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David W. Hart

anthuriumcaribjournal@gmail.com

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Caribbean Chronotopes: From Exile to Agency¹

Where else to row, but backward?

—Derek Walcott, *Another Life*

It is no mystery / we making history.

—Michelle Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven*

Crick crack. This discussion will explore the use of shifting temporal and spatial modes in the quest for origins and identity fragments in Caribbean literature. M. M. Bakhtin's theory of the "chronotope" or the flux of "time-space" in popular folktales will serve as a conceptual frame for the discussion. Most of the texts to which I will refer were produced in the decades approaching and following independence for many of the islands, in the 1950s through the 1990s. These texts exhibit what Homi Bhabha describes as "dissemination," in which ". . . the language of culture and community is poised on the fissures of the present becoming the rhetorical figures of a national past" (142). These narratives also show the fissures of the past becoming the rhetorical figures of a national present. Silvio Torres-Saillant suggests that this delving into the past for origins and experience is a "hypermnesic element of Caribbean poetics, that is, the uncommon compulsion to remember, to look for meaning in the exploration of past experience" (288). Indeed, we may view that ancient myths and folklore become appropriated and revised to reclaim exile as a local force of agency in the globalized Caribbean. Caribbean authors use, for example, African gods, geographical space, ancestral histories and memories, and folktales of trickster figures, such as the devil and Sasabonsam, to create and maintain signifiers for local identities. Further, the cultural agency of the past is usefully engaged and brought back into a present Caribbean psyche through two narrative strains: (1) a resistance narrative, and (2) a creole narrative, which is often a re-inscription of commonly-held western beliefs—such as the origins of world creation and the classical Greek myths—into a narrative which better fits a creole Caribbean model. I argue that Caribbean folklore (or even "literary" texts with "folkloric" elements) often focuses on history and faith in its "resistance" or "creole" narratives of cultural agency, and further that much of this Caribbean folklore exemplifies Bakhtin's chronotope.

I will explore, first, notions of the chronotope (Bakhtin), orality (Finnegan, Ong, Brathwaite), and Caribbean folklore (Glissant). The "time-space" flux of the chronotope is especially useful in Caribbean folklore; authors often look to the past for agency in the present—as Walcott writes, "who will teach us a history of which we too are capable?" (*Omeros* 197). Second, I will explore representative "folkloric" texts, chosen for their engagement with folklore as well as the chronotope. Although I include other texts, the main focal points are Derek Walcott's *Omeros* and "Ti-Jean and His Brothers," Alejo Carpentier's *The Kingdom of This*

World and The Lost Steps, Wilson Harris' *Palace of the Peacock*, and Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven*; all of these texts depict the exilic heritage of the region, and to a lesser degree elements of faith that inscribe a current Caribbean agency.

Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope or "time-space" brings together time and space in a critical moment of flux with an imbued power that may produce either a debilitating or a strengthening change in a protagonist. In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin observes that,

in the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. (84)

Although Bakhtin is discussing what he calls the "ancient novel," his theoretical perspective is useful here, especially concerning the quest for cultural agency within which much Caribbean literature may be placed. Perhaps because of this quest for agency, there is a heightened predisposition toward temporal and spatial significance in Caribbean literature.

The significance of the chronotope to Caribbean literature appears especially in what Bakhtin calls "the chronotope of the *threshold*" (248), and in another context "*historical inversion*" (147). The chronotope of the threshold is "connected with the breaking point in life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life . . ." (Bakhtin 248). Caribbean literature often dramatizes this crisis in variations on the theme of breaking through the "threshold" of the imperial cultural hegemony and asserting a sense of Caribbean cultural agency. One way Caribbean authors empower the past is through historical inversion; in Caribbean literature historical inversion is a narrative process in which one "rows backward" into the past. Through historical inversion Caribbean literature liberates a fragmented and exilic history by identifying it, engaging it, and reclaiming it.

Some of the texts themselves, more overtly than others, suggest the time-space flux of the chronotope. For instance, Harris' *Palace of the Peacock* and Carpentier's *The Lost Steps* are both narratives where, for every step forward the protagonist takes, time moves in reverse sequence (and later fluctuates back to the present). There are also less obvious chronotopic texts that still exhibit elements of a lost Caribbean heritage being brought into the present; their protagonists only *symbolically* leave the present, and time does not "shift." In a few of these texts the chronotope may be simplified further as a critical "middle moment" in time, which forever changes the protagonist. In Caribbean literature, exilic characters often engage their past in a variety of ways and return to the present with newfound agency.

Ruth Finnegan, in *Oral Poetry*, points out a discursive problem concerning the defining elements of oral poetry: "There is no clear-cut line between 'oral' and 'written' literature, and when one tries to differentiate between them—as has often been attempted—it becomes clear that there are constant overlaps" (2). Finnegan does, however, narrow her discussion of oral

poetry in terms of ballads, folksongs, popular songs, children's verse, and epic poetry (3-16). She arrives at one conclusion, which is quite relevant to Caribbean literature:

The element of *performance*, of oral presentation, is of such obvious and leading significance in oral poetry that, paradoxically, it raises the question whether this element is not also of more real importance in the literature we classify as "written" than we often realise. Is there not an auditory ring in most poetry? Is reading aloud, declaiming aloud, not in practice an important part of our culture? How many people only appreciate poetry through the eye? (273)

The element of performance is important to Caribbean oral poetry. For many years, the Caribbean has produced "performance poets" and "Dub poets," who emphasize the rhythm, or musicality, of the sounds they speak. Further, there are numerous endorsements for the critical importance of sound, especially "noise" in Caribbean literature, which we see in work by Brathwaite and Lamming, and more recently in Carolyn Cooper's critical analyses of both performance and sound in *Noises in the Blood*. Cooper notes that many Jamaican authors' "experiments in form inscribe the Jamaican attempt to 'colonise' a western literary form, the novel, adapting the conventions of the genre to accommodate orality" (3). In this sense, we may view the Caribbean novel as a scribal extension of the oral cultural milieu, but this is also applicable to other artistic forms, such as drama and poetry.

