

Orphans of the Other America: Contesting Community in Twentieth-Century
Caribbean Literatures

A Dissertation
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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May 2013

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Acknowledgements

I owe a debt of gratitude to many people who have helped me in completing this project. First and foremost, I must thank my advisers Jaime Hanneken and Joanna O'Connell. Their guidance truly enabled me to arrive at this moment. Jaime's comments and rereadings took my writing to another level and to her I am very grateful for the amount of time and effort she put into every detail. I would be remiss if I did not recognize her kindness and patience. Joanna's ability to recommend necessary texts at a moment's notice facilitated my research. I thank her for her positive reinforcement and valuable comments.

Other faculty members at the University of Minnesota have been instrumental in shaping many of the thought processes that went into this work. Foremost among these are Raúl Marrero-Fente and Njeri Githire. Raúl's courses on colonial literature made me rethink the connectiveness of the world across regions. His book recommendations did much of the same. Serving as a teaching assistant for Njeri allowed me to broaden my own horizons and consider the African diaspora beyond the Caribbean region(s). I am forever indebted for the opportunity to work with her in a teaching capacity. In both cases, their words of encouragement and willingness to help in various capacities always made me feel welcome. I also must acknowledge Ana Forcinito for highlighting the use of orphan protagonists in nineteenth-century Latin American literature and Omise'eke Tinsley for introducing me to Dutch Caribbean literature.

I am also greatly appreciative of the faculty at the University of New Mexico who provided me with mentorship during my master's studies. Specifically, Eleuterio Santiago-Díaz, who not only mentored me in Caribbean studies but also life. I also wish to thank Miguel López, who helped me realize that working with orphan protagonists would make for an interesting project.

Beyond faculty, I want to express gratefulness to a few friends that I have made along the way. Thank you to Michael Arnold for the multiple collaborative projects, from our first publication to our course design to our MLA experience. Every moment was enjoyable, especially the most difficult ones. I cannot wait to start the next project. I would also like to thank the Trimbles for their constant support.

I wish to thank my families. My family in Cincinnati has been with me from the beginning, feeding my curiosities with books. Thank you for instilling in me ambition and a strong work ethic. To my family in Albuquerque and Chihuahua, I appreciate your unconditional support. To my family in Minneapolis: Vanessa, I love you. Thank you for putting up with my downtrodden days and being there to help me enjoy the good ones. Thank you for helping me to formulate ideas, for reading my chapters, and for knowing when I needed to work and when I needed to relax. To my grandmother, rest in peace, I miss our Sunday talks.

Thank you to the Spanish and Portuguese Studies Department and the University of Minnesota for the travel grants and support. Being able to study Dutch and receive invaluable feedback on large parts of my chapters from audiences in Curaçao and Guadeloupe has helped this dissertation come to fruition.

Finally, I am obliged to *Journal of Caribbean Literatures* and *Mester* for granting me permission to reprint versions of chapters that they have already been published: “Finding the Dutch Caribbean with *Mijn zuster de negerin*” in *JCLs* 7.2 and “The Unwilling Orphan: Trauma and the Decaying Bourgeoisie in *Los soles truncos*” in *Mester* 41, respectively.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the women in my life: my grandmother, my mother, my sister, and last but not least, my wife.

Abstract

One of the leading Critical Race theories in the Caribbean, as put forth by Édouard Glissant, Edward Brathwaite, Jean Bernabé and others calls for a collective “we” in Caribbean society characterized by the idea of creolization, or the fusing of heterogeneous characteristics. In other words, people are able to feel a part of society because everyone shares a background of diversity and racial mixing. This utopic concept often attempts to move beyond racial categorization that creates exclusionary practices to privilege cultural fluidity; identity is no longer fixed because all Caribbean people have multiple genealogical backgrounds. This dissertation aims to complicate the concept of creolization as a unifying factor. Indeed, “Orphans of the Other America: Contesting Community in Twentieth Century Caribbean Literatures” explores the different ways that orphan protagonists in Caribbean literature spurn creolization in the region in favor of their own individual, albeit differing, needs.

My approach therefore challenges creolization as nothing more than an ideal that has failed to be pragmatic in the Caribbean setting. This is in tune with recent research like Shalini Puri’s *The Caribbean Postcolonial* (2004) which articulates the social inequalities on the islands of Trinidad and Tobago where racial tension continues to exist between the Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean sectors. My conclusions thus demonstrate insular societies that are racially fragmented and disjointed.

I use orphan characters as a way to highlight the unwillingness to accept creolization as a premise. Orphan characters are particularly useful because their loss of parents should represent a sense of freedom from familial ties. Indeed, leading scholarly work on orphans in the Caribbean, such as Valérie Loichot’s *Orphan Narratives* (2007) praises orphan protagonists for their ability to create their own creolized narratives and communities that often challenge the power in place. However, the orphan protagonists in my dissertation often revert back to the colonial models left behind by their parents. Instead of serving as a site of liberty, they come to be a site of recalcitrance. For this reason I use the term counter-community, which I define as elements that thwart social and racial equality and oppose community-building. As a result, colonial violence (rape and incest) as well as racism are acted out by these very orphans. Specifically those descendants of the plantocracy do not break from their parents and create their own narratives; they reassert the narratives of colonialism. Meanwhile, descendants of slaves are too entrenched in their own search for identity and questions revolving around their parents’ history, that their parents’ absence prevents their initiation into society. Instead of being part of a collective, they survive in solitude.

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Introduction: Mapping Orphans in the Americas

Colonial and linguistic histories divide the Americas, categorizing them separately and rather arbitrarily as South America, Central America, North America, and the Caribbean. Scholars have used additional names to identify the region: Latin America, for instance, is a problematic name that seemingly encompasses Portuguese-speaking Brazil along with the Spanish-speaking nations of the Western Hemisphere, but excludes bordering countries such as Dutch-speaking Suriname, French Guiana, or English-speaking Guyana. Does it include New Mexico, which has a rich Hispanic history but is part of the United States? This of course, leads us to question the restrictive nature of the modern nation-state that builds itself upon a homogenizing national tradition. Academic studies commonly fragment the Caribbean, a site of difference, discontinuity, and disjunction because of different languages and colonial histories, dividing them by “ideologically determined categories” (Dash 3). Academic structures put these categories in play, relegating the Spanish Caribbean to the Spanish department, the Francophone Caribbean to the French department, and thereby privileging the cultural boundaries that nation-state narratives posit. In opposition to that categorization, I read the texts in this study alongside each other in an effort to emphasize Caribbean cultural exchanges in their horizontal flows—across the region’s different linguistic and colonial legacies—rather than in the vertical periphery-metropolis relationship that current disciplinary borders favor. Too often academic structures allow the vertical periphery-metropolis relationship to be the dominant approach to Caribbean literatures. By looking at common tropes across the region, I challenge this dominant approach through a

broader transnational understanding that de-centers links to the colonizers. I argue that the Caribbean should only be understood as a whole, and read intertextually.¹ I aim to minimize the departmentalization of the Caribbean by showing that Caribbean authors, despite their linguistic differences, dialogue with each other through common tropological revisions, one of which is the use of orphan protagonists. Such revisions bring into view a common hemispheric and interdisciplinary literature in which writers who are both descendants of plantation owners and those who are descendants of slaves work through/process the aftermath of colonial plantation society. Indeed, it is through the aftermath of colonial plantation society that these parallel flows emerge across race and language to reveal the shared evolution of the New World: specifically, ongoing attempts to construct heterogeneous communities despite societal disjuncture and racial fragmentation. Plantation society is precisely what differentiates the New World from the Old; in the New World, it violently brought various ethnic groups together while the Old World looked on from afar. With that metaphor in mind, I use horizontal relationships to present new comparative viewpoints on (failed) community building in contrast to traditional periphery-metropolis relationships.

This dissertation represents a multidisciplinary approach that spans four European languages (Dutch, Spanish, French, and English) through the twentieth century. In spite of their linguistic differences, Caribbean authors dialogue with each other and show a common American literature. Henry Louis Gates's "The Talking Book" (1988) is

¹ This comment echoes Dash's belief that "The only useful approach to Caribbean literature is an intertextual one" (20).

instructive for this study because it allows us to de-centralize authors in order to read texts in conjunction with each other, minimizing authorial authority and linguistic difference. Through this decentering, “unity and resemblance rather than critique and difference” (Gates xxvii) are the salient features. Consequently, the Western notion of the original and the borrower is lost in Gates’s talking text in which there is no delineated copy or original, but an ongoing improvised performance of signifying. In the case of my dissertation, the authors “signify” on the orphan trope. The fact that these authors write in Spanish, English, French, or Dutch does not prevent them from talking to each other. They are “double-voiced” (Gates xxv). Gates's Talking Book serves as the unifying metaphor for my dissertation. Yet that is not to say that sameness prevails within all these texts. On the other hand, Gates informs us of “tropological revision,” or “the manner in which a special trope is repeated, with differences, between two or more texts” (xxv). Orphanhood, I argue, serves as one such tropological revision which, repeated with differences across the Caribbean, brings into view a discursive plane of regional literary unity. Although Gates focuses on African-American literature, his talking text trope is also suitable for the Caribbean as it also plays a large role in African Diasporic studies. Furthermore, the talking texts included here transcend race as well as space: their voices come from descendants of slave owners as well as descendants of slaves. Indeed, the intertexts that the Caribbean’s variegated tales of orphanhood open flow freely across boundaries of class, race, and gender, making the orphan figure an intersectional site for competing notions of community, nation, and colonial legacy.

This dissertation makes an analytical contribution to the literatures from these linguistic blocs through novel and drama via the study of orphan protagonists as they problematize hybridity theories and community-building in twentieth-century Caribbean literatures. One observes that intellectual communities in the 1900s, looking to break from their colonial power, use literature a way to metaphorically orphan their nations so as to create their own identity through the projection of a new society. At the same time, these communities try to determine the fate and involvement of different societal sectors in the transition. This is because colonies were long considered children of the colonial enterprise. Names such as New Orleans, New Amsterdam, New Spain, and New England not only served to claim possession for imperialist endeavors, it also continued a genealogy. In *The French Atlantic Triangle* (2008), Christopher Miller rightly points out that “the history of colonialism is rife with metaphors casting Europe in the role of father, Africa as mother (an idea supported by the ideology of Negritude), and the new *creole* (from Spanish *criar*, to breed, to raise) colonies as children” (5). Considering the etymology of “creole” within the family metaphor, there is no coincidence that upon independence, many of the new nations sought their own identity, and discursively severed their ties with the colonial family romance. David Haberly notes that “one of the primary metaphors of independence in the Americas, repeated almost endlessly by both writers and politicians, was that the new nations of the hemisphere were children—gigantic, potentially powerful children, but children nonetheless, children without a past” (46). Like the new nations they come from, orphan protagonists attempt to make sense of a history of abandonment and build a future persona without clear parental models or

genealogical blueprints. They struggle between yearning for at least one of their colonial parents and negating at least one of them. The protagonists in this study deal with societal transitions that come as a result of increased autonomy and changing social hierarchies. Many protagonists, while aware of the societal transitions, fear them. In view of that anxiety, Caribbean orphan narratives, contrary to orphanhood's association with freedom and adventure, often reclaim colonial taxonomies and plantation-era social structures for the stability of identity they provide, while other times orphan protagonists withdraw from postcolonial society altogether. In short, the ambivalence that theory often invokes as a medium of community building is in fact an obstacle to these orphans' national self-fashioning. Indeed, if, as Laura Peters claims, "[family] came to represent legitimacy, race and national belonging" (1), then orphans could upset these discourses of identity. In agreement, John Thieme states that:

Orphans and bastards abound in postcolonial texts and the engagement with issues of parentage is often as intense as in, say, a [Henry] Fielding novel where the social order can be reaffirmed by the revelation that the picaresque hero of uncertain birth is really a gentleman. The difference is, of course, that postcolonial texts seldom, if ever, offer such comfortable resolutions.

Illegitimacy preponderates, a metonym *for both social plurality and the severing of the bloodlines from the supposed colonial father* (8, my emphasis).

With this perspective of the orphan in mind I acknowledge that the orphan trope is not reduced to a singular use, but rather has plural uses that account for multiple dialogues: this dissertation is but one focus. The intertextualities that I study in the following

chapters will show a common literature across the Americas framed around the orphan who thwarts community-building in Caribbean narratives and is a barrier to nationhood.

Orphans in Literature: A Brief Overview

Tracing the narrative genealogy of orphan protagonists takes us to a wide range of genres, from fairy tales and foundational myths to characters living on the margins of society. Yet literary scholars have produced a surprisingly small amount on the trope. Some exceptions that helped in this dissertation are “The Literary Orphan as National Hero: Huck and Pip” (1986) by Hana Wirth-Nesher, *Orphan Texts* (2001) by Laura Peters, *Orphan Narratives* (2007) by Valérie Loichot, and Armanda Lewis’s dissertation *The Ethical Orphan in the Nineteenth-Century Latin American Novel* (2009). For fairy tales, Rapunzel and Cinderella are memorable examples inasmuch as they evince the trajectory of the narrative arch. Rapunzel’s father barter her away for lettuce. Cinderella’s mother passed away, leaving Cinderella to an evil stepmother and an inattentive father. In both cases marriage into a royal family saves the women from neglect after chance encounters with princes, who possess the power to transform their lives. For foundational myths, we can look to the legends pertaining to Moses’s birth as well as the epic of Sundiata Keita, who fulfilled a prophecy to become the first emperor of the Mali Kingdom. In the aforementioned examples, orphans are able to overcome the hardships faced in their childhood to serve as royalty, prophet, and founder; they are destined to be great leaders. Orphaning makes protagonists interesting subjects because they depart from hegemonic norms: just as Western society assumes heteronormativity in regards to sexual orientation, and Whiteness in racial construction, it also assumes

nuclear family structures (McWilliams 8). Orphans' lack of genealogical roots frees them from familial obligation, leaving them to face hardship and opportunity alike without parental aid and inviting readers' sympathy and vicarious adventurism. Orphans' dispossession allows them to function and behave outside of societal conventions unfettered by family values. According to McWilliams, this tension renders the orphan as "a figure of transgression" as he points to Huck Finn's controversial relationship with Jim (6). I mention this brief history of orphan protagonists because different models emerge in twentieth-century Caribbean literatures. In the case of the Caribbean texts that I will examine, I conclude that the orphan protagonist is not a figure of transgression, but rather someone who complicates projects of national identity and a poetics of hybridity.

Both Wirth-Nesher and Peters focus on the literary Victorian orphan, but their ideas are divergent. Whereas Peters analyzes the problems that the orphan poses to family, society and culture in the Victorian era, Wirth-Nesher is interested in how orphans overcome their obstacles to become national heroes. In line with Peters, my dissertation specifically provides the other side to the study of the orphan as a national hero, and reveals the orphan as someone who frustrates integration and community. My study is in contrast to Lewis's *The Ethical Orphan in the 19th Century Latin American Novel*. Therein she looks at how orphan discourse attempts to unify peripheral voices into a national project through a performance ethic, such as mimicry, role-playing and camouflage (5). Lewis juxtaposes my work through her confluence of orphan and nation, particularly in terms of racial harmony. Therefore, our projects differ in scope: her dissertation examines the nineteenth century Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking America

because it was during that century that independence was widespread. In the case of the Caribbean, autonomy on some scale occurred for most islands in the twentieth century. What is more, while Lewis discusses how orphan discourse brought nations together, I am more interested in how orphan discourse continues to fragment them.

Similarly, Valérie Loichot's *Orphan Narratives* is another study that advances the orphan as active performers in community construction because they can create their own family (read: community) narratives where actual family is dismembered (Loichot 2-3). Utilizing Glissant's *Poétique de la Relation* [Poetics of Relation] (1990), Loichot's main point of reference shifts from family to composite and plural communities that weaken plantation binaries associated with filiation and affirm in their place plurality and opacity (Loichot 31). Loichot holds that a composite community is the "only constructive escape from narrow family, plantation, and national units" (195) so that she proposes that the absence of family allows orphans to self-name and even re-create their own pasts, seamlessly slipping between ethnicities and classes.² The orphan then, in line with Loichot, can be the embodiment of a new creolized society and a new community narrative that seeks to end rigid colonial taxonomies and master-slave narratives. I challenge Loichot's call for a composite society at face value by questioning the limits of community as an ideological apparatus for poetics of hybridity. I examine orphans who exemplify colonial violence, taxonomies, and fragmentation in creolized societies. Through their dispossession, abandonment, and uncertainty, they reveal the complexities of community building in post-plantation insular society.

² For an analytical example, see Loichot's chapter "William Faulkner's Crossroads: *Light in August*."

Beverly Ormerod notes that the use of orphanage is a relevant motif “for the dispossession of blacks in the West Indian novel. The result of their forced exile is an endless search to reclaim a lost motherland” (1). This polemic of not belonging is particular to the Caribbean, a site of coming-and-going that dates back to the Arawaks migrating from the mainland prior to the arrival of Europeans. However, Ormerod’s commentary is reductive by voicing the motif solely through the Black West Indian experience because as I intend to show in this dissertation, different people feel dispossessed in different ways. Euro-Antilleans differ from Imperial Whites; Europe is no longer their home, but the Caribbean serves as a reminder of the atrocities they committed in the name of empire. Afro-, Indo-, and Chinese-Antilleans also differ within their respective diasporas, but it is their forced migration (which occurs on different levels) that leads to their dispossession. Finally, the remaining indigenous communities, which I highlight in my fourth chapter, experience dispossession as a result of the colonial period that exploited them as workers and transformed their motherland, usually with little input from them as the legitimate proprietors.

For the purpose of this project, I broadly define orphans as people who have lost at least one parent and who have been deeply affected by this loss. Yet that is not to suggest that this loss is the same across all of the texts that I examine. This broad definition permits me to work with an extensive literary canon that features protagonists who lost their parent(s) at different ages and to different circumstances. In my first two chapters, the orphaned protagonists lost both of their parents, but they also grew up under their guidance. Importantly, it is this guidance that directs many of their colonial

attitudes that they are unable to (completely) break from. In the texts in my third chapter, along with *The Autobiography of My Mother*, only one parent dies, but it is precisely that death that motivates these protagonists to search for and process their roots while ultimately distancing themselves from their fathers. In the fourth chapter, the orphaned protagonists never knew their mothers (and in Razyé's case, his father) and therefore never receive the parental directives that the orphans in my first two chapters receive. That lack of parental guidance is precisely why they ultimately feel no affiliation to society. Despite the differences between these orphan protagonists, in all cases the loss of their parent(s) profoundly affects their actions throughout the texts.

Theoretical Approach

One of the leading Critical Race theories in the Caribbean, as Édouard Glissant, Edward Brathwaite, the Francophone Creolists, Fernando Ortiz and others put forth calls for a collective "we" in Caribbean society characterized by the idea of creolization, or the fusing of heterogeneous characteristics. Though there are differentiations in their models, a general idea emerges that people are able to feel a part of society because everyone shares a background of diversity and racial mixing. This concept often attempts to move beyond racial categorization that creates exclusionary practices to privilege a world of fluidity; identity is no longer fixed because all Caribbean people have multiple genealogical backgrounds. In *Éloge de la Créolité* [In Praise of Creoleness] (1989) the Francophone Creolists Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant resist portraits of the Caribbean as a site of Blackness where Whiteness is negative. Instead they view the positives of hybridization that continue to occur through the constant

blending of cultures. The Francophone Creolists conceive hybridity specifically in reference to a cultural aesthetic (90) but they also cross into the realm of racial identity when they identify themselves as “neither Europeans, nor Africans, nor Asians,” [ni Européens, ni Africains, ni Asiatiques] but rather Creoles (Taleb-Khyar 75; 13). By using this all-encompassing multiracial term, the Creolists attempt to minimize racial differences in hopes of building a hybrid community. For that reason, they criticize Martinican author and one of the founders of the *Négritude* movement Aimé Césaire for wanting to return to his roots, but not viewing *Creolité* as these roots (79). However, the work is not solely a response to Césaire, but rather a new perspective that advances Edouard Glissant’s *Le Discours antillais* [Caribbean Discourse] (1981).

To be certain, Bernabé, Confiant, and Chamoiseau theorize three concepts that culminate in Creoleness, or *Créolité*. Americanness, for instance, were Western populations in the New World with no real interaction with other cultures. In this case original cultures are adapted to new geographical environments. “It is a migrant culture in splendid isolation” [*une culture émigré, dans un splendide isolement*] (Taleb-Khyar 92; 30). Secondly, they define Caribbeanness as being like Americanness but on the Caribbean Archipelago and referring to isolated Asian, European and African communities. Caribbeanness is a geopolitical concept and shares a geopolitical Caribbean solidarity with all the peoples of the archipelago regardless of their cultural differences. On the other hand, *Créolité* is not a geographic concept but an interaction of culturally different populations. This interaction invents new cultural designs to allow for cohabitation so that a non-harmonious mix of languages, religions, and cuisines is

prevalent. According to the authors, *Créolité* is an original entity that emerges from this process after time and encompasses and perfects Americanness, because it is the mixing of these isolated cultures which no longer isolates them (91-3). The movement seeks to eliminate totalitarian perspectives of race that they saw apparent in the works of the *Négritude* movement. In that sense, they are interested in totality, but not totalitarianism: “Creoleness is an annihilation of false universality, of monolingualism, and of purity...for complexity is the very principle of our identity” [La Créolité est une annihilation de la fausse universalité, du monolinguisme et de la pureté...Car le principe même de notre identité est la complexité (Taleb-Khyar 90; 28). This universality is a constructed Western concept, and the authors propose a version that has samples of every language and race, without favoring one heritage over the others.

In keeping with this thought process, an orphan’s ability to be racially unidentifiable can be useful as a strategy to avoid slippage. In the same vein, their lack of genealogy would embody a oneness because of its inability to claim one heritage over the other. The Francophone Creolists, although they do not refer specifically to orphans, praise the indeterminacy afforded to a pluralistic society. I take umbrage with these ideas. The concept of constructing a creolized community is above all else a utopic poetics of hybridity that negates racial experience in order to promote a fabricated cultural sameness. As these theorists call for a society that no longer relies on racial categorizations, they paradoxically and hegemonically identify all Caribbean peoples as “Creoles” (Taleb-Khyar 75; 13). That is to say that poetics of hybridity such as *Créolité* replace colonial systems by becoming the new hegemonic systems that manufacture

inclusion while negating racial (and gender) difference. It is for this reason that A. James Arnold identifies *Créolité* as constricting (“Gendering” 39) in its discursive singularity and that Richard Burton states that “*Créolité* is in practice often retrospective, even regressive, in character, falling back, in a last desperate recourse against decreolization, into the real or imagined plenitude of *an tan lontan* (olden times)” (23). As ideologies of hybridity mimic the colonial past in their quest for power, they reduce the complexities of lived racial experiences in hopes of generating a collective identity for postplantation communities. As my study will show, Caribbean authors utilize orphan protagonists to disrupt these narratives of collective identity.

To that end, I approach ideologies of creolization as nothing more than ideals that have failed to be pragmatic in the Caribbean setting. Loichot’s aim is to show creolized Caribbean communities that have broken with a master-narrative. She specifically suggests that orphans create their own narrative because their genealogical rootlessness affords them such freedom. Yet orphans can also reinforce master narratives, as the protagonists of plantocracy-driven works like *Mijn zuster de negerin* [My Black Sister] (1935), *Los soles truncos* [The Fanlights] (1958), and *Amour* [Love] (1969) make clear. Orphans of the historically subjugated racial sectors of the Caribbean, on the other hand, often repeat colonial-era narratives of racial exclusion, as the protagonists of of *Dubbelspel* [Double Play] (1973) and *No Telephone to Heaven* (1987) exemplify. The orphans of *The Autobiography of My Mother* (1995) and Maryse Condé’s *La migration des cœurs* [Windward Heights] (1995) are so entrenched in their own search for identity and questions revolving around their parents’ history that they fail to take on any social

role whatsoever. Contrary to the self-birthing and self-fashioning that Loichot sees as intrinsic to orphanhood, the orphans in these texts dredge up contradictions in projects of national identity: they represent what I will call counter-community and counter-collective, namely forces and persons that thwart social and racial harmony and disrupt community-building. These very orphans, often from the plantocracy, act out colonial violence (rape and incest) as well as racism. They do not break from their parents and create their own narratives; they reassert the narratives of colonialism. Meanwhile, descendants of subjugated peoples survive in solitude without affiliation to the island. Instead of forging on after abandonment, racial sectors struggle to come to terms with their loss, behaving in ways that problematize discourses of belonging.

In fact, the texts studied in this dissertation gravitate toward each other because of commonalities that the orphan protagonists share: an uncertain role in a transitioning society; a fixed racial identity; and a stagnant national model through a chaotic urban sector. In the end, one observes a recurring theme in which the plantocracy becomes less relevant in the transitioning society and thus yearns for its past relevance. On the other hand, the racially marginalized sectors are unable to decolonize a colonial mindset which preserves racial categories. In both cases, the same holds true:

Economic and social shifts provoked a reassessment of established social hierarchies and official interpretations of the past. A climate of crisis and transformation henceforth stimulated the production of a rich body of written texts that attempted to reassert or, alternatively, redefine the narratives through which postslavery societies understood themselves as coherent imagined

communities (Russ 15).

In the texts I will examine here, the prevailing themes run counter to coherence: societal disharmony, sexual violence, the rejection of the modern city in favor of the country, and the return to colonial models.

This is in tune with recent research like Shalini Puri's *The Caribbean Postcolonial* (2004) which articulates the social inequalities on the islands of Trinidad and Tobago where racial tension continues to exist between the Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean sectors. *The Caribbean Postcolonial* also contests the reality of *Créolité* in the Caribbean in the first decade of the twenty-first century. From a Marxist perspective, Puri questions *Créolité* in the Caribbean as a utopian desire or a reality, stating that it was used to create a nationalist discourse of belonging. She believes that "Caribbean history reveals that the state need not be opposed to or threatened by hybridity, but may claim to emerge from it, and, indeed, be an agent of hybridization" (47). In that sense, hybridity becomes part of a poetics to rationalize colonialism as having positive aspects, such as the creation of blended cultures. Indeed, Amar Acheraiou's *Questioning Hybridity, Postcolonialism and Globalization* (2011) considers the history of creolization as being grounded in a colonial tactic for the declining ruling class to maintain its power (60-79). While syncretism has obviously occurred at various levels in practice (one only needs to think of *santería* as an example), Puri views the ideological blending of cultures more in terms of theoretical expression than of lived racial experience. She declares that hybridity discourses are forced poetics, and a "philosophical or theoretical construct that is plagued by conceptual weakness and

contradiction” (93). In practical terms, Puri sees racial tensions still present in the Caribbean, and so she designates hybridity to a cultural expression. For example, if we think about the economic tension between Indo-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadians, as well as the intent of Indo-Trinidadians to remain purists through their imaginings of India (189-90) then it becomes apparent that creolization as a harmonious ideological endpoint is still theoretical, and that the Caribbean is still in a moment of “Caribbeanness.”

Dutch Caribbean writer Frank Martinus Arion focuses on *Créolité* in his article “The Great Curassow or the Road to Caribbeanness” (1998). This essay closes the twentieth century with optimism for the future, but a realization that at the time of writing, Caribbeanness, let alone *Créolité* has yet to come to fruition. Although Arion agrees with the project of *Créolité* (447), he ultimately believes that “the region as a whole has not even reached the stage of Caribbeanness or even Americanness yet” (448). Arion goes on to discuss that the reasons for this revolve around a continued migration to the Caribbean from Europe but a lack of migration from Africa, which in turn diminishes the presence of African nannies who frequently kept cultural traditions alive through the telling of African stories, such as trickster tales.³ He also points towards the increasing Chinese and Indian populations that segregate themselves from other racial sectors (448). Another challenge to *Créolité*, according to Arion, is Europeanness, which he shows through Cuban José Martí. Europeanness suggests a problem in which those of European

³ It should be noted that Arion is the author of a collection of poetry known as *Stemmen uit Afrika* [Voices from Africa] (1957) that looks at the cultural influences that Africa has had in the Dutch Caribbean, one of the first Dutch Caribbean authors to develop a black consciousness in his work.

descent still see themselves as superior, as Martí does when he degrades the Curaçaoan population and ridicules Papiamentu (450). These linguistic and racial barriers, consistent with Arion, keep the insular residents alienated from each other, relegating *Créolité* to an ideal. Neither Arion nor Puri account for the significant role orphan protagonists play in thwarting a poetics of hybridity. Indeed, orphans evince the colonial legacy in hybridity, as shown in my first chapter. Similarly they also reaffirm the plantocracy's rejection of creolization, as I demonstrate in my second chapter. Both cases proclaim a frustration with a poetics of hybridity from the bourgeoisie author's perspective. Authors who are descendants of slavery also depict a fragmented society through the use of orphans utilizing their own exclusionary practices in identity projects and by abstaining from a desire to belong in a community.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter One, "The Ambiguous Orphan: Finding the Dutch Caribbean with *Mijn zuster de negerin*" shows Cola Debrot's problematic attempt to bring a dying plantocracy together with an industrializing Afro-Antillean urban sector in order to project a national community of oneness through the twentieth-century Dutch Caribbean novel *Mijn zuster de negerin*. The chapter will focus on Édouard Glissant's concept of a "forced poetics," in which "a need for expression confronts an inability to achieve expression" [une nécessité d'expression confronte un impossible à exprimer] (Dash 120; 236). Because a forced poetics does not develop freely, the orphan protagonist Frits takes on an ambiguous role of someone attempting to use miscegenation to forge his role in a new

Afro-Curaçaoan society.⁴ The descendant of plantation owners, Frits' strategies to reaffirm his place in society only dredge up colonial imagery; the incest motif, the objectification and exploitation of Black women, and Debrot's project of creolization are stagnant reproductions of colonial models. The plot is about Frits, an orphan protagonist of the plantocracy who returns to the Dutch Antilles after years in Europe to handle the colonial inheritance of his parents. He struggles to find his place in a transitioning society, but attempts to do so through his sexual desire for Maria, a mulatto woman who turns out to be his half-sister. The author utilizes the incest motif as a model that allegorically bonds the islanders by "redefining traditional ethical theory in order to be more inclusive" (Lewis 8), but it ultimately leaves their society stagnant due to a non-productive ideal. That is to say that Debrot chooses a filial bond over a romantic one, leaving the generation allegorically unable to procreate. However, prior to the revelation of their kinship, Frits objectifies Maria as a sexual conquest, recycling a colonial mindset that he learned from his father Alexander who similarly imposed himself on a nameless and voiceless black woman, Maria's mother. Using colonial hierarchies of race, Frits tries to seduce Maria as he keeps from her the secret of their kinship that he has suspected all along. When Maria's role changes from objectified Black lover to mulatto sister, Frits's behavior towards her also changes so that he empathizes with her. Within this behavior, Debrot's project of creolization is revealed through his advancement of a

⁴ I am aware of the colonial legacy surrounding terms such as "miscegenation" and racial categories like "mulatto," "quarteroon," and "octoroon." In the case of "miscegenation," I use it alongside *mestizaje* and *métissage*, terms that lack a direct English equivalent. I employ these racial classifiers, despite their development in plantation society, because insular societies still utilize them today.

disharmonious colonial model of whitening in which people gain value through their assimilation to a European cultural model. Using Doris Sommer's *Foundational Fictions* (1991), I enter into a discussion among Dutch-Caribbean scholars Joseph Aimone, Olga Rojer, Wim Rutgers, Hilda van Neck-Yoder and Aart Broek in order to demonstrate that considering Frits as an allegorical representative of the island's new society proves to be misleading. Although Maria embodies the Land, and the industrialization of the island can be read as the Usurper, Frits alienates both the Afro-Antillean and *blanke creool* sectors of society while he shows that the White Protestant sector of society no longer belongs within this transformation because of their unwillingness to renounce colonial models. This causes Frits to behave ambiguously and dishonestly throughout the novel, often letting his perversion guide him towards the nostalgia of the plantocracy as well as maintaining secrets for his own benefit. I counter Frits's behavior with examples of nineteenth-century Spanish American literature in which protagonists of the dying plantocracy have the mores to transform and be active participants in the new society. In addition to Sommer, the theoretical framework for this chapter includes Saidiya Hartman's "The Black Venus" (2008) to discuss the treatment of Black women in a plantation context as they are dehumanized through namelessness and voicelessness and that such a reduction becomes part of their universalization, which I find particularly useful when dealing with Maria's mother. Additionally I use José Vasconcelos's *La raza cósmica* (1925) in order to talk about theories of whitening under the guise of racial harmony as they pertain to Debrot's project of creolization through Maria. By comparing

this text with nineteenth-century Spanish American romance novels, I aim to advance the oft-overlooked Dutch Antilles within a larger hemispheric dialogue.

In Chapter Two, “The Unwilling Orphan” I examine two sets of orphan sisters who are unwilling to relinquish the privilege that a colonial legacy of race afforded to them. In Puerto Rican René Marqués’s *Los soles truncos* and Haitian Marie Vieux-Chauvet’s *Amour* descendants of the plantocracy confront a loss of power after the United States has occupied their respective islands. Amidst the aftermath of the occupation is the rise of the Afro-Antillean sectors seeking the racial equality that colonial history has denied them. Because the U.S. occupation provides the interruption to call for these changes, the works, which read as denunciations of the occupation, read by extension as denunciations of the rising Afro-Antillean sectors. The two texts, whether the authors know it or not, create racial tension and thwart a multi-racial society. Since a creolized community is not an option for these two authors, I articulate in what ways they attempt to preserve their racialized power and isolation. Vieux-Chauvet and Marqués both try to legitimate the plantocracy as the rightful authority of the islands—the founders and forgers of their society. In so doing, they negate the contributions of other racial sectors and privilege their Europeanness, that is, their European heritage. Indeed, even with alternative modes of identity, such as Fernando Ortiz’s *Contrapunteo de tabaco y azucar* [Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar] (1940), both authors choose a colonialist mentality that Puerto Rican Antonio Pedreira portrays in *Insularismo* [Insularism] (1934). Pedreira’s canonical text enforces a series of binaries of which

White/Black is equated with superior/inferior and governor/governed that attempts to reaffirm the plantocracy's inheritance as legitimate.

In *Los soles truncos* and *Amour*, this racial discourse plays out through the orphaning process. When the families are intact they experience a wealth and order that parallels the island's. However, when the United States occupies the islands both sets of parents die. The occupation orphans the island and the two sets of sisters in a shared victimization. Rather than accept the societal transformations and attempt to forge on, the sisters begin to decline and delve further into a colonial legacy by affirming their Europeanness. This in turn counters Loichot's argument that orphans break from the master-text and create their own narratives as the orphans in Marqués and Vieux-Chauvet's works reinforce the master-text. In fact, even when the two sets of sisters question their Europeanness in moments in which they realize that they are racially different from European White, they ultimately do not betray their Europeanness. On the other hand, they betray their Afro-Antillean compatriots in hopes to regain their place in the social and colonial racial hierarchy.

The need to reaffirm their European heritage manifests itself in racialized acts of resistance by the two sets of sisters. In *Los soles truncos*, the sisters choose self-immolation over integrating themselves into a multiracial society. In *Amour* Claire Clamont murders the representative of the usurping Afro-Haitian class in order to reclaim *milat* power. In both works then the authors project a society in which those closest to a European heritage either maintain power or commit suicide to avoid losing it. Neither text presents a multi-racial community as a viable option outside the plantocracy's very

specific binary of governor/governed. This colonial ideology correspondingly spurns a postplantation poetics of hybridity. I conclude that despite the call for hybridity, there are still racial sectors that prefer to remain in their segregated communities.

In Chapter Three, “The Eager Orphan,” I turn my attention to historically marginalized sectors eager to belong in a changing society. I examine the postplantation shift in which rising Afro-Antillean nationalist groups rise to the forefront in Frank Martinus Arion’s *Dubbelspel* and Michelle Cliff’s *No Telephone to Heaven*. These two texts present multiracial orphans, Janchi Pau and Clare Savage, who in an effort to belong in Afro-Antillean communities, must disavow their hybridity and choose a fixed African heritage. Both authors revise *Négritude* to advance the role of Afro-Antillean women historically relegated to auxiliary roles in the genre’s novels. In *Dubbelspel* and *No Telephone to Heaven*, women become equals and heroines in postplantation societal transformation. As a result the authors privilege *Négritude*, specifically these revised versions, as progressive and criticize Europeanness as backwards. Through that African heritage, the orphan protagonists are able to reconnect with their deceased mothers and be a part of society: in other words, they connect with their mother(land). Additionally, through a vindication of landscapes and alternative histories, these two orphan narratives attempt to undo the conflation of historiography and the Eurocentric planter class that dominates the texts in Chapter Two. At the same time, the use of *Négritude* to pronounce the deficiencies of *Créolité* also ultimately highlights its own insufficiencies: both are ideologies that partake of their own forms of exclusion.

In Arion's novel Janchi Pau's orphaning thrusts him into resignation, yet he comes to feel a sense of belonging to the community and island when he finds love. Solema, Janchi Pau's lover, instills in him the desire to improve his life and their island by calling for more autonomy from Dutch colonizers. In an act of community-building, Janchi Pau forms a furniture co-operative that uses island woods to manufacture pieces, but also replants more trees to ensure the island's longevity. In the aftermath of ecological imperialism that deforested Curaçao, Janchi Pau's initiative reflects an affiliation to the island that differentiates the Afro-Curaçaoan from the Dutch colonizer. *Dubbelspel*, in the vein of Sommer's *Foundational Fictions*, presents a romance that spills over into the nation. While the nineteenth-century Latin American novels in Sommer's study often end with the revelation of a secret that problematizes the romance, Arion's novel has a fairy-tale-like happy ending for Janchi Pau and Solema, albeit at the expense of the novel's other characters.⁵ But Arion's ideal community is not without its issues. As I allude to above, the community is Afro-Curaçaoan, thereby excluding other racial sectors. It is also heterosexual, which raises questions about bio-reproductivity and an intention to normalize heterosexuality.

