscious: Freudianism in French Caribbean Thought* [Oxford: LEGENDA, 2002] pp. 63-65). The focus for Glissant is, thus, repression and trauma: the impact of 'diversion' on the collective unconscious, rather than the identification of recurring archetypes. As he writes in *Caribbean Discourse*: '[o]ur task here is not to illustrate a Jungian point of view, and we do not defend the existence of determining, universal archetypes. But we believe in the repercussions of socio-historical givens, not only on our beliefs, our morals, our ideologies (what is known as the superstructure), but also, under certain conditions, on the formation of a field of commonalities, which might be termed a collective unconscious' (cited in Britton [2002] p. 63, my translation). In this respect, at this point, Glissant stands apart from not only Harris, but also Aimé Césaire, who, in a letter to Lilyan Kesteloot (1959) wrote that 'all or almost all images are reducible to some *primordial images*, which – encrusted in the collective unconscious – are universal, as the language of dreams proves, identical for all people above and beyond the diversity of languages and modes of existence' (cited by Arnold, A. James *Modernism and Negritude: The Poetry and Politics of Aimé Césaire* [Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1981] p. 60, emphasis by Arnold). It is with *Poetics of Relation*, however, that Glissant begins to signal an interest in what might be recognised as archetypes that relate specific acts of violence to common, universal impulses. Describing relation, Glissant writes: '[t]he position of each part within this whole; that is, the acknowledged validity of each specific Plantation yet at the same time the urgent need to understand the hidden order of the whole' (Glissant [1997] p. 131).

⁶⁰ The particular relation between Harris and Jung is significant, although not exactly one of direct influence. As Harris argues, 'Jung never influenced me, but I had a dialogue with him. I came to him rather late and I had been involved in these things myself, but I was alone to a large extent. I had no one to turn to, and when I came to Jung and read what he had to say about the collective unconscious, it sustained and supported me' (Harris in Riach and Williams [1992] p. 62).

(2000), which represents the most comprehensive account of Harris's ontology.⁶¹

Henry characterises the Void as a reaction of the consciousness, a voiding of the ego that effects 'a deintentionalized state' in which the ego is unable to exist: '[i]t is now in the Harrisian void or abyss'.⁶² Combining both the Heideggerian authentic existence and Jaspers's account of the subject's response to an extreme situation, Henry argues that in Harris's philosophy, '[a]uthenticity requires the recognition of voidings and the decision to live out of them and the vulnerabilities they create'.⁶³ However, Henry's focus offers little sense of the profound creativity that Harris finds in the Void. Rather than seeing it as a reactive response by consciousness, as an action, I want to suggest that the Void is best understood as a noun, hence the capitalisation.⁶⁴ In the same way that, as I argued in Chapter Two, the creative writer

⁶¹ See Henry (2000) pp. 90-114. Sandra Drake also identifies the importance of the unconscious in Harris's work, focusing, in particular, on his fiction. For Drake, Harris's concern with the unconscious psyche is evidence of a Modernism comparable to Joyce and Woolf (Sandra E Drake *Wilson Harris and the Modern Tradition: A New Architecture of the World* [New York, West Port, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1986] pp. 4-5, see also pp. 3-27).

⁶² Henry (2000) p. 98-99.

⁶³ Henry (2000) p. 101.

⁶⁴ Another theorist to utilise the concept of the Void is Alain Badiou. To a certain extent, both Harris and Badiou view the Void as a component of a situation. Further, it plays a role in the production of original formations. In Badiou's terminology, the Void of a situation makes possible an event. Importantly, it is only the event that signifies the production genuine originality that could not have been predicted by the status quo (Peter Hallward *Badiou: a Subject to Truth* [Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003] p. 114). That the Void is instrumental in the production of singular forms, does highlight commonalities with the process of creolization. However, as Hallward notes, Badiou's ontology is fundamentally directed towards the non-relational and the generic, which, I would suggest, are two concepts difficult to reconcile with Harris's vision of wholeness (Hallward [2003] p. xxxi; Peter Hallward 'Introduction: "Consequences of Abstraction"' pp. 2-20 in *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, edited by Peter Hallward [London and New York: Continuum, 2004] p. 8, 14). As such, Badiou falls into the same category of singularizing thought that Hallward identifies in Deleuze and Glissant, leading Hallward to reassert the question posed in *Absolutely Postcolonial*: '[m]ight it be possible, in partial competition with Badiou's conception of the generic, to develop a notion of the *specific* as an emphatically subjective orientation – but one that is, precisely, specific to (rather than specified by) those objectifying conditions that enable it to exist?' (Hallward, 2003 p. xxxv, see also pp. 271-291). For further details see Alain Badiou *Theoretical Writings*, edited and translated by Ray Brassier and Alberto Toscano (especially pp. 59-99 on the event and void); Hallward (2003) pp. xxi-xxxvi, 81-106, 107-122, and 271-291; Hallward (2004) pp. 1-20 gives a clear introduction to Badiou's framework; and Daniel Bensaïd 'Alain Badiou and the Miracle of the Event' in *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of*

is faced with a relation with otherness in the production of singularity, the Void represents this always present, unknowable state that lies outwith human consciousness and is available to consciousness as a source of creolization. This particular reading of the Void may be identified in his novel, *Jonestown* (1996), Harris's fictional account of the mass suicide of over nine hundred members of the People's Temple cult in Guyana on the eighteenth of November 1978. This novel points toward the paradoxical creativity and regenerative potential of the Void, and, further, it brings into focus two aspects of Jungian philosophy central to Harris's writings and the model of creolization that they promote: the collective unconscious and the archetype.⁶⁵

Jonestown is presented as the first hand account of Francisco Bone, the sole survivor of the tragedy and the fictional author of the text that the reader experiences. Explaining the impulse behind the writing of this 'long fragmented archetypal narrative',⁶⁶ Bone claims:

Jonestown had left me stunned but I needed to revisit the scene and the entire environment – not only interior but coastal – in which it had occurred to learn of the foundations of doomed colonies, cities, villages, settlements, ancient and modern, by retracing my steps, by accepting my wounds and lameness and

Philosophy, edited by Peter Hallward (London and New York: Continuum, 2004) pp. 94-105, addresses the question of relation in Badiou's writings. See also pp. 304-305 of this thesis.

⁶⁵ Sandra Drake posits R. D. Laing's theory of cultural and familial patterns, in which individuals repeat certain behavioural characteristics or actions that have been consciously or unconsciously transmitted to their psyche, as a fundamental aspect of Harris's fiction. In this way, recurring human traits are the results of 'frozen, repetitive patterns [that] outlast the "individual" human entity' (Drake [1986] p. 12). This appears to share much with the function of archetypes that I am discussing. However, as I will go on to suggest, the archetypal characters and events that Harris's fiction identifies, points towards not only a repetition but finds in the archetype an undiscovered potentiality that has not yet become part of the conscious. For Harris, archetypes continue to re-emerge because there remains some still to be comprehended aspect of it. Given this latent potential, the malleability of the archetypal forms he posits, and his specific identification of Jung as an influence, it is the archetype rather than Laing's repetitive patterns that better fits Harris's poetics.

⁶⁶ Wilson Harris *Jonestown* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996) p. 167.

the speed of light with which one travels back into the past from bleak futures.⁶⁷

Both Harris and Bone approach the Jonestown tragedy not as a unique historical event, but as a sign of the tyranny of absolute authority that has echoes in colonial oppression, World War Two, and contemporary conflicts in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Ethiopia; and a utopianism that recalls El Dorado, Atlantis, or Ancient Rome.⁶⁸ In this way, the tragedy is cast as an archetype for violence and absolutism, in the broad usage of the term adopted by Northrop Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957),⁶⁹ and the impulse to revisit the historical moment is a desire to understand the function of that archetype throughout human history to gain a sense of the relationality, or ‘epic net’, that links together these experiences.⁷⁰

To a certain extent, there is common ground between Frye’s concept of the archetype and that of Jung: both suggest that the defining characteristic of the archetype is its commonality to all humanity. However, while Frye argues that the universality of literary archetypes is an effect of education and global media⁷¹ – a view that Frantz Fanon also takes when he refers to the role of the collective unconscious in shaping black consciousness as other⁷² – for Jung the recognition of

⁶⁷ Harris (1996) p. 170.

⁶⁸ Harris (1996) pp. 77, 83, and 86.

⁶⁹ For Frye, archetypes are recognisable symbols that ‘unify and integrate our literary experience’ (*Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* [Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957 p. 99], also see pp. 99-126 and pp. 140-204 for further discussion). Keith Mitchell similarly highlights the archetypal significance of the massacre, arguing that ‘*Jonestown* expands the specificity of holocaust narratives to include those which have disappeared in the Void of our collective unconscious and to act in the process of historical and psychic recovery’ (Keith Mitchell ‘All Our Yesterdays: Utopianism, Holocausts, and History in Wilson Harris’ *Jonestown*’ pp. 223-246 in *Changing Currents: Transnational Caribbean Literary and Cultural Criticism*, edited by Emily Allen Williams and Melvin Rahming [Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2006] p. 227).

⁷⁰ Harris (1996) p. 186.

⁷¹ Frye (1957) p. 99.

⁷² Fanon argues that ‘[t]he collective unconscious is not dependent on cerebral heredity; it is the result of what I shall call the unreflected imposition of a culture’ (*Black Skin, White Masks*, translated by

archetypes is not an effect of conscious training. Rather, they are unconscious, common images that are always already latent in the psyche: as Jung writes,

there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconsciousness does not develop individually, but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents.⁷³

Jung's contention that not only is the archetype a component of a universal, innate collective structure, but that it 'can only become conscious secondarily' is of fundamental importance to Harris's poetics. Although Jung provides examples of frequent archetypes, such as the Mother, or the Trickster, these distinct forms are recognisable only because of their commonness to every day life. At first, they, like all archetypes, are present in the psyche as 'forms without content' and only assume specific forms once activated in response to a situation.⁷⁴ Archetypes, then, are not strictly speaking definite representations or forms, for, as Jung argues, the term 'applies only indirectly to the "représentations collectives", since it designates only those psychic contents which have not yet been submitted to conscious elaboration'.⁷⁵ Thus, the collective unconscious and the archetypes which constitute

Charles Lam Markmann [London and Sydney: Pluto Press, 1986] p. 189). For further reference to Jung, the collective unconscious and archetypes, also see pp. 143-146, 189, 191-193). Wole Soyinka has also commented on Jung's use of the collective unconscious and archetypes, which he compares to African mythical thinking. For Soyinka, the problem lies in Jung's distinction between the primitive and civilized mentality: 'Jung differentiates the nature of the archetype in the "primitive" mind from that of the "civilized" mind even as he pays lip service to the universality of a collective unconscious, and to the archetype as the inhabitant of that hinterland' (Wole Soyinka *Myth, Literature and the African World* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976] p. 35).

⁷³ C. G. Jung *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung Vol 9 Part I: Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, edited by Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, Gerhard Adler, and William McGuire, translated by R. F. C. Hull (London, Routledge, 1969, 2nd edition) p. 43 (see also pp. 1-41, 42-53). For a good introduction to the terms, Anthony Stevens *Jung: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) pp. 47-58.

⁷⁴ Jung (1969) p. 48.

⁷⁵ Jung (1969) p. 5.

it are always that which lies outside of recognisable cultural discourse: absolute otherness in the sense that this thesis has promoted. Furthermore, the process of incorporation of the archetype into consciousness denotes a process of transformation that agrees with Glissant's creolization theory: as Jung argues, '[t]he archetype is essentially an unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and it takes its colour from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear'.⁷⁶ In other words, as the archetype moves from unconsciousness into consciousness, otherness into the known, its content is altered in relation to the specific context in which it is realised: essentially the function of creolization.

In *Jonestown*, Harris's references to archetypes and archetypal narrative are fundamentally of the Jungian type: Bone's description of himself as belonging to 'peoples of the Void', implies the singular otherness of the collective unconsciousness (Void) of which he is a part; while his need to revisit past events from the future 'in order to bridge chasms in historical memory', is a sign of the potential to relate recurring archetypes to one another.⁷⁷ However, the novel suggests that archetypes have become so thoroughly assimilated into consciousness and

⁷⁶ Jung (1969) p. 5. This contradicts Wole Soyinka's reading of the archetype. Drawing a distinction between African mythical thinking and Jung's ontology, Soyinka writes that that inner world is not static, but 'being constantly enriched by the moral and historic experience of man. Jung, by contrast declares that "the archetype does not proceed from physical facts"' (Soyinka [1976] p. 35). However, Soyinka's desire to read the archetype as 'autogenous' (p. 35), which would suggest it as a singularity of Hallward's model, ignores the way in which it relates to context in the process of its conscious manifestation. This is the critical distinction: the form that the archetype assumes in the consciousness is relative to the varying contexts in which appears. When Jung argues that 'the archetype does not proceed from physical facts', he does so to emphasise the primacy of its unconscious state. The archetype itself is always properly other/unknowable derived from the collective unconscious, and continually responding to the circumstances of its conscious realisation. In this way both the known archetypal form and the unknowable collective unconscious of which it is a part, are founded on their relation to the socio-historic circumstances that define their limits.

⁷⁷ Harris (1996) p. 7; p. 5.

appear in such specified forms as seemingly unique historical events, that they are no longer recognised as archetypes of the collective unconsciousness. This is why it is Bone's task to expose Jonah Jones (the fictionalised Jim Jones, leader of the Peoples' Temple) as an archetype of violence and absolute power, not as the instigator of a one-off event, exclusive to a specific time, place, and group of people. As Bone writes in his letter to W.H. in the novel's opening: 'Keys to the Void of civilization are realized not by escapism from dire inheritances [...] but by immersion in the terrifying legacies of the past and the wholly unexpected insights into shared fates and freedoms such legacies may offer'.⁷⁸ The Void is not accessed through the evacuation (voiding) of consciousness, but rather revisiting historical suffering, recognising it as a recurring trait of human existence, is an essential process of a novel that seeks to address those traumas not only for the individual self, the 'I' of the text, but for the collective. It is in this sense that Bone claims 'one is a multitude'.⁷⁹ Yet, while the Void may be allied with Jung's collective unconscious in *Jonestown*, its creative potential is not fully articulated, although it is assumed by the novel's suggestion that access to it is part of the process of recovery for Bone: a partial omission that is addressed in Harris's most recent novels *The Ghost of Memory* (2006) and *The Mask of the Beggar* (2003).

A novel that Harris claims to be his last, *The Ghost of Memory* is, in many ways, a continuation of themes explored in *The Mask of the Beggar*, which directly preceded it: both novels are concerned with the origins of art and originality, and

⁷⁸ Harris (1996) p. 8.

⁷⁹ Harris (1996) p. 5.

explore this through a dialogue with living paintings.⁸⁰ *The Mask of the Beggar*, as Harris's preface informs the reader, assumes its title from the disguise Odysseus adopts on his return to Ithaca in Homer's *Odyssey*. But it is also based on a number of converging childhood experiences: when Harris was eight, his step-father disappeared in the Guyanese interior, at which time, Harris claims, 'I saw a beggar on a street corner, with holes in his face. I came home and couldn't eat – I never forgot that man'.⁸¹ These events coincide with Harris's introduction to the *Odyssey*, and as a result, the missing father, Georgetown beggar and Odysseus are imaginatively related in Harris's memory: 'across half-a-century and more [...]. The fabric of his face [the Georgetown beggar's] upon a floating tide of sorrow is stitched into Homer's beggar within a tapestry of gestating vision'.⁸² The Homeric beggar is thus suggested as an archetype that is revived in the context of Harris's childhood and the novel itself. Yet, as Jung has suggested, this archetype is not a stable form, but rather relational or context-specific, and, accordingly, in *The Mask of the Beggar* the disguise, Harris tells his reader, 'is changed, however, into a holed or fissured face in which Chinese, Indian, African and European immigrants may be invoked'.⁸³ In this way the archetypal beggar is available to all of Guyana's peoples.

⁸⁰ The particular relationship between these two novels is suggested by the fact that Harris cites an extract from *The Mask of the Beggar* in his epilogue to *The Ghost of Memory*. Further, Harris's claim that *The Ghost of Memory* will be his last novel is cited by Maya Jaggi 'A Life in Writing: Redemption Song' in *The Guardian* 16/12/2006, available at <http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,1972887,00.html>.

⁸¹ Harris cited by Jaggi (2006).

⁸² Harris cited in Hena Maes-Jelinek 'Universal Carnival Epic: Epic Metamorphoses in Wilson Harris's Trilogy' pp. 45-58 in *Callaloo* Vol. 18 No. 1 Wilson Harris: a Special Issue (Winter 1995) p. 46, also see pp. 46-47 for a discussion of the significance of the *Odyssey* to Harris's work. Additionally, see Maes-Jelinek *The Labyrinth of Universality: Wilson Harris's Visionary Art of Fiction* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006) pp. 451-467.

⁸³ Wilson Harris *The Mask of the Beggar* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003) p. vii.

The function of archetypes in *The Mask of the Beggar* assumes a specific role, and relates to the novel's discourse on originality in art. Set in the year 2000, the novel witnesses a conversation between a mother, who has died in 1952, and her son, the novel's protagonist and the artist who has painted/created her in the present. In the course of their dialogue, the protagonist addresses his mother to reveal the following sequence of thoughts:

'[t]hink of yourself', he said at last, 'arriving as a piece of sculpture in this planetary or solar system. Do you really appreciate how novel you are? It's an original occasion [...]. *You are an innovation*. I may call you *Mother* but you are a new work of art. Where do you come from to attain such newness? You hint, let us say, at a timeless space beyond yourself, *beyond me* who has made you'.⁸⁴

This questioning of the source of originality reveals a process of translation in which previous forms combine and are revised in the production of original works of art: as the mother claims, her son 'hears the real and subtle "voices" of sculptures and paintings [...] and translates them into words'.⁸⁵ In the former extract, while the mother corresponds to the protagonist's dead mother, it is not her life or appearance that are being translated into a work of art by her son. Rather, originality is drawn from a singular 'beyond', and it is the mother archetype that is being revised anew in relation to the both the artist's and mother's memories.

The novel's enquiry into originality and art is grounded in a dialogue not only between 'painter and painted, writer and written',⁸⁶ but also between works of art that 'cross a chasm, of which we need to learn, that lies outside of frames of

⁸⁴ Harris (2003) pp. 76-77. Emphasis in the original.

⁸⁵ Harris (2003) p. 8.

⁸⁶ Harris (2003) p. 39.

culture'.⁸⁷ Thus the relation that is envisioned is between the self and the otherness, or Void, that 'lies outside frames of culture', or in other words: 'the creative and re-creative, unfinished play of the unconscious in the mystery of consciousness'.⁸⁸ This is the clearest affirmation of the Void, not as the evacuation of consciousness, but as the ungraspable presence of the unconscious. The conversation between artist and artwork, then, reveals itself as a partial model of the singular relation between consciousness and the collective unconscious that expresses itself in the continual renewal, or creolization, of archetypes. Harris revisits this process once more in his latest novel, *The Ghost of Memory*, in order to return to the regenerative potential of the unconscious, and in doing so, departs from the Jungian model of the collective unconscious and fully realises his notion of the Void as the 'celestial unconscious'.⁸⁹

The Ghost of Memory explores what Harris refers to as the 'almost indefinable cross-culturalities between moments of life and death',⁹⁰ through a narrative that traces the journey of a man, shot in the back as a suspected terrorist, who falls into a painting. While Harris's readers might speculate on the possibility that his 'South American, Venezuelan/Brazilian' protagonist, killed by armed police in an undisclosed, major Western city,⁹¹ is based on the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes by London police in 2005, he remains ambivalent about his novel's context, marking a clear distinction from the historicity of *Jonestown*. This uncertainty of the narrator's identity gives him a spectral presence in the novel: occupying a hybrid, in-

⁸⁷ Harris (2003) p. 11.

⁸⁸ Harris (2003) p. 124.

⁸⁹ Wilson Harris *The Ghost of Memory* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006) p. 100. Harris had previously signified his dissatisfaction with the term collective unconscious, arguing that a preferable term might be 'world's unconscious' or 'universal unconscious' (Harris in Riach and Williams [1992] p. 25, p. 62).

⁹⁰ Harris (2006) p. vii.

⁹¹ Harris (2006) p. 89.

between state, his existence is characteristic of what Derrida terms ‘the spectre’: ‘neither soul nor body, and both one and the other. For it is flesh and phenomenality that give to the spirit its spectral apparition, but which disappear right away in the apparition [...]. One does not know: not out of ignorance, but because this non-object, this non-present present, this being-there of an absent or departed one no longer belongs to knowledge’.⁹² Indeed, it is his in-between, spectral presence that places the narrator on the boundary between the conscious and the unconscious, and suggests his archetypal significance. As Harris stresses, ‘[t]his man is not to be taken seriously. He is a dream-animal who dies and lives in the dreams of Mankind at the edges of consciousness and unconsciousness’:⁹³ an inhabitant of the Void in both Harris’s sense and Badiou’s.⁹⁴ Indeed this immediate indebtedness to Jung’s theory of the collective unconscious and its archetypes is clearly acknowledged in the author’s preface, in which Harris argues that the dream-like staging of the relation between life and death in his novel, might be conceived of as an investigation into the hidden resources of the unconscious: ‘we may seek to unearth the buried dream. Such an opening of the unconscious brings cultures from a collective (as C. G. Jung might well have put it) of which we had little or no idea that we knew. There are surprises in store for those of us who venture into a new consciousness of life through the unconscious’.⁹⁵ As with *Jonestown*, the archetypal significance of the event or character is emphasised in order to view the act of violence in the relational

⁹² Jacques Derrida *Spectres of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, translated by Peggy Kamuf (New York and London: Routledge Classics, 2006) p. 5.

⁹³ Harris (2006) p. vii.

⁹⁴ As Hallward writes: for Badiou, ‘[p]eople who inhabit the edge of a situation’s void are people who have nothing which entitles them to belong in the situation’ (Hallward [2004] p. 9). Harris’s narrator quite literally does not belong in the world because he is dead.

⁹⁵ Harris (2006) p. vii.

web of human history – as Harris claims, the protagonist ‘sees himself as a sacrifice for the failure of a civilization to recognise how it is aligned to ancient rituals that feared the Sun might never rise again and Darkness would engulf the world for ever’⁹⁶ – and to seek in the unconscious, or otherness, a singularity to inspire new and surprising imaginative forms.

Establishing a link with *Mask of the Beggar*, *The Ghost of Memory* interrogates artistic representations as signs of the collective unconscious. After the protagonist is shot, he falls into a painting and emerges in an art gallery, where he is confronted by Christopher Columbus, who is, himself, the embodiment of an archetypal absolutist point of view. Viewing Giacometti’s sculpture, *Standing Woman*, the narrator sees in it figures of South and Central America – an observation to which Columbus replies:

‘Myth and nonsense,’ he shouted. ‘Who would believe a primitive relic in the hands of ancient Arawaks – who look like felled, walking trees – is in any way akin to the important work of a twentieth-century sculptor? Do you really believe this – that Giacometti was influenced ...?’

I stood at the edges of the canvas in the constellation of the Trickster. I felt remote and far away and yet spaces invited me to step into the gallery [...]. I found myself standing beside the spectator who had shouted with such disdain.

‘I never said that he was influenced ... But I felt that there was a resemblance of line. That is all. A curious resemblance that tells us of distances we have travelled in one shape or another to reach where we are. Those distances are there in a twentieth-century sculptor who is sensitive to material form as never absolute [...].’⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Harris (2006) p. vii.

⁹⁷ Harris (2006) p. 25. Harris also discusses reoccurring archetypes in his essay ‘Character and Philosophic Myth’, in which he highlights common threads in the genesis mythology of pre-Columbian, Christian, and ancient Greek societies (see Wilson Harris ‘Character and Philosophic Myth’ in *A Sense of Place: Essays in Post-Colonial Literatures*, edited by Britta Olinder [Göteborg: Gothenburg University, 1984] pp. 124-130).

Columbus represents an absolute point of view that refuses to recognise commonalities between cultures that signify more than the influence of past traditions or artistic forms. The protagonist, on the other hand, is aligned with the Trickster figure, a classic Jungian archetype, for whom, such commonalities do not imply ‘a broken-ness of self, encompassing two selves half-forgetful one of the other. Yet a new creativity may bring them into profound dialogue’.⁹⁸ By rejecting the creativity, or potential for creolization, that lies in the dialogue between already realised archetypes and the unconscious/Void, Columbus stands in opposition to the novel’s central precepts: that ‘[c]onsciousness and the unconscious reshape themselves endlessly into a play or plays, into a myth or myths’; and that “We” and “one” were linked in all men and women though few were aware of this subtle linkage’.⁹⁹ These definite signs of the collective unconscious point towards the novel’s resolution. The conversations held between the protagonist and Columbus illustrate the impossibility of creative dialogue with the individual who refuses to accept the partiality of social and cultural forms. Columbus’s belief in the absolutes of good and evil, the divine right of one true Church and religion, and his complete dismissal of archetypal resemblances between Giacommetti and the ancient Arawak sculptures, mean that he cannot accept the challenge of the cross-cultural painting of which the protagonist is a part, and ultimately he destroys the painting he condemns as heretical.

The discussion staged between the protagonist and Columbus is echoed in the dialogue of two further spectators in the gallery: Andy and George. While the

⁹⁸ Harris (2006) p. 57. For Jung’s Trickster archetype and American-Indian mythology, see Jung ([1969] pp. 255-272).