While Finnegan sees an overlap between oral and written texts, Walter Ong, in *Orality and Literacy*, states that "an oral culture has no texts" (33). Yet, if an oral culture has no texts, it still has *contexts*. In the modern Caribbean, there are Creole societies that are largely oral, yet easily intermingle the oral with the scribal. I resist the suggestion in *The Empire Writes Back* that "oral literature" is a "contradictory" term (Ashcroft 127). This observation may be a measure of the West's inability to fully understand Creole sensibilities, which perhaps gives more impetus to Caribbean resistance narratives.

Ong's progressive ideology suggests an "orality-literacy shift" in which orality leads to literacy, and not the other way around (145). He further claims that the classical epic cannot be reproduced for the simple reason that "the narrator of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is lost in the oral communalities: he never appears as 'I'" (159). But we may view Walcott's *Omeros* with its narrative "I" as a modern Creole epic poem that intermingles both the oral and the literate/literary. This mixture of orality and literacy may very well stem from a Caribbean "*irruption into modernity*" as Glissant suggests (*Caribbean Discourse* 146). In Caribbean literature, we may view a construction of oral narrative, where one's written text—complete with new mythologies of the new world mixing with the old—may be deemed not only to have oral antecedents but to be itself in dialogic interaction with its own oral cultural milieu.

Caribbean literature's mixing of the oral and the scribal conjoined with its "irruption into modernity" fits well with Bakhtin's chronotope. In *Caribbean Discourse*, Glissant argues that

“the Caribbean folktale zeroes in on our absence of history: it is the site of the deactivated word. Yet it says all” (85). Glissant further poses this identity argument: “the 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?’” (86). Glissant affirms the historical cultural significance of living in one’s own time and space; “for history is not only absence for us, it is vertigo. This time that was never ours, we must now possess” (161). As Glissant suggests, Caribbean authors often appropriate their local folklore to answer questions of cultural significance. The power inscribed in Caribbean narrative folklore, and hence a reason for its success, is that it answers Glissant’s question.

Walcott and Brathwaite use space and time as discursive entities by which to make some of their arguments. Walcott asks, in his book-length autobiographical poem *Another Life*, “where else to row, but backward?” (217). Walcott writes history as he brings together various fragments of history to complete his incarnation of a New World Caribbean Self. In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech (1992), Walcott explains why he feels compelled to do this; “the sigh of History rises over ruins, not over landscapes, and in the Antilles there are few ruins to sigh over, apart from the ruins of sugar estates, and abandoned forts” (*The Antilles* 7). Walcott often questions History in his quest for Caribbean agency, for example, in the inscription of History in his poem, “The Sea is History”: “Where are your monuments, your battles, martyrs? / Where is your tribal memory? / Sirs, / in that grey vault. The sea. The sea / has locked them up. The sea is History” (*Collected Poems* 364). Walcott places History in the sea, a peculiar “vault.” This is an idea that parallels Brathwaite’s in his analysis of Caribbean cultural identity in *Contradictory Omens*, when he concludes that, “the unity is submarine” (64). In “Calypso,” Brathwaite turns to mythic origins of the Caribbean which cannot help but include the unstated sea with which the stone comes in contact: “the stone had skidded arc’d and bloomed into islands . . .” (*The Arrivants* 48). Likewise, Walcott’s “The Sea is History” describes the genesis of Caribbean history, when “. . . each rock broke into its own nation; / . . . / and in the salt chuckle of rocks / with their sea pools, there was a sound / like a rumour without any echo / of History really beginning” (367). In this case, history is conflated with the politics of the islands as independent nation-states. The implication is that history is there for one to find, if one can just swim deep enough to obtain this knowledge and hear the sounds that are so critical to the Caribbean.

Brathwaite argues that sound resides in a privileged space in Caribbean poetry in *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry*.² Brathwaite’s general argument may be summed up in his comment that “the hurricane does not roar in pentameter” (10). Brathwaite maintains that the *sounds* of a distinctly Caribbean poetry are in a “nation language” that does not mimic the European pentameter. Yet a search for origins remains problematic in a Caribbean which has not had the past half-millennium to create and build a positive sense of self—a side effect of existing as a “hole” society (Brathwaite, “World Order Models” 57).³ The Caribbean’s “irruption into modernity” can result in poetry that awkwardly mixes European poetic traditions with a Caribbean locale as Brathwaite illustrates

with a student's poem: "*the snow was falling on the canefields*" (*History of the Voice* 9). He uses his own "Wings of a Dove," as an example of the "riddimic [sic] aspect of nation language" (34), which reflects the "sound-structure of the Rastafarian drums . . ." (33). Hence, the local cultural milieu is inscribed in the poem, while the sound structure asserts the dialogic orality of the poem:

Watch *dem* ship *dem*
come to town *dem*

full o' *silk* *dem*
 full o' *food* *dem*

and *dem* plane *dem*
come to *groun'* *dem*

full o' *flash* *dem*
 full o' *cash* *dem* (32-33)

The chronotope here is the daily arrival of the global in the local sphere. The shipping industry that brings food and silk, and the planes that are full of flash and cash represent the rhythm of the outside world arriving on the island. But the West does not intrude so much as to negate the rhythm of local lives. The rhythmic functions of these poetic events are more easily seen and heard in actual performance, as Brathwaite will tap his thighs or the podium when reciting these words so that the significance of the local rhythm is "amplified" for his audience.

In Caribbean writing other than poetry, there is also an engagement with the orality/aurality of "noise" in Caribbean literature. For example, we may view a creative representation of the "noise factor" in the first pages of Erna Brodber's *Myal*. *Myal* aptly begins (not with a hurricane but close enough) with a lightning storm and all the mythic and metaphoric possibilities inherent in it. The character Mass Cyrus says, "this discord could shake a man out of his roots" (1). George Lamming refers specifically to noise multiple times in describing identity issues in *The Pleasures of Exile*. It is Caliban's *voice* in Act III Scene II of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* which Lamming quotes: "Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises, / Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not / Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments will hum about mine ears . . ." (14). Lamming also writes that when reciting a poem in London, he "made a heaven of a noise which is characteristic of my voice and an ingredient of West Indian behavior. The result was an impression of authority" (62-63). Carolyn Cooper's *Noises in the Blood* supports Brathwaite's general notions of orality, rhythm, and nation language. She points out further that "one culture's 'knowledge' is another culture's 'noise'" (4). We may thus understand the "noise factor" as intrinsic to Caribbean nation language, and nation language itself as a core value in Caribbean oral literature.

