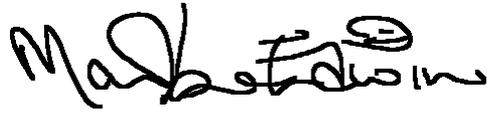


**Orality in the Body of the Archive:  
Memorialising Representations of Creole Language  
and Culture in the Technologised Word**

A thesis submitted by Marl'ene Edwin in the fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English and Comparative Literature, Goldsmiths, University of London, 2016

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marl'ene Edwin". The signature is written in a cursive style with some loops and flourishes.

**Marl'ene Edwin**

*Dedicated to the memory of my beloved mother and father  
Linnette (1933-1996) and George (1925-1998)*

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Too many people to mention here,  
Who have helped me along the way.  
However, there are a few things I find I must say.

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Supervisor, mentor and critical friend  
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And time to work my thesis over.

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I've run out of words and my face  
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I thank you all for your love and patience.  
We made it!!

## ABSTRACT

This thesis begins with a re-reading of selected texts by Caribbean writers, specifically, Joan Anim-Addo, Olive Senior and Merle Collins and in so doing argues that literary fiction can and does function as a ‘creolised archive’. I argue that a historic marginalisation, which has barred Caribbean scholars from entering ‘formal’ archival spaces, has created an alternative discourse. Consequently, Caribbean writers have chosen the imagined landscapes of literature, a *new archival* space for the Caribbean, within which to document and preserve Caribbean cultural traditions. If as I suggest, fiction allows for the safeguarding of traditions, how then should we read Caribbean literature? The combination of a physical and a virtual archive questions the literary and linguistic interface that such a mingling entails in a preservation of Caribbean culture. I argue for an appreciation of orality as performance, primary and technologised, as well as the reading of texts as ‘creolised archive’.

Drawing on interlinked theoretical works including that of Kamau Brathwaite, Édouard Glissant and Antoinette Burton, I attempt to establish the performativity of the ‘creolised archive’ in twentieth and twenty-first century Caribbean literature, defined as oral in this research. I suggest that the ‘creolised archive’ has a plurality of sources/resources enabling the preservation of aspects of Creole culture. I begin by exploring the literary representation and imagining of black female subjectivity to highlight a reading of the black female

body as archive. The selected short stories provide a starting point from which the history and construction of the Creole voice is explored to determine the representation and preservation of Caribbean Creoles archived within the literary text. In considering the World Wide Web as archive, I examine how the World Wide Web might most effectively serve as an interactive archive for Caribbean oral literature. Additionally, I interrogate how the Web might be seen and experienced as a literary interface – a creolised archive – enabling Caribbean Creole languages and literature to be represented.

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I am a memory that does not reach the threshold<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Aimé Césaire, 'The Griffin'. In Arnold, James and Clayton Eshleman, (eds) *Solar Throat Slashed: The Unexpurgated 1948 Edition*, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2011, p25.

Cameroonian intellectual Achille Mbembe notes that, traditionally, the term ‘archive’ first refers to a building, a symbol of a public institution, which is one of the organs of a constituted state<sup>2</sup>. Moreover as I address in Chapter One, Mbembe suggests that there cannot be a definition of the archive which does not encompass both the building and the documents stored there. If Mbembe’s view might be relied upon, does it mean that for a community denied access to such public spaces of power, they have no archive? Where are their nuanced and complex experiences archived? It is the question of access that has led me to this research and lies at the centre of this thesis. Drawing on Mbembe’s critique of the ‘traditional archive’ in relation to societies less well resourced than in the west, I seek to interrogate the relationship between the Caribbean subject and the archival practices through which he/she is constructed. I posit that in relation to the Caribbean, with its complex and pathologised political and historical legacy, notions of the archive should be characterized as a more fluid space than a building or public institution. Moreover, I argue that the history of the transatlantic slave trade and the slave plantation that shapes the foundations of Caribbean spaces and diaspora renders its archive a very fluid space because of the many absences, silences, and ruins consequent upon that history.<sup>3</sup>

Importantly, I suggest that Caribbean literature, particularly the register of the oral tradition recorded within it and thus, archived in the

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<sup>2</sup> Achille Mbembe, ‘The Power of the Archive and its Limits’ in Hamilton, Carolyn et al. *Refiguring the Archive*, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, p19.

<sup>3</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, USA: University of Michigan Press, 1997.

written texts and indeed the bodies of the Caribbean subjects themselves, become important spaces and places invested with knowledge. Moreover, it is to these spaces that the Caribbean communities return in order to reconfigure, corroborate and understand Caribbean culture and history. In order to interrogate this fluid archival space, I examine Joan Anim-Addo's libretto and neo-slave narrative, *Imoinda: Or She Who will Lose her Name* (2008; [2003])<sup>4</sup>, Merle Collins' novel *Angel* (1987 and 2011), and selected short stories from Olive Senior's *Summer Lightning* (1986) and *Discerner of Hearts* (1995).

I propose that the selected literary texts can be read as a 'creolised archive' that functions cross-sectionally as a crucial though relatively new archival space for the preservation of Caribbean culture, its written and oral traditions. Furthermore, the selected texts foreground and examine the black female body, the development of Caribbean Creole languages, specifically Jamaican and Grenadian Creoles, and versions of Caribbean history that they both perform and archive. Alongside consideration of the literary text as 'creolised archive', I am concerned with questioning the extent to which digitalised creolised texts render the World Wide Web a 'creolised archive' and thereby creates an

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<sup>4</sup> While there are other librettos, operas, by black women/writers, and opera as an art form has always used colour blind casting, *Imoinda* is central to my work because of its position as a neo-slavery narrative and importantly one which focuses primarily on the Caribbean as opposed to Latin America. Furthermore the fact that Anim-Addo places the female body as centre stage and proposes that the birth of the Creole nation is a matriarchal as opposed to patriarchal process is of the utmost importance to this thesis concerning the creolised archive. For other examples of African-heritage librettos see Toni Morrison, *Margaret Garner* (2005) and Charlotte Blake Alston, *The Good Raised Up* (2011).

‘imagined Creole community’<sup>5</sup>, as well as a multimedia differentiated from that produced by the literary text. In bringing together what might be considered archival fragments, I seek to question the Creole archive in the Diaspora, not only through the physical and virtual texts but also through an analysis of a Caribbean research Centre as archive alongside selected issues of space, place and cyberspace.

Underpinning this thesis are key interlinked theoretical threads, namely archiving, performativity, narratology, space and place, microhistory and memory. An understanding of memory is of central importance in this regard, because as Marlene Nourbese Philip<sup>6</sup> states:

when the African comes to the New World, she comes with nothing. But the body. Her body.<sup>7</sup>

For Philip, the body ‘include[s] mind which is, [...], very much a part of *and* an extension of body’ reinforcing my enquiry which underlines how the Africans arrived in an unknown land with nothing but their bodies and minds. Moreover, they were even stripped of their own languages. Yet, contained in the mind are memories, with, as I argue, the body serving as the archive. Philip suggests that the African body is the:

repository and source of everything needed to survive in any but the barest sense. Body memory bodymemory’.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised Edition. London; New York: Verso, 2006. For further details on the ‘imagined community’ see pages 6-7.

<sup>6</sup> See P Saunders, ‘Defending the Dead, Confronting the Archive: A Conversation with M Nourbese Philip’, *Small Axe* 26, Vol 12, No 2, 2008, pp63-79. Also S Hartman, ‘Venus in Two Acts’, *Small Axe* 26, Vol 12, No 2, 2008, pp1-14.

<sup>7</sup> Marlene Nourbese Philip, *A Genealogy of Resistance and other essays*, Canada: Mercury Press, 1997, p91.

<sup>8</sup> Marlene Nourbese Philip, *A Genealogy of Resistance*, p91.

Deep within these 'bodymemories' are the history, the oral stories, proverbs, riddles and songs which draw from the oral culture of the Caribbean region and its diaspora and which as I intend to show are subject to different kinds of performativity and simultaneous archiving within the texts that become cultural artefacts and as such sometimes become deliberately archived.

### **Performativity, Performance, Narratology**

Performativity and performance are derivatives of the verb 'to perform' and for narratology, which concerns this thesis, performativity denotes modes of evoking or presenting action.<sup>9</sup> In the narrowest sense, discussed further below, a performance, that is, a live presentation of events in the presence of an audience at a set date, place and time is performative. The audience is able to experience the actors and live action directly. At the same time, performance can be experienced in the real world or can be a fictional event, for example, a wedding or a theatre performance.

Performativity can also be applied to the written narrative where it is the imitation or illusion of a performance. The reader reconstructs the performance in her mind, hence the performance is imagined. In *The Living Handbook of Narratology* (2009)<sup>10</sup> Ute Berns describes two levels of performativity. Firstly, on the level of 'histoire' (the story that

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<sup>9</sup> Ute Berns, 'Performativity', in by Hühn, Peter, John Pier, Wolf Schmid and Jörg Schönert (eds), *Handbook of Narratology*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009, p370.

<sup>10</sup> The *living handbook of narratology* (LHN) is based on the [Handbook of Narratology](#) edited by Peter Hühn, John Pier, Wolf Schmid and Jörg Schönert and first published by Walter de Gruyter in 2009.

is presented) where the reader's attention is drawn to the actions taking place in the story. Secondly, the actions can be located on the level of narration, that is, the narrator's act of mediation. At this level the reader's attention is drawn to the act of narration itself or to the actions of the narrator. These two levels of performativity can also be re-conceptualised in speech act terminology that describes utterances as a mode of action. Utterances 'say' as well as 'do' something. Berns argues that the demand that performativity makes on the spectator is reliant upon the medium in which it is delivered and this can describe the process of realisation or mental performance of the spectator/reader.