⁹⁹ Harris (2006) p. 77, p. 87.

protagonist and Columbus are endowed with archetypal significance, Andy and George are 'real life' figures on whom the novel focuses in order to chart their response to the creative challenge of the artwork:

George hesitated. Then he looked up at Andy and replied. 'I said I saw the Beggar in a new way. I mean the man who was shot and who fell into the painting. By "new way" I mean he cannot be captured or seized. That's part of what I mean. He has to be reinvented every century, every generation. His *essence* is beyond us. That's what the painting is saying. One may see, rarely perhaps, an *imprint* that compels us to create, to reinterpret. That *imprint* is available to all'.¹⁰⁰

Art is revealed as the central ground of the genesis of the imagination, for it is in the creative work that archetypes emerge as continually revised forms, imprints of the collective unconscious that can never be grasped, but which is the basis for whole-world creolizations.

George experiences a more profound realisation in the closing pages of the novel, as he is left reeling by Columbus's outburst of violence and destruction of the painting. Alone with the shreds of canvas, George looks out into the constellations of the night sky and recognises one as the Wanderer of the painting:

a skeleton of lights. It may have been there a million and more years before Man had appeared on planet Earth. How could it be anything one now knew? One could clothe it with the garments of myth and legend but these were illusions, they were ruins in which one placed the origins of Art.

George was suddenly empowered by the distant spectrum in the sky. He had wandered the Earth for many years. He was a minimal wanderer who could become a major Wanderer following a skeleton of hazy lights he could not identify.

[...] Whatever it was, it would help him to bring the tattered and bereft figures lying on the floor back into a painting.

He had been empowered to do so by the celestial unconscious. It is real and unreal, and it inspires us to make of

¹⁰⁰ Harris (2006) p. 71. Emphasis in the original.

illusion a shape which represents an eternity of riddles, a
shape brooding upon ruin and unknown fulfilment and
origin.¹⁰¹

The novel thus closes with this reaching beyond art, towards the source of inspiration identified as the celestial unconscious. This suggests a spiritual underpinning to Harris's work that resounds with his usage of grace – as Frye argues, constellations and the stars often function as apocalyptic archetypes or images of heaven.¹⁰² However, this is in no way a sign of ultimate faith in doctrinal religions, which is Columbus's conviction in the novel. Rather, the celestial or heaven is, the protagonist argues,

a medium [...] which we cannot easily dispense with. It has been there from the beginning of times. The world remains trapped in such simplicities. Heaven is 'up there'. We have technical doubts about what 'up there' is. But such technical misgivings cannot easily heal our broken-ness. Science is a series of technicalities. Has it healed us? I would say therefore that heaven is in Nature, a

¹⁰¹ Harris (2006) p. 100. Harris's presentation of an unknown, creative source resounds the kind of creativity that Hallward reads in Deleuze, with an important distinction. Hallward argues that, for Deleuze, 'the universe and all that it contains is a facet of a singular and absolute creative power' (Peter Hallward *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* [London and New York: Verso, 2006] p. 4). Although this is consistent with a theological view of an absolute Creator, God, as with Harris, is not necessarily part of Deleuze's project. Rather, Hallward draws the following summary: 'we might say that any singular principle of radical creativity will entail the distinction of: an uncreated and consequently unknowable or unthinkable *creator*, the immediate and adequate expression of this creator in multiple self-reservations or *creatings* (which are both created and creative); the various *creatures* (created but not creative) that lend material weight to these creations; and finally, a virtual state beyond creaturely perception and distinction, to which whatever is eternally creative about these creatures is destined eventually to return' (p. 5). Here the conceptualisation of an inherently creative universe and, in particular, a creative force that is 'unknowable or unthinkable', suggests a commonality between these two views of creativity. However, the distance that Harris envisions between his character and the creative source, makes his framework distinct from the singularising and de-specifying creative force that Deleuze conceives of (for Deleuze, Hallward argues, absolute creativity is neither relational or dialectical, a 'singular creative force is nothing other than the multiplication of singular creations [...] such individuation does not itself depend on mediation through the categories of representation, objectivity, history or the world' [p. 5]). There is a distinction to be drawn between a creative force that maintains a dialectical or relational distance from individuals, and an 'immanent approach' which assumes that creativity is absolute, 'saturates the whole of being with no remainder' (p. 6). In this latter example, there is no space between creator and created, and the distance that George envisions between himself and the celestial unconscious that inspires him is void.

¹⁰² Frye (1957) p. 145. Of course, Frye argues that we need not adhere to a religious point of view in order to recognise these archetypes as representing a cycle of life.

Nature of complex and difficult balances between all things, all peoples, all creatures, lands and waters balances through which we may *learn* – with an open mind – to break through in small degrees – however miniscule – the involuntary prisons in which we imprison ourselves.¹⁰³

What the collective unconscious fails to offer Harris is a universal structure that brings into relation not only all of mankind, but, making the link with Glissant, all things within the totality both known and unknown. As the protagonist argues, '*[w]e are related to every creature in the tree of life and death*'.¹⁰⁴ The celestial and nature refer to this whole-world relating of partial forms that leads to the break away from the absolute values (prisons) on which reified and separate cultures or religions are founded.

In this latest, and perhaps final, addition to Harris's oeuvre, the celestial unconscious replaces the Jungian inspired collective unconscious that appears in such novels as *Jonestown* and *The Mask of the Beggar*. However, it continues to serve a similar purpose. George's sense of the Wanderer as a constellation, an archetypal imprint, that pre-dates Mankind, inspires him to refigure such forms in art: to 'bring the tattered and bereft figures lying on the floor back into a painting'.¹⁰⁵ It remains the case, then, that the artistic imagination is empowered by the endless relation between consciousness and the celestial unconscious that links all things. Yet this relation, the continual reinscription or creolization of the archetypes, is not an evolution towards an eventual realization of the celestial. Rather, it is 'an eternity of riddles',¹⁰⁶ a never-finished play of relation between consciousness and the absolute

¹⁰³ Harris (2006) p. 91. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁰⁴ Harris (2006) p. 34. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁰⁵ Harris (2006) p. 100.

¹⁰⁶ Harris (2006) p. 100.

otherness of the collective/celestial unconscious, that finds expression in ever changing archetypal forms.

Creoleness, Harris's term for creolization, is inherently bound to his sense of the collective/celestial unconscious and the relation between all things. As he argues: 'creoleness made me aware of the complex labyrinth of the family of humankind into which I was born'.¹⁰⁷ This form of creoleness is distinct from that employed by the authors of the *créolité* movement, for whom it signifies the attainment of a definitively creole identity, and points towards a field of relation characteristic of Glissant's poetics, in which identities are understood through '*their relation to everything possible as well – the mutual mutations generated by this interplay of relations*'.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, the essentially unceasing, never complete state of creoleness that Harris envisions, agrees with Glissantian creolization which signifies a continuing and unceasing process – *creolization* – as opposed to an achieved state – *creoleness*. Given this distinction between verb and noun, I would suggest that creolization more accurately denotes the world of cross-cultural interrelations that Harris envisions. Much lies in common between Harris's creoleness and Glissant's theory of creolization, both of which offer a model for the original production of new forms and identities through a dialogue with the current and specific realities of a culture and the absolute unknown that lies outside of it. What Harris contributes to the model is a greater sense of what this otherness designates: a celestial unconscious that confirms the relational totality Glissant assumes, and the production of newness that creolization demands. Importantly, this shift from collective to celestial

¹⁰⁷ Harris (1998) p. 24.

¹⁰⁸ Glissant (1997) p. 89. Emphasis in the original.

unconscious is marked by the inclusion of nature – *every creature in the tree of life and death*,¹⁰⁹ – in the concept of the whole-world unconscious. Once again, this points to a commonality with Glissant, one which confirms the centrality of landscape tropes to theories of creolization.

Metaphysical Outlines: Otherness and the Landscape

From its early usage, the term creolization has been linked to the New World environment. For Glissant, landscape is not a backdrop to his poetics of relation, but rather, bound as a contributing factor in that process. As Glissant states in *Caribbean Discourse*: '[d]escribing the landscape is not enough. The individual, the community, the land are inextricable in the process of creating history. Landscape is a character in this process'.¹¹⁰ Foregrounding this poetics of landscape as a source of a regenerative, creolized New World identity offers another link into the writing of Wilson Harris. Recalling Dash's comment that, for Glissant, '[n]ature is not simply *décour consentant* [consenting scenery] or pathetic fallacy',¹¹¹ Fred D'Aguiar argues that in Harris's writing '[c]haracters are not on a set where the landscape provides a visual backdrop. His characters do not walk over the landscape. They pass *through* it. Landscape is itself a character exerting influence on other flesh-and-blood characters'.¹¹² Like Glissant, Harris rejects the perception of landscape 'as passive, as furniture, as an area to be manipulated' and views the natural world as part of

¹⁰⁹ Harris (2006) p. 34. Emphasis mine.

¹¹⁰ Glissant (1999b) pp. 105-106.

¹¹¹ J Michael Dash 'Introduction' pp. xi- xlv in *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, by Édouard Glissant, translated by J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999) p. xxxv.

¹¹² Fred D'Aguiar 'Love For the Vanished: Wilson Harris on Love' pp. 11-20 in *Theatre of the Arts: Wilson Harris and the Caribbean*, edited by Hena Maes-Jelinek and Bénédicte Ledent (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002) p. 16.

relation.¹¹³ In other words, just as the collective unconscious was expanded to include non-human elements, Harris elaborates his vision of creolizing relations to include landscape and nature. This concern accounts for Harris's reference to quantum mechanics or the quantum imagination in his discussions of both landscape and its interpreted meaning. The application of quantum theory allows Harris to support his rejection of linear temporality, and enforces his conviction that reading is not a sequential process but the continual generation of 'visionary probabilities': 'if the images were total and absolute, you would read forwards all the time. But then you come to an image and you realize that it links up with what has gone before'.¹¹⁴ This might be aligned with a Derridean perspective which highlights the multiple associations present in the play of *différance*, and locates the traces of previous narratives or images in current forms.¹¹⁵ Indeed, although Harris's work supports this reading, what the quantum perspective adds to this is a greater sense of the whole-world/universal scope of Harris vision: 'equations between being and nonbeing', as well as the complex 'dimensionalities of space'.¹¹⁶ Although this widening of relation to include landscape/space agrees with Glissant, whereas Glissant's *The*

¹¹³ Harris (1999) p. 40.

¹¹⁴ Harris in Vera M. Kutzinski 'The Composition of Reality: A Talk with Wilson Harris's pp. 13-32. in *Callaloo*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Wilson Harris a Special Issue (Winter 1995) p. 26.

¹¹⁵ Recently, Elizabeth DeLoughrey has addressed the question of quantum mechanics and poststructuralism with reference to Harris, and, more particularly, the writings of Pauline Melville ('Quantum Landscapes: a "Ventriloquism of Spirit"' in *Interventions* Vol. 9, No. 1, 2007 pp. 62-82).

¹¹⁶ Harris (1999) p. 246. Harris focuses on quantum/parallel landscapes in, for example, *The Four Banks of the River of Space* (1990) in which the protagonist, Anselm, revisits and rereads his own history as he moves through the parallel banks around which the novel is structured. Critical commentary on *The Four Banks* often focuses on aspects of quantum mechanics in Harris work, see for example Jean-Pierre Durix 'Weaving the Tapestry of Memory: Wilson Harris's *The Four Banks of the River of Space*' in *Callaloo* Vol. 18, No. 1, Wilson Harris a Special Issue (Winter 1995) pp. 59-69. For a more direct consideration of these themes see Andrew Jefferson-Miles 'Quantum Value in Wilson Harris's architecture of the Tides' in *Theatre of the Arts: Wilson Harris and the Caribbean*, edited by Hena Maes-Jelinek and Bénédicte Ledent (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002) pp. 177-193.

Ripening, for example, emphasises the need for the individual to forge a connection with the real and present circumstances of the Caribbean landscape, as opposed to an idealised African one, for Harris, celebrating landscape as ‘a character in this process’ of reconstruction, has little to do with any political or social reality. Instead, landscape plays an informing role in the process of imaginative regeneration and cross-cultural realities that Harris’s critical essays foreground.

The unique position of landscape in Harris’s work, as Gilkes has illustrated, is a direct result of his experiences of the interior regions of Guyana during his employment as a hydrographical surveyor. As Harris himself explains,

when I first travelled into the rainforest, I realized that I had to visualize the landscape of the Guyanas quite differently from how I had been conditioned to see the landscape on the coastlands [...]. The landscape is alive, it is a text in itself, it is a living text. And the question is, how can one find, as an imaginative writer, another kind of living text which corresponds to that living text. There is a dialogue there between one’s internal being, one’s psyche, and the nature of place, the landscape.¹¹⁷

Although Glissant and Harris suggest different motives behind their dialogue with the natural world, both endow landscape with a life independent from the will of man. However, by suggesting this, neither writer implies that the landscape has been deaf to the environmental impact of mankind: Glissant clearly acknowledges the poverty of Martinique, and Harris speaks of the need to accept that landscapes ‘have been manipulated and altered’.¹¹⁸ Rather, what is at issue is a desire to confront those discourses that lay claim to an authoritative, static, at times idealised, representation

¹¹⁷ Harris cited by Michael Gilkes ‘The Landscape of Dreams’ pp. 31-38 in *Wilson Harris: The Uncompromising Imagination*, edited by Hena Maes-Jelinek (Mundelstrup and Sydney: Dangaroo, 1991) p. 33.

¹¹⁸ Harris (1999) p. 62.

of the natural world. It is from this perspective that Harris finds fault in nature poetry that offers ‘a verbal snapshot of unchanging tree or mental stamp of flower or beast, unchanging in that the poem is convinced it sees nature as it truly is’.¹¹⁹ Such representations claim to offer a faithful translation of the landscape, but in effect give only a momentary surface view of an ever changing, living reality. Harris illustrates this point by recalling a memory from his childhood:

I often swam at the Fort on the Georgetown foreshore. I reflected also on an observation I made when I was last in Georgetown in 1960: the sea no longer stands where it used to be and the land has grown in its place by six or seven feet. Therefore, were I to endow *de facto* mound or grave, which now exists on the foreshore with a figurative meaning beyond the present stasis of reality, I might see the ghost of the past (the ghost of my childhood) swimming in dry land.¹²⁰

Immediately, this suggests a quantum, or parallel reality: the co-existent trace of the past evident in the present that realist depictions fail to capture. For Harris, no absolute representation of the landscape is possible, rather his novels present ‘landscape seen in great depth and with great resonance’.¹²¹ For example, in the closing section of Harris’s first novel, *Palace of the Peacock*, the Dreamer/narrator casts his eye over the expansive landscape before him: ‘[o]ne had an intuitive feeling that the savannahs – though empty – were crowded. A metaphysical outline dwelt everywhere filling in blocks where spaces stood and without this one would have never have perceived the curious statement of completion and perfection. The work was truly finished but no one would have known it’.¹²² This is no realist

¹¹⁹ Harris (1983a) p. 132.

¹²⁰ Harris (1999) p. 174.

¹²¹ Gilkes (1991) p. 31.

¹²² Wilson Harris *The Guyana Quartet* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1985) p. 111. The sense of otherness behind the landscape resounds not only with the way in which Glissant characterises his

representation of a visual moment; the Dreamer intuits a more complete vision of the landscape by reaching beyond the surface view of the empty savannah to identify '[a] metaphysical outline'. Importantly, within this image, voids and empty spaces are endowed with the creative potential characteristic of 'the womb of space', which designates the revisionary site in which cross-cultural relations occur.¹²³ Though the Dreamer does not classify the 'outlines' that he intuits, they suggest the unceasing creative process that, paradoxically, is identified as a 'statement of completion'. Rather than refuting the above point, this motion towards a state of completion should be read in terms of a wholeness already discussed, an all encompassing creative genesis, rather than an absolute state reached.

Landscape, as in the writings of Glissant, offers an instructive model for creolizing relations and 'teaches us to pay the closest care and attention to the

poetic landscape as marked by absences and gaps (see p. 157 of this thesis), but also the surrealism of Pierre Mabille, who similarly writes of accessing the marvellous through 'gaps' in representation, and notes that the marvellous is 'between all things and all beings, interpenetrating space, where our senses perceive nothing directly; but the space is filled with energy, waves, and forces in continual motion' (Pierre Mabille *The Mirror of the Marvellous: The Classic Surrealist Work on Myth* translated by Jody Gladding [Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions International, 1998] p. 14).

¹²³ This concept is traced throughout Harris's *The Womb of Space: The Cross-Cultural Imagination* (Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press 1983a). Harris's use of an ostensibly gender-specific metaphor, 'womb of space', should be recognised as holding archetypal significance, rather than representing any political point or distinguishing between male and female roles in the genesis of the imagination. The womb's archetypal significance, for Harris, lies in its metaphoric association with creation, regeneration, and potentialities: '[t]hink of the human vessel in the genius of the Imagination symbolizing ingredients within itself and beyond itself which are richer and stranger than any individual gender [...]. The womb [...] transgresses the boundaries of individual gender' (Harris [1999] p. 227). In the same way, Harris's female characters are often associated with the archetypes, for example, of Muse, Siren and Furies, that do not necessarily evoke any essentialised notions of a particular character's gender: 'though the Furies were portrayed as women, gender was a mask for far-flung – sometimes self-contradictory – natures, the natures of fire and water and the multitudinous fabric of the cosmos within the heart of human and animal passion' (Harris [1999] p. 227). Gender becomes, for Harris, a partial appearance (Harris [1999] pp. 218-219) that is transcended by the wholeness evoked by the womb of space. For further discussion of Harris's female characters, see Drake [1986] pp. 62-76; Mark McWatt 'The Madonna/Whore: Womb of Possibilities' in *The Literate Imagination: Essays on the Novels of Wilson Harris*, edited by Michael Gilkes (London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1989) pp. 31-44; Shona Jackson 'Race, Sex, and Historical Tension in the Search for the Transcendental West Indian Subject' in *Changing Currents: Transnational Caribbean Literary and Cultural Criticism*, edited by Emily Allen Williams and Melvin B. Rahming (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2006) pp. 195-222.

variations and movements on the stage on which we live: and not to invest absolutely or fixedly on such a stage'.¹²⁴ In addition to this caution, Harris premises the notion of a dialogue between the individual and their environment: or to put it another way, 'space' plays an important role in the creative 'womb' of creolizing relations. Implicit in this is a view of the interconnectedness of all elements, as Harris explains: '[w]hen we breathe we are not only breathing out through our lungs but through the lungs of the globe. The lungs of the globe look out on the stars, they have connections with the stars. So you have that thread running right through'.¹²⁵ The scale of this quantum model has a similar impact to the total play of relations that Glissant imagines as he stands on 'The Black Beach'.¹²⁶ What Harris imagines here is not a straightforward cause-and-effect view of the world's eco-system, but rather argues that we breathe out *through* the lungs of the globe. It is not only suggested that we breathe oxygen because the forests of the globe produce it, but that there is an internalisation, a quantum duality established. Harris makes this point more pointedly when he claims that '[m]any believe there is a firm and irreconcilable barrier between person and environment. Whereas I see the environment as a measure of reflection in the person, a measure of the cosmos in the person'.¹²⁷ In his novels this reflection may be identified in what Maes-Jelinek considers a mutual relationship between character and landscape.¹²⁸ *The Secret Ladder*, which, in a clear parallel to Harris's own biography, tells the story of Russell Fenwick, a

¹²⁴ Harris (2005) p. 266.

¹²⁵ Harris cited by Gilkes (1991) p. 38.

¹²⁶ Glissant (1997) p. 124, cited on p. 169 of this thesis.

¹²⁷ Harris (2000) p. 22.

¹²⁸ Hena Maes-Jelinek 'From Living Nature to Borderless Culture in Wilson Harris's Work' p. 247-260 in *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture* edited by Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005) p. 247.

hydrographical surveyor on a fact gathering mission in the Guyanese interior, offers a number of instances of this mutuality. In the novel's opening, Fenwick feels oppressed by his task and uncertain about his position of authority over the men. In turn, Harris reinforces the atmosphere of insecurity by reference to the mid-day equatorial sun: '[a]ll shadow had ceased [...]. The sun shone through dark flesh to illuminated skeleton, the greenest garment to the whitest bone'.¹²⁹ In this environment, Fenwick has nothing to hide his insecurity behind. As was argued in the case of Glissant, this device does not amount to an instance of pathetic fallacy, but a duality or '[c]onsciousness of self in others'.¹³⁰ Again, Harris suggests, the natural world offers a model in this respect: trees are identified for 'their dual place' between the river below and the sky above.¹³¹ Furthermore, there is no hierarchy implicit in this: in *The Secret Ladder* it is unclear whether the merciless sun is a reflection of Fenwick's feelings of exposure, or a contributing factor. Rather, the '[c]onsciousness of self in others' indicates an intuited awareness of the relationality of the self, as well as the collective unconscious that underpins Harris ontology.

Harris draws on quantum theory to support his framework of universal relations, however, it should be recognised as a minor element in his work, and one that is secondary to issues of the creativity of language. For Harris, the potential for an imaginative re-evaluation of the past, including past misconceptions of the landscape such as the myth of El Dorado or Paradise, resides in language.¹³² As Harris explains in his conversation with Gilkes, in the dialogue between self and landscape '[t]here

¹²⁹ Harris (1985) pp. 398-395.

¹³⁰ Harris (1999) p. 44.

¹³¹ Harris (1985) p. 372.

¹³² Harris (1999) pp. 141-142.

has to be some sort of connection, some sort of bridge, which allows one to sense all sorts of relationships’:

[t]hat is where language becomes important. In other words, language possesses resources which one has to sense as coming not only from within oneself, but from outside, from the land itself, from the rivers [...] from those persons and those cultures that existed in the landscape and have left their trace. So there is a play between what one could call unconscious, the subconscious, and the conscious. The relationship between these affects the language and brings into play connections which allow one to see the landscape in a wholly different way.¹³³

Clearly, what Harris envisions in his cross-cultural womb of space, or unfinished genesis of the imagination is fundamentally a *poetics* of relation, to make the link to Glissant. Landscape is an element in relation, one which, by merit of its peculiar ability to witness barely registered, ‘metaphysical outline[s]’ of the past, offers a means to access the unknown other/unconscious.¹³⁴ As Harris argues: ‘I sense the collective or universal unconscious extending in voices that echo within the roots of nature as from the ancestral dead, from rivers, from rocks, from birds and other species, from the rhythm of landscape, skyscapes, etc’.¹³⁵ As I argued with regard to Glissant’s poetry, the landscape offers the poet access to the other, essential in the creolizing relation.¹³⁶ However, what Harris here stresses is the fact that it is primarily in language that this relation may be enacted.

Language, then, becomes the primary site of creolizing relations. However, despite its centrality, Maes-Jelinek suggests, this aspect of Harris’s poetics has received scant commentary: ‘little attention has been paid so far to his vision of

¹³³ Harris cited by Gilkes (1991) p. 33.

¹³⁴ Harris (1985) p. 111.

¹³⁵ Harris (1999) p. 201.

¹³⁶ See p. 157 of this thesis.

creation as a transfer or “translation” of the substance of fiction from unconsciousness into consciousness’.¹³⁷ Since making this claim, investigations have been made into Harris’s unique use of language: Mary Lou Emery discusses the way in which ‘[i]n Harris’s writing the image exceeds itself, moving past verbal language into visual signs’;¹³⁸ Mackey dedicates two chapters to a discussion of the way in which Harris’s language signifies the trace of historical memory.¹³⁹ However, creolization theory, as I have described it, accounts not only for the linguistic dialogue with history (as Mackey’s study discusses) or the verbalisation of the visual (reading Harris as part of the ekphrastic tradition, as Emery does), but both. It is the relation of all elements which come into contact with the individual. Moreover, it suggests that as a result of these relations, new connections, new ways of thinking may be produced when the self enters into a relation with the other, or, to recall Maes-Jelinek’s challenge: a ‘vision of creation as a transfer or “translation” of the substance of fiction from unconsciousness into consciousness’. It is precisely this model that this thesis identified in my reading of Attridge. Singular works of literature are produced as known traditions are reworked by bringing them into contact with that which lies outwith the current limits of discourse: a latent, ‘unconscious’ otherness.

Harris’s demand that we remain sensitive to the ‘metaphysical outlines’ or ‘voices of dead cultures’ that ‘affect the rhythm of the English Language’ is closely

¹³⁷ Maes-Jelinek (1991) p. 54.

¹³⁸ Mary Lou Emery ‘The Poetics of Vision in Wilson Harris’s Writing’ pp. 111-124 in *Theatre of the Arts: Wilson Harris and the Caribbean*, edited by Hena Maes-Jelinek and Bénédicte Ledent (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002) p. 112. Fred D’Aguiar makes a similar point (2002 p. 17).