Walcott's *Omeros* continues his thematic engagement with the "absence" of history. If the classical epic, such as the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, is understood to be an oral narrative, then

Omeros may be viewed as a descendant of the classical epic poem. Yet, the communal significance of *Omeros* goes beyond this definition. Myth and folklore are embedded and re-inscribe fragmented ancient tribal memories into a locale that has suffered a “deep amnesiac blow” to the head (*Collected Poems* 88). In *Omeros*, the narrator asks, “Who will teach us a history of which we too are capable?” (*Omeros* 197) The answer is given in the text, for example, in the chronotope of Achille’s sunstroke, where “time is the metre, memory the only plot” (129). The sunstroke is a device Walcott uses to enable Achille’s ancestry to resurface into Achille’s consciousness. During his illness, Achille’s mind goes back in time and when he returns a changed person, he brings a new awareness of his African heritage back with him. During his sunstroke, Achille meets his ancestral father, Afolabe. While *Omeros* is considered an epic poem, this scene is written in the textual style of a play, and may be viewed as a dramatized performance for our benefit. Afolabe asks Achille a critical question: “Achille. What does the name mean? I have forgotten the one / that I gave you. But it was, it seems, many years ago. / What does it mean?” (137). Achille’s response is at first sympathetic: “well, I too have forgotten / Everything was forgotten” (137); then it becomes more lackadaisical: “it means something, maybe. What’s the difference?” (138). Achille’s attitude causes Afolabe’s tribe to grieve (138), and condemns Achille to a veritable lecture on the importance of names as well as the importance of his African heritage (135-39): “No man loses his shadow except it is in the night, / and even then his shadow is hidden, not lost. At the glow / of sunrise, he stands on his own name in that light” (138). Afolabe tries to tell Achille that his past can be reclaimed, and his name can mean something again. Achille returns to the present with a better understanding of how his heritage became fragmented over three hundred years. A folabe’s oration may extend beyond Achille to include the national heritage of St. Lucia. Like Achille’s name, the agency of the island’s culture is not lost but hidden in the legacies of slavery and imperialism. Significantly, Achille is last seen returning from a fishing trip and the sea where history continues to be made: “when he left the beach the sea was still going on” (325).

In a visit to the underworld, Walcott is guided by *Omeros* (reminiscent of Virgil guiding Dante) to confront and understand his “lost faith both in religion and myth” (*Omeros* 293). Yet Walcott’s “faith,” by all appearances, remains constant. In an interview with Edward Hirsch, Walcott suggests as much; “if you go to a peak anywhere in St. Lucia, you feel a simultaneous newness and a sense of timelessness at the same time—the presence of where you are. It’s a primal thing and it has always been that way” (Hirsch 105). Walcott is describing a schizophrenic Caribbean chronotope that occurs where “newness” and “timelessness” intersect in a specific place, the peaks of St. Lucia, where something can be “primal” and simultaneously “has *always* been that way.” In other interviews, Walcott similarly describes his homeland as “a very green, misty island, which always has a low cloud hanging over the mountaintops. When you come down by plane, you break through the mist, and it’s as if you were entering some kind of prehistoric Eden” (“Man of the Theater” 18). We thus have Walcott’s sense of St. Lucia as an Adamic place. We see this again in his response to Naipaul’s comments in *The Middle Passage* that “nothing was created in the West Indies” (29): “if there was nothing, there was

everything to be made. With this prodigious ambition one began” (*What the Twilight Says* 2). Bhabha suggests that “it is this forgetting—the signification of a minus in the origin—that constitutes the *beginning* of a nation’s narrative” (160). Of course Walcott does not confuse his Eden with the biblical referent. He is discussing a New World Caribbean Eden. In “The Muse of History,” Walcott writes, “the apples of this second Eden have the tartness of experience” (41). This second time around, Walcott’s view of Adam’s task to give things their name comes with a certain ironic pretense about faith, myth, and history. We thus have an imaginative duality of time in the space of a Caribbean chronotope. Can there be a “prehistoric Eden” concurrent with modernity? This is indeed a paradox of the Caribbean chronotope.

Walcott’s narrative of dual time lends itself to Bakhtin’s notion of “historical inversion.” Bakhtin says that “where there is no passage of time there is also no *moment* of time . . .” (146), which is the very problem of an “a-historical” Caribbean. Perhaps historical inversion is compensation for this problem in Caribbean literature. Historical inversion occurs when the future is “somehow empty and fragmented—since everything affirmative, ideal, obligatory, desired has been shifted, via the inversion, into the past (or partly into the present); on route, it has become weightier, more authentic, more persuasive” (Bakhtin 147). If Caribbean narratives of historical inversion are part of the developmental processes of cultural decolonization and quests for affirmative national identities, then historical inversion lays the groundwork for a positive future, and a more amenable present. This may be one way of reading “historical inversion” in Achille’s sunstroke in *Omeros*, and in the mythologies of origin in Walcott’s “The Sea is History” and Brathwaite’s “Calypso.”

The Caribbean has been an important part of Western history for so long that it would be futile to attempt to detach the various creolized cultures in the Caribbean from their five-hundred-year-old melding process. Caribbean literature illustrates and validates this creolization. Hence, *Omeros* does not stop with the relationship of the Old World to the New World; it does not halt with the Mediterranean similitude to the Caribbean. Walcott’s epic poem is a New World Caribbean epic, complete with modern and ancient griots (Seven Seas and *Omeros*); Achille’s tree god-given canoe; a modern-day Helen who walks on an ancient Helen (the island); Hector’s metamorphosis from a fisherman into a taxi driver; a metaphysical connection to the Sioux Indians’ Trail of Tears and Ghost Dance; and Philoctete’s wound that is only healed by Ma Kilman’s obeah concoction brewed with leaves from a vine grown from an African seed. What I am suggesting with this partial list is the usefulness of Walcott’s inclusion of diverse mythologies (especially the African and Greek), and of ancient elements with modern elements in his tale. Bhabha suggests that, “postcolonial time questions the teleological traditions of past and present, and the polarized historicist *sensibility* of the archaic and the modern” (153). The Caribbean chronotope is therefore well represented with *Omeros*, where ancient times reside in a modern space (or equally, where ancient space resides in modern time).