Feminist narratologist, Susan Lanser draws on speech acts concepts of performativity to re-appraise the gendered relation between author, narrator and point of view. Lanser highlights the importance of analysing the 'deep structure' of narrative voice in order to understand what ideological alliances shape the narrator's presentation of the narrative world, in turn influencing readers' apprehension of that world.<sup>11</sup> According to Lanser, classical narratology fails to address those properties of narrative voice germane to a text's politics, for example, 'the gender of the narrator [and] the narrators 'personality' and 'values'.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Lanser creates a vocabulary for analysing subtle qualities of narrative voice enabling readers to bring a text's politics into clearer view.

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<sup>11</sup> Susan Lanser, *The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction*, USA: Princeton University Press, 1981, p41.

<sup>12</sup> Susan Lanser, *The Narrative Act*, p5.

Narrative and acts of memory are thus closely linked and it is in ‘fictional representations of remembering that the manifold possibilities of narrative discourse best come to the fore’.<sup>13</sup> Storytelling is an act of ‘memory’, of connecting the temporal levels of past, present and future. Acts of memory which belong to the episodic-autobiographical memory system, that is, the memory of lived experience, can only be realised by way of storytelling.

Cultural memory involves remembering and forgetting – two sides of a coin. It entails individuality and collectivity which are closely interrelated.<sup>14</sup> As such storytelling can vividly portray individual and collective memory - its contents, its workings, its fragility and its distortions - by coding it into aesthetic forms, such as narrative structures, symbols, and metaphors important features of the literary text. The role of shared memory and the important part it plays in the creation of an imagined Creole community is also of concern. Through creolisation, Creole communities have resisted the ‘imposition of mechanistic, systemizing, standardizing norms from official, politically dominant cultures’<sup>15</sup>. Indeed as Roger Abrahams has argued the ‘man-of-words’<sup>16</sup> plays a critical role in negotiating and celebrating

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<sup>13</sup> Astrid Erll, ‘Narratology and Cultural Memory Studies’, in Heinen, Sandra and Roy Sommer (eds) *Narratology in the Age of Cross-disciplinary Narrative Research*, Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009, pp212-227.

<sup>14</sup> See, Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Baron and Ana C Cara, ‘Introduction: Creolization as Cultural Creativity’ in Baron, R and Ana C Cara (eds) *Creolization as Cultural Creativity*, USA: University Press of Mississippi, 2011, p6.

<sup>16</sup> Roger D. Abrahams, *The Man-of-Words in the West Indies: Performance and the Emergence of Creole Culture*, USA: John Hopkins Press, 1983.

creolisation and in achieving meaning in local Creole communities.<sup>17</sup> Creole communities are shaped and conditioned by multiple different local, colonial and postcolonial histories, demography, geography, politics, economics, religious forces and other influences and such complex multiplicity is central to my thesis.<sup>18</sup>

I intend to connect and interlink concepts of the 'archive', 'Creole', and 'creolisation' to conceptualise the 'creolised archive'. While the concepts of archive, Creole, and creolisation have already been used individually as theoretical tools across disciplines such as anthropology<sup>19</sup>, sociology<sup>20</sup>, cultural studies<sup>21</sup> and library and museum studies<sup>22</sup>, it is my intention in this thesis to align these concepts in order to apply them to a particular concern of Caribbean culture, namely, the archiving and preservation of Caribbean Creole Languages through the oral and written literature of the region. Throughout this thesis, Caribbean Creole Languages will be referred to as Caribbean Creoles unless I am referring to a specific region of the Caribbean which will be identified with reference to a particular regional Creole.

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<sup>17</sup> Roger Abrahams, *The Man-of-Words in the West Indies*, pp109-110.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Baron, p5. See also Kenneth Bilby, 'How the yolder headsý talk: a Jamaican Maroon spirit possession language and its relationship to the creoles of Suriname and Sierra Leone' in *New West Indian Guide/ Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 57 (1983), no: 1/2, Leiden, pp37-88 in which he discusses the Jamaican Maroon community and the idea that their cultural knowledge is a shared memory preserved collectively.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Hylland Eriksen, 'Creolization in Anthropological Theory and in Mauritius' in Stewart, C (ed) *Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory*, USA: Left Coast Press, 2007, pp153-177.

<sup>20</sup> Allen D Grimshaw, 'Some social forces and some social functions of Pidgins and Creole Languages' in Hymes, D (ed) *Pidginization and Creolization of Language*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1971, pp427-430.

<sup>21</sup> Ulf Hannerz, 'The World in Creolisation' in *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol 57, No 4, Sierre Leone, 1787-1987 (1987), pp546-559.

<sup>22</sup> Viv Golding, 'Creolizing the Museum: Art, Humour, Young Audiences', in Golding, V. and Modest, W. (eds) *Museums and Communities: Curators, Collections, Collaboration*, Oxford: Berg, 2013, pp195-216.

I examine a range of texts: neo-slavery libretto, short story and novel and of these three genres, the neo-slavery libretto may initially be considered the most problematic when viewed through the lens of Caribbean oral tradition. This is because in the Western world the practice of setting a play to music emerged in Italy during the seventeenth century. According to Lucile Desblache, the word opera appeared in 1659 when it was introduced with ‘the aim of suggesting a spectacle including dance, orchestral and vocal music’.<sup>23</sup> The term *libretto* which emerged shortly after the birth of the opera referred to a small booklet containing the words of a cantata, an oratorio, or any other vocal/lyrical piece, usually lavishly illustrated and available before performances. Yet, interestingly for this thesis, in ‘Toward an Oral Poetics’, anthropologist Dennis Tedlock states:

that ‘librettos [reflect] the character of oral performances, with white spaces for silences, small or light type for what is soft, large or bold type for what is loud, rising and falling lines for what is chanted, and so on.’<sup>24</sup>

These ‘oral performances’ reflect a continuation of ‘word of mouth’<sup>25</sup> to borrow from the African literary critic Isidore Okpewho. For Okpewho, oral literature acknowledges the imaginativeness and creativity of the forms and emphasises the medium of expression, namely word of mouth.<sup>26</sup> The way in which the words are organised and the resources

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<sup>23</sup> Lucile Desblache, ‘Music to my ears, but words to my eyes? Text, opera and their audiences’. In *Linguistica Antverpiensia*, New Series – Themes in Translation Studies, No 6, 2007, p157.

<sup>24</sup> Dennis Tedlock, ‘Toward an Oral Poetics’, *New Literary History* Vol. 8, No. 3, Oral Cultures and Oral Performances (Spring, 1977), p517.

<sup>25</sup> Isidore Okpewho, *African Oral Literature: Backgrounds, Character and Continuity*, USA: Indiana University Press, 1992, p3.

<sup>26</sup> Isidore Okpewho, *African Oral Literature*, p163.

within the words ensure the effectiveness of the oral performance. That is to say, questions of styles and techniques of presentation all speak to aspects that make the libretto distinct from written literature.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, although the written text is prescriptive and determined, its oral counterpart depends much more on the freedom of the performance so that no two productions will ever be exactly the same.<sup>28</sup> Crucial to the performance is the body. My key argument in this regard is that the libretto may be said to affiliate two different registers, the oral and the written. As a written text, it is specific and concrete in form and content. As a text written to be performed though, the libretto is the path to performance, its rich potentiality for differentiation and variation.<sup>29</sup> Each performance is based on a specific reading of the text of the libretto and a production that will materialise this reading. This means that the same text can enable a wide range of readings and performances that will affiliate and display the written and oral elements of the libretto differently. Moreover, the musical score of the libretto can draw on a variety of oral elements – musical traditions sounds, instruments – that bring together different and often discrepant cultures as is the case with Anim-Addo's *Imoinda*, which crucially functions as a neo-slavery narrative as I explore in my thesis. Specifically, I examine the various ways in which the black female body

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<sup>27</sup> See Chapter 4 in Okpweho, *African Oral Literature: Backgrounds, Character and Continuity*.

<sup>28</sup> See Joseph C Allard, *Words and Music: Oral and Literary*, <https://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol20/literary.pdf> [accessed September 2015]; James Miles Foley, 'Reading the Oral Traditional Text: Aesthetics of Creation and Response' in Foley, John Miles (ed.). *Comparative Research on Oral Traditions: A Memorial for Milman Parry*. Columbus, Ohio: Slavika Publishers, 1987, pp. 185–212.

<sup>29</sup> James Miles Foley, 'Reading the Oral Traditional Text: Aesthetics of Creation and Response'. p187.

is constructed and reconstructed within the libretto's performance of an often unclaimed history.<sup>30</sup> I argue that the libretto, such as *Imoinda*, an archive of oral and written texts, becomes the space where the history of the black female body is materialised – a history often silenced and written over as critics and writers such as Toni Morrison, Patricia Saunders and Joan Anim-Addo have emphasised.<sup>31</sup>

Consideration of the role of language is fundamental to this thesis and the short stories of Senior and Collins' novel are paramount to my research. I attempt to illustrate that the Creole language, specifically Jamaican and Grenadian Creole, is meaningfully archived within the literary text while the short story genre provides fine examples of how this is done. Kenneth Ramchand in his introduction to the *Best West Indian Stories* (1982) presents the Caribbean short story as a 'bridge between the oral tradition and [...] the West Indian novel'.<sup>32</sup> Likewise Frank Birbalsingh sees the short story form in the Caribbean as a 'direct descendant of a Caribbean oral tradition of folk tales'.<sup>33</sup> The selected texts dating from early to late twentieth century are set in the islands of Jamaica and Grenada, Anglophone islands that historiographically best lend themselves to this study because, as I hope to show, they richly

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<sup>30</sup> See George Lamming, *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953) and Merle Collins, *Angel* (1982).