¹³⁹ Mackey (1993) Chapters Nine and Ten, see also pp. 253-259.

aligned with the production of singular imaginative forms.¹⁴⁰ As he explains: ‘our language is a very ancient one, that it requires of us not only to penetrate to the depths of our tradition, but to find original ways of making connections which we have failed to make because of all sorts of circumstances’.¹⁴¹ It has been argued throughout this thesis that the forging of new connections or insights is an effect of a singular model of creolization, and it is a claim that takes on further significance, I suggest in the remainder of this chapter, in Harris’s treatment of literary and historical tradition. However, as with Glissant, landscape must also be acknowledged as a contributing factor. Both writers present the Caribbean landscape as a subterranean text (and context) which suggests partial presences and absences. It is a shifting, unstable ground on which traces of the past, like salt, ‘accumulates’.¹⁴² For both Harris and Glissant, this is a fertile ground of creative, poetic potential, as the following extract from *The Secret Ladder* illustrates:

[t]he sky was a dripping sponge over the river which had begun to swell. All the arid dusty watermarks of the drought on the trees and bushes were disappearing as if they, too, had been rubbed away leaving a clean but cracked slate, a web of broken lines nature had no desire to erase. These were salutary reminders of the displacement of the past, the basic untrustworthiness in every material image [...]. Were it otherwise the immaterial creation of freedom would have been banished for ever.¹⁴³

Traces of the drought in this scene remain, like the accumulating salt in Glissant’s poem. Yet what this signifies is the ‘untrustworthiness’ of the realist’s rendering of the visual moment. It reminds us that every landscape is partial, full of ‘metaphysical

¹⁴⁰ Harris cited by Gilkes (1991) p. 31.

¹⁴¹ Harris cited by Gilkes (1991) p. 37.

¹⁴² Édouard Glissant *The Collected Poems of Édouard Glissant*, edited and with an introduction by Jeff Humphries, translated by Jeff Humphries with Melissa Manolas (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) p. 101. Cited on p. 136 of this thesis.

¹⁴³ Harris (1985) p. 446.

outlines' and opaque otherness that can lead us 'to find original ways of making connections' and inspire the unfinished digenesis of the imagination.

In Search of *Cauda Pavonis*: Reading *Palace of the Peacock* and *The Secret Ladder*.

Harris's challenge to realism extends beyond his landscape aesthetics, to encompass the realist novel itself. Nineteenth-century novels of persuasion, 'in which the author *persuades* you to ally yourself with situation and character', encourage the 'consolidation of character' and 'the self-sufficient individual' at a time when society was 'involved in consolidating their class and other vested interests'.¹⁴⁴ By Harris's contrapuntal account, realism thus becomes inextricably implicated in the consolidation of interests that occurred in the colonial era, and 'led the rulers of civilization, *unintentionally* perhaps, into an "obliviousness" of the many diverse peoples under the umbrella of Empire'.¹⁴⁵ In particular, it enforced atavistic notions of clear genealogy and inheritance. As Harris explains: '[a]ll-white characterizations produced a tightly-wrought family structure which excluded, or places on the margins, those who differed in pigmentation or in otherness of insight'.¹⁴⁶ The critique levelled here has much in common with Glissant's rejection of creation myths that reify uncomplicated lines of heredity: such works undermine the potential for creolizing identities. Harris challenges these intricate family structures in *Palace of the Peacock*. The crew which journey up river with Donne are part of a complex

¹⁴⁴ Harris (1999) p. 141; p. 140. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁴⁵ Harris (2005) p. 262. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁴⁶ Wilson Harris 'Resistance to Alterities' pp. 3-8 in *Resisting Alterities: Wilson Harris and Other Avatars of Otherness*, edited by Marco Fazzini (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004a) p. 5.

heritage: Schomburgh claims German and Arawak decent; Cameron, half Scottish, half African, 'born from a close fantasy and web of slave and concubine and free, out of one complex womb'; Carroll is stepbrother to Vigilance and 'nephew or [...] son or both' to Schomburgh.¹⁴⁷ The complicated family histories in this novel indicate a digenesis at work: a set of creative, unfinished, composite origins that suggest, Harris argues 'that there is another kind of genesis, another kind of beginning'.¹⁴⁸ *Palace of the Peacock*, then, becomes a creation myth (founded on a moment of digenesis) for the composite culture of Guyana: European, Amerindian, African heritages are all present in the genealogies of the crew, so that '[t]he whole crew was one spiritual family living and dying together in a common grave out of which they had sprung again from the same soul and womb as it were'.¹⁴⁹

Rejecting pure filiations and absolute legitimacy not only presents the opportunity to establish diverse identities, but allows Harris to suggest a relationality between characters. The 'self-sufficient', unified 'I' of the realist novel is rejected from the outset of *Palace of the Peacock*: '[t]he sun blinded and ruled my living sight but the dead man's eye remained open and obstinate and clear'; or again: 'I dreamt I awoke with one dead seeing eye and one living closed eye'.¹⁵⁰ Such passages, Mackey argues, 'displaces the privileged eye' and its ability to represent a complete account of reality.¹⁵¹ Unable to witness both the material and the spiritual, there is a concerted effort in the opening chapters of *Palace of the Peacock* to disturb the

¹⁴⁷ Harris (1985) p. 39; p. 67.

¹⁴⁸ Harris cited by Gilkes (1991) pp. 36-37.

¹⁴⁹ Harris (1985) p. 39. Bundy notes that English, Portuguese, Africa, Hindu Indian, Chinese, and Amerindian peoples populate Guyana (Bundy [1999] p. 22).

¹⁵⁰ Harris (1985) p. 19.

¹⁵¹ Mackey (1993) p. 255.

reader's confidence in the act of seeing, and in its place promotes fragmentary visions and identities. In this way, characters are not read as unique and separate individuals, but, rather, as Glissant might put it, identities are presented as opaque *echos-monde* that must be viewed in relation to one another.¹⁵² This is what Harris refers to when he speaks of the '[c]onsciousness of self in others',¹⁵³ a view clearly acknowledged in *Palace of the Peacock* by the crew, when, looking over board

[t]he unceasing reflection of themselves in each other made them see themselves everywhere save where they thought they had always stood.

After a while this horrifying exchange of soul and this identification of themselves with each other brought them a partial return and renewal of confidence [...]. It was a partial rehabilitation of themselves.¹⁵⁴

Here, creolization, in the first instance, appears to threaten the certainty of identity: 'where they thought they had always stood'.¹⁵⁵ However, as in the case of Glissant, relation does not lead to the transcendence of difference or specific and situated identities: this 'horrifying exchange' is not fulfilled and the sense of each character's relationality ultimately empowers the individual.

Further developing Harris's critique of the autonomous, sovereign individual, and underscoring the force of each characters' relation to one another, dualities become apparent throughout *Palace of the Peacock*. The crew in name and appearance 'matched the names of a famous dead crew that had sunk in the rapids';

¹⁵² As Maes-Jelinek points out, 'in his novels neither mere uncertainty of identity nor, at the opposite pole, the assertion of one that is merely "other" [...]. Neither the author nor the characters are "sovereign" in his view, by which he means that they do not employ one given personality but rather a series of personalities out of "one complex womb"' (Maes-Jelinek [1991] p. 53).

¹⁵³ Harris (1999) p. 44.

¹⁵⁴ Harris (1985) p. 80.

¹⁵⁵ This is a point that Aldon Nielsen emphasises when he suggests that '[e]ach character seems part of a throng, dissolving subtly into the characteristics of the others, and yet each is undeniably there' ("Hieroglyphics of Space: Wilson Harris in "The Waiting Room" pp. 125-131 in *Callaloo* Vol. 18 No. 1. Wilson Harris: a Special Issue 1995 p. 126).

and the Dreamer/narrator, Donne's twin brother, expresses a duality he feels with his twin – 'he was myself standing outside of me while I stood inside of him'.¹⁵⁶ There is an element of intertextuality to the novel's presentation of a previous, ill-fated crew: the journey into the interior recall features of Carpentier's *The Lost Steps* (1953), Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), as well as elements of *The Odyssey*.¹⁵⁷ Indeed intertextual engagement is part of Harris's project, as I will suggest later in this chapter. However, more than this, the dualities which exist between characters signify a cross-cultural relationship that exceeds the presentation of a single character's alter-ego. Harris is unequivocal on this point: 'I do not believe in the alter egos that critics and publishers speak of. I believe in cross-culturalities'; '[i]t is not a question of alter ego; it is a positive relationship that helps us to see that the animals, what I call "creatures of genius", bear on ourselves, telling us about ourselves'.¹⁵⁸ The duality expressed between the Dreamer and Donne, then, forms part of the cross-cultural relations that Harris's novel attempts to stage. As Gilkes argues, 'Donne's insistence on the qualities of ruler or conqueror – will-power and energy – [...] and the Dreamer's shadowy, passive existence mainly in sleep, in the dark, remind us of Harris's own concern with the opposed concepts of victor/victim, life/death, etc., and his attempt to reconcile these'.¹⁵⁹ What *Palace of the Peacock* attempts is a cross-

¹⁵⁶ Harris (1985) p. 39; p. 26.

¹⁵⁷ Elsewhere Harris has written on the significance of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. See Wilson Harris 'The Frontier on Which *Heart of Darkness* Stands' in *Heart of Darkness: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, Sources and Criticism*, edited by Robert Kimbrough, 3rd edition (New York and London: N. W. Norton and Co., 1988) pp. 262-268.

¹⁵⁸ Harris cited by Marina Camboni and Marco Fazzini 'An Interview with Wilson Harris in Macerata' pp. 53-64 in *Resisting Alterities: Wilson Harris and Other Avatars of Otherness*, edited by Marco Fazzini (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004) p. 57; p. 59.

¹⁵⁹ Gilkes (1975) p. 29.

cultural/creolizing relation between two, *seeming*, polar opposites that undermines the legitimacy of the absolute individual.

Harris returns to the relation between partial characters in the final novel of the *Guyana Quartet*, *The Secret Ladder*. During the course of his study of the river's water levels, Fenwick comes into conflict with the maroon community who believe their land is threatened by this sign of governmental interest. According to Webb, the maroons may be taken to signify 'the dismembered, repressed consciousness of the radically divided Guyanese past and present',¹⁶⁰ mythologized further in the name of the great maroon leader, Poseidon. Of course, as Mackey notes, it is no surprise to meet characters of African descent bearing European names; however, 'Poseidon is not just any European name', it 'calls attention to itself, in a way that, for example, Bryant, another European name borne by a black character in the novel, does not'.¹⁶¹ Poseidon is an exceptional signifier of European legacy, resisting easy translation into the New World context. This discrepancy is further confirmed when Fenwick first confronts Poseidon:

Poseidon addressed Fenwick at last. His mouth moved and made frames which did not correspond to the words he actually uttered. It was like the tragic lips of an actor, moving but soundless as a picture, galvanized into comical associations with foreign dubbing and tongue which uttered a mechanical version and translation out of accord with the visible features of original expression.¹⁶²

In response to this passage, Mackey finds that Harris exposes the discrepancy between signifier and signified, and the play of *différance* thwarts the achievement of

¹⁶⁰ Webb (1992) p. 41.

¹⁶¹ Mackey (1993) p. 185.

¹⁶² Harris (1985) p. 371.

transparency.¹⁶³ Poseidon's European name contrasts with his status as maroon leader, yet that seeming polar opposition is undermined by the mythological status that the figure of the ancient maroon has in the minds of characters like Bryant. No dichotomy is absolute, but rather Harris brings them into play with one another. In the case of Fenwick and Poseidon, whereas the polarity between self and other appears absolute – complete unintelligibility of the words spoken – the movement of the novel charts the changing relation of the two characters.

Casting Poseidon in the role of the other is not to suggest any racial or absolute stereotyping, but is achieved by the narrative at various stages. He is described as being 'hooked and nailed to a secret ladder of conscience'; and likened to a god who nevertheless 'teaches us the terrifying depth of our human allegiance, our guilt in the face of humanity, our subservience to the human condition'.¹⁶⁴ Poseidon is presented as an exemplary character because he encapsulates duality. As Fenwick claims, 'he [Fenwick] could not shake off the conviction of a dual net of ancient spirit and helplessness – divine pride and human fallibility – Poseidon had found in the air and on the earth they walked upon'.¹⁶⁵ This is a duality that is captured even in the description of his house, which 'had an air both foreign and native, ideal and primitive, at one and the same time'.¹⁶⁶ Importantly, it is this play of duality that Fenwick identifies as 'the emotional dynamic of liberation'.¹⁶⁷ If, as Webb argues, Poseidon signifies both the past and the racial diversity of Guyana, what Harris suggests is that the re-imagining of seeming absolutes, such as history and race, must

¹⁶³ Mackey (1993) p. 177.

¹⁶⁴ Harris (1985) p. 371; p. 397.

¹⁶⁵ Harris (1985) p. 398.

¹⁶⁶ Harris (1985) p. 411.

¹⁶⁷ Harris (1985) p. 385.

be taken on board by Fenwick and his crew, not so that the conversation with the other becomes perfectly intelligible or, to recall Glissant, transparent, but rather to continually effect a relation between opaque individuals to overcome oppression.

The novel closes with a dream that recalls Fenwick's unintelligible encounter with Poseidon:

Fenwick was dreaming a very strange dream: it seemed that an inquisition of dead gods and heroes had ended, an inquiry into the dramatic role of conscience in time and being, the dangers of mortal ascent and immortal descent. The one chosen from amongst them to descend was crying something Fenwick was unable to fathom but the echoes of annunciation grew on every hand and became resonant with life In our end ...our end ...our end is our beginning ...beginning ...beginning. Fenwick awoke. It was the dawn of the seventh day.¹⁶⁸

The relation between Fenwick and the unknown god/hero is not one of mutual intelligibility. Otherness is not wholly assimilated by the receiving self. Instead, Harris celebrates a new relation between Fenwick and another plane of reality that lets the revisionary imagination begin its work, not only for himself but towards 'our beginning'. This is a revision of historical legacies for the present Guyanese people, a revisionary dynamic that gives hope for the future.

Historical legacies also abound in *Palace of the Peacock*. The journey undertaken by the crew of the El Doradonne resonates with conquistadorial explorations of the interior lands of Guyana. Indeed, the very name of the vessel conflates El Dorado and Donne, reinforcing the image of Donne as the obstinate and

¹⁶⁸ Harris (1985) p. 464. Ellipsis in the original. This final passage recalls, T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* (1944): 'What we call the beginning is often the end/And to make an end is to make a beginning' (T.S. Eliot *Four Quartets* [London: Faber and Faber, 1959] p. 58). Indeed, Harris clearly signals this association in his epilogue to book three of *The Secret Ladder* which cites from the same poem: 'We are born with the dead:/See, they return, and bring us with them [...]. A people without history/Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern/Of timeless moments' (Harris [1985] p. 445; Eliot [1959] p. 58) Moreover, it was T. S. Eliot who approved Harris's first novel, *Palace of the Peacock*, for publication with Faber and Faber.

callous coloniser: 'I'm the last landlord. I tell you I fight everything in nature'.¹⁶⁹

This questing premise is borne throughout the novel as the journey upstream towards the uncharted source becomes a seven stage quest to reach the palace of the peacock. In this way, like *The Lost Steps*, it becomes a re-visioning of the creation myth, as Riach points out: 'the narrative works backwards through the seven days of creation in Christian mythology. We arrive at the very end of the novel at the point of genesis'.¹⁷⁰ Or better still, the moment of digenesis, for Harris's novel is not the confirmation of an absolute legitimacy and pure lineage. Moreover, the significance of Christian mythology as a backdrop to *Palace* further confirms Harris's challenge to dogmatic and absolutist religious views. Jean-Pierre Durix illustrates this issue by pointing towards a moment in the closing section of *Palace of the Peacock*. Donne is climbing a cliff face and is confronted by a number of windows, which variously reveal a carpenter's room and 'a crib in a stall that might have been an animal's trough'.¹⁷¹ Identifying the biblical parallels evident here, Durix emphasises the fact that, despite his efforts, Donne 'obtains no response' from these scenes, and argues that, for Harris, 'this lack of communication' illustrates that '[u]nless characters can relate to these scenes in such a way to abandon their biases, these visions of origin will remain like frozen objects with no relevance to the present'.¹⁷² As with Glissant's theory of a digenesis, the creation myth that Harris presents in *Palace of*

¹⁶⁹ Harris (1985) p. 22.

¹⁷⁰ Alan Riach 'The Presence of Actual Angels: The Fractal Poetics of Wilson Harris's pp. 33-44 in *Callaloo* Vol. 18 No. 1 Wilson Harris: a Special Issue 1995 (Winter) p. 41.

¹⁷¹ Harris (1985) p. 106.

¹⁷² Jean-Pierre Durix 'Origins in *Palace of the Peacock*' pp. 83-102 in *Theatre of the Arts: Wilson Harris and the Caribbean*, edited by Hena Maes-Jelinek and Bénédicte Ledent (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002) Durix (2002) p. 97.

the Peacock is one that is founded on an opaque moment, not static or reified in some mythical-historic past.

Harris's presentation of the moment of creation, then, conforms to his presentation of wholeness as an unfinished, always unrealised state. In the same way, the palace of the peacock, which represents the 'origin' that the crew are seeking, is not a tangible place, but signifies a creative genesis of cross-cultural relations that is relived over several occasions. The reader is told that, as Donne moves closer towards the palace, '[a] longing swept him like the wind of the muse to understand and transform his beginnings: to see the indestructible nucleus and redemption of creation, the remote and the abstract image and correspondence, in which all things and events gained their substance and universal meaning'.¹⁷³ Although the crew must die to reach the palace, this is not an absolute moment of transcendence into another realm: Donne's desire is to 'transform his beginnings', not escape his previous life. Additionally, the enlightenment gained by Donne and his crew is not associated with an absolute creator/God, but is characterised by the awareness of the inscrutable otherness which lies outside 'normal' comprehension: '[h]e saw nothing, he saw the unself of night, the invisible otherness around [...]. He saw something but had not grasped it. It was his blindness that made him see his own nothingness and imagination constructed beyond his reach'.¹⁷⁴ This is the absolute and creative otherness into which the members of the crew are brought into relation with at the end of the novel: a relation that is encapsulated, in particular, by the music which fills the palace.

¹⁷³ Harris (1985) p. 101.

¹⁷⁴ Harris (1985) p.108.

After a notable absence the narrator/Dreamer returns in the closing section of *Palace of the Peacock* to witness the sound that is apparently issuing from Carroll's lips, though 'I knew it came from a far source within':¹⁷⁵

Carroll was whistling. A solemn and beautiful cry – unlike a whistle I reflected – deeper and mature. Nevertheless his lips were framed to whistle and I could only explain the difference by assuming the sound from his lips was changed when it struck the window and issued into the world. It was an organ cry almost and yet quite different I reflected again. It seemed to break and mend itself [...]. It was the cry of the peacock and yet I reflected far different. I stared at the whistling lips and wondered if the change was in me or in them.¹⁷⁶

This privileged moment witnesses unceasing relation through music. For Mackey, the discrepancy between the sound apparently issued and that which is understood – a moment which recalls the conversation between Fenwick and Poseidon in *The Secret Ladder* – 'reveals not only the insufficiency of the visual image but that of any image, visual, acoustic, or otherwise. Heaven is wholeness, meaning that any image that takes up the task of evoking it can only fail'.¹⁷⁷ If this is the case, then Harris is suggesting the impossibility of achieving heaven/wholeness. However, it is misleading to read the palace of the peacock strictly as a metaphor for a single concept: heaven. Harris writes that 'the colours of the peacock', in line with alchemical symbolism, 'may be equated with all the variable possibilities or colours of fulfilment we can never totally realise'.¹⁷⁸ While the palace may be compared to the apocalyptic archetypes identified by Frye – notably, stars –, they do not

¹⁷⁵ Harris (1985) p. 114.

¹⁷⁶ Harris (1985) p. 113.

¹⁷⁷ Mackey (1993) p. 255.

¹⁷⁸ Harris (1999) p. 169.

necessarily denote religious belief.¹⁷⁹ Rather, Frye argues that we should approach the Bible as ‘a definitive myth, a single archetypal structure extending from creation to apocalypse’.¹⁸⁰ And it is precisely this sense of cyclical progression that Harris replicates in *Palace of the Peacock*, and which is inherent in the alchemical process itself: ‘the revisionary cycle which Jung identifies with ancient alchemy [...]. The nigredo is the unknown land; the albedo is the dawning light; and the cauda pavonis are the colours of the peacock. But then the colours of the peacock go back to the nigredo and it becomes a different place’.¹⁸¹ As for Jung, alchemy presents itself as significant metaphor for the psychic process of projection and the bringing into consciousness new perspectives derived from the unconscious.¹⁸² For Harris, the cycle is never complete because it is premised on a relation to place and context, which is subject to continual change. In this same sense, Maes-Jelinek argues that the wholeness that the palace of the peacock signifies, is not a final state, but rather ‘a coming to consciousness which makes the crew see themselves as whole’.¹⁸³ Wholeness is a sense of one’s cross-culturality or relation with all others including the creative ‘nucleus’ that lies outside of consciousness. The extract re-enacts this relation. The music is unidentifiable because, like the archetype, it gestures towards the ungraspable otherness. As Harris makes clear: ‘when I speak of music, I am not thinking simply of a man-made music. I am thinking of the music that exists prior to human discourse. It exists in the cosmos, it exists, you could say, in the rivers in the

¹⁷⁹ Frye (1957) p. 145.

¹⁸⁰ Frye (1957) p. 315.

¹⁸¹ Harris in Riach and Williams (1992) p. 62.

¹⁸² See Stevens (1994) pp. 40-41.

¹⁸³ Maes-Jelinek (2006) p. 15.

land'.¹⁸⁴ The 'metaphysical outlines' that the Dreamer intuits as he looks over the savannah's indeed might signify traces of past lives or history, but equally they might point towards the celestial 'music' the Harris describes. In each cases, it signifies an otherness with which Harris's characters begin a relation with in the genesis of the imagination.

As the music travels from the unknown/opaque otherness– 'it came from a far source within' – to reach the Dreamer, it passes through the window into the world. It passes from otherness into a (partially) comprehended sound. The sound is not absolute: once in the world the music is creatively reimagined as whistle, organ, or peacock's cry. But rather than signifying the unattainability of wholeness, it characterises an unceasing creativity in which the 'text' received is reimagined. The transfer through the window represents, to recall Bhabha, a Third Space:¹⁸⁵ a site of passage though which otherness is translated into consciousness, though only partially so, as opacity, represented in the novel by peacock colours, always resists complete comprehension: 'it seemed to me that Carroll's music changed [...]. The change and variation I thought I detected in the harmony were outward and unreal and illusory: they were induced by the *limits and apprehensions in the listening mind of men*'.¹⁸⁶ This becomes a crucial scene that visualises not only cross-cultural relations between characters (Carroll and the Dreamer), but a model of singular creolization in which 'metaphysical outlines' and opaque otherness that the novel gestures towards form part of the imaginative cycle.

¹⁸⁴ Harris cited by Camboni and Fazzini (2004) p. 54.

¹⁸⁵ Bhabha (1994) p. 36. Cited on p. 147 of this thesis.

¹⁸⁶ Harris (1985) p. 114. Emphasis mine.

If on reaching the palace the crew attain a degree of enlightenment, that achievement is the ability to relate without bias. The character of Schomburgh, for example, in an earlier moment, is drawn to relive a past memory on hearing '[a] long bar of secret music'.¹⁸⁷ This is a privileged, 'universal' moment that reconciles apparent opposites – 'beyond life and death, past and present'.¹⁸⁸ However this moment is broken: '[h]e had heard clearer than ever before the distant music of the heart's wish and desire. But even now he tried to resist and rebuke himself for being merely another nasty sentimental old man'.¹⁸⁹ Yet, by the time he has reached the palace, Schomburgh has let go of his inhibitions: '[h]e listened too, like me. I saw he was free to listen and to hear at last without fearing a hoax. He stood at his window and I stood at mine, transported beyond the memory of words'.¹⁹⁰ Free to listen, to see oneself as part of the wholeness of cross-cultural relations without material prejudice : this is the enlightenment gained by the crew of the *El Doradonne*.

Where the alchemical process evoked by *Palace of the Peacock* – from unknown territory to the peacock colours¹⁹¹ - concerns, as Gilkes argues, 'the reintegration of the individual through a juxtaposition or "wedding" of opposites',¹⁹² the end result is a fantastical vision. And while peacock colours suggest a vast departure from 'macadam dreams',¹⁹³ in fact, the difference is not so great. Despite the mythological grandeur of the palace, Harris's novel remains rooted in a

¹⁸⁷ Harris (1985) p. 66.

¹⁸⁸ Harris (1985) p. 66.

¹⁸⁹ Harris (1985) p. 67.

¹⁹⁰ Harris (1985) p. 113.

¹⁹¹ See Harris (1999) p. 163 and Gilkes (1975) p. 36. Gilkes's commentary on the alchemical significance to *Palace of the Peacock* refers to the *nigredo* stage as chaos only. However, given the central role of context and place, I would emphasise the significance of 'unknown territory', which Harris mentions, for it stresses the importance of landscape within the process of enlightenment.

¹⁹² Gilkes (1975) p. 37.

¹⁹³ Pineau's concept discussed in Chapter One, pp. 100-115.

Caribbean reality and landscape. The histories and mythology evoked in both *Palace of the Peacock* and *The Secret Ladder* are specific to the Caribbean context: maroon communities, the experience of the interior, legacies of colonialism and displacement. Further, McWatt suggests, it is ‘because of [its] particular history and hybrid nature, with multiple influences from outside, [the Caribbean is] better equipped than most’ to encompass aspects of creolization.¹⁹⁴ As with Glissant, the Caribbean is offered as the exemplary site of creolization; and further, it is the legacies and memories specific to that context that inform the creolizing traditions that each writer explores. For Schomburgh in *Palace of the Peacock*, enlightenment marks the simple ability to look back on his past actions without shame or embarrassment. It may be imagined in a fantastical uncommon way, but it is an everyday impulse. Further, as Bundy notes, ‘[t]he peacock’s palace is none other than the stars of the southern night sky’:¹⁹⁵ a common and recurring sight, clearly situated and realised from a Guyanese perspective. By the same token, macadam is not uniform colour, but broken shards of stone bound together by tar. In this case, what the peacock colours come to signify is ultimately not so different from a macadam state. That is to say both imply ‘unity within diversity’,¹⁹⁶ ‘variable possibilities’, and ‘colours of fulfilment we can never totally realize’.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ McWatt (2002) p. 127.