In *Omeros*, Walcott is fulfilling a self-appointed mission to describe his as yet un-inscribed St. Lucian heritage and this is the significant point of departure. Just as CLR James

describes the Haitian revolution in *The Black Jacobins* from the perspective of the modern Caribbean subject, other Caribbean artists similarly represent their islands in opposition to or in addition to the West's generalized knowledge from its previously written histories of the region. Toussaint L'Overture and Dessalines and Henri Christophe have now become archetypal and mythical folk figures of Haiti and, by extension, the Caribbean's past. Walcott reminds us that "there was only one noble ruin in the archipelago: Christophe's massive citadel at La Ferriere. It was a monument to egomania, more than a strategic castle. . . It was all we had" ("What the Twilight Says" 13). Perhaps because it was "all we had," the Haitian revolution becomes an important focal point for some Caribbean authors. Aimé Césaire and Walcott have both written eponymous plays about the Haitian revolution that serve to heighten the myth of Henri Christophe. Both James and Glissant did the same for Monsieur Toussaint. Alejo Carpentier's novel *The Kingdom of this World* was inspired by the Haitian revolution and Christophe's reign after the revolution. So "who will teach us a history of which we too are capable?" (*Omeros* 197). If *Omeros* itself serves as one answer, we also have a variety of previous "answers" in James's, Glissant's, Césaire's, and Carpentier's work, just to name a few.

Orality and myth come together in a quite straightforward way in the Caribbean chronotope of Carpentier's *The Kingdom of This World*. The spiritual folk figure and shape-shifter Macandal tells stories as prophecy and his listeners believe them to such a degree that what would otherwise be "mere stories" become "true to life" folktales. If Caribbean artists are looking for distinguished origins, they have found them in Macandal, a Haitian slave. Since he is a catalyst for the only successful slave rebellion in the history of our modern world, he lives during the "threshold" of a critical middle moment of Caribbean (and world) history. First, we hear the "tales Macandal sing-songed in the sugar mill" (13) about great kings of Africa and the difference between African kings and European ones: "in Africa, the king was warrior, hunter, judge, and priest. . . In France, in Spain, the king sent his generals to fight in his stead; he was incompetent to decide legal problems, he allowed himself to be scolded by any trumpety friar" (14). Then, when Macandal's left hand becomes stuck in a cane grinder, he begins his literal and figurative metamorphosis into folk hero with an amputation (21).

Macandal is reassigned from hard labor in the fields to overseeing cattle (24) after he loses his arm in an accident, and it is at this time that he discovers the poison that will beget the downfall of the white plantocracy (25-26). Macandal then escapes slavery to become a living legend.

Macandal, the one-armed, now a *houngan* of the Rada rite, invested with superhuman powers as the result of his possession by the major gods on several occasions, was the Lord of Poison. Endowed with supreme authority by the Rulers of the Other Shore, he had proclaimed the crusade of extermination, chosen as he was to wipe out the whites and create a great empire of free Negroes in Santo Domingo. Thousands of slaves obeyed him blindly. Nobody could halt the march of poison. (36)

Faith in Macandal both frees the slaves and condemns the whites. In the minds of the slaves, Macandal has abilities to morph into *anything* such as a green lizard, a moth, or a dog (41), so that if anything occurs out of the ordinary it can be credited to Macandal, who “now ruled the whole island” (42).⁴ But when Macandal actually returns four years later in human guise, he is caught and in a public ceremony burned at the stake (50-52). However, it seems that the plantation owners still could not win the battle of faith because Macandal gets loose briefly, and apparently no slave sees that he has been,

thrust head first into the fire . . . that afternoon the slaves returned to their plantations laughing all the way. Macandal had kept his word, remaining in the Kingdom of This World. Once more the Whites had been outwitted by the Mighty Powers of the Other Shore. (52)

During the twenty years following the “absence” of Macandal, before the “Call of the Conch Shells,” which would bring the slaves to unified rebellion, Ti-Noel (the protagonist of the novel) “passed on the tales of the Mandingue to his children, teaching them simple little songs he had made up in Macandal’s honor while currying and brushing the horses” (62-63). Honoring Macandal comes to fruition in the eventual success of the rebellion.

Many years after the rebellion, and after Christophe’s horrendous reign, Ti-Noel has a metamorphosis of his own. In fear of being put back to work in his old age by the Mulattos (who are then in charge), Ti-Noel turns into a bird, a stallion, an ant, a goose, and finally back to human guise before he disappears into the sea breeze (184-86). Thus the myth of Macandal overlaps with the myth of Ti-Noel. Part of the “magical realism” of this text is that Carpentier has Ti-Noel living through the days of the rise and fall of Macandal, Toussaint L’Overture, Dessaline, Christophe, and Bouckman. Yet, according to CLR James in the *The Black Jacobins*, “the Mackandal rebellion never reached fruition and it was the only hint of an organized revolt during the hundred years preceding the French Revolution” (21). Bouckman views the French Revolution as a signpost for his people, and they blow the conch shells eight days later (*The Kingdom of This World* 66-68). Perhaps magical realism lends itself to the expansion and compression of time-space because Ti-Noel has lived a long and hearty life: before, during, and after critical moments in Caribbean history.

Carpentier’s *The Lost Steps* is a narrative with a “prehistoric Eden” concurrent with modernity. Carpentier’s protagonist leaves New York to search for an ancient musical instrument, but becomes caught up in a quest for history itself. He searches for and finds a secret river-entrance to a path into the heartland of Central America, which is “undocumented, without knowledge of its past or the preparation of the written word” (68). He travels into the mythic past where life moves “to a primordial rhythm” (173). His continued movement up the river is parallel to his journey backward through time. Eventually, “it is the year 0,” and then it is “the Paleolithic Age” (179). This engagement with history ignites a turn in the protagonist from an initial awe of “the presence of rampant fauna, of the primeval slime, of the green fermentation

beneath the dark waters,” to a joyous celebration of Self as “master of the world, the supreme heir of creation” (160, 163). In essence, this backward glance constitutes an exile from the present. However, it is a peculiar spatial and temporal moment of exchange in Caribbean literature through which, paradoxically, *exile becomes a solution to exile*. Caribbean authors thus subvert the exile of the present by looking to the past.