<sup>31</sup> See Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Joan Anim-Addo, *Touching the Body: History, Language and African-Caribbean Women's Writing*. Also P Saunders, 'Defending the Dead, Confronting the Archive: A Conversation with M Nourbese Philip', *Small Axe* 26, Vol 12, No 2, 2008, pp63-79. Also S Hartman, 'Venus in Two Acts', *Small Axe* 26, Vol 12, No 2, 2008, pp1-14

<sup>32</sup> Kenneth Ramchand, 'The Short Story – An Introduction' *Best West Indian Stories*, Kingston: Nelson Caribbean, 1982, p2.

<sup>33</sup> Frank Birbalsingh, 'The Indo-Caribbean Short Story', *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 12:1-2, 2004, p125. See also Stewart Brown and John Wickham, *The Oxford Book of Caribbean Short Stories*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, who prioritise the Caribbean short story in relation to Anancy stories that is key tales from the Caribbean oral tradition.

exemplify the process of archiving in relation to Jamaican Creole, Grenadian English Creole and Grenadian French Creole.

I engage these narratives to excavate the oral tradition traces and remains which I consider to be key to the archival process within these literary texts. Specifically, I propose to interrogate instances of Caribbean Creoles, that is, the language of the formerly enslaved, the language that s/he was forced to acquire during the emergence of creole society from the eighteenth century. Collins argues that the use of the Creole language was believed to be associated with ‘stupidity and childishness’<sup>34</sup> regardless of the fact that the slave would have been able to communicate in four or five different African languages. If so, then how does this imagined ‘stupidity’ translate to the modern day use of Creole? Collins writes further that the coloniser, using the ability to speak English as a marker for good sense, did not respect that which he could not understand since the Creole language was deemed insignificant and unimportant. Likewise, Moira Ferguson in *Subject to Others* (1992) confirms that lack of respect by the coloniser continued to re-inforce stereotypes about Africans as childlike people<sup>35</sup>. In the process of probing the development of Caribbean Creoles through the selected short stories and novel, I intend to explore also the extent to which the Caribbean Creoles that emerged so far have been orthographised on the page and continue to be archived digitally. How,

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<sup>34</sup> Merle Collins, ‘Writing and Creole Language Politics’ in Balutansky, Kathleen and Marie-Agnes Sourieau, (eds) *Caribbean Creolization: Reflections on the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature and Identity*, USA: University Press Florida, 1998, p94.

<sup>35</sup> Moira Ferguson, *Subject to Others: British Women Writers and Colonial Slavery, 1670-1834*, London: Routledge, 1992, p103.

in the light of paper and digital texts, might Caribbean Creoles be considered to be archived? Does the text archive or perform or should it be considered as both archiving and performing? In the following literature review I explore the development of archival theory and practice including that of the Caribbean, in order to pinpoint the complexities involved in the creolisation process that the literature engages and that are central to this thesis. I define the key terminologies that concern this study and its development and how they relate to my theoretical framework.

### **Technauriture: Traversing the oral-literacy-techno continuum**

In *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982) Walter Ong explores the differences between two types of cultures: primary oral culture and chirographic/writing culture.<sup>36</sup> Ong's examination focuses on the perceived shift that takes place when one moves from an oral-based society to one dominated by writing and print and he questions whether this changes the way in which we think. Ong defines primary oral culture as that which may be found in societies that do not have a system of writing. Ong was also highlighting the emergence of the electronic modes of communication such as the telephone, television and the internet, which he deemed a 'secondary orality'. This 'secondary orality' is defined as being electronic devices that 'depend for their existence and functioning on writing and print'.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, London: Routledge, 2002, p11.

<sup>37</sup> Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, p11.

Ong's notion of 'primary orality' in its strictest sense rarely exists in the twenty-first century as societies know or have experienced the effects of writing. At a first glance, Ong's text may appear to be pitting orality against literacy but this is not the case as he very clearly states in the final chapter that 'orality-literacy dynamics enter integrally into the modern evolution of consciousness'.<sup>38</sup> While critics such as Courtney MacNeil<sup>39</sup> are aware that Ong's definitions of orality provide a useful framework for characterising different kinds of oral cultures, it is also noted that these definitions limit the possibility for 'mutual interdependency'<sup>40</sup> between the two. MacNeil argues that the orality/literacy mode of thinking needs to be revisited in light of the recent technological advances which have resulted in the blurring of previous distinctions. If, as Ong suggests, orality is not permanent or, to use his term, 'evanescent', then how do we describe or categorise audio-files? These are words that are spoken, saved, played and re-played. In contrast, if the text is seen as permanent, then how should we consider the instant text message or email which is read and then deleted? The on-going and highly visible cyber-revolution of our time means that Ong's definitions do not properly reflect the multi-sensory character of the cyber-world. How this cyber-world translates in relation to Caribbean texts is a focus of this study.

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<sup>38</sup> Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, p176.

<sup>39</sup> See MacNeil, C. 'Orality'. *Theories of Media*, University of Chicago, Winter 2007, pp1-3.

<sup>40</sup> See MacNeil, C. 'Orality'. p1.

In the *Politics of Caribbean Cyberculture* (2008) Curwen Best examines the impact and imprint of new technology arguing that Caribbean culture died in the decades of the 1990s<sup>41</sup> and was reborn having adapted ‘to the rapid changes taking place within the region’.<sup>42</sup> The underlying theme in Best’s work is the Internet through which he explores the cyber revolution in the Caribbean applying it to literature, gospel songs, sport, video games, films and tourism. Of particular relevance to my thesis is Best’s chapter on a Caribbean Literary Cyberspace in which he discusses the way in which Caribbean literature has had to ‘deal with a number of questions relating to its very identification and identity’<sup>43</sup> and raises the problematic issues of publishing and publishing houses. Identifying works as Caribbean has also been problematic and contested when looking at where, how and by whom these works have been produced. This poses a question of recognition in the diaspora. Best argues that traditionally ‘Caribbean creative artists’ are those ‘who were born or actively shared in the culture of the region while on actual location.’<sup>44</sup> Yet, new technologies, such as the World Wide Web, ‘create a space of contact that bridges earlier notions of fracture such as distance and time’.<sup>45</sup> The Web has helped to bridge the gap between home and away as well as space of cultural contact for writer and reader.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Curwen Best, *Politics of Caribbean Cyberculture*, New York and England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p1.

<sup>42</sup> Curwen Best, *Politics of Caribbean Cyberculture*, p1.

<sup>43</sup> Curwen Best, *Politics of Caribbean Cyberculture*, p20.

<sup>44</sup> Curwen Best, *Politics of Caribbean Cyberculture*, p23.

<sup>45</sup> Curwen Best, *Politics of Caribbean Cyberculture*, p24.

<sup>46</sup> It can be said that oral communication has been revived by the advent of electronic media such as online writing (for example, chat rooms, instant messenger, Facebook and Twitter). In the orality versus literacy debate new concepts are emerging in relation to speech and

Similarly, it is to be remembered that orality is also a means of accessing collective memory and whether it is through folktales, riddles, proverbs or songs, for example, it is ultimately connected with cultural knowledge. In his discussion on orality and literacy, Ong raises concerns over capturing the words of an oral culture on the page. He states:

When a present-day linguist laboriously works out a more or less adequate way to transcribe a previously unwritten language, few, if any, of the speakers of the language normally learn to write it. The script figures in linguistic journals but not in the language speakers' lives. Often the speakers of the language are even incredulous about its writability, believing that only certain languages, not including their own, can be written.<sup>47</sup>

In this dilemma illustrated by Ong, language begins to relate to writing when somebody devises a way of putting the words of a language into a script. This event, though, will not necessarily have any impact on the language or the speakers of the language. In 'Orality, Literacy, and Medieval Textualization', Ong describes a time when Latin or as he refers to it '*Learned Latin*' was a 'high' language and it was English and French, for example, which were the 'low' languages.<sup>48</sup> This situation came about, because in comparison to Latin, the vernaculars, that is, English and French were seen as oral languages even though written works were beginning to be produced. Ironically for this study, there are islands in parts of the Eastern Caribbean that because of colonial

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electronic online speech. Speech traces are easily erased whereas electronic speech of online communication lends itself to archiving as electronic traces are left behind.

<sup>47</sup>Walter Ong, 'Orality, Literacy and Medieval Textualization', *New Literary History*, Vol 16, No 1 Oral and Written Traditions in the Middle Ages (Autumn 1984), pp1-12.

<sup>48</sup>Walter Ong, 'Orality, Literacy and Medieval Textualization', p5.

imposition now mimic this linguistic situation in that English/French are seen as the ‘high’ languages and Creoles as the ‘low’ languages.

If, as Serafin Roldan-Santiago suggests, we were to adapt Ferdinand Saussure’s notion of *langue-parole*<sup>49</sup> and modify it so that *langue* represents standard English and *parole* the Creole, it could then be argued that there is a twist to this theoretical paradigm because as ‘Creole is more practical and unstructured’<sup>50</sup> and it represents the language of the people, it could be seen as *parole* at its best. Thus the reverse continuum would be that speakers move from standard to Creole forms – or from lower *langue* to complete *parole*.

That Caribbean oral literature inevitably stems from the region’s oral tradition and contains remnants of an oral tradition is important to my questioning of the archive. It is my intention to show through the analysis of folk tales within the short story that the folklore of the Caribbean has created a vital first archive for its Caribbean Creoles in which orality and literacy play key roles. Like the other key terminologies that are explored in this thesis, ‘oral literature’ is another term that resists definition.

Okpewho, in his work on African oral literature argues that:

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<sup>49</sup> Parole – the concrete utterances produced by individual speakers; Langue – collective language system of a speech community.