¹⁹⁵ Bundy (1999) p. 27.

¹⁹⁶ Gilkes (1975) p. 36.

¹⁹⁷ Harris (1999) p. 163.

Reimagining the Muse of History.

The cross-cultural imagination celebrated by Harris is, as I have suggested, a capacity to produce wholly new ways of thinking. However, both Harris and Glissant agree that this does not mean complete dislocation from the past. A similar claim is made in Harris's approach to literary traditions. As outlined in Chapter Two, Attridge argues that all literary production may be understood as a translation of previous works, and that singular, or original, works of literature are created when past forms are brought into contact with the other/unknown. Similarly, Harris depicts a chaotic play of relations at work, not to be misunderstood as 'an anarchic phenomenon' but 'may be visualised as portraying an "open" universe. Continuities running out of the mystery of the past into the unknown futures yields proportions of originality, proportions of the "genuinely new"'.¹⁹⁸ The regenerative capacity of the imagination, then, lies in its ability to produce 'genuinely new' perspectives from the past. Harris likens this process to the creation of a 'jigsaw in which "pasts" and "presents" and likely or unlikely "futures" are the pieces that multitudes in the self employ in order to bridge chasms in historical memory'.¹⁹⁹ Within this model, the past is not an absolute point of reference, a reality waiting to be uncovered, but fragments of texts and contexts that can be put together and viewed in new ways in the present. Harris suggests that Penelope's loom offers an example of this. Awaiting the return of Odysseus and endlessly deferring re-marriage, Penelope weaves a shroud that is undone and re-woven, so that 'each thread is subject to varieties of implicit re-

¹⁹⁸ Harris (1999) p. 49.

¹⁹⁹ Harris (1999) p. 49.

dress’.²⁰⁰ In the same way, historical legacies and literary traditions may be read in new ways as they are revised by the creative imagination.

The partiality of each ‘thread’ of history is illustrated by another example offered by Harris: limbo, a form of dance conceived on the slave ships crossing the Middle Passage. Importantly, Mackey emphasises, this is a tradition born from ‘a liminal or in-between state’.²⁰¹ Thus when the limbo dance is performed in contemporary Caribbean contexts it signifies a relationship with history that is creolized: limbo, for Harris,

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 renaissance of a new corpus of sensibility that could translate and accommodate African and other legacies within a new architecture of cultures.²⁰²

Limbo dance refers back to an African past and signifies the absence of history: an ambivalent ‘hybrid’ moment, to evoke Bhabha’s terminology, that is *neither* wholly African, *nor* wholly new (World).²⁰³ This ambivalence can also be traced in Harris’s concept of the ‘phantom limb’, ‘the re-assembly of dismembered man or god’ which nevertheless signifies both unity and amputation.²⁰⁴ By evoking this ambivalent tradition, recalling a past that is both absent and present, Harris, like Glissant, rejects linear historicity and pure racial origins, enforcing his conviction, as Marina Camboni has suggested, that ‘the path to salvation involves overcoming the

²⁰⁰ Harris (1983a) p. 126.

²⁰¹ Mackey (1993) p. 168.

²⁰² Harris (1999) p. 158.

²⁰³ Bhabha presents hybridity as ‘neither the one thing nor the other’ (1994 p. 33).

²⁰⁴ Harris (1999) p. 158. Mackey similarly draws attention to the closely related concepts of limb and limbo (1993 p. 168-169).

symmetrical binaries of Self and Other'.²⁰⁵ By being both neither/nor, limbo as a liminal, hybrid space breaks the binaries that have served to relegate the Caribbean to the periphery.

Conventional historiography refuses the potential that may be found in overcoming binaries and linearity. For Harris, this conventional way of viewing history creates 'a stasis which *possesses* no criteria for assessing profoundly original dislocations in the continuous pattern of exploiter/exploited charted by the historian'.²⁰⁶ Western historiography, then, forgoes the possibility of creolized readings of history as well as the potential for redressing the historical trauma that Harris explores in novels such as *Jonestown*. In this case, the individual remains cast within the self/other binary around which colonial and counter-colonial discourse function. Postcoloniality is achieved only when such binaries are overcome. This does not mean, as Barbara Webb argues, that Harris presents a re-evaluation of history and myth that 'is tantamount to deliverance from the alienating effects of the historical process'.²⁰⁷ Limbo does not erase the legacy of the Middle Passage, it is haunted by the phantom of that horror. But it is not restricted by the already established pattern of exploiter/exploited: it is, Gilkes argues 'a response to West Indian culture and historical reality which is neither a revolt against, nor a passive acceptance of, a diverse situation'.²⁰⁸ In this way, Harris's dialogue with history

²⁰⁵ Marina Camboni 'Resisting Fearful Symmetry: Wilson Harris's Bridges of Language' pp. 9-20 in *Resisting Alterities: Wilson Harris and Other Avatars of Otherness*, edited by Marco Fazzini (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004) p. 12.

²⁰⁶ Harris (1999) p. 176. Emphasis in the original. Glissant similarly criticises Western historiography for its inability to deal with multiple, converging histories (1999a p. 66; see p.58 of this thesis).

²⁰⁷ Webb (1992) p. 81. This comment puts Webb at odds with critics such as Camboni, who argues that 'Harris maintains that five hundred years of conquest and colonialism cannot be brushed aside by an act of will on either side' (2004 p. 10).

²⁰⁸ Gilkes (1975) p. 152.

achieves the form of postcoloniality that this thesis has set out to investigate, remaining specific to, but not determined by the history of colonisation and domination in the Caribbean.

Webb's comment reveals a lack of sensitivity with respect to Harris's approach to traumatic history: while Francisco Bone, for example, is able to revisit the past in order to readdress the trauma of the Jonestown tragedy, this does not mean that the event is any less painful or alienating. Yet, it is a position perhaps encouraged by Harris's particular historical perspective which often reaches far beyond the colonial moment. Brathwaite, it will be remembered from my Introduction, argued that creolization exists as a direct result of European colonisation. Glissant follows this model, claiming that 'creolization was born' on the plantation.²⁰⁹ Harris, on the other hand, looks further back, finding the impulse towards conquest and colonisation in pre-Columbian Carib civilization.²¹⁰ However, Harris does not reject the colonial legacy. Nor is he reading history as a linear evolution from the pre-Columbian era, through colonisation, to the present day: 'I am concerned with gateway-complex between cultures. Such a gateway-complex means, in fact, that one stresses a discontinuous line – the missing links, as it were, between cultures'.²¹¹ What Harris's use of pre-colonial myths reinforces, then, is the 'discontinuous line' that he is drawing: partial histories converge and are re-read in the present.

²⁰⁹ Édouard Glissant 'Creolization and the Making of the Americas' pp. 268-275 in Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford (eds) *Race, Discourse and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1995) p. 271.

²¹⁰ Harris (1998) p. 27.

²¹¹ Harris (1999) p. 177.

Harris approaches literary traditions, in particular the epic, in precisely the same manner.²¹² The influence of traditional epics – Homer’s *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, Dante’s *Divine Comedy* – may be identified throughout Harris’s writings; however, Harris has a more precise definition in mind:

[e]pic is *not* Hollywood *Ben-Hur* or Hollywood *Moses*.
Epic is an *arrival* in an architecture of space that is *original* to our age, an *arrival* in multi-dimensionality that alerts us to some kind of transfiguration.²¹³

Epic literature is that which, like the mythological figure of Quetzalcoatl, signifies partial existences and ‘multi-dimensionality’. Ulysses or Orpheus move from one plane of existence to another: descent into the Underworld and return. The epic has built into it, the ‘gateway-complex’ necessary for revision: ‘the epic is suggesting that there are stairways running through space and through the globe’.²¹⁴ This usefully suggests that what Harris is attempting to achieve in his own fiction, is the

²¹² Glissant has identified the epic as providing a model for cross-cultural relations, not in order to secure the legitimacy of the nation, but, like a digenesis, as a sign of a community’s relation with all others: ‘a new, contemporary epic literature will begin to appear as soon as the world-totality will begin to be conceived of as a new community [...]. The new epic literature will establish relation and not exclusion. Finally, such an epic literature may be able to do without the concept of being, in order to remain astounded by the imagination of becoming, of all the possible becomings of the world, of all possible existings’ (Édouard Glissant ‘From Introduction to a Poetics of the Diverse’ translated by Pierre Joris, pp. 119-121 in *boundary 2* Vol. 26, No. 1 1999 p. 120-121).

²¹³ Harris (1999) p. 187. Emphasis in the original. Wole Soyinka also celebrates the epic as it points toward a human totality and relation between individuals, nature, and the cosmos, evidence for which he finds in those archetypal characters who were able to move between spheres of existence, such as Orpheus, Gilgamesh, Ulysses, Persephone, and Lord Shiva (Soyinka [1976 pp. 1-5). In the same way, Harris argues that the potential of the epic lies in its ability to move between seemingly absolute orders and thus offer an original, quantum ‘architecture of space’. However, for Soyinka, the influence of Platonic-Christian tradition led to the degradation of the epic’s cosmic vision (p. 3). Harris, on the other hand, argues that like Odysseus’ decent and return from the underworld, the Christian tradition of Christ’s resurrection similarly points towards a continuation of the epic’s ability to transcend a discourse of absolute orders: a multidimensionality or transfiguration of the self (see Harris [1992] pp. 71-72; Harris interviewed by Riach [1992] p. 55; and on epic’s challenge to the absoluteness of death see Harris ‘Quetzalcoatl and the Smoking Mirror: Reflections on Originality and Tradition’ in Wilson Harris *The Selected Essays of Wilson Harris*, edited by Andrew Bundy [London: Routledge, 1999] pp. 184-195).

²¹⁴ Harris cited in Marina Camboni and Marco Fazzini ‘An Interview with Wilson Harris in Macerata’ pp. 53-64 in *Resisting Alterities: Wilson Harris and Other Avatars of Otherness*, edited by Marco Fazzini (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004) p. 62.

presentation of multiple planes of reality and temporal discontinuities. But what is important is the way in which literary tradition, more generally, is approached by Harris. The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is exemplary of his method: 'Orpheus' disobedience may be re-read or re-interpreted afresh as unconscious or subconscious insight into Eurydice's fate as a *continuing pawn* of sovereign Death if her release is sanctioned within a frame of absolute rules and commandments issued by the identical regime that promises to liberate her'.²¹⁵ Here Harris returns to the Greek myth to re-read Orpheus as knowingly disobeying 'sovereign Death', and in doing so, breaking the hold of absolute orders. In this way, literary traditions and history may be 'subtly re-dressed within the cross-cultural web, subtly enriched within and against apparently alien imaginations [...]. Indeed, each work complexly and peculiarly revises another and is inwardly revised in turn'.²¹⁶ Once again, this runs parallel to Attridge's depiction of a literary tradition continually renewing itself by reworking existing texts and modes.²¹⁷ But what Harris appears to be suggesting here is a method of reading that is singular: an attentiveness for 'intuitive clues' in a text, 'implying that the *visible* text of the play [or novel, or poem] runs in concert with an *invisible* text that secrets a corridor into the future'.²¹⁸ This 'invisible text' is that absolute otherness that remains beyond and 'before human discourse': 'the well-spring from which new ideas, new associations, *spring*'.²¹⁹ This unconscious element ensures that no text or myth may be comprehended absolutely at any one time, but

²¹⁵ Harris (1999) p. 192. Emphasis in the original.

²¹⁶ Harris (1983a) p. 127.

²¹⁷ Attridge (2004) pp. 20-21. For further discussion, see pp. 151-157 of this thesis.

²¹⁸ Harris (1999) p. 249. Emphasis in the original.

²¹⁹ Harris (2000) p. 17. Emphasis in the original.

that it may be available for future interpretation, at such a time as it 'needs to be taken up again and treated differently'.²²⁰

Harris asserts that myths are available for revision because they contain aspects, 'intuitive clues', that have not been realised in previous ages. In other words, these mythical figures have archetypal significance that remains to be uncovered. Archetypes of literature continue to resurface in ever creolized forms, in response to the context of their articulation and in relation to the collective/celestial unconscious. The vision of creolization that Harris offers, while resonating with Glissant in many respects, clearly articulates the informative role of the unconscious as the absolute other/unknown that makes original formations possible. In the following chapter, I return to the issue of literary legacies and the translation of canonical texts of the Western tradition by Caribbean authors. Again, such translations exceed the original, become creolized, only when brought into a contrapuntal relation with perspectives other to the contexts in which those originals were produced. And whereas, for Harris this otherness, represented the collective unconscious, in the following chapter, I introduce an additional term that designates both this division between known and unknown, but further adds to the historicity of that relation: the archive. By marking the boundary of the other, while giving the writer access to a range of inherited discourses, the archive becomes an instrumental concept in the creolization of the Caribbean canon.

²²⁰ Harris (1999) p. 249.

Chapter Four

The Archive and The Archivist: Towards a Creolizing Relation with the Canon

[...] Each
Will be barren of ancestral memory
But endowed richly with such emptiness
From which to dream, surmise, invent, immortalise.
Though each will wear different beads
Each will be Manu, the source and future
Chronicles of our tribe.¹

Creolization has emerged throughout this thesis as a uniquely postcolonial paradigm for the production of new imaginative forms and cultural identities, but also as a recognisable feature of Caribbean literature. The composite nature of the different cultures and countries that form the archipelago and rimlands of the Caribbean ensure that relation is fundamental to any notion of Caribbeanness. In my Introduction and Chapter One, relation centred on a dialogue between colonial and postcolonial writers: a creolization of landscape tropes in order to expose the hierarchies and assumptions that lay behind colonial writing and to produce a new literature of the Caribbean landscape. Indeed, given Glissant's acknowledged engagement with both Césaire and Carpentier, this dialogue or relation between writers has not only occurred as a writing back to the ex-colonial centre, but within the Caribbean itself and across national, linguistic, and, especially in the case of Wilson Harris, historical boundaries.² These acts of literary relating are reflected in the texts themselves. Signs of creolization are evident in partial, ambiguous

¹ David Dabydeen *Turner: New and Selected Poems* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1994) p. 34.

² See Chapter One of this thesis for discussion of Glissant, Césaire, and Carpentier. In addition, for an account of 'writing back' as a model for postcolonial literature, see Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin *The Empire Writes Back*, second edition (London: Routledge, 2002) p. 6.

characters such as Tyler and Otoh in Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night* (1998); or the archetypal dreamers and tricksters that recur throughout Wilson Harris's novels; it can be found in the interdependent relationships between individuals and the landscape that Glissant celebrates; and in the recognition of macadam paradises, rather than a reified Eden or Africa for Gisèle Pineau.³

The regeneration of literary accounts of the New World as Eden points towards one of the ways in which writers from the Caribbean have creolized their canon. That the Caribbean was read as paradise, as Césaire, Glissant and Pineau have shown, indicates a tendency to overlook the poverty and abuse experienced by its population, and operates as a sign of the coloniser's possession of the landscape: the projection of an European ideal or mythology onto the appropriated territory. Yet the proximity of colonialism and literature is not limited to merely landscape aesthetics. As George Lamming in *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960) argues, the entire education system in the Caribbean was imported in the same way as consumable commodities are. The result, Lamming argues, is that both culture and literature have come to be seen as foreign entities:

education was imported in much the same way that flour and butter are imported from Canada. Since the cultural negotiation was strictly between England and the natives, and England had acquired, somehow, the divine right to organise the native's reading, it is to be expected that England's export of literature would be English. Deliberately and exclusively English [...]. So the examinations, which would determine that Trinidadian's future in the Civil Service, imposed Shakespeare, and Wordsworth, and Jane Austen and George Eliot and the whole

³ *Cereus Blooms at Night* is discussed on pp. 115-126 of this thesis, while Harris is the focus of Chapter Three. For Glissant's use of landscape in *The Ripening*, see pp. 93-99, and Gisèle Pineau's *Macadam Dreams* on pp. 100-115.

tabernacle of dead names, now come alive again at the world's greatest summit of literary expression.⁴

Colonial education encouraged the Caribbean people to look elsewhere for culture; the enforcement of cultural diversion, Glissant would argue.⁵ Lamming's resentment at the imposition of a foreign canon via the colonial education system is echoed in Jamaica Kincaid's novel *Lucy* (1990) in which the eponymous protagonist reacts angrily to her first encounter with daffodils while in the U.S.: 'I remembered an old poem I had been made to memorize when I was ten years old and a pupil at Queen Victoria Girls' School [...]. I was then at the height of my two-facedness: that is, outside I seemed one way, inside I was another; outside false, inside true'.⁶ For Lucy, Wordsworth's poetry functions as a signifier of colonial acculturation, and her anger is the recognition of the epistemic violence that resulted in her complicity with this system – the memorization of the poem, mimicking the pronunciation.

These brief examples suggest the extent to which literature is bound to the colonial project, and reveals the correlation between power and canon formation. Furthermore, the elevation of Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Austen and Eliot to canonical status is not justified merely on aesthetic merit, Marie-Denise Shelton

⁴ George Lamming *The Pleasures of Exile* (Michigan: Ann Arbor Paperbacks/The University of Michigan Press, 1992) p. 27. Lamming's point of reference as a Barbadian is the Anglophone Caribbean and the former colonies of Britain, hence England is singled out as the force defining culture. However, a similar process of acculturation, particularly focusing on literature, is found throughout the Caribbean. Francophone writer, Aimé Césaire's Shakespearean rewriting, *A Tempest* (1969), suggests not only the extent of writing back across the Caribbean, but that this form of engagement need not only occur between the colony and the metropolis: Césaire writes back to the European canon, rather than an exclusively French one. The psychoanalytic effect of acculturation is also discussed by Frantz Fanon *Black Skins, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986) pp. 141-209. For the purposes of this thesis my focus will be on Caribbean writers' responses to the imposition of a Western canon.

⁵ Édouard Glissant *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, translated by J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999b) pp. 87-89. Also see pp. 57-62 of this thesis.

⁶ Jamaica Kincaid *Lucy* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1991) p. 18.

argues, but rather, is determined by the need to legitimize European authority.⁷ In this light, Lucy's determination to erase from her memory 'line by line, every word of that poem',⁸ constitutes a rejection of the West's dominance. However, Lucy's attitude is not wholly characteristic of Caribbean authors. Writing back is not an erasure of the West's canonical legacy; rather, as with the reassessment of Edenic discourse explored in Chapter One, Western canonical texts have been subjected to a rewriting and relocation in the Caribbean context. Jean Rhys elaborates Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) in *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966); while Maryse Condé rewrites Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) in *Windward Heights* (originally published as *La Migration des coeurs*, 1995); Derek Walcott dialogues with Homer in *Omeros* (1990); Wilson Harris similarly utilizes the *Odyssey* but also Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902) in *Palace of the Peacock* (1960); and Aimé Césaire offers a Shakespearean adaptation in *A Tempest* (1969). These are a few examples of the ways in which the Western canon is evoked, not erased by contemporary Caribbean literature, and this chapter will focus in particular on Condé's *Windward Heights* and Derek Walcott's *Omeros* to expose the processes of creolization that are implicit in these intertextual engagements with the canon.⁹

Although Lamming identifies several authors as figureheads of the exported colonial canon, it is misleading to understand the canon as merely a body of select

⁷ Marie-Denise Shelton 'Who Is Afraid of the Canon?' pp. 136-139 in *Pacific Coast Philology* Vol.32, No.2 1997 p. 139.

⁸ Kincaid (1991) p. 18.

⁹ This chapter engages with direct examples of textual translations. However, as my discussion of Caribbean authors' revisions of literary tropes such as paradise/Eden suggests, the issue of rewriting the canon expands beyond intertextuality. Indeed, as Simon Gikandi has illustrated, the literary relation between Europe and the Caribbean may be traced in the response of Caribbean writers to entire movements, such as modernism (see Simon Gikandi *Writing in Limbo: Modernism and Caribbean Literature* [Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992] pp. 1-32, in particular).

works of literature. Rather, as Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin have argued, a 'canon is not a body of texts *per se*, but rather a set of reading practices (the enactment of innumerable individual and community assumptions, for example about genre, about literature, and even about writing)'.¹⁰ As this chapter will later suggest, this model of the canon is consistent with Foucault's concept of the archive as a set of governing rules.¹¹ However, it also sheds light on the processes that writers such as Condé and Walcott are involved with. If the canon signifies reading practices, Ashcroft *et al* argue, the subversion of that particular canon will involve 'the bringing-to-consciousness and articulation of these practices and institutions, and will result not only in the replacement of some texts by others, [...] but equally crucially by the reconstruction of the so-called canonical texts through alternative reading practices'.¹² Rather than rewriting, then, this engagement with the Western canon should be understood as a rereading that exposes the assumptions and biases of Western reading practices and the texts that enforce them. In other words, postcolonial authors must enact what Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) identifies as a contrapuntal reading: '[a]s we look back at the cultural archive, we begin to reread it not univocally but *contrapuntally*, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts'.¹³ The reading practice endorsed here entails the recognition of the imperial processes

¹⁰ Ashcroft *et al* (2002) p. 186.

¹¹ Michel Foucault *The Archaeology of Knowledge* A. M. Sheridan Smith (trans). (London and New York: Routledge, 1989) p. 145. Allan Megill identifies this aspect of the archive in his article 'Foucault, Structuralism, and the Ends of History' pp. 451-503 in *Journal of Modern History* Vol. 51, No. 3 (September 1979) p. 485.

¹² Ashcroft *et al* (2002) pp. 186-187.

¹³ Edward Said *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus Ltd, 1993) p. 59. Emphasis in the original.

that allow, for example, Jane Austen or Charles Dickens to make passing references to the colonies: such acts are not arbitrary but signs of colonial appropriation and domination.¹⁴ Further, what contrapuntal readings highlight are not only the unstated connections between colonial centre and periphery, but also the history of resistance to it: the reactions that the colonial relationship provoked.¹⁵ Fundamentally, contrapuntal reading is a process of relation in the Glissantian sense: ‘we must be able to think through and interpret together experiences that are discrepant, each with its particular agenda [...], all of them co-existing and interacting with others’, ‘juxtaposing experiences with each other, [...] letting them play off each other’.¹⁶ The cultural moment of the canon is brought into relation with that which is *excluded* by those assumed reading practices in order to effect new readings of texts and in doing so, creolizes the canon. This paradigm, then, not only represents the extent to which creolization functions as a central concept within the literature of the contemporary Caribbean, but points towards an engagement with the reading practices and texts of the West that stimulate new, original readings. Contrapuntal writing, to elaborate this term further, would constitute the enactment of this relation: exposing both the assumptions inherent in the source and creolizing it by incorporating that which it excludes into the frame.¹⁷ By transposing Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* to the French Caribbean, Condé’s *Windward Heights* initiates just such a process.

¹⁴ Said (1993) p. 78.

¹⁵ Said (1993) p. 79.

¹⁶ Said (1993) p. 36; p. 37.

¹⁷ As I argued in Chapter Two, this is the crucial distinction between rewriting and a new work of literature by Attridge’s account (see pp. 151-157 of this thesis).

‘Honour and Respect’: Returning to *Wuthering Heights*.

Guadeloupean author and academic, Maryse Condé, celebrates the art of mimicry in her essay ‘Order, Disorder, Freedom, and the West Indian Writer’, claiming that ‘to imitate to perfection was [...] a transgression. The black man was not entitled to have any talent, and during slavery to be caught reading a book meant death’.¹⁸ This transgressive power of mimicry is most forcefully evident in her novel *Windward Heights*, dedicated with ‘[h]onour and respect’ to Emily Brontë, who, Condé writes, ‘I hope will approve of this interpretation of her masterpiece’.¹⁹ Intertextual references are present throughout Condé’s work – *Crossing the Mangrove* (*Traversée de la mangrove* [1989]) is influenced by Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* (1929); *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem* (*Moi, Tituba, sorcière... Noire de Salem* [1986]) imagines an encounter with Hester Prynne from Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* (1850).²⁰ However, *Windward Heights* stands apart from these works by merit of the strong degree to which Condé’s work relies on and even mimics the original Brontë text. Condé’s novel is set in the post-emancipation era (1898) in Cuba and Guadeloupe, and tells the story of two prominent families: Gagneur and de Linsseuil. The Gagneurs are an estate-owning mulatto family into

¹⁸ Condé, Maryse ‘Order, Disorder, Freedom, and the West Indian Writer’ pp. 121-135 in *Yale French Studies* No. 83, *Post/Colonial Conditions: Exiles, Migrations, and Nomadisms* Vol. 2 1993 p. 124.

¹⁹ Condé, Maryse (1998) *Windward Heights*, translated by Richard Philcox (London: Faber and Faber), epigraph.