In *No Telephone to Heaven*, Clare Savage joins a pan-African rebel group intent on overthrowing oppressive neo-colonial regimes. Though Clare's father is a descendant of the plantocracy, Clare racially identifies herself with her Afro-Jamaican mother. By

⁵ See Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's *Sab* (1841), Cirilo Villaverde's *Cecilia Valdés* (1882) and Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Aves sin nido* [Birds without Nest] (1889) as examples of foundational fictions with surprising revelations in the denouement.

joining the rebel group and setting up their operations on Clare's grandmother's farm in the bush, Clare is able to reconnect with her mother and grandmother. In this novel, feminism combines with *Négritude* and landscapes to provide Clare with an understanding of the past that her father has kept from her. For Clare to belong in the rebel group, she must recognize this past and accept it as her prominent heritage. In Cliff's novel then creolization is not the end goal, but rather a movement from creolization to a revised, feminist *Négritude*.

In that vein, the postplantation societies in *Dubbelspel* and *No Telephone to Heaven* fall into the same traps as their predecessors: by delegitimizing the plantocracy, they end up performing the same exclusionary practices that colonialism imposed on them. Acheraïou notes that the position of many colonized people towards colonial racial politics often turns out to be essentialist and mimetic; that is to say, it simply reproduces the dominant racial binaries (82). In this act of mimesis, community converts into a frustrated concept that disturbs a poetics of hybridity. Through that lens I look at the rise of *Négritude* as an opposition to *Créolité* and its limitations as a hegemonic ideology while acknowledging its enduring prominence in insular societies. Afro-Antillean sectors frustrate creolization because they long to assert themselves in positions of power and claim the island as theirs. When in power, they keep racial binaries in place, but invert their semiotic signs. What is more, multiracial characters choose fixed identities in order to belong, but they oppose creolization in the process as *Négritude* is given preference not as a bridge to creolization but as a resistance to it.

In Chapter Four, “The Staying Orphan,” I analyze Antiguan Jamaica Kincaid’s *The Autobiography of My Mother* and Maryse Condé’s *La migration des cœurs* as examples of why orphaned subalterns in insular communities are not able to feel a sense of belonging. According to Saidiya Hartman, “staying” is having no affiliation to or stake in the community, but rather simply living there (88). This is an effective way to think about Afro-Antilleans because colonialism uprooted them from Africa and forced them to migrate to the Caribbean where they worked as slaves, as Kincaid’s ancestors did. But it is also useful to talk about the remaining indigenous peoples in the Caribbean who have seen European colonization transform their islands while marginalizing and relegating them to history books. Such is the identity struggle for Kincaid’s protagonist Xuela. Never knowing her indigenous mother who died during childbirth, Xuela spends her life trying to understand who her mother was, and by extension, who she is. It is because she is an orphan that Xuela has no connection to the island or its inhabitants, as she lacks the parental directive to guide her into society.

Similarly, Condé’s *La migration des cœurs* considers Razyé, an orphan with ambivalent roots. Throughout the novel society defines him as Afro-Guadeloupean despite a more likely background as a *bata coolie/dougla*, or someone of mixed African and Indian heritage. The inability to know his background embitters him during his childhood. Vengeance towards the *béké* (or island-born White) society that has reduced him to an Other fuels Razyé to set fire to plantations, destroying a site of creolization. But Razyé’s acts of vengeance do not necessarily equate to an assertion of *Négritude* on his part. On the other hand, Razyé is indifferent to what happens on the island, just so

long as he extracts revenge. The orphan then, in the search to know one's self, is incapable of belonging to a larger collective "we." In that sense, the orphan interrupts the hybrid ideology that Francophone Creolists Jean Bernabe, Rafael Confiante, and Patrick Chamoiseau postulate in *Éloge de la Créolité*. These theorists propose the importance of community over individual by calling for people to unify under the racial umbrella of everyone being Creole, or multiracial. Hence I question the Creolists' poetics of creolization by giving an example of characters attempting to make sense of their own life at the expense of the community. What is more, even though Xuela is multiracial, she privileges her mother's genealogical Carib root over her African and European backgrounds. A more specific racial background (Carib) replaces the all-encompassing *Créole*. To emphasize the importance of the self I refer to Frantz Fanon's *Peau noire, masques blancs* [Black Skin, White Masks] (1952). Indeed, it is the focus on the self that problematizes community-building. "Staying" becomes an alternative mode to community, although a rather hapless one as Xuela and Razyé live an isolated and nihilist life. Death is the only closure that brings them peace. "Staying" frustrates community, but in *The Autobiography of My Mother* and *La migration des cœurs*, Xuela and Razyé's isolation is two-sided. Kincaid describes a loveless community full of greedy, corrupt and hateful people. Xuela is constantly excluded because of her class, gender and race (the others classify as Carib and then reject her for being from a subjugated people). Condé portrays a colonial society that restricts Razyé because of his racial background. The *békés* control the limits of Razyé's childhood growth and teach him to perform in stereotypical slave roles for their own entertainment. Although the Gagneur family takes

Razyé in, he is never one of them. These exclusionary practices not only play a role in Xuela and Razyé's "staying," but they also evince a society disinterested in incorporating everyone. Kincaid's attitude toward community contests *Créolité* because for Xuela and other indigenous peoples, a collectivity is not the answer. Xuela does not want to belong to a group and the group does not want her either. Kincaid does not offer an alternative besides that we are all only equal in death. Likewise, Razyé's multiracial background as *bata coolie/dougl*a leaves him placeless in the Black/White binary that colonial society strives to enforce: he is outside of the community imaginary and as such, cannot belong. Xuela and Razyé may choose "staying" over belonging, but the hardships that they endure via isolation hardly makes it a solution. In neither text is community the all-encompassing solution that the Creolists want it to be.

My conclusions outline insular societies that are racially fragmented and disjointed. Descendants of plantation owners ambivalently deal with longing for their past colonial power. They continue a master-narrative that their parents set forth. Descendants of subjugated peoples carry on no narrative as they seek to extract revenge on the former colonizers and make sense of the autonomy that postplantation societies thrust upon them with little preparation. In both cases orphan protagonists disrupt projects of national identity centered on poetics of hybridity, but their racial experience plays a role in how this disruption occurs. The orphan trope, prevailing in the novels of all four European languages in the Caribbean underscores an insular region connected through its disconnections.

Chapter One

Finding the Dutch Caribbean with *Mijn zuster de negerin*: The Ambiguous Orphan

National romance allegories, as Doris Sommer has amply shown, were a primary vehicle through which nineteenth-century Latin American nations forged an autonomous literary tradition.⁶ Yet these allegorical romance novels were not exclusive to Latin America. On the contrary, Cola Debrot's *Mijn zuster de negerin* [My Black Sister] (1935), a canonical Dutch-Antillean novel, presents a similar project of literary nation-building from a different linguistic bloc of the Americas through the author's desire to advance a unique regional identity for the Dutch Caribbean via his attempts to represent a harmonious, albeit problematic union in the work. This essay intends to show how *Mijn zuster de negerin* dialogues with Spanish American national romances and can be read in conjunction with foundational fictions, as its allegorical model converges with those of nineteenth-century Spanish American literature. What I will argue here, however, is that Debrot's novel is anti-foundational: its portrayal of colonial intimacy among the protagonists reveals sexual violence and incest instead of love, as well as the novel's defense of decaying plantation society against the dismantling of colonial hierarchies, all of which resist the nation-building imperative on which foundational fiction is predicated. Consequently, the anti-foundational nature in the text leads us to speculate how "national" fictions in the Caribbean as a whole confront an impasse between the cultural

⁶ See Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: UP of California, 1991) and *One Master for Another: Populism as Patriarchal Rhetoric in Dominican Novels* (Lanham, MD: UP of America, 1983).

applications of a Western-style state ideology and a much less linear experience of race, gender, and class. Such a conflict marks the text as an example of a “forced poetics” or “poétique forcée” centered on cultural hybridity through assimilation at the expense of racial equality.⁷ Like Shalini Puri, I use “equality” as a “necessarily open-ended term, the meanings, reach, and sites of which may continually expand through social struggles” (2). Debrot’s acknowledgment of a need for expression is in conflict with an inability to achieve it and this conflict results in the trope of what I will call the “ambiguous orphan” who wants to belong in a changing society but who is ultimately too entrenched in his colonial upbringing to do so. The orphan’s ambiguity pertains to his own allegiances as well as whether or not he is an adequate representative to the reader of the national impulse.

Sommer’s allegorical model, first proposed in her study of Dominican novels, discusses the role of characters in which she equates the male protagonist with the People while the female protagonist is representative of the Land. Sommer introduces the Usurper, a character that attempts to separate the People and the Land, in order to complete the model (*One* 11). In her extension of this model, she studied a range of novels from other countries, with the idea that foundational fictions attempt to bring together heterosexual lovers of dissimilar sectors of society to create a harmonious national ideal through reproduction. The results, however, are met with varying degrees

⁷ By “forced poetics” I refer to Édouard Glissant’s definition as a collective situation in which “a need for expression confronts an inability to achieve expression” [une nécessité d’expression confronte un impossible à exprimer] (Dash 120; 236).

of success. In Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's *Sab* (1841), the heroine Carlota ends up in a loveless marriage with the Usurper; in José Mármol's *Amalia* (1851), the Usurper murders Eduardo right after the latter's wedding; in Jorge Isaacs's *María* (1867), a fatal disease prohibits the union of the protagonists. Whether the romances work out or not, the couples in all of these examples still are shown as drawn together or bound by a mutual love, at least by the end of the novel. Additionally, the novels portray the modernization of the nation by emphasizing the importance of the city over the country. In *María*, Efraín leaves a decaying plantocracy to spend his formative school years in Bogotá. We see a similar parallel in Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Aves sin nido* [Birds without a Nest] (1889) when the Maríns go to Lima by train, a symbol of modernization in the nineteenth century. In these novels, an a priori structuring device posits that to leave the country is to dispose of colonial models whereas the city reflects the autonomy of the new nations. Sommer studies these novels, in part, because they were successful upon publication and quickly became a part of school curricula, a reading program for citizen formation.

In what I am calling “anti-foundational” fictions, a similar allegorical model appears, but it serves to invert the trajectories that Sommer laid out: instead of an ideal of a harmonious union across classes, races, and/or regions, anti-foundational fictions highlight the ways colonial violence on the part of the protagonist thwarts such a union. In Tip Marugg's *Weekendpelgrimage* [Weekend Pilgrimage] (1957), for example, the White protagonist rapes his Afro-Curaçaoan friend Altagracia (170). Therefore, the romance of foundational fictions, predicated on the yearning for union, is noticeably

absent from anti-foundational fictions as the protagonists' motives often run directly counter to the idea of the couple as an allegorical figure for resolving conflicts such as post-slavery racial reconciliation, competing industries (i.e. plantocracy/oil) or rural/urban spaces. This is perhaps the greatest contrast between the two classifications since in foundational fictions, the nation's development is worked out through the allegory of the union of two lovers. Thus, a resistance to social equality underlined by colonial imagery often reasserts colonial models as in Marie Vieux-Chauvet's *Amour* [Love] (1968) and an emphasis on the country and a rejection of the city, as in Lindsay Barrett's *Song for Mumu* (1967). Characters leave the city to return to the plantation to reaffirm their traditional colonial positions.

Another difference between Debrot's novel and foundational fictions is the relative lack of acclaim that it experienced upon publication in 1935. Although *Mijn zuster de negerin* is now a part of the Dutch-Antillean literary canon, critics initially denounced the text. Dutch Caribbeanists have proposed various ideas to explain this early reception: Debrot himself suggests that it is because of the incest motif, claiming that islanders did not want to admit to interracial incestuous relations ("Brief" 96-104).⁸ In response, Aart Broek conceives that it was due to Debrot's rather exclusive audience. The fact that Debrot's novel appeared in the Netherlands and in Dutch suggests that his principal audience would have been the plantocracy, composed mostly of Protestants and

⁸ Aart Broek refutes that claim by showing contemporary texts published in Papiamentu that didactically deal with incest, such as Willem Kroon's *Mientrastanto anochi n'sera, careda n'caba* [The Race Will Not End Before Nightfall] (1926) and *Castigo di un abuso* [Punishment of an Abuse] (1929/30) as well as Ernesto Petronia's *Venganze di un amigo* [Revenge of a Friend] (1932).

Jews (“Ideological” 376). The use of Dutch rather than Papiamentu is the first indication of a “forced poetics” in that there is “an opposition between the content to be expressed and the language suggested or imposed” [une opposition entre le contenu exprimable et la langue suggérée ou imposée] (Dash 120; 236). A mass audience in Curaçao whose first language was Papiamentu would have found *Mijn zuster de negerin* inaccessible. Furthermore, the novel also contrasted sharply, both in subject matter and objectives, with the more popular didactic literature that the island's Catholic missions produced in Papiamentu. The Church supported weekly newspapers such as *La Union* and *La Cruz* that instructed the masses who were believed to be embracing the radical changes brought by industrialization, marked specifically by a real-life interest in incest. The Church viewed incest as a non-Catholic aberration that preoccupied the elites who worried that their legitimate children might fall in love with their unofficial miscegenated children which would in turn undermine filial and racial bonds (“Ideology” 3). *Mijn zuster de negerin*'s lack of moral didacticism coupled with the incest motif led to negative reviews from influential Catholic publishers that encouraged islanders to avoid the novel. Wim Rutgers conversely hypothesized that the reason for early criticism is not the incest motif, but “in actuality because of its redefinition of racial relations” referring to Debrot's attempt to end division between Whites and Blacks (544). Neither of these explanations, however, considers the anti-foundational nature of the novel's proposals, the fact that its (rather unlikeable) hero clings to a colonial past precisely when Curaçaoan society is busy forging ahead as a result of its industrialization through the oil industry and more regional autonomy. Along with the doubling of Curaçao's population

and a rapid industrialization of the island in the 1930s of Debrot's text, there was an influx of South American and Caribbean migrants who worked for the newly established oil industry: Royal Shell had set up refineries off Curaçao in 1918.⁹ The migration lent itself to a great deal of creolization as more cultures came into contact with each other.¹⁰ Meanwhile, the industrialization of the island meant less attention paid to plantations and more of an emphasis on oil refinery which soon dominated the island and brought about drastic changes not just to the economy but to society.¹¹ As Cornelis Goslinga writes, "a society disappeared in these years, an infrastructure got into turmoil, a new social mobility, unknown and unheard in earlier days reversed traditional values" (526). These changes serve as the contextual basis for the novel and its reception.

(Dis)Placement: A Hemispheric Approach to Framing *Mijn zuster de negerin*

This study questions why Spanish America is often linked with Spain and likewise, the Dutch Antilles with the Netherlands when the two American regions share a literary evolution that dialogues across languages. What interests me is demonstrating a

⁹ Goslinga notes a rise "from 34,639 inhabitants in 1918 to 62,798 in 1938" (525).

¹⁰ I define creolization as a fusing of heterogeneous characteristics.

¹¹ The oil boom of the second decade initiated Curaçao's autonomous projects throughout the twentieth-century. From 1950-1952, they had an interim island rule. In 1954 the Dutch government approved more local authority by developing political parties and expanding the education system so that islanders would handle local dealings (Phaf-Rheinberger 358). Debrot himself later became the first native-born governor of the Netherlands Antilles, serving from 1962-1970. Despite those moments however, the island remained an island territory of the Kingdom of the Netherlands until finally gaining autonomous status on October 10, 2010 as a constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

resounding affirmation to the narratological question that Gustavo Pérez Firmat poses in the anthology *Do the Americas Have a Common Literature?* (1990) by considering a transnational perspective that examines the commonalities of post-plantation societies in the New World. When looking across linguistic regions of the Americas rather than at the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer, one finds abundant and usually overlooked intertextuality, as is the case with *Mijn zuster de negerin* and its Spanish American counterparts. Debrot himself realizes the multiple influences, claiming that “the hybrid character of our literature, the literature of a mixed population and therefore also a mixed literature, means that different parts of it might belong equally to a Dutch or Spanish environment as to an Antillean one. It is not very easy to determine the degree of creolization in a particular literary work” (“Literature” 28).¹² Indeed, the Dutch Caribbean and particularly Curaçao have always had a unique relationship with South America. From the mid seventeenth century through the eighteenth century, Curaçao functioned as a port for many of the African slaves who were sold to the South American mainland; in the nineteenth century, the island became a destination for Latin American refugees and exiles in times of political turmoil, whose presence influenced Dutch-Antillean cultural life, such as in school where classes were taught in Spanish (Echteld 506). Spanish, then, has had a place on the island, at times being a language of the elite and at other times sparking hispanophobic sentiment. Echteld informs us about the

¹² Debrot goes on to define creolization at two different moments, introducing it as “the real difference that exists between writers drawing from a creole source and metropolitan European writers” (“Literature” 7) and then summarizing it with a “paradox that every gain conceals a loss and every loss a gain” (“Literature” 28).

variety of late nineteenth and twentieth-century Spanish-language newspapers in the Dutch Antilles that published Spanish-American and Spanish authors which affirms interest in the culture(s) of the Spanish-speaking world (509) while Broek agrees that “literacy in Spanish was more often than not, better known than Dutch” (“Ideology” 1). Debrot, born in 1902, grew up during a renaissance of Spanish-language literary production when Spanish was as prominent in publication as Papiamentu and Dutch.¹³ Even at the time that he published *Mijn zuster de negerin* in Dutch, Debrot, whose mother was Venezuelan, and many of his contemporaries used Spanish in their writings and discussed the relationships between Spanish-speakers and the Dutch Antilles. For instance, Debrot’s *De Vervolgden* [The Persecuted] (1982) is a historical novel set in the sixteenth century that discusses the Spanish colonization of the New World, both realizing that the insular region is at peace as long as the Spaniards continue their mainland conquests, and condemning their exploits at the same time (Phaf-Rheinberger 472).¹⁴ Debrot and his peers shared a conflicting perspective of Spanish America in that

¹³ See Jan Terlingen, *Las Antillas Neerlandesas en su vecindad: lengua y literatura españolas en las Antillas Neerlandesas* (Curaçao: Ministerio de Asuntos Culturales de las Antillas Neerlandesas, 1961).

¹⁴ We can also refer to the text *Josefina* (1899) by David Darío Salas. The story focuses on the elite class and in particular the failed romance between Josefina, a Venezuelan political refugee and Alfredo, a Jewish Curaçaoan. At one moment in the text when the couple is unable to comprehend their driver, Josefina exclaims “Ignoramos por completo su idioma” [his language was completely unknown to us] (28, my translation). The language in question is either Papiamentu or Dutch. Although it is somewhat understandable that Josefina, a Venezuelan and Spanish-speaker would not understand either of these two languages, the fact that her use of the first personal plural pronoun causes us to question Alfredo’s

the region provided literary models with which they could dialogue but it also became a site of antagonism in literature and legislation. The Dutch colonial government, in response to the abundance of Spanish on the island, reintroduced Dutch in the educational system in order to reintegrate Dutch customs and values on the island (Rutgers 545). However, Goslinga points out that Spanish remained the preferred language for many Dutch Caribbean writers who sought to reach a larger Spanish-speaking audience (711). Choosing Spanish as a vehicle can be construed as resisting Dutch colonialism because it privileges a regional relationship in contrast to a colonial-metropolitan relationship. Such a privilege exposes the narrowness of a traditional framework as is evident in the intertextual conversation that takes place within the Caribbean and South America.

Mijn zuster de negerin in many ways dialogues with nineteenth-century Spanish-language romance novels that provide the structural influence for Debrot's text: through the treatment of miscegenation and nation-building, the novel allows us to reevaluate the parameters of the regional construction and naming of Latin America, which most thinkers of foundational fictions elaborate along linguistic lines.¹⁵ In the same way that

incomprehension, since he is a native of the island. Therefore, it suggests that at the end of the nineteenth-century, Spanish was the language of the elites (Echteld 509).

¹⁵ I call the region of Latin America vague because its borders are constantly redefined. For instance, is Latin America only Spanish-speaking countries in the Western Hemisphere? If that is the case, would Puerto Rico and Miami, two areas with long histories of Hispanic influence, but neither independent nations, be excluded from the Latin American construct? What about Brazil, Suriname, Guyana and French Guiana? These nations share the South American continent with Spanish-speaking nations, but does the fact that their first language is not Spanish prevent them from being considered part of Latin

the Latin American novels are said to present an affirmation of a nationalist identity in antagonism to the former colonial power, *Mijn zuster de negerin* aims to separate the Dutch Caribbean from the Netherlands. The novel partakes of Latin American regional identity through its intertextuality with nineteenth-century Spanish-language foundational fictions, speaking to Dutch colonial power in part through that identity. The Spanish-language intertexts are readily apparent: as is the case in Cirilo Villaverde's *Cecilia Valdés* (1882) or *Sab*, ideas of miscegenation in *Mijn zuster de negerin* develop much like with Alexander's relationship with Maria's mother, leading to incestuous encounters amongst their children, most of whom are orphaned. Also a noteworthy text for comparison is *María* in which Efraín, like Frits, goes to the metropole for his education, but continues to think about a love interest (also named María) in the country. With these works as models, Debrot's text follows similar patterns that foreground its relationship with the Romantic Movement to which these works belong.

In *Mijn zuster de negerin*, a comparable allegorical model appears to that of Sommer's study. Maria, the woman Frits seeks out, is the allegory of the Land. She has lived in both the country and the city, before deciding to return to the plantation. The Usurper is implicitly the industrialization of the island due to the oil refinery which has rendered the agricultural sector useless. Furthermore, the cultural transformation that has brought Catholic Antillean and Spanish-American migrant workers is a threat to the declining White Protestant Dutch-speaking plantocracy class to which both the author

America? A hemispheric approach allows us to deconstruct these boundaries in order to include peripheral sites like the Dutch Antilles.

and the protagonist belonged. Identifying Frits as a figure of the People proves to be more complicated. We cannot say that Frits represents his fellow islanders, a majority of whom is Afro-Antillean. Moreover, it is not just a racial barrier that divides Frits from the population but also an economic one, since other *blanke creolen* dislike him because he spent his formative years in Europe.¹⁶ The people that Frits represents, then, are the decaying plantocracy. The same could be said about Efraín in *María* except for a fundamental difference: Efraín is able to forge on through his nation's transformation. Frits, on the other hand, is in the ambiguous location of being part of colonialism and of anti-colonialism, caught between the ideologies of colonizer and colonized, oppressor and oppressed, and the anxiety of being neither imperially White nor Afro-Curaçaoan. Furthermore, he ambivalently fluctuates between rejecting transformation and wanting to participate in it but only under his own colonial pretenses. Either way, he holds onto the colonial past, as his attempt to seduce Maria amidst the backdrop of the plantation exemplifies. This is another indicator of a “forced poetics” because Frits is miscast as representative of a collective desire for autonomous expression and furthermore, he is unable to realize it. His ambiguity as someone seemingly trying to topple his colonial

¹⁶ To maintain a linguistic accuracy to the region, I use the Dutch term *blanke creool* and its plural, *creolen* (literally White creole(s)) to refer to inhabitants born in the Dutch Antilles who are of European descent. One example of Frits's displacement occurs upon his arrival to the island where he talks with the local judge on the dock. The judge says “you look like you've spent your whole life in Paris...In Paris one often sees types like you—I don't know really what I mean with that” [Je ziet eruit of je je hele leven in Parijs hebt doorgebracht...In Parijs ziet men vaak van die types als jij. Ik weet zelf niet wat ik hiermee bedoel] (Rojer 20; 318). While the judge's meaning is ambiguous, one definite is that it marks Frits as an outsider.

upbringing while acting it out at the same time speaks to the polemic of “forced poetics” because it does not develop freely and naturally (Dash 132; 245). Accordingly, violent intimacy results due to colonial racism which privileges Whites over Blacks. In order to fully comprehend this, we must start with the model that his father left behind.

Debrot’s novel takes place over a one-day period in the Dutch Antilles, most likely Curaçao, in the remains of a crumbling colonial plantation society. The protagonist Frits returns to the island after sixteen years in the Netherlands. His parents have passed away, leaving orphan Frits to handle the inheritance—a decaying estate on the island and money that, as he contends, will make him rich for life. However, the motivation for his homecoming is in fact his desire for a Black lover:

Now that almost everything is lost, one thinks that a situation has been created where nothing is forbidden and one can expect from life only the most outrageous adventure. And Frits Ruprecht was to have his outrageous adventure...All I want is my black sister. No more empty chatter. Just black, and tender.

[...nu eenmaal zowat alles verloren ging, acht men die toestand geschapen waarin ook alles geoorloofd lijkt en men van het leven niet anders mag verwachten dan het meest bizarre avontuur. Frits Ruprecht zou zijn bizar avontuur hebben...Ik wil hebben: mijn zuster de negerin. Geen geklets meer. Maar zwartheid en aanhankelijkheid] (Rojer 20; 319).

The loss that the narrator refers to could be an emotional loss with respect to the deaths of Frits’s parents; yet the adventure intimates that grief is not the issue. On the other hand, Frits seeks liberation from a plantation system morality that his parents falsely embodied

in an effort to prevent miscegenation and uphold patrilineal order. Now that Frits's parents can no longer restrict him, Frits desires what was once forbidden: sex with a Black woman. This desire amplifies when Frits realizes he is an outsider to island society after a conversation with childhood friend and district chief Karel who implores Frits to return to Europe (25; 326). For Frits, finding his "Black sister" will allow him to recuperate his place on the island in response to his orphaning and the antagonistic reception he has received since his return. He attempts to quench his desire when he targets Maria, a woman of color of similar age whom he remembers fondly from childhood. That night as Frits tours his parents' estate, rehashing memories of his youth, he sees an elusive figure that he suspects might be Maria or someone that looks like her. He enters her dark room where the woman is lying down in bed. It is only when she hugs him that Frits knows that it is Maria. Wantsjo, the estate's caretaker and Maria's grandfather interrupts the two as they are embracing in her bed, with Frits's hand on her hip. He informs Frits that Maria is in fact his half-sister; Maria is the offspring of an extramarital affair between their father, Alexander Ruprecht and a Black woman, a secret that her grandfather has since kept. Frits returns to the room to find a distraught Maria. As he comforts her, the story ends with his fulfillment of finding a Black sister, but emptiness in that he does not have a Black lover.

False and Violent Harmony

Mijn zuster de negerin, like Spanish American foundational fictions, seeks to define a regional identity distinct from the European metropolis. On the one hand, the European colonial mindset, though not uniform across languages, officially intended to

uphold ethnic identities in order to establish a stable hierarchy of Europeans, *blanke creolen*, and Afro-Antilleans. Yet miscegenation and passing occurred so frequently in the colonies that registers shifted easily, often creating new classifications in the process and allowing for slippage whereby non-Europeans could be considered, at least culturally, European. Labeling various peoples as European subverted and decentralized the colonizer's power; however, loose ethnic classifications made it difficult to distinguish an identity native to the island except through a common exclusion of Dutchness, as seen through the shared intimacy and filial bond of slavery. With this in mind, Debrot's project becomes evident: the creolization of these cultures to produce a racially harmonious identity where the positive qualities from each are blended together, but always advancing towards an aspired European model so that the nation would be forged as culturally European. In aligning *blanke creolen* of the declining aristocracy with the Afro-Antillean labor force, Debrot's allegorical union hews closely to the classic foundational romances of Latin America which, as Sommer explains, "are almost inevitably stories of star-crossed lovers who represent particular regions, races, parties, economic interests, and the like" (*Foundational* 5). Sommer adds that these romances are to unite the community through reproduction. If that is the case, then the creolization that takes place here is not necessarily between Frits and Maria, but between their father and Maria's mother.

It is notable that the allegory of the region's identity establishes itself in the problematic union of Maria's mother with Alexander Ruprecht, an illicit affair between the plantation owner and a voiceless, nameless Black woman. Indeed, the only thing we

know about Maria's mother is that "she was the caretaker's oldest daughter" [zij was de oudste dochter van de rentmeester] and that she "had not survived the birth [of Maria]" [had de bevalling [van Maria] niet overleefd] (Rojer 34; 336). Although Maria's mother most likely was not a slave (slavery was abolished in Curaçao in 1863), her voicelessness and nondescriptness nonetheless point to the maintenance of the same social hierarchies of slavery and suggest a certain universalization of her character: through allegory, it is feasible to read Maria's mother as the representative of all Black women on the island; her universality is the cause for her silence and yet also the reason that the reader is supposed to know her story. And still it is for this very same reason that she is voiceless and nameless because she *is* the representative of every Black woman of a plantocracy who finds herself at the disposal of the White man. Maria's mother is an example of what Saidiya Hartman calls the "Black Venus." "What else is there to know?" Hartman inquires, "Hers is the same fate as every other Black Venus: no one remembered her name or recorded the things she said, or that she refused to say anything at all. Hers is an untimely story told by a failed witness" (2). The outcome of her affair with Alexander reflects the common colonial injunction against legal union (i.e. marriage) between African and European that relegates the Black woman to the role of mistress, perpetuating the colonial idea of racial homogeneity as official and miscegenation as unofficial, or irregular, and hence, discouraged. Also, the lack of voice in this fabricated history omits the hardships endured due to slavery and post-emancipation society for Afro-Curaçaoans. If a voice were given to Maria's mother, Curaçaoans would have to confront this past and account for the share of violence contained in processes of

creolization. The characterization of Maria's mother as voiceless and nameless in conjunction with the lacunae about the details of their relationship elucidate the historical make-up of the island: Black women with no say, and the White colonizers who may or may not rape and otherwise exploit them. However, as we see through Maria's mother, unearthing the whole truth is impossible, and for Debrot, difficult to resolve. Although the relationship is reproductive, it establishes a power construction that is anything but mutual or harmonious.

Colonial Intimacy and a Lack of Love

Now let us turn our attention to the relationship between Frits and Maria. As an orphan, Frits possesses the capability to break from his colonial upbringing. As such, when Frits makes it clear that he desires a Black woman, the reader perceives through allegory a generation seeking other means to reproduce while looking to topple previous conventions of racial homogeneity that disguised and denied miscegenation. Indeed, love via procreation establishes itself as the way to bring these Black and White communities together and forge a productive and growing population. However, this is not the case in *Mijn zuster de negerin* since whether the targeted woman is Maria or not is irrelevant because Frits is merely interested in a sexual conquest, which is evident prior to the resurgence of his childhood memories of Maria. He has already decided that she will be his target for adventure when he thinks to himself "Maria, or the other, who resembled her, and who this night could be none other than Maria" [Maria, of die andere, die op haar leek en die deze nacht toch geen andere zou kunnen zijn dan Maria] (Royer 40; 345). Although Maria is likely the Black girl he was forbidden to pursue romantically in his

youth for reasons that he misperceived to be related to miscegenation as discussed above, it becomes clear to the reader that any Black woman will satisfy his “outrageous adventure” for that night, provided she resembles Maria. Paradoxically, one of the ambiguous aspects of the novel is Frits’s fixation on Maria since she is not the only Black woman that he sees that day. Yet it is her proximity, as well as the plantation setting that gives Frits the authority necessary to impose himself on her, similar to Alexander and Maria’s mother. Nevertheless, Frits’s contradictions affect his relationship with Maria in which there is a clear distinction based on race in his behavior towards her before and after she learns of their filial bond. Prior to the revelation, Frits lusts after Maria as an objectified Black lover. His sexual desire delineates certain privileges that upper-class *blanke creolen* are able to participate in—privileges that his father taught him. In other words, having a Black woman is a status symbol for him. These privileges once again reaffirm colonial ideas that put a socio-economic value on people. Like the Black Venus, when Frits sees “Maria, or the other,” he reduces the Black woman to an interchangeable part of the plantation, disposable insofar as she is replaced with equal value, whether that value is monetary as seen in plantation ledgers, or social. Nevertheless, after Maria overhears Wantsjo and Frits’s conversation, he demonstrates a brotherly love, holding her as she processes the revelation (Rojer 44; 349). As the object of his desire, Maria can be easily replaced by “the other,” but as his sister, Maria’s feelings are comforted. The consequences of this ambivalence reflect Debrot’s project of creolization in that people become more valued as they become Europeanized, as is the case when Maria shifts from a Black woman with European features to Frits’s mulatto half-sister. Within anti-

foundationalism, privileging Europeaness creates disharmony because it continues to revert to colonial hierarchies and eschew social equality, which is exactly what Frits does.

Debrot's characterization of Maria as Frits's desired lover further advances an assimilatory model that privileges Western aesthetics. While Maria certainly has African features, it is her European profile that attracts Frits. In this manner Frits describes Maria, causing the reader to wonder with what stipulations Frits wants his Black lover:

Frits remembered this young black girl vividly. She was of a deep blackness seldom seen among the rather mixed blacks of the island. But there was something very special about her: the shape of her skull, her nose, her lips, were like those of a white person, with nothing negroid...But Maria did not impress you as a mulatto, rather as a full-blooded black woman in whom, however, distinct features of a distant, non-negroid forefather were apparent.

[Frits herinnerde zich levendig dit jonge zwarte meisje. Zij was zo zwart als men onder de vrij gemengde negers van het eiland bijna niet aantrof. Maar er was iets zeer bijzondersaan haar: haar schedelvorm, haar neus, haar lippen waren die van een blanke, hadden neits negers...Maria maakte niet de indruk van een mulattin, maar van een rasechte negerin bij wie zich echter zeer bepaalde eigenschappen van een verre nietnegerse voorvader hadden doen gelden] (Rojer 34; 336).

The protagonist, on an island that has an abundance of African heritage, seeks out a Black woman with European features, which lends itself to Debrot's emphasis on creolization. Maria, serving as the feminine model, presents a certain Western aesthetic

that the generation should emulate and posits a certain amount of assimilation towards European ideas of beauty. Yet it is not solely her African heritage that intrigues Frits, but rather that combined with her European features, as he never searches for another Black woman. Such concepts were not uncommon for the time period: José Vasconcelos aspires to a syncretic, “cosmic” race that would construct a new civilization through the sort of selective aesthetic mixing Frits appreciates in Maria. Although *La raza cósmica* [The Cosmic Race] (1925) presents harmonious racial blending, it is noteworthy that White characteristics were expected to dominate the new race while absorbing the “inferior races” (21, 27). To that end, Vasconcelos’s concept of racial syncretism was a variation of whitening that would eliminate, through aesthetic preference, African elements. In regards to Debrot’s Dutch Caribbean, a determinist objective in the text to promote assimilation to a European model prevails.

Equally of interest in the above passage is that Frits begins to speculate about Maria’s racial background, orphaning, and the possibility that Alexander Ruprecht is her father. Up until this moment the official story was that Maria’s father was an islander named Theodore who, after the death of Maria’s mother, went astray in Europe and that Frits’ parents, out of philanthropy, made it possible for Maria to study in the city to become a teacher (Rojer 34; 337). Nevertheless, Frits questions this story, particularly focusing on Maria’s education:

[Frits] knew such men as Theodore, who would end in European bars, were often chosen as cloaks for the sins of the white gentlemen. But one thing remained with which these white sinners, nonetheless, betrayed themselves: they gave to their

secret children an education, which made the children and also themselves suspicious in the eyes of others...Therefore it would not surprise him if one day or another he would be forced to decide on the fatherhood, not of the careless Theodore, but of Alexander Ruprecht, Frits' father.

[[Frits] wist dat zulke mannen als Theodoor, die zouden eindigen in Europese bars, vaak warden uitgekozen als dekmantel voor de zonden van de blanke heren. Maar er bleef één ding over waarmee deze blanke zondaars zich niettemin verrieden: zij gaven aan hun verborgen kinderen een opvoeding die de kinderen en ook henzelf verdacht maakte in de ogen van anderen...Dus zou het hem neit verwonderen als hij de een of andere dag zou moeten besluiten tot een vaderschap niet van de slordige Theodoor maar van Alexander Ruprecht, Frits' vader] (Rojer 36; 339).

Subconsciously Frits knows that Maria is his sister, but he attempts to seduce her anyway, which reproduces old colonial ideas about Black women that extend from his father's treatment of Maria's mother. In agreement, Hilda van Neck-Yoder states that "shocking though it may be, Frits knew that Maria's warm embrace was incestuous, knew that she was his sister. Debrot shows us a young man willing to violate the horrific taboo to claim his father's inheritance and solidify his role as colonial master" (441). What is more, after Wantsjo reveals to Frits the truth that he suspected all along, the narrator ambiguously states that "[Frits] was so tired that he sought for only a moment for evasions before Maria but soon gave it up. Come what may come! [[Frits] was zo moe dat hij slechts een kort ogenblik naar uitbluchten zocht tegenover Maria, om het dadelijk

weer op te geven. Kome wat komen moge!]) (Rojer 43; 349). Frits's indifference prior to re-entering the room shows a willingness to keep the secret at least until after his adventure. It is only when he sees that Maria has heard everything that he renounces his pursuit. Attempting to keep the truth from Maria as both Frits and Wantsjo do reaffirms colonial male hierarchy.¹⁷ The secret is but one item on a list that includes the erasure of Maria's mother, Maria's own origins, and the identity of her father as methods to maintain paternal White power (Neck-Yoder 442). The work exposes a conflict-ridden society still trying to reconcile the past with the present, but unable to because of the secrets that shroud it. Through truth the island can find reconciliation, but in order to do that, it must be able to overcome a past full of power impositions due to slavery. Able to break the colonial cycle by uncovering the past, Frits only recycles it through his ambiguous and contradictory nature towards Maria. To return to the idea of "forced poetics," here we see in what ways Debrot attempts to build harmony on top of fated negation, secrecy, and violence.