<sup>50</sup> Serafin Roldan-Santiago, ‘Thematic and Structural Functions of Folklore in Caribbean Literature: /the Case of the “Written” and the “Oral”’. *Journal of Caribbean Literature*, Vol 4 No 1, 2005, p1.

if we accept the idea of literature as creative text we will find that the other words used for qualifying it are simple attempts to emphasize one aspect or other of the subject.<sup>51</sup>

Okpewho posits the notion of 'oral literature' as a commonly used term to describe literature that is 'delivered by word of mouth'.<sup>52</sup> This 'word of mouth' signals an important area of human communication; that of telling stories, whether through folktales, myth, song, riddles and short stories, all of which link to an oral tradition.

It is evident that there have been a number of different terminologies concerned with the oral word on the page, the most appropriate of which for my purposes, I will discuss here, in that they relate specifically to the category of oral literature that I will analyse in an attempt to foreground the archived creolised word. For example, Ruth Finnegan<sup>53</sup> argues against the use of the term 'oral literature' citing the fact that its etymology is somewhat contradictory. Yet, in her later work she is in favour of the terminology and argues that 'literature' has been extended to include traditional oral narratives in cultures untouched by writing. Likewise, Ong sees the term 'oral literature' as a 'monstrous concept' as he believes that the use of this term represents an 'inability to represent in our own minds a heritage of verbally organized materials except as some variant of writing.'<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Isidore Okpewho, *African Oral Literature: Backgrounds, Character and Continuity*, USA: Indiana University Press, 1992, p3.

<sup>52</sup> Isidore Okpewho, *African Oral Literature: Backgrounds, Character and Continuity*, p3.

<sup>53</sup> See Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Literature in Africa*, Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2012 and *Short Time to Stay, Comments on Time, Literature and Oral Performance*, USA: African Studies Program, Indiana University, 1981.

<sup>54</sup> Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, p11.

In *Binding Cultures* (1992) Gay Wilentz makes reference to black women's literature being 'rooted in storytelling and the African [...] folk tradition.'<sup>55</sup> Wilentz cites the African-American anthropologist and novelist, Zora Neale Hurston as a classic example, where in her text *Mules and Men* (1935) she draws upon the orature of her African culture in her tales, novels and short stories. A rich example of this is Hurston's tale 'How to Write a letter' which is a piece about a father and daughter and the difficulties that the daughter has in scribing parts of a letter that she has been asked to write. The father says:

"Daughter, git yo' things and write me a letter to my brother!"[...]

"Now tell him some mo'. Our mule is dead but Ah got another mule and when Ah say (clucking sound of tongue and teeth) he moved from de word."

"Is you got dat?" he ast de girl [...]

"Naw suh, Ah ain't got it yet."

"How come you ain't got it?"

"Cause Ah can't spell (clucking sound)."

"You mean to tell me you been off to school seben years and can't spell (clucking sound)? Why Ah could spell dat myself and Ah ain't been to school a day in mah life. Well jes' say (clucking sound) he'll know what yo' mean and go on wid de letter."<sup>56</sup>

The daughter's inability to write the 'clucking sound' highlights the difficulties faced in translating the meaning of an 'everyday Caribbean

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<sup>55</sup> Gay Wilentz, *Binding Cultures: Black Women Writers in Africa and the Diaspora*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992, pxi.

<sup>56</sup> Zora Neal Hurston, *Mules and Men*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1935, pp40-41.

oral gesture'<sup>57</sup> in written words. However, an aural recording of this tale would have enabled the reader to determine that meaning and speaks to the notion of the World Wide Web as creolised archive – an arena in which sounds of a culture can be simultaneously experienced. The preface to *Mules and Men* (1935) written by the anthropologist Franz Boaz, who was also Hurston's supervisor, describes her ability to:

penetrate through that affected demeanor by which the Negro excludes the White observer effectively from participating in his true inner life.<sup>58</sup>

Boaz writes further that Hurston has been able to gain the confidence of the voodoo doctors. This means that she would have been granted access to cultural traditions at the source, and her findings would shed new light upon the much discussed voodoo beliefs and practices<sup>59</sup>. This access to cultural traditions will be discussed further in chapter three of this thesis.

Wilentz's theoretical framework investigates the notion of 'generational continuity'<sup>60</sup> defined as the passing on of cultural values and personal history as traditionally a woman's domain. To consider the development of creole society, the female, usually the grandmother, assumes the responsibility of being the figurehead of the community within which folk knowledge is contained and passed from generation

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<sup>57</sup> Kiss-teeth. See Esther Figuero and Peter L Patrick, 'The meaning of Kiss-teeth' <http://repository.essex.ac.uk/167/1/KSTpapwww.pdf> (accessed January 2014).

<sup>58</sup> Zora Neal Hurston, *Mules and Men*, pxiii.

<sup>59</sup> Zora Neal Hurston, *Mules and Men*, px.

<sup>60</sup> Wilentz credits the term 'generational continuity' to Beverly Stoeltje, University of Texas, p121.

to generation. Beryl Gilroy writes of ‘mothers who learn to pass on to youth traditional or tribal knowledge’.<sup>61</sup>

This matriarchal ‘generational continuity’ means that cultural traditions have passed from African mother to slave mother to African-American mother or alternatively African-Caribbean (or indeed African-Diaspora) as issues that cluster around exile and migration give rise to the debate concerning ethnicity.<sup>62</sup> Wilentz argues that orature and as such, literature becomes part of a woman’s daily struggle to communicate and pass on the values of one’s culture to one’s children. In an attempt to find an appropriate term that links the African literary tradition with its parental oral tradition, Wilentz coined the term ‘oraliterature’ which she defined as ‘written creative works which retain elements of the orature that informed them’.<sup>63</sup> Since then, there has been much debate about the appropriate term that should be used for the body of work arising from the oral traditions and its fusions.

Wilentz’ theory includes a concern with ‘telling stories’ in which the notion of generational continuity allows the storyteller/author to ‘extend the cultural practices of the communities to the words on a page’.<sup>64</sup> Oraliterature affiliates the history of these oral communications with a wide community of readers and audience that receive these texts. Their different readings and/or performances engage readers – often

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<sup>61</sup> Beryl Gilroy. ‘On Creativity, Autarchy and Memory.’ *Centre of Remembrance: Memory and Caribbean Women’s Literature*, London: Mango Publishing, 2002, p114.

<sup>62</sup> Gay Wilentz, *Binding Cultures*, pxi.

<sup>63</sup> Gay Wilentz, *Binding Cultures*, pxivii.

<sup>64</sup> Gay Wilentz, *Binding Cultures*, p117.

located in different cultural contexts that are also Anglophone – in different translation practices and enable them to share the history of these texts and the communities and subjects they record in the present. The history of this past that the texts narrate becomes an enabling possibility for all these different readers and audiences in Anglophone countries across the world, but also in places that engage the Anglophone literatures across the world and not only across the Atlantic. This history now offered through these creolised archives invites readers and audiences to rethink the ways by which communities and collectivities are formed. ‘Oraliterature’ thus becomes a concept that allows us to think of how the virtual community can be materialised and how modern technology can represent and recreate oraliterature.

Stewart Brown in his introduction to *The Pressures of the Text: Orality, Texts and the Telling of Tales* (1995), investigates this modern technology and uses the term ‘word culture’ to describe the space between the categories of oral and scribal literature. Papers in Brown’s edited collection were presented from various perspectives, on the one hand positing the notion that the word processor would be the tool that would release the text from its supposedly conventional limitations with regard to the pressures of orthography. Yet, one has only to look at the works of poet and historian Kamau Brathwaite and the pressures

exerted on his publisher to produce the text in the format he so desired.

For example an extract from his poem *Stone*<sup>65</sup> reads:

pronunciation. now unannounce & like a black wick in i head &  
dead .  
& it was like a heavy heavy riddim low down in i belly . bleedin dub  
.  
& there was like this heavy heavy black dog thump. in in i chest &  
pump. in

**murderer  
murderer**

In an interview given in Jamaica in 1988, Brathwaite talks about the advent of computing and the wordprocessor stating that:

The computer has moved us away from scripture into some other dimension which is “writin in light”. It is really nearer to the oral tradition than the typewriter is. The typewriter is an extension of the pen. The computer is getting as close as you can to the spoken word.<sup>66</sup>

What Brathwaite is arguing here was his belief that technology would make his conceptualisation of ‘nation language’ easier. In his words:

the computer has made it much easier for the illiterate, the Caliban, actually to get himself visible [...] you don’t have to be able to type, you can make mistakes and correct or leave them, you can see what you hear [...] the spoken word can become visible<sup>67</sup>.

How then would modern day technology be able to cope with Brathwaite’s use of what he calls ‘calibanisms’ – that is, the shaping of words, spelling, spacing and breaking of words from their traditional associations and meanings? Brathwaite has been able to reproduce his earlier works using his ‘calibanisms’ or what is now referred to as ‘Sycorax Video Style’ defined by Stewart Brown in the introduction of

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<sup>65</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, ‘Stone’ in *Middle Passages*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1992, p52.

<sup>66</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, *Kyk-over-al*, No 40, Georgetown: Guyana, 1989, pp84-93.

<sup>67</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, *Kyk-over-al*, p84.

*Born to Slow Horses* (2004) as exploring ‘the potentialities of the computer/word processor as a generator of texts that challenge conventional ways of reading’<sup>68</sup>. In highlighting such a trend, I wish to suggest that the recent advances in the development of the internet and the awakening of a space that is freely available for the non-traditional writer opens us up to all kinds of innovatory publishing techniques.

Unlike Brathwaite, Karin Barber in her paper ‘Literacy, Improvisation and the Public in Yoruba Popular Theatre’ explores the notion of an ‘imagined script’ which occupied the ‘conceptual space between text and improvisation’.<sup>69</sup> Undertaking this analysis in relation to her involvement with the Oyin Adejobi Theatre Company, Barber argues that the traditional paradigm of ‘distinctions between orality and text can be irrelevant in the process of composition’<sup>70</sup> and that the songs and rituals taken from the folk domain act as oral ‘counter texts’ against the grain. It is Barber’s ‘imagined script’ which proves interesting to my thesis in that it resonates with my concern with memory and the way in which the imaginary script can become a ‘counter text’ for the ‘imagined creole community’.