²⁰ There are numerous discussions of intertextuality in Maryse Condé’s fiction. Renée Larrier gives a good overview of the multiple literary borrowings throughout Condé’s work, focusing in more detail on *Crossing the Mangrove* and *Windward Heights* (see Renée Larrier *Autofiction and Advocacy in the Francophone Caribbean* [Gainesville: The University Press of Florida, 2006] Chapter Five). Derek O’Regan *Postcolonial Echoes and Evocations: The Intertextual Appeal of Maryse Condé* (Bern and Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006) provides a clear account of the various theoretical approaches to intertextuality and influence from Harold Bloom, through Julia Kristeva (who coined the term in her 1966 essay ‘Le Mot, le dialogue et le roman’), to Gérard Genette’s refinement of the concept in *Palimpsestes* (1982).

which Rayzé is introduced in lieu of the father's promised gifts (a fiddle and a whip)²¹ to his two children Justin and Cathy. Condé leaves her reader with no doubt of the correlation between Rayzé and Brontë's Heathcliff: retelling his childhood, Rayzé claims that, "I was found in Guadeloupe as naked as the day I was born, on the barren *heath and cliffs* – the *razyés* – hence my name".²² As in *Wuthering Heights*, Rayzé and Cathy form a deep attachment, but she eventually rejects him and marries Aymeric de Linsseuil, a white creole, after which Rayzé devotes his life to seeking revenge on the de Linsseuil family, for example by marrying Aymeric's sister Irmine de Linsseuil.

From this brief introduction to Condé's text, a clear reliance on *Wuthering Heights* is evident: Cathy is the equivalent of Catherine Earnshaw; Justin of Hindley; Aymeric de Linsseuil of Edgar Linton; Irmine of Isabella Linton. Corresponding events recur throughout the novel, such as the reference to the fiddle and whip; or the fact that both Justin and Hindley lose their inheritance to Rayzé/Heathcliff in a game of cards, as well as the hatred between the two rivals; or the hysteria of Cathy.²³ But what Condé's relocation achieves, Vinay Swamy argues, is the

²¹ This is a direct parallel with *Wuthering Heights* in which Mr Earnshaw promises a whip for Cathy and a fiddle for Hindley. Bill Clemente and Linda Clemente's article, 'Maryse Condé's *Windward Heights* and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*: Colonial Reality in Victorian Guise', details further parallels between the two texts (in *Changing Currents: Transnational Caribbean Literary and Cultural Criticism*, edited by Emily Allen Williams and Melvin Rahming [Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2006] pp. 119-133); see also Lillian Corti 'The Unrocked Cradle in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Maryse Condé's *La Migration des coeurs* in *Changing Currents: Transnational Caribbean Literary and Cultural Criticism*, edited by Emily Allen Williams and Melvin Rahming (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2006) pp. 119-133 (see, in particular, pp. 292-295).

²² Condé (1998) p. 9. My emphasis. Both Heathcliff and Rayzé are given their names by their new families, names which, for both, function as both first and surname.

²³ Not only the fact of Cathy's hysteria is incorporated into *Windward Heights*, but Condé approximates specific scenes; for example in both texts Cathy is discovered standing in front of an open window in the cold night air (Condé [1998] p. 74; Emily Brontë *Wuthering Heights* [London: Penguin Books, 1994] p. 116).

exposure of elements of the colonial relationship in Brontë.²⁴ In other words, Condé encourages her readers to re-read Brontë contrapuntally – highlighting the colonial power relations that allow Brontë to refer to Heathcliff as a ‘dark-skinned gipsy’, or question whether Catherine Linton (junior) ‘be a native of the country, or, as is more probable, an exotic’, or even make the passing reference to ‘a strange repulsive animal: a centipede from the Indies’.²⁵ However, some critics have questioned Condé’s over-dependence on *Wuthering Heights*.²⁶ Indeed, by Said’s account, these statements from *Wuthering Heights* alone provide ample grounding for contrapuntal readings, leaving the need for rewriting in question. Yet, while Condé remains faithful to the original text to a much greater extent than, for example, Derek Walcott in his use of the *Odyssey* or *Iliad* in *Omeros*, her interpretation elaborates and exceeds the source text. For example, while *Wuthering Heights* utilises the narrative voices of Nelly Dean and Mr Lockwood, Condé offers thirteen different first-person narratives. These narrators are peripheral characters –servants, ex-slaves, fishermen – and representatives of the racial diversity of Caribbean society.²⁷ At the same time, Condé displays a real concern to give voice to those most radically

²⁴ Swamy (2006) p. 64

²⁵ Brontë (1994) p. 43; p. 100. Condé is not alone in reading Brontë contrapuntally. Maja-Lisa Von Sneidern, for example, considers *Wuthering Heights* as not only a commentary on a Victorian fear of racial miscegenation, but as the transference of plantation society onto the English landscape (‘*Wuthering Heights* and the Liverpool Slave Trade’ in *English Literary History* Vol.62 No.1 1995 pp. 171-196). While, Fumagalli notes, Angela Carter has speculated on Heathcliff’s possible links with the slave trade (2006 p. 257).

²⁶ O’Regan (2006) questions the fine line between adaptation and plagiarism (pp. 35-36), an allegation that some critics have raised against *Windward Heights* (see Rodger Little ‘Condé, Brontë, Duras, Beyala: Intertextuality or Plagiarism?’ in *French Studies Bulletin: A Quarterly Supplement* Vol. 72, Autumn, 1999). See also Rudyard J. Alcocer (2005) *Narrative Mutations* (New York and London: Routledge) pp. 176-186.

²⁷ Elsewhere, Condé has spoken of the duty of the Caribbean writer to listen to and record the voices and experiences of his/her people (see Maryse Condé ‘What About Those Who Don’t Have Grandmothers?’ in *Contemporary Women Writing in the Other Americas: Contemporary Women Writing in the Caribbean* Vol. 2, edited by Georgina M. M. Colvile [Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1996] pp. 307-311).

marginalised in society: ten of the thirteen accounts are narrated by female characters.²⁸ Of course, the very act of relocating *Wuthering Heights* in the Caribbean conforms to the original meaning of creolization (settlement in the New World);²⁹ however, this exaggeration and democratisation of Brontë's narrative structure not only contrapuntally exposes the strict hierarchy implicit in *Wuthering Heights* that posits Mr Lockwood's (the English gentleman) account above that of the housekeeper, Nelly Dean, but provides spaces for those accounts excluded by the dominant discourses of both nineteenth-century England, most notably that of Heathcliff/Rayzé, the racial other.³⁰

While critical responses to Condé's novel have emphasised the extent to which *Windward Heights* effects contrapuntal readings of Brontë,³¹ it should be acknowledged that any possible colonial implications behind the character of Heathcliff do not necessarily explain the Caribbean, and in particular French Caribbean, context to *Windward Heights*. As Condé herself has commented, her decision to rewrite Brontë lay less with any ideological agenda, but rather with a fascination held for the author.³² Further, the additional intertextual references that

²⁸ Like Gisèle Pineau, Condé has expressed her concern with the tendency to relegate or ignore the subjugation of women within a discourse of racial oppression (see Condé [1993] pp. 124-134).

²⁹ See pp. 3-6 of this thesis.

³⁰ Vinay Swamy draws detailed comparisons between Brontë and Condé, and comments on the hierarchical structure within *Wuthering Heights* ('Traversing the Atlantic: From Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* to Condé's *Les migration des coeurs*' in *The Journal of Caribbean Literatures* Vol. 4 No.2 2006 pp. 61-74). In addition, many critics reference creolization in their discussion of *Windward Heights*. See, for example, O'Regan (2006) p. 241; Maria Cristina Fumagalli 'Maryse Condé Creolizes the Canon with *La migration des cœurs*' in *Emerging Perspectives on Maryse Condé: A Writer of Her Own*, edited by Sarah Barbour and Gerise Herndon (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2006) pp. 258. On Condé and *métissage*, see Gloria Nne Onyeoziri 'In the Face of the Daughter: Feminist Perspectives in *Métissage* and Gender' in *Emerging Perspectives on Maryse Condé: A Writer of Her Own*, edited by Sarah Barbour and Gerise Herndon (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2006) pp. 143-158.

³¹ In particular, see Fumagalli (2006) and Swamy (2006).

³² Condé cited by Alcocer (2005) p. 176.

recur in *Windward Heights* (W.H. Auden, Flaubert, Césaire, and the ancient Indian *Ramayana*) illustrate, Renée Larrier argues, Condé's tendency for literary borrowings from writers 'whose texts may or may not be set in or even related to the Caribbean'.³³ This apparently arbitrary approach to the canon distinguishes Condé from the reactive, counter-responses by Lamming or Kincaid's Lucy, both of whom approach the canon as an institutional legacy specific to particular colonial regimes. However, this distinction should be taken as evidence of Condé's postcolonial approach to both historical and literary legacies: the author is no longer confined to a position of counter-colonial opposition – a failure to transcend the already established subject-positions of colonial discourse – but, rather, is free to engage in unrestrained relation with various authors and canons.

Condé's identification with this postcolonial position is forcefully asserted in her novel's dialogue with the role the past plays in determining the lives of characters. Throughout the novel, the weight of the past is a profoundly debilitating presence. Caribbean society itself is depicted as unsuccessfully struggling to transcend the racial and social hierarchies that remain a legacy of colonialism. As the character of Justin Gagneur comments: '[i]t's been almost fifty years since slavery's supposed to be over and yet the blacks only find misery at the bottom of life's bowl. Meantime the white Creoles are still parading around with the same wealth and haven't suffered one bit'.³⁴ In the novel, the past often presents itself in terms of heritage, according to which these racial prejudices continue to be

³³ Larrier (2006) p. 133.

³⁴ Condé (1998) p. 49.

enforced.³⁵ Cathy's rejection of Rayzé offers a clear example of this: 'I could never marry him. It would be too degrading! It would be as if only Cathy the reprobate existed, stepping straight off the slave boat. Living with him would be like starting over as savages from Africa'.³⁶ Cathy's concern here is not the preservation of her family's racial purity, she is of mixed race and has an awareness of her dual heritage: 'it's as if there were two Cathy's inside me and there always have been, ever since I was little. One Cathy who's come straight from Africa, vices and all. The other Cathy who is the very image of her white ancestor, pure, dutiful, fond of order and moderation'.³⁷ Rather, her act is determined by the social and economic advantages of marrying into the white creole class; in other words, a conscious decision to remain ideologically faithful to her white heritage. The duality Cathy experiences suggests that while biological creolization may be in effect in the Caribbean, without a similar social and cultural process the entrenchment of divisions will perpetuate through individual and collective loyalty to the colonial racial hierarchy.

In many respects Condé gives the character of Ada, friend of Cathy (junior), the moral voice of the novel when she tells her to "[f]orget all about that. You mustn't keep harping on the past. What's done is done. Look ahead of you. Think of your child".³⁸ The child in question, the result of the union between Cathy (most likely the daughter of Rayzé and Cathy Gagneur) and First Born (son of Rayzé and Irmine de Linsseuil), is clearly representative of the complex racial heritage of the

³⁵ Alcoer regards these issues of heritage as fundamental to any reading of Condé's novel (2005, pp. 176-186).

³⁶ Condé (1998) p. 41.

³⁷ Condé (1998) p. 40.

³⁸ Condé (1998) p. 325.

Caribbean: 'a society whose roots and branches were so intertwined, so twisted and interlocking that falling in love and sharing a bed with a half-brother or unknown cousin was no surprise'.³⁹ Indeed, there is nothing to clearly indicate that Condé considers the future of the child, Anthuria, as being in any way compromised by the fact that her parents shared the same father. Rather, at the end of the novel, the greatest threat is that First Born will show the same destructive, obsessive love that Aymeric showered on Justin-Marie. Again, Ada is the voice of caution: 'Anthuria will be no consolation. Just the opposite. That child will lead him a real song and dance. Besides, children never are a consolation. They come to live their lives, not to brighten up their parents'.⁴⁰ Thus it is in the repetition of biases, characteristics, and destructive behaviour that the next generation and the future stability of Caribbean society is most threatened by.

That Cathy and First Born produce a female child, suggests that Condé sees some hope that the child will transcend the static and repeating characteristics of the deeply divided Guadeloupean society: elsewhere she has argued that as women do not carry on the family name, they are potentially free to push their lives in new directions.⁴¹ This is a freedom that Condé pursues in her own appropriations of various texts, as well as in her contrapuntal reading and creolization of *Wuthering Heights*. However, the ability of the individual or society to adopt a similar approach in their own dialogue with history, remains an open question. While Brontë's novel ends with the reestablishment of the family line through the union of Cathy and

³⁹ Condé (1998) p. 312.

⁴⁰ Condé (1998) p. 328.

⁴¹ Condé cited by Alcoer (2005) p. 185.

Hareton,⁴² Condé ultimately leaves the question of lineage in uncertainty, resting in the hands of a female character who is free to abandon the family name, but threatened by the isolation imposed on her by her father.

Condé's criticism of heritage, repetition, and the past is surprising in a novel that, as an interpretation of a previous text, is premised on a dialogue with all of these things. Indeed, in one sense, and despite the contrapuntal elements at work in *Windward Heights*, Condé seems to take a strangely ahistorical approach to the texts she cites. This is, then, a contradictory position: if Condé's critique of history is applied to the canon, we might expect that literature is to be criticised for prolonging or reinscribing particular ideological perspectives or repressive behavioural traits. However, this does not happen in *Windward Heights* because of a lack of ideological commitment behind Condé's textual appropriations: the canon features more as a point of reference, a broad field within which Condé can place herself in relation to other works. To view Condé's narrative as evidence of a number of interactions with other writers, does suggest a poetics of relation: not bound by the colonial relationship, free to reference Brontë or the *Ramayana*, the text itself is part of a relating between these others. In this case, the text, in a strict Glissantian sense, is an *échos-monde*: a temporary subject-position/unity that exists in relation to corresponding unities; the expression of an individual's relative position within the field of relation.⁴³ Although this agrees with the unrestricted play of postcolonial

⁴² Wilson Harris has argued that the establishment a closed family structure is the basis of the eighteenth and nineteenth century European novel ('Resistance to Alterities' pp. 3-8 in *Resisting Alterities: Wilson Harris and Other Avatars of Otherness*, edited by Marco Fazzini [Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi 2004a] p. 5).

⁴³ Édouard Glissant *Poetics of Relation*, translated by Betsy Wing (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1997) pp. 92-94. See also Chapter Two of this thesis, pp. 157-174.

relating envisioned by Glissant, Condé's approach to intertextuality excludes the historical dimension of this theory. The free play of relation should not be misunderstood as a disavowal of the impact that the past effects on people's lives: both relation and contrapuntality are informed by a spectrum of historical discourses, dominant and marginal, that converge at one particular moment. Said cites T.S. Eliot to emphasise this point:

the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of timeless as well as the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional.⁴⁴

While Condé achieves a sense of this relational field of literature, her appraisal of characters' obsessive relationship with history, as well as her refusal to clearly engage with the canon in ideological terms, means that the historical dimension of relation is muted in *Windward Heights*. Although the novel is clearly established in a historical moment, as emphasised by the fact that it opens at a crucial turning point in Cuban history, February 1898,⁴⁵ Condé is more concerned with critiquing legacy and the corresponding issue of the Caribbean's failure to progress in the aftermath of slavery, than to fully engage with and explore the concept of the canon as a historicised source of literary heritage.

⁴⁴ T. S. Eliot cited by Said (1993) p. 2.

⁴⁵ In this month the sinking of the U.S. battleship Maine in Havana sparked the outbreak of the Spanish-American War. In the peace treaty (the Treaty of Paris, nineteenth of December 1898), Spain granted Cuba its independence (under American persuasion) and ceded Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Phillippeans to the U.S.

A very different picture emerges in the poetry of Derek Walcott, who stages a much clearer, self-critical dialogue with his literary and artistic predecessors.⁴⁶ In *Omeros* he places himself directly in relation with the tradition identified by Eliot; returning to the roots of the Western canon and Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*. Indeed, much of the critical response to *Omeros* has centred around the question of its status as an epic (or not); speculation that has been fuelled by Walcott's own hesitancy at designating his work as an epic.⁴⁷ Structurally, he is clearly within that tradition: adapting his 'rough' hexameter from Homer and his 'rough' terza rima from Dante.⁴⁸ Furthermore, his cast of characters – Achille, Hector, Philoctete, and Helen – clearly provoke comparisons with their classical counterparts. However, the critical issue in terms of this thesis is not whether *Omeros* is or is not an epic in the style of Homer or Dante, but the relation in which the poem places itself with respect

⁴⁶ Walcott is also an accomplished painter and explores his relationship to the Western artistic tradition in *Tiepolo's Hound* (2000).

⁴⁷ One of the earliest commentaries is provided by Walcott's former teacher, John Figueroa, who firmly rejects the possibility that *Omeros* can be classed as an epic ('*Omeros*' in *The Art of Derek Walcott* edited by Stewart Brown [Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, Ltd/Seven Books, 1991] pp. 193-213). Decisively in the pro-epic camp is Joseph Farrel, who has accused those who would deny *Omeros* its epical status as being blinded by a Euro-centric racism that ignores the presence of epic poetry throughout world literature ('Walcott's *Omeros*: The Classical Epic in a Postmodern World' pp. 247-273 in *The South Atlantic Quarterly* Vol. 92 No. 2. 1997). Overall, however, critics have approached the issue in a more even handed way, emphasising both the ways in which Walcott has drawn on and creolized the epic tradition. See for example, Edward Baugh *Derek Walcott* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) pp. 185-197; Lance Callahan *In the Shadows of Divine Perfection: Derek Walcott's Omeros* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003) pp. 1-90; Gregson Davis "'With no Homeric Shadow": The Disavowal of Epic in Derek Walcott's *Omeros*' in *The South Atlantic Quarterly* Vol. 92 No. 2 1997 pp. 321-333; Robert D. Hamner *Epic of the Dispossessed: Derek Walcott's Omeros* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), in particular pp. 1-32; Rodger Moss 'Derek Walcott's *Omeros*: Representing St. Lucia, Re-presenting Homer' in *Islands in History and Representation*, edited by Rod Edmond and Vanessa Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 2003) pp. 146-161; John Thieme *Derek Walcott* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991) pp. 151-187.

⁴⁸ Derek Walcott 'Reflections on *Omeros*' pp. 229-246 in *The South Atlantic Quarterly* Vol. 92 No. 2. 1997c Special edition *The Poetics of Derek Walcott: Intertextual Perspectives* edited by Gregson Davis p. 244. For a detailed study of Walcott's prosody see Callahan (2003) pp. 3-55.

to that inherited literary tradition; the assumptions or reading practices that it reveals; and the creolized text that results.

Anxious Ancestry in Derek Walcott's *Omeros*.

As with *Windward Heights*, *Omeros* is presented as a document of Caribbean society, focusing on the lives of St. Lucian fishermen (Philoctete, Hector, and Achille), a housemaid, Helen, over whom Hector and Achille fight, and the expatriated colonials, Major Plunkett and his wife, Maud. But it is also a detailed account of Walcott's, and Caribbean literature's, dialogue with Western inheritance.⁴⁹ Crucially, the poem considers the impact of imposing already established models or texts on Caribbean lives, and exploring the gap between the original source and transposed counterpart. Such a process can be immediately identified in the discrepancy between Achilles and Achille (pronounced, Walcott insists, according to the French creole as *a-sheel*).⁵⁰ Whereas, for John Figueroa, Achille represents the slave owner's practice of endowing their slaves with grandiose names, noting the discrepancy illustrates how Walcott exceeds this. As the poem reveals, it is Achille's African ancestor, Afolabe, who is renamed as Achilles by the slave owner.⁵¹ Reminiscent of Wilson Harris's *The Secret Ladder* (1963) and the character of Poseidon, the allusion to the colonial practice of naming is

⁴⁹ Walcott's most recent works *The Prodigal* (2004) and *Tiepolo's Hound* (2000) continue to explore the relationship between the postcolonial world and Europe. *The Prodigal* is a reflection on the impact of returning to St. Lucia after experiencing Europe. The poem stages a geographic relation as it reads the Caribbean landscape and history alongside Europe's. *Tiepolo's Hound* shares much in common with *Omeros*. The poet's imagined dialogue with Homer in *Omeros* is reflected in Walcott's similar engagement with the masters of European art, a relationship he sees reflected in the life of Camille Pissarro (impressionist painter born on the Caribbean island of St. Thomas).

⁵⁰ Callahan (2003) p. 6.

⁵¹ Derek Walcott *Omeros* (London: Faber and Faber, 1990) p. 83. Richard Hamner also notes this distinction (1997 p. 59).

complicated by the author: neither Poseidon or Achille are slaves, and their names signify a more complex dialogue with the Caribbean's colonial heritage. In the case of *Omeros*, Achille is neither Achilles the African ancestor nor the Greek hero; a neither/nor relationship that Bhabha identifies as a sign of hybridity.⁵² The protagonist, like the poem's uncertain status as an epic, can be characterised as a creolization of origin and originality: both standing in an ambivalent relation between what the poem identifies as the two sources of Caribbean identity and culture, Africa and Europe. Yet, as Glissant would argue, a Caribbean poetics cannot be a tale of genesis,⁵³ and although *Omeros* does engage with origin – Achille returns to his ancestors' land in a spell of sunstroke – Walcott also questions the stability and ostensible unity of the source.

This becomes apparent as the hybrid, 'mis-spelling' of Achilles, finds another parallel in the poem, in the form of Achille's fishing boat: 'when he [the priest] smiled at Achille's canoe, *In God we Troust*,/Achille said: "Leave it! Is God' spelling and mine"'.⁵⁴ In both cases, Achille and 'Troust', Walcott clearly affirms the validity of the linguistic mutations that occur as they are subject to Caribbean pronunciation. Once again, this is re-enforced by the much cited example of the poem's creolization of Homer's name: 'and *O* was the conch-shell's invocation, *mer* was/both mother and sea in our Antillean patois,/os, a grey bone, and the white surf

⁵² Homi K. Bhabha *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) p. 33.

⁵³ As Glissant argues in *Faulkner, Mississippi* (1996), composite cultures like the Caribbean – those cultures 'created with western expansion and out of the mingling of many contradictory atavistic cultures' – take shape around a digenesis (Édouard Glissant *Faulkner, Mississippi*, translated by Barbara B. Lewis [New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999a] p. 115. See also Chapter Three of this thesis, pp. 212-216.

⁵⁴ Walcott (1990) p. 8.

as it crashes'.⁵⁵ Thus 'Omeros', a modern Greek pronunciation, as the poem tells us, and as such already at a remove from 'Homer', is subject to a further distortion as it is forced to signify through the Caribbean landscape and language. These forms of linguistic creolization disrupt any clear or authoritative version of language, and suggest a contingency to the environment within which words signify. In other words, rather than imposing a fixed and already established framework of meaning directly on to the Caribbean experience, the inherited language or text is itself an unstable point of reference.

Commenting on the writing of *Omeros*, Walcott rejects the notion that his poem is a rewriting or transposition of the *Odyssey*, for to do so implies that 'the Caribbean is secondary to the Aegean'.⁵⁶ By making this distinction, Walcott draws attention to that which Condé under-plays: the historical relation that is implicit in any act of rewriting a work of literature. Rather, he argues, *Omeros* is an attempt to 'register exact parallels, proportionally speaking, between the Caribbean experience and that of Homer's Greece'.⁵⁷ In this case, Walcott initially approaches the canon not as a source of authority, but as a source of archetypal models, in the Jungian/Harrisian sense, that reveal commonalities between disparate cultures.⁵⁸ However, despite this claim, the poem remains aware of the impossibility of separating canon and authority. The character of Major Plunkett provides a clear example of this as he parallels the work of the poet in his attempt to give both Helen and St. Lucia (known as the Helen of the Caribbean), a history: 'Plunkett decided

⁵⁵ Walcott (1990) p. 14. For critical references to this quote see, for example Moss (2003) p. 148 or Callahan (2003) p. 74.

⁵⁶ Walcott (1997c) p. 232.

⁵⁷ Walcott (1997c) p. 230.

⁵⁸ See Chapter Three, pp. 226-244 of this thesis.

that what the place needed/was its true place in history, that he'd spend hours/for Helen's sake on research'.⁵⁹ This impulse, conversely, contradicts the fact that Plunkett has come to the Caribbean because he was searching for a place without history: a place 'where what they called history could not happen. Where?/Where could this world renew the Mediterranean's/innocence? She deserved Eden after this war'.⁶⁰ Plunkett clearly represents the perspective of the European seeking a New World Eden, but crucially this is coupled with a desire to escape history and therefore there is a contradiction between his rejection of history and his desire to impose it on the Caribbean island and people. However, the task he pursues with regard to Helen/St. Lucia is not strictly speaking an exercise in historical documentation or the verification of events. As the poem claims:

The Major made his own flock of V's, winged comments
in the margin when he found parallels. If she
hid in their net of myths, knotted entanglements

of figures and dates, she was not a fantasy
but a webbed connection, like that stupid pretence
that they did not fight for her face on a burning sea.

[...] The factual fiction
of textbooks, pamphlets, brochures, which he had loaded

in a ziggurat from the library, had the affliction
of impartiality; [...]

[...] but his book-burdened heart
found no joy in them except their love of events,

and none noticed the Homeric repetition
of details, their prophecy. That was the difference.
He saw coincidence, they saw superstition.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Walcott (1990) p. 64

⁶⁰ Walcott (1990) p. 28.

⁶¹ Walcott (1990) pp. 95-96.