In *Palace of the Peacock*, Wilson Harris anticipates and answers Walcott’s question about history as he envisions the creation of mankind as malleable and traceable to a Caribbean moment in ancient history. The Caribbean “local” and the West’s “global” intersect just as the present and the past intersect in a mythical locale called “the palace of the peacock.” Harris’ historical inversion shows a momentous journey from present into past as the colonialist Donne and Donne’s twin, a local Guyanese narrator, climb a rock-face ladder in a utopian past to find God and themselves. Donne’s journey also may be understood as a re-creation of the search for El Dorado, the mythical land of the gold mother lode. But along the way, Donne and his crew seem to be transformed by their search as the farther they travel into the heartland, up a river, and scale the ladder of creation, the farther they travel into a mythic past. This “golden” palace of the peacock is described by the narrator as a “palace of the universe” where “the windows of the soul looked out and in” (146). Hence, this journey is about the narrator’s and Donne’s inward look at themselves and outward view of the world.

In *Palace of the Peacock*, Harris attempts to change our structural understanding of the world, which is key to understanding the folk pathways of his narrative. He shows various structures both in place and being displaced. This displacement may be viewed as a kind of deconstruction of the western grasp on Guyana’s heart and heartland. For example, Donne speaks about himself as the landlord of the village called Mariella—also the name of the Aruac woman in the story who serves as a guide—where everything is “primitive”; “every boundary line is a myth. No-man’s land, understand?” (17). The boundary lines that connote property and ownership in Mariella are constructions of Donne’s western mind. We may view that Donne’s general success stems from his overt colonizing attitude: “rule the land . . . and you rule the world” (19). Barbara Webb suggests that in Harris,

El Dorado is emblematic of the first encounter of the European and the Amerindian, the Old and the New World. Furthermore, this nexus of myth and history reveals how vision - the idealism of the quest - was corrupted by the realism of the present. (64)

The present finds itself engaging the past when Donne’s crew, upon their arrival in Mariella, realize that “their living names matched the names of a famous dead crew that had sunk in the rapids and been drowned to a man, leaving their names inscribed at Sorrow Hill which stood at the foot of the falls” (*Palace* 23). Fearful of the prophetic nature of the dead names, the narrating “I” ponders the difficulty of his journey:

how could I escape the enormous ancestral and twin fantasy of death-in-life and life-in-death? It was impossible to turn back now and leave the crew in the world inverse stream of beginning to live again in a hot and mad pursuit in the midst of imprisoning land and water and ambushing forest and wood. (25-26)

It is indeed too late to escape. The narrator has one dead eye that sees into the past when he dreams, and one live eye that views the future when he wakes. Webb writes that,

in *Palace of the Peacock*, the reader is immediately plunged into the hallucinatory world of the subconscious imagination. Time, place, character, and event are caught up in the flux of duality and metamorphosis. . . . Through the language of the text itself, Harris achieves a fusion of past, present, and future, the simultaneity of dreamtime. (66-67)

The narrator's opposing monocular vision suggests that he has added abilities concerning his vision into the past and future; however, he also has a lack of vision or understanding of his *present* circumstances. He represents a schizophrenic Caribbean chronotope.

Harris uses as a tool the myth of the creation as it is told in the Bible. Harris revises this myth to suit his characters and plot. Once the crew reaches Mariella, and they begin their search for El Dorado, the remainder of the story takes place over the course of seven days and nights. Each major occasion in the story occurs in this fashion: a death on day one, another death and the travel up river on day two and three, et cetera, until they reach the top of the ladder on day six, and enlightenment on day seven. On the fourth day, at the base of the ladder, the narrator "rested against the wall and cliff of heaven as against an indestructible mirror and soul in which he saw the blind dream of creation crumble as it was re-enacted" (124). This view from the wall occurs while the narrator is resting, in a passive moment of non-movement, and he sees history *unfolding*. Once he actively moves farther up the ladder, he sees history *enfolding*, which is a reversal of time simultaneous to his movement through space. This horizontal movement (through the river and the land) and then vertical movement through space (up the ladder) in the search for Self subverts the exile of the present; it is tantamount to a search for "the mythical paradise of union with the cosmos—a timeless place of supreme liberation" (Webb 78-79). But we should ask, for whom is this liberation, and from what, especially since the narrator travels to a place where "time had no meaning" (*Palace* 133). Of course, time has great meaning in the context of the narrative. For the narrator, his travel to this place is a liberation of the soul from the absence of history. In essence, he has "throw[n] bridges across chasms" of time (Harris, "Creoleness" 25). His bringing together of history and a Caribbean Self can now be inscribed together through time because the narrator must ultimately leave the ladder of creation; in doing so, he will "transform his beginnings" (*Palace* 130) and he will come back to the present, and in this return, he will bring history with him just as Achilles does after his sunstroke.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., in *The Signifying Monkey* (1988), says that “the most fundamental absolute of the Yoruba is that there exist, simultaneously, three stages of existence: the past, the present, and the unborn (37). Although unstated as such, this part of the Yoruba faith is at work in Walcott’s folktale, “Ti-Jean and His Brothers” (in *Dream on Monkey Mountain and Other Plays*). The play is representative of a Caribbean chronotope, as we view the past, the present, and even a physical manifestation of the Caribbean’s unborn future in this play. “Ti-Jean and his Brothers” is rooted in mankind’s age-old struggle with the devil, which is depicted in a variety of narratives, from Goethe’s *Faust* to Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “Young Goodman Brown,” for example. Walcott’s play inscribes the “devil in the forest” legend with a Caribbean allegorical twist. It includes the Bolom character as an unborn child, also sometimes referred to as Foetus, who is in limbo; “I am neither living nor dead” (98). The Bolom, while a representative of the unborn future, is also a messenger of the devil. The Bolom brings the challenge. If Ti-Jean or his brothers can make the devil feel any human emotion, then they will receive for themselves and their mother “fulfillment, wealth, peace” (100). If they lose their patience with the devil, they will lose their lives, but (oddly) not their souls. More importantly for the Bolom, his motive for participating in this game is that, “once they are dead, woman, I too shall feel life” (100).