Furthermore, Kabir Ahmed writing on the works of Ngugi analyses the initial attempts by Ngugi to use orature<sup>71</sup> or oral traditions in his

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<sup>68</sup> Stewart Brown, ‘Introduction’ in Brathwaite, Kamau, *Born to Slow Horses*, Australia: Salt Publishing, 2004, pxiii.

<sup>69</sup> Karin Barber, ‘Literacy, Improvisation and the Public in Yoruba Popular Theatre’ in Brown, Stewart (ed), *The Pressures of the Text: Orality, Texts and The Telling of Tales*, 1995, p2.

<sup>70</sup> Karin Barber, ‘Literacy, Improvisation and the Public in Yoruba Popular Theatre’, p2.

<sup>71</sup> Pio Zirimu, Ugandan scholar coined the term ‘Orature’ in the sixties. For further discussion on this see ‘Oral Power and Europhone Glory: Orature, Literature & Stolen Legacies’ in

Gikuyu novel. Ahmed highlights Ngugi's inability, at the time, 'to grasp the cultural depth and variety of Gikuyu folkways'.<sup>72</sup> In this respect orature is described as songs, proverbs, parables, story-telling, and so on.<sup>73</sup> Ahmed argues that 'knowledge of orature has to be acquired'<sup>74</sup> stating that being of African origin does not automatically give one the knowledge and ability to use orature. Hubert Devonish and Carolyn Cooper prefer in the Caribbean context to use the term 'Lit/orature'. In their essay, 'A Tale of two states: Language, Lit/orature and the Two Jamaicas'<sup>75</sup> they begin by discussing national identities and how they become linked. For them, 'written language is a form of technology'<sup>76</sup> since in the beginning, the speaker and the audience had to be within earshot of one another. The advent of writing meant that the reader and the listener no longer needed to be so close. Yet, it was still necessary for the reader to be brought to the document or the document to the reader, hence the printing press. This allowed multiple documents of the same symbols or texts to be printed, and opened up access to print culture. Cooper and Devonish foreground the debate between 'high' and 'low' language and the diglossic situation, much more of which I develop in chapters two and

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*Penpoints, Gunpoints & Dreams: Towards a Critical Theory of the Arts and the State in Africa*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1998.

<sup>72</sup> Kabir Ahmed, 'Orature, Politics and the Writer: A Case Study of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Novels', in Brown, Stewart, (ed.) *The Pressures of the Text: Orality, Texts and The Telling of Tales*, 1995, p49.

<sup>73</sup> Kabir Ahmed, 'Orature, Politics and the Writer: A Case Study of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Novels', p53.

<sup>74</sup> Kabir Ahmed, 'Orature, Politics and the Writer: A Case Study of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Novels', p49.

<sup>75</sup> Hubert Devonish and Carolyn Cooper, 'A Tale of two states: Language, Lit/orature and the Two Jamaicas' in Brown, Stewart, (ed.) *The Pressures of the Text: Orality, Texts and the Telling of Tales*, 1995, University of Birmingham.

<sup>76</sup> Hubert Devonish and Carolyn Cooper, 'A Tale of two states: Language, Lit/orature and the Two Jamaicas', p60.

three of this thesis which details the representation of Jamaican Creole, Grenadian English Creole and Grenadian French Creole and their archiving in selected literary texts.

Brathwaite in *History of the Voice* (1984) uses Foucault's idea in *Madness and Civilisation* (1961) of defining the normal through the abnormal and argues that the English language is abnormal. The main aspect throughout Foucault's thesis of significance to my own is his categorisation of people into normal and abnormal. Foucault defined abnormality as madness/illness, criminality and perverted sexuality. Abnormality then became the way in which power relations were established in society. That which was normal has power over the abnormal and it is Brathwaite's contention that English language is abnormal in that the Caribbean became a multilingual society where the African languages that the slave majority brought with them were suppressed by the European minority masters in favour of the 'imposed'<sup>77</sup> languages of the colonial master: English, Spanish, French, and Dutch, for example, thereby rendering 'nation language' as the norm. At the time, Brathwaite's concern was that little had been done to investigate the way in which 'nation language' affects literature. He argues that nation language:

exists not in the dictionary but in the tradition of the spoken word. It is based as much on sound as it is in song [...] the noise that it makes is part of its meaning, and if you ignore the noise [...] then you lose part of the

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<sup>77</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry*, London: New Beacon Books, 1984, p17.

meaning. When it is written, you lose the sound of the noise and therefore you lose part of the meaning.<sup>78</sup>

Brathwaite argues for a language that represents the enunciation of ‘the African aspect of our New World/Caribbean heritage.’<sup>79</sup> It is my contention that the transition of the oral to the World Wide Web will preserve the ‘noise’ and the ‘meaning’ that Brathwaite fears will be lost when it becomes written.

It is this preservation of noise and meaning that Russell Kaschula, South African literary critic and author, set out to explore when he coined the term ‘Technauriture’.<sup>80</sup> Described as the meeting point between orality, the written word and digital technology this new terminology, I suggest, encapsulates the blending and fusion of the Creole word with technology and in the words of Kaschula:

attempts to embrace the dichotomies acknowledged by Ong and Finnegan and to firmly place the debate regarding orality and oral traditions in a 21<sup>st</sup>-century discourse that implicates contemporary modes of technology.<sup>81</sup>

By placing orality-literacy in conversation with twenty-first century technology, technauriture creates a three way dialectic that includes all the implications of technology – digital recordings, web-casts, YouTube and so on. The etymology of technauriture combines the ‘techn’ from technology; ‘auri’ is derived from auriture and ‘ture’ from literature.

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<sup>78</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, *History of the Voice*, p17.

<sup>79</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, *History of the Voice*, p13.

<sup>80</sup> Russell Kaschula, ‘Imbongi to Slam: The Emergence of a Technologised Auriture’, *Southern African Journal of Folklore Studies* 14 (2), pp45-58.

<sup>81</sup> Russell Kaschula & Andre Mostert, ‘From oral literature to technauriture: What’s in a name?’ *World Oral Literature Project Occasional Papers*, 2011, p4.  
<http://www.dspace.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/237322> (accessed 16 February 2015).

Auriture implies the use of a range of senses in appreciation of the oral word, that is, 'hearing, speaking and the more abstract aesthetic analysis of a word'.<sup>82</sup> Technauriture, then, allows for the multiple considerations that will come into play with the synthesis of the technologised Creole word with the World Wide Web.

Linguistic elements can often be lost in the transition of orality to literacy and technology offers a recapturing of this loss through sound bites and video clips. The digitized version can offer a rebirth, a re-ignition of quality of voice, rhythm, context and speed of performance as well as preservation and archiving of a culture. Indeed, Kaschula argues that technology is opening up and commercialising the field of oral literature.<sup>83</sup> Technauriture offers this thesis a cross-disciplinary approach to orality and oral traditions in the digital age and a framework through which to examine the 'imagined creole community' in the archive.

### **Reconfiguring the Archive: The Beginnings**

In *Refiguring the Archive* (2002), an edited collection of papers in which the writers within a South African context demand a reappraisal of every aspect of understanding the archive, Carolyn Hamilton et al suggest that 'archives require transformation, or refiguring'<sup>84</sup> and raise questions around 'what archivists do and how they perceive

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<sup>82</sup> David Coplan, *In the Time of Cannibals: The Word Music of South Africa's Basotho Migrants*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994, p9.

<sup>83</sup> Russell Kaschula & Andre Mostert, 'From oral literature to technauriture: What's in a name?', p8.

<sup>84</sup> Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris & Graeme Reid, 'Introduction' in Hamilton, Carolyn et al. *Refiguring the Archive*, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, p7.

themselves'.<sup>85</sup> They champion a space for the marginalised to speak and be heard. Of the eighteen articles in the volume, four are of particular significance to my thesis. Mbembe's 'The Power and Limits of the Archive' cited above, together with 'The Archive, Public History and The Essential Truth' by Brent Harris<sup>86</sup>, Bhekizizwe Peterson's 'The Archive and the Political Imaginary'<sup>87</sup> and 'Literature and the Archive: The Biography of Texts'<sup>88</sup> by Sarah Nuttall best speak to the concerns raised in this thesis. They raise concerns of new thinking around the archive, extending its boundaries and theorizing its exclusions, and the making of archives, all of which are of particular relevance here.

Throughout *Refiguring the Archive* the underlying current is that concerning power as a Foucauldian phenomenon. That is to say, as Hamilton et al underscore, Foucault's influence was strongest in the proposition that 'archives are often both documents of exclusion and monuments to particular configurations of power'.<sup>89</sup> The writers examine the archive from the perspective of anthropologists, archivists, playwrights, literary critics and so on. Peterson's paper specifically outlines the issue that the unauthorised, uncatalogued experience of black people must be found, assembled and brought into formal legitimacy if the refiguring of the archive is to attain something more

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<sup>85</sup> Carolyn Hamilton et al, *Refiguring the Archive*, p11.

<sup>86</sup> Brent Harris, 'The Archive, Public History and The Essential Truth' in Hamilton, Carolyn et al. *Refiguring the Archive*, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, pp161-177.

<sup>87</sup> Bhekizizwe Peterson, 'The Archives and the Political Imaginary' in Hamilton, Carolyn et al. *Refiguring the Archive*, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, pp161-177.

<sup>88</sup> Sarah Nuttall, 'Literature and the Archive: The Biography of Texts' in Hamilton, Carolyn et al. *Refiguring the Archive*, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, pp283-299.