Like Walcott, Plunkett is searching for the correspondences or parallels between his Helen and Helen of Troy, as a sign of an archetypal 'webbed connection'. His project is not to endow the ahistorical Caribbean with a history, but, as T. S. Eliot advocated, to view it in relation to a web of tradition of literature and mythology from Homer onward.⁶²

While this suggests a contrapuntal poetics that emphasises both the marginality of the Caribbean voice within Western literature and the way in which the canon can be made to signify anew within the postcolonial context, by linking Plunkett's association of his housekeeper and the Homeric Helen with an idealism that corresponds to his view of the New World as Eden, Walcott warns against over-romanticising the Caribbean and de-specifying its people to the extent that they are merely archetypal models. The poet's own voice continually surfaces in *Omeros* to question his role in elevating ordinary St. Lucian fishermen or housemaids to the status of epic heroes:

My inspiration was impulse, but the Major's zeal
to make her the pride of the Battle of the Saints,
her yellow dress on its flagships, was an ideal
no different from mine. Plunkett in his innocence,
had tried to change History to a metaphor,
in the name of a housemaid; I, in self-defence,
altered her opposite. Yet it was all for her.⁶³

Both Plunkett and Walcott are implicated in this parallel process of forcing other characters' lives to signify through already established epic or historic models, rather than seeing them on their own terms. Significantly, however, Walcott's reading of

⁶² T. S. Eliot cited by Said (1993) p. 2 and on p. 289 of this thesis.

⁶³ Walcott (1990) p. 270.

Helen also effects contemporary perceptions of the 'original' Helen: 'her opposite', white Helen of Troy. Once again, the authority of the source text is questioned by *Omeros*, and Walcott hints at a creolization of the canonical figure of Helen. Yet, this potentially liberating play with Homeric Helen is undermined by the poem's insistence that a more authentic picture of the Caribbean can be gained when it is viewed without recourse to pre-existing discourse:

[...] nor all their names forced the coincidence

we had made them. There, in her head of ebony,
there was no real need for the historian's
remorse, nor for literature's. Why not see Helen

as the sun saw her, with no Homeric shadow,
swinging her plastic sandals on that beach alone,
as fresh as the sea wind?⁶⁴

Walcott asks his reader to see beyond the canonical allusions that the poem itself self-consciously makes.

He continues on this theme, pursuing it to the limits at which he suggests that not only should the act of imposing familiar models be questioned, but that the poet should access reality that exists beyond language itself:

All that Greek manure under the green bananas,
under indigo hills, the rain-rutted road,
the galvanized village, the myth of rustic manners,

glazed by the transparent page of what I had read.
What I had read and rewritten till literature
was as guilty as History. When would the sails drop

from my eyes, when would I not hear the Trojan War
in two fishermen cursing in Ma Kilman's shop?
[...]

[...] When would it stop,

⁶⁴ Walcott (1990) p. 271.

the echo in the throat, insisting, 'Omeros';
when would I enter that light beyond metaphor?⁶⁵

The poet's anxious relationship to his poetic predecessors is signalled by the persistent echo of 'Omeros' throughout the poem, and Walcott casts himself as an 'ambivalent heir', to use Torres-Saillant's term, by both accepting kinship and creatively forging new traditions.⁶⁶ This creativity, as the term creolization suggests, is derived from original engagements with tradition: a move that is recognised in the double significance of 'all that Greek manure'. In this phrase, the Homeric literary legacy is both rejected as an unwanted presence, as sign of the colonial view of the Caribbean as an insignificant and degenerate, and celebrated as a nourishing source for the poet. However, Walcott's assertion of a pre-linguistic state or authenticity 'beyond metaphor' is difficult to reconcile with his recognition of the potential within the canon to creolize artistic forms, but ultimately, the poem suggests that despite history's and literature's simplification of people and events, there remains in such forms the promise of regeneration:

[...] History has simplified

him. Its elegies had blinded me with the temporal
lament for a smoky Troy, but where coral died
it feeds on its death, the bones branch into more coral

and contradiction begins. It lies in the schism
of the starfish reversing in heaven; the mirror of History
has melted and, beneath it, a patient, hybrid organism

grows in his cruciform shadow.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Walcott (1990) p. 271.

⁶⁶ Silvio Torres-Saillant *An Intellectual History of the Caribbean* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006) pp. 103-104. See p. 18 of this thesis.

⁶⁷ Walcott (1990) p. 297.

Omeros stands in an ambivalent relation to Western culture and literature. The assumptions and biases of the canon are criticised – the colonial view of the Edenic, marginal Caribbean, its inability to articulate its own history – and its coherence and authority are undermined through the poem's celebration of creolization. Walcott is anxious about his own assumptions and articulation of Caribbean society, and the fear that his work is objectifying or exoticising the poverty of his homeland remains constant. However, discourse, history, literary archetypes, and canonical biases are not absolutes, but fragile, partial models that when exposed as such provide the ground, or 'manure', on which the 'hybrid organism' can be established.

Walcott clearly engages with Homer on ideological as well as aesthetic grounds. Not only does he adapt the epic tradition, or approximate terza rima and hexameter, but uses these conventions in order to express a creolized Caribbean identity and history. Furthermore, Walcott's critical engagement with the canon in terms of reading practices, rather than just a body of texts, offers a more coherent model of canonical creolization than Condé's *Windward Heights*. Returning to Condé's text, Larrier attempts to formulate a clear model for the author's canonical appropriations, positing Suzanne Césaire's concept of cannibal literature as a metaphor for textual transformation.⁶⁸ Césaire's manifesto for cannibal literature

⁶⁸ Carine M. Mardorossian similarly introduces the notion of cannibalism in relation to Condé's *Windward Heights* 'not to evoke the savagery and destruction it denotes in the Western imaginary but to suggest the productive process of hybridity it signifies in Caribbean and Brazilian redeployments of the term' (Carine M. Mardorossian 'Cannibalizing the Victorians: Maryse Condé's Narrative Structure' pp. 135-149 in *Changing Currents: Transnational Caribbean Literary and Cultural Criticism*, edited by Emily Allen Williams and Melvin Rahming [Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2006a] p. 137). However, Mardorossian's application of cannibalism is revealed as a process of contrapuntal rewriting, eschewing the notions of incorporation that Larrier develops. Mardorossian also discusses *Windward Heights* in 'Rewriting the Postcolonial in Maryse Condé's *La migration des cœurs*' in *Emerging Perspectives on Maryse Condé: A Writer of Her Own*, edited by Sarah Barbour and Gerise Herndon (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2006b) pp. 275-290.

proclaims 'the death of *dou-dou* literature (colonial texts in which a Caribbean woman is abandoned by her French lover). And to hibiscus, frangipani, bougainvilleas. Martinican poetry will be cannibal or it will not exist'.⁶⁹ The ideological underpinnings of Césaire's statement clearly resound with those articulated in her husband's *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* (1939), which promoted the rejection of the idealised, paradisiacal islandscape and the reclamation of the terms of racial prejudice. Whereas *Notebook* recast *négre* and *négritude* as affirmational terms of black identity, Suzanne Césaire reappropriates the figure of the cannibal – the stereotyped savage other of the New World.⁷⁰ Yet this term also repeats the problematical politics of *négritude*: the failure to transcend the terms of colonial discourse. As Wole Soyinka has argued, *négritude* 'trapped itself in what was primarily a defensive role' and 'stayed within a pre-set system of Eurocentric intellectual analysis of both man and his society, and tried to re-define the African and his society in those externalised terms'.⁷¹ By arguing that Martinican poetry

⁶⁹ Suzanne Césaire cited by Larrier (2006) p. 128. This statement is in itself a cannibalization of André Breton's *Nadja* (1928) – 'Beauty will be CONVULSIVE or will not be at all' (André Breton *Nadja*, translated by Richard Howard [London: Penguin Books, 1999] p. 160). Breton was an important supporter of *négritude*, and Aimé Césaire's *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* in particular. His preface to the 1947 Bordas edition of *Notebook*, certainly contributed to the increasing success of the poem in Europe. Furthermore, Suzanne Césaire published an article in *Tropiques*, highlighting the impact of Surrealism on Martinican intellectuals: '1943: le surréalisme et nous' (*Tropiques* Nos. 8-9, October 1943 [an English translation of '1943: Surrealism and Us' may be found in Michael Richardson (ed) *Refusal of the Shadow: Surrealism and the Caribbean*, translated by Michael Richardson and Krzysztof Fijalkowski (London and New York: Verso, 1996) pp. 123-126]). For further discussion of Surrealism and the Caribbean, see Mireille Rosello 'Introduction' pp. 9-68, in *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* by Aimé Césaire, translated by Mireille Rosello with Annie Pritchard [Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books Ltd, 1995] pp. 32-34), and Michael Richardson's Introduction in *Refusal of the Shadow: Surrealism and the Caribbean*, edited by Michael Richardson, translated by Michael Richardson and Krzysztof Fijalkowski (London and New York: Verso, 1996) pp. 1-33.

⁷⁰ See Larrier (2006) pp. 128-130.

⁷¹ Wole Soyinka *Myth, Literature and the African World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) p. 129; p. 136.

should be neither romantic nor pastoral, Suzanne Césaire points toward a savage and degraded poetic world that repeats the colonial stereotype.

This could not be further from Condé's own position, which is critical of the trend for social realism in Caribbean literature at the expense of lyrical celebrations of the natural world.⁷² However, Larrier's use of Césaire emphasises a further element of cannibal literature, which 'urges writers to symbolically devour, regurgitate, and thus transform' canonical texts.⁷³ In this case, the cannibal text is the rewritten, but also transformed, 'original'. Whereas Walcott has specifically rejected this form of reworking, seeing it as reinforcing the authority and primacy of the original text, Césaire's emphasis on the alteration to which the original is subject suggests that, potentially, a poetics of creolization is at work in this model. If creolization, as I have stressed, is a form of relation with otherness that effects a new entity, similarly, we might say that cannibalising the canon is a form of relating to the other text that produces a new work of literature. However, it is not the other text *per se* that is subject to this process, a distinction that Walcott appears more conscious of than Condé. Glissant's theory does not envisage the incorporation of the other person/text. Rather, they remain opacities or *échos-monde* that are resistant to assimilation, and coexist to produce the patterns and 'music' of cultures.⁷⁴ The

⁷² Condé (1993) p. 123.

⁷³ Larrier (2006) p. 130.

⁷⁴ Glissant (1997) p. 93. The music that Glissant envisions finds a parallel, in cannibalistic terms, in Harris's discussion of the Carib bone-flute. For Harris, the Carib's practice of cannibalism was not only regarded as a final victory over the enemy, but as a means to access secret knowledge possessed by them (Harris discusses this in 'The Schizophrenic Sea', pp. 15-26 *The Womb of Space: The Cross-Cultural Imagination* [Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1983a], see pp. 24-26, and 'New Preface to *Palace of the Peacock*' pp. 53-57 in *Selected Essays of Wilson Harris: The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination*, edited by Andrew Bundy [London and New York: Routledge, 1999], see pp. 53-54). But Harris makes the bone-flute (an instrument carved from the bones of the victim), not the act of cannibalism the metaphor for his work. Again, this issues centres around creativity and the

critical distinction must be made between a literary encounter with other texts, corresponding *échos-monde*, and an engagement with the socio-cultural assumptions and biases that lie dormant in those texts. Creolization can only occur at this latter, canonical level, because it is only at this point that the other becomes an unknown in the sense that Attridge promotes: a relation with the unconscious biases and reading practices of the canon. Although within the cannibalistic model, Wilson Harris has argued, the victim appears to be the other – the enemy in possession of some secret knowledge – both victor and victim form part of the same order.⁷⁵ The other is only that which exceeds the known. Said's notion of contrapuntal reading recognises this point: the text becomes a sign of society's values, and in re-reading that text, 'one must open it out both to what went into it and to what the author excluded'.⁷⁶ What becomes necessary in order to account for ways in which the canon may be creolized by writers from the Caribbean is a model of inter-textual relation that also exposes that which lies outside the texts. While the act of incorporating that is promoted by cannibal literature does form part of the process of creolization, a clearer theoretical model of the dialogue between the canon and those assumptions and biases it fails to recognise is necessary. In this respect, the concept of the cultural archive best fits Said's elaborated canon, while the poet examining its inclusions and exclusions, its

production of new forms: crucial qualifiers for creolization. Cannibalism, on the one hand, is the incorporation of the other person/text that effects a degree self-recognition in the cannibal, enabling them to see their own identical desire for victory and conquest that they had previously only recognised in their enemy (Harris [1999] p. 54). In other words, it leads to the awareness of one's place or character in relation to others. On the other hand, the bone-flute occupies an ambiguous position between victor and victim, life and death, which are characterised as partial, not absolute states. It is a tool for the production of a music that stages a relation between various *échos-mondes*. Its process designates not the incorporation of the enemy, but the bringing into relation contrasting points of view that exist within the same order, with that which lies outside that order, the unknown: death. This is why, for Harris death, absolute otherness, becomes a source of regeneration.

⁷⁵ Harris (1999) p. 54.

⁷⁶ Said (1993) p. 79.

archetypal models and their representations, can be reconfigured as a postcolonial archivist.

Creolizing the Canonical Archive.

Michel Foucault elaborates a theory of the archive in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), and at first glance parallels between canon and archive suggest themselves by virtue of the concept's association with documents.⁷⁷ However, this oversimplification of the archive is the equivalent of the view that holds the canon to be no more than a collection of texts. As Ashcroft *et al* have argued, this is to misunderstand the power of the canon and its role in enforcing particular reading practices and biases. In the same way, Foucault argues that the archive is not 'the sum of all the texts that a culture has', but rather 'is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events'.⁷⁸ This is not to deny the role that discourse plays within the archive, as Gary Gutting comments: 'Foucault speaks of the *archive* as the complex of all the discursive formations that

⁷⁷ For example, Mario Moussa and Ron Scapp identify this central aspect of the archive, although their overall formulation of the concept is a vast simplification of Foucault's argument ('The Practical Theorizing of Michel Foucault: Politics and Counter-Discourse' pp. 87-112 in *Cultural Critique* No. 33 Spring 1996). For a further discussion of Foucault's changing theorization of history throughout his various works, see Michael S. Roth 'Foucault's "History of the Present"' in *History and Theory* Vol. 20 No. 1 February 1981 pp. 32-46.

⁷⁸ Foucault (1989) p. 145. McGill (1979) identifies this aspect of the archive in his article (p. 485), as does Thomas Richard's 'Archive and Utopia' in *Representations*, No. 37, Special Issue: Imperial Fantasies and Postcolonial Histories Winter, 1992 pp. 104-135, who writes that '[t]he archive was not a building nor even a collection of texts but the collectively imagined junction of all that was known and knowable' (p. 104). Richard's article also usefully considers the way in which the archive was employed in nineteenth century imperialist discourse. Derrida similarly emphasises the archive's role in shaping the future, rather than simply representing an account of the past: '[a]s much as and more than a thing of the past, before such a thing, the archive should *call into question* the coming of the future' (Jacques Derrida 'Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression', translated by Eric Prenowitz pp. 9-63 in *Diacritics*, Vol. 25, No. 2 Summer 1995 p. 26. Emphasis in the original. See also pp. 17, 26, 36).

exist in a given “society, culture, or civilization”.⁷⁹ This distinction between ‘discourse’ on the one hand and surviving ‘documents’ from the past, on the other, is evident in Foucault’s rejection of ‘the great mythical book of history’, an absolute and clear account of ‘thoughts that were formed in some other time and place’.⁸⁰ To the extent that historical documents survive within the archive, they feature as instances of ‘lines of words’, to use Foucault’s phrase, that speak of ‘some other time’:⁸¹ as with the canon, documents reveal aspects of the culture from which they were produced. Moreover, rather than a static account of the past, for Foucault the archive is founded on an ‘event’⁸² (the event of a statement), which occurs in a specific socio-cultural context. In this way, and like the canon, the archive points not towards a repository of texts or documents, but the conditions in which the document may come into existence. As Derrida writes:

the archive, as printing, writing, prosthesis, or hypomnesic technique in general is not only the place for stocking and for conserving an archivable content *of the past* which would exist in any case, as such, without the archive [...]. No, the technical structure of the *archiving* archive also determines the structure of the *archivable* content even in its very coming into existence and in its relationship to the future. The activation produces as much as it records the event’.⁸³

Employing the concept of the archive, then, establishes a framework for the production of the event of the statement in relation to the specific structure of the already established archive. In turn, this conditions the production of future statements.

⁷⁹ Gary Gutting *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) p. 242. Emphasis in the original.

⁸⁰ Foucault (1989) p. 145.

⁸¹ Foucault (1989) p. 145.

⁸² Foucault (1989) p. 145.

⁸³ Derrida (1995) p. 17.

This reference to the function of an 'event' suggests a parallel between the concept of the archive and the philosophy of Alain Badiou, for whom the event marks the emergence of an entirely original situation or truth.⁸⁴ Badiou's philosophy of the event, Hallward notes, not only maintains that it is only the occurrence of event that guarantees 'genuine "novelty in being"', but that every event is located in a particular context: 'every event is specific to, but not specified by, its site'.⁸⁵ As this phrasing suggests, Hallward's formulation of Badiou has great significance for creolization theory: both the truth of the event and the product of creolization must constitute, in Glissant's words, a 'new and original dimension',⁸⁶ and they must be specific to, but not determined by, a particular context. The crucial aspect of specificity is, Hallward argues, guaranteed by the 'evental site' that determines each truth's 'location within the situation that it transforms. Thanks to its site, an event can always be located precisely in a situation, in a specific "point" of the situation'.⁸⁷ To the extent that the archive witnesses the event of the statement – we might say creolized/singular statement, to emphasise the novelty of this form – the archive may be understood as the contextualising, evental site. It is a momentary sum of all known discourse and its rules that exists within a society and are available to the creative writer. That artistic and literary production continue to generate novel, genuinely singular works of art, specific to, but not specified by, particular socio-historical contexts, is a clear sign of a creolizing event.

⁸⁴ See Peter Hallward *Badiou: a Subject to Truth* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003) pp. 114-117.

⁸⁵ Hallward (2003) p. 114, p. 117.

⁸⁶ Glissant (1997) p. 34.

⁸⁷ Hallward (2003) pp. 116-117.

Where the application of Badiou's ontology to creolization theory becomes problematic is in his conception of the void. To be sure, absolute otherness, as I argued in Chapter Two, is instrumental to the production of genuinely new forms. However, for Badiou, while the void of a situation is instrumental in the generation of truths, it is fundamentally non-relational. As a result, Hallward argues, '[w]hat a truth then assembles, from the bias of the void, is a mass of unrelated singularities, a collection of "extreme particularity". Since the relational consistency of a situation is simply an illusion maintained by its state, a truth breaks this illusion'.⁸⁸ In this case, the archive is that which gives the *illusion* of situation only, masking the fact that what it represents is nothing more than 'a mass of unrelated singularities' or statements. However, for both Glissant and Harris, relationality is not an illusion or false consciousness, but the framework on which their conception of the totality/wholeness is founded. The void is important, for it guarantees the novelty of the evental truth, but in order to retain relation as a fundamental feature of creolization, the void, or more precisely the void relative to the archive, must be reformulated.⁸⁹ Once more, it is Attridge's nuanced application of singularity that offers a way forward.

It will be recalled that Attridge distances himself from Hallward's sense of the singular as an individual entity absent of relations outside itself, and rather identifies it as an essential element in the production of art. He claims that, 'the creative writer registers, whether consciously or unconsciously, both the possibilities offered by the

⁸⁸ Hallward (2003) p. 273.

⁸⁹ The void is a concept that Wilson Harris also utilises. See pp. 228-229 of this thesis.

accepted forms and materials of the time, and their impossibilities'.⁹⁰ His argument follows that the singularity of literature resides in its ability to re-evaluate and refigure the discourse of a culture, and it can do this only by the process of incorporating otherness, initiated by the identification of 'gaps in the material, strains and tensions [in the cultural field] that suggest the pressure of the other, of the hitherto unthinkable, of that which is necessarily excluded'.⁹¹ Although no direct acknowledgement is made, Attridge's indebtedness to Foucault, in particular, is evident. Consider Foucault's account of the archive in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*:

[t]he description of the archive deploys its possibilities (and the mastery of its possibilities) on the basis of the very discourses that have just ceased to be ours; its threshold of existence is established by the break that separates us from what we can no longer say, and from what falls outside our discursive practice [...]. It causes the other and the outside to burst forth.⁹²

The archive, like the canon, is to be understood as a set of governing rules rather than a repository of texts, that allows the subject to discern whether or not what is said or encountered 'make[s] sense' relative to 'a whole set of relations that are peculiar to [one's particular] discursive level'.⁹³ This finds a correlation, then, in Attridge's later theorization of the way in which the creative writer identifies the possibilities and impossibilities of contemporary discourse. What Attridge's writer is registering in this case is both the archive and void, or unknowable otherness that

⁹⁰ Attridge (2004) pp. 20-21.

⁹¹ Attridge (2004) p. 36.

⁹² Foucault cited by John Rajchman 'Crisis' pp. 90- 98 in *Representations* No. 28 Special Issue: Essays in Memory of Joel Fineman Autumn 1989 p. 91.

⁹³ Foucault (1989) p. 97. Given this description, Foucault's archive may be aligned with Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia as a condition of language in which received meaning is contingent to the context of its utterance (see M. M. Bakhtin *The Dialogic Imagination* edited by Michael Holquist, translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist [Austin, Texas: The University of Texas Press, 1981] p. 428).

exceeds it. In this way, neither the archive or the void is absolute, but constituted via the relation with the other. And what guarantees that the process of relation produces *singular* forms (original statements), is that this event is a relating between the known discursive possibilities of the archive and the absolute other.

Like Attridge and Glissant, Foucault's intention, Arnold Davidson argues, was to 'describe the transformations that had to take place in order for new structures of knowledge to [emerge]':⁹⁴ a process that involves the subjection of current ways of thinking to that which lies outwith its bounds. In a similar manner to Attridge's description of the singular art work, Foucault is depicting a moment wherein the archive, by opening up to the possibility of the other/unknown, transforms into a new configuration and stands as a monument to those now surpassed, hence the transitory, relational nature of the model. Here the archive agrees with the characteristics of Badiou's evental site, with the qualifying difference that the other/void is subject to its ever-changing relation to the realized archive.⁹⁵ In this way, the creolizing archive is that which makes access to the other and the production of entirely original cultural discourse possible.

The archive understood as a singularising principle is a set of rules that ensure an enunciation makes sense within a specific context and delineates the potential for new ways of thinking that can be generated by the event of creolization.

⁹⁴ Arnold I. Davidson 'Structures and Strategies of Discourse: Remarks Towards a History of Foucault's Philosophy of Language' pp. 1-17 in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, edited by Arnold I. Davidson (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997) p. 11.

⁹⁵ The non-relationality of Badiou's evental truth has been questioned by Daniel Bensaïd, who suggests that given that the void of a situation must always effect a truth that breaks the current status quo, 'this propitious ripeness of the opportune moment unexpectedly refers us back to the historicity that determines and conditions the latter' (Daniel Bensaïd 'Alain Badiou and the Miracle of the Event' pp. 94-105 in *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, edited by Peter Hallward [London and New York: Continuum, 2004] p. 98).

Foucault is not, however, making an argument about literature. In fact, Megill claims, Foucault's analysis is emphatically not concerned with literature and that ultimately, 'what uncovering the archive *is* concerned with [...] is never made clear'.⁹⁶ While there may remain a difficulty in conceptualising the discursive forms of Foucault's archive, its function as providing a set of enunciative rules that establish the boundary between a culture's realised knowledge and that which lies outwith it, reveal it to be compatible with the model of canonical creolization that Glissant's theory of relation and Said's contrapuntality propose. In this respect, it might be argued that the canon is a contributing element to the archive, regulating and creolizing a culture's literary production and reading practices.

The link between archive and literature that this chapter proposes is established by Roberto González Echevarría in his study of Latin American fiction, *Myth and Archive* (1989). Initially, Echevarría points to the moment in Alejo Carpentier's *The Lost Steps* (1953) when the narrator is reduced to writing, erasing, then rewriting his compositions due to the lack of paper in the jungle settlement. Because of this circularity, the piece is never completed, and it is this motif of the unfinished manuscript of both the narrator and Carpentier – *The Lost Steps* itself remains open ended – and as such suggests the continually renewed status of the archive and the other. In this way, Foucault's characterisation of the archive as both a fragile (not static) threshold between the other and the known, and as an event that 'causes the other and the outside to burst forth' finds a literary parallel. As Echevarría argues:

Carpentier's *Los pasos perdidos* is a turning point in the history of Latin American narrative, the founding archival fiction. It is a book in which all the important narrative modalities in Latin

⁹⁶ Megill (1989) p. 488.

America, up to the time when it was published, are contained and analyzed as in a kind of active memory [...]. Just as the narrator-protagonist of the novel discovers that he is unable to wipe the slate clean to make a fresh start, so the book, in searching for a new, original narrative, must contain all previous ones.⁹⁷

Echevarría's appropriation of Foucault is clear: the archive is a theoretical concept used to designate all discourses informing a particular culture. Moreover, the archive is not merely a catalogue of previous narratives but incorporates the ways in which these narratives were expressed. And, as with Attridge's account of the new, singular work of literature, originality does not mean the rejection of all that went before, the slate cannot be wiped clean, but rather involves a translation and re-evaluation of these previous works. Carpentier's own novel, produced from the official texts of colonialism – the travelogue and anthropological account – establishes a 'metaphysical space [...] that becomes a starting point for the New Latin American narrative; the clearing for the building of Comala, Macondo, Coronel Vallejos, for the founding of the imaginary city containing all previous forms of Latin American narrative as well as the origins of the novel; a space for the Archive'.⁹⁸ In *The Lost Steps*, the regression through time, the synthesis of various narratives, and its illustration of the circular act of writing and rewriting is an act of resistance that establishes a postcolonial, Latin American narrative that includes all

⁹⁷ Echevarría (1990b) pp. 3–4. Echevarría here recalls Pierre Macherey's analysis of Borges library: '[t]he book (the narrative, in fact) only exists in its recognisable form because it is implicitly related to the totality of all possible books. It exists, it has its allotted place in the universe of books, because it is an element in a totality [...]. The book exists only by its possible multiplication: externally, in relation to other books, but also internally as it is itself structured like a library' (Pierre Macherey *A Theory of Literary Production*, translated by Geoffrey Wall [London, Henley and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978] p. 249). In this way, the library/archive and the book within functions in the same way as Glissant's *écho-monde*: a relational element of the totality.