The three brothers meet with the devil, not unlike the “Three Little Pigs” who meet individually with the Big Bad Wolf. They each meet the devil in a chronotopic repetition of time and space with only the slightest, but critical, differences. The oldest brother, Gros-Jean, as his name implies is the biggest; “his arm was hard as iron, / but he was very stupid” (86). His hubris about his strength allows him to become worn out in his tasks for the devil—such as tying up a goat that perpetually gets loose—and he loses his patience, and is taken and eaten by the devil. The second brother, Mi-Jean, represents the middle child, “so only half as stupid” (87) and yet he is somehow philosophical. But the devil beats him and eats him too, when he loses his patience with the devil in a debate. But finally Ti-Jean beats the devil at his own game by using deception, and by enlisting the help of his community: his mother, Frog, Cricket, Bird, and the cane-field workers. Instead of following the devil’s requests like his brothers did, Ti-Jean first castrates the goat and then kills it; he burns the fields, and the devil’s house for good measure. Indeed, the moral of the story seems to be, to beat the devil, you have to play his game; but you not only have to play it, you have to understand the rules, and you have to break them. For example, Ti-Jean’s last task set by the devil was to count all the leaves of every stalk of cane in the cane-field before the next day began (147). But Ti-Jean understands, “the one way to annoy you is rank disobedience” (153). To annoy the devil would create human emotions in the devil and Ti-Jean would win the game. Ti-Jean, therefore, surmounts his problem by getting the field-workers to burn the cane-field overnight (148-149): “I’m the new foreman! Listen to this: / The Devil say you must burn everything, now. / Burn the cane, burn the cotton! Burn everything now!” (149). When Ti-Jean says “Devil” it is the same as saying “Planter” (who is the owner of the fields) to the workers. The significance of this conflation is important in understanding Caribbean history,

and why the workers so readily and unquestioningly follow the new foreman's commands when they burn the fields.

The past in this story is represented in the obvious historical connections to slavery and colonialism. The past is also represented by the Devil's eternal quest for human emotion: "He spoiled me you know, when I was his bright starry lieutenant. Gave me everything I desired. I was God's spoiled son. Result: ingratitude" (155). The present is represented as the moment in time in which the story takes place. It is a chronotopic middle moment in time, that will forever after change the characters' lives. The moral is explained by Ti-Jean: "who with the Devil tries to play fair, / weaves the net of his own despair" (156-57). Oddly, the moral is not "don't play games with the devil." It seems that the game *must* be played. The Devil of course still attempts to make his own rules, even after he is beaten by Ti-Jean. It is the Bolom, a representative of the unborn future, who demands and somehow gets through to the Devil that he has gotten what he wished. The Bolom says, "master, be fair!" and "Master, you have lost. Pay him! Reward him!" (157,160). Ti-Jean asks that his gift be given to the Bolom, and the Bolom receives the gift of life.

If we view this folktale as a Caribbean allegory, then we may better understand the exilic condition of the Caribbean "local" and its struggle for agency against the Western "global" as represented respectively by Ti-Jean and his brothers, and the Devil. This folktale reminds us that there was never a choice about whether or not to interact with the West in the first place. The Caribbean must interact with the West, and generally on the West's terms. Viewing the folktale as Caribbean allegory, we may better understand the pressures which the colonial Planter places on the field-worker, and how quickly the workers burned the fields without questioning the "new foreman," and how the devil comes in various guises throughout the story - Devil, Old Man, Planter - , and how collective unborn identities wait for life, even while they remain strangled in their waiting. The Bolom rejoices when finally given life, "I am born! I shall die! I am born! I shall die!" (163). The Bolom celebrates the joy of *independence* from the Devil. He represents the possibilities for a New World Caribbean life; he becomes the "foetus of Caribbean aspirations who chooses the pain of selfhood rather than continue to be the Devil's emissary" (Coke 122). The play's various allegorical incarnations revolve around redemption and possibilities for a Caribbean future. Yet one point must not be overlooked. The Devil says to Ti-Jean after he admits he has been beaten, "we shall meet again, Ti-Jean. You, and your new brother! / The features will change, but the fight is still on" (164). The changing of the features is evident in the changing paradigmatic chronicles of the interactions between the West and the Caribbean; what was once colonialism becomes neocolonialism and is now called globalization (Harvey 53). We should note that only the external features have changed. In the modern Caribbean, the fight has always—already been "on." In recent years, what was once a fight for independence has become a continuing struggle for national sovereignty and regional comradeship in the Caribbean. Indeed, we may view various Caribbean island nations fighting to maintain their righteous lives while playing the game of globalization with rules dictated by the

IMF and the World Bank. But when it defeats the New World Devils, the Caribbean cannot again afford to give away its gift to the Bolom, unless the Bolom is indeed its own unborn future. Of course, it may be understood that Ti-Jean's act is not only one of life-giving for another, but Ti-Jean benefits just as much, for the Bolom is now his "brother" and they may comfort and aid each other in the future.

We should remember that "Ti-Jean and His Brothers" is a fable, and that Frog is telling this story. The final words, like the first words, are his: "Messiers, creek. Crack" (166). Frog ends with the same oral device by which he began the story: "Greek-croak. Greek-croak" (85). "Crick crack" is a Caribbean story-telling device in which (it seems to vary) either the story-teller or the audience makes a request (Crick?), and if the response is heard (Crack!), then a story will commence. Walcott's literary play on words notwithstanding (Greek for Crick), Cricket's answer using the same words allows Frog to begin the story. We are therefore reminded at the beginning and at the finale of "Ti-Jean and His Brothers" that this is indeed an oral tale.

"Crick Crack" can also be used as a negation or usurping device to imply that a liar or "story teller" exists. In Merle Hodge's *Crick-Crack Monkey* (1970), a child playing with Tee and other friends says "crick crack" at the end of a long adventure tale about the "stateside" exploits of Manhatt'n, whose name is an obvious sign of worldly travel and knowledge (Hodge 7). The statement upsets Manhatt'n so much that he forgets his "perfect western drawl" when he says "crick crack yu mother! Is true whe ah tell yu-yu only jealous it ain't you!" (8). Although he is seen little after this encounter, his name reverts back to "Fresh-water," which was previously reserved for behind-his-back usage only (8). In "Ti-Jean and His Brothers," therefore, we may view the entry and exit usage of "crick-crack" as a fun and culturally significant way to bring the audience into and back out of the story. It serves as reminder, and cathartic relief: it is "just" a folktale.