<sup>89</sup> Carolyn Hamilton et al, *Refiguring the Archive*, p9.

than the status quo,<sup>90</sup> a concern peculiarly parallel to that of the neo-slavery narrative as I explore. In comparison, Nuttall argues that there is plenty outside the text and that without the context, a full understanding of how the text evolves is impossible, thereby rendering the reader unable to understand the final text in all its complexity.<sup>91</sup>

In considering the notion of ‘archive’, the following functional questions need to be addressed: What is an Archive? Who creates the Archive? Who maintains it and who are its users? Traditionally, as indicated above, an archive is the name given not only to a collection of official documents or records but it is also the name given to the building which houses these records. Mbembe, for example, in exploring the power and limits of the archive, has argued that not all documents are ‘destined to be archives [and] in any given cultural system only some documents fulfill the criteria or *archivability*’<sup>92</sup>. These archivable documents are often related to the work of the state. The word ‘archive’ derives from the Greek word ‘arkhē’ meaning government or order and was originally developed from the Greek ‘arkheion’ which refers to the home or dwelling of the Archon. It was in this dwelling that important

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<sup>90</sup> Bhekizizwe Peterson, ‘The Archives and the Political Imaginery’ in *Refiguring the Archive*, p30.

<sup>91</sup> Sarah Nuttall, ‘Literature and the Archive: The Biography of Texts’, in *Refiguring the Archive*, p291.

<sup>92</sup> Achille Mbembe, ‘The Power of the Archive and its Limits’, p19. In 1998 the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee in South Africa was issued and formed the keystone of the negotiated transformation of the apartheid system to liberal democracy in South Africa. Twenty two speakers attended a seminar series in which the concept of the archive was examined against the stark history of the repressive apartheid regime in South Africa.

official state documents were filed and interpreted under the authority of the Archon<sup>93</sup>.

The term 'archive' is also used when referring to documents which are scanned and then archived in an electronic management system allowing the original documents to be destroyed as the electronic version replaces it. However, this electronic storage still needs to be housed on servers which in turn need to be located in a building. What makes the electronic archive different from the traditional archive is that of access. In effect what is revealed is a double archive, the virtual archive residing in the physical archive, a reality rendering questions of access an even more crucial concern to this thesis.

The creation of archives may be divided into two categories: public and private. Public archives are created by institutions, such as universities, schools, libraries, museums, and government departments, whereas private archives are created by individuals and families. A private archive can become public as demonstrated through Jacques Derrida's archive which became public after his death in 2004. Interestingly this was something that Derrida's family tried to resist<sup>94</sup> and which speaks to my questioning of access in the archives.

As such, Derrida's 'Archive Fever' lecture is directly relevant to this thesis. Delivered in June 1994, in the Freud Museum London, itself an

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<sup>93</sup> Carolyn Hamilton et al, *Refiguring the Archive*, Netherlands: Kluwer, 2002.

<sup>94</sup> For example see <http://jacques-derrida.org/UCI%20Affair.html> (accessed November 2009).

archive, the text has little to do with archives and more to do with Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (1991). Indeed Derrida describes Yerushalmi's book as an 'archival book on the archive'<sup>95</sup>. Derrida's *Archive Fever* deconstructs Freud's notion of the archive. Cathy Caruth reads both Freud and Derrida's notion of the archive as a *change in modes of memory* that is also a *change in history*, a change that is, in the words of Derrida, equally technological and political, ethical and juridical.<sup>96</sup>

Four years later in 1998 at a seminar at the University of the Witwatersand, Derrida admitted that when he delivered his earlier lecture on the archive, he had not taken into account the whole 'history of technology'<sup>97</sup>. He made the assumption that the changes in technology not only altered the archiving process but had an effect on what in fact is archivable. This change would have a number of political implications leading to 'the technological power of the archive determining the nature of what has to be archived'<sup>98</sup>. This is important to my thesis. As Derrida states, it is always possible to re-interpret an archive and this is an important aim of my thesis which in effect seeks to challenge and extend the debate concerning the archive and Caribbean or Creole culture. Specifically, Barbara Lalla and Jean

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<sup>95</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Translated Eric Prenowitz, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998 [1996], p58.

<sup>96</sup> Psychoanalytic archive. For a useful discussion on Freud's archive see Cathy Caruth, 'After the End: Psychoanalysis in the Ashes of History' in Nadal, Marita and Mónica Calvo (eds) *Trauma in Contemporary Literature: Narrative and Representation*, New York: Routledge, 2014, pp17-34.

<sup>97</sup> Verne Harris (transcribed), 'Archive Fever: a seminar by Jacques Derrida, University of Witwatersrand, August 1998) in *Refiguring the Archive*, pp38-81.

<sup>98</sup> Verne Harris, 'Archive Fever', pp38-81.

D'Costa characterise the archive by its absence of 'evidence of speech of the time' in their seminal study *Language in Exile: Three hundred years of Jamaican Creole* (1990). A key hypothesis of this study is that the literary text performs precisely such an archiving role.

The question of 'what constitutes an archive' is key to this thesis. Michel Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) defines the archive by telling us what it is not. It is not the 'library of libraries'<sup>99</sup> nor is it the 'sum of all the texts that a culture has kept upon its person as documents attesting to its own past'<sup>100</sup>. Rather, Foucault sees the archive as a 'system of discursivity'<sup>101</sup>. That is, the possibility of what can be said. Questioning his contemporary modes of excavating history, Foucault positions the archive as a space of enunciation, directly related to the act of speaking. What he suggests is that two modes are needed: archaeology and genealogy. It requires a critical praxis that in R. Radhakrishnan's<sup>102</sup> words, is both archaeological and genealogical. The 'archaeological grid is a deterministic grid'<sup>103</sup> and the genealogical is a troubling strategy. The two meet in the topos of 'subjugated knowledge' whose excavation intends to 'rewrite history, and to take history away from historiographies of dominance'.<sup>104</sup> If, as Radhakrishnan proposes, theory bears the burden of unevenness and argues for an ethics of persuasion that is firmly rooted in political resistance then how can we

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<sup>99</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge, 2008, p146.

<sup>100</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p145.

<sup>101</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p148.

<sup>102</sup> Author's name is Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan but is commonly known as R. Radhakrishnan.

<sup>103</sup> R. Radhakrishnan, *History, the Human and the World Between*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2008, p150.

<sup>104</sup> R. Radhakrishnan, *History, the Human and the World Between*, p150.

handle the unevenness between the west and the rest and can theory help us think beyond the ‘winner takes all model’? I explore this specifically in relation to the neo-slavery libretto in Chapter One of this thesis.

It is useful, here, to highlight Foucault’s ‘act of speaking’ and indeed the oral as particularly important to my argument which concerns the archive as primarily oral. Whereas Foucault interrogates the classification systems that fail to describe the archive, Derrida offers us the fragmentary and feverish nature of the archive. Foucault’s site is one of enunciation and Derrida’s may be said to be a possible site of enunciation, a site of traces and remains. For the purposes of this study, what the two theories have in common is the ‘archives’ link to narrative production’.<sup>105</sup>

Following on from Foucault’s excavation of history, Derrida’s thesis invites the reader to ‘reflect on the subtle mechanisms that close off the addition to or subtraction from’<sup>106</sup> Freud’s work. This addition and subtraction refer to the separation of Sigmund Freud, the person, from the ‘text’ of Sigmund Freud. Freud, the person, is no longer able to converse with the world while his text does. What Derrida is concerned with here is whether or not the archive ends that conversation. Freud’s

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<sup>105</sup> Kate Eichorn, ‘Archival Genres: Gathering Texts and Reading Spaces’, *Invisible Culture* Issue No 12, pp1-10, 2008, [http://www.rochester.edu/in\\_visible\\_culture/Issue\\_12/title12.html](http://www.rochester.edu/in_visible_culture/Issue_12/title12.html) (accessed November 2009).

<sup>106</sup> Victor Taylor, ‘Theory Fever: Archivalism and the Future of Religious Studies’, *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* Volume 5. No 2, pp10-14, April 2004.

museum opens itself to scholarly activity but as a complete collection it also closes off the possibility of certain conversations.

In *Dwelling in the Archive* (2003) Antoinette Burton defines ‘archive’ firstly as ‘a source of evidence’<sup>107</sup> and secondly, ‘to indicate that a text can itself be an enduring site of historical evidence and historiographical opportunity in and for the present’<sup>108</sup>. In this instance, the text that she refers to is that of ‘family history’ reliant upon the use of home to stage ‘dramas of remembrance’.<sup>109</sup> Burton argues that the materials and artefacts that one has in one’s home can be classified as archival. Home as archival is an important part of this thesis which will be revisited in chapter four. Within this, Burton also considers the term “dwelling” not only in relation to one’s abode but also in relation to country as well. Using the narratives of a politician’s daughter, a novelist and a lawyer<sup>110</sup> Burton foregrounds the Indian female and at the same time documents the female experience of colonialism and nation-building.

The politician’s daughter uses the architectural constructs of her family’s various homes to re-assemble their family history. The homes are used as an archival source. Cornelia Sorabji, the lawyer, also

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<sup>107</sup> Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing Home, House and History in Late Colonial India*. USA: Oxford University Press, 2003, p5.

<sup>108</sup> Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, p5.

<sup>109</sup> Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, p6.

<sup>110</sup> All three women were born in India, Janaki Majumdar’s travelled back and forth between India and Britain due to the transnational character of her father’s role as president of the INC. Corbelia Sorabji was a Parsee, a member of a Zoroastrian religious sect in India. Her ancestors fled Muslim persecution in Persia in the seventh and eighth centuries. Attia Hosain was a Muslim from a taluqdari (landed) family who live through the partition of India.

archives the interiors of house and home to offer an historical narrative of colonial India. Burton examines the work of novelist, Attia Hosain, who uses her protagonist's family home to describe the trauma of partition. I am particularly interested in how 'family' might relate to nation especially as Burton argues that "family history" is a commemorative practice that creates a very specific kind of archive'.<sup>111</sup> That Sorabji, using her legal skills, was able to document the lives of the Zenana women and leave behind a rich archive, once again representing the home as archive is of particular interest. It is the 'home as archive' which is of particular concern to this thesis when analysing the Caribbean research centre as archive.