⁹⁸ Echevarría (1990b) p. 17. For further discussion of the relationship between colonialism and travel writing see Steve Clark, (ed) *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit* (London: Zed Books, 1999), in particular John Phillips' article 'Lagging Behind: Bhabha, Post-Colonial Theory and the Future' pp. 63–80, and Richard Kerridge's 'Ecologies of Desire: Travel Writing and Nature Writing as Travelogue' pp. 164–182.

intertexts and historical narratives. It becomes an archetypal text for Latin American fiction: it recodes previous narratives within a new archival space and provides a framework for future expressions.

This archival space becomes fictionalised, Echevarría argues, in Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as Melquíades's study: a 'room [...] full of books and manuscripts and has a time of its own'.⁹⁹ What this particular intervention adds to the imagining of the archive, is a clear understanding of the figure of the archivist and his/her function:

[w]hat is characteristic of the Archive is: (1) the presence not only of history but of previous mediating elements through which it was narrated, be it the legal documents of colonial times or the scientific ones of the nineteenth century; (2) *the existence of an inner historian who reads the texts, interprets and writes them*; and finally (3) the presence of an unfinished manuscript that the inner historian is trying to complete.¹⁰⁰

Echevarría's second characteristic importantly depicts the 'inner historian's' role of interpreting the texts of the archive, not only canonical works of literature, but, all forms of narrative. The archivist's role is primarily as a mediator and translator. They have access to the diverse narratives of the archive which they then assimilate, translate, and rewrite in the production of a new narrative. In this way, Carpentier's *The Lost Steps*, which, according to Echevarría, is a reassessment of all previous narratives specific to its Latin American context, is the unfinished manuscript and Carpentier is the archivist involved both in the filtering and translation of the

⁹⁹ Echevarría (1990b) p. 21

¹⁰⁰ Echevarría (1990b) p. 22. My emphasis. Echevarría notes the parallel this holds with Borges' library/study (see Jorge Luis Borges 'The Library of Babel' in *Fictions*, translated by Audrey Hurley [London: Penguin Books, 2000] pp. 65-74, and *Dreamtigers* translated by Mildred Boyer and Harold Morland [Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004]). See also Roberto González Echevarría 'Cien años de soledad: The Novel as Myth and Archive' in *MLN* Vol. 99 No. 2 Hispanic Issue (March) 1984 pp. 385-380 for reference to both Borges' study and that of Melquíades in Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

archived narratives, and in the creating of something new. From the scientific discourse of the nineteenth century, the travel journals, anthropological accounts, native mythology and the classical stories of Odysseus and Prometheus, Carpentier creates his own narrative that alludes to these previous modes but reinscribes them anew.¹⁰¹ Echevarría's archivist becomes, in this Caribbean context, a figure surrounded by the documents and statements of both coloniser and colonised, Old World and New, free to create something original, but which contains the trace of all these narratives.

For this reassessment and translation to be regarded as a creolization of legacy, the way in which the archivist engages with the archive must be clearly defined. Echevarría emphasises the archivist's ability to rewrite inherited discourses, however, as this thesis has argued, the way in which the rewriting is characterised is vital for the distinction between a counter-colonial argument which preserves the terms and ideological assumptions of the 'original' text, and a postcolonial translation which is not bound to restate the hierarchies or biases of previous narratives. As Bernabé *et al* write, 'our history (or our histories) is not totally accessible to historians. Their methodology restricts them to the sole-colonial chronicle. Our chronicle is behind the dates, behind the known'.¹⁰² The créolité authors here articulate the need to move beyond the already defined rules and subjectivities of the myopic colonial archive. In order to fulfil the model I have outlined, access to this new chronicle must be attained through a postcolonial archivist who is distinguished by his/her relation to an archive specific to their

¹⁰¹ Echevarría (1990b) pp. 16-17.

¹⁰² Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant *Éloge de la créolité (In Praise of Creoleness)* translated by M. B. Taleb-Khyar (Gallimard, 1993) p. 99.

particular context, but their resulting, unfinished manuscript is not wholly specified by the ideological assumptions and governing rules of that archive. If it were, the text would not be creolized, it would not exceed the limits of what is possible within the current archive. While Echevarría does not offer an account of such a figure, Gilles Deleuze's elaboration of Foucault's archive does hold such potential.

Whereas Foucault focuses on the archive, Deleuze celebrates the arrival of the 'new' archivist who will 'ignore both the vertical hierarchy of propositions which are stacked on top of one another, and the horizontal relationships established between phrases in which one seems to respond to another. Instead he will remain mobile, skimming along in a kind of diagonal line that allows him to read what could not be apprehended before'.¹⁰³ This does not mean that, to evoke Badiou, the archive is here characterised as a body of unrelated singularities, only that the already established relations between archived 'contents', as well as their ideological biases and hierarchies, do not necessarily determine the archivist's reading. In this way, the postcoloniality of the archivist is made explicit: no longer must he or she work according to discourses which are specified by a unique and static relation to other components in the archive, but 'will remain mobile', unlimited by established binaries or hierarchy. Expanding this model to include the term creolization, the archive is, in one sense, a totality within which relation forms ever-diversifying patterns, not just parallel lines. Further, it is his or her mobility that allows the archivist to locate the gaps that suggest the presence of the other, and as such 'read

¹⁰³ Gilles Deleuze *Foucault*, translated and edited by Seán Hand (London: The Athlone Press, 1988) p. 1.

what could not be apprehended before': a recognition essential, as I have stressed, to the process of creolization as the generation of wholly singular forms.

The function of otherness in the production of originality is highlighted by Badiou who argues that every 'singular truth has its origin in an event. Something must happen, in order for there to be something new. Even in our personal lives, there must be an encounter, there must be something which cannot be calculated, predicted or managed'.¹⁰⁴ In my application of the term, the archivist is the individual who encounters both the known archive and that which exceeds it. The result of this meeting, which 'cannot be calculated', is singular and conforms to Glissant's demand that creolization opens on an unpredictable, 'radically new dimension of reality'.¹⁰⁵ At the same time, moving beyond Badiou's account, the archivist is not just a passive witness to the event of the original statement. Rather, it is the archivist's particular, rhizomatic reading and translation of the documents of the archive that exposes the 'gaps that suggest the presence of the other', the absolute other, necessary for the production of singularity. It is the archivist who, by contrapuntally re-reading the archive – the rules and codes that govern what can be said –, brings into relation the known 'contents' of a culture's archive with the excluded other. The archivist, then, not only encounters the other, but it is their specific dialogue with the archive that makes the relation with the other possible. By effecting this kind of relation, the text that the archivist produces as they contrapuntally translate archived contents, is always creolized.

¹⁰⁴ Badiou cited by Hallward (2003) p. xxv.

¹⁰⁵ Édouard Glissant 'Creolization and the Making of the Americas' pp. 268-275 in *Race, Discourse and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*, edited by Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995) p. 269.

If Foucault suggests the archive as that which marks the boundary between the known and the other, Deleuze offers a model for the active production of singular formations through the figure of the new archivist, a creolization of the archive that effects entirely new ways of thinking. Where the archive functions specifically as a canon, Deleuze and Echevarría come together: the archivist as author re-reads and re-writes the texts/reading practices of a culture by exposing it contrapuntally to that which it has excluded. To the extent that the author is able to enact this process without recourse to the subject positions designated by colonial discourse, a distinctly postcolonial form of creolization is effected. And it is this founding moment that Édouard Glissant privileges in his second novel, *The Fourth Century* (1964).

Chronicling *The Fourth Century*.

The action of *The Fourth Century* pre-dates that of Glissant's first novel, *The Ripening* (1958). Whereas in *The Ripening*, Mathieu is already established as a leader and the focus is on Thaël's development, in *The Fourth Century* the subject is a younger Mathieu's coming of age. Once again, Martinican nationalism is celebrated by this novel in which the story of Mathieu's ancestors, retold to him by Papa Longué, reflects the history of Martinique from the slaves' arrival in the New World, through the experience of plantation and maroon societies, to emancipation and the growth of national consciousness. Where Carpentier rewrote and revalued the inherited archive of colonial travelogues and anthropological accounts through his protagonist's role as an academic, Glissant presents his reader with a historian,

Mathieu, trying to comprehend and reorder the Caribbean archive contained within Papa Longué's narrative, and in doing so allows Glissant both to critique the linear organization of history and establish a postcolonial Caribbean archive that is initiated at the first point of contact between the transferred people and the new land.

Both *The Ripening* and *The Fourth Century* circle around the same characters, forming an open-ended chronicle of the lives of a small group of friends and the community of Lambrianne. However, *The Fourth Century*, regresses further into history of this group and, in particular, the character of Mathieu and his attempts to research a history of Martinique, using Papa Longué, the seer or *quimboiseur*, as the source. Mathieu, a trained historian, desires a logical chronology:

[h]e would have preferred to proceed peacefully following the long, methodical procession of causes followed by effects [...] in a way that was coherent with details and things that happened over time – the forest turning brown and rock becoming plowed land – to record the slow setting of the land, the calamitous embrace that earned these 'people' and this country their inseparability. [...] To study that other moment when the 'people', having left the cane fields and washed off their sweat, began to turn into what was referred as 'nice'.¹⁰⁶

Here Mathieu desires what Glissant describes as a historical consciousness 'deposited gradually and continuously like sediment',¹⁰⁷ as is characteristic of an ordering of history structured around genesis. However, for Glissant, this model is incompatible with a Caribbean consciousness, which, because of its composite nature, must reject 'the linear, hierarchical vision of a single History that would run its unique course',¹⁰⁸ and recognise that their historical consciousness 'came

¹⁰⁶ Édouard Glissant *The Fourth Century*, translated by Betsy Wing (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001) p. 282.

¹⁰⁷ Glissant (2001) pp. 61-62.

¹⁰⁸ Glissant (1999b) p. 66.

together in the context of shock, contraction, painful negation, and explosive forces [...which] characterise what I call a nonhistory'.¹⁰⁹ This is a problematic situation: 'nonhistory' does not permit the establishment of collective memory: '[w]hat resulted was that the French Caribbean people did not relate even a mythical chronology of this land to their knowledge of this country, and so nature and culture have not formed a dialectical whole that informs a people's consciousness'.¹¹⁰ Within Martinique, then, not even a mythological digenesis has been founded, a further sign of diversion, looking elsewhere, to France, for legitimacy.¹¹¹ In such circumstances the relationship between community and landscape must be established, not by means of some idealised notion of the original genesis, but through a dissemination of diverse histories and an appreciation of the way in which these fragmented, disjointed narratives contribute to a Caribbean archive. In this way the archive is not legitimising, a record of a culture's development from its inception, but a composite totality that signifies the community's digenesis.

It is just such a dissemination of the past that Mathieu is faced with in his meetings with Papa Longué. The dialogue between Papa Longué and Mathieu Béluse represents a further chapter in the long standing relations between both families, and the narrative that Papa Longué provides is an account of the history of these two families from the time the first ancestors, brought over in the same slave ship, set their first foot on the land. This act, while identified as a founding moment for the Caribbean families, is not depicted as a genesis from which the community is

¹⁰⁹ Glissant (1999b) p. 62.

¹¹⁰ Glissant (1999b) p. 63.

¹¹¹ Glissant's concept of 'digenesis', established in *Faulkner, Mississippi* (1996) is referenced on pp. 212-216 of this thesis.

derived. By drawing attention to the fact of the slave ship – which signifies not only an African history from which the Béluse and Longué ancestors have been alienated, but also the European presence in the form of the coloniser or plantation owner – the partial, or compositional nature of this moment is emphasised: Glissant establishes a Caribbean genealogy on a digenesis, a moment in which the displaced peoples came into contact with the land and each other as they disembark onto the island.

What is conveyed throughout the novel, is not only the history of a maroon (the Longué ancestor) and a slave (the Béluse ancestor), but an account of the community's growth on the land from slavery to emancipation and the prospects of new futures which form part of *The Ripening*. However, Papa Longué refuses to conform to Mathieu's expectations of a 'logical' chronology of events and people:

[i]n this struggle over names and secrets from the past, for the first time Mathieu found himself the direct target of the *quimboiseur's* power, with no time to figure out what was real. What if the old man had some knowledge of such a dialogue (but how?), or what if he had guessed at the words following some model he constructed for himself? And Mathieu heard the words above the echoes rising from the plains.¹¹²

The history that Papa Longué relates does not follow a linear sequence, but rather past, present, and future are all elements in the creation of history: he 'divined, foreseeing what has happened'.¹¹³ This somewhat contradictory notion of a historical retelling that is an act of foresight, is envisioned by Glissant in *Caribbean Discourse* (1981) in the following terms: the exploration of historical consciousness

is related neither to a schematic chronology nor to a nostalgic lament. It leads to the identification of a painful notion of time and its full projection forward into the future, without the help of those plateaus in time from which the West has benefited,

¹¹² Glissant (2001) p. 34.

¹¹³ Glissant (2001) p. 51.

without the help of that collective destiny that is the primary value of an ancestral cultural heartland. That is what I call *a prophetic vision of the past*.¹¹⁴

Several strands of Glissantian theory converge here: the importance of 'a painful notion of time', such as Thaël comes to realize after the death of Valérie; the rejection of a single History and the identification with unique, pure cultural origins; and a vision of the past that is a coming to terms with it, allowing movement into the future. Glissant's 'prophetic vision of the past' is a function of creolization, and reveals the liberating potential within the archive. The act of re-reading history as partial and illegitimate is a move beyond a politics of oppressor and oppressed, argument and counter argument. What Papa Longué's narrative represents is a new relation with, or relating to, the past, within the context of the present, that effects a new and unpredictable future.¹¹⁵ It is prophetic because the archivist, represented at this point by Papa Longué, re-reads the past in light of what has occurred afterwards: contrapuntally bringing the past into relation with its own future. In this way, historical events or narratives are viewed not as complete, immutable parts within an overarching, grand narrative, rather they are open to revision, translation, and, importantly, must be understood in relation.

In *The Fourth Century* the creolization of familial lineage is established as the histories of the two families become increasingly intermixed: maroons leave the forest, Béluse leaves the plains for the upper-lands, Longué marry Béluse, and ultimately a Béluse (Mathieu) becomes the heir of the Longué lineage. This mixing is mirrored in the landscape itself:

¹¹⁴ Glissant (1999b) p. 64.

¹¹⁵ This future significance of the archive is a function that Derrida stresses (1995 pp. 17, 26-27, 36.)

[t]he sea had intermingled the men who had come from so far away, and the land to which they were delivered had strengthened them with a different sap. And the red lands had mixed with the black lands, the rock and lava with the sand, the clay with the flash of flint, the backwaters with the sea and the sea with the sky, giving birth in the battered calabash floating on the waters to a new human cry and a new echo.¹¹⁶

In this passage, no longer is the landscape visualised in terms of a 'duality',¹¹⁷ the opposition of mountains and plain. It is conceived of as a product of a creolization in which the parts of which the landscape is composed are transcended in order to produce a new entity. Yet this is not an absolute, fixed product: it is unstable, with 'something unreal about it'.¹¹⁸ But, as with the prophetic vision of the past, this process is liberating, providing the means for a 'new human cry'. And it is a process that, in *The Fourth Century* and Mathieu's attempt to assimilate Papa Longué's narrative, is reflected in the partial, shifting identities of the community and an expression of a new genealogy:

Mathieu did not notice that that was the precise moment when, carried away with his angry speech, he had begun the chronology and set up the first milestone from which the centuries could be measured. Not the gap of a hundred years unfolding one after the other, but the space traversed and the boundaries in that space. Because everyday [...] they would say, 'That black man, he's a century!' But none of them had yet shaded their eyes with their hands and said, 'The sea we cross is a century' [...]. And the coast where you debark, blinded with no soul or voice, is a century. And the forest – kept in its prime until the day you became a maroon [...] – is a century. And the land, [...] where the man coming down from the hills, and the man waiting in the valleys came to gather to hoe the same weeds, is a century. Not centuries all decked out in ribbons [...], but centuries knotted together by unknown blood, voiceless suffering, death without

¹¹⁶ Glissant (2001) p. 292.

¹¹⁷ Glissant (2001) p. 290.

¹¹⁸ Glissant (2001) p. 290.

echo. Spread out between the infinite land and the land here that had to be named, discovered, and borne.¹¹⁹

Mathieu the historian and archivist, at this point, establishes a new 'chronology' and 'milestone'. His engagement with the Caribbean archive, in the form of Papa Longué's narrative, follows the new set of rules suggested by Deleuze. Mathieu's reading of history, like that of Deleuze's new archivist, no longer conforms to the traditional linear structure of 'years unfolding one after the other', but rather, history is a knotting together. This is a moment born out of the processes of creolization that has been witnessed within the landscape of the novel. As in Carpentier's *The Lost Steps*, a new archival space has been cleared and its postcolonial archivist is free to give historicity to narratives previously denied that privilege, the unsubstantiated history of the maroon, or the unnamed slave. The archive of Papa Longué is a haunting remembrance of the 'unknown blood, voiceless suffering', and in this statement, Glissant signifies the fragile presence of the forgotten narratives of those who once moved across the landscape.¹²⁰

The creolized, postcolonial archive that contains the trace of all previous narratives, instils in the archivist, Mathieu, a sense of freedom to name and discover his world. But this is not the naming or discovery that, like Carpentier's marvellous Caribbean reality, reinscribes the otherness of the Caribbean landscape and history; nor is it a 'revolvement' that wipes the slate of history clean, starting afresh.¹²¹

Rather, *The Fourth Century* is characterised as an unfinished manuscript; the very

¹¹⁹ Glissant (2001) pp. 273-274.

¹²⁰ This is evocative of metaphysical outlines that Wilson Harris draws upon. See Wilson Harris *The Guyana Quartet* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1985) p. 111, cited on p. 247 of this thesis.

¹²¹ Both the critique of Carpentier's marvellous realism and Césaire's revolvement are discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, pp. 64-67, and pp. 91-92 respectively.

fact that Glissant's first novel, *The Ripening*, details what happens next in Mathieu's story, illustrates the incomplete nature of Glissant's novel. Moreover, *The Fourth Century* envisions a new reading of history that reveals it to be partial and always being creolized as it is related to present and future. The new, postcolonial Caribbean archive, then, is a totality of these incomplete narratives that illustrate the composite nature of Caribbean identity. Glissant's novel offers a model for the archival relation that Echevarría places in the Latin American context. Its focus is not so much canonical texts or reading practices, but a dialogue with the past that, in direct contrast with Maryse Condé, reasserts its informative role within the Caribbean archive without repeating its limiting effects. Glissant's key figure is that of the 'inner-historian' interpreting and rewriting his unfinished manuscript of the archive that Echevarría identifies. Yet, while Mathieu deals primarily with an oral source, Echevarría's model exceeds this, alluding to all forms of discourse and 'previous mediating elements through which [history...] was narrated'. *Omeros* is exemplary in this sense, addressing and creolizing not only Caribbean history through the characters of Achille, Philoctete, and Major Plunkett, but referencing and creolizing the canonical forms of narrating this history – epic convention, pastoral imagery, mythology, and essay. Both Walcott, and to a certain extent, Condé reveal through their engagement with European texts a process of contrapuntal rewriting that exposes the canon as an archive regulating the reading practices of a culture. That this regulation occurs not only at the level of the text, but through literary genres and forms is evident in Walcott's approximation of terza rima and hexameter. Thus at the level of form, creolization is part of the postcolonial

writer's creative response to inherited modes of representation and archival discourse, a function revealed by David Dabydeen's poem 'Turner' (1994).

The New Postcolonial Archive: David Dabydeen's 'Turner'.

In both his critical and imaginative writings, Guyanese born author David Dabydeen has consistently interrogated the place of the black subject in European art works.¹²² His preface to his poem 'Turner' encapsulates the issue when he quotes Ruskin's praise for 'the noblest sea that Turner ever painted [...]. If I were to rest Turner's immortality upon any single work, I should choose this'.¹²³ Ruskin is here referring to Turner's 'Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying' (1840), and the noble sea in question is a violent, swelling mass strewn with the drowning bodies of African slaves. Dabydeen's citation of Ruskin reflects the poet's concern to emphasise the marginalisation of black subjects within European art. The painting's radical de-specification of its subject – the dead and dying – clearly views the scene from an European perspective, as it is only the slavers who are identified. As Dabydeen writes, the painting's 'subject, the shackling and drowning of Africans, was relegated to a brief footnote in Ruskin's essay'.¹²⁴ In this case, a contrapuntal reading of this painting reveals not only the fact of slavery, but signifies the colonial attitude that saw the non-white world as less than human. In response, Dabydeen's poem attempts to appropriate Turner's subject (the slave trade and its victims) and to

¹²² See Dabydeen's novel *A Harlot's Progress* (1999) in which he elaborates a narrative around scenes derived from the series of Hogarth's prints of the same name. See also Dabydeen's and study *Hogarth's Blacks: Images of Blacks in Eighteenth-Century Art* (1985), as well as Derek Walcott's *Tiepolo's Hound*.

¹²³ Dabydeen (1994) p. ix.

¹²⁴ Dabydeen (1994) p. ix

turn those enslaved into subjects, to endow them with identity and voice. In this process, the poet engages not only with Turner's painting, but contrapuntally re-reads the Western archive in which black subjects were rendered as other.

Recalling Aimé Césaire's *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, Dabydeen's poem adopts the perspective of a decentred, disembodied self that he finds in the submerged African in the foreground of Turner's painting.¹²⁵ Similarly, the themes of coming-to-consciousness found in Césaire's *Notebook*, surfaces once again in 'Turner' as the poet explores the awakening of the submerged African: a process initiated by the recognition of a stillborn child thrown overboard by another passing slave ship. From the outset of the poem, the still-born child is identified as a creative agent.¹²⁶ Not only does it awaken the submerged figure/speaker, as the seventh canto illustrates – 'For years I had known/These scenes, and I had forgotten the years –/until it broke the waters, close/To my face, salt splash burning my eyes/Awake'¹²⁷ – but it inspires the speaker to create his own story:

The part born, sometimes with its mother,
Tossed overboard. Such was my bounty
Delivered so unexpectedly that at first
I could not believe this miracle of fate,
This longed-for gift of motherhood.
What was deemed mere food for sharks will become
My fable. I named it Turner
As I have given fresh names to birds and fish

¹²⁵ J. Michael Dash argues that Césaire is the first Caribbean poet to examine this notion of a radically alienated self seeking incarnation. ('Introduction' pp. xi- xlv in Édouard Glissant *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, translated by J. Michael Dash [Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999] p. xiii).

¹²⁶ The sign of violent oppression that becomes a source of regeneration is a Harrisian trait that informs Dabydeen's writings. Indeed, Dabydeen has openly acknowledged the enormous influence that Wilson Harris has on his works, as have other Guyanese writers of his generation: Fred D'Aguiar and Pauline Melville. In Dabydeen's most recent novel, *Our Lady of Demerara* (2004) Harris, to whom the novel is dedicated alongside Derek Walcott, is fictionalised in the characters Father Wilson and Father Harris.

¹²⁷ Dabydeen (1994) p. 11.

And humankind, all things living but unknown,
Dimly recalled, or dead.¹²⁸

Dabydeen's preface draws attention to the sea's effect of 'complicating [the speaker's] sense of gender',¹²⁹ evident here in his desire for motherhood. Yet this moment also appeals to notion of agency and authorship. That which is deemed insignificant, worthless, 'tossed overboard', becomes the source of the speaker's imagination: the still-born child becomes the speaker's own story, his 'fable'. It endows him the authorial power to name, to give 'fresh names' to all things, including his own story which he names 'Turner'. There is an irony here that complicates the strength of speaker's own agency: he names the child – which, Dabydeen claims, is 'his unconscious and his origin',¹³⁰ – Turner, the name of the captain of the slave ship and the artist who rendered that image in paint. It is of course also the name of Dabydeen's own poem. As a result, the agency of the speaker is called in to question, as it is throughout the poem: as with Walcott's *Omeros* and Harris's *The Secret Ladder*, the choice of name both signifies the assimilation of African slaves by the coloniser through the act of allocating 'Western' names, and disrupts the original name. This contradiction is encapsulated in the previous passage from canto seven, where the breaking of the waters encompasses the contrary images of both birth and the action of the dead child hitting the water: exposing the tension between the speaker's desire to give history and identity to this child – his own 'unconscious and origin' – and the impossibility

¹²⁸ Dabydeen (1994) p. 1.

¹²⁹ Dabydeen (1994) p. x.

¹³⁰ Dabydeen (1994) p. x.

of such a move, for both the child and narrative voice remain trapped, lifeless victims in Turner's painting.