Because love is absent in Frits's objectives, he furthers the exploitation of Black women by choosing to make public his desires. When the protagonist divulges that "I will have a black woman" [een negerin zal ik hebben] Karel responds: "No one will prevent you from having a black woman in this country. For all I care, three black women...But shouting about it the way you do shows that it goes deeper" [Niemand zal je verhinderen om in dit land een negerin te hebben. Voor mijn part drie

¹⁷ Wantsjo participates in the attempted censoring by stating that it is "better Maria not know any of this" [Maria moet die alles maar liever niet weten] (Rojer 42; 347).

negerinnen...Maar dat je het zo uitschreeuwt, bewijst dat het dieper zit] (Rojer 26; 326). Here Karel scolds Frits for what is considered unacceptable: not interracial relations in themselves, but rather their public acknowledgement. Additionally, Karel reinforces the Black woman's role on the island that the previous generation established as the accepted yet private mistress. Frits's public desire to have sex with a Black woman marks him as different from islanders, and is a telltale sign of the protagonist's dispossession. While his openness seemingly ruptures with traditional colonial ideas, that it is a desire for sex and nothing more implicates him within a colonial model because he reduces Black women to eroticized sites of conquest followed by public dissemination. The act of dissemination underpins both his desire to feel at home and the recognition that he does not. It is true that he wants to challenge tacit complicity, but he utilizes colonial racial hierarchies to do so. Through these hierarchies he dehumanizes Black women and alienates *blanke creool* men by breaking their code of conduct, distancing himself from an allegorical representative of a new society. Although Debrot is trying to break through racial divisions to show islanders, particularly the decadent plantation class that the residents of the island are one big family, and therefore confronting any hardships or transitions as a unified whole, his use of Frits as one of the harbingers is perplexing. Neck-Yoder describes Frits as arrogant and eager to follow in his father's footsteps (441-2). The novel itself describes him as a slumlord to Black women who in turn call him "master" [heer], hardly a description of someone breaking colonial cycles (Rojer 23; 322).

The Decaying Plantation and the Need to Belong

Debrot utilizes Frits' return to Curaçao as a catalyst to explore the transition occurring within the island community, a transition in which Frits finds himself in between a stagnant plantation past and an industrial future. After years of unbelonging in Europe because of his Antillean identity, "Frits longs nostalgically for the security of his youth on the plantation and his untroubled affectionate relationship with the dark skinned young playmate, Maria" (Rojer 7). Yet his nostalgia for security is not complete in a childhood memory, but rather the authority that the plantation affords him. Frits's self-relevance is dependent on the plantation model and accordingly, he is resistant to economic transition, thereby evincing the ways class struggle in Curaçao is steeped in issues of race. Debrot deploys Frits's anti-foundationalism—his retreat into nostalgic attempts to recoup the old life of the colony—in a somewhat ironic way through his sense of unbelonging; unlike most foundational novels, in which it is the non-White inhabitant who must be legitimized through creolization, *mestizaje*, or some sort of mythic link to the nation, here it is the dispossessed Euro-Antillean who must find his place in society, and he does it through Maria. Rojer and Aimone argue that, seeing the differences between Europeans and *blanke creolen* in that Europeans did not experience the intimacy of slavery firsthand, Frits returns to the island "to find his identity in an African past, portrayed this time by his preoccupation with his dark-skinned childhood friend Maria" (7). The need for Frits to connect with Blacks becomes a means of survival for him, and that is to say, for the last generation of the plantocracy. In order for Frits to be a part of the community which has already shunned him since his return, he must first be received by Maria, who, due to her racial composition, serves as a bridge between *blanke creolen*

and Afro-Curaçaoans. The reader can perceive Maria's role as either mistress or half-sister as undifferentiated because both cases guarantee the stability that Frits seeks to belong. However, since the novel attempts to implicate a united island constructed on a new solidarity between Whites and Blacks through kinship, the problem remains that the union is unproductive. Because of the incest taboo, the union must move beyond the notion of reproductivity and bio-power, transforming a spirit of change to an unattainable and unproductive ideal resulting in island progress coming to a standstill. If we are to believe that the attempted union between Frits and Maria represents the allegory of the new generation, then we see that their kinship takes a greater precedence than reproduction as the idea of incest becomes taboo. After all, the tragedy is not that Frits and Maria do not consummate their union; indeed, that predicament befalls almost all protagonists of foundational fictions. Rather, the tragedy is the implication that through images of colonial violence, their culture will become stagnant and conformist from lack of heterosexual reproduction; they would be part of the old system.

Maria, as the legitimating sister/mistress, embodies the anti-foundational premises of *Mijn zuster de negerin* because she is the offspring of a possibly violent relationship, she returns to the country from the city, and she almost participates in an inoperative incestuous relationship in which the other half is solely looking for an "adventure." Maria, who has been a schoolteacher in the city, ambiguously leaves that stable position in a time of educational expansion on the island and returns to the decaying plantation to assist her grandfather in caretaking duties. For what reason would she do that other than to cling to the past? Oversteegen declares that "Antilleans would say that Maria chooses

her black side through this act" ("Strategies" 515). Just as Maria's return to the plantation reaffirms her "Black side," her trajectory from city to country counters the urban migration so often seen in Latin American romances as an affirmation of new, modern metropolises. But in *Mijn zuster de negerin*, Frits projects the metropolis as "dry" and "lifeless" [dorre" and "levenloze] and capable of making Maria ill (Rojer 39; 343). To that effect, Debrot's work suggests a move away from modernization and a recovery of and nostalgia for a past, simpler time, but it also suggests a rejection of European ideals about the importance of the city in progress. This shift back to the peripheral country then does not promote nation-building: Frits and Maria do not metaphorically bring together a new society, but rather cling to their colonial pasts, a past that can no longer exist, as the novel's end demonstrates through Frits's continuation of White privileges and Maria's reduction as a Black woman to her corporality as acted out in plantation societies.

Conclusion

It is precisely Frits and Maria's ambivalences and contradictions that make the work an anti-foundational fiction because they undercut any attempts at a projected harmonious ideal. Without characters that have the drive to break from their colonial past, projecting a future for the island is futile. The optimistic future for the society that is prevalent in foundational fictions is absent in *Mijn zuster de negerin*. Instead the author deals with *blanke creool* decadence through an ambiguous main character in an existential crisis whose nostalgia in the face of societal change and subsequent fear of

unbelonging causes him to return to a colonial mindset. De Roo furthers this idea when he claims that:

The native white character in the work of Debrot sees the traditional social norms of their own groups undermined by the emancipation of the black ‘masses’ and the growing process of democratization. They cannot agree with the old norms nor internalize the norms of the blacks, so the only possibility for them is to focus on their own individual values (647).

Frits’s first day back on the island is met with resolutions for himself: he is able to feel at home on the island with his new sister. At the same time, he reveals the anxieties and fears that the declining plantocracy felt in the midst of change. Although the family makeup weakens racial categories on the island and the crumbling plantation becomes the site of racial compositeness, it is one entrenched in colonial hierarchies which signal that Frits does not participate in a new Dutch Caribbean identity, but rather returns to the one he has always known, even succeeding in bringing others with him. For that reason, it is questionable to what extent the work provides a new identity for the island. Rather than projecting racial harmony, Frits’s perverse behavior guides him to feel at home at the expense of Maria. Maria’s voice is silenced throughout the text. Finally, Wantsjo reveals a liberating secret that allows for truth to be a relevant part of the author’s project, but prefers that the woman to whom the secret pertains not know about it. In those manners, the project is incomplete due to a shortage of solutions. Though *blanke creolen* and Afro-Curaçaoans may feel more solidarity due to a proposed familial bond, Debrot would leave it to succeeding generations to resolve the issues of colonial violence, incest

and reproductive growth on the island. Most importantly, and perhaps only subtly stated in this chapter, are the overtones of unity that writers across the New World share. These overtones demonstrate a clear commonality that deserves examination in conjunction with New World literatures as opposed to in relation with former and present colonizers. For this reason, it is valuable to refigure Dutch Caribbean literature in a continental frame in order to separate it from the Dutch colonial canon and view commonalities in themes, discourse and subject matter that are more prevalent among its hemispheric neighbors.

Chapter Two

The Unwilling Orphan: Europeanness and the Decaying Bourgeoisie

In the previous chapter, Cola Debrot's *blanke creool* protagonist Frits Ruprecht imposes himself sexually on his mulatto half-sister in hopes that interracial sex will enable him to belong in the rapidly industrializing Dutch Caribbean society. Through a "forced poetics," a state of desire prevails that provides the orphan with an outlook in which s/he has a certain position and role in a larger national "family." But what happens when society changes and the orphan no longer wants to belong? In this chapter I sustain that orphans thwart societal transformations that directly weaken the colonial class status that they covet. In turn they further fragment society through racial tension since they elect precisely not to belong despite the fact that their orphaning affords them the freedom to sever ties with the colonizer. René Marqués's *Los soles truncos* [The Fanlights] (1958) and Marie Vieux-Chauvet's *Amour* [Love] (1969) make use of orphans of the decaying bourgeoisie in order to criticize what the authors perceive to be oppressive regimes on their respective islands through *criollo* and *milat* protagonist self-victimization and longing for power.¹⁸ In so doing, they deny the contributions of the Afro-Antillean masses and go so far as to antagonize them in their works. The orphan figure frustrates racial mixing in these two works because it dredges up contradictions in racial identity in an attempt to reconnect with an absent parental directive, whether it is the author's purpose or not. In other words, the orphan protagonist is an interruption of

¹⁸ *Los soles truncos* is based on a short story by Marqués, "La purificación de la Calle del Cristo" (1958). I will refer to the short story when I feel that context is missing from the drama.

ideological continuity—it throws a hiatus into narratives of identity. In *Los soles truncos* and *Amour*, the aim to reconnect with a colonial parental directive produces their affinity for “Europeanness,” which Curaçaoan writer Frank Martinus Arion terms as the tendency of those of European descent to see themselves as superior members of Caribbean society (450). Such attitude creates racial tension among the community and keeps racial sectors segregated because the protagonists will not relinquish their privilege in order to promote racial equality and economic betterment for the largely Afro-Antillean masses. This chapter will examine how orphan protagonists in these two texts utilize their root identity as European descendents to privilege a colonial history, reaffirm their perceived right to power, and resist change through racialized acts of resistance in order to stifle racial hybridity.

Contrary to Debrot’s Frits Ruprecht, these protagonists are not ambiguous toward the developments transforming their societies, but actively resist an era Piotr Sztompka refers to as “the age of change” because of its movements for equal rights, empowerment of the masses, universal education and suffrage (162). One transformation particular to the Caribbean is the twentieth century call for Afro-Antillean vindication as noted through cultural production. One of the earliest proponents in the Anglophone Caribbean was Jamaica’s Claude McKay who had an important role in the Harlem Renaissance. In the Spanish Caribbean, and specifically Puerto Rico, Luís Palés Matos and the lesser known Afro-Puerto Ricans Fortunato Vizcarrondo and Juan Boria in the 1930s onward highlighted Afro-Puerto Rican culture. Vizcarrondo’s poem “¿Y tu agüela, a’ onde ejtá?” (1942) boldly criticizes White fervor when he states that all Puerto Ricans have African

ancestry in them, commonly found in the grandmother who was hidden in the backroom of the house to keep up racial appearances: “Here he who does not have dinga / has mandinga...! Ha, ha! / Therefore I ask you / and your grandmother, where is she?” [Aquí el que no tiene dinga / tiene mandinga...! ja, ja! / Por eso yo te pregunto / Y tu agüela, a’onde ejta?] (78). Similar African diasporic movements take place at the same time period in Cuba with Nicolás Guillén’s *poesía negra* and Alejo Carpentier’s *Écue-yamba-ó* (1933) and in the Francophone Caribbean with Martinique’s *Négritude* movement led by Aimé and Suzanne Césaire. The Dutch Caribbean joined in the 1940s with Curaçaoan Pierre Lauffer’s *Patria* (1944) and the insistence in writing in Papiamentu, a language historically oral and reserved for the Afro-Curaçaoan masses. These Afro-Antillean movements gave rise to Cuban anthropologist’s Fernando Ortiz and his theory on transculturation in the 1940 seminal text *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* [Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar]. What is more, Fidel Castro’s 1959 victory in Cuba ushered in an age of anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist mentality in the Caribbean that also called for the end to racism and acknowledged Cuba as an Afro-Latin country.¹⁹

¹⁹ For the former, I refer to the 1959 speech, “Discurso pronunciado por el Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz, Primer Ministro del Gobierno Revolucionario, en el Palacio Presidencial, el 22 de marzo de 1959” [Speech given by the Commander Fidel Castro Ruz, Prime Minister of the Revolutionary Government, in the Presidential Palace, the 22 of March 1959]. For the latter, I refer to the 1975 speech, “Discurso pronunciado por el Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz, Primer Secretario del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba y del Gobierno Revolucionario y Primer Ministro del Gobierno Revolucionario, en el Acto de Masas con motivo de la clausura del Primer Congreso del Partido Comunista de Cuba. Plaza de la Revolución, 22 de diciembre de 1975, ‘Año del Primer Congreso’” [Speech given by the Commander-in-

The work of these authors and many more establish a precedent that acknowledged Afro-Antillean contributions to Caribbean society and culture at the time of Marqués and Vieux-Chauvet's respective publications as well as the time of the works' settings. Since both Marqués and Vieux-Chauvet choose to vindicate two largely racially segregated families who are descendants of the once ruling light-skinned bourgeoisie (like the authors themselves), they lead the reader to sympathize with the bourgeoisie as the victims of history, despite their previous role as aggressors and slaveholders. The Afro-Antillean sector, meanwhile, is left underrepresented and lacking in voice.

For the purpose of this chapter and linguistic accuracy, I employ the Spanish term *criollo* to depict people of European descent, but born in the Americas. *Milat* is a *Kreyòl* word that describes a light-skinned member of the upper class that dates from before the Haitian Revolution when “the three major racial categories of white, Black, and *milat* (mixed race or mulatto) correspond to a degree to the legal status of *lib* (free), *esklav* (slave), and *afranchi* (freed slave) or *gens de couleur*” (Daniels 156).²⁰ Indeed, the *milats* held an advantage over Afro-Haitians that dates back to before the Haitian Revolution in

Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and of the Revolutionary Government and Prime Minister of the Revolutionary Government, in the Act of the Masses with the reason of the Closing Ceremony of the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba. Plaza of the Revolution, 22 of December 1975, ‘Year of the First Congress’].

²⁰ Because *milat* is a term that makes up part of a complex racial system in Haiti, I will refrain from using “mulatto” unless it is part of a quote since it is a term whose meaning changes across cultures. It should also be noted that Vieux-Chauvet does not use the term *milat* in *Amour*, instead opting for *mulâtre* and *mulâtre-blanc*. I chose to use the *Kreyòl* form of this word to give it more geographic accuracy.

that they were able to accumulate land without any restrictions (Henlon 3). *Milat* not only refers to color, but also class as exemplified by nineteenth-century army leader Jean-Jacques Acau, who said that “nég rich se *milat*, *milat* pòv se nég” (the rich black is a *milat*, the poor *milat* is a black) (Smith 198). After independence in 1804 in which Haitian military forces expelled or eradicated all Whites on the island, the *milat* elite spent the nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries vying for control with the *nwa* (middle- and upper-class dark-skinned Haitians). The former successfully gained power because of their position of privilege and educational opportunities (Largey 31). Nevertheless, their power dwindled with the rise of *noirisme* in the 1940s. Though *milat* and *criollo* reflect two distinct racial histories in the Caribbean, the groups intersect economically. In that vein, the two works parallel Cola Debrot’s *Mijn zuster de negerin* [My Black Sister] (1935) given that the descendants of the plantocracy feel irrelevant in the changing society. Unlike Debrot’s Frits, the sister protagonists of Marqués and Vieux-Chauvet do not encounter the dilemma of ambivalently wanting to belong while holding onto their colonial upbringing. Marqués and Vieux-Chauvet are both descendants of the lighter-skinned land-owners on their islands (Puerto Rico and Haiti, respectively) which influence their characters’ experience. In fact, the two texts are comparable in that both portray three orphan sisters who were originally part of the Eurocentric elite, but that come to see that authority diminish due to U.S. occupation and the death of their parents.

The Nostalgic *Criollo* and *Milat* Mindset and the Privileging of “White” Colonial History

Due to the U.S. occupation, the Puerto Rican and Haitian landowning class found their power in jeopardy. To understand these transformations, one must look at the initial goals of the U.S. regime, beginning in Puerto Rico. In the 1930s, a period that saw the early stages of movement for reform, the educational system had three main objections in U.S.-controlled Puerto Rico: to Americanize the masses, to impose English, and to make education widespread. The Americans used these objectives to acculturate new colonial subjects, and that era saw an increase of students from previously ineligible sectors of the small- and medium-sized land owners (Rodríguez 88-91). Additionally, life for Afro-Puerto Ricans improved: they were able to influence Puerto Rican life in the twentieth century due to the new democratic and social freedoms that went hand in hand with the political break from Spain, ending a colonial relation which they viewed as synonymous with the plantation society that oppressed and underappreciated them (González 35). Politically, Pedro Albizu Campos, Ernesto Ramos Antonini and José Celso Barbosa, three notable Afro-Puerto Ricans, occupied a variety of posts, ranging from representative of sugar cane workers and pro-independence movements (Albizu Campos) and President of the House of Representatives of Puerto Rico (Ramos Antonini) to U.S. Senator and annexationist (Celso Barbosa). Culturally, Afro-Puerto Rican music genres such as the *plena*, *danza* and *bomba* were more accepted among citizens, though not without detractors (Zenon Cruz 118-121, 295-7). By 1958, the moment of the drama's setting, Puerto Rico had undergone significant industrialization and urbanization. In order to stimulate economic development beginning in the mid-1940s, Operación Manos a la Obra encouraged industrialization dependent on privatized U.S. capital (Baldrich

250). As the U.S. took over the island, the privileges that the plantocracy enjoyed and the divisions that Spanish colonialism maintained had ended, but other sectors benefited from improved standards of living. It is because of these developments that one is able to posit that *criollo* hardship was racialized and as such, not universal on the island.

Similarly, Vieux-Chauvet's triptych *Amour, colère, et folie* also opposes changes stemming from U.S. intervention. The U.S. intervened in Haiti in 1915 because it wanted to establish distance between the Caribbean nation and the European powers that dominated the area during World War I, protect U.S. loans made to Haiti between 1900 and 1911, as well as private investments such as export-oriented plantation systems that U.S. citizens had operated since 1910 (Trouillot 100). Vieux-Chauvet, born in 1916 in Port-au-Prince, is considered part of the "occupation generation," and growing up in such an environment parallels the Clamont family in the novel. As in Puerto Rico, U.S. occupation transformed Haitian society, particularly the agricultural sector, which lost much of its revenue due to custom duties that favored U.S. owned and operated plants, making it difficult for land-holding families, such as the fictional Clamonts, to compete with their prices (Chancy 53). *Amour* is set in 1939, five years following U.S. occupation and during the presidency of *milat* Sténio Vincent, who held office from 1930-1941 and was known for sustaining his power through a terrorizing police force that would evolve into François Duvalier's infamous *Tonton Macoutes* (Smith 13-7). The U.S. occupation did not only threaten *milat* livelihood in the agricultural sector, it also upset the long-standing social hierarchy they presided over: the Black Nationalism that would help bring Duvalier to power is a direct reaction to the racism introduced as a control tactic

under the U.S. regime. “In the 1940s [Duvalier] extolled the idea of the need for the country to empower itself through its reconciliation with its native cultural institutions and practices” (Laguerre 106). In literature, the *indigénisme haïtienne* movement prefigured the Francophone *Négritude* movement by vindicating Afro-Haitian heritage and identifying with the masses. In other words, the years during and following U.S. occupation saw an increased awareness of African heritage in the national identity of the island that further divided the Eurocentric *milat* elite and the Afrocentric populace. Although *indigénisme* was the fashion of the times, Vieux-Chauvet opts for a different style in that she “writes as a bourgeoisie, locating herself emphatically outside the majority of women in her culture; and unread by those of her own class, she is scorned by those whose more ‘political’ agenda demands that they speak for and with the people” (*Haiti* 80). Not to be confused with *indigénisme*, Duvalier’s *noirisme* gained popularity among the middle and lower classes, who were perceived to be more African than European, because it claimed them as rightful inheritors to state power. More than one critic, in this case Edwidge Danticat, has detected a clandestine critique of the Duvalier regime:

It is obvious that [the book] is meant to evoke 1967, the year [it] was written, a time when what would end up as a thirty-year dictatorship run by Francois ‘Papa Doc’ Duvalier and Jean-Claude ‘Baby Doc’ Duvalier was becoming more and more severe, enrolling the poor as henchmen and –women, killing them to reduce their number, and persecuting intellectuals for their ideas and artists for their creations (xi).

Part of Vieux-Chauvet's portrayal of Haitian society is the change of power across racialized economic classes and consequently, how *milats* are victimized in their loss to dehumanized Afro-Haitian usurpers. Thus, the author creates racial tension and societal fragmentation through "the pattern of Beauty (the bourgeois mulatto woman) and the Beast (the black, ugly, military or militia man, of lowly social origins and recently promoted by the regime)" (N'zengou-Tayo 220).

The *criollo* and *milat* reactions to these transformations play out in *Los soles truncos* and *Amour*. Afraid to relinquish their privilege, the landholding classes resort to a colonial discourse in which they are the rightful proprietors of the land whose cultural history is intertwined with that of the islands' independence from their first colonizers. Consistent with their thought process, they are the legitimate governors of the land, and the U.S. occupation and subsequent rise of Afro-Antilleans is an illegitimate affront to their power. Antonio Pedreira's *Insularismo* (1934) demonstrates the thinking of the decadent elite *criollo* class early in the twentieth century, a mindset that Vieux-Chauvet and Marqués's texts convey. Pertaining to the first generation to write after Puerto Rico's independence from Spain and subsequent annexation to the United States, Pedreira analyzes the racial contributions to the island's identity. Like much of the Puerto Rican *criollo* literary production during the 1930s (save for Luis Palés Matos), Pedreira's text expresses a sense of longing for the island to return to its Spanish roots and plantocracy in which the *criollo* held much power. He suppresses the Afro-Puerto Ricans' contributions and the African influences to the culture in favor of nostalgia, as Pedreira relies on racial determinism to unjustly portray Afro-Puerto Ricans as "inferior"

throughout the text. By describing the Afro-Puerto Ricans in those terms, he aims to privilege the *criollo* class as capable of governing while depicting Afro-Puerto Ricans as dependent. Indeed, “Pedreira talks about the blacks as an ‘inferior race,’ capable of working diligently, but lacking the “intelligence of the white” [Pedreira habla de los negros como ‘raza inferior’, capaz de trabajar afanosamente, pero carente de la ‘inteligencia del blanco’] (Flores 49).²¹ To that end, Pedreira states that “the white race was legislative, the black executive; one inspired the project and ordered; the other offered the labor and obeyed; while the European race was owner of lives and plantations, the African race could not even place its opinions at its disposal” [la raza blanca era legislativa, la negra ejecutiva; una imponía el proyecto y ordenaba; la otra ofrecía el brazo y obedecía; mientras la europea era dueña de vidas y haciendas la africana no podía disponer ni siquiera de sus sentries] (46). His dichotomous view of race upholds colonial-style racism by believing that White/Black is equivalent to master/worker and governor/governed. Furthermore, although Pedreira recognizes the heterogeneous population of the island (54), he considers the Spaniards the founders and forgers of the Puerto Rican character (Flores 49). By partitioning these roles to the White European, Pedreira also fortifies his argument against miscegenation, which he criticizes as a manner of “stepping back” due to his monolithic perspective. This mentality will contrast with writers later in the century who view mulattos and *mestizos* as extremely important to their poetics of hybridization. Pedreira writes that:

²¹All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

In the *mestizo* two antagonistic races of difficult conjugation and from opposite cultures fight. Between one, which is the superior, and the other, which is the inferior, the mulatto will always be a border element, participant of both racial tendencies that will grow more or less in agreement with the type that he chooses for marriage: the *mestizo*, the white, or the black. The mulatto, who carries in himself the last two races and generally is not one or the other, is a type of undefined and hesitant core...The mulatto needs a larger quantity of 'reserves' from one race or the other to resolve his situation. He is a man from a group that collaborates and does not create, that follows and does not initiate, that marches in line and is not a leader.

[luchan en el mestizo dos razas antagónicas de difícil conjugación y opuestas culturas. Entre una, que es la superior, y la otra, que es la inferior, el mulato será siempre elemento fronterizo, participante de ambas tendencias raciales que acrecentará más o menos de acuerdo con el tipo que escoja para un segundo enlace: el mestizo, el blanco, o el negro. El mulato, que combina en sí las dos últimas y generalmente no suele ser una cosa ni la otra, es un tipo de fondo indefinido y titubeante...Necesita una mayor cantidad de reservas de una u otra raza para resolver su situación. Es hombre de grupo que colabora y no crea, que sigue y no inicia, que marcha en fila y no es puntero (46-7).]

For Pedreira, *mestizaje* produces negative results, an ideology that is restated in both *Los soles truncos* and *Amour*. His negligence of the Afro-Caribbean influence in Puerto Rico would be the cause of refutation for generations to come, as noticeably seen in Isabelo

Zenon Cruz's *Narciso descubre su trasero* [Narcissus Discovers his Rear End] (1974), José Luis González's *El país de cuatro pisos* [Puerto Rico: the Four-Storeyed Country] (1979), and more recently, Eleuterio Santiago-Díaz's *Escritura afropuertorriqueña y modernidad* [Afro-Puerto Rican Writing and Modernity] (2007). González, for instance, challenges Pedreira and others' assumptions that Puerto Rico was a "White" community at its beginnings. González sustains that the first Puerto Ricans, the founders of Puerto Rican nationality through their attachment to the island, were of African origin: "the first Puerto Ricans were in fact *black* Puerto Ricans" [...los primeros puertorriqueños fueron en realidad los puertorriqueños negros] (Guinness 10; 20). Although Pedreira along with contemporary writers who longed for the plantocracy would serve as motivation for writers who sought societal change and revisionist considerations, it would become a foundational text for Marqués. He came to be one of the most prominent authors of "La generación del cincuenta" but as Margot Arce de Vázquez points out, Marqués is also a continuation of Pedreira's "La generación del treinta," the children of ex-hacendados who lauded Spain's paternalistic legacy.²²

²² Arce de Vázquez comments that Marqués "was very close to the ideology of the writers of the '30s generation and, in certain aspects, came to continue it and be a transmitter to his own generation and the following. This bordering situation of his thought and literary work—that which he accepts and that which he rejects from his immediate precursors—it is necessary to keep in mind in order to judge it with justice" [estaba muy cerca de la ideología de los escritores de la Generación del '30 y, en ciertos aspectos, vino a ser su continuador y transmisor a su propia generación y a la siguiente. Esta situación fronteriza de su pensamiento y obra literaria—lo que acepta y lo que rechaza de sus precursores inmediatos—hay que tenerla muy en cuenta para juzgarla con justicia] (59). José Luis González echoes this sentiment: Marqués

One of the ways to construct a legacy between the plantocracy and the island is through the orphaning process. The two sets of sisters experience a double orphaning: both their parents die and both are metaphorically orphaned from their Europeanness. This is particularly noteworthy because it links the plantocracy to the nation; they are ostensibly one and the same in these novels since much of the plantocracy's orphaning, as they interpret it, happens because of the insular society's foreign occupation. This is evident in *Los soles truncos* when Papá Burkhart blames the United States for his wife's death: "The pain of seeing a foreign flag wave where the Spanish one used to. 'That's what your mother died from, girls'" [El dolor de ver flotar una bandera extraña donde siempre flotara su pendón de rojo y gualda. 'De eso muere vuestra mamá, niñas'] (53). When Papá Burkhart blames the United States, he connects the literal and figurative orphaning. To be certain, a similar phenomenon takes place in *Amour*. Claire's father, Henri Clamont dies a day after U.S. forces occupy Haiti (108-10); a *milat* neighbor reminds Claire that "the Occupation killed your father" (29). Claire's mother dies three and a half years later of lassitude (110). The wane of bourgeoisie power after U.S. intervention alongside the rupture of a previously united and well-to-do family shows that the authors are manipulating the U.S. occupation of their islands to fuse together loss, melancholia, and racial hatred with personal stories of dispossession and displacement. Considering Antonio Benítez Rojo's statement that "we must conclude that the historiography of the Caribbean, in general, reads like a long and inconsonant story

"ideologically belongs to the '30s generation" [pertenece ideológicamente a la generación del treinta] (Díaz Quiñones 70).

favoring the legitimization of the white planter” [hay que concluir que la historiografía del Caribe, en general, se lee como un largo e incongruente relato de legitimación del plantador blanco...] (Maraniss 254; 294), one notices that the ill effects of this orphaning continue a process of legitimizing the planter within the nation through parallel occurrences. That is to say, as the plantocracy suffers, so does the nation. This in turn neglects other cultures’ contributions to society by giving ownership to the landholding classes. Yet, as George Handley astutely observes, this ownership is “fundamentally tied to the anxiety about genealogical legitimacy, an anxiety initiated by the violence of New World history. Ownership serves to invent identity because it will always keep history at bay, at least any history that is inclusive of a heterogeneous past” (“A New World” 37). While looking at a heterogeneous society ripe with cross-cultural relationships, the orphan bourgeoisie protagonists in these works make a diachronic singular claim to history that discredits other racial contribution. They thwart *mestizaje*. Such an erasure of the other sectors would counter ideas of Ortiz’s *Contrapunteo*. It is because of this mindset to erase other cultures’ right as inheritors that texts such as Aimé Césaire’s *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* [Notebook of a return to My Native Land] (1939) or Nicolás Guillén’s *negrista* poetry exist to affirm an Afro-Antillean presence as a counter-discourse to Europeanness.

Los soles truncos explicitly contests the question of rightful proprietors when American tax collectors come to foreclose the now-dilapidated Burkhart house, their last remaining refuge from change, in Old San Juan at the end of the drama. The ensuing monologue from Emilia reveals nostalgia for the old days of Spanish rule when the

criollo class had power and serves as a source of resilience in the Burkhart sisters. When the tax collectors show up at their doorstep, Emilia and the spectator cheer on Inés to defend their home and island from U.S. occupation. “That’s it, Inés. Defend your house. Mamá Eugenia’s house. Papá Burkhart’s. The house of our black nanny that used to cry to us, and sing to us, and rock us, without opposing time. Hortensia and Emilia’s. Our house.” [Eso es, Inés. Defiende tu casa. La casa de mamá Eugenia. De papá Burkhart. La de la nana negra que nos lloraba, y nos cantaba, y nos mecía, sin oponerse al tiempo. La de Hortensia y Emilia. La casa nuestra] (74-5). Whether “la casa nuestra” is a metaphor for the old Spanish colony or a more literal understanding of their house, the conclusion remains the same: the sisters link “home” with the nostalgic colonial past as Emilia refers to important people and fond memories of their childhood. It also implies an old colonial hierarchy of racial power as seen in *Insularismo*. Although the role of the Afro-Puerto Rican nanny within the declaration gives pause to reconsider the meaning of “our house” as a possible reconstruction of family, that the drama reduces her to a worker who does not question her role even as the times change speaks to a longing for colonial hierarchies and a particular type of “family” as the nameless, stereotypical Black Mammy persona that dehumanizes her indicates. Here planter history is continued: the *criollo* family has authority and the Afro-Puerto Rican nanny happily carries on in her inferior position without ever aspiring to have her own power; in fact, the very thought of power does not cross her mind because she does not oppose time. In other words, though she sees the societal transformations occurring around her that positively affect her people, she is uninterested in them.

Furthermore, the call for resistance reinforces a sense of an illegitimate usurpation in regards to the United States. It is, after all, the Burkhart sisters' house being overtaken against their will. This is made more evident in Inés's own declaration that "Nobody has the right to trespass on this property...It doesn't matter that the times changed! The time of this house is not your time! [Nadie tiene derecho a violar este recinto...;No importa que los tiempos cambien! ¡El tiempo de esta casa no es vuestro tiempo!] (75).

Linguistically, there are two noteworthy items that support the Burkhart sisters' privileging of Europeanness with regards to history. First is the use of "vosotros," the plural form of "you." The form is used widely in Spain whereas it is largely absent in the Spanish Caribbean. This reaffirms the Burkhart sisters' Europeanness. Secondly, and of more importance is the use of "violar" which I have loosely translated, for the sake of fluidity, as "to trespass." A more literal translation of this verb, which has two meanings in Spanish, is "to violate" and "to rape." Of these two I am most interested in the latter because it portrays the United States and their initiatives to better Afro-Puerto Rican life as unlawful and criminal. That is to say that their occupation of the island supplants the *criollo* class that, according to itself, legitimately belongs in power. The fact that the home belongs to the Burkhart sisters adds a gendered aspect to the idea of "rape." The Burkhart sisters, like their house and their island, both of which are feminized spaces in this interpretation and in the Spanish language ("la casa" and "la isla," respectively), are but mere objects for the United States to wrongfully possess. Ironically, this is precisely what the Spaniards did to the indigenous of this island from 1492 onward so that they could claim themselves as the rightful inheritors. Since the majority of the indigenous

population died due to conquest and/or disease by the mid-1500s, the Spaniards were able to possess the land and write themselves into the history books as the rightful proprietors of the island.²³ Time, or “tiempo,” takes on such relevance in this scene because it is the very legacy of 1492 that the Burkhart sisters aim to preserve, even if it means denying the reality. By holding onto that colonial legacy through the defense of their Spanish values, the Burkhart sisters resist the political change that the U.S. occupation brought. However, in so doing, they also resist racial changes that improve the lives of Afro-Puerto Ricans when they declare that the time of their house (stuck in a past nostalgia) is not the same as the current time.

Examples of both the remnants of U.S. intervention and the rise of *noirisme* are evident in *Amour*, something that Claire denotes as negative when she writes in her journal “our little town of X is emancipating itself. It would seem we have been contaminated by what they call civilization” [la petite ville d’X s’émancipe. Nous voilà contaminés par ce que l’on nomme la civilization] (Réjouis 4; 11). Ambivalence marks this statement because “civilization” could refer both to the U.S. legacies (commercial exploitation of Haitian resources) and the surging Afro-Haitian civilization of *noirisme* (Black empowerment). Although the two oppose each other, Claire and the *milat* class are opposed to both of them since they undermine class power. What is more, the *milat* sector excludes itself from the rest of society; it is specifically they who are tainted. The

²³ Miriam Jiménez Román comments that the Spaniards reported 1,545 indigenous peoples in the 1530s (110). This is a drastic decline from first contact with the Spaniards, where indigenous population numbers in Puerto Rico range from as many as one million to as few as 16,000 (Moscoso 408).

use of “contaminated” suggests that the town’s current dynamic, from Claire’s perspective, is out of order. The society in place prior to the arrival of “civilization” then must have been in order, which refers to the rigid social hierarchies. In that way, order becomes linked with and legitimated through the *milat* class, the closest descendants of French colonialism. Disorder, on the other hand, becomes conflated with U.S. forces, or more importantly, *noirisme*. This recalls a colonial discourse of who should govern and who should be governed—proposing the *milat* class as rightful inheritors of the land. Take for instance, Claire’s portrayal of life both prior to and after the U.S. occupation (marked by the ellipsis):

The streets are cheerful. On the doorsteps, groups of men gather. Smoking the day’s first cigar, they share the political news gleaned from Port-au-Prince. The doors of the stores are open. European boats unload their merchandise on the pier, which teems with people of all classes...What has happened to Mme Bavière’s gorgeous store? And Duclan’s, where they sold French wines, liqueurs and boxes of chocolate of the best French brands? Ruined. One after the other, they went bankrupt. And the Syrians, like vultures, rushed for their remains and bought them up. They’re holding up well, the Syrians.

[Les rues sont gaies. Au pas des portes se forment déjà des groups d’hommes. Ils se communiquent en fumant leur premier cigare, les nouvelles politiques venues de Port-au-Prince. Les portes des magasins sont ouvertes. Des bateaux européens déchargent leurs marchandises sur les quais fourmillant de gens de toutes classes...Qu’est devenu la beau magasin de Mme Bavière? Celui des

Duclan, où l'on vendait des vins français, des liqueurs et des boîtes de chocolat de la meilleure marquée française? Ruinés! L'un après l'autre ils ont fait faillite. Et les Syriens, comme des rapaces, se sont rués sur leurs restes et les ont achetés. Ils tiennent bon, eux] (Réjouis 36; 47).

The first half of the passage portrays an idyllic view of the town where classes intermingle without disagreement and trade maintains a connection to the town's European legacy. Because everyone is seemingly so content, structures are in place and never transgressed. In the second part of the passage, ruin marks the town's description which reaffirms Claire's contempt for change. This example demonstrates a binary of pessimism for the Afro-Haitian future/nostalgia for the *milat*-driven past. The stores that marked her fond memory are gone. Furthermore, her disdain towards Syrians reveals the *milat* class's disinterest in incorporating certain cultures into their social milieu. Instead they heavily privilege their French and upper-class lineage.

The *milat* class shares a common sentiment of Europeanness, marked by their perceived right to govern. For instance, the *milat* citizens of X delegitimize the rise of *noirisme*, claiming that the *noiristes* “come from nothing” and are “upstarts made rich by trickery” [gens de rien...des parvenus enrichis par des combines] (Réjouis 31; 41). Vieux-Chauvet best conveys this usurpation through the use of the hyperviolent commandant Calédu as the primary representative of *noirisme*. Racial, class and ethnic distinction characterize *Amour* and serve as definitions of “Self” and “Other,” thereby evading any notion of togetherness in favor of portraying an illegitimate loss of *milat* social power. In fact, it is precisely Claire's attitude, representative in this instance of the

mindset of the *milat* class, that causes the arrival of Calédu, “a man chosen expressly by the police to tame this little town famous for its arrogance and prejudices” [choisi tout exprès pour mater cette petite ville réputée pour son arrogance et ses préjugés] (Réjouis 14; 22). Calédu comes to normalize what feels contaminated to Claire. Although his terror tactics are deplorable, he represents the change that the *milat* class fears most: a loss of power.