One character who exemplifies metropolitan experience and knowledge is Clare Savage in Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven*. The story is a continuation of Clare's life from *Abeng*. In *No Telephone to Heaven* Clare travels with her family as they leave Jamaica for New York, and then on her own to England for college, and finally back to Jamaica to stay. Clare's problematic search for her personal identity and place in the world is parallel to Jamaica's own coming of age in the 1960s-1980s. In this novel, Cliff brings up two (among other) notable mythological resistance motifs; one is Nanny of the Maroons, which by the end of the story Clare embodies, and the other is Sasabonsam, a forest god, which the character Christopher eventually embodies.

All Jamaicans know who Nanny is, because Nanny is one of Jamaica's official National Heroes. Also, Nanny's image is on the Jamaican five-hundred-dollar bill. Currently, the Jamaican five-hundred-dollar bill is approximate to ten US dollars and in frequent use. Nanny's narrative inscribes the Jamaican ideal heroics of resistance against oppression and an organic sensibility toward the landscape as Nanny escaped the slave plantation to live in the hills of the

Blue Mountains. Jamaica's youth are further taught how Nanny showed off her special powers, on one occasion, by catching bullets that were fired at her and then handing them back to her oppressors.

We are told that after the treaty was signed . . . she asked the leader of the British forces to order his men to fire their guns at her. . . . Nanny turned her back and bent over. The shots were fired. When the smoke cleared, she went over to the British captain. She gave him the bullets which she had caught and said; "Take these good friend, there is peace." (Jamaica Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture).

The Maroon heritage is significant to such a great degree that some people who live in Accompong (St. Elizabeth parish) and Moore Town (Portland parish) claim to be direct descendants of the original Maroons. Laura Tanna has collected some of these testimonies in *Jamaican Folk Tales and Oral Histories* (1984). Mann Rowe of Accompong refers to Nanny as "my tird great granmada" (Tanna 18). Although, Col. C.L.G. Harris of Moore Town notes that the Moore Town usage of "Grandy Nanny" is "a term of endearment" (19).

Cliff's use of Nanny in her constructions of Clare seem relevant as an allegory of resistance to oppression, as Cliff connects Jamaica's past with Jamaica's present. Before Clare has made up her mind about who she wants to be, Cliff inserts the short chapter, "Magnanimous Warrior" significantly just before the chapter "Homebound" which is where (back in Jamaica) Clare will find her calling. The Warrior chapter is two pages of folklore about Nanny.

She writes in her own blood across the drumhead. Obeah-woman. Myal-woman. She can cure. She can kill. She can give jobs. She is foy-eyed. The bearer of second sight. Mother who goes forth emitting flames from her eyes. Nose. Mouth. Ears. Vulva. Anus. She bites the evildoers that they become full of sores. She treats cholera with bitterbush. She burns the canefields. She is River Mother. Sky Mother. . . . What has become of this warrior? Now that we need her more than ever. (163-64)

The answer to the question is given, "we have forgotten her" (164). But this is not the case after all, because Clare has joined the revolution. It is Clare, who is the unnamed person at the beginning of the novel joining the crew in the back of the truck with the painted side which reads "No Telephone to Heaven"; "a light-skinned woman, daughter of landowners, native-born slaves, emigrés, Carib, Ashanti, English, has taken her place on this truck, alongside people who easily could have hated her" (5). Clare's distinction as a part of this group is quite significant because, "[she] had once witnessed for Babylon" (87). The truck and the crew are headed up the mountain to re-claim and make use of Clare's grandmother's land, which lies in "ruinate" (a Jamaican term for land that was once in agricultural use). Clare's reason for joining this crew is summed up by one of its members, "it is no mystery / we making history . . ." (5). We thus have

a double reclaiming here, as Clare helps to reclaim the island (through the revolution) as well as her personal repossession of her grandmother's land in the countryside that she shares with the insurgents. Clare has indeed become a Nanny figure, even if she cannot catch bullets and hand them back to her oppressors. At the end of the novel, she lies in the bitterbush, and-it is implied-she is killed in the crossfire when it seems the revolution is squashed, and "shots found the bitterbush" (208).

The "ruination" of Clare's grandmother's land is described at one point: "there was no forgiveness in this disorder. Sasabonsam, fire-eyed forest monster, dangled his legs from the height of a silk-cotton tree" (9). The silk-cotton tree has special significance in Jamaica; for instance, Tom Cringle's Cotton Tree is known as a landmark used for hanging slaves.⁵ But to have Sasabonsam dangling his legs from it makes great use of this symbol, since Sasabonsam is an African god of the forest who is being used by Cliff to claim this tree in his forest away from home. The *Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language* gives a definition for "Sasabonsam" as:

an imaginary monstrous being, conceived as having a huge body of human shape, but of a red colour, and with very long hair, living in the deepest recess of the forest, where an immense silk-cotton tree is his abode; inimicable to man, especially to the priests . . . but the friend and chief of the sorcerers and witches.
(429)

We should take into account that the Rev. J.G. Christaller compiled these English translations in 1881, and they were revised in 1933. It should be easy to see how, what is known to the Asante and their descendants as an African god can become for an English Reverend "an imaginary monstrous being." For "cryptozoologists," Sasabonsam is viewed as being similar to Sasquach (a.k.a. Bigfoot) because there seems to be much lore about him and apparent presence, while his actual existence cannot be verified (Heuvelmans). For religion scholars, Sasabonsam is linked to psychic phenomena in Jamaica with regard to myal and obeah (Williams); further, there is often a conflation of Sasabonsam with evil-doing in general and, more specifically, the devil himself (Williams). In *No Telephone to Heaven*, Christopher embodies these definitions in full.

Christopher is a killer, a brutal murderer. Some may say he is a "victim of the system," since his rage and the murder of his employer's whole family are to some degree results of his dire living conditions in "the Dungle" (a Jamaican conflation of "dung-heap-jungle," and quite literally, the worst part of the inner-city of West Kingston). After his grandmother dies Christopher slowly goes insane. He eventually hears his grandmother calling for a decent burial, even though her body could never be found since the government had taken her dead body away from him thirteen years ago. How does one bury an absent body? Christopher's dire circumstances are summed up by the narrator, ". . . there was not one single smaddy in the world who cared if he lived or died. His death would cause inconvenience to no one - unless him dead on dem property. In this loneliness he longed for his grandmother" (44). His grandmother's

duppy, her spirit, speaks to him in the moment of truth to kill the employer who ridicules Christopher for asking for help to bury his dead grandmother:

‘be quick of hand.’ She spoke to him. He let go. A force passed through him. He had no past. He had no future. He was phosphorus. Light-bearing. He was light igniting the air around him. The source of all danger. He was the carrier of fire.
(47)

In this chronotope of the “threshold,” Christopher changes forever. He is no longer compared to “Likkle Jesus” in the novel. Simultaneous to Christopher’s murderous act, the revolutionaries are charging up the hill to retake Clare’s grandmother’s land, and we hear a Rastafari-type resistance mantra (albeit on the extremist militant edge), which represents both Clare’s group and Christopher’s metamorphosis into Sasabonsam: “NO TELEPHONE TO HEAVEN. No miracles. . . .Cyaan tun back now. Capture the I in I. Then say Bless me Ja/Shango/Yemanja/Jehovah/Oshun/Jesus/Nanny/Marcus/Oshun. I am about to kill one of your creatures. Some of your children” (50).