Mushirul Hasan contends that drawing on fiction as an archive of partition experiences offers an opportunity to access 'multiple versions of the truth'.<sup>112</sup> It is this contention that Burton uses in arguing for Attia Hosain's novel as partition archive and which I wish to use in supporting my argument of the printed text as archive in general, but also specifically for Caribbean Creoles. I refer to print rather than publication since the World Wide Web also gives access to publication. Overall, and in relation to the literary text, I wish to suggest that multiple versions of a truth can be excavated from within the fictional text, and that this constitutes an important archive, especially in the absence of buildings that function effectively as archive.

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<sup>111</sup> Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, p32.

<sup>112</sup> Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, p105.

Harris in *Refiguring the Archive* writes of the past that is contained within the archive as being ‘constantly revisited, re-read, reappraised, reinterpreted, revised and rewritten’.<sup>113</sup> As such the archive becomes the place from which the past begins and this happens despite the fact that what may be in the archive is in itself incomplete. Take for example, Derrida’s view that archiving is really about forgetting and not about remembering, because the archivist puts the memory into a safe place in order to forget it, knowing that it can be found again. The question remains: found by whom? The archivist trying to forget knows where that memory can be located. Surely then it is not about the archivist but the archive. The archive is where humanity – many more than the original archivist - goes to find out about the past, what has gone before, and tries to somehow keep it alive. To remember is to archive. To archive is to preserve memory.

### **Caribbean Archives**

How does such understanding of archiving relate to the Caribbean context? Knowledge and history in the Caribbean regions have, in recent times, since colonisation been transmitted through an educational system, which focused on the superiority of the written word and celebrated the institutional places, such as schools and libraries where colonial knowledge was not only preserved but transmitted. Yet, as Manuela Coppola states, ‘alternative forms of knowledge continued to circulate from mouth to mouth, through

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<sup>113</sup>Brent Harris, ‘The Archive, Public History and the Essential Truth: The TRC Reading the Past’, *Refiguring the Archive*, p162.

proverbs and stories, calypsos and poems, implicitly challenging the Western association of place and archive'.<sup>114</sup> Cultural theorist, Édouard Glissant also challenges the notion of the traditional archive when he argues in favour of preserving orality and states that 'the written could increasingly perform the function of an archive'.<sup>115</sup>

In the 1988 publication of *The American Archivist* in an article titled 'Archives in Emerging Nations: The Anglophone Experience' Philip Alexander and Elizabeth Pessek examined the archival experience of the Anglophone Caribbean. They stated:

At the turn of the twentieth century, the condition of official records in the British colonies was at best indifferent; more often than not, it was appalling. Despite some good intentions, the officials responsible for records administration — governors, colonial secretaries, department heads (there were no full-time professional archivists as such) — by and large failed dismally to live up to their responsibilities.<sup>116</sup>

The statement above is predicated on the fact that preservation of colonial documents and records was not regarded as important and was further complicated due to the lack of constitutional continuity, which resulted from the frequent transferral of territories between the colonial powers, and led to the dispersion or loss of records. An example of this type of archival loss has been documented by the archivist, Richard Pares, who described the extreme case of a governor in Barbados in the

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<sup>114</sup> Manuela Coppola, 'Soun de Abeng fi Nanny: Music and Resistance in Contemporary Caribbean Women's Poetry' in *Anglistica*, 13.2, 2009, p80.

<sup>115</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989, p101.

<sup>116</sup> Philip Alexander and Elizabeth Pessek, 'Archives in Emerging Nations: The Anglophone Experience' in *American Archivist*, Vol. 51, Winter and Spring 1988, pp120-131.

nineteenth century who was known to have routinely pitched great quantities of records into the ocean.<sup>117</sup>

It is important to insert into the debate some consideration of archival practice in the Caribbean. MIGAN<sup>118</sup>, the directory of Caribbean Archival Institutions and a web portal that gives access to the archival resources of the Caribbean, lists sixteen such archival institutions located in the Caribbean. Of these sixteen, three are of particular interest to this thesis: The Jamaica Archives and Records Department (1985), Grenada Public Library and Archives<sup>119</sup> and the St Lucia National Archives. The Jamaica Archives and Records Department started out in 1659 as the Island Secretary's Office (ISO) and was the record keeping arm of the colonial government. In 1879 some of its functions were transferred to the Island Record Office (IRO) in Spanish town and the ISO was dismantled. Jamaica Archives began its existence as an Archival Section of the IRO in 1955 under the leadership of government archivist, Clinton Black – the first to be appointed in the Commonwealth Caribbean – finally becoming the Jamaica Archives and Records Department (JARD) in 1985 when it took on the record management responsibilities. JARD serves as the main repository in Jamaica for the preservation of all government records in all formats: paper, audiovisual and electronic. It also collects archival material relating to Jamaica produced by 'persons of national importance as well

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<sup>117</sup> Richard Pares, 'Public Records in British West India Islands', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 7, (February 1930), pp149-157.

<sup>118</sup> MIGAN – Memory of the Islands/A Gateway for Archival Networking. See <http://www.migan.org/index.php/> (accessed October 2013).

<sup>119</sup> Grenada Public Library and Archives has been closed to the public since Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

as churches, charities and other organisations to ensure that primary materials of cultural value are preserved'<sup>120</sup>.

The first Caribbean Archives Conference was held at the University of West Indies, Mona, Jamaica in 1965. Delegates were present from the majority of the Caribbean islands and also included representation from the United Kingdom, USA and the Netherlands. There was also representation from other institutions such as UNESCO, the University of Puerto Rico, the Societe d'Histoire de la Guadeloupe, the Instituto Panamericano de Geografia e Historia, the Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos of Spain, the Public Archives of Canada, and the Consulate General of Colombia. The conference was devoted to three important matters: (1) the location and availability of public and private records in the Caribbean countries; (2) the location and availability of archival material abroad; and (3) general professional and technical problems in surveying, appraising, storing, administering, and repairing records and in recruiting and training archivists. It was noted that:

since some records pertaining to the Caribbean countries were either removed to Europe or do not exist because they were destroyed or because they were never created in the first instance, considerable attention was given to the reproduction of European archives and to the production of audiovisual records relating to folklore.<sup>121</sup>

Through the detailed information provided by the delegates it is possible to gain an accurate picture of the state of archives and archival

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<sup>120</sup> <http://www.jard.gov.jm/about-us/history-of-the-department.html> (accessed January 2015).

<sup>121</sup> Theodore R Schellenberg, 'Caribbean Archives Conference 1965', *The American Archivist*, Volume 29 Number 3, July 1966, p388.

practice in the Caribbean. What became apparent was the lack of legislation, staff and housing for archives on a number of the Caribbean islands such as Dominica, Grenada and St Lucia. At that time, Dominica had no archival agency, as was the case with Grenada and St Lucia. However, Grenada and St Lucia had interim measures in place. For Grenada, most of the public records were kept in the General registry at St George's. In St Lucia, an Archives Committee, under the chairmanship of the Administrator was concerning itself with public records.<sup>122</sup>

The Grenada Public Library and Archives (GPLA) was initially established as a library as early as 1846. It did not take on the functions of an archive until 1959. In 2004 the Grenada Public Library and Archives closed to the public after the impact of Hurricane Ivan. The building has deteriorated and researchers in 2015 await further news of the state of the archive. In 2009, Dr Laurence Brown from the University of Manchester, United Kingdom was awarded a grant for a major project in conjunction with the GPLA titled 'Digitising the endangered archives of Grenada'<sup>123</sup>. The focus of this project was to digitise 132 volumes of deed records and local government correspondence which had survived the 2004 hurricane and had been deposited in the basement of the Office of the Governor-General. Not all of the digitisation has been completed but the work done so far has been deposited with the British Library and with the University of the

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<sup>122</sup> Theodore R Schellenberg, 'Caribbean Archives Conference 1965' pp388-391.

<sup>123</sup> [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_project.a4d?projID=EAP295;r=22648](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_project.a4d?projID=EAP295;r=22648) (accessed January 2015).

West Indies, Grenada campus, and this will be made publicly accessible through the new campus that is being constructed on the island.<sup>124</sup> To date, the Grenada Public Library and archive has not yet re-opened.

Meanwhile, the establishment of the National Archives for St Lucia was one of the long-term objectives of the founders of the St. Lucia Archaeological and Historical (A & H) Society. From its formation in 1954, the Society set out to collect records of historical and archival interest. Following the Castries fire of 1948, Society members rescued valuable Government records and it was this keen interest in the history of Saint Lucia and its preservation that prompted the Government to confer the title, "Preserver of Records" on the Society in January 1975, by a Cabinet decree. As the archival collections grew, the St Lucian government recognised the need for a trained archivist and the archives now operate as part of the Office of the Prime Minister.