Similar to the Burkhart sisters’ attitudes towards the U.S. occupation, the *milat* mentality is more explicitly racialized to characterize the rising *noiristes* as competition to *milat* power. As a result, Calédu’s death at the end of the novel is *not* the end of a common oppressor as Latortue postulates (56) because *noiristes* enjoyed a privileged life during his reign. This privilege comes into question at a dinner in which both *milats* and *noiristes* are present. When *milat* Mme Camuse reminisces that “not so long ago, we lived opulently” [nous vivions il n’y a pas longtemps dans l’opulence] (Réjouis 77; 96), it again harks back to *milat* nostalgia for their superior position in society. From their perspective, Haiti was opulent because they were opulent, which entangles the two histories; the *milats* become identifiable as forgers of the Haitian nation. Similarly Vieux-Chauvet intertwines *milat* decline and the island’s impoverishment. However, *noiriste* M. Trudor reminds the *milats* of the other racial sectors that they did not consider when he responds “Only some of you lived opulently... You’ll tell me that nothing has changed or that the situation has even gotten worse; all that’s happened is the roles have been reversed. As the Haitian proverb goes: ‘Today it’s the hunter’s turn, tomorrow the prey’s’” [Quelques-uns d’entre vous seulement vivaient dans l’opulence... Vous me

répondrez que rien n'a change ou que la situation est pire; les roles ne sont que renversés. Comme dit le proverb haïtien: «Aujourd'hui aux chasseurs, demain aux gibiers»] (Réjouis 77-8; 96). In other words, Calédu and the allusion to *noirisme* is an inversion of power that, at least for Trudor, has improved life for the middle and lower classes.²⁴ To that point, Vieux-Chauvet wrongfully creates racial hatred towards the Afro-Haitian class as illegitimate usurpers, embodied by a despicable *noiriste* in Calédu. The conclusion of the text, which I examine below and is often interpreted as the end of oppression, reveals the false idea that the national space can resolve irreconcilable differences so long as the island's history is conflated with that of one race's rise and fall.

Reaffirming Europeanness at the Expense of Loss

With the death of their parents as well as the break from their European powers, these two sets of orphan protagonists would theoretically have the opportunity to move beyond colonial ideas of segregation and binary thinking and participate in a creolized society in which other racial sectors improve their lot. Such is the thought process found in Valérie Loichot's *Orphan Narratives* (2007). She claims that "orphan characters...create and master their family narratives...An 'orphan narrative' is thus not only a narrative without a parent but, more important, a narrative initiated by the orphan...that challenges the master or master-text"(3). Yet because of a prevailing desire to uphold their colonial privilege in these two works, the orphans do not challenge a

²⁴ My point is not to downplay Calédu's terror tactics, but rather to uphold that Claire is not liberating an entire town but attempting to restore *milat* power, which would affect families like the Trudors who have gained power due to *noirisme*.

master-text. That is to say, they are incapable of breaking from the paternalism, linearity, and atavistic genealogy that characterize colonial society. In fact, they aim to keep it as a vestige of their past. This thought process reinforces a nostalgic yearning for a particular narrative of origin, both colonial and familial, in order to make sense of the shift in power that takes place around the two sets of orphan sisters. Counter to Loichot's hypothesis then is that family and colonial constructions win over transforming communities so that definitions of race and colonial mentalities are upheld. The dissolution of colonial power means that solitude and isolation, instead of community, becomes the primary reference for the subject which leads to or reaffirms a fragmentation of community rather than racial mixing. This fragmentation plays out racially in the two works and perhaps Clare's statement about Frenchman Jean Luze best summarizes the colonial mindset: "A foreigner has always represented the height of perfection in our eyes. He has always had the reputation of being rich, happy, knowing everything better than us. He opens our eyes on new horizons and unveils a mysterious, unknown world to us" [Un étranger à nos yeux a toujours représenté ce qu'il y a de plus parfait. Il a toujours eu la reputation d'être riche, heureux; de connaître tout et mieux que nous. Il nous ouvre des horizons nouveaux, nous dévoile tout un monde inconnu, mystérieux] (Réjouis 62; 77).²⁵ For this purpose, Europeanness is helpful to understand why orphans are not necessarily embracing the rootlessness afforded to them and creating their own narratives. It provides a lens to contest these women characters as resistant orphans who fight against usurpers for the betterment of the imagined community. On the other hand, the orphans

²⁵ It is important to note that Claire's "foreigner" is very specific: light-skinned and European.

present in these narratives are counter-community because they reinforce the master-texts from which they would otherwise break. The individual subject, holding onto her Europeanness, becomes too entrenched in not belonging to identify with a larger community.

Granted Loichot published her study approximately fifty years after *Los soles truncos* but the aforementioned Fernando Ortiz, while not dealing with orphans, provides a contemporary model of hybridity that both Marqués and Vieux-Chauvet choose not to embrace. Ortiz differs from Pedreira in that the former acknowledges the valuable role that the indigenous and the Afro-Antilleans play alongside the Euro-Antillean in a heterogeneous society. A brief look at his publications reflect an objective to propagate Afro-Cuban cultural influences in an era when this heterogeneous revisionist history still was not the mode: “Las rebeliones de los afrocubanos” [The Rebellions of the Afro-Cubans] (1910), “La fiesta afrocubana del Día de los Reyes” [The Afro-Cuban Celebration of Three Kings’ Day] (1920) “Los cabildos afrocubanos” [The Afro-Cuban Councils] (1921), *Glosario de afronegrismos* [Glossary of Africanisms] (1924), *La africanía de la música cubana* [The Africanness of Cuban Music] (1950), *Los bailes y el teatro de los negros en el folklore de Cuba* [Black dances and theater in the Folklore of Cuba] (1951) and *Los instrumentos de la música afrocubana* [The Instruments of Afro-Cuban Music] (1952), among others. In a time of increasing Western racism and Nazism, Ortiz criticized what he termed “negrofobia.” He commented that “he who fosters racial hatred flag waving will one day in turn see himself persecuted by pretext of race as well. All racism has its consequences and is definitely an insult and a danger for

all Cubans equally” [quien fomenta el odio enarbolando bandera de raza se verá un día perseguido a su vez por pretexto de raza también. Todo racismo tiene su rebote y es en definitiva un insulto y un peligro para todos los cubanos por igual] (“Por la” 269-70). To further Ortiz’s outlook, Enrico Mario Santí reveals that “if there is something that characterizes Ortiz in his later years it is precisely this passion of overcoming race with the concept of culture” [si hay algo que caracteriza al Ortiz tardío es precisamente esta pasión por la superación de las razas a partir del concepto de cultura] (46). Ortiz’s term “transculturation” is a product of a contact zone where two or more cultures merge and converge upon one another. However violent or pacific in Ortiz’s perspective, transculturation ultimately gives birth to a creolizing culture. Indeed, transculturation is a dynamic concept to explain Caribbean culture. For Ortiz, the different components:

Agitate each other, intermingle and break up in a social boil; and, there in the depths of the stewpot, a new dough already formed, produced by the elements that, by disintegrating with the historical fervor, have gone settling their most tenacious essences in a rich and deliciously dressed mixture, which already has a proper temperment from creation. *Mestizaje* of cuisines, *mestizaje* of cultures. A thick stew of civilization that bubbles in the stove of the Caribbean.

[se agitan, entremezclan y disgregan en un mismo bullir social; y, allá en lo hondo del puchero, una masa nueva ya posada, producida por los elementos que al desintegrarse con el hervor histórico han ido sedimentando sus más tenaces esencias en un mixtura rica y sabrosamente aderezada, que ya tiene un carácter propio de creación. Mestizaje de cocinas, mestizaje de razas, mestizaje de

culturas. Caldo denso de civilización que borbotlea en el fogón del Caribe] (“Los factores” 9).

Alive during the diffusion of Ortiz’s concept, Vieux-Chauvet and Marqués elect to reinforce a colonial discourse of racial segregation and binarism as seen in Pedreira’s theoretical text that privileges Europeanness and prevents hybridity discourse from coming to fruition.

Such an entrenchment in Europeanness comes directly from a colonial legacy that favored the *criollo* and *milat* classes. For these two lighter-skinned groups, colonialism provided a model, unattainable as it was, for their cultural upbringing. This model served to mold the upper classes with false promises of oneness within the colonizing enterprise. It is for this reason that the upper classes in the colonies went abroad for their education, only to find themselves, in many cases, markedly different from their compatriots. Due to the colonizer’s own “parental” directives in shaping their colonized “children,” it is unsurprising that terms such as mother country/father country/*patria* /*patrie*/ *moederland*/*vaderland* appear frequently when discussing the colonizer. In agreement, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o demonstrates that:

Colonialism not only made communities captives of foreign economies and politics but also turned them into psychic captives through cultural control. An aspect of that control is the obsession of the colonized with the image of the ‘mother’ country. Dwellers in the colony, at least the educated upper echelon, come to do more than identify with the language and culture of their colonial inheritance. They become obsessed with it, almost as if gripped by a spiritual

possession. Even the most progressive are not immune from this spirit possession by the image of the benevolent mother...It is the classic psychological case of children's attachment to their mothers and refusal to be weaned from mother's milk ("In the Name of" 140).

This esteem towards the European culture leads to mimicry on part of the bourgeoisie as they enthusiastically adopt the thinking of the colonizer, developing a consciousness based upon foreign foundations while suppressing their own local thought (*The Wretched* 178; 119).

The obsession with the image of the mother country as superior is present in various cultural forms in *Los soles truncos* and *Amour*. In the former, the furniture, which although deteriorated, shows an opulent past that connected the family to Europe: "a Luis XV stool" [una butaca Luis XV], "a Viennese armchair" [un sillón de Viena], and "an Imperial chair" [una silla estilo Imperio] (26) while "a grand shawl from Manila" [un gran mantón de Manila] (27) incorporates Spain's colony in the Pacific; the incessant playing of Chopin and Wagner waltzes (32, 84) to drown out the sound of the quotidian *pregón*; even the hacienda Toa Alta, which they reluctantly sell all speak to an interest in privileging the colonial enterprise. In *Amour*, the Clamont sisters also favor European music (Jean Luze's phonograph) and education (Claire wants to study in France). In terms of religion, Claire specifically privileges Christianity over serving her father's Vodou *loas* (95-6/116-7). By favoring European culture, the two sets of sisters develop their own beliefs of European superiority that will also factor into racialized experiences with their romantic interests and family.

In *Los soles truncos* and to a lesser extent, *Amour*, Europeanness plays out in the two sets of sisters' common love interests: in *Los soles truncos* it is a nameless Spanish lieutenant whereas in *Amour* it is Frenchman Jean Luze. Beginning with Marqués's drama, the nameless Spanish lieutenant embodies the ideal man for the three sisters. Although a relationship between him and Hortensia emerges, it is not without competition: the Burkhardt sisters' desire to marry a Spaniard eclipses their own loyalty to each other as betrayal is an implicit theme in the work. Were their engagement to come to fruition, the union between Hortensia and the Spanish lieutenant would represent a reinforced link between the Burkhardt family and Spain. The marriage would reaffirm the Burkharts' status as elites since it would be the ideal culmination to her privileged lifestyle that kept her separated from the Afro-Puerto Rican masses (save for the family servant) and provided her a European education. Of German and Spanish descent, Hortensia Burkhardt would only add to her European legacy through marriage with a European, as opposed to a *criollo*. In fact, racial background is of such importance to the family that prior to their engagement, Papá Burkhardt examines the lieutenant's bloodlines to ensure his purity (40). Hortensia remarks that "I know that we are Celtiberian via the Málaga branch. Moreover, now, by me getting married, we'll have between us..." [Ya sé que somos celtíberos por la rama de Málaga. Mas aún, ahora, al yo casarme, tendremos entre nosotros...] (39). Marqués never provides the rest of the thought or the lieutenant's specific genealogical background, however Hortensia's reaction indicates that it is desirable. The first part of the quote focuses on a Celtiberian lineage that subdues any idea that the family might have North African blood. The need to explicitly discern both

sides' lineages comes from a colonial fear of non-European genealogies and miscegenation, but in *Los soles truncos*, only the lieutenant's bloodline, ironically, is questioned. While the Burkhart family investigates the lieutenant's lineage to ensure against racial mixing, the sisters apply extra makeup to cover "blackish stains" on their cheeks ("La purificación" 12).

Europeanness dictates the Burkhart sisters' lives to a point that it is difficult to align them with Puerto Rico. Their German last name distinguishes them as foreigners on their native island, as does their schooling abroad that alienated them from islanders. José Luis González comments that:

To pass off this world as the world of 'Puerto Ricanness,' at grips with 'American adulteration,' not only constitutes a flagrant misrepresentation of the historical truth, but also (and this is truly serious) an aggression against the Puerto Ricanness of the popular masses, whose ancestors, in many cases within living memory, lived in that world as slaves, squatters, or peons.

[presentar ese mundo como el mundo de la 'puertorriqueñidad' enfrentado a la 'adulteración' norteamericana, constituye no sólo una tergiversación flagrante de la realidad histórica, sino además, y ello es lo verdaderamente grave, una agresión a la puertorriqueñidad de la masa popular cuyos antepasados (en muchos casos cercanos) vivieron en ese mundo como esclavos, como arrimados o como peones] (Guinness 23; 34).

In line with González's comment is Puerto Rican author Luis Rafael Sánchez whose study of Caribbean identity through insular literary production concludes that "[m]usic,

blackness, and wandering define the Caribbean according to three of the Caribbean's essential writers: Alejo Carpentier, Luis Palés Matos, and Pedro Mir... [These cultural elements] are the flag of the entire Caribbean" [El son, la prietura y la errancia definen el Caribe según opinan tres de sus escritores imprescindibles, Alejo Carpentier, Luis Palés Matos, Pedro Mir... [estos elementos culturales] se postulan como la bandera del Caribe entero"] (Adam 22; 45). Without speaking to wandering, which Sánchez uses to refer to multicultural procreation, the Burkhart sisters as we have seen fall outside of the parameters of the first two characteristics: they abhor popular music and hide any Blackness that they may have. Granted one should note the exclusionary polemics of these three cultural elements, but more important to this argument is that to legitimate the crumbling bourgeoisie's dispossession, Marqués paradoxically singles out this individual family, so apart from the rest of society, and makes it seem like the U.S. occupation afflicts all Puerto Ricans in the same way. This focus enables him to divert the effects that widespread education, political participation, and improved living conditions have on other societal sectors at the same time. The sisters further betray their insular family by privileging their parents' European heritage over their own Caribbeanness. Even with no familial obligations to Europe, they still choose their Europeanness and stifle *mestizaje* in the process.

For orphan protagonists Hortensia and Claire, the realization that their Europeanness is no longer relevant, whether due to U.S. occupation or rising Afro-Antillean sectors, yields a racialized experience of loss, rejection and the anxiety of not

belonging to either an imperial White or Afro-Antillean world.²⁶ The first such moment in *Los soles truncos* is a failed romance between Hortensia and a nameless Spanish lieutenant, which ends when he fathers a mulatto baby with an Afro-Puerto Rican *yerbatera* (42). Marqués reverses power differentials through the use of the *yerbatera* to produce a victimization of *criollos*. The result creates disjuncture between the *criollo* and Afro-Puerto Rican sectors because the *yerbatera* transgresses racial hierarchies and blocks matrimony. She is the voiceless home wrecker without a side to the story; Hortensia is the victim unable to overcome the event with whom the spectator empathizes. Correspondingly, when the Spanish lieutenant betrays Hortensia, it marks a recognition that White *criolla* and imperial White have two different meanings. As Burrows puts it, the Burkhart sisters are “white but not quite” (29). In addition to the aforementioned reconfiguration of insular social hierarchies, *criollo* dispossession becomes doubly reinforced by the betrayal of imperial White Iberians who have stranded the *hacendado* class, a “white-on-white desertion” (Burrows 29). In post-1898 Puerto Rico, where peoples of color outnumbered *criollos* and connections to Spain were broken, their racial identity is now a sign of past exploitation. In fact, it is the lieutenant, the imperial White in this situation, who portrays a sign of the changing times. He obviously does not seem as concerned with genealogy because he fathers a mulatto baby. *Mestizaje* is happening much to the *criollo* class’s chagrin. This fact suggests two changes: racial purity has become more important to *criollos* than to imperial Whites,

²⁶ I use the term “imperial White” to refer to the Whites native to Europe as opposed to those native to the Antilles.

which signifies that colonial models remain firmly in place even as their precedents change. Fanon posits a similar notion that “by its...will to imitation, [the bourgeoisie] promotes the ingrafting and stiffening of racism which was characteristic of the colonial era” [Par son mimétisme elle favorise l’implantation et le renforcement du racisme qui caractérisait l’ère coloniale] (*The Wretched* 162; 106). That is to say, the *criollos* enforce a stricter racial hierarchy because they need to reaffirm their lineage as they constantly try to prove themselves hierarchically equal to imperial Whites, which they are not. Secondly, *criollo* women of the plantocracy are no longer considered superior partners to Afro-Puerto Ricans.²⁷

The abandonment that takes place reflects an orphaning that leaves the sisters displaced on their own island. U.S. occupation disconnects the Burkarts from family, European culture, and most importantly, financial security now that their place within the imperialist endeavor has ceased to exist. Yet rather than blame the Spanish lieutenant, the Burkart sisters continue their allegiance to Spain through their racialized act of resistance discussed below. Therefore, the blame falls largely on the Afro-Puerto Rican *yerbera* as the sisters forego an alternative ground for understanding and solidarity between women. The Burkart sisters want to be European and so they cannot reject the Spaniard, but they can no longer attain that ideal, especially if marriage is not an option. That the *yerbera* interrupts this seemingly destined union makes her the scapegoat for Hortensia’s downward spiral. That she is Afro-Puerto Rican generates racial hatred in

²⁷ The fact that the mulatto baby is public knowledge allows us to deduce that it is not a secretive relationship.

the drama because Marqués creates her as an antagonist—a foil to Hortensia that the spectator will disdain because she ruins an inevitable relationship. The Spanish lieutenant originally courts Hortensia for her racial and social status, neither of which holds value at the end of the play. In fact, the lieutenant equates Hortensia, who throughout her life distinguishes herself from the popular classes, with the Afro-Puerto Rican *yerbatera*. This process of “indifferentiation” in which “social hierarchies are first transgressed, then abolished” (Girard 136) produces feelings of displacement and dispossession for the *criollo* class. While Afro-Puerto Ricans reconfigure social hierarchies alongside imperial Whites, the sisters adhere to a colonial ethos as they segregate themselves from Afro-Puerto Rican sectors. As racial and economic change envelops the island, their reclusion and denial becomes more pronounced; the sisters do not want a racially egalitarian society at their own expense, thus causing resentment towards the Afro-Puerto Rican class who has upstaged the Burkhart sisters.

At the core of Claire’s Europeanness is her racial complexion: in comparison with her family and *milat society* Claire is considerably darker-skinned. Indeed, she confirms that “the mahogany color I had inherited from some great-great-grandmother went off like a small bomb in the tight circle of whites and white-mulattoes with whom my parents socialized” [cette couleur acajou héritée d’une lointaine aïeule et qui détonnait dans le cercle étroit des Blancs et des mulâtres-blancs que mes parents fréquentaient] (Réjouis 4; 10). Her identity is problematized in that she does not fit in with the light-skinned bourgeoisie but disdains the dark-skinned popular class with whom she blends in. Othered by her own family during childhood, Claire’s racial complex

constantly causes her to act out in *milat* society in order to reaffirm her European heritage. A look into her upbringing helps to explain her behavior. Her father was particularly hard on her as a child, reassuming his plantation-owner legacy by beating Claire as if she were a slave. He simultaneously makes her feel unacceptable and inferior. For instance, Claire's parents prohibit her from playing with Agnès, a child neighbor who falls out of *milat* society's favor for talking to an Afro-Haitian man. When Henri Clamont finds out that Claire does it behind his back, he resorts to a racialized form of physical abuse and interrogation: "each question was reinforced with a terrible blow from his belt. At the third lash, I started screaming as loud as Agnès; at the twentieth, I passed out" [chaque question était appuyée d'un terrible coup de ceinture. Dès le troisième, je m'étais mise à hurler aussi fort qu'Agnès; au vingtième, je m'évanouis] (Réjouis 90; 110). To justify his actions to the town doctor who has to treat Claire, Henri reverts to an essentialist view that "Black blood" threatens normative behavior: "This means that my own black blood has been reabsorbed and that I inherited certain traits that will blemish her unless I correct her" [Cela signifie que mon sang noir à moi est en voie de regression et que j'ai hérité certaines qualities que vont lui faire défaut à elle, si je ne la corrige pas] (Réjouis 90; 111). Henri literally tries to beat the "Blackness" out of Claire so that she will comport herself like a *milat*. It is a weak attempt to reinforce *milat* separation from the Afro-Haitian sectors but it also reveals a racism based on fear. Henri beats Claire because she is "excessively Black" from a *milat* perspective that contradictorily renounces *métissage* as an impurity. Neither Félicia nor

Annette, both light-skinned, receives similar punishments.²⁸ The ill effects of these continual beatings cause Claire to despise her Blackness insofar as much of her social interaction, including courtships, run afoul because she perceives her friends and suitors to be disingenuous—she believes that they either interact with her because of her social standing and wealth or tease her when they compliment her complexion. In fact, in an effort to belong, she values her Europeanness while abhorring her Blackness to such an extent that when Henri paradoxically asks her to continue serving the family's Vodou *loas*, an affirmation of their Afro-Haitian heritage, Claire refuses (95-6; 116-7). The co-existent practice of Catholicism and Vodou within her family is incomprehensible for Claire, characterizing her as someone who maintains racial division: in a nation splintered between a Europeanized upper-class and Afro-Haitian middle and lower classes, she is unable to reconcile her dual background, but more importantly, she does not *want* to reconcile it. By refusing to practice Vodou, she reaffirms her Europeanness. At the expense of this affirmation comes a missed opportunity for her to participate in a creolized cultural element. It also prohibits Claire from having a larger societal role as a metaphorical bridge, similar to Maria in *Mijn zuster de negerin*, between the debilitating *milat* class and the rising *noiristes*.

Claire's anxieties about race and loss come to light through her dreams that conflate Calédu and Henri. The two men parallel each other in their abusive nature. What is more, Claire affirms her Europeanness as a response to both men. I discussed

²⁸ However, we might point to the death of the father, the upholder of *milat* values, prior to Annette's birth as the reason her promiscuity goes unpunished.

above how Henri's forms of discipline and punishment instill in Claire a racial complex that she deals with by negating her Blackness. In regards to Calédu, Claire's fears drive her to view herself as an enemy of the Afro-Haitian sectors. There are two distinct moments that deserve our attention. The first is when a scream of terror from outside interrupts Claire's fantasy about Jean Luze and sends her body into defense mode: "I hide my face in my hands and try to banish this terrible vision by sinking voluptuously into memories of the past" [Je me cache la figure dans les mains et pour empêcher l'atroce vision de revenir, j'appelle mes souvenirs et je m'enfonce avec volupté et pour une fois dans ma vie passée] (Réjouis 84; 104). Indeed, it is because of Calédu that Claire experiences her flashbacks, defining the present by the past. In the past, she had her *milat* social status, however, now *milat* power has declined. *Milat* women, Claire especially because she is a virgin, are the target for Calédu's rape terror.²⁹ In the new society, Claire is placeless because she is objectified as a sexual conquest for Calédu to assert Afro-Haitian power and paternalism. While he never rapes Claire, the terror tactic is enough to haunt her. Brinda Mehta points out that:

The search for the 'virgin' female body becomes the colonialist's ultimate obsession; he inscribes his imposing insignia on the unblemished body just as colonialism indiscriminately carved its territorial routes on virgin soil. The

²⁹ We know that Calédu targets *milat* women because Dora, one of his victims, relates his abuses: "With each blow, he would yell: 'snobs, you bunch of snobs, mulatto snobs, I'll make cripples of all of you, you snobs...'" [A chaque coup, il criait: aristos, bande d'aristos, mulâtres-aristos, je vous estropierai tous, aristos, aristos...] (Réjouis 136; 163).

colonization of the Caribbean land thereby goes hand-in-hand with the conquest of the female body... (43).

Though Mehta speaks to the colonialist period, a similar paradigm arises here through a reversal of power. Calédu uses rape as a terror tactic to haunt his *milat* victims, which has racial meaning. Rape here re-maps Haitian society as Afro-Haitian. It is an Afro-Haitian reconquest of Haiti after the *milat* bourgeoisie governed the island for the majority of its sovereignty. That Calédu does not empathize with the victim further demonstrates the societal exclusivity present in the text. This isolation is present in the second moment, a nightmare that Clare has:

...suddenly I saw a stone statue before me. At that moment, the crowd's cries became deafening. The statue, with its enormous phallus stiffened in a voluptuous and painful spasm, was of Calédu. The statue came to life and the phallus wagged feverishly. I throw myself at its feet, submissive and rebellious, hardly daring to look up, my thighs shut tight. I heard cries: 'Kill, kill!' The crowd was cheering on Calédu to murder me. Cold metal caressed the skin of my neck as ferocious laughter replaced the screaming of the suddenly silent spectators. The weapon sank slow and deep into my flesh...Such nightmares are familiar to me now. How many times have I been chased by mad bulls, by low beasts, monsters, all wanting to rape or kill me? When I was a little girl, I often dreamed that my father had been transformed into a roaring two-legged creature with a lion's mane, whipping me as I searched in vain for the key that would release me from his cage!

[tout à coup, je vis se clameurs de la foule devinrent assourdissantes. La statue pourvue d'un phallus énorme tendu dans un spasme de voluptueuse souffrance était celle de Calédu. La statue s'anima et le phallus et révoltée, osant à peine lever les yeux, les cuisses serrées. J'entendis crier «à mort, à mort». C'était la foule qui poussait Calédu à m'assassiner. Le froid d'un métal me caressa la peau seul aux cris de l'assistance, tout à coup silencieuse. L'arme s'enfonça doucement, profondément dans ma chair... Ces cauchemars me sont familiers. Combien de fois ai-je été poursuivie par des taureaux enragés, par des bêtes immondes, par des monsters qui, tous, voulaient me violer ou me tuer? Petite fille, j'ai souvent rêvé de mon père métamorphose en un animal bipède à crinière de lion qui me fouettait, en rugissant, dans une cage dont je cherchais en vain la clef!] (Réjouis 120-1; 145).

Claire's nightmare confirms her separation from Afro-Haitian sectors, as the rising *noiristes* cheer on as Calédu's weapon/phallus penetrates her and kills her. Here there is a clear division of the two groups. Like her fellow *milats*, Claire is helpless, defenseless, and outmoded. In this spectacle of rape, the phallus enforces a gendered relationship of familiarity that exposes crimes committed against women, which begins with Henri and continues with Calédu (Mehta 39).³⁰ However, these crimes are not recognized within their patriarchal culture. In that vein, the terror also causes her to recall her childhood nightmares of her plantation-owning father beating her with a whip, another phallic symbol that engenders a colonial legacy that reasserts Claire's desire to distance herself from Blackness. Claire's dream of the bull whip conflates sexual and corporal

³⁰ Though Mehta is not referring specifically to *Amour*, I still find her idea to be applicable in my analysis.

punishment that is common in plantation societies. To avoid being beaten like a slave (again), Claire's response to her night terror is to reclaim *milat* power at the expense of the Afro-Haitian sectors. Through the use of dream, Vieux-Chauvet successfully portrays the rising Afro-Haitian class as a violent, blood-thirsty, and dehumanized mob to whom the *milats* are victims. In short, rather than serving as a hybrid character that problematizes this binary of *milat*/Afro-Haitian, Claire looks for ways to prove her Europeanness so that she can function within *milat* society as well as be a sexual option for her unfaithful brother-in-law Jean Luze.

Claire both disdains and envies Félicia because Félicia has what Claire, rationalizing it as a result of her complexion, does not: Frenchman Jean Luze. The same inferiority complex returns when Jean Luze first meets the Clamont sisters and mistakes Claire for the housemaid (11; 18-9). But it *is* precisely the racial line that makes Jean Luze obtainable for Félicia and Annette and not for Claire. Claire is never a legitimate sexual threat: her darker complexion cannot attract Jean Luze's interest while her sisters, particularly Annette, who is described as a younger, lighter-skinned version of Claire, can. Vieux-Chauvet thus creates racial tension by positing a colonial aesthetic of White/attractive and Black/unattractive. Unable to change her complexion, Claire can continue to overcompensate with her mindset. From listening to Jean Luze's European records to constantly belittling the Afro-Haitian servant Augustine (57, 59, 75; 72, 74, 93) Claire reaffirms her Europeanness at the expense of the betterment of Afro-Haitian society. This notion is evident when Claire suspects her Afro-Haitian farmhands of underpaying her in hopes that she will sell them the remainder of her plantation. Of the

600 acres the family once had, only forty remained; Henri Clamont sold the rest to Afro-Haitian peasants to furnish his political aspirations. To extract revenge, Claire lowers her coffee prices so as to have a monopoly with the German buyer. In protest, the neighboring peasants go to her plantation at Lion Mountain and ruthlessly murder her Afro-Haitian farmhands (111-3; 136-8). Though the murders were not her intention, Claire's responsibility in this act attests to an individualistic act to reclaim power through her plantation-owner lineage while the larger Afro-Haitian community suffers via economic impoverishment and/or death. None of these examples of Europeanness attract Jean Luze's prolonged attention however. There is only one racialized act of resistance towards the rising Afro-Haitians that can place Claire as "the female equivalent of Jean Luze in action" (Dalleo 140): the murder of Calédu. Whereas Jean Luze's political intentions, beyond removing Calédu, are unclear, I argue that Claire's intentions are to restore power to the *milat* sector; the ultimate act of devotion to her Europeanness.

Racialized Acts of Resistance

The U.S. arrival not only kills the Burkhart and Clamont sisters' parents, but also threatens their culture. In *Los soles truncos*, the transformations brought on by U.S. occupation challenge the notion of *la casa solariega*, or "patrician house." Gelpí notes that *la casa solariega* does not have to be on a plantation *per se* since it was built by Puerto Rico's landowning *criollo* elite (22). *Insularismo* and *Los soles truncos* portray the Big House as a site of "ample and sheltering space in which a national family may thrive" (Russ 157). Russ continues that it is a symbol "at the center of a discourse that strove to create a national family, unified and homogenized through its submission to a

patriarchal order that valorized the Spanish inheritance to the exclusion of all others” (156). As we have already seen regarding the role of the Burkhart sisters’ servant, the type of “family” that these *hacendado* elites have in mind is particular, and it bears repeating: an empowered *criollo* sector and a repressed and complacent Afro-Puerto Rican sector. It is unsurprising then that Pedreira laments the loss of *la casa solariega*: “The old *casas solariegas*, with the spaciousness of a warehouse, have given way to airtight housing, tightly constructed to economize costly space... We do not fit in our own house and this discomfort intervenes painfully in the margin of euphoria to which every people has a right” [Las antiguas casas solariegas, con amplitudes de almacén, han dado paso a la hermética vivienda, apretadamente construida para economizar costoso espacio... No cabemos en nuestra propia casa y esta incomodidad interviene dolorosamente en el margen de euforia a que todo pueblo tiene derecho] (Pedreira 104). The threat of painful discomfort in the new racially-transformed society begets racial tension for the *criollo* sector when they realize that the new society has dismantled their discursive house and their comforts, which is to say their racially hierarchical power has come undone. Pedreira’s notion that every people has a right to “euphoria” is but a mere euphemism (and an exclusionary one at that) to uphold *criollo* hegemony.³¹

³¹ In agreement, Gelpí declares that *la casa solariega* “constitutes an exclusionary and hierarchical interpretation of Puerto Rican history and culture. It presents a ‘superior’ that takes on a protective attitude towards a series of subordinates: be they slaves, women, or workers” [constituye una interpretación excluyente y jerárquica de la historia y la cultura puertorriqueñas. Presenta a un ‘superior’ que asume una actitud protectora hacia una serie de subordinados: sean éstos esclavos, mujeres o trabajadores” (22). This superior attitude is the *criollo* class’ Europeaness.

Consequently, when the sisters decide to burn themselves alive in *Los soles truncos*, the act of resistance takes on a racialized meaning. Inés's statement that "for once time belongs to us" [por esta vez el tiempo nos pertenece] (80) reinforces the desire to continue the colonial status quo of racial inequality. Accordingly, one must view this battle with time not only as resistant to U.S. occupation, but also as resistant to the end of Spanish colonialism in which everyone else seems to be participating – emphasizing the sisters' separation from insular society. To immolate themselves within *la casa solariega* is to demonstrate an unwillingness to concede that Europeanness denies other sectors their social betterment; an unwillingness to change. What is more, self immolation shows that the *criollo* sector will not acknowledge that other groups can play roles in governing the island. Finally, it underscores the sectors' fragmentation by choosing death over integration. In place of participating in U.S.-occupied Puerto Rico where they will serve as reminders of the Spanish past, the Burkhart sisters reclaim "time" and their place in history, as symbolically portrayed through the now-dilapidated house.

Rather than embrace her Blackness in a historic moment of rising Afro-Antilleanism, Claire reaffirms her allegiance to her Europeanness over the betterment of a creolized society through the murder of Calédu. During a revolt that Jean Luze and local poets initiate, Claire creeps up and fatally stabs Calédu. While others interpret that the action of killing Calédu liberates the entire town ("Reading" 241, Paravisini-Gerbert 31), the murder further divides the town; M. Trudor's response in an earlier section of this chapter reminds us of the lack of solidarity. In fact, Claire herself doubts that the society will "stick together" (Réjouis 127). With this fragmented outlook in mind, the

murder of Calédu is a way to reassert *milat* power against the rise of *noirisme* precisely to “avoid slipping back” [éviter de régresser] in Fanonian terms (*Black* 37; 44). With the U.S. occupation followed by the rise of *noirisme*, Claire, like many of the *milat* class is left with uncertainty about the future. Claire does not desire to be a part of creolized society, as she herself states: “I don’t care to belong to any sisterhood. The idea that I’m an old maid, set apart and original, pleases me...” [Je ne veux faire partie d’aucune confrérie. L’idée que je suis una vieille fille à part, originale, me plait...] (*Réjouis* 127; 152). Claire’s *milat* upbringing that she continues to perform in spite of her own self-criticism causes her to kill Calédu in an effort to manage her racial complex: to murder Calédu is to negate her Blackness. To that effect, Calédu is both a casualty and an accomplice in this divisive history in which descendants of slaves and descendants of the plantocracy further isolate themselves from each other. Claire wants the town to parallel her idyllic memory that her class and youth shaped, but without her father’s abuse. In that aspect, Claire replaces Henri with an idealized nostalgia linked to a “fantasy of an ideal model of filiation to which there is only one parent, the republic” (*Vergès* 7). In Claire’s case that republic is structured through her *milat* upbringing and Europeanness. Claire is not interested in participating in an Afro-Haitian society and similarly attempts to render them unthreatening to her ideal: like in her idyllic memory, Afro-Haitians should know their place in society without transgressing it. She does not partake of Afro-Haitian betterment because, from her perspective, her Europeanness will forever define her: “How people do change! Not in character, because the core is immutable...” [Comme on peut changer! Non de caractère, car le fond rest immuable...] (*Réjouis* 52;

66). This statement, alongside the murder of Calédu elucidates Claire's unwillingness to belong in an Afro-Haitian society and an inability to engage in the new society because of her background. Orphaned from the past, Claire is incapable, by her own account, of breaking from it.

Conclusion

Arion's "The Great Curassow or the Road to Caribbeanness" (1998) all but concludes the twentieth century with the realization that Caribbean sectors are still largely isolated from one another (448). Arion points to a continued migration to the Caribbean from Europe but a lack of migration from Africa, which in turn diminishes the presence of African cultural elements. His point is that Caribbean societies are still largely fragmented and have never homogenized into a national identity. In that sense, Caribbean Critical Race Theorists must reevaluate Fernando Ortiz's transculturation and similar discourses on hybridity culminating in the twentieth century with the Francophone Creolists' manifesto *Éloge de la Créolité [In Praise of Creoleness]* (1989), to whom Arion directs his essay.³² Because the characters in *Los soles truncos* and

³² To be certain, Bernabé, Confiant, and Chamoiseau postulate the culmination of Creoleness through two preceding stages. Americanness is the first stage when Western populations in the New World had no real interaction with other cultures. In this case original cultures are adapted to new geographical environments. "*Americanness is therefore, in many respects, a migrant culture in a splendid isolation*" [*L'Américanité est donc, pour une large part, une culture émigré, dans un splendide isolement*] (Taleb-Khyar 92; 30).

Secondly they define Caribbeanness as being like Americanness but on the Caribbean Archipelago and referring to isolated Asian, European and African communities. Caribbeanness is a geopolitical concept and shares a geopolitical Caribbean solidarity with all the peoples of the archipelago regardless of their

Amour are still searching for racial exclusivity through Europeanness, they frustrate racial mixing, leaving hybridity poetics contested concepts in Caribbean literature.³³ The characters do not live up to the ideals that poetics of hybridity propose. On the other hand, language, race, class, and gender continue to divide them (Malena 5). In this chapter, I have demonstrated that part of this splintering has to do with the plantocracy's upholding of Europeanness as a means to reaffirm their power during historic moments

cultural differences. On the other hand, Creoleness is not a geographic concept but a "brutal interaction" of culturally different populations. The fusing society invents new cultural designs to allow for cohabitation, and as a result we see a non-harmonious mix of language, religion, and culinary. Creoleness is an original entity that emerges from this process after time and encompasses and perfects Americanness, because it is the mixing of these isolated cultures, thus making them no longer isolated (90-3; 30-3). Making note of the segregation in which cultures exist on the Caribbean, Arion declares that "the region as a whole has not even reached the stage of Caribbeanness or even Americanness yet" (448).

³³ This statement refers to Glissant's belief that "the idea of creolization demonstrates that henceforth it is no longer valid to glorify 'unique' origins that the race safeguards and prolongs. In Western tradition, genealogical descent guarantees racial exclusivity, just as Genesis legitimizes genealogy. To assert peoples are creolized, that creolization has value, is to deconstruct in this way the category of 'creolized' that is considered as halfway between the two 'pure' extremes" [le métissage comme proposition souligne qu'il est désormais inopérant de glorifier une origine «unique» dont la race serait gardienne et continuatrice. Dans les traditions occidentales, la filiation est le garant de cette unicité, tout comme la Genèse légitime la filiation. Affirmer que les peuples sont métissés, que le métissage est valeur, c'est déconstruire ainsi une catégorie «métis» qui serait intermédiaire en tant que telle entre deux extrêmes «purs»] (Dash 140; 250).

of power struggle. The authors specifically use orphans, symbolizing loss of family/colony, to engage the reader/spectator on an empathetic level that later expands to a societal level in which the decaying bourgeoisie is victimized. The Burkhart sisters and Claire are counter-community because they refuse to accept their loss of power to meet the changes of their insular society. Solitude and isolation characterize the Burkhart sisters' lives. Claire, on the other hand, is not alone in society in her colonial mindset, but she *is* a remnant of a dying plantocracy and it is precisely this behavior that characterizes orphans clinging to their European heritage, resulting in their unwillingness to change. To say nothing in this chapter of Afro-Antillean searches for racial exclusivity via re-imaginings of Africa that stem from the Middle Passage, slavery, and post-emancipation insular race relations that engage the popular classes, the plantocracy's own racial categorization reveals disjointed sectors sharing an island, but in "complete ignorance of each other's existence" (Arion 449).