The speaker's first move towards incarnation and creativity begins as the poetic recreation, or invention of his own childhood and the naming of things. Later, in the ninth canto, the speaker appears free from fixed markers of identity – 'Words are all I have left of my eyes [...] I float eyeless, indelible, / My mind a garment of invention'¹³¹ – and is able to initiate a creative process naming, of appointing 'fresh names' to 'all things living but unknown'. This would appear to evidence authorship, agency and his transcendence of the limited position accorded to him in the composition of Turner's painting. With this freedom the narrative finds a voice through which he can recreate a fictional childhood that circles around images of both the mother and the mother-land:

It broke the water and made the years
Stir, not in faint murmurs but in a whirlpool
That sucks me under with lust for the smell
Of earth and root and freshly burst fruit,
My breasts a woman's which I surrender
To my child-mouth, feeding my own hurt
For the taste of sugared milk, mantee seeds
Crushed, my mother dipping them in sweet paste,
Letting me lick her fingers afterwards.¹³²

Recalling and assuming the role of both nourishing mother and child produces a nostalgia within the speaker that manifests itself in the various evocations of childhood innocence and simplicity. Of course, as this thesis has argued, this desire to return to the point of racial origins is a form of alienation from the present and, in the case of the Caribbean writer, from his native land: '[t]o be unable [...] to manage

¹³¹ Dabydeen (1994) p. 14.

¹³² Dabydeen (1994) p. 20.

to live in one's country, that is where the hurt is deepest'.¹³³ This echoes Derek

Walcott's point that,

[t]he West Indian mind historically hungover, exhausted, prefers to take its revenge in nostalgia, to narrow its eyelids in a schizophrenic daydream of Eden that existed before its exile. Its fixation is for the breasts of the nourishing mother [...W]e have not wholly sunk into our own landscapes [...]. The depth of being rooted is related to the shallowness of racial despair. The migratory West Indian feels rootless on his own earth, chafing at its beaches.¹³⁴

In *Omeros* Walcott represents this impulse not only through Plunkett's colonial fantasy of a New World Eden, but Achille's dreaming of Africa. In line with Glissant, Walcott asserts that this preservation of origin represents an inability to connect with the Caribbean landscape and misrepresents its people.

Accordingly, 'Turner's' speaker rejects the imagined memories of his native land or to quote from Dabydeen's preface, 'rejects the fabrication of an idyllic past'.¹³⁵ This refusal is clearly shown in the conclusion of canto fifteen where the memory of his mother gathering corn yields to the scene of the speaker's drowning, ultimately, the erasure of that memory:

[...] All day I am a small boy
Nibbling at whatever grain falls from
My mother's breast as she bends and weaves
Before the crop, hugging a huge bundle
Of cobs to her body, which flames
In the sun, which blinds me as I look up
From her skirt, which makes me reach like a drowning
Man gropes at the white crest of waves, thinking it
Rope. I can no longer see her face
In the blackness. The sun has reaped my eyes.
I struggle to find her in the blackness

¹³³ Glissant (1999b) p. 23.

¹³⁴ Derek Walcott 'What the Twilight Says' pp. 3-35 in Derek Walcott *What the Twilight Says: Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998a) p. 18.

¹³⁵ Dabydeen (1994) p. ix.

At the bottom of the sea where the brightest
Sunken treasure barely keeps its glow.¹³⁶

In this moment the sea is recognised as darkness, as blind absence and unlimited negation. Previously, the speaker regarded the sea as a space offering the possibility of existence without reference to the historical significance of blackness, that he would be able 'to begin anew in the sea'.¹³⁷ For the speaker, to exist in the sea is to exist without reference to colour or race: as he claims 'It has bleached me too of colour'.¹³⁸ This conviction is not the diversion of those who would seek to return to their site of racial origin, but a freedom from racial signifiers. Such a position seems to agree with Glissant's celebration of Kamau Brathwaite's notion of 'submarine roots': 'Submarine roots: that is floating free, not fixed in one position in some primordial spot, but extending in all directions in our world through its network of branches'.¹³⁹ However, as I have argued, creolization is not the rejection of all markers of identity, but the recognition of their partiality and mutability.

Similarly, Dabydeen's speaker finds it difficult to sustain a raceless existence:

[...] this thing which I cannot
Fathom, resembling a piece of ragged flesh,
Though human from the shape of its head,
Its half formed eyes, seeming jaw and as yet
Sealed lips. Later it confirmed its breed,
Tugging my hair spitefully, startling me
With obscene memory. 'Nigger!' it cried, seeing
Through the sea's disguise as only children can,
Recognising me below my skin long since
Washed clean of the colour of sin, scab, smudge,
Pestilence, death, rats that carry plague,
Darkness such as blots the sky when locusts swarm.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Dabydeen (1994) p. 20.

¹³⁷ Dabydeen (1994) p. 39.

¹³⁸ Dabydeen (1994) p. 14.

¹³⁹ Glissant (1999b) p. 67.

¹⁴⁰ Dabydeen (1994) p. 16.

Despite the fact that the speaker has lost the blackness of his skin, he is still identified as the racial other: he cannot escape the significance of the identity accorded to him by Turner. However, this inability to live beyond racial identification is not a failure of creolization. To live with the desire to return to the site of pure racial origins, is one form of diversion, of alienation, but so too is the attempt to bleach one's self of the signifiers of racial origin. Glissant's relational ideal is not the absence of colour, but a colour so indeterminate and opaque that the question 'to which race do I belong?' becomes pointless. This does not mean that a Caribbean individual should deny any African element of his identity, rather '[h]e must *recognise* it' while understanding that as a result of history '*another reality* has come about', a creolized identity in which both African and European elements of identity coexist through a synthesis in which 'each element is enriched'.¹⁴¹ The speaker finds this synthesis impossible because he is trapped in the Middle Passage, in Turner's sea, and in Dabydeen's poem. For Glissant, as illustrated in *The Fourth Century*, the process of creolization is initiated the moment that the first ancestor disembarked on to the Caribbean island, the 'point of entanglement'.¹⁴² The role of the landscape as the site of the community's development and model for that unregulated mixing is essential. Dabydeen's speaker never experiences this land, he never becomes Caribbean or postcolonial. The archive in which his tale is located and the rules which govern what he can say, are exclusively defined in terms of the colonial relationship, and as such, the speaker is unable to transcend his prescribed role. His only evocations of landscape are found in the nostalgia for an African

¹⁴¹ Glissant (1999b) p. 8. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁴² Glissant (1999b) p. 26.

childhood, which he rejects, and his imaginings of England inspired by his admiration of the painting hanging on the cabin wall belonging to the captain of the slaveship, Turner.

Canto fourteen depicts a clear engagement with European artistic traditions as the speaker steps into the remembered painting of the English landscape: 'He held a lamp/up to his country, which I never saw,/In spite of his promises, but in images/Of hedgerows that stalked the edge of fields,/Briars, vines, gouts of wild flowers'.¹⁴³ At first, existence within this scene promises sanctuary and escape from the fate of a slave: 'curved branches form a canopy, protect/Me from the stare of men with fat hands/Feeling my weight, prying in my mouth,/Bidding'.¹⁴⁴ However, the scene remains a painted image with no real substance, or reflections other than those placed there by the artist: there is 'no reflection when I gaze into it,/The water will not see me, nor the villagers'.¹⁴⁵ As an African, there is no place for him in this scene of English village life: the only identities permitted visibility are those 'other faces', such as the old woman, placed there by the artist. As the final canto suggests, there is a desire to transcend Turner's fixed representation of the slave – 'I wanted to teach it/A redemptive song, fashion new descriptions/Of things, new colours fountaining out of form./I wanted to begin anew at sea'¹⁴⁶ – however, the consciousness, the child rejects this 'body of lies',¹⁴⁷ which is both the account of the possibility to 'begin anew at sea' and the imagined physical body of the speaker, absent in Turner's depiction. In this respect, the speaker is like the old English

¹⁴³ Dabydeen (1994) p. 23.

¹⁴⁴ Dabydeen (1994) p. 23.

¹⁴⁵ Dabydeen (1994) p. 23.

¹⁴⁶ Dabydeen (1994) p. 39.

¹⁴⁷ Dabydeen (1994) p. 39.

woman of canto fifteen who 'Opens the door, disappears': there is no presence beyond the artist's representation. As Dabydeen writes, neither the child nor the submerged body 'can escape Turner's representation of them as exotic and sublime victims. Neither can describe themselves anew but are indelibly stained by Turner's language and imagery'.¹⁴⁸ By failing to escape these designated roles, the speaker never becomes a postcolonial subject. Unlike Mathieu of *The Fourth Century*, the speaker as archivist approaches historical modes but is unable to rewrite or reimagine them: he remains trapped in a linear, hierarchical archive in which his position as colonial other is reified.

The acknowledgement that the speaker cannot achieve an identity that is distinct from that endowed to him by Turner, in canto twenty-five, is a realisation that he exists in a world of absences, for even his own body is an absence. History, the African community from which he imagined he came, is affected by this lack: 'There is no mother, family,/Savannah fattening with cows, community of faithful men'.¹⁴⁹ The closing lines of the poem, 'No stars, no land, no words, no community,/No mother',¹⁵⁰ emphasise the complete erasure of the sense of the 'motherland'. This marks an important distinction from Césaire's *Notebook*, which celebrates the reunification of subject, community, and landscape. Yet Césaire and Dabydeen pursue similar aims: both seek to undermine Western representations of the Caribbean as wholly other to the European experience; both reject the notion that it is possible to return to some state of innocence in Africa; and both explore these possibilities through a narrative voice seeking the embodiment of that self. Where

¹⁴⁸ Dabydeen (1994) p. x.

¹⁴⁹ Dabydeen (1994) p. 39.

¹⁵⁰ Dabydeen (1994) p. 40.

these poems differ is in their setting. For Césaire it is a return to a poverty ridden Martinique that allows the speaker to formulate his own identity, not by rejecting his blackness but by initiating, what Glissant would later term a cross-cultural poetics: that is an understanding of identity that recognises that each self is the product of a cultural mixing that no longer requires notions of pure and fixed origins. Dabydeen's subject, on the other hand remains imprisoned in Turner's representation: 'he is too trapped by grievous memory to escape history'.¹⁵¹

This condition of slavery to the 'Medusa' of history, according to Walcott, 'has produced a literature of recrimination and despair, a literature of revenge written by the descendants of slaves or a literature of remorse written by the descendants of masters'.¹⁵² Such literature is, I have argued, designated as counter-colonial: a point reinforced by Walcott's assertion that '[t]he truly tough aesthetic of the New World neither explains nor forgives history. It refuses to recognise it as a creative or culpable forces. The shame and awe of history possess poets of the Third World who think of language as enslavement and who, in a rage for identity, respect only incoherence or nostalgia'.¹⁵³ The speaker's attempt to give 'fresh names' to things, is another symptom of his slavery to history: 'what is needed is not new names for old things, or old names for old things, but the faith of using the old names anew'.¹⁵⁴ In other words, what is needed is not the creation of a counter-colonial discourse that is always restrained by the governing rules and ideological assumptions of the colonial archive, but revealing in that archive that which it

¹⁵¹ Dabydeen (1994) p. x.

¹⁵² Derek Walcott 'The Muse of History' pp. 36-64 in Derek Walcott *What the Twilight Says: Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux 1998b) p. 37.

¹⁵³ Walcott (1998b) p. 37.

¹⁵⁴ Walcott (1998a) p. 9.

excluded, the silenced histories and biases of previous narratives ('the old names'), and using them 'anew'. What Walcott details here is precisely the archivist's role in creolizing the archive, and for Walcott there is no question of the suitability of the coloniser's language for this process. He advocates the use of these 'old names anew'; that is to admit language into the process of creolization, in the Glissantian sense.

Similarly, Dabydeen's speaker is uncomfortable with his use of Turner's language – 'Turner crammed our boys' mouths too with riches,/His tongue spurring strange potions upon ours/Which left us dazed, which made us forget/The very sound of our speech'¹⁵⁵ –and, in response, attempts to create 'new names for old things'. The speaker, in his own 'rage for identity' seeks to incarnate himself through this new poetics to resist amnesia and the sea's erasure. However, Walcott continues, '[i]n time the slave surrendered to amnesia. That amnesia is the true history of the New World. That is our inheritance [...] it is not the pressure of the past which torments great poets but the weight of the present'.¹⁵⁶ Linear, genesis-based history is denied creative agency and the postcolonial writer becomes conscious of the absent narratives that lie in the Middle Passage. Importantly, however, the artist is not constrained by this inheritance. Creativity resides not in the determining force of history on the individual, but is resides within the archivist/poet and their ability to approach the texts and reading practices of the archive, and read them in such a way as to expose the gaps that effect a relation with the excluded other, essential for the creolization of singular works of artistic expression.

¹⁵⁵ Dabydeen (1994) p. 38.

¹⁵⁶ Walcott (1998b) pp. 39–40.

The power of the artist's representation surfaces at various points in the poem, highlighting that the speaker is unable to escape Turner's depiction. However, Dabydeen's own engagement with both Turner and Western artistic traditions must be recognised as a different process. As a Caribbean writer, Dabydeen avoids the impulse towards diversion and identification with, what Walcott terms, the shipwreck: 'to most writers of the archipelago who contemplate the shipwreck, the New World offers not elation but cynicism, a despair at the vices of the Old which they feel must be repeated. Their malaise is an oceanic nostalgia for the older culture and a melancholy at the new, and this can go as deep as a rejection of the untamed landscape, a yearning for ruins'.¹⁵⁷ As a result, Dabydeen himself is the new archivist, producing a work that is not specified by history ('the pressure of the past'), but is specific to postcolonial, Caribbean reality ('the weight of the present'). The amnesiac slave in the foreground of Turner's painting is the writer's 'inheritance' but not the limits of his creative vision. In this case, the poet not only identifies Turner's subject, but rereads him contrapuntally, exposing that which Turner excluded and, in this way, effecting a new vision. Dabydeen's poem is specific to Turner's 'Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying' – to that historical, archival narrative – but it is not specified by it. The poet is able to enact the contrapuntal reading of the archive that Deleuze envisions. As such, within the poem Dabydeen casts a new light on Turner himself. As he writes: 'the intensity of Turner's painting is such that I believe that the artist in private must have savoured the sadism he publicly denounced. I make Turner the captain of the slave ship [...]. Turner's well-chronicled love of children is seen in another light, as is his extreme

¹⁵⁷ Walcott (1998b) p. 42.

prudence with money'.¹⁵⁸ The poem subverts traditional readings and responses to the painting, such as Ruskin's, or common ideas about Turner the man.

Further, there is something of the creolizing imagination at work in the poem.

In canto twenty-one the tribe's seer Manu prophesies:

That in the future time each must learn to live
Beadless in a foreign land; or perish.
Or each must learn to make new jouti, [a tribal necklace of beads],
Arrange them by instinct, imagination, study
And arbitrary choice into a pattern
Pleasing to the self and to others
Of the scattered tribe; or perish. Each
Will be barren of ancestral memory
But each endowed richly with such emptiness
From which to dream, surmise, invent, immortalise.
Though each will wear different beads
Each will be Manu, the source and future
Chronicles of our tribe.¹⁵⁹

The postcolonial inheritance promised here is exactly the fruitful 'emptiness' or 'amnesia' that Walcott suggested. Yet this does not mean the postcolonial archive erases the silenced narratives of colonialism. Whether through amnesia or the devastating effects of insomnia suggested by Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, it is exactly these absent narratives or, to recall Harris, metaphysical outlines,¹⁶⁰ that haunt the archive that the postcolonial archivist/author inherits and translates. These are the absences that tormented Mathieu's search for a complete

¹⁵⁸ Dabydeen (1994) p. x.

¹⁵⁹ Dabydeen (1994) pp. 33-34. In Hindu mythology, Manu is the first man, the ancestor of all humanity. Similarly, the English word 'man' originates from the Sanskrit '*manu*' meaning 'mankind'. He is also associated with the ocean: like the Christian tale of Noah, Manu was warned of a coming deluge and told to fill a large ship with two of every creature and plant. It was the actions of Manu that preserved the human race, animals, and environment after the world is submerged by the ocean. Thus, by positing Manu as the ancestor and position of each member of the scattered tribe, Dabydeen's poem suggests what Glissant would term a digenesis: a mythology of origin that is neither original nor absolute. For details on Manu in Indian mythology, see Felix Guirán *New Larousse Encyclopaedia of Mythology* translated by Richard Aldington and Delano Ames, introduced by Robert Graves (London and New York: The Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd, 1973) pp. 345-346, 362.

¹⁶⁰ Harris (1985) p. 111.

and sequential history on which to base his own archive-manuscript. Mathieu becomes postcolonial only after submitting to the process of creolization wherein the absent and the official are synthesised into something new and singular. Similarly in Dabydeen's poem, the self that reaches the 'foreign land' is thus creatively unrestricted in the construction of their identity – the making of 'new jouti'. 'Turner' the poem is the archivist's unfinished manuscript, or chronicle of the tribe, that is produced from his postcolonial reading of the archive: a re-enactment of Glissant's prophetic vision of the past that addresses the historical narratives in a way that frees the archivist-author from the reified subject positions and governing rules of the colonial archive.

Like Walcott's Greek/African dialogue in *Omeros*, Dabydeen illustrates that not only is this new identity an original arrangement of the tribal inheritance, but that the postcolonial writer is equally free to contrapuntally read European artworks and literary forms. Dabydeen's revision of Turner's noble sea displays the singular creativity of the creolizing imagination, not in order to speak for the submerged figure in the foreground of Turner's painting, but to move towards a postcolonial aesthetics in which Dabydeen himself is charged with the preservation of the voices and histories of the tribal archive, and, like Deleuze's archivist, is free to rewrite those texts 'by instinct, imagination, study/And arbitrary choice'. In this way, Dabydeen's poem draws a clear line between the limited position of the subject confined to the subject position accorded to them by colonial discourse (the poem's speaker), and the freedom of relation between various co-existing *échos-monde* that Glissant imagines.

By focusing on the terms archive and canon, these *échos-monde* can be contextualised and understood as expressions of specific cultures that are both constitutive of and produced by their relation to the governing rules of the archive. But more than this, these concepts – archive and canon – designate the limits of their cultures, and as such, by delineating what exceeds them, continually renew the potential for creolization. The texts considered in this chapter approach different aspects of this model. At the canonical level, *Omeros* and *Windward Heights* enact contrapuntal revisions of literary works; while *The Fourth Century* and ‘Turner’ expose the creative potential in reading according to Said’s term. In each case, the relation that is staged between the known cultural archive or canon and that which it excludes, signifies a process of creolization that is effected by the creative agency of the postcolonial archivist/artist. As such, these terms highlight both the centrality of creolization to the contemporary Caribbean canon, and its function in mediating its authors’ relation to the archives of the cultures to which they are ‘ambivalent heirs’.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Silvio Torres-Saillant (2006) *An Intellectual History of the Caribbean* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan) p. 103. Full citation on p. 18 of this thesis.

Conclusion

Silvio Torres-Saillant's study, *Caribbean Poetics* (1997), sought to reaffirm the unity of Caribbean literature despite discontinuities on linguistic, national, and racial fronts:

[d]ue to the region's colonial history, we must face the fact that Caribbean literature for long was not among the 'literatures that have a suitable theory or body of criticism arising from typological features of their works'. Perhaps henceforward the proper stance for Caribbeanists should be to proclaim the coherence of the region's literary production a priori. Scholars would do well to affirm the cognitive wholeness of Caribbean literature as a theoretical given.¹

While these demands are necessary for the continuing development of a distinctly Caribbean literary canon, which ever way it is approached, this unity or wholeness, as this thesis has stressed through my readings of Édouard Glissant and Wilson Harris, is not uniformity, and any notion of the canon must recognise that Caribbean identity and literature is grounded in the continuing significance of difference and relation. In this way, writers from such diverse backgrounds as Guyana (Harris and David Dabydeen), St. Lucia (Derek Walcott), Martinique (Glissant, Aimé Césaire, and the créolité authors), Cuba (Alejo Carpentier), Paris (Gisèle Pineau), Edinburgh (James Grainger), Guadeloupe (Maryse Condé), Antigua (Jamaica Kincaid), Ireland/Trinidad (Shani Mootoo), and Jamaica (Claude McKay, J. E. C. McFarlane, Tom Redcam, Eva Nicholas, H. S. Bunbury, and Una Marson) effect a relation with the New World landscape, the literary legacies that represent it, and, whether consciously or not, each other, in the production of a distinctly Caribbean, revisionary *and* singular, literary

¹ Silvio Torres-Saillant *Caribbean Poetics: Toward an Aesthetic of West Indian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 14.

canon. Moreover, by approaching writers across this spectrum of geographical, cultural, and racial contexts, this thesis has itself staged a relation: not absolute, or all-encompassing, but like all *échos-monde* a finite positioning and snapshot of the connections that may be traced between particular writers and places.

The formation of the Caribbean canon, then, begins with a relation between the West and the New World: as Torres-Saillant writes, the Caribbean and Europe 'have historically been closely interconnected. The West literally created the Caribbean'.² Indeed, with a Scotsman, James Grainger, posited by David Dabydeen as the father of Caribbean literature,³ this unique relationship seems confirmed, and its influence can be felt from Grainger's 'West India georgic', through the pastoral vision of the early twentieth century poets Nicholas, Redcam, Bunbury, and McFarlane, to the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries where the intertextual engagements and contrapuntal readings of Western texts feature in the novels of Dabydeen, Condé, and Walcott. Yet the composite nature of the Caribbean canon's digenesis, to use Glissant's distinction, is not a sign of inauthenticity or mimicry pure and simple. Whereas the Edenic vision of the early era might be read as a mimicking of European forms that impacts on the stability of the 'original', which is Bhabha's account of the effect of colonial mimicry,⁴ the relation between contemporary Caribbean writers and the literary legacies that, as Lamming highlights, were imported as commodities,⁵ exceeds this. The continual translation of both the imposed European and emerging

² Torres-Saillant (1997) p. 5.

³ David Dabydeen 'Review: Sugar and Slavery in the West Indian Georgic' pp. 1513-1514 in *Callaloo* Vol. 23 No. 4 2000b (Autumn) p. 1513.

⁴ Homi Bhabha *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) pp. 85-92.

⁵ George Lamming *The Pleasures of Exile* (Michigan: Ann Arbor Paperbacks/The University of Michigan Press, 1992) p. 27. Cited on p. 276 of this thesis.

Caribbean canon, produces a new, singular dimension of reality and original works of literature. And what makes these aesthetic reworkings and contrapuntal rereadings of inherited literary traditions original works of literature is, as I have stressed, the occurrence of creolization: the production of a wholly original, singular configurations that could not have been predicted by the composite elements.

The terms according to which I have discussed creolization as a central paradigm of postcolonial Caribbean literature and theory may be conceptualised as a relation between the known (whether that be consciousness, canon or archive) and an absolute otherness which exceeds those cultural forms. It is only by reaching towards that which is excluded by the contemporary archive/canon, exposing contrapuntally that which is other to a particular text in a particular context, that creolization as the production of singularity may be effected. That I have chosen to focus on a select number of authors, in no way designates the limits of this model. The macadam paradises of Chapter One might also be found in Olive Senior's *Gardening in the Tropics* (1994), Gisèle Pineau's *The Drifting of the Spirits* (1999); and in the reassessment of the European pastoral traditions present in V. S. Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987), David Dabydeen's *Disappearance* (1993), or in Nigerian author, Ben Okri's ekphrastic exploration of Europe's fascination with paradise in *In Arcadia* (2002). The tradition of rewriting the canon, or writing back as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin suggest,⁶ extends throughout the Caribbean literary tradition – Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), Aimé Césaire's *A Tempest* (1969) – and beyond – Wole Soyinka's *Opera Wonyosi* (1981), J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* (1987). While

⁶ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, second edition (London: Routledge, 2002) p. 32.

the figure of the archivist in his study, rewriting the texts of the archive that Echevarría finds in Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) might also be located in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) as Saleem's unfinished manuscript transcribes the narratives of a newly independent Indian nation.

Although this indicates the way in which the model of creolization promoted by this thesis may be elaborated, it is in the development of a distinctly Caribbean philosophical tradition through the combined writings of Édouard Glissant and Wilson Harris that further avenues of research suggest themselves. Comparative approaches directed at these two writers of relation are scant, and while I have argued for some of the ways in which Glissant and Harris may be read together as producing a particular model of creolization theory, there is potential in a more sustained dialogue to emphasise these commonalities and respond to Torres-Saillant's demand for a more unified approach to Caribbean writers' poetic intent. Glissant and Harris share a common belief in the integral importance of landscape and context to the Caribbean imagination; an awareness of the quantum possibilities latent in contrapuntal rereadings of historical discourse (what Glissant would term 'a prophetic vision of the past');⁷ a conceptualisation of the shifting structural relations necessary for the generation of genuinely singular expressions; and a celebration of difference and diversity apart from hierarchical values that, nevertheless, envisions mankind's relational unity. Above all, Glissant and Harris privilege this as an imaginative relation: an aesthetics of diversity and wholeness that continues to creolize itself in face of the changing demands of Caribbean experience. Together, these two writers

⁷ Édouard Glissant *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, translated by J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999b) p. 64.

of relation, as well as those other Caribbean poets and authors identified by this thesis, have responded to the colonial legacies that shaped Caribbean history, culture, and society by producing a canon that firmly places creolization at the heart of the Caribbean literary imagination. As Glissant has proclaimed: '[t]his phenomenon probably has no political or economic power. But it is precious for mankind's imagination, its capacity for invention'.⁸ Creolization represents the potential for new, original thought paradigms, an indefinite renewal of the canon, and envisions the production of singular works of literature that are the result of the ever changing relations between the artist, his or her inherited traditions, and the contexts from which they write.

⁸ Édouard Glissant 'Creolization and the Making of the Americas' pp. 268-275 in *Race, Discourse and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*, edited by Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1995) p. 274.

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