Additionally, The Folk Research Centre (FRC) is a non-governmental organisation established in 1973 to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of St. Lucia. Its main objectives are to i) promote research into St. Lucian culture; 2) to explore and clarify the role of culture in the

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<sup>124</sup> University of the West Indies has a commitment to expand its outreach, bringing the University to students "who could not easily come to us," and the role of the Open Campus (OC), UWI's newest and furthest reaching campus, as the one under which facilities planned for the new site will be managed. 88 acres of land was gifted to UWI by the Congress Government in 2012 for the construction of a UWI Campus. It was envisioned that the new facilities in Hope, St. Andrews (in the north-eastern section of the island) would be a robust place of learning which would change the tertiary education landscape. Preliminary proposals included a multi-purpose site encompassing teaching and learning facilities, conference and event facilities, as well as an agricultural research station. (See <http://sta.uwi.edu/news/releases/release.asp?id=972> [accessed 1 August 2015]). At the time of writing this thesis, UWI is still looking for a qualified firm to form a partnership with in order to draw up architectural plans and commence the build. Currently the Grenada Site Office of the UWI Open Campus is located in the historic T.A. Marryshow House.

development of St. Lucia; and 3) to contribute to cultural development. The FRC has many programmes such as the use of traditional theatre to address and facilitate action on community issues; documentation of cultural processes and events and cultural education. The FRC has been instrumental in the documentation of St Lucian Kwéyol and the publication of a Kwéyol dictionary.

The history of the Caribbean archive is a difficult one. In order to memorialise history 'the conservation of archives is necessary to preserve the past'.<sup>125</sup> The Caribbean archive requires funding and maintenance, an aspect which some of the islands are able to sustain more than others. In the diaspora, the makings of a Caribbean archive is not prone to the peculiarities of tropical climates but faces the same financial challenges. Digitisation as a mechanism for access provides a tension for the traditional archive culture - the-dust covered document versus the 'reluctance to embrace technology and [a] resistance to providing public access online'<sup>126</sup>. The new archival information seekers such as bloggers, independent scholars and genealogists are 'discovering the density, evidentiary value and vividness of archival imagery and sound'<sup>127</sup> and are making them available online, thus changing the nature of the traditional archivist who is seen as a 'keeper of culture'.

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<sup>125</sup> Conservation Methods, TANAP: Towards a New Age of Partnership in Dutch East India Company Archives and Research, 2011.  
<http://www.tanap.net/content/archives/conservation/conservation.htm> (accessed December 2015).

<sup>126</sup> Rick Prelinger, 'Archives and access in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', *Cinema Journal*, Vol 46 No 3, 2007, pp114-118.

<sup>127</sup> Rick Prelinger, pp114-118.

### **Creole and Creolisation: A Multiplicity of Lines**

In order to bring together ideas of the archive and of creolisation it is important to take note of the multiple definitions applied to Creole and Creolisation. In *Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture* (2002) Carolyn Allen argues that the term 'Creole' is a problematic one to define. Unlike Brathwaite's view of 'Creole' as product and 'Creolisation' as the process<sup>128</sup>, Allen seems to conflate both terms when she questions whether we all mean the same thing when we say 'Creole' and 'Creolisation'. Charting the development of the term 'Creole' from dictionary definitions through to comparisons with 'Creolisation' from scholars such as Sylvia Wynter and David Nicholls, Allen rightly states that this conflation or duality becomes controversial when the term stops being applied to the product and is applied to the process. Likewise, Nigel O' Bolland suggests that users of the term creolisation are obliged to state the specific definition they are referring to when using the term. If we envisage the term 'Creole' through a rhizomatic gaze, that is, using Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic cartography<sup>129</sup>, then when this methodology is applied to the term, 'Creole' might be considered a rhizome made up of a 'multiplicity of lines that extend in all directions'. This 'multiplicity of lines' are the definitions relating to race, culture and language. Of relevance to this thesis are the designations pertaining to culture and language.

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<sup>128</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820*. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2005 [1971], p297.

<sup>129</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, 'Treatise on Nomadology', *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, pp351-423.

Verene Shepherd and Glen L Richards in defining Creole as culture, discuss the notion that ‘Creole’ as a description of New World cultures and societies was already in widespread and general use’.<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, in 1957, Richard Adams defined ‘Creole culture’ as ‘ways of life that have emerged in the New World [...] in those societies where plantations have served as a dominant element in the [...] social structure’.<sup>131</sup> In addition, Brathwaite sees Creole culture as ‘a way of seeing the society, not in terms of white and black, master and slave [...] but as contributory parts of a whole’.<sup>132</sup> In his seminal text *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820* Brathwaite sought to establish patterns of creole interaction as the beginnings of a sociological foundation for Caribbean societies. He proposed that the Caribbean should reject the principles of cultural distinction and unitary origin through which societies were typically analysed and categorised and replace these principles with the intrinsic ethnic and cultural pluralism of the islands. Brathwaite argues that at the core of the Caribbean experience lies the cultural intersection, ethnic admixture and linguistic cross-fertilisation which should be used to dispute the historical discontinuity and the geographical and political fragmentation through which the Caribbean region had been framed.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Verene Shepherd and Glen L Richards, eds. *Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture: In Honour of Kamau Brathwaite*. Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle; Oxford: James Currey, 2002, px.

<sup>131</sup> Richard Adams, ‘On the Relation between Plantation and ‘Creole’ Cultures’ in *Plantation Systems of the New World*, Washington, DC: Pan American Union, 1959, p78.

<sup>132</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820*. p307.

<sup>133</sup> See Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820*.

Moving to a definition of 'Creole' as a language, Suzanne Romaine writes:

The term was then subsequently applied to certain languages spoken by creoles in and around the Caribbean and in West Africa, and then more generally to other languages of similar types which had arisen in similar circumstances.<sup>134</sup>

Indeed, Raymond Arveiller<sup>135</sup> states that the first attestation of the use of 'Creole' in reference to languages occurred in *Premier Voyage* (1913).

Arveiller writes as follows:

Nous lisons à date ancienne l'expression 'langue créole' à propos du portugais corrompu parlé au Sénégal: 'ces gens la [les Sénégalais], outre la langue du pays, parlent encore un certain jargon qui n'a que tres peu de ressemblance a la langue portugaise, et qu'on nomme langue créole, comme dans la mer Mediterranée la langue franque'<sup>136</sup>.

We read to date the old term 'Creole' in connection with corrupt Portuguese spoken in Senegal: 'these people [the Senegalese], besides the language, speak a certain jargon that has very little resemblance to the Portuguese language, and this language is called Creole, as in the Mediterranean sea Frankish language. {My translation}

The extract refers to 'a certain jargon' spoken in Senegal that, although 'only remotely similar to the Portuguese language'<sup>137</sup> was nonetheless thought to be genetically related to it.

Similarly, linguist, John Holm describes Creole languages as having:

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<sup>134</sup> Romaine, Suzanne *Pidgin and Creole Languages*, London; New York: Longman, 1988, p38.

<sup>135</sup> Raymond Arveiller, *Contribution a l'etude des termes de voyage en francais 1505-1722*, (1963), Paris, pp204-208.

<sup>136</sup> Michel Jajolet de La Courbe, *Premier Voyage ... fait a la coste d'Afrique en 1685*, edition Prosper Cultru: Paris, 1913. p192 Texte rédigé vers 1688.

<sup>137</sup> Robert Chaudenson, *Creolization of Language and Culture*, revised in collaboration with Salikoko S. Mufwene; translated by Sheri Pargman [et al.], London; New York: Routledge, 2001, p8.

a jargon or pidgin in its ancestry; it is spoken natively by an entire speech community, often one whose ancestors were displaced geographically so that their ties with their original language and socio-cultural identity were partly broken.<sup>138</sup>

What Holm refers to here is also the legacy of slavery. Research into the theory of Creole languages stems from the late nineteenth century when Hugo Schuchardt published his comparative study of pidgins and creoles titled *Kreolische Studien* (1882). As noted by David DeCamp, the first international conference on Creole language studies was held in 1959<sup>139</sup>. Several Creolists, such as Mervyn Alleyne (1986), Derek Bickerton (1975, 1981), Frederick Cassidy, Robert Chaudenson (2001), David DeCamp (1977), Morgan Dalphinis (1985) and John Holm (2000) to name but a few, were credited with placing in the academic arena another discipline, Creolistics, which is a ‘noteworthy research area for conceiving and/or verifying theories that bear on the formation and evolution of languages’.<sup>140</sup>

This ‘noteworthy research area’ argues convincingly that Caribbean peoples have a ‘mother’ (native) tongue – Creole(s). Because of the complex multilingual nature of the region, the ‘mother-tongue’ needs also to be considered plurally, in terms of Creoles. The various Creoles of the region, until recently, derogatively considered as a ‘patois’ or ‘dialect’, given their mixed African and European roots and their oral nature, are the concern of this thesis. Yet, as Mireille Rosello states, the

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<sup>138</sup> John Holm, *An Introduction to Pidgins and Creoles*, Cambridge: CUP, 2000.

<sup>139</sup> See David DeCamp, Introduction: The Study of Pidgin and Creole Languages, *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*, Cambridge: CUP, 1977, pp13-39.

<sup>140</sup> Robert Chaudenson, *Creolization of Language and Culture*, revised in collaboration with Salikoko S. Mufwene; translated by Sheri Pargman et al., London; New York: Routledge, 2001, p34.

myth that 'Creole' (and in this instance I am referring to all Caribbean Creoles) is the language of uneducated slaves has been perpetuated by colonialism.<sup>141</sup> Interrogation of Creole as archive is due in order to discover what the language archives or holds in relation to literary representations.

Alleyne posits the argument that 'Africans of varying linguistic and geographical origins underwent language change arising primarily out of new communicative needs within their own number and [...] out of communicative needs with Europeans.'<sup>142</sup> A language that the European could not recognize was deemed unimportant. What impact would this 'unimportance'<sup>143</sup> have had on the European writer and his depiction of any Creole language that he would have heard on his travels?

### **Literary Creole: Constructing a Creole Identity**

In 'The variability of literary dialect in Jamaican creole'<sup>144</sup> Edgar Schneider and Christian Wagner examine the 'pan-lectal' competence of Michael Thewell in his novel *The harder they come* (1980). By pan-lectal they refer to the representation of Jamaican speech in the novel and whether or not this representation was accurate and in line with fieldwork based socio-linguistic studies. Throughout the article reference is made to a 'literary dialect' or as I read it, 'literary Creole'