Chapter Three
The Eager Orphan: *Négritude* and Belonging in the Postplantation Community of Frank Martinus Arion's *Dubbelspel* and Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven*

Until now, I have examined in this dissertation texts authored by members of the ruling class who have dealt with the loss of power and subsequent dispossession that stems from the transition to postplantation societies. The remainder of this dissertation will shift its focus to the lower classes and specifically, the “Othered” racial sectors of Caribbean society to explore their own limitations with the idea of “community” as it relates to the *Créolité* [Creoleness] movement and its precursors. I utilize texts written by descendants of slavery who give voice and name to Cola Debrot’s Maria and René Marqués’s nameless *yerbatera*. In this chapter, I look at Curaçaoan Frank Martinus Arion’s *Dubbelspel* (1973) in conjunction with Jamaican Michelle Cliff’s *No Telephone to Heaven* (1987) because they challenge contemporary Haitian René Depestre’s 1980 declarative title *Bonjour et adieu à la négritude* [Hello and Goodbye to *Négritude*]. Herein Depestre foregrounds the Francophone Creolists’ call for *Créolité* by dismissing *Négritude* and calling for wholeness: “Farewell to *Négritude*, and then, what follows? Whatever it is, in these times of fire and blood, human beings are summoned to answer this question. Singular identities, regional or national, all need to be recycled into the mainstream of the changing world: the struggle for panhuman identity” [*Adieu à la négritude, et après, qui être? Où qu’il se trouve, en ces temps de feu et de sang, l’être humain est sommé de répondre à cette question. Les identités singulières, régionales ou nationales, ont toutes besoin d’être recyclées dans le courant principal de l’évolution du*

monde: la lutte pour une *identité panhumaine*] (14).³⁴ Cliff and Arion's novels point out that *Négritude*, albeit revised versions of it, was still very much in vogue at the time of, and after Depestre's publication. The reason for the discord is that both *Négritude* and *Créolité* aim to assert themselves as hegemonic systems since colonial control continues to wane in the Caribbean. As these two identity movements vie for power, they each aim to reduce the oppositional ideology to an insufficient model. However, both ultimately commit exclusionary acts that evoke the past hegemonic colonial system. To that end, both ideological movements become propaganda of hegemonic apparatuses for community-building. They reveal the folly that *is* community-building in the postplantation Caribbean through their paradoxical denouncement of authority followed by their mimetic use of it. In this chapter I will examine the objectives and limitations of both movements before delving into works that aim to assert a new *Négritude* in opposition to hybridity discourse but whose proposal for community falls short.

I use the term *Négritude* to talk about a postplantation shift in Caribbean literature that appropriates pre-colonial African cultural elements brought to the Americas. Writers, artists, and musicians use these elements to define a cultural identity in resistance towards colonialism. In the process, the movement privileges an Afrocentric identity at the expense of other racial sectors. The term itself implies the Francophone regions of Africa and the Caribbean; however, here I use it to discuss authors from Curaçao and Jamaica because of similar cultural articulations. In "Order, Disorder, Freedom, and the West Indian Writer" (1993), Maryse Condé defines and criticizes these articulations for their structural redundancies:

³⁴ All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

1. The framework should be the native land.
2. The hero should be male, of peasant origin.
3. The brave and hardworking woman should be the auxiliary in his struggle for community.
4. Although they produce children, no reference should be made to sex. If any, it will be to male sexuality.
5. Of course, heterosexuality is the absolute rule.
6. Society should be pitied but never criticized. All its errors should be redeemed by the male hero (126).

Arion's *Dubbelspel* and Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven* both rely on tenets of *Négritude*.

In fact, Igma van Putte-de Windt notes that Arion's work must be categorized as *Négritude* because of its themes and philosophy (657). In regards to Cliff, Patricia Krus comments that:

One of the important influences recurring throughout *No Telephone to Heaven* is made transparent through the quotations taken from the work of the Martinican poet Aimé Césaire. Césaire appears twice in Cliff's novel with first, an extract of his *Cahier d'n retour au pays natal* (Notebook of a Return to My Native Land) and second, a passage from his poem "Autre Saison" (Another Season) from the collection entitled *Les armes miraculeuses* (*Miraculous Weapons*). The textual relationship between Cliff and Césaire allows for a reexamination of Caribbean cultural identity: Cliff's appropriation of Césaire's texts shows how issues of

cultural identity crucial to Césaire are still relevant to the contemporary Caribbean (38).

Yet these authors' revived *Négritude* differs from Césaire's by changing the role of woman from auxiliary to heroine, thereby defying numbers two, three, and six on Condé's list. Women are no longer viewed as objects, but rather as agents of change. They are equal in revolutionary potential, not secondary. Furthermore, in the case of *No Telephone to Heaven*, heterosexuality is not absolute and sexuality moves beyond the male body. Therefore, Arion and Cliff articulate a new *Négritude*, but one that is still limited in postplantation society. I borrow the term "postplantation" from Valérie Loichot who defines it as "a compound one built on irreconcilable differences" (7). These irreconcilable differences are precisely what lead to *Négritude* as a way to invert social discourse and power.

In privileging their African heritage, Janchi Pau and Clare reveal the limitations of their postplantation projects by excluding others. One of the biggest criticisms of *Négritude* is that it operates within the racial binaries that colonialism established. In "Orphée Noir" [Black Orpheus] (1948), Jean-Paul Sartre referred to *Négritude* as "anti-racist racism" [racisme antiraciste] (Allen 59; xl) In that same vein, Depestre points out, "Today the 'négrologues' of *Négritude* are presented under the form of a worldview that, in American or African societies, would be exclusive to Blacks" [Aujourd'hui les « négrologues » de la négritude la présentent sous la forme d'une conception du monde qui, dans des sociétés américaines ou africaines, serait exclusive aux Noirs...] (83). These types of denouncements of *Négritude* as an exclusionary privileging served the

Francophone Creolists' manifesto to promote hybridity and view *Négritude* as no more than a bridge to *Créolité*: "It was Césaire's Negritude that *opened to us the path* for the actuality of Caribbeanness..." [C'est la Négritude césairienne qui nous a ouvert le passage vers l'ici d'une Antillanité désormais postulable...] (Taleb-Khyar 80; 18). Whilst others have disputed the essentialist claims that characterize *Négritude*, in *Dubbelspel* and *No Telephone to Heaven* these postcolonial communities are above all, restricted because *Négritude* asserts itself as a revived hegemonic system.³⁵ At the same time, *Négritude* is still very present even when theorists offer alternative poetics of hybridity which demonstrates that these poetics of hybridity, such as *Créolité*, are also insufficient ideologies. According to Mervin Alleyne, the presence of racial difference is at the forefront of the conflict between *Négritude* and *Créolité*:

...while postmodernism is busy trying to deconstruct African (and other) essentialisms, there are a number of Caribbean groups busy maintaining it or reconstructing it. While concepts (and, I suppose in some cases, movements based on the concepts) such as *créolité*, *métissage*, hybridity, and even globalization are busy projecting a new liberal middle-class order of culture and identity on the world, the cultural proletariat is still seeking ways to triumph over the savaging that it has undergone and continues to undergo in the modern world. Africa often plays a role, variously ambivalent, uncertain, aggressive, timid (32).

³⁵ See for instance, *Négritude: Legacy and Present Relevance*, Eds. Isabelle Constant and Kahiudi C. Mabana (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2009).

Alleyne's mention of *Créolité* calls attention to the conflicting ideologies that differentiate *Créolité* and *Négritude*. As *Créolité* has moved to the vanguard of critical race theories in the Caribbean, it is not a particularly new concept.³⁶ Some of the major proponents of creolization across linguistic blocs, such as Sidney Mintz, the Francophone Creolists, Edward Brathwaite, Antonio Benitez Rojo and Fernando Ortiz all look towards the plantation as the beginning of the creolization process.³⁷ However, I sustain that the ideology does not reflect a Caribbean reality, but rather a commodity for a new global world. In agreement, Arnold reasons that "it is the Creolists, rather than Glissant, who in their fiction have created a commodified post-emancipation Martinique designed to titillate consumers in Europe and North America. Indeed, I have argued elsewhere that their aesthetics results in an exoticized version of cultural dependence upon France" ("From the" 168-9). Historically, "creolization" was an assimilationist tactic meant to reject Africa and favor a European ideal (Alleyne 41). Amar Acheraïou describes how ideologies of hybridity/creolization were an imperialist strategy that became the "long-term solution towards the extinction of the colonized races by means of biological mixing" (70). What is more, Brathwaite postulates that "'Creole' also supposes a

³⁶ I say to the forefront of Caribbean critical race theory as well as Academia because of recent publications such as *Creolization and Contraband: Curacao in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (2012), *The Creolization of Theory* (2011), *The Creolization Reader* (2010), *Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory* (2007), and *The Libertine Colony: Creolization in the Early French Caribbean* (2005).

³⁷ See "Enduring Substances, Trying Theories: The Caribbean Region as oikoumene" (1996), *Éloge de la Créolité* (1989), *La isla que se repite* (1989), *Contradictory Omens* (1974), and *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y azúcar* (1940), respectively.

situation where the society concerned is caught up in ‘some kind of colonial arrangement’ with a metropolitan power, on the one hand, and a (tropical) plantation arrangement on the other, and where the society is multi-racial but organized for the benefit of a minority of European origin” (10). The recent and revived use of *Négritude* is a response to the Eurocentric version of *Créolité* that the Creolists put forth. Theirs is an ideology steeped in colonial and imperial expression and tied to assimilation. Nowhere is this more present than in Lafcadio Hearn’s *Two Years* (1890). Chris Bongie traces how Hearn is the first to coin the term “creolization” (“Resisting” 159) but his way of using it is “steep[ed] in nostalgia” and “indisputably racist” (“Resisting” 159). Hearn fears the rise of Blackness in the Caribbean and asserts creolization as a happy medium on the White-Black colonial continuum. In *Two Years* he bemoans that “all these mixed races, all these beautiful fruit-colored populations, seem doomed to extinction: the future tendency must be to universal blackness, if existing conditions continue – perhaps to universal savagery” (III, 110). Hearn equates Blackness with decadency and barbarism. Moreover, he shows that creolization is discriminatorily rooted in a way to escape Blackness. Since creolization is an imperialist strategy that began in colonial times, then *Négritude* is not just a challenge to colonial ideology, but also to creolization as an assimilationist process.

Depestre’s “panhuman identity” furthers the assimilationist process. Echoic of José Vasconcelos’s cosmic race, it is reflective of a diverse world, yet it presupposes that races, ethnicities and cultures desire to move beyond their particularities in an attempt to

reconcile a world history full of atrocities committed against each other.³⁸ The Martinican school of Creolists, led by Raphaël Confiant, Jean Bernabé, and Patrick Chamoiseau have attempted to answer Depestre's question with their publication *Éloge de la Créolité* [In Praise of Creoleness] (1989). They argue that:

Negritude did not solve our aesthetic problems. At some point, it might even have worsened our identity instability by pointing at the most pertinent syndrome of our morbidities: self-withdrawal, mimetism, the natural perception of local things abandoned for the fascination of foreign things, etc., all forms of alienation.

³⁸ In order to reach "a panhuman identity," Depestre suggests that *Créolité* move beyond colonial dichotomies:

The inventive creoleness of the Americas (as well as that of Africa) should successfully de-Europeanize French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch cultural heritages without degenerating, degrading or diminishing them. The European contribution, which integrated that which was best for other social metabolisms, led to scales of values, rules of life, existential experiences, wonderful forms that, through the diversity of national cultures, constitute a new imaginary for the time of decolonization.

[La *créolité* inventive des Amériques (comme d'ailleurs des Afriques) devait avec succès *déseuropéaniser* les héritages culturels français, anglais, espagnol, portugais, hollandais, sans pour autant les abâtardir, les dégrader ou les amoindrir. L'apport européen, intégré dans ce qu'il avait de meilleur à d'autres métabolismes sociaux, déboucha sur des échelles de valeurs, des règles de vie, des expériences existentielles, des formes de merveilleux qui, à travers la diversité des cultures nationales, constituent un nouvel imaginaire, celui des temps de la décolonisation] (9).

His proposal for creolization, although not the focus of this chapter, reveals a contradiction: although he wants to de-Europeanize the Americas in order to achieve decolonization, he still acknowledges European cultural contributions as the basis for social bodies.

A violent and paradoxical therapy, Negritude replaced the illusion of Europe by an African illusion. Initially motivated by the wish of embedding us into the actuality of our being, Negritude soon manifested itself in many kinds of exteriority: *the exteriority of aspirations* (to mother Africa, mythical Africa, impossible Africa) and *the exteriority of self-assertion* (we are Africans). It was a necessary dialectical moment, an indispensable development. But it remains a great challenge to step out of it in order to finally build a new yet temporary synthesis on the open path to history, our history (82).

Eager to move beyond racial categorization in support of cultural sameness, the Francophone Creolists talk about *Négritude* as if it were a movement of the past, a metaphorical and theoretical bridge that allowed for “the emergence of those who were to express the envelope of our Caribbean thought...” (83). What is more, they claim that *Négritude* had “no consideration for our cultural reality,” “far from the land, far from the people, far from the readers, far from any authenticity except for an accidental, partial, and secondary one:” *Négritude* was a “trap” (83). The Creolists’ treatment of *Négritude* is necessary to further their ideological movement. However, as I will proclaim, calling for an end to *Négritude*, even in 2013, is premature in the Caribbean. Like those orphans in the second chapter whose Europeanness prevents them from participating in a creolizing society, orphans who uphold their *Négritude* frustrate postplantation reconciliation because their eagerness to belong in a postcolonial community leads them to exclude others, legitimate one racial heritage over others, prolong racial binaries, and encourage fixed Afro-Antillean identities. That is to say, their Black consciousness, able

to recall the atrocities of slavery and the Middle Passage that colonialism committed against their ancestors, now prohibits them from envisioning a community free of racial tension, discrimination, and vengeance.

Solidarity in Black identity gave rise to *Négritude* in the 1930s. This solidarity was in opposition to the French Assimilationist theory that professed that everyone under the French Republic is French with a common cultural ancestor in the Gauls (Lewis 131-4 and Grosfoguel 217). Under French Assimilationist theory, categories like Afro-Martinican did not exist; only Frenchmen. Through this reduction of identity, racial experience was negated and yet, racism towards those of African descent abounded. Fronted by Aimé Césaire and Suzanne Césaire of Martinique, Léon Damas of French Guiana, and Léopold Senghor of Senegal, *Négritude* was espoused as a tool to fight French hegemony. Like French Assimilationist theory before them, *Créolité* aims to reduce racial difference (“We declare ourselves Creoles” [Nous nous déclarons Créoles] (Taleb-Khyar 87; 26) even though racial fragmentation still exists in the Caribbean. In the present *Négritude* serves as an oppositional ideology of belonging in Caribbean societies because racial difference is the crux of its discourse. In that vein the movement provides a sense of membership based on race in opposition to the Creolists’ call for post-racial cultural identity. This is noticeable in orphan protagonists who jettison racial, social, and political affiliation because their parents are not there to reinforce them. What is more, orphans of multiracial identities seemingly could function as reconcilers between racial binaries. Yet in the following texts, orphans of multiracial identities instead give priority to their African heritage in order to be considered a part of the racial community.

As such, the limitation of this ideology is that racial reconciliation is inhibited because *Négritude* still favors one heritage over others. Without racial reconciliation, discrimination still exists and for this reason, the ideology exposes that cultural sameness is impractical. Whereas the Creolists call for reconciliation through cultural sameness, the novels in this chapter detail societal fragmentation through Blackness. Ironically, those communities that attempt to distinguish themselves from their colonial predecessors turn out to be similar in their exclusionary practices and provide an alternative meaning to mimicry. When I use the term “mimicry” I refer to Frantz Fanon’s belief that “mimicry results from the exertion of colonial power on the colonized in such a way that he or she loses the possibility of an autonomous cultural identity; legitimacy is gained through the taking on of Western ideals—or what he has called ‘white masks’” (Kochhar-Lindgren 297). Mimicry here *is* the possibility of an autonomous cultural identity, but gained through the taking on of Western ideals of monolithic community-building. In the absence of cultural sameness, the Afro-Antillean sector takes advantage of their large population and their access to education and jobs in industrialization, and constructs postplantation communities that are just as racially fragmented as the colonial ones before them. Because these Afro-Antillean communities seek equality or empowerment at the risk of racial and social antagonism, they complicate *Créolité* as an ideological project that attempts to move beyond racial categorization. In other words, their sense of unity is forged by creating an antagonistic “Other,” often times pinpointing those of European descent.

In Curaçao, this is most notable via the island's violent revolt of May 30, 1969.

Known as *trinta di mei*, this revolt-turned-social movement changed the political atmosphere in Curaçao as the Netherlands' power diminished. The *trinta de mei* revolt provided the conditions for the Black masses to dominate politics and cultural production, once an affair of a small, predominantly non-Black local elite.³⁹ New political parties rose to power, particularly those that represented workers and Afro-Curaçaoans such as *Frente Obrero Liberashon 30 di Mei* (FOL) [Worker Liberation Front] and *Movemento Antiyas Nobo* (MAN) [New Antilles Movement]. The achievements of the May Movement included: the success of the Liberation Front at the polls during elections for both the central and island governments and the selection of Blacks for such high public office as prime minister and governor of Curaçao. In regards to socio-economic changes that supported the Afro-Curaçaoan sector, unions negotiated wage increases, and Afro-Curaçaoans received access to social clubs (Anderson 140). Culturally, the rise of Black leaders led to the increasing valorization of Papiamentu that began in the 1940s in published poems and prose, such as Pierre Lauffer's *Patria* (1940). This language, spoken by all Curaçaoans but particularly affiliated with the Afro-Curaçaoan sectors, has endured stigmatization as part of a colonial effort to promote

³⁹ Ironically, the Netherland Antillean governor at the time was none other than Cola Debrot who described the revolt as "understandable" (*Gemunt* 245). After becoming the first island-born governor of the Netherlands Antilles in 1962, Debrot left his post in 1970 and spent the remainder of his years in the Netherlands (*Gemunt* 252).

Dutch.⁴⁰ After *trinta de mei*, cultural production as seen in Guillermo Rosario's poem "Mi Nigrita Papiamentu" [My Black Darling Papiamentu] (1971), V.H. "Pacheco" Domacassé's plays *Konsenshi di un pueblo* [A People's Conscience] (1973) and *Tula* (the leader of a slave uprising) (1975), Carel de Haseth's novel *Katibu di Shon* [Slave and Master] (1988), and Lucille Berry-Haseth's poem "Identidat" [Identity] (1990) aligned Papiamentu, Afro-Antilleanism, and nation. Indeed, these works expressed the popular protest slogans *Awor nos ta manda* [Now the power is ours] and *Di nos e ta* [We claim our Afro-Caribbean heritage] that called for "the ultimate emancipation of the common Afro-Antillean people...while the death of capitalism, colonialism, and discrimination was loudly applauded" (Broek 14). Despite the successes of the May Movement in the Afro-Curaçaoan sectors, the movement's main objective was not solely Black empowerment, as we saw with the rising *noiristes* in Chapter Two. In fact, the May Movement used Papiamentu to bridge White Curaçaoans and Black Curaçaoans as Antilleans against the Dutch through cultural symbols of transculturation such as the *yaya*, or Black nanny figure who passed on the language as well as African-based trickster stories to the White Curaçaoan children that she cared for.⁴¹ Therefore, the growing promotion of Papiamentu is directly linked to the rise of Antilleanism in the

⁴⁰ Linda Rupert reports that in colonial court records dating back to the eighteenth century, Papiamentu was referred to as *negers spraake* or "black speech" despite the fact that it was not confined to Afro-Curaçaoan sectors (213-4).

⁴¹ It should be noted that the *yaya* differs from the Black mammy character found in *Los soles truncos* because the former instills Afro-Antillean culture in the children she cares for, thereby becoming a symbol of creolization. The latter's role is much more passive.

political sphere and hence, “from a chronological point of view, the period subsequent to the riots played a crucial role in the evolution of a ‘creole’ identity” (Eckkrammer 101). I highlight this idea of a Creole identity because Arion’s post-May Movement *Dubbelspel* negates such a process in an effort to present an isolated Afro-Curaçaoan community for reasons that I will discuss below.

In Jamaica, social change gained support during the 1960s from four sources: “the urban unemployed, radical intelligentsia, discontented students, and religious Rastafarians” (Panton 28). Social unrest spearheaded this radical Black nationalist movement and was the basis for the election of Prime Minister Michael Manley and the People’s National Party (PNP) in 1972 (ten years after full independence) and is different from Curaçao’s more racially inclusive May Movement. Manley made various reforms that empowered the poor sectors, such as “the national minimum wage law, local government tax reform, free uniforms for primary schoolchildren, the furnishing of prime land to sugar workers, compulsory union recognition by employers, the Prevention of Crime Act and the Gun Court Act” (Levi 144) as well as free education at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. These movements on the island, coetaneous with Civil Rights movements in the United States and around the world, provided the basis for a growing Black consciousness in Jamaica. In “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” (1989) Stuart Hall elaborates on this growth in awareness in an autobiographical anecdote:

When I was growing up in the 1940s and 1950s as a child in Kingston, I was surrounded by the signs, music and rhythms of this Africa of the diaspora, which only existed as a result of a long and discontinuous series of transformations. But,

although almost everyone around me was some shade of brown or black (Africa ‘speaks’!), I never once heard a single person refer to themselves or to others as, in some way, or as having been at some time in the past, ‘African’. It was only in the 1970s that this Afro-Caribbean identity became historically available to the great majority of Jamaican people, at home and abroad. In this historic moment, Jamaicans discovered themselves to be ‘black’ - just as, in the same moment, they discovered themselves to be the sons and daughters of ‘slavery’ (231).

The development of Black consciousness along with the increased benefits and access to institutions empowered the Afro-Antillean sectors to create a new postplantation community to serve their needs. One of these needs was to have a sense of belonging in a region that they were historically brought to as forced labor. *Négritude* provided those sectors with a means to satisfy that need by inverting the colonial system in which Europeans and their descendants were considered the rightful inheritors and governors of the land, producers of history, and culturally superior to Africans and their descendants. In disagreement with the Francophone Creolists, I posit that Cliff and Arion’s revised versions of *Négritude do* demonstrate a relationship to the local as well as a connection to the land. Furthermore, it is through these connections that the protagonists in *No Telephone to Heaven* and *Dubbelspel* are able to develop a sense of belonging in opposition to hybridity discourse. At the same time, the fact that *Négritude* is still relevant in Caribbean societies reveals the shortcomings of *Créolité* as a harmonious ideology: “this view of a simple ‘blending’ and ‘spectrum’ obfuscates the tension and

conflict that existed, and still exists, between the Africans and Europeans who were the bearers of these traditions” (Bolland 113).

Négritude: A Response to Europeanness and Créolité

Before further delving into the limitations of *Négritude*, I want to first discuss the ways in which Arion and Cliff use Black consciousness as a means to contest Europeanness and *Créolité* because these particular ways elucidate why their multiracial characters choose to identify as Afro-Antillean. *Négritude* has been one of the main characteristics of postplantation “imagined communities” because it seemingly breaks with the colonial hierarchies that Europeanness forged. Benedict Anderson theorizes in his seminal text *Imagined Communities* (1983) that a community is imagined because the people within it feel a common bond amongst each other despite the fact that they do not know each other, and possibly never will (6). Their bond is formed by linguistic discourse (in this case Jamaican patwa or Papiamentu), racial identity (Afro-Antillean and descendants of slaves), and moral and historical discourse (oral folklore and oral history). Along these commonalities, the parameters for who can and cannot belong in this postplantation community are established. Space and notions of home accordingly become organized in an overarching hegemonic discourse. Both Arion and Cliff eschew a poetics of hybridity to fortify an Afro-Antillean/Euro-Antillean dichotomy that provides the limits for who can belong and who cannot. This dichotomy characterizes African elements as progressive and European elements as assimilationist. Janchi Pau and Clare Savage, Arion and Cliff’s protagonists, respectively, claim Blackness to reconnect with the maternal past that their mothers’ deaths have orphaned them from: that is to say, they

connect with their mother(land). The two most salient ways that these novels present insular society as Afro-Antillean while maintaining this aforementioned binary are through a usurping of landscape and a rewriting of history. Through a relationship to the land and a relationship to the local (history), *Négritude* offers an exclusive membership to the Afro-Antillean inhabitants. For Arion, *Dubbelspel* is a novel that affirms a postplantation shift in which Afro-Curaçaoans such as orphan Janchi Pau and his love interest Solema begin to assert themselves in the political realm and slowly reduce the power of the Netherlands until finally becoming an autonomous nation within the Kingdom of the Netherlands on October 10, 2010. *Dubbelspel*, the story of four men whose regular Sunday game of dominoes becomes the setting to discuss island politics, illuminates *Négritude* through Janchi Pau's relationship with Solema, the wife of his rival. She instills in him an awareness of his Black consciousness which develops concurrently with his pride in his native Curaçao and his desire for more autonomy from the Netherlands. What is more, she provides the inspiration and knowhow for him to form a co-operative furniture factory in Curaçao so that the islanders produce for themselves. What is of particular interest is Janchi Pau's trajectory: from being an alienated orphan to someone who aids in the construction of an Afro-Antillean community that excludes others. His transformation is due to a re-invested interest in Curaçao's history and landscapes upon his romantic involvement with Solema.

Indeed, Janchi Pau awakens to an Afro-Curaçaoan consciousness and sense of belonging through romance. Prior to his relationship with Solema, Janchi's orphaning removed him from society. This observation is most notable in the house that Janchi Pau

begins to build for his Afro-Curaçaoan mother, only to leave it unfinished when she dies. “At any rate, the thought of completing the house that he had begun seemed absurd to him after he had buried his mother...” [De gedachte het begonnen huis af te bouwen kwam hem in ieder geval onzinnig voor nadat hij zijn moeder had gebgraven...] (Vincent 37; 39). The property, which he then inhabits, is left unfinished and neglected. Moreover, his orphaning consumes him so that there is an absence of profound relationships in his life. “After the death of his mother, Janchi Pau had not only stopped working on the house, but had seemed to lose all appetite for life” [Na de dood van zijn moeder had Janchi Pau niet alleen opgehouden aan het huis te werken, maar het was zelfs alsof hij de zin van het bestaan zelf volledig uit het oog verloren had] (Vincent 36; 38). Furthermore, “[i]t embittered him and alienated him from God and man, even more than was already the case” [Het verbitterde hem en maakte dat hij van god en mens vervreemde, voor zover dat nog niet reeds het geval was geweest] (Vincent 36; 39). The inheritance of the house here functions as an allegory for belonging. Janchi Pau never completes it because after his mother dies, he does not feel a part of the colonial community.⁴² And why should he? Prior to the *trinta di mei* revolt Dutch-born and *blanke creool* men dominated the political realm. Janchi Pau is neither, nor does he aspire to be. It is no coincidence then that he begins finishing his mother’s house once Solema, described at length in the text for her brown skin and afro (30-2) as well as her Afro-Curaçaoan nationalist aspirations (57), comes to live with him and the two decide to challenge the political sphere by constructing a postplantation community. The

⁴² Prior to his mother’s death, he had only recently returned to the island after spending years as a sailor.

transformation in Janchi Pau is unsurprising because as Annette Kolodny postulates, “[i]mplicit in the metaphor of the land-as-woman was both the regressive pull of maternal containment *and* the seductive invitation to sexual assertion: if the Mother demands passivity, and threatens regression, the Virgin apparently invites sexual assertion and awaits impregnation” (67). If the death of Janchi Pau’s mother led to his regression, then his relationship with Solema reawakens him. To further this figuration of the woman, Solema and Janchi Pau’s mother are alike in that both are victims of mistreatment by mimic men, those who adhere to colonial paternalism. Janchi Pau’s rival Manchi Santiano constantly berates Solema, treating her like his property, and Janchi Pau’s own father abandoned his family and returned to Venezuela (36). In line with the *Négritude* movement’s goal to present Africa as mother (Miller 5) then is Janchi Pau’s embrace of his mother/Solema and the rejection of the colonial father (embodied by his father and Manchi). To counter his rival Manchi, Janchi Pau’s embrace of Solema must be more than an objectification. Building the house becomes symbolic of building a gender-equal community independent of the Netherlands. For Janchi Pau, his oedipal desire means that Solema takes on the matriarchal void that his mother left behind. As both women are Afro-Curaçaoan, Janchi Pau constructs a sense of belonging and (mother)land through the vindication of the Afro-Curaçaoan woman. In the same vein, Arion dedicates the novel to “women with courage” [aan vrouwen met moed].

Janchi Pau’s relationship with Solema transforms him from lonely outsider to revolutionary with collective aspirations (Vincent 176; 153). In an effort to recognize the Afro-Curaçaoan women on the island, who are often voiceless in novels written by the

decaying plantocracy, Arion attributes Janchi Pau's metamorphosis to Solema and her valorization of the island.⁴³ The romance between the two recalls the nineteenth-century romance novels found in Doris Sommer's *Foundational Fictions* (1991). Akin to foundational fictions, *Dubbelspel* uses romance to build an ideal union within a nation and serve as a model for the nation to follow in its own historical construction. Sommer asserts that "whether the plots end happily or not, the romances are invariably about desire in young chaste heroes for equally young and chaste heroines, the nations' hope for productive unions" (24). In *Dubbelspel*, love and nationalist sentiment help support Afro-Curaçaoans in the midst of racial tensions, as I will discuss below. Furthermore, *Dubbelspel* demonstrates how heterosexual romance spills over into Arion's specific national model. Janchi Pau, a Gramscian organic intellectual, and Solema, a Dutch university-educated woman who returns to her native island to implement improvements via a socialist platform, come to represent Arion's ideal couple for an anti-colonial, pro-Afro-Curaçaoan island; their romance plays out in the novel's fairy-tale-like happy ending. Whereas the novels in Sommer's study usually end with a plot twist and a revelation of a secret that disrupts the proposed national model, Arion's text has none of

⁴³ See, for instance, Cola Debrot's *Mijn zuster de negerin* [My Black Sister], Boeli van Leeuwen's *Een vreemdeling op aarde* [A Stranger on Earth] and Carel de Haseh's *Katibu di shon* [Slave and Master] (1988). The Afro-Curaçaoan woman's role varies in all three texts, taking on the most importance in *Katibu di shon*, but in all three canonical Dutch Caribbean texts the three women are voiceless. For an analysis on this matter, see Olga E. Rojer and Joseph O. Aimone, "Introduction," *Founding Fictions of the Dutch Caribbean: Carel de Haseh's Slave and Master (Katibu di Shon)*, Eds. Olga E. Rojer and Joseph O. Aimone (New York: Peter Lang, 2011) 1-26.

the above. It is simply the beginning of a national project built on African heritage and heterosexuality to ensure bio-reproductivity. Additionally, the novels that Sommer examines usually bring together unions from different racial backgrounds towards a Europeanized ideal. Yet *Dubbelspel* does not promote miscegenation or a Western aesthetic; its union asserts a fixed Blackness. Janchi Pau is able to belong because he identifies himself as part of the majority Afro-Curaçaoan sector through his mother, despite the rootlessness that comes with orphanhood. Solema teaches Janchi to question colonial exploitation at the hands of foreigners and to produce for himself. Her lesson in self-pride serves its purpose: “He’d changed, and she’d done it. There was something new in him. A desire for action, which he’d never had before. In the space of a few weeks he felt like a different man” [Hij was veranderd en zij had het gedaan. Er was iets nieuws in hem. Een zin tot actie, die hij tevoren niet gehad had. In een paar weken tijds voelde hij zich een ander mens] (Vincent 177; 153). Yet Janchi’s new outlook does not stop with individual betterment. He restores his belonging to the community when he realizes that the way to nation-build is through self-pride and a connection to the land:

It wasn’t education that this country needed, but *love!* This feeling that [Janchi Pau] had. Because with this feeling you could do things. You could keep animals with it and you could make plants grow with it. *You could finish a house with it.* Because you could do that, you could also build *several* houses with it...He formulated it slowly to himself: we need love. We’ve got to start loving this country more and our women too.

[Dan was het, het kon logisch gezien niet anders, niet *onderwijs* dat dit land nodig

had, maar *liefde!* Dit gevoel, dat hij had. Want met dit gevoel kon je dingen doen. Je kon er dieren mee houden en je kon er planten mee doen groeien. *Je kon er een huis mee afmaken.* Omdat dat kon, moestje er ook meerdere huizen mee kunnen bouwen...Hij mormuleerde het langzaam voor zichzelf: ‘We hebben liefde nodig. We moeten meer van dit land gaan houden en meer van onze vrouwen] (Vincent 177; 153).

For Arion, “love” here extends from a one-on-one intimate relationship to a larger community, which Janchi Pau underscores through his idea to make his furniture factory a co-operative which binds economic self-interest with solidarity. For the author, love becomes a way to build a community, which seemingly approximates Arion’s ultimate vision of the Caribbean and is in line with the Francophone Creolists’ *In Praise of Creoleness* as discussed in Chapter Two.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the passage articulates Janchi

⁴⁴ Because Arion excludes the European and Asian contributions from the community in *Dubbelspel*—as I will discuss below—I point the reader to Arion’s 1995 novel *De laatste vrijheid* [The Final Freedom]. In this novel, Arion’s Caribbean community better approximates that of the creolized society proposed by Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant. On this fictional Caribbean island, people of different backgrounds successfully live together. Genealogical background (African, European, Asian) is put aside to give privilege to community-building and using creole to create solidarity. To further celebrate Caribbean diversity, Arion posits “[e]ndless variations of individualities, themes, projects; conflicting, each with its own history and origin...Their unity could only exist in their own opposites! Bonded by one minimal thing: the entire Caribbean region...” [Eindeloze variatie van individualiteiten, thema’s, projecten; dissonanten, met elk hun eigen geschiedenis en oorsprong...Hun eenheid kon alleen maar in hun tegenstelling bestaan! Gebonden door één minimum ding: heel het Caribische gebied, verschrikkelijk veel eilanden, maar toch allemaal groen (956).

Pau's conflation of community and house in which house continues to serve as a metaphor for belonging in the community. In Chapter Four, I will examine the significance of not being "of the house" (Hartman 88); in *Dubbelspel* and *No Telephone to Heaven*, both protagonists ensure that they are part "of the house" by fashioning for themselves a stable Afro-Antillean identity. This community, or "country" as Janchi Pau says, also continues the vindication of women: when Janchi Pau says "We've got to start loving this country more and our women too" [We moeten meer van dit land gaan houden en meer van onze vrouwen] there is a direct correlation again between nation and woman, or (mother)land, made possible only through the central role of Solema. Finally, we might read Janchi Pau's declaration for love over education as a condemnation of those who go to the Netherlands to study and return as "mimic men."

In both novels, this Afro-Antillean community is constructed through a Black consciousness that rewrites colonial historiography: whereas in Chapter Two I demonstrate how the planter class conflates its history with that of the land, in this chapter the descendants of slaves appropriate the land as inherently theirs since it was their ancestors who tilled it. The connection between land and belonging should not be overlooked: in *El país de cuatro pisos* [Puerto Rico: The Four-Storeyed Country] (1980), José Luis González points out that "...the first Puerto Ricans were in fact *black* Puerto Ricans" since "it was the blacks, *the people bound most closely to the territory* which they inhabited (they were after all slaves), who had the greatest difficulty in imagining any other place to live" [los primeros puertorriqueños fueron en realidad los puertorriqueños negros] since "*por ser los más atados al territorio que habitaban en*

virtud de su condición de esclavos, difícilmente podían pensar en la posibilidad de hacerse de otro país] (Guinness 10; 20, my emphasis). It is this link between (mother)land and history that I aim to develop in this section because it inverts racial hierarchies and disrupts racial healing. Principally, the land is not a shared commodity but rather serves to divide groups over racial dynamics of power and questions of rightful ownership. For the Creolists, *Créolité* is “the interactional or transactional aggregate of Caribbean, European, African, Asian, and Levantine cultural elements, *united on the same soil by the yoke of history*” [l’agrégat interactionnel ou transactionnel, des éléments culturels caraïbes, européens, africains, asiatiques, et Levantines, *que le joug de l’Histoire a réunis sur le même sol* (Taleb-Khyar 87; 26, my emphasis). Bernabé et. al aim to provide a location, “the same soil” to promote their theory on cultural sameness and unity. The rupture here is that in these two novels, the authors are making history exclusively Afro-Antillean and explicitly not European. Landscape becomes an alternative mode of history that challenges colonial discourse in which the land inherently belongs to the White settler. Rather than hybridity or cultural harmony, these authors reappropriate telluric national imaginaries from White settlers. With this reappropriation, the landscape is used to establish the island as Afro-Antillean: the soil is not “the same” because it has a different relationship to those who worked it in contrast to those who exploited it or *forced* others to work it. The Creolists paradoxically seem aware of this nonharmonious past, but dismiss it in favor of a fictionalized unity in the present: “socioethnic relations in our society ought to take place from now on under the seal of a common creoleness, without, not in the least, obliterating class relations or conflicts”

(90). Yet the present cannot unite when racial antagonism shrouds its history. As Arion points out, the Creolists “are looking at creoleness from the white side of the equation, so to speak...” (“Creole” 152). From their perspective, it is ideologically necessary to overlook or reduce racial antagonism because acknowledging it would mean recognizing that Europeans and their descendants committed historical atrocities during colonialism. Yet from the point of view of the Black masses, the history of slavery as a historical process divided races and is precisely the cause for disputes over a discursive claim on national identity. In that sense, landscape is a metaphor of racial and class difference and one that Arion and Cliff keenly employ to further their versions of *Négritude*.