Christopher, now known as “De Watchman” of the night, is aptly hired by an American film company to play the role of Sasabonsam. A cultural dialogue occurs between the indifferent movie director, who yells “action,” and Christopher’s response. The joke is on the director when he says to Christopher, “Howl! Howl! I want you to bellow as loud as you can. Try to wake the dead. . . . Remember, you’re not human. Action!” (207). At this point, Christopher can hardly be deemed human. He is the embodiment of Sasabonsam, even without the fake red lenses on his eyes and “suit of long red hair” (207). We hear the noise factor—which Brathwaite explains in *History of the Voice* as intrinsic to the Caribbean—in Christopher’s primal howl; it is reminiscent of the call of the conch shell. At the moment of his howl, the helicopters arrive, the lights go out, the actors run and hide, and shots are fired, “spraying the breadfruit tree. Sasabonsam fell, silent” (208). By all appearances, the revolution is squashed. The sadness of this story ending in the violent death of Christopher, Clare, and others infuses the novel with realism, even while the folklore imbedded in the resistance narrative maintains its force as it answers Glissant’s quest to define “Who are we?” (*Caribbean Discourse* 86).

I have only one question for Cliff’s use of Sasabonsam, the forest god. With the exception of Cliff’s use of it in the novel, I had not read about Sasabonsam before my visit to Jamaica;⁶ therefore, this was one of my special interests and goals during my visit. I asked around. I asked the students on campus at UWI, I asked the professors on campus, I did keyword searches in the library, I asked people who came to visit the family where I lived in Kingston, and I asked the friends I had made in the farming community in Crofts Hill. I was surprised to realize that the fact of Sasabonsam’s existence and the Jamaican acknowledgement of him in *No Telephone to Heaven* was in clear contrast to his being virtually unknown to the Jamaicans I met. The general response was, and I quote, “Sasa-what?” How does one *re*-inscribe something into a Caribbean psyche that does not exist in the first place? Finally, Carolyn Cooper found

Sasabonsam living in the cotton-tree leaves of a Jamaican dictionary, which described it as a jungle god, of Akan origin. My initial question was, why make use of a god no one has heard of? But the answer is obvious to me now. The *re*-inscription of Sasabonsam into the Jamaican/Caribbean psyche serves this heritage to the same degree as CLR James' *The Black Jacobins* does for the history of Haiti's—and outwardly the Caribbean's—struggle for independence, history, and “ruins.” Sasabonsam is part of the Afro-Caribbean heritage. His place in the Caribbean pantheon should not be questioned.

Cliff, along with other Caribbean authors, is attempting to represent an important, though also difficult, Caribbean chronotope, which brings the fragmented and otherwise lost Caribbean history into a present Caribbean psyche. Indeed, the authors are fulfilling Glissant's quest, as he states, “this time that was never ours, we must now possess” (*Caribbean Discourse* 161). Through the possession of their Caribbean past and present—a possession of their own “cultural artefacts” (Anderson 4)—Glissant's community can develop a positive identity. It is perhaps a sad fact that my initial lack of knowledge on the Sasabonsam subject led me to such a dismal response in Jamaica. But this only underscores the importance of Cliff's task. Discussing her novels, Cliff has stated in an interview, “I'm interested in history that hasn't been written. The history that's not recorded” (Zacharias “Michelle Cliff”), which is quite an understatement for the significance of her work to her Caribbean heritage.

Perhaps it is true that, as Bob Marley sings, “half the story has never been told” (“Get Up Stand Up”). But the quest for cultural agency in the Caribbean is being represented through Caribbean literature's engagement with its heritage in the flux of the chronotope. Through the chronotope of the threshold, Caribbean folkloric narratives illustrate and participate in the development of Caribbean cultural agency. The agency of the local appears in both oral and literary referents. The agency often rooted in an exile of the present, through historical inversion, aids the reclamation of local histories, myth, and folklore. The fluctuation of Caribbean time-space is also a useful tool in representing the local Caribbean interaction with the wider world. Harris' use of the West's search for El Dorado, as well as his use of the Christian heritage brought by the colonizers, suggests this very interaction. Walcott's Ti-Jean confronts the West's devil; and to some degree this folktale confronts the Caribbean's continuing “mental slavery” to this devil when Gros-Jean and Mi-Jean are killed so easily. Carpentier and Walcott both use folk tales to represent the local subversion of external forces; they use not only folk *tales*, but also folk *figures*, such as Ti-Noel and Achille. Cliff and Carpentier make great use of the African heritage of the Caribbean. Sasabonsam and Macandal live in the Caribbean today just as spiritedly as their ancestors did in Africa.

Notes

¹I presented a version of this paper at the XXII Annual West Indian Literature Conference in Miami, 2003.

²See my article, “Erosion, Noise, and Hurricanes: A Review of Edward Kamau Brathwaite’s *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry*.” *Revista Mexicana del Caribe* 12 (2003): 211-216.

³Brathwaite distinguishes between the historical fragmentation of Caribbean “hole” societies and the historical security of Western European “whole” societies.

⁴There is an uncanny similarity here with the way James describes Toussaint at one point, who is also seemingly everywhere at once (yet in human form); “he was now complete master of the whole island” (*The Black Jacobins* 239).

⁵See Rebecca Tortello, “The Fall of a Gentle Giant: The Collapse of Tom Cringle’s Cotton Tree,” <<http://www.jamaicagleaner.com/pages/history/story0020.html>.>

⁶I was honored to be an exchange student at UWI during the fall semester, 2001.

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