These novels minimize the plantation as a system constructed and headed by Europeans while giving preference to the bush and forest, landscapes historically coded as hideouts for maroons. Russ states that “...questions about the origins and nature of imagined communities, when not displayed prominently on their surfaces, inevitably lurk in the shadows of these untamed American spaces” (93). As Afro-Antillean, these imagined communities find their identity in the spaces of the bush and forest, both free spaces that Afro-Antilleans ultimately tame in the novels. To further this idea, a focus on how Arion and Cliff code the landscape, including houses, as Afro-Antillean is essential. I begin with Janchi Pau’s plans for his furniture factory and the island. Janchi Pau, as an outcome from his discussions with Solema, exemplifies belonging through his desire to use wood native to the island in his furniture factory and more importantly, to plant additional trees on the island:

He in any case would do his part. It was ironic perhaps, he thought, that if ever the Solema Furniture Factory became a flourishing business, he would need more than anything on this island, *wabis*... This despised tree, which is found everywhere on the island, and is second only to the cactus in numbers, would therefore be the starting point of his business... And he thought that he really ought to start planting them... He would have to *plant* them here in any case. He wouldn't work as Solema had told him the Dutch had done in the past: they felled all the Brazil wood that they needed, and which was found in abundance on the island when they arrived here in the seventeenth century, without it occurring to them that they could also plant young trees, so that afterwards there would be Brazil wood for them and for everyone else! Always. But no, they'd quickly deforested the whole, beautiful island and in so doing had driven the rain away, perhaps for good, then went on to complain that it was so 'arid' and 'dry'. They're apes, those Dutch, he thought. Barbarians. Underdeveloped. Savages. [Hij zou in ieder geval zijn deel doen. Het was misschien ironisch dacht hij, dat als *Meubelfabriek Solema* ooit eens een bloeiende zaak werd, hij meer dan één ander ding op dit eiland, *wabi's* nodig zou hebben... Deze geminachte boom, die *overal* op het eiland te vinden is, en eigenlijk alleen minder voorkomt dan de cactus, zou dus het uitgangspunt van zijn bedrijf zijn... En bij de gedachte, dat hij ze nog 'ns zou moeten gaan planten... *Planten* zou hij ze in ieder geval moeten. Hij zou niet te werk gaan zoals Solema hem verteld had dat de Hollanders vroeger gedaan hadden: Al het braziliëhout dat ze nodig hadden, en dat in overvloed op

het eiland voorkwam toen zij hier in de zeventiende eeuw kwamen, kapten ze weg *zonder op de gedachte te komen, dat ze ook jonge bomen konden planten, opdat er daarna opnieuw braziliëhout zou zijn, voor hen en voor iedereen!* Altijd.

Maar neen, zij hadden het hele mooie eiland snel ontbost en daarmee misschien voorgoed de regen verjaagd, om daarna te gaan klagen dat het zo ‘dor’ en ‘droog’ was. ‘Het zijn apen, die Holanders,’ dacht hij. ‘Barbaren en onderontwikkelden. Onbeschaafden’] (Vincent 335-6; 282-3).

The idea demonstrates a co-dependence between Janchi Pau and the island for the island gives him the materials necessary to make his living while Janchi Pau returns the favor by sustaining the island’s environment.⁴⁵ He expects to permanently remain on the island, hence his interest in its own longevity. Furthermore, the passage voices a postcolonial discourse that chides the Dutch for their exploitation of the island’s resources. In that sense, this postcolonial re-writing strips the land from the colonizer and the plantocracy’s history due to their inability to replenish the island’s resources and places the land in the hands of the Afro-Curaçaoans. It is under their watch that the land can sustain itself so that they legitimate themselves as the rightful owners: the landscape, and the soil—to speak to the Francophone Creolists—is written as Afro-Curaçaoan. Upon separating himself from the Dutch colonizers, Janchi Pau concludes by describing the Dutch with the very terms used as justifications in colonial discourse to enslave and

⁴⁵ While I am not suggesting that Janchi Pau takes on a maroon identity, his dependency on the land recalls the testimonial *Biografía de un cimarrón* [Biography of a Runaway Slave] (1963) by Miguel Barnett as recounted to him by Estebán Montejo. In it Montejo flees from the plantation to the hills of Cuba where he survives as a maroon by successfully living off the land (42-50).

abuse subaltern groups. That Arion utilizes the Dutch language to denounce the colonizers reasserts a common postcolonial trope of using the master's language to curse him. Additionally, this denouncement is part of Janchi Pau's call for Afro-Curaçaoan autonomy and his investment in the island's independence, as at the time of the novel's publication, Curaçao was still a Dutch colony.

It is precisely Janchi Pau's connection to the land that will lead to his community's emancipation from Dutch colonialism. This is most obvious in his furniture factory, which is in fact a co-operative. The co-operative evokes a collective community and functions as Janchi Pau's starting point for political ambitions. To that end, Janchi Pau's lofty goals begin with the island's natural resources and end with sovereignty. The narrator says "Solema wants to go even further. In a short interview I recently had with her, she said to me, 'First more co-operatives! Then we'll unite all the co-operatives into a political party. A party,' she said, 'on co-operative socialist principles' [Solema wil zelfs verder. In een kort interview, dat ik onlangs met haar had, zei ze tegen me: *Eerst meer coöperatieven! Daarna* gaan we al die coöperatieven samenbundelen in een politieke partij; 'een partij dus,' zei ze, 'op coöperatief-socialistische grondslag'](Vincent 370; 310). Granted Solema is speaking, but the "we" implies both her and Janchi Pau. This characterization of Solema again supports that she is not just an objectified female character as is common in *Négritude* writing. On the other hand, she often educates Janchi Pau in themes ranging from race, history, politics, and economics. Janchi Pau's growing sense of belonging to a larger collective as well as his affiliation to the island facilitates establishing the co-operatives with the idea of political aspirations.

A similar phenomenon of landscape and *Négritude* occurs in *No Telephone to Heaven*. Belinda Edmonson notes that Cliff's "novels attempt to reclaim her African identity, which was 'bred out' of her during her childhood in Jamaica" (186). *No Telephone to Heaven* is a sequel to Michelle Cliff's *Abeng* (1984) and both tell the story of semi-autobiographical character Clare Savage at different moments in her life. Specifically, *No Telephone to Heaven* focuses on Clare as she negotiates her identity in Jamaica, the United States to where her father uproots the family, and England where Clare studies. Clare finally returns to Jamaica as a primary school teacher before becoming involved with an international Black rebel group at the behest of her transgendered and transvestite friend Harry/Harriet. The revolutionaries seek further societal change in a post-Independence society where disparity and hardship still plague the majority of the people, particularly the dark-skinned masses. The group sells marijuana cultivated on Clare's grandmother's rural property to fund itself. However, the story ends when Clare and her group attempt an attack on a British-American film production—here a symbol of neo-colonialism on the island—but are ambushed and killed.⁴⁶

Clare's recognition of her African heritage first comes as a student in the United States when the education system identifies her outright as Black because in America there is "no room for lies in our system. No place for in-betweens" (99). Indeed, being in the United States, which uses an arbitrary White-Black binary, as opposed to Jamaica's multi-level hierarchy (for example, mulatto, quarteroon, octoroon, red, etcetera), forces

⁴⁶ It is unclear whether the army that takes down Clare's group is Jamaican, U.S., or a collaborative effort.

Clare to choose. After Clare's mother, a woman described in *Abeng* as someone who "cherished darkness" (127) returns to Jamaica unable to adapt to the United States, Clare is left with just her father, Boy Savage, the descendant of slaveowners.⁴⁷ Then, when Clare's mother dies, Clare declares that "My mother was a nigger...And so am I" (104), an identity that becomes even more stable in England when she hears White protestors referring to Idi Amin as "the great ape" (138). It is at this moment when Clare stops being a "split character," torn between her slave ancestry and her slave-owner ancestry as Barbara Edlmair suggests (39), and becomes constant in her identity as a Black woman. Like Janchi Pau, her identity becomes more stable with her own rejection of the father, who embodies Europeanness. Clare acknowledges that she can never truly belong as "White" in society based on her experiences of "Otherness" abroad. Realizing her difference, Clare rejects Europeanness altogether to benefit a Blackness that she aligns with a matriarchal opposition to patriarchal Whiteness. Her ongoing psychological issues with her racial identity as a multiracial person seemingly come to a halt upon declaring her Blackness. In short, Clare finds her place by identifying as Black amidst the backdrop of an empowered Black society. At the same time, she also relinquishes her other heritages. In agreement, Edmondson states that "[t]he ideological project in this arrangement is easy to see: Cliff is setting up a dichotomy in the white father/black mother parallel, so that Clare's search for a black identity becomes aligned with a woman-centered, incipiently feminist consciousness" ("Race, Privilege" 188). In fact, in

⁴⁷ In fact, Boy's great-grandfather Judge Savage murdered one hundred slaves that he owned on his large plantation in 1834, on the eve of emancipation (*Abeng* 24).

both novels the active role of women creates a new community that challenges patriarchy. Whether it is Clare's return to her grandmother's house or Arion's acknowledgment of men's debt to women, the matrilineal line becomes an opposition to patriarchal discourse. With that in mind, it is unsurprising that one of the criticisms lodged at the *Créolité* movement has been its reduction of women's roles.

In response to *Éloge de la Créolité*, Maryse Condé co-edited a counter-manifesto, *Penser la Créolité* (1995). This collection of essays challenges *Éloge de la Créolité*, from the way it invents a Creole language that does not reflect the Creole spoken on the streets, to its neglect of Haiti within the Caribbean, to its use of Creoleness as a utopia in Guadeloupe and Martinique, despite the fact that race and class tensions still divide the people (Gyssels 315). One contributor, Thomas Spear explores the masculinist discourse evident in the Creolists' literary movement, which stereotypes and recolonizes the female West Indian's sexuality (148). Indeed, Francophone Creolist discourse reduces the role of the woman, a simplification with which Condé takes umbrage. In her study on Maryse Condé and *Créolité*, Kathleen Gyssels points out that:

Apart from being irritated by the way Antillean *créolistes* persist in portraying the French Caribbean, and by the emphasis put on *creole* as the necessary ingredient in the contemporary novel, Condé is irritated by the representation of the female condition in the novels of *créolité*. A core objective of her writing ever since her first essay on *La Parole des femmes* (1979) has been her struggle against the stock representation of the black female as whore or slave (l'Antillaise soumise, servile et serviable,' nicknamed la 'Doudou') (307).

Similarly, A. James Arnold notes the division between the male Creolist writers and West Indian women writers:

The inescapable conclusion to which this examination leads is that in the French West Indies today there are two literary cultures: one, theoretically driven and linguistically constrained, gendered in terms of the age-old inheritance from the *habitation*, practiced by the male *créolistes*; the other, practiced by a disparate group of women writers who seem to have in common their near total disregard for these same considerations (“The gendering” 40).

Male proponents of *Créolité*, in an effort to assert it as the new ideological movement, have effectively allowed their paternalistic mindset to guide them in creating stock female characters.

Arion and Cliff’s revised *Négritude* further the Antillean woman through alternative histories as well as an allegiance to the land. Like Janchi Pau and Solema, Clare too reclaims history, in her case by distancing herself from the colonial education she once learned. In an interview with the rebel group, Clare emphasizes the importance of seeking out other histories, for she has studied “stories of Anansi...Oshun...Shàngo...I have walked the cane...poked through the ruins...rusted machines marked Glasgow...standing as they were left. I have swum underwater off the cays...some history is only underwater” (193). In this passage, Clare begins to construct a subaltern history around the African cosmovision brought to Jamaica in bondage. These examples emphasized an African diasporic history framed around trickster tales, plantations, and the Middle Passage. The last example, in which “some history is only underwater”

evokes Derek Walcott's poem "Sea is History" (1979) and Edward Kamau Brathwaite's comment that "the unity is submarine" (6) and reinforces a collective history that colonialism has literally attempted to discard.⁴⁸ Although she acknowledges an Arawak history too (193), Clare claims her African heritage, and in either case shows a history devoid of the White plantocracy, because it affords her acceptance into the rebel group and builds camaraderie amongst them; Clare affirms that she is a part of this history: "I'm not outside this history—it's a matter of recognition...memory...emotion" (194). In a Spanish interview with René Depestre for Casa de las Américas, Aimé Césaire reveals that "our Negro heritage was worthy of respect, and that this heritage was not relegated to the past, that its values were values that could still make an important contribution to the world" [ese pasado negro era digno de respeto, ese pasado negro no era únicamente el pasado, que los valores eran valores que todavía podían aportar cosas importantes al mundo] (Pinkham 92; xxx-xxxi). In line with Césaire's comment, Clare uses these examples to assert that the land and the sea become sites of *Négritude* that are used to build a community in opposition to Europeanness.

Clare's grandmother's plot of land again reinforces this notion because in her grandmother, Clare found the genealogical root that allows her to be a part of the rising Afro-Jamaican community. The grandmother embodies the continuity of the African tradition. In the case of *No Telephone to Heaven*, landscape is connected with *Négritude*, femininity, and revolutionary potential: the island becomes the nurturing mother. While this might seem like a reproduction of *Négritude*'s stereotypical vision of the Black woman, Cliff's revised version allows the heroine to recover cultural history on the

⁴⁸ Glissant renders both Walcott and Brathwaite's declarations in *Poétique de la relation*.

feminized land while resisting imperial endeavors. If Maria's return to the plantation in *Mijn zuster de negerin* is a confirmation of her Afro-Curaçaoan side as I argue in Chapter One, then Clare's return to the bush is no different in that racial affirmation. This can be seen on different layers. Firstly, when the rebel group interrogates Clare about her sense of belonging, she replies that "I...if anything, I owe my allegiance to the place my grandmother made" (189). Secondly, this rural plot symbolizes the small Afro-Jamaican farmer interested in his/her own sustenance, and that of his/her neighbors. Clare has offered that the group use the land because "my grandmother believed in using the land to feed people. My mother as well...communists, I guess" (189) and verifies that the rebel group will distribute the surplus to the people around (189). Aside from cultivating marijuana to sell, the group sustains itself and its nearby community with crops—specifically those connected with slaves and their descendants, such as cassava and yams. Yet there are differences between Maria's return and Clare's: notably that Maria returns to a plantation whereas Clare returns to a small plot of land in the bush. The plantation Maria returns to is a site of White patriarchy/Europeanness that shares a connection with a hegemonic metropole. There is no communal sharing but rather a direct relationship of supply and demand through a structured hierarchy of power. The plantation is also where the imperialist endeavor practiced monoculture for large-scale exportation and economic gain. On Clare's small plot, no such connection or production is evident, save for the marijuana sold to the United States. However, even that can be justified as being a part of the illegal sector, meaning that it is an alternative form of economy. Instead of a White patriarchy, the rural plot symbolizes an Afro-matrilineal genealogy; the soil is not

“the same.” Edlmair confirms the importance of the Afro-matrilineal genealogy in *Abeng*: “One of the most complete characters in *Abeng* is that of Clare’s grandmother and Kitty’s mother, Miss Mattie. A small landowner in St. Elizabeth, she is the key figure in her community and in her family, the one who is both the economic and spiritual provider” (45). That genealogy continues with Clare’s mother when Clare finds her mother’s childhood textbooks underneath her grandmother’s house:

Clare slithered beneath her grandmother’s house, drawing her head through widow’s webs, pulling herself through the hard black leavings of rats, hands scraping against fragments of shells embedded in the ground, which signaled the explosive birth of the island...Under this house she found solace from the rest of the company. She found her mother’s things from childhood – schoolbooks, thread-spool dollies, vehicles with whets of shoe-polish tins. Her mother’s schoolbooks – history, literature, geography – opened their wormed pages to a former world (199-200).

This uncovering provides a relationship between the three women that Clare did not fully experience due to her orphaning. In agreement, Alfred Hornung comments that “Clare’s unearthing allows her to restore a spiritual relation with her mother, with the African side of her family, a biological bond which had been broken under the influence of her white father for reasons of color” (95). This relation intersects race and gender (the union between three multi-generational women characterized by their African heritage and their resistance) with land (the bush instead of a plantation as a meeting ground for all three) as Cliff embraces this conventionally gendered imagery to challenge colonial patriarchy. Finally, Clare describes the place as a site that “represented a labor of love—once.”

(189). One can read this comment as a subtle differentiation to the violence that exists on plantations. By returning to this land, Clare indeed stands by her Blackness and complicates creolization by devaluing the plantation (one of the main sites of creolization according to the Creolists) in favor of the bush, a longstanding site of maroonage. Consequently, the maroon reasserts herself (in this case) as the purveyor of an Afro-Antillean identity in response to the Creolists' shift away from the maroon to the plantation slave. In *Lettres créoles* (1991) Chamoiseau and Confiant depict the maroon as outside of creolization for having abandoned the plantation for the hills (34), positioning runaway slaves as "somewhat uncultured isolationists" (Price 130). Furthermore, Arnold recognizes that "within this model of a nascent creole culture, the maroons could not...be the effective vehicle for transmission of the syncretic new culture that would come down to the present day" ("The Gendering" 29). However, for *Négritude*, the maroon symbolizes the free Afro-Antillean whose isolation from society would complicate poetics of hybridity that are based on cultural mixing.⁴⁹ The maroon is the upholder of African cultures, but whose connection to and dependency on the landscape transforms him within a Caribbean space. Similarly, when "at the end of *No Telephone to Heaven*, Clare Savage is burned into the landscape of Jamaica, by gunfire, but she is also enveloped in the deep green of the hills and the delicate intricacy of birdsong" ("Clare Savage as a Crossroads Character" 266), Clare affirms that the landscape is conflated with *Négritude*. It is in that moment that "...the doom of the

⁴⁹ As an example, the maroon becomes the tragic hero who prefers death to life in Aimé Césaire's play *Et les chiens se taisaient* [And the Dogs were Silent] (1956).

creole was sealed” (*If I Could Write This in Fire* 27). In both *Dubbelspel* and *No Telephone to Heaven*, the community takes on an Afrocentric outlook that is joined with a matriarchal resistance to the past. In fact, Clare’s return to the bush recalls Queen Nanny, the leader of the Windward Jamaican maroons whose absence from most major Jamaican history books despite being “the most significant figure in the history of the Jamaican Maroon struggle for freedom” (Gottlieb xiv) speaks to the matriarchal alternative history.⁵⁰ As Cliff alludes to, this alternative history supplants the conflation of the plantocracy with the land that I discussed in Chapter Two and posits an identity built around *Négritude* because it is seen as a progressive form of decolonization and an attempt for social power.

Limitations of *Négritude*

These orphans *do* challenge the master-text, as Loichot sustains is representative of orphan discourse (3), but only insofar as to replace it with a new one ensconced in the same exclusory acts that occur through the privileging of an Afro-Antillean identity. As I will show in the remainder of this chapter, *Négritude* may provide an opposition to Europeanness and creolization as I demonstrate above, but it also continues to establish restrictive limitations on the people because it empowers one race, prolongs binary thinking, and what is more, it forces binary thinking upon others. For those reasons, *Négritude* provides an essentialist and monolithic viewpoint of Blackness and reduces the

⁵⁰ For further treatment on Nanny in relation to Clare, see Patricia Krus, “Claiming Masculinity as Her Own: Maroon Revolution in Michelle Cliff’s *No Telephone to Heaven*,” *Journal of Caribbean Literatures* 3.2 (Spring 2002): 37-50.

complexities of Caribbean identity in support of exclusionary and farcical postplantation community-building. Neither Clare nor Janchi Pau's orphanhood marks the entrance to a composite community (Loichot 118). On the other hand, the orphan discourse in *Dubbelspel* and *No Telephone to Heaven* divulged a strong desire to connect with alternative modes of history in order to empower the racial sectors with whom they identify, even if it is at the expense of other sectors. Édouard Glissant identifies this shift in power: "Most of the nations that liberated themselves from colonization have tended to form themselves around the idea of power, the totalitarian drive of the single root, rather than in a founding relationship with the Other" [La plupart des nations qui se sont libérées de la colonisation ont tendu à se former autour de l'idée de puissance, pulsion totalitaire de la racine unique, et non pas dans un rapport fondateur à l'Autre] (Wing 26-7; 26-7). The choice to identify with one racial sector reveals that *Créolité* is still best thought of as a "manifesto of desire." In Shalini Puri's *The Caribbean Postcolonial: Social Equality, Post-Nationalism and Cultural Hybridity* (2004), manifestos of desire "are programmatic in intention, more properly prescriptions than descriptions, hybridist discourse rather than hybridity discourse" (83). Moreover, manifestos of hybridity:

Seek to create new enunciative positions from which the question of equality could then be framed differently. To do so, they tend to rehearse a utopian community without rehearsing the alternative material conditions necessary to realize such a community. What I am suggesting is that a poetics of hybridity is necessary to constitute a counter-subject of equality *in the absence of equality* (Puri 85).

Créolité tries to move beyond racial boundaries into a cultural wholeness in an effort to mask the racial tensions that exist in the insular regions. It becomes a convenient program when racial tension and inequalities threaten to become unmanageable (Puri 12). As we can see in *Dubbelspel* and *No Telephone to Heaven*, orphans are at the forefront of showing these racial tensions. The way that they racially identify themselves ultimately affects whether the community accepts them or not because the community identity is homogenous.

While Arion presents us with an alternative to Dutch Caribbean literary forefathers like Debrot, Boeli van Leeuwen, and de Haseth who express their concern for the descendant of the White male plantocracy, Janchi Pau's community is exclusive to Afro-Curaçaoans. In Arion's efforts to give voice to the doubly marginalized female Afro-Curaçaoan, he negates the contributions of other racial sectors and therefore challenges creolization. Ineke Phaf echoes this statement by writing that "Europeans don't play any part at all in this novel. Everyone has a dark skin that is compared to the hues of various kinds of wood, the material with which the first co-operative enterprise—the furniture factory—will operate" (163). There *is* a limit then to Arion's Afro-Curaçaoan community. First, the heterosexual desire excludes persons of other sexual orientations. Second, it is not a racially all-inclusive community as hybridity theorists propose. On the other hand, Janchi Pau and the other characters "articulate fierce criticism of foreigners, who dominate the island's economy in general, and of the Dutch colonizers in particular" (Rutgers 549). Where are the Chinese-, Indo-, and Euro-Curaçaoans? The Jewish sector's only mention is in regards to Bleinheim, a seventeenth-

century cemetery (3), suggesting that they are relics of the past. The novel reduces the migrant sector to Campo Alegre, a legal brothel isolated from the city where “one can find female guests from all over the Americas” (3) and perhaps is a true site of ethnic and/or racial mixing. *Dubbelspel*’s setting, Wakota, is conveniently placed in between the brothel and the cemetery and yet seemingly isolated from both, a symbol of its racial isolation. After all, in Wakota streets bear names like “Tula” after the slave leader of an eighteenth-century revolt. This sentiment of *Négritude*, coupled with Arion’s own interest in vindicating Curaçao’s connection to Africa, as seen in his 1957 collection of poetry *Stemmen uit Afrika* [Voices from Africa] bolsters a defense of the Afro-Curaçaoan at the expense of including other racial sectors such as the Euro-Curaçaoan, Indo-Curaçaoan, Chinese Curaçaoan, or the large Spanish-speaking migrant population. In that vein, “the novel was very much a realization of new ideals which dictated texts to hail the potential of Afro-Antillean resistance, creativity, and self-reliance. As such this realization formed an integral part of deeply-rooted feelings of dissatisfaction and anger among the black and racially mixed people on the island...” (Broek 12). Arion appropriated the social transformation that the May Movement introduced, a unifying endeavor, and reduced it to an Afro-Curaçaoan discourse on identity. Ironically, Janchi Pau helps to build an Afro-Curaçaoan community that is as exclusive as the colonial one he is contesting. Writing during an era of vindication for Afro-Curaçaoan peoples, Arion views diasporic community, love, and self-pride as modes of colonial resistance, but paradoxically still within the hegemonic system that he attempts to move away from. Arion uses the sentiment to extend the cover of belonging

to the Afro-Curaçaoan sector, while making Curaçao a stranger to other racial sectors through vengeance and exclusion. Because, as Saidiya Hartman points out, “affection perhaps softens the sting of dishonor *but does not erase it*” (87, my emphasis), the enduring effects of racial tension prompt one to recall the thin line between love and hate in order to see that Arion’s text is monolithic. Arion’s *Dubbelspel* reinforces this mindset as an Afrocentric nationalist model mimics its colonial forbearers and excludes others in order to claim power.

Arion’s essay, “Creole Identity through Chinese Wall: Affinities between Papiamentu and Chinese” (2003) sheds light on his identity politics. A follow up to “The Great Curassow or the Road to Caribbeanness” (1998) which I discussed briefly in Chapter Two, “Creole Identity through Chinese Wall” continues to point out the fallacies of *Créolité* in the Netherlands Antilles. It also reveals Arion’s binary thinking about creolization: “creoleness as we understand it nowadays is basically a ‘miscegenation’ of white and black. And this phenomenon is becoming weaker because of that fact that the black element is fading away, at least in the Netherlands Antilles” (152). The first part of this quote reminds us of the absence of the Indo- and Chinese-Caribbean in *Dubbelspel* because Arion believes that these two ethnicities do not participate in creolization (153). To that point, Arion continues a Black-White paradigm that is apparent in *Dubbelspel* in the dichotomy of Afro-Curaçaoan and Dutch, as well as in the opposition between Janchi Pau (progressive Afro-Curaçaoan) and Manchi Santiano (mimic man). The second part of the quote forces us to question if the Black consciousness present in *Dubbelspel* is Arion’s assertion of a strong African element to offset its “fading.” He continues to

lament the vanishing of the African element, which proponents of creolization often overlook: “The Netherlands Antilles are being continuously replenished with Caucasians from Holland and the rest of the world, East Indians and Chinese. Since these groups generally represent non-creolizing, non-mixing cultures in splendid isolation, creoleness is not reinforced but weakened” (153). It is true that few Africans presently move to or visit the Caribbean in comparison to other ethnic groups. Thus the type of creolization that Arion critiques is one becoming less African while moving towards the colonial perspective of hybridity that is structured around whitening and assimilation. From that viewpoint, it is not coincidental that the Afro-Curaçaoan community that Arion creates in *Dubbelspel* firstly establishes its separation from other communities, particularly the Dutch colonizers, and secondly asserts its *Négritude* through the landscape and history. In short, Arion expresses resistance and subjectivity. Paradoxically, Arion seems to be aware of the limitations of *Négritude* and the tensions that he conveniently avoided in *Dubbelspel*:

Meanwhile, the colored natives or Creole Curaçaoans, who think they own the island (which in reality they own less and less of), treat all these immigrants as condescendingly as possible, especially the Chinese...All immigrants look down on the creoles, through whom they earn their living and through whom they often become rich, and steer clear of them as much as possible (154).

This is not a description of a heterogeneous society, but rather multiple ethnicities/races competing for power. The description also elucidates why Arion took the surging Antilleanist sentiment that rose in the aftermath of the May Movement and made it

specific to the Afro-Curaçaoan sector in *Dubbelspel*: it was an effort to assert subjectivity in a changing society. The result is that the novel overlooks Euro-, Indo- and Chinese-Caribbean contributions to society and in lieu of their contributions, antagonizes or ignores them.

In disagreement with Depestre, who called *Négritude* “a perfectly harmless essentialism” [un essentialisme parfaitement inoffensif] (82), I contend that *Négritude* is still relevant and challenges a poetics of hybridity because it is aware of the racial fragmentation that exists in Caribbean societies in relation to concepts that praise post-racial identity. The privileging of one race is precisely what happens among orphan protagonists in *Dubbelspel* and *No Telephone to Heaven*. What is particularly interesting is that in both novels, the orphan protagonists are multiracial and yet disavow hybridity to choose one fixed identity. For them, *Négritude* becomes a “forced poetics” for belonging. Since society constructs the postcolonial community through Blackness, the protagonists must eschew their other heritages to be a part of the community. Whiteness then, while still maintaining economic hierarchical power (in spite of its small numbers) is associated with a violent colonial past as well as an illegitimate place in society. The hybrid person must choose between home and away, belonging and unbelonging. Rather than being the harbingers of a poetics of hybridity, these orphan protagonists elect to remain within the dichotomous categorizations constructed during colonialism. Lois Parkinson Zamora provides insight as to why authors and/or protagonists opt for the known quantity of stable identities rather than the anxiety of fluidity:

I consistently find that an anxiety about origins impels American writers to search *for* precursors (in the name of community) rather than escape *from* them (in the name of individuation); to connect *to* traditions and histories (in the name of the usable past) rather than dissociate *from* them (in the name of originality)...They are impelled...by the need to locate usable historical precursors and precedents. The search for origins may be ironic and at the same time ‘authentic,’ simulatenously self-doubting and subversive (*Usable Past* 5-6).

In *Dubbelspel*, Janchi Pau is an orphan who is half Afro-Curaçaoan and half-Venezuelan, but identifies himself solely as Afro-Curaçaoan. Although it is unclear as to whether Janchi Pau’s father is Afro-Venezuelan or not, Janchi Pau, particularly because of his orphanage, has the opportunity to identify as Hispanic, Dutch, Curaçaoan, Afro-Curaçaoan, or the possibility to shift between all of them, in line with proponents of hybridity.⁵¹ Similarly, in *No Telephone to Heaven*, Clare Savage recognizes that she has Carib, African, and English heritage (189). In fact, her father passes as “White” on more than one occasion while living in the United States and encourages Clare to do the same. He educated her in the hegemonic colonial history of the island, often bypassing alternative histories and reaffirming his genealogy from the slavocracy. Yet upon the death of her mother, Clare refuses her European and Carib heritage and in a moment of angst, sides with her mother and identifies herself as black (104). Despite the rootlessness afforded them, in both cases, these orphan protagonists prefer a fixed Afro-Caribbean heritage because of the demands of the Afro-Curaçaoan community that they

⁵¹ It should be noted that Janchi Pau’s father abandoned the family when Janchi Pau was a child.

help to construct. In part, this preference has to do with the past as much as it does with the future. As Maryse Condé begrudgingly notes, “Caribbeans tell themselves that they must choose...That which gives prevalence to African elements is immediately characterized as progressive. Vindicating its African heritage, it is opposed to the assimilationist, defender of European values, and therefore, contemptible” [l’Antillais se dit donc qu’il faut choisir...Celui qui donne la prédominance aux éléments venus d’Afrique se voit tout aussitôt qualifié de progressiste. Revendiquant, selon l’expression consacrée, son héritage africain, il s’oppose à l’assimilationniste, défenseur des valeurs européennes et par là, mépresibale] (6). By choosing their African heritage, Janchi Pau and Clare resist the discourse of creolization in favor of “an ongoing yearning after an imagined ideal” (*Writing* 16) that connects them to their mother(land). In fact, rather than entering into a process of *Créolité*, these orphans, like those aligned with Europeanness, reinforce the “splendid isolation” that characterizes “Americanness” and “Caribbeanness” as the Creolists lay out (91-3). Ironically, they choose a specific Afro-Antillean community at the expense of a larger, more encompassing creolized community. This choice is because *Négritude*, despite Arion and Cliff’s projects to move beyond colonialism, benefits one racial heritage over another and effectively becomes its own constrictive system. In so doing, Janchi Pau and Clare continue the colonial dichotomies that colonialism imposed on their respective insular societies as they seek alternative modes to assimilation. Their fixed identities show that the hybrid person must choose his/her racial affiliation amidst the background of identity movements vying for control.

I point to Clare's choices as essential to proclaim her *Négritude* because other scholars have suggested that Cliff's novel seeks wholeness, or *totalité*. Nada Elia for example argues that Clare, and by extension Cliff, reconciles her European ancestry with her African and indigenous. Elia states that "...in claiming her despised identity, Cliff does more than embrace her blackness, she embraces all of the components of her mixed racial, gender, class, and cultural subjectivities, thus transcending various divisive polarized binaries" (45). To strengthen her analysis, Elia also refers to Harry/Harriet as someone who, because s/he "never undergoes a physical transformation, remaining dual in body, as is the fate of all Creoles, diasporans, and biracials for whom transformation is impossible" (61). I question these notions because neither Clare nor Harry/Harriet seeks this wholeness in the equilibrium that Elia suggests. Clare, like Cliff, privileges her *Négritude*: both are light-skinned women who identify as Black (O'Driscoll 56). Similarly, Harry/Harriet chooses to be Harriet at the end of the novel: when s/he confirms that "the choice is mine, man, is made. Harriet live and Harry be no more" (168) she is choosing a stable identity that asserts her feminine side. Correspondingly, when considering Elia's statement that "through the Clare and Harry/Harriet couple, Cliff shows the possibility of reconciliation despite obvious differences" (71), we have to consider the alternative: that Clare shows Harry/Harriet how to disregard a part of oneself in exchange for stability. As such, Clare not only upholds binary thinking, but models it for others. To that end, I agree with Belinda Edmondson who states that "for Cliff, blackness is the goal, creoleness the *obstacle*" as she aims "to make the creole text black" ("The Black Mother" 78). This goal opposes the Jamaican government's motto

“out of many, one people” and instead favors the Afro-Jamaican sector. For Cliff, “ultimately the creole must choose blackness if she is to be Jamaican. She must dissolve her white heritage into this fundamentally black identity” (“The Black Mother” 78). To counter poetics of hybridity then, here is a group of people able to choose hybridity, but who instead choose the known quantity of a stable Black identity because the national identity has constructed Blackness as fundamental.

As in Harry/Harriet’s quest for identity, society dictates that Clare too must think dichotomously. When the rebel group that she joins first interviews her, the interrogator asks Clare to define her racial affiliation:

“To whom do you owe your allegiance?”

“I have African, English, Carib in me”

“Can we trust you?”

“I...if anything, I owe my allegiance to the place my grandmother made” (189).

As a hybrid character, Clare’s trustworthiness is unreliable because her affiliation could be to any one of her three ethnicities. As proponents of hybridity would state, these three ethnicities afford Clare the necessary slippage to embrace a totality. Within Bhabha’s concept of “the third space,” she should be able to both unite and keep separate the three ethnicities. In that case, the mulatto is a threat to colonial binaries because she disrupts them. To that effect, it is ironic that Clare must participate in colonial binaries in order to join a group that aims to rebel against them. In order to demonstrate that she is a willing fighter, Clare does not unite the three ethnicities; she drops two of her racial identities and chooses her grandmother’s place, which as I have already described above, is a

symbol of her Afro-Jamaican identity. Because she does that, Clare is now able to belong in this rebel community and although her lighter skin causes her to still stand out, her allegiance is no longer in doubt: Clare is Black. *Négritude* forces fixed identities at the expense of creolization because the fluidity of creolization causes fears and anxieties. Accordingly, when multiracial people align themselves with *Négritude* they prolong colonial mindsets as they cast aside or minimize their other racial heritages. Ironically in regards to orphan protagonists, the lack of parents does not provide them with rootlessness to shift in between ethnicities. On the other hand, their orphaning furnishes the desire to identify with the parent that they lost and to be a part of that parent's community: as in Chapter Two, stable identities make that desire obtainable, even if it forces binary thinking and relegates one group to the "Other." Cliff, like Arion, advances postplantation belonging through a static Black identity that does not incorporate rootlessness into revolutionary discourse: since there are other multi-racial and light-skinned rebels in the group, one can only assume that they too must pledge their allegiance to *Négritude* at the expense of a multiracial heritage.

Conclusion

Trapped in models of cultural duality, Janchi Pau and Clare must identify with the African worldview or with the colonizers' historical and cultural hierarchies. In choosing a Black identity, Janchi Pau and Clare vindicate the African Diaspora's connection to land and community that highlights a re-writing of history and a sense of belonging to an island that was the endpoint of forced migration for their ancestors. This search for a Black consciousness was and remains necessary after nearly 500 years of colonial

brainwashing and social conditioning that left minds “bleached” (*If I Could Write This in Fire* ix). It is in opposition to this bleaching that *Négritude* still plays a role in Caribbean societies, despite the wishes of hybridists. Recalling Césaire's statement that “as long as there are negroes, *Négritude* will exist” [La *Négritude* existera tant qu'il y aura des nègres un peu partout] (Rowell 55-57; 56), one sees a continual exploration of African heritage up until the present day: Damian Marley and Nas's collaborative album *Distant Relatives* (2010), for example, affirms themes of ancestry, diaspora and the plight of Africa. In fact, the name of the album alludes to the diasporic connection that these two distinct musicians (Marley a reggae artist from Jamaica and Nas a rapper from New York) share.⁵² For hybrid theorists to overlook or attempt to move beyond Afrocentric cultural production then is to negate its strong presence in contemporary Caribbean societies, such as the Lucumis in Cuba, Vodou practitioners in Haiti, maroon societies in Jamaica and Suriname, and Rastafarians in Jamaica and Brazil. Returning to Depestre, *Négritude* cannot be disregarded at this point despite the alternative that creolization offers in seeking to move beyond racial distinction to cultural oneness. In that sense, George Handley is correct to declare that:

No matter how aggressively some may wish to dismiss race as a category of social and moral meaning so as to move on to societal organization beyond race, until the lived experience of those marked by signs of racial difference no longer

⁵² Paradoxically, Damian Marley's genealogy is not solely African. His paternal great-grandfather was born in Sussex, England while his maternal grandmother was a Euro-Canadian. However, this orphan thwarts his own hybridity and chooses Blackness, a recurring trend in this chapter.

differs in any significant way from those not so marked, racial difference will continue to require our measured judgment (*Postslavery* 187-8).

Janchi Pau and Clare's decision to identify with *Négritude*, in spite of their hybrid compositions, suggests that orphans eschew their rootlessness in an eagerness to feel affiliation to a community and at the same time, participate in excluding others. It is, after all, their orphaning and subsequent search for (mother)land that leads them to choose a stable identity. Orphan protagonists frustrate creolization because instead of using their rootlessness to work outside of fragmented racial communities, they would rather choose a fixed identity to connect with their lost parent. In order to do that though they become a part of a rising postplantation community that commits the same errors as the colonial one before it. Arion's *Dubbelspel* and Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven* reinforce this colonial mindset as an Afrocentric nationalist model mimics its colonial forbearers and excludes others in order to claim power.

In sum, poetics of hybridity seek to right their perceived wrongs of *Négritude* by offering a supposedly more inclusive community in their ideology. On the other hand, *Négritude*, specifically Cliff and Arion's revised versions which presents the woman as heroine instead of auxiliary, attempts to reassert itself by pointing to the insufficiencies of ideologies of hybridity, particularly in regards to history and the role of the woman. The irony is that in both cases, in their conflicting attempts to correct the other, both ideologies end up practicing racially homogenous acts that are reminiscent of a colonial hegemonic system. Therefore, they both reveal the farce that is community building in

the Caribbean. It is for that reason that we will see in the final chapter orphans that show no affiliation to any community in the Caribbean.

Chapter Four

Not of 'This House': Fanonian Nonbeing and the 'Staying' Orphan

In chapters two and three, I examined orphans whose racial affiliation takes precedent over a poetics of hybridity. Through an allegiance to Europeanness or *Négritude*, those orphans contest creolization by envisioning a nation that rests on colonial binaries. While their outlook may differ as to which racial sector has power, the two visions share a common interest of nation-building. To be exact, those affiliated with Europeanness seek to preserve their power and social status within the community (as in *Los soles truncos* and *Amour*), whereas those affiliated with *Négritude* seek to topple those very hierarchies and assume the role of forging an autonomous nation (as in *Dubbelspel* and *No Telephone to Heaven*). In this, my final chapter, I am interested in orphans who have neither affiliation to nor interest in their insular community; they thwart community because they are “staying,” to borrow Saidiya Hartman’s concept.

In *Lose Your Mother* (2007), Hartman relates a journey she took along a former slave route in Ghana. Blending personal experience with research, she traces the history of the Atlantic slave trade. Hartman uses “staying” to characterize the effects of slavery that are still present today in the Americas. It is a result of not fully belonging in the Americas, but being unable to belong in an ever-transforming Africa. “Staying,” Hartman puts forth, “is living in a country without exercising any claims on its resources. It is the perilous condition of existing in a world in which you have no investments” (88). What is more, “‘staying’ is having never resided in a place that you can say is yours. It is being ‘of the house’ but not having a stake in it. Staying implies transient quarters, a makeshift

domicile, a temporary shelter, but no attachment or affiliation” (88). In this chapter, I will utilize the notion of “staying” to challenge the ideology of the Martinican school of creolization in the Caribbean as the endless fusing of various cultures into one collective heterogeneous community. Antiguan Jamaica Kincaid’s nihilist novel *The Autobiography of My Mother* (1995) and Maryse Condé’s *La migration des cœurs* [Windward Heights] (1995) are two such texts that exemplify the concept of “staying” by giving voice to subalterns Xuela, a multiracial (African, Carib, and Scottish) orphan protagonist and Razyé, a subaltern and racially ambiguous orphan. Perhaps paradoxically, I will apply Hartman’s ideas on “staying” to not just the Afro-Antillean sector, but also the descendants of the indigenous sectors who the Spaniards originally enslaved shortly after the Columbian encounter; I also use the concept to discuss an Indo-Caribbean/Afro-Caribbean protagonist who struggles to feel a sense of belonging due to the fact that he does not fit within a White-Black spectrum.⁵³ “Staying” then serves as a valuable reminder of the fragmentation that exists within insular society. It elucidates the disjuncture between races on the island at a time when some Caribbean race theorists, such as the Francophone Creolists, are declaring the end of racial dynamics of power. Specifically, it contests the practicality of these ideologies and theories of hybridity in the Caribbean by focusing on people who have no affiliation because colonialism decimated the region, depleted its resources, and forced people to migrate there. I argue that these texts complicate ideologies of a post-racial Caribbean by revealing societies still

⁵³ I say “paradoxically” because I am aware that I am fusing an African Diasporic idea with Carib and Indo-Caribbean peoples in order to frustrate creolization.

fragmented by racial and colonial hierarchies because communities as hegemonic apparatuses do not "remedy the isolation of being severed from your kin and denied ancestors" (Hartman 87). This absence of affiliation or attachment cannot be overlooked, for why should there be an affiliation with the island? Colonialism and particularly slavery created orphans by splitting up families.⁵⁴ Additionally one would have to question to what extent families existed, as the brutal demands of the slave-owner often led to forced breeding among slaves and the abandonment of slave reproduction and the discouragement of nuclear families when slave reproduction proved to be uneconomical (Reddock 66-9). Without parents around to teach their children about their history, people became disconnected from the surrounding society, a legacy that continues into the twentieth-century. I place a special emphasis on Hartman's concept to highlight the isolation that Xuela and Razyé experience due to their orphanhoods while I will also discuss the consequences of a lack of affiliation as a disruption to poetics of hybridity.

What interests me is showing the limits of creolization theory within a multiracial society. My argument against Creoleness as a workable concept is thusly consonant with Shalini Puri's reading of creolization as a utopian model for future multicultural peoples, but not a truthful description of the present (83-105) since the Caribbean's continuing racial tensions reveal cultures starkly opposed to the sort of singularizing racial and cultural identity in which "history is a braid of histories" [*Histoire est une tresse*

⁵⁴ Verene Shepherd states that "[a]s chattels their family life could be controlled by their owners and their children and spouses could be sold or transferred to a different country or estate within the same country. In fact, slaves were generally forbidden to marry, except by their owners' consent and could not cohabit particularly if the parties were from different estates" (41).

d’histoires] (Taleb-Khyar 88; 26). Through cultural sameness, the Francophone Creolists aim to create a sense of belonging. However, they also overlook the fact that, to borrow from Cornel West, “race matters.”⁵⁵ *La migration des cœurs* and *The Autobiography of My Mother* discredit the thesis of *Éloge de la Créolité* (1989) by showing that the Guadeloupean and Dominican communities do not fit into any ideal of Creoleness; that daily life there does not fulfill the desire for a harmonious multiracial society. It is made clear that the inhabitants of the Caribbean do not easily accept strangers, especially of racially ambiguous or subaltern origins, such as the protagonists of Condé and Kincaid’s novels. Instead of encountering an exaltation of Creole society, Condé and Kincaid’s readers find the discriminatory and racist attitude of Guadeloupean and Dominican people towards outsiders. What, then, does the theory of *Créolité* mean on islands whose inhabitants are vengeful, envious, angry, and suspicious? (Gyssels 315-6).⁵⁶ “Staying” responds to this question because *Créolité* loses its discursive power when people feel no sense of affiliation to the island. In terms of “staying” one must only consider Rastafari sects in the Caribbean. By keeping their distance in the bush, these groups are able to practice African traditions with little integration into mainstream society. What is more, their perpetual desire to return to Africa means that they are not affiliated with their island’s community: dub poet and reggae musician Joe Ruglass coined a popular Rastafarian saying that “Jamaica is a islan’, but it is not I lan’” (qtd. in Chevannes 1).

⁵⁵ Here I refer to Cornel West’s seminal text *Race Matters* (1993), in which he examines the ongoing racial debate in the United States.

⁵⁶ Kathleen Gyssels is referring to Condé’s novel *Traversée de la mangrove* (1989), however, I find her assessment to be applicable to discuss *La migration des cœurs* and *The Autobiography of My Mother*.

Like Rastafarians, Kincaid contests the call for collectivity and creolization in the Caribbean by privileging an individual search for mother(land) through the search of roots and in conjunction with Condé, by depicting a community that excludes others except for in moments of reaffirmation. Herein lies the isolation that prevents a postplantation collective community. While others hold that different kinship networks arising from slavery promote new modes of family transmission and thinking of community, such a concept undervalues the role of the biological parent.⁵⁷ Françoise Vergès points out that successful relationships cannot make up completely for failed parent-child transmission: “It was not possible to be free of an essential feature of slavery—the denial of the paternal function—simply by formulating a fraternity” (40). Although Vergès’s comment refers to colonial Réunion, the extension of colonialism, in which the paternal function is still denied for different reasons in postplantation societies, indicates that a collectivity is not sufficient; the children’s desire to know his/her parents is still ever-present. In recognizing the role of the biological parent, both Kincaid and Condé anticipate Puri’s claim that hybridity discourses aim to forge a collective community, but because they are a forced poetics, they are better thought of as “a philosophical or theoretical construct plagued by conceptual weakness and contradiction”

⁵⁷ See Valérie Loichot, *Orphan Narratives: The Postplantation of Faulkner, Glissant, Morrison, and Saint-John Perse*, ed. A. James Arnold (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 2007) and George B. Handley, *Postslavery Literatures in the Americas: Family Portraits in Black and White*, ed. A. James Arnold (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 2000).

(93).⁵⁸ The orphan protagonists in Kincaid's *The Autobiography of My Mother* and Condé's *La migration des cœurs* substantiate the polemics of creolization theory through orphans that thwart community-building to search for their own individual roots and orphans who demonstrate no affiliation to their community.

Notable writers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries such as José Martí, Lafcadio Hearn, Fernando Ortiz, Edward Kamau Brathwaite, Derek Walcott, and Caryl Phillips have promoted creolization to differing degrees and under different terms throughout the Caribbean as a unifying ideal. In *Le Discours antillais* [Caribbean Discourse] (1981), Édouard Glissant aims to move beyond the identity of the individual to consider a larger collective identity when he states that “[t]he question we need to ask in Martinique will not be, for instance: ‘Who am I?’ —a question that from the outset is meaningless—but rather: ‘Who are we?’” [La question à poser à un Martiniquais ne sera par exemple pas, ‘Qui suis-je?’, question inopératoire au premier abord, mais bien: ‘Qui sommes-nous?'] (Dash 86; 265-6). Glissant's call for a universalizing community would serve as the inspiration to Francophone Creolists Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant, whose *Éloge de la Créolité* [In Praise of Creoleness] (1989) will be my reference point for poetics of hybridity in this chapter.

“Neither Europeans, nor Africans, nor Asians, we proclaim ourselves Creoles” [Ni Européens, ni Africains, ni Asiatiques, nous nous proclamons Créoles] (Taleb-Khyar 75;

⁵⁸ The novel itself points to a lack of community through its narrative form as it “unfolds as a 228-page monologue rendered in unconventional, haunting prose. The text is devoid of direct speech, and there is not a single quotation or line of dialogue” (Edwards 115).

13). The Creolists' poetics of Creoleness focuses on community by privileging culture over race; through orality, Creole language, cuisine, cultural production and unbounded racial classifications, the peoples of the Caribbean can supposedly feel a sense of unity despite their racial differences. That unity begins with the legacy of the plantation: "[g]enerally resting upon a plantation economy, *these populations are called to invent the new cultural designs allowing for a relative cohabitation between them*" [Réunis en général au sein d'une économie plantationnaire, *ces populations sont sommées d'inventer de nouveaux schèmes culturels permettant d'établir une relative cohabitation entre elles*] (Taleb-Khyar 92; 31). But at the core of their poetics of hybridity, the Creolists "articulate identity through the exploration and exploitation of pluralism, ambiguity, and instability" (Murdoch 3). The Francophone Creolists' call for a collective "we" in which "it seems urgent to quit using the traditional raciological distinctions and to start again designating the people of our countries, regardless of their complexion, by the only suitable word: *Creole*" [il apparaît urgent que l'on sorte des habituelles distinctions raciologiques et que l'on reprenne l'habitude de designer l'homme de nos pays sous le seul vocable qui lui convienne, quelle que soit sa complexion: *Créole*] (Taleb-Khyar 90; 29) is, above all, their own singular version of *Créolité* for the Caribbean where European colonial powers divided peoples by class, race, gender, and language. The Creolists' attempt to move beyond these divisions towards a global community, where "a maelstrom of signifieds" [un maelström de signifiés] fuse into "a single signifier" [un seul significant] (Taleb-Khyar 88; 27) seeks to overlook a specific Caribbean history of racial violence and division, not just between colonizer and colonized, but across various

colonized sectors. Insisting on a post-racial and post-national world that has become popular in academic circles in the United States and Europe (*Friends* 350), their theory on heterogeneity through cultural sameness has become a commodity within “the hegemony of corporate diversity, as the ideological face of global capitalism...reproduced by the millions of public relations images in which social harmony is achieved through relations of difference” (Yúdice 217) that does not account for racial experience.⁵⁹ One need only observe the racial tensions across the Caribbean, from the events leading up to *trinta di mei* [30th of May] movement in Curaçao that I discussed in Chapter Three to the racial relations between Indo-Caribbeans and Afro-Caribbeans in Trinidad and Guyana to see that their ideology does not relate to the cultural production nor the lived racial experience in the Caribbean. The legacy of that racial tension is still present today in Caribbean society and serves as evidence of how looking at cultural commonalities has pragmatic limitations when one factors in race.⁶⁰ In short, while Caribbean discourse is associated with a utopic poetics of creolization that

⁵⁹ Bongie and Yúdice refer to Glissant and his later work in their comments; however, I find them apt to discuss the Francophone Creolists who in many ways used Glissant’s popularity and ideas in a globalized community to promote their own work.

⁶⁰ To be certain, a similar premise of hybridity exists within the Anglophone Caribbean and is perhaps more accessible to Kincaid, a native English speaker. Like the Creolists, Edward Brathwaite is also hopeful that “...a base, evolving its own residential ‘great’ tradition, could well support the development of a new parochial *wholeness*, a difficult but possible creole authenticity” (311, my emphasis). Brathwaite defines creolization as “a way of seeing the society, not in terms of white and black, master and slave, in separate nuclear units, but as contributory parts of a whole” (307). Paradoxically his definition of a “whole” focuses on a black/white dichotomy that excludes other races living in Jamaica.

has emerged from the dystopic plantocracy, the works of Condé and Kincaid pose ongoing challenges to the idealized model of heterogeneity by elaborating on disjuncture and racial antagonism.

The theory of creolization suggests a harmonious project in the sense that it is “an identity of coexistence [that] is necessary and is an imperative to reject the exclusiveness of the One and its militant isolation” (Pépin 98). However, by declaring everyone in the Caribbean Creoles, as the Francophone Creolists do in the opening line of their manifesto, they paradoxically insert themselves as a new hegemonic power that categorizes the people despite the ideology’s aims to move beyond classification. In fact, not only does the manifesto tell Caribbean peoples that they are Creoles, it also tells the insular people what they are *not*: the opening line of the manifesto is “Neither Europeans, nor Africans, nor Asians” (75). Through this declaration, the Creolists intend to eliminate racial difference and exclude those that seek to maintain that specific heritage. In “Order, Disorder, Freedom, and the West Indian Writer” (1993), Maryse Condé expresses her own concerns with the Creolists’ opening statement by exclaiming that “...the opening lines possess the violence of a declaration of war...” (128).

Although Condé is of the same generation as the Francophone Creolists, she does not agree with the sentiments expressed in their manifesto. On the contrary, Condé describes the ideology presented in *Éloge de la Créolité* as limited and similar to past ideologies, such as *Négritude*. She declares that “In this respect, *Éloge de la Créolité* gives an impression of a *déjà vu* or *déjà entendu*. Moreover, reading it, one seems to witness the emergence of a new order, even more restrictive than the existing one” (“Order” 129-30).

Elaborating on these restrictions, she adds that “the tedious enumeration of the elements of popular culture which is made in the first pages of the manifesto leaves very little freedom for creativity. Are we condemned *ad vitam aeternam* to speak of vegetable markets, story tellers, ‘dorlis,’ ‘koutem’...? Are we condemned to explore to saturation the resources of our narrow islands?” (“Order” 130). Condé’s point is that, contrary to what the Creolists profess, there can be and are multiple creolizations that happen and so Caribbean peoples should not limit themselves to one ideology. Yet that is precisely what the Creolists aim to do: it “is singular because it presumes to impose law and order” (“*Créolité*” 106). The ideology of *Créolité*, which seeks to be progressive in its post-racial claims in fact falls prey to the trap of universalism and essentialism that it denounces (Burton 156).

In keeping with Condé, another primary issue lies in the Creolists’ search for “truths” [vérités] (Taleb-Khyar 101; 40). The author of *La migration des cœurs* writes that “It could be a long analysis of the text to show that it reflects the colonial obsession that we have already denounced. Retain just the first sentence: ‘We must seek our truths’” [On pourrait faire longuement l’analyse de ce texte afin de démontrer qu’il traduit bien cette obsession coloniale que nous avons déjà dénoncée. Retenons simplement la première phrase: ‘Il faut chercher nos vérités’] (“Chercher” 310). In *La migration des cœurs*, Condé employs Razyé’s ambiguous genealogy as a means to ridicule and pervert that specific Creolist search for truths as his racial ambiguity underscores these colonial obsessions for geneses and genealogical origins. Throughout the novel, Condé never reveals Razyé’s racial composition (although I will suggest he is a *dougl*a or *bata coolie*

below) despite the curiosity of the other characters. Furthermore, the author avoids other truths surrounding origins because they bring tragedy, not cultural affirmation as the Creolists imply. In one instance, Razyé's son Razyé II severs his roots to construct his own genealogy. He renames himself Premier-né [First-born] which serves as a reminder of both privilege and rupture. Since the first-born is often the inheritor, Premier-né's disavowal of his genealogy underscores his desire to evade his origins. He makes his rupture all the more apparent when he moves to the small neighboring island Marie-Galante precisely in order to escape his vengeful father after Razyé learns that both son and father have been sleeping with Razyé's mistress. There he meets Cathy II who the reader recognizes as Premier-né's half-sister. The two eventually marry but the marriage is ill-fated as Cathy II dies in childbirth. After her death, a diary containing the truth about the couple's biological relationship emerges. Premier-né, who by now suspects that Cathy II was in fact his half-sister, throws the diary into the sea without reading it, choosing ignorance and opacity over truth. Yet for all of Premier-né's ignorance and self-naming, he still cannot escape his filiation. The child becomes a perversion of the "truths" and origins that the Creolists seek. In agreement, Emily Meyers contends that:

This uncertain conclusion offers weak consolation, if we read the romances in the novel allegorically in regards to the nation. If the child born at the end of a tale offers hope for a new beginning, a child born from an incestuous union becomes a flimsy vehicle to stage the possibilities of a new society. Condé perverts the genealogical logic behind both *créolité* and colonial discourse to stage a gender critique of the sexual politics they espouse (147).

For Condé, this incestuous union in conjunction with Razyé's ambiguous racial composition clarifies that the obsessive search for origins present in *Éloge de la Créolité* only causes pain and tragedy that are remnants of colonialism, the *déjà vu* to which she refers.

La migration des cœurs provides a response in opposition to *Éloge de la Créolité*. This adaptation of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, which John Thieme calls a "postcolonial con-text" for its ability "to take a classic English text as its departure point as a strategy to question the authority of the canon of English literature" (1), builds upon the romantic love triangle between Cathy, Heathcliff, and Linton, renamed in Condé's work as Cathy, Razyé, and Aymeric, respectively. Condé gives more attention to narrative voices, as she uses ten narrators of different races, genders, cultures and social classes. Additionally, while the first third of *La migration des cœurs* reads as a Caribbean adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*, Condé's novel also moves beyond the original romantic triangle to tell the stories of their offspring. Perhaps of most interest to this chapter, Condé brings to light Heathcliff's supposed Romany ancestry by transposing to Caribbean society the Victorians' racial tropes that the colonial context introduced. Indeed, "problematic parentage becomes a major trope in postcolonial con-texts, where the genealogical bloodlines of transmission are frequently delegitimized by multiple ancestral legacies, usually but not always initiated by imperialism" (Thieme 8). Condé accentuates the importance of Razyé's racial ambiguity throughout the novel; she codes him as dark-skinned to Aymeric's Whiteness, and Cathy is both sentimentally and racially stuck in the middle. In fact, colonial race discourse in the novel dictates romance

and union; the mulatto Cathy enters the world of Whiteness through marriage. Later, Razyé and Aymeric's quarrel causes racial animosity among their children. Maria Cristina Fumagalli points out that:

In *Windward Heights*, most victims are mixed-blood characters affected by psychological violence who succumb to a self-destructive desire to become white. Yet the novel also reveals how abruptly they can become prey to a burning and self-alienating urge to see themselves as blacks; the emphasis, therefore, lays more on the crippling nature of the strategically produced need for an artificially pure and stable identity (whichever that might be) than on what we may call the requirements of lactification (*Caribbean* 59).

The novel was well-received among the Caribbean public, as its near-immediate translation to English (by Condé's husband Richard Philcox) and inclusion in the 1998 Faber Caribbean Series indicate. This series' objective was to "publish the finest work being produced in the Caribbean and the Caribbean diaspora, in the four major languages of the region: English, French, Spanish and Dutch. It contains original work, including classic texts, much of which is published for the first time in English" (Condé, *Windward Heights* back cover). Alongside Wilson Harris' *The Palace of the Peacock* (1960), Frank Martinus Arion's *Double Play* (1973) Gabriel García Márquez's and Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza's *The Fragrance of Guava* (1982), Condé's *La migration des cœurs* established itself as a twentieth-century classic within three years of its original publication ("Maryse Condé's *La*" 195).

Returning to Glissant's call for a collective "we," he may address Martinique, but his question takes on an extended meaning through the Creolists' aim to speak to the Caribbean, and even a globalized world, as a whole. In that context, the question resonates with Dominica and Guadeloupe, the insular settings of the two texts. Like Martinique, Dominica and Guadeloupe's population consists largely of peoples of African, European, Carib, Syrian, Lebanese, and Asian descent. In *The Autobiography of My Mother* the orphan Xuela is unable to make valuable contributions, by her own account, to the growth of a collective "we" precisely because she is an orphan who spends her life searching for her Self.⁶¹ Indeed, Xuela's plight to find individual meaning in life after the death of her mother hews more closely to Hartman's assertions about "staying" than the Creolist project of postplantation community-building. Poetics of hybridity, such as *Éloge de la Créolité* do not account for the complexities of the individual search for Self and mother(land), prominent in Kincaid's work through the use of an orphan protagonist who attempts to make sense of her mother's absence, her father's colonialist mindset, and the hostile surroundings of an insular society. As I noted in my dissertation introduction, the orphan trope is used as a relevant motif "for the dispossession of blacks in the West Indian novel. The result of their forced exile is an endless search to reclaim a lost motherland" (Ormerod 1). This polemic of not belonging is particular to the Caribbean, a site of coming-and-going that dates back to the Arawaks migrating from the mainland prior to the arrival of the Europeans. Ironically, this

⁶¹ In concordance, Mary Ellen Snodgrass comments that "...the motherless Xuela Claudette Richardson Bailey allows orphanhood to define her 70 years" (55).

dispossession also includes Xuela. Despite being indigenous, she is a “staying” orphan because the Afro-Dominicans view the Carib peoples as exterminated relics of the past and thus, unable to be part of the present. Twentieth-century Caribbean society has largely eradicated and rendered the Carib culture insignificant: Wilson Harris notes that ‘there are collections of Amerindian artifacts throughout the West Indies but...[these] legacies are regarded as basically irrelevant to, or lacking significance for, the late twentieth-century Caribbean’ (*The Womb* 124). From her stepmother’s attempt to poison her to her schoolteacher calling Xuela evil and possessed because of her ability to retain information – and then pointing to her Carib heritage as evidence of this evilness (16-7) – Xuela is constantly relegated to a peripheral position that borders on extinction. The indigenous dispossession is accordingly one of lost motherland and subsequent subjugation. Furthermore, there is the ever-present reminder of their near-complete extermination that the Afro-Dominican community uses to separate themselves from Xuela. It is the crisis of never knowing her mother, who died during childbirth, that leaves Xuela obsessively attempting to put together her mother’s history and wondering what her life would have been had she known her. It is precisely *not* knowing that raises questions of race, gender, and community, marking Xuela as an outsider “staying” in an inhospitable Dominican backdrop. More to the point, she is not ready to move beyond her racial heritage, of which she has questions. What is more, once the rest of the community identifies her solely as being Carib, they subsequently exclude her from the community. Because of this exclusion and the inability to come to terms with her roots in *The Autobiography of My Mother*, Xuela “stays” rather than belongs in society. In that

sense, being an orphan is central to contesting community-building because orphans still favor racial heritage over cultural sameness and similarly, society still practices exclusion over inclusion. Both notions complicate *Créolité* as a model of heterogeneity that exalts oneness and cultural unity.

In order to bring attention to Xuela's inability to reconcile her childhood and join a collective "we," I will examine Kincaid's novel alongside Maryse Condé's *La migration des cœurs*. Set in Guadeloupe in the 1890s and the early twentieth century, this text describes the flawed relationship of racially ambiguous Razyé (the Heathcliff figure) and mulatto Cathy Gagneur as well as their offspring using a polyphonic Faulknerian narrative style. The novel is set against the backdrop of social and racial unrest in the Caribbean, particularly Guadeloupe, Cuba and Dominica. Although there are multiple orphans in the novel, I want to focus on Razyé as yet another orphan who challenges community-building as promoted through creolization theory by "staying." Xuela and Razyé are similar in their longing for a mother and the way that others use them to construct binaries of Self/Other. However, the two differ, as I show below, in the ways that they "stay:" whereas Xuela largely isolates herself from society, Razyé obtains a prominent role in Guadeloupean politics. To that point, Xuela's "staying" is on a more personal level while Razyé's "staying" affects a large population.

Fanonian Nonbeing and Isolation in *The Autobiography of My Mother*

Xuela questions her existence from the beginning of the text when she recounts the defining moment of her childhood:

My mother died at the moment I was born, and so for my whole life there was nothing standing between myself and eternity; at my back was always a bleak, black wind. I could not have known at the beginning of my life that this would be so; I only came to know this in the middle of my life, just at the time when I was no longer young and realized that I had less of some of the things I used to have in abundance and more of some of the things I had scarcely at all. And this realization of loss and gain made me look backward and forward: at my beginning was this woman whose face I had never seen, but at my end was nothing, no one between me and the black room of the world. I came to feel that for my whole life I had been standing on a precipice, that my loss had made me vulnerable, hard, and helpless; on knowing this I became overwhelmed with sadness and shame and pity for myself (3-4).

Although the opening lines might suggest a sort of independence in which only Xuela can determine her life without having to consider the desires of a mother figure, Xuela forever links her life to the death of her mother. The loss affects her outlook on life as she delves into a deep solitude that eschews a collective community. To have a mother is to have a history but because Xuela will never fully know her maternal lineage, she is devoid of a past that contributes to identity formation in the present. Without a source of initiation into the community (a lack of mother(land) and a lack of history), Xuela endures the emptiness of a “bleak, black wind.” From that initial moment onward, Xuela’s life is one of constant hardship. Adding to her abandonment, her half-Scottish, half-African father passes her off to his laundrywoman, Ma Eunice, who raises her

alongside her own children. He only sees her once every fortnight (6). In her childhood then, Xuela is without any constant parental guidance on how to be a member of a community. It is through this isolation of the individual that Kincaid dramatizes the history of the island and the alienation of the Caribbean subject (Edwards 122-3). After Xuela writes a letter to her father pleading for help, he takes her to live with him and his new family. There her step-mother unsuccessfully tries to poison her and teaches her own children to despise her (34). At the age of fourteen, her father sends her to live with his acquaintance, Monsieur LaBatte in Dominica's capital city Roseau. At the urging of Madame LaBatte, Xuela enters into a sexual relationship with Monsieur LaBatte in hopes that Xuela gives her husband the one thing that she cannot: a child (70-7). Xuela responds to these demands by having an abortion before leaving the family for good (82). Afterwards a brief love affair ensues with a stevedore, Roland, which ends when he pressures Xuela to have his child (175-6). However, Xuela has already decided that she will never be a mother (97). Xuela later endears herself to Philip Bailey, a married Englishman and doctor bent on repeating the colonial past through his attempts at dominating nature with his gardening (143). Xuela describes his wife Moira as a White woman who denounces Blacks to reaffirm her own identity. She dies from a hallucinogenic plant that poisons her body, which Xuela gives to her.⁶² It is then when Xuela marries Philip, even though she does not love him and the two leave Roseau to live out their remaining days in a Carib community in the country (150-166). I direct the reader through these moments of Xuela's life not only to show the hardship that Xuela

⁶² Ironically the plant turns Moira's skin a dark black prior to killing her.

endures, but also to depict the greedy, self-loathing, and loveless community that surrounds her. Moreover, it also underscores the moments that lead Xuela to the following conclusions at the end of her life:

Who was I? My mother died at the moment I was born. You are not yet anything at the moment you are born. This fact of my mother dying at the moment I was born became a central motif of my life. I cannot remember when I first knew this fact of my life, I cannot remember when I did not know this fact of my life; perhaps it was at the moment I could recognize my own hand...(225).

Considering the previous comment, it is useful to think of Xuela's wondering in terms of a crisis of Fanonian nonbeing, which he presents in *Peau noire, masques blancs* [Black Skin, White Masks] (1952) as "an extraordinarily sterile and arid region, an incline stripped bare of every essential from which a genuine new departure can emerge" [une zone de non-être, une région extraordinairement stérile et aride, une rampe essentiellement dépouillée, d'où un authentique surgissement peut prendre naissance (*Black* xii; 6). In this metaphorical and hopeless region, Xuela constantly questions her purpose in life. Such doubt stresses an individual angst of being different that prevents belonging to a larger creolized community. Her difference is due to how the community perceives her: even though she is Afro-Antillean, Euro-Antillean, and Carib, the community adheres to colonial racial classifications and identifies Xuela solely as Carib. Society racially categorizes Xuela and isolates her to a meager state of nonbeing after she is unable to reclaim her past roots or find a Carib future. Relegated to Carib, she only exists when other racial sectors desire to reaffirm their own identities, leading Xuela not

only to feel inferior but also nonexistent because of her loss and her heritage (*Black* 118; 112). This of course recalls Fanon's own dialectic of self-consciousness when he is interpellated as a "Negro" (*Black* 89-91; 83-5). For Xuela, as for Fanon, their identities are a negation or difference recognized by others. Such is the case when Xuela is in class as a child:

My teacher and these boys looked at me and looked at me: I had thick eyebrows; my hair was coarse, thick, and wavy; my eyes were set far apart from each other and they had the shape of almonds; my lips were wide and narrow in an unexpected way. I was of the African people, but not exclusively. My mother was a Carib woman, and when they looked at me this is what they say: The Carib people had been defeated and then exterminated, thrown away like weeds in a garden; the African people had been defeated but had survived. When they looked at me, they saw only the Carib people (15-16).

This passage indicates that the rootlessness that the Creolists describe, in which apparently everyone shares a common Creole identity at the expense of racial difference, is not an accurate description of insular society. In this case society overlooks Xuela's hybridity and defines her as one particular race.⁶³ What is more, as Fanon points out, she becomes responsible for her race and her ancestors (*Black* 92; 90).

⁶³ Here I refer to Homi Bhabha's seminal postcolonial discourse on hybridity and the third space. He declares that "[a]ll forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. But for me 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. [...] the process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and

The classroom, here serving as a microcosm of the community, shows the exclusionary practices that take place in a society, elucidating the idealistic but impractical nature of poetics of hybridity. Xuela is part African, Scottish and Carib, and yet society marginalizes her. In classroom politics her teacher and classmates single out her hybridity and rarefy it into a pure, unwelcome, difference. The reduction sets her on a lifelong journey to understand her Carib genealogy, an instance of her privileging her racial heritage over supposed cultural sameness. Xuela's "staying" is directly connected to the absence of her mother and yet centuries of exploitation, colonialism, and erasure from the national imaginary taint such a lineage. This idealized Carib space is lost to "an island of villagers and rivers and mountains and people who began and ended with murder and theft and not very much love" (89). For Xuela, this paradise lost is an unattainable ideal, much like trying to piece together information about her mother's past—she too was an orphan. Colonialism has forever transformed what is left of their land and culture. Because society classifies Xuela solely as Carib, her mother(land) is forever lost to her. The way that society racially categorizes Xuela reflects the position of many colonized people towards colonial racial politics in that it often turns out to be essentialist and mimetic; that is to say, it simply reproduces the dominant racial binaries as I pointed out in *Dubbelspel* (1973) and *No Telephone to Heaven* (1982) (Acheraïou 82). The teacher and the students use Xuela's Carib roots to distance themselves from her. The Afro-Antilleans, historically the oppressed, themselves become oppressors as

representation" ("The Third" 211). This hybrid third space is posited as a site of subversion, a notion that this chapter should prove reductive.

they relish in their ability to survive that which the Caribs could not. This behavior disregards the utopic discourse of “Neither Europeans, nor Africans, nor Asians, we proclaim ourselves Creoles” (Taleb-Khyar 75) since racial difference here leads to racial dynamics of power.

In fact, racial tension surges when the passage is put into historical context. DeLoughrey notes that “there is a long and rich discourse in the Caribbean that, generally speaking, variously posits native Caribbean peoples either as complicit with European plantocracy (assisting Europeans in capturing maroons), or as idealized and romantic antecedents” (238). In *The Middle Passage* (1962), V.S. Naipaul adds that “[e]veryone knows that Amerindians hunted down runaway slaves; it was something I had heard again and again, from white and black...and whenever one sees Amerindians, it is a chilling memory” (107). To belong in this type of society would only reinforce a violent history full of racial tension and eventually, near-extirmination for Caribs. It is unsurprising that Xuela, henceforth identified as a Carib, “stays” as opposed to belongs. The reaction echoes Fanon’s desire not to be the Other with which one constructs his/her Self: “I slip into corners; I keep silent; all I want is to be anonymous, to be forgotten. Look, I’ll agree to everything, on condition I go unnoticed!” [je me glisse dans les coins, je demeure silencieux, j’aspire à l’anonymat, à l’oubli. Tenez, j’accepte tout, mais que l’on ne m’aperçoive plus!] (*Black* 96; 93). In a similar attempt to complicate community-building by removing herself from society, Xuela chooses “staying”: “I refused to belong to a race, I refused to accept a nation. I wanted only, and still do want, to observe the people who do so. The crime of these identities, which I know now more than ever, I do

not have the courage to bear. Am I nothing, then? I do not believe so, but if nothing is a condemnation, then I would love to be condemned” (226). Xuela’s entrenchment in her orphanhood alongside her racial assignation consistently prevent her from moving beyond her Self to a collective state because the risk of nonbeing perpetually embattles her as she struggles to determine her own life while an exclusionary community confronts her. It is because of this risk that she searches for a monolithic root to her multiracial identity which contests the post-racial and multicultural ideology of creolization. “Xuela’s desire for a genealogical return to her Carib mother and a geographical return to the land of her mother’s people—or to a pure origin—is complicated by and ultimately fails because of the horrific and irreversible reality of genocide” (Braziel 118). In accordance, Xuela states that “[t]his account is an account of the person who was never allowed to be and an account of the person I did not allow myself to become” (228). For Xuela, her orphanhood and community both prevent and disable; they problematize the theory of *Créolité* because they do not afford her a workable racial rootlessness that leads to solidarity or “Totality” [*Totalité*] (Taleb-Khyar 88; 27). It is precisely the struggle against nonbeing that impedes the ideology of *Créolité* because it highlights people conscious of and privileging their racial differences over cultural commonality. To that effect, the Caribbean community, supposedly unified from the viewpoint of the Francophone Creolists, is in fact excluding people.

Society again calls Xuela’s identity into question when she speaks her very first words, in English, the language of the colonizer. Accustomed to French patois, Xuela surprisingly asks for her father in a language she had never heard spoken before. “That

the first words I said were in the language of a people I would never like or love is not now a mystery to me; everything in my life, good or bad, to which I am inextricably bound is a source of pain” (7). Xuela’s use of English invokes issues about the destruction of Carib cultural identity at the hands of European imperialism because language and culture are forever linked. In agreement, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o claims that:

Language as communication and as culture are then products of each other. . . . Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we perceive ourselves and our place in the world. . . . Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world (*Decolonising* 15-16).

Xuela’s choice to speak English as a young girl anticipates the feelings of nonbeing that she would experience throughout her life. The erasure of language and by extension, identity, put Xuela’s very existence into jeopardy. This in turn highlights her individual struggle while minimizing a collective “we.” What is more, it suggests that the Caribs are too disempowered or small in number to form their own collective which furthers Xuela’s solitude and also explains her own dissatisfaction for other societal sectors.

English, on the other hand, serves as a reminder of the class and race divisions on the island since the thought of Xuela, a lower class multiracial child, speaking the colonizer’s language is shocking. It shocks Ma Eunice and her children because it is a language of privilege, exclusive to those who hold power. The power of language reinforces societal divisions as English is certainly not for Xuela, the daughter of a vanquished Carib

mother. The passage sets off a series of exclusions that place Xuela outside of the community, relegating her to a sense of “staying” rather than belonging.

Hartman’s choice to talk about being ‘of the house’ may be figurative, but in *The Autobiography of My Mother*, it takes on a literal meaning. When Xuela’s father finally comes to take Xuela to live with him and his new family, Xuela experiences a sense of “staying” for she knows that the hatred that her step-mother and step-siblings direct towards her can never create an environment of belonging. While Xuela unhappily lived with Ma Eunice, the family had forged a life, albeit a loveless one, without her. As Xuela embodies the vanishing Carib race in this novel, one sees in what way she is a remnant of the past, this time her father’s. She reminds him of his deceased wife when he is trying to move on and forget that past. What is more, the house as a microcosm of a loveless society is unable to successfully incorporate her, as she observes herself:

Already [the old house] sagged with the many burdens of its inhabitants: my father’s grief for the loss of my mother; his marriage to his present wife, whom he had not loved for herself but for her family’s connections and wealth; the grief her own barrenness had caused her; his son’s lack of good health; the waywardness of his younger daughter. *I could not see anything of myself in this house; I could see only others. I did not belong in it. I did not yet belong anywhere* (106-7, my emphasis).

Kincaid explores indigenous representation in Caribbean cultural production, yet in so doing, she highlights their racial exclusion in society; the Carib peoples are not part of “the house.”

Race, however, is not the sole factor in expressing the lack of solidarity present in Dominica. The following example, again presented through the use of a small group of children, shows that race *and* social class intersect under a colonial strategy of self-loathing. Xuela narrates about the make-up of her classmates:

In any one year, at any one time, there were not more than a dozen of us, more boys than girls. We were not friends; such a thing was discouraged. We were never to trust each other. This was like a motto repeated to us by our parents; it was a part of my upbringing, like a form of good manners: You cannot trust these people, my father would say to me, the very words the other children's parents were saying to them...That "these people" were ourselves, that this insistence on mistrust of others—that people who looked so very much like each other, who shared a common history of suffering and humiliation and enslavement, should be taught to mistrust each other, even as children, is no longer a mystery to me (47-48).

Here the colonized uphold the divisions among themselves, a legacy of colonialism to preserve power in the hands of a few on an island where Afro-, Indo- and Chinese-Antilleans easily outnumbered Whites. Their suspicious attitudes towards each other reaffirm that colonialism successfully created fragmentation through race and class, coupled with stereotypes and dichotomies that continue to plague the Caribbean in postplantation settings. Case in point, cultural sameness is not a sufficient ideological model to unite different groups that have been divided throughout history.

This type of fragmentation creates a society full of anger, vengeance, and hostility, which in turn upsets creolized communities that claim to be "*united* on the same soil by

the yoke of history” [le joug de l’Histoire a réunis sur le même sol] (Taleb-Khyar 87; 26, my emphasis). In this novel, as well as in *La migration des cœurs*, it is precisely history that *divides*, not unites, because it serves as a reminder of racial hatred. Yet racial hatred is part of the present: just as the community racially excluded Xuela, Xuela cares very little for tragedies that befall other members of the insular society. From sleeping with her half-sister’s lover (162) to aiding in the unintentional poisoning of Moira Bailey, her future husband’s wife, Xuela makes no effort to reconcile the community. As the product of the insular community, Xuela’s sentiments mirror those that have “nurtured” her.⁶⁴ What is more, that Xuela marries a man that she does not love to spark “the beginning of my great revenge” (216) shows an absence of forgiveness and love, a bitter relationship indicative of the larger community. But this great revenge is not just a personal one towards Phillip Bailey. On the contrary, Xuela intends to avenge history and the atrocities committed towards the Caribs. Therefore, it is predictable that she brings her husband Phillip to live in an indigenous community where he cannot speak the language. Here she seeks vengeance and authority by forcing the descendant of the colonizers to rely solely on her, the descendant of the defeated Caribs. Successfully, she “blocked his entrance into all the worlds he had come to know” (224). Without remorse, Xuela is but one sample from an island of people seeking retribution for the wrongs of history. When Kincaid justifies Xuela’s character as a product of colonialism by stating that “I am completely unapologetic about it. How can you ask a person like that to be different than

⁶⁴ This idea comes from Diane Simmons’s declaration that “There is nowhere to turn but to revenge, nothing to nurture but a heart that is cold and closed” (107).

she is?" (Obejas 10), one cannot help but notice a prevailing attitude among the subaltern peoples of the Caribbean: vengeance is understandable; isolation is acceptable. What is absent is the reconciliation and post-racial collectivity that hybridity theorists clamor for.

Not of 'This House' in *La migration des cœurs*

Condé's Razyé serves as a different model of Fanonian nonbeing. One of the main differences between Razyé and Xuela is that Razyé, in his mind, does have a purpose in life: to love and be with Cathy Gagneur. However, for reasons I will discuss below, their love never comes to fruition and Cathy's marriage to Aymeric de Linsseuil triggers in Razyé a realization of his nonbeing that later erupts into a vengeful assertion of Self, underscoring a lack of affiliation to the island. Similar to Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, Razyé is an orphan foundling that mulatto Hubert Gagneur brought to his plantation upon returning from the city where there was a meeting among small sugar-cane planters. Condé never reveals Razyé's origins other than he was apparently found along the Guadeloupean heaths. In fact, while others accept Razyé as Afro-Guadeloupean, the novel is more vague about his heritage: the *mabo* narrator Nelly Raboteur who recalls her first sighting of Razyé describes him in the following manner: "I was looking at what [Hubert Gagneur] was clutching between his knees: a dirty, repulsive, seven- or eight-year-old boy, completely naked, with a well-developed sex, believe me; a little black boy or Indian half-caste. His skin was black, and his tangled curly hair reached down his back" [Je regardais ce qu'il tenait serré entre ses jambs. Un enfant de sept ou huit ans, sale et repoussant, complètement nu, garçon, et, croyez-moi, le

sexe bien formé, nègre ou *bata-zindien*] (*Windward* 21; 28).⁶⁵ Razyé's racial ambiguity however only allows him to pass between subaltern racial sectors rather than between dominant and subordinate groups so that his origins, in a colonial society, still remain undesirable as well as uncertain. But it is that uncertainty that haunts Razyé's childhood because the colonial society constantly tries to attribute him a stable identity. Like Xuela, Razyé contemplates how his life would be different if he knew his mother. However, in contrast, Razyé knows nothing about his mother (or father) which offers him the ability to conjure up different racial genealogies:

Why didn't he have a maman like all the other human beings? Even the slaves in the depths of their hell knew the womb that had carried them. He wondered what face he should give to his dreams and who was this mother he was never to know. Sometimes he told himself she was an Indian who had arrived in this land of exile and misfortune on board the *Aurélie*. Other times she was an African, treading the island paths in search of lost gods. Or else a mulatto girl, torn like Cathy between her two races. Had she been raped and then set about despising the child of the man who had assaulted her? What father's crime was he paying for? How could he explain his abandonment?

[Pourquoi n'avait-il pas une maman comme tous les êtres humains? Même les esclaves dans leur enfer savaient le ventre qui les avait portés. Il se demandait quelle figure donner à ses rêves et qui était cette inconnue à jamais. Parfois il se

⁶⁵ Carine Mardorossian, for instance, describes Razyé as "a black Creole of unmixed African ancestry" (29).

distait que c'était une Indienne venue à bord de l'*Aurélie* dans cette terre d'exil et de malheur. À d'autres encoré, une mulâtresse écartelée comme Cathy entre ses deux hérités. Il ne savait pas si elle avait été violée, engrossée et, en conséquence, si elle s'était mise à haïr l'enfant de celui qui l'avait agressée? Quel crime de son père expiait-il? Comment expliquer son abandon?] (*Windward* 38; 45-6).

Here Razyé ponders various genealogies for his parents, shifting between categories of identity (Indian, *dougl*, African, and mulatto), eras (Indians started coming to Guadeloupe after the abolition of slavery in 1848 (*Report* 235)), and relationships (was his mother raped? Was his father cursed?).⁶⁶ Razyé's ambiguous beginnings would make him an exemplary figure of the multicultural and raceless community that the Francophone Creolists promote. Yet Condé's efforts to ridicule and pervert *Créolité* mean that his racial rootlessness does not emancipate him from hierarchies or colonial obsessions with genesis that are apparent in the Creolists' search for "truths." Razyé's abandonment leaves him incapacitated and ultimately, as the ward of a family that will betray him because of his subaltern identity. The multiracial plantation community determines Razyé's roots: like Xuela, he exists only for their construction of Self. Razyé is quick to realize that he does not receive the same treatment as *békés*, or island-born whites (30; 36). Both Afro-Guadeloupean Nelly Raboteur and mulatto Cathy Gagneur define him, perhaps wrongfully, as of African descent (30 [36] and 41 [48] respectively).

⁶⁶ A *Dougl* is an Anglophone Caribbean word to describe miscegenation between those of African ancestry with those of Indian ancestry.

The plantation setting, a microcosm for 1890s Guadeloupe, reminds Razyé of which racial sectors have power and which do not.

To that end, in *La migration des cœurs*, Razyé serves as the “other” from which the *béké* and mulatto aim to separate themselves in an effort to construct a “Self.” Such is the relationship between Razyé and his benefactors, the Gagneurs. This happens on three different occasions: when Razyé is first brought home and establishes a relationship with Hubert, when Justin takes control of the plantation after Hubert’s death, and when Cathy decides to marry rich *béké* planter Aymeric de Linsseuil. In agreement, Linda Corti acknowledges the importance of these three moments, along with Razyé’s orphaning, as life-altering experiences that later shape his vengeful wrath: “...the ferocity of Condé’s Razyé is prepared by a veritable litany of losses: he has been orphaned in childhood, tormented by Justin, betrayed by Cathy, and schooled in cruelty by his oblivious foster father” (294-5). Here however, I am interested in how others use Razyé to construct their identities and how these moments will lead Razyé to assert himself later in the novel while choosing to never belong in Guadeloupe.

Hubert Gagneur takes Razyé in after finding him without parents. However, this foster relationship does not yield subjectivity for Razyé in his childhood. Hubert introduces him to his children Cathy and Justin as if Razyé were a present that Hubert had brought back from the capital: “Look what I’ve brought you... Isn’t this better than all the fiddles and whips in the world?” [Regardez ce que je vous ai rapport. Est-ce que cela ne vaut pas mieux que tous les violins et les fouets de la terre?] (*Windward* 21; 28). Compared with fiddles and whips, Razyé is immediately objectified, which Hubert

further does by suggesting that Razyé sleep with Cathy because “she’ll adore him” [elle va l’adorer] (*Windward* 21; 28). Fanon argues that this objectification is when the man of color experiences his being through others (*Black* 89). In this instance Hubert evokes images of dolls or stuffed animals when talking about the young foundling. On top of this objectification, the idea takes on a racial meaning when one recalls how slave children were often provided as playmates for children of the slavocracy. Marie Jenkins Schwartz declares:

Attempts by slaveholders to stress that slave children did not belong to their parents sometimes took the form of ‘giving’ particular slave children to their own sons and daughters who were close in age to the slave youngsters. The slaves became the white children’s playmates. Sometimes the slave children lived in their owning family’s home; at other times they remained in the slave quarter with their parents...(93-4).

In that vein, Razyé becomes a form of entertainment, not just for the children, but for Hubert as well. The narrator Nelly Raboteur informs us that:

...Razyé had found a special place in the heart of Hubert Gagneur. The master treated him like a plaything. He taught him the words to the most obscene beguines. He split his sides with laughter at the sight of him shaking his behind and thrusting forward his sex as he danced. He encouraged him to masquerade as a carnival *mas’ à congo* or a *mas’ à goudron*. He had him imitate animal sounds: squeal like a pig, bray like a donkey, cackle like a hen that’s just laid an egg, and moo like a cow.

[...Hubert Gagneur avait noué avec Razyé une relation special. Il le traitait comme un jouet. Il lui apprenait, avec toutes qualities de gros mots, les beguines du *bonda* ou en pointant son sexe. Il l'encourageait à se déguiser en *mas' à kongo* ou en *mas' à goudron*. Il lui faisait imiter des cris d'animaux, couiner comme un cochon, hennir comme un bourriquet, caqueter comme une poule qui vient de pondré son œuf, meugler comme une vache] (*Windward* 22; 29).

In this passage, Razyé does not have a father-son type relationship with Hubert, but rather takes on a conflated role of two stereotypes: the “happy slave” (the *Ya bon Banania*/Uncle Ben) and the “Black minstrel” (the entertainer). The use of “master,” since the narrator is a house servant, evokes the colonial hierarchies that stem from slavery as does the animalization/dehumanization of the Black body that is taking place when Hubert has Razyé perform animal sounds. That all of this is for Hubert’s amusement reinforces a racialized division here: specifically Hubert, as a mulatto, is escaping his “Black” heritage by separating himself from Razyé. Razyé is the slave-like performer; Hubert is the whitened spectator-master. Like Shakespeare’s Prospero, Hubert takes responsibility for Razyé’s education, but limits it to only what he needs from it: in Hubert’s case that is entertainment and racial division. Hubert elevates himself above Afro-Guadeloupean identity by reducing an “Afro-Guadeloupean” to such a spectacle for his enjoyment. He constructs his racial Self at Razyé’s expense and thwarts the post-racial ideology of creolization by maintaining a racial division that reinforces colonial stereotypes.

Razyé's relationship with Justin is markedly different from his relationship with Hubert principally because Justin is jealous of the attention Razyé receives and therefore, despises him (23; 29). When Hubert dies and Justin takes control of the plantation, Razyé's role in the house changes from "happy house slave" to "field slave." Justin more clearly defines Razyé's relationship to the Gagneurs and the two enter into a Hegelian master-slave dialectic in which Razyé voluntarily accepts a subordinate position "to be for another" that ultimately mediates *béké* society's construction of Whiteness and the Gagneurs' ability to enter that construction (Hegel 115). Indeed, "Justin forbade Razyé to set foot inside the house and confined him to the fields with the Indians" [À partir de ce jour, Justin interdit à Razyé l'intérieur de la maison et le consigna aux travaux des champs avec les Zindiens] (26-7; 33). What is more, Razyé spends his nights in a leaky stable rather than in Cathy's bedroom (27; 34). For Justin, separating Razyé from the Gagneur family is to ensure that the Gagneurs uphold their privilege. It is no surprise that shortly after he moves Razyé to the stable, Justin reveals he will marry an heiress of a prominent *béké* family, Marie-France La Rinardière. This marriage further delineates the racial differences between the Gagneurs and Razyé. Similarly, Justin hires a nun to instruct Cathy; shortly after, she too marries a *béké* of the same family: Aymeric. Justin affirms fixed places: the Gagneurs are the mulatto masters and Razyé is the "Black" stable boy whose existence ensures the Gagneurs' whitening. The Gagneurs make it abundantly clear that Razyé does not have the same societal access as they do and Justin even further nullifies Razyé's membership in the family when Justin reassigns Razyé to work with Indians in the field.

The introduction of Indians problematizes the colonial Black-White spectrum that Razyé embodied in correspondence to the Gagneurs. In the past, the Black-White binary at least ensured Razyé a sense of belonging in the national imaginary, even if it was among the subordinate class. However, the arrival of the Indians upsets this binary by being a third identity. They are the most recent migrants to the colonial-era plantation setting in the novel and thereby further exoticized. As a result, Razyé too becomes further exoticized and “Othered” as those around Razyé consider an Indo-Caribbean identity in regards to this orphan who now shares meals with these immigrant workers (27). His lack of heritage furthers his own sense of not belonging; as a person of possible Indian descent, he no longer fits in the structured colonial national imaginary of Black-White. Specifically, his racial ambiguity becomes a taboo for Justin’s aim to whiten the family since his closeness to Cathy becomes a sexualized threat to whitening. Justin bars him from the house because he does not want Razyé to “corrupt” the “Whiteness” that he begins to construct upon the death of his father. Razyé’s closeness to Cathy (they sleep together as teenagers), threatens the very “Whiteness” that he wants to construct. This “Whiteness” is all the more threatened when considering that Razyé is characterized as having a well-developed penis, a symbol of the stereotypical “savage, hypersexual” Black man (21; 28). Colonial society, set in its racial hierarchies, would shun the Gagneur family should Cathy and Razyé have a baby and/or marry (or continue sleeping together), nor would society look fondly on the Gagneurs treating Razyé as an equal in the household. In other words, cultural sameness is not enough. Justin, unlike Hubert, enforces these racial divisions. Further, he exposes Cathy to a Eurocentric world: not

only does he provide his sister access to a Eurocentric education and the latest French fashions, but he almost exclusively speaks French rather than Kréyòl.

Meanwhile, Razyé slips back into that Fanonian site of nonbeing: “He no longer washed. A comb never touched his hair...All the liveliness and boldness had gone out of him. He had become sullen and uncouth, a repulsive animal” [Il ne sse lavait plus. Ses cheveux ne voyaient plus le peigne...Il avait perdu la vivacité et l’effronterie de ses manières. Il était devenu triste, grossier, un animal repoussant] (*Windward* 27; 34).

Although Cathy and he still share their intimate moments, Razyé is aware of the change in his status, which leads to the final construction of his Self as inferior, “Othered” and defined by what he is not: White. Building off of Hegel’s master-slave dialectic, Toni Morrison notes that the literature of the Americas reveals a “strategic use of black characters to define the goals and enhance the qualities of white characters” (52-3) by building off a “construction of blackness *and* enslavement [in which] could be found not only the not-free but also, with the dramatic polarity created by skin color, *the projection of the not-me*” (38, my emphasis). Condé’s Razyé demonstrates this not only by being someone that the Gagneur family wants to escape, but by participating in his own alienation. Upon seeing Justin and Cathy enter into *béké* social circles, Razyé complains “Oh, how I wish I were white!” he shouted. ‘White with blue eyes in my face! White with blond hair on my head!’...If I was white everyone would respect me! Justin like all the rest!” [Ah, qu’est-ce que j’aimerais être blanc! Blanc avec des yeux bleus! Blanc avec des cheveux blonds sur ma tête...Si j’étais blanc, tout le monde me respecterait! Justin comme les autres!] (*Windward* 30; 36). Justin’s process of whitening successfully

separates the Gagneurs from Razyé and at the same time, draws Razyé to an unattainable racial model of Whiteness. Here Whiteness takes on the lacanian minus phi as the object of desire that because Razyé cannot attain it, produces in him anxiety and later, revenge. In the process, Condé complicates the Francophone Creolists' call for post-racial creolization through cultural sameness by depicting an insular society that embraces its Europeanness while shunning Razyé for his racially ambiguous beginnings. To claim that European heritage is no longer of importance, as the Creolists do in their opening lines, is to negate the ongoing desire for one to be identified in society as more European than not. As I have explained in Chapter Two, claiming Europeanness has historically come with societal benefits, which the Gagneurs are unwilling to relinquish.⁶⁷

Razyé and Cathy's relationship withstands Justin's initial attempts to separate the two; even after Justin sends Razyé to live in the stable, Cathy still spends her evenings with him (27; 34). Yet upon spending a month with the Linsseuils at their Belles-Feuilles plantation, Cathy enters the *béké* social realm and in the process, abandons Razyé. Like Justin, Cathy uses Razyé as a way to negate her "Blackness" and affirm her "Whiteness." Darker skin marks Cathy so that she must deal with her racial genealogy in a way that Justin does not. Cathy acknowledges her multiracial make-up: "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. But this second Cathy is seldom heard, and the first always gets the upper hand" [Une Cathy qui débarque directement

⁶⁷ What is more, these benefits still hold true today: Frank Martinus Arion notes that the financial world is still mostly reserved for peoples of European descent ("Creole"154).

d’Afrique avec tous ses vices. Une autre Cathy qui est le portrait de son aïeule blanche, pure, pieuse, aimant l’ordre et la mesure. Mais cette deuxième Cathy-là n’a pas souvent la parole, la première a toujours le dessus] (*Windward* 40; 48). Cathy does not see her multiracial heritage as empowering or as creating a “Totalité” within her as poetics of hybridity imply, but rather fragmenting her. They are two dueling and warring consciousnesses that reflect a larger and divided society. However, Cathy’s African side only has the upper hand in her youth. Once Cathy experiences *béké* society, she rejects Razyé and her African side by electing to marry Aymeric. She exclaims that “the way Razyé is now, 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-ship. Living with him would be like starting over as savages from Africa. Just the same!” [Mais de la façon dont Razyé est à présent, je ne pourrai jamais me marier avec lui. Ce serait une dégradation! Ce serait comme s’il n’y avait plus qu’une seule Cathy, la bossale, la mécréante descendant tout droit de son négrier...Avec lui, je recommencerais à vivre comme si nous étions encore des sauvages d’Afrique. Tout pareil!] (*Windward* 41; 48). Cathy elects to privilege her “Europeanness” by contrasting it with a stereotyped depiction of Africa which “reinforces the dichotomy perpetuated by white colonial figures, who characterize their own civilization as mainstream and moderate” (Clemente 124). As long as people within Caribbean culture privilege their “Europeanness” like the Gagneurs do, racial division will abound. With that in mind, Caribbean cultural production continues to show that race still matters. Cathy constructs her Whiteness by participating in colonial dichotomies in which Razyé again becomes the “Black savage”

to the “enlightened White.” Similar to Claire Clamont in Chapter Two, Cathy does not want to “slip back” by being with Razyé. Like the mulatto that Fanon profiles, Cathy pursues a lactification that precludes her marriage to a Black man: by abandoning Razyé, she absolves herself of her Blackness: she constructs her White self at his expense.

Cathy is the last Gagneur to affirm Razyé’s nonbeing. Akin to Justin, she separates herself from Razyé in order to enter *béké* society. However, unlike Justin, Cathy occupies the center of Razyé’s worldview: “There was a time when Cathy had been a papa, a maman and a sister to him. Her body had protected him. When he curled up against her he found the softness of the breast and the womb he had never known. Now she had deserted him” [Une temps, Cathy lui avait servi de tout à la fois: de papa, de maman, de sœur. Son corps le protégeait. Blotti contre sa poitrine, il trouvait la douceur du sein et du ventre qu’il n’avait jamais connus. À present, elle l’avait déserté] (*Windward* 38; 46). When Cathy abandons Razyé, it is like a second orphaning for him as he loses someone he incestuously describes as his mother and sister, but with whom the reader knows he has engaged sexually. Whereas in Chapter Three Janchi Pau feels a sense of belonging to society through his relationship with Solema, Razyé’s loss of Cathy reinforces that he does not belong. On the other hand, the Gagneurs manipulated him as a metaphorical launch pad to gain access to society. In that sense, the Gagneurs ultimately take on the behavior of the European colonizer in their brutality and exploitation of Razyé. Albert Memmi states that it is the colonizer’s supreme ambition to turn the colonized into an object existing only as a function of the needs of the colonizer (86). Razyé’s function, that is, to be an object that allows the Gagneurs to construct their

Self, is complete. These three examples show that there is no cultural unity “on the same soil by the yoke of history” (91-2), but only disjuncture because of social and racial antagonisms. With no reason to stay on the island, Razyé leaves for Cuba only to return three years later, full of racialized vengeance.

Whereas Xuela’s vengefulness is established at an individual level (sleeping with her step-sister’s boyfriend, moving her husband to an indigenous area where he does not speak the language, etcetera), Razyé’s personal vendetta crosses over into the social realm. Razyé begins with the destruction of the Linsseuil family by dishonoring, marrying, and beating Aymeric’s sister Irmine and impregnating Cathy before burning Aymeric and other *békés*’ plantations. He also enters the political realm through an alliance with a socialist party on the island aimed at protecting and empowering Afro-Guadeloupeans at the expense of the diminishing *békés*. In that regard, Razyé’s struggle with Fanonian nonbeing ends because he claims subjectivity and achieves political power upon his return to Guadeloupe. Part of this is the shift in island politics in Guadeloupe in which Afro-Guadeloupeans begin to contend for more political power. However, political desire does not motivate Razyé, but rather revenge towards Aymeric de Linsseuil and Justin Gagneur. One of the ways in which Razyé achieves vengeance and thwarts cultural sameness over racial difference at the same time is by burning *béké* plantations. Consistent with prominent scholars such as Edward Kamau Brathwaite, Antonio Benitez Rojo, Edouard Glissant, the Francophone Creolists, the plantation is one of the main sites of creolization because it is where language, race, and culture mix. Condé exaggerates this idea in *La migration des cœurs* through Aymeric, who she depicts

as a benevolent master interested in racial equality: “[Aymeric] believed in eradicating the very memory of slavery and transforming the Belles-Feuilles estate into a model plantation where there would be no white Creoles, no mulattos, no blacks, but free men, equal in the eyes of the law” [Aymeric] rêvait d’abolir jusqu’au souvenir de l’esclavage et de transformer le domaine des Belles-Feuilles en une plantation modèle où il n’y aurait ni békés, ni mulâtres, ni nègres, mais des hommes libres et égaux en droit] (*Windward* 37; 45). Aymeric’s prefiguring of creolization however does not come to fruition. When Razyé burns down the plantation, he frustrates Aymeric’s goals for better race relations by specifically highlighting racial animosity. Condé elucidates the limits and restrictions of manifestos of hybridity when Razyé destroys one of its main discursive sites because of racial antagonism, the antithesis of hybridity. What is more, Razyé reaffirms his lack of affiliation to the island by driving the island’s economic means and wealthiest families into instant calamity. Razyé’s personal vendetta against the de Linseuill family reveals the domino effect of orphanhood in which “one’s personal life causes problems in society which contributes to a national fracture in which brothers take advantage of brothers” (Lewis 79). Yes racial tension existed prior to Razyé’s plantation burning, but his actions bring it to the forefront of society. The vengeance goes from personal to public because there *is* racial tension that hybridists prefer to negate. However, Razyé’s vengeful actions should not be read as him showing interest in Guadeloupe or the rise of the Afro-Guadeloupean sectors. Carine Mardorossian correctly points out that “His vendetta against Aymeric is only incidentally mapped onto the struggle of the black labor force against the white *békés*’ control of the economy” (47). Just because Razyé’s desire to

destroy Aymeric motivates him, it does not mean that he is invested in the rise of Afro-Guadeloupeans for the latter does not necessarily depend on the former in the novel. Because *béké* society literally places Razyé outside of “the house,” he resorts to vengeance to destroy “the house.” At the same time, he shows no ambition to construct a new one in contrast with Janchi Pau and Clare Savage.

Correspondingly, Razyé is not interested in the rise of Afro-Guadeloupean sectors in part because he is not necessarily Afro-Guadeloupean. In *Notions of Identity, Diaspora, and Gender in Caribbean Women’s Writing* (2009) Brinda Mehta postulates that Razyé is *bata coolie/dougla*, of both Indian and African descent.⁶⁸ This assertion helps to explain why Razyé feels no affiliation to Guadeloupe. Historically Guadeloupean colonial hierarchy was based largely on a Black-White spectrum since Indians (and Chinese) did not arrive until largely after the abolition of slavery. Arion contends that even after their arrival to the Caribbean, Indians are considered one of two groups (along with the Chinese) who weaken *Créolité* because they do not mix, opting to live in splendid isolation (“Creole” 153). While terms exist to describe persons that shift in between this dichotomy, a *bata coolie/dougla* by definition is outside of the binary. *Dougla*, which originates from the Hindi and Bhojpuri word *doogala*, literally means “two necks” and

⁶⁸ Mehta uses the Anglophone Caribbean term *dougla*. Its Guadeloupean Kreyol counterpart is *bata coolie*, a problematic term because it is the most linguistically accurate, but *bata* connotes bastardization, much like the original Hindi and Bhojpuri definition for *doogala*.

can be an insult that refers to inner-caste mixing and bastardization. Common in Trinidad, Tobago, and Guyana, the West Indian context of the term refers to people of mixed Afro-Indo descent (Mendes 47). A *bata coolie/dougl*a is outside of the national imaginary, as the word *bata* connotes: a bastard without a (colonial) father. Consonant with this interpretation, Kempadoo maintains that *bata coolies/douglas* are “located outside the boundaries of the racialized group.” She continues, “in other words, people who live outside the boundaries of what we know as racial and ethnic groups do not exist, according to dominant perceptions” (105). If we are to accept Razyé as a *bata coolie/dougl*a then his orphaning could be explained as a rejection from the Indian community that has no desire to mix; he is abandoned because he is multiracial. At the same time, the larger society rejects him because his Indian heritage places him outside of the Black-White spectrum. Consequently, society excludes him from the national imaginary. Kempadoo thus raises a question that approximates my analysis of Razyé as a “staying” orphan: “Are ‘douglas’ then to define themselves as non-cultured, *a people of ‘no nation’*, non-racialized, or as half real?” (105, my emphasis). Razyé also chooses not to belong: while in Cuba he clarifies his position: “I say ‘home’ to speak like the rest of you. But I have no home. I was found in Guadeloupe as naked as the day I was born, on the barren heath and cliffs—the *razyés*—hence my name” [Je dis «chez moi» pour parler comme tout le monde. Mais je n’ai pas de pays. C’est en Guadeloupe qu’on cochon qu’on égorge, en plein milieu des *razyés*. Mon nom vient de là] (*Windward* 9; 17). Whereas the island and landscapes provide a sense of belonging in the third chapter of this dissertation, Razyé feels no connection to Guadeloupe. Mehta posits that:

The disassociation between name, location, and identity indicates a disrupted or traceless genealogy without inherent kinship or parental affiliations, the very foundation of colonial lineage and proprietary rights. The character's homelessness, symbolized by the bare heath and forbidding cliffs, underscores his simultaneous territorial dispossessions and deprivation of subjectivity (129).

Without parental affiliations, Razyé has no sense of heritage to feel a part of society. His orphanhood, particularly as a *bata coolie/dougl*a rejects the colonial parents while he searches for his roots as either Indian or African, or both.

Conclusion

These works elucidate the challenges that frustrate a model of heterogeneity in a Caribbean poetics of hybridity, like *Éloge de la Créolité*, because they underscore an insular society wrought with disjuncture. The communities in the Dominican and Guadeloupean settings are not without their problematic exclusionary acts. Kincaid's *The Autobiography of My Mother* and Maryse Condé's *La migration des cœurs* are textual evidence of the individual struggle to be at the expense of a collective "we" that constructs itself by excluding others. The novels question the idealized community that the Creolists present by depicting a fragmented insular community bent on exclusion through race, gender, and class. Therefore, processes of cultural, racial and historical mixing do not necessarily bring together a collective "we" as Glissant calls for. That a society might be racially hybrid does not inherently suggest communication and oneness nor does it suggest that people want to work together in building or subverting a society. On the other hand, it shows the contradictions of hybridity because communities still

classify people within the creolized third space. For one might no longer be the colonial “One” or “the Other” (*The Location* 28) but, as emphasized in *The Autobiography of My Mother*, one still reiterates and succumbs to the binary racial thinking, now in the form of a postcolonial “One” (Afro-Dominican) and “the Other” (Carib) as people try to empower themselves. What is more, Condé’s *La migration des cœurs* exemplifies how personal vengeance can play out on a large societal scale that keeps communities conflicted and divided. It also shows how subaltern bodies become excluded from colonial dichotomies and then relegated to the outside of insular communities; they “stay” because they are not part of “the house.” Poetics of hybridity are indeed manifestos of desire that provide ideals of all-encompassing communities, but the fact that these theories have privileged cultural over racial identity reveals the impracticalities of these poetics amidst current racial tensions in the Caribbean. Until these racial tensions are resolved, if they ever are, then perhaps Xuela is right in her nihilist thinking: while theorists aim to implement idealized but unworkable hybrid ideologies, the reality is that death is truly the great equalizer, “inevitable to all things” (224).

Conclusion

A 2012 study by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) reveals that “the problems of race are most persistent in the Caribbean, compared to other parts of the Americas” (Study). The report looks at racial tensions between Afro- and Indo-Antilleans particularly in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago while also acknowledging subtle racial discrimination in societal institutions that privilege those with lighter skin complexions. Such a study seemingly rebukes the goals of a poetics of hybridity in the Caribbean. Whereas the poetics that I have studied throughout this dissertation seem to promote cultural sameness in an effort to move past racial differences, this study indicates that race continues to fragment insular societies. This fragmentation is further elucidated through orphan discourse.

In this dissertation, I have shown four ways in which orphans challenge hybridity: through ambiguity shrouded in a Glissantian forced poetics, an unwillingness to participate in creolizing communities by privileging a colonial past, an overzealousness to belong that articulates the exclusions of hegemonic ideologies, and “staying,” or not having any affiliation to the island. In order to present various perspectives, I have looked at orphan protagonists from the historically dominant classes, such as Frits Ruprecht, Clare Clamont and the Burkhart sisters and orphans from the historically subordinate classes, such as Janchi Pau, Xuela Richardson, and Razyé, and finally an orphan, Clare Savage, who is in a liminal space. Within these characters I have considered various racial classifications: from *blanke creool* and *criollo* to *milat* and *mulatto* to Afro-Antillean to *dougla* and Carib. Despite all of the racial, linguistic,

historical and economic differences, one commonality is that these orphan protagonists contest community-building in the Caribbean. Whether it is because the declining plantocracy wants to continue their power, or the rising Afro-Antillean classes want to usurp power, or other sectors demonstrate indifference to what happens, racial fragmentation runs rampant in these texts. For this purpose, my dissertation reveals communities to be nothing more than the apparatus of hegemonic systems vying to promote commonalities while ignoring the racial and social disjunctions present in Caribbean societies.

In more thorough summation, Chapter One, “The Ambiguous Orphan” examines *Mijn zuster de negerin* [My Black Sister] (1932) in dialogue with nineteenth century Spanish American novels. In Debrot’s Dutch Caribbean novel, orphan Frits Ruprecht attempts to have sex with a mulatto that turns out to be his half-sister. Although Debrot’s intention was to put forth a notion of family that includes both Afro- and Euro-Curaçaoans, the novel presents a descendent of plantation owners evoking colonial hierarchies to assert a dwindling colonial power. The novel reveals a Glissantian forced poetics of using cultural production to project racial and social unification when in practice, fragmentation is abundant. Finally, the orphan does not bring together the island’s different racial sectors, but rather drudges up a colonial past of sexual imposition and racial violence further emphasized by the voicelessness of Maria, the orphan mulatto half-sister, throughout the novel.

Chapter Two, “The Unwilling Orphan” examines the plantocracy’s attempt to conflate their class history with that of the island’s in order to legitimize their power.

The consequence, however, is that as societal transformations are taking place that benefit other racial sectors, the orphan sisters of René Marqués's *Los soles truncos* [The Fanlights] (1958) and Marie Vieux-Chauvet's *Amour* [Love] (1969) refuse to relinquish their class status and participate in a creolizing community. Despite their ties with Europe being broken and the European colonial endeavor ending, these orphans thwart creolization by privileging their Europeanness. Meanwhile, Afro-Antillean sectors are portrayed as illegitimate usurpers responsible for the suffering of the plantocracy sector, which only further causes racial tension. This chapter clarifies the racial division that is steeped in colonialism and the mindset upheld by some to maintain these same racial hierarchies.

Chapter Three, "The Eager Orphan" considers the shift in power and class status in a postplantation society. Through Frank Martinus Arion's *Dubbelspel* [Double Play] (1973) and Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven* (1987), I consider how multiracial orphans frustrate a poetics of hybridity by having to choose one fixed racial identity. Specifically, they choose *Négritude* as a necessary means to belong in insular societies where Afro-Antilleanism, sparked by pan-African movements, is rising. What is more, Cliff and Arion represent postplantation Caribbean identity through their revised versions of *Négritude* by conflating African heritage with the island's history and landscapes. In so doing, these Afro-Antillean communities become as exclusionary as the Euro-Antillean ones that preceded them in colonialism. In both texts Whiteness is construed as a semiotic negative and Blackness is constructed as positive and progressive. In order to belong in these new communities, multiracial orphans disavow their hybridity.

Lastly, Chapter Four, “The ‘Staying’ Orphan” contests creolizing communities from the framework of what Saidiya Hartman calls ‘Staying,’ that is, having no affiliation to the island (88). The previous three chapters show orphans who attempt to belong to transforming societies or who are unwilling to give up the colonial society that privileges them; in this chapter orphans show no vested interest in their island community. I argue that it is because of their racial background and having never known their mothers: in Maryse Condé’s *La migration des cœurs* [Windward Heights] (1995) Razyé is coded as Afro-Guadeloupean in society despite the fact that his genealogy is more ambivalent if read as a *bata coolie/dougl*a. Similarly, Xuela Richardson in Jamaica Kincaid’s *The Autobiography of My Mother* (1995) is of European, African, and Carib descent, but society characterizes her solely as Carib. These categorizations show the limits of a community imaginary, of which both characters are excluded. That is to say, neither has a place in their respective societies. As society excludes them, these orphans also challenge creolization by electing indifference to and vengeance towards their societies rather than continuing to try to fit in some harmonious ideal of hybridity.

My conclusions are in line with those of Frantz Fanon’s assessment of families and communities in colonial Algeria: that is, that colonialism “has had the result of separating the people from each other, of fragmenting them, with the sole objective of making any cohesion impossible” [a eu pour résultat d’écarter le peuple, de le morceler, à seule fin de rendre impossible toute cohesion] (*Studies* 118; 101). I will add that in the specific case of the Caribbean, the uprooting of peoples from Europe, Africa, India and Asia along with the decimation of the indigenous peoples of the Americas has led to a

cultural orphaning that has left many feeling dispossessed and with no sense of belonging to the islands that they now inhabit. It is no coincidence then that authors continue to return to the orphan character to symbolize this division. The “coming-and-going” errantry that now characterizes Caribbean culture further expounds this sentiment of not belonging. As Caribbean societies enter into varying stages ranging from autonomous nations to vague “Associated State” to neo-colonies, fragmentation continues to mark sectors. The orphan trope continues to demonstrate overwhelming evidence of isolation because of past and present racial discrimination in society, coupled with vengeance and hostility.

Although my project looks at various linguistic blocs and novels of the twentieth century, orphan discourse requires more research. The twentieth century offers a plethora of orphan narratives in the Caribbean that I could not discuss within the scope of this dissertation. Joseph Zobel’s *La rue cases negres* [Sugar-Cane Alley] (1950), Jan Carew’s *The Wild Coast* (1958), Boeli van Leeuwen’s *De rots der struikeling* [The Stumbling Stone] (1959), Gabriel García Márquez’s *Cien años de soledad* [One Hundred Years of Solitude] (1967), Carel de Haseh’s *Katibu di shon* [Slave and Master] (1988), Carmelo Rodríguez Torres’s *Este pueblo no es un manto de sonrisas* [This Town is not a Cloak of Smiles] (1991) and Patricia Powell’s *The Pagoda* (1998) are but a few examples. What is more, the twenty-first century continues the pattern of orphan protagonists: Gisele Pineau’s *Chair piment* [Devil’s Dance] (2002) and Marlon James’ *The Book of Night Women* (2009). Whereas I focused on race and class in this dissertation, orphan discourse also intersects with sexuality and migration. To that effect,

it is pertinent to examine texts that reflect the migrant experience: how do orphans used in Myriam Warner-Vieyra's *Juletane* (1982), Joan Riley's *The Unbelonging* (1985), Astrid Roemer's *Een naam voor de liefde* [A Name for Love] (1990), Cristina García's *The Agüero Sisters* (1997) and Junot Diaz's *Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007)? In LGBT novels (aside from *No Telephone to Heaven*) like Dionne Brand's *In Another Place, Not Here* (1996) and Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night* (1996)? In that sense, orphan discourse is multivalent in its use and deserves more attention. Whether divergent or convergent paths, in all cases, orphan discourse provides an affirmative response to Gustavo Perez Firmat's question *Do the Americas have a common literature?* (1990) which I posed in my introduction. Indeed, orphan discourse ironically forges "familial" bonds that connect Caribbean writers of different social, linguistic and racial backgrounds while articulating their views (whether proposals or criticisms) of the Caribbean experience. Postplantation societies can therefore (further) cut their ties with the colonial forefathers that still dictate their departmental classifications in Academia, their economic dependencies and their literary audience and construct a dialogue around their experience as the orphans of the Other America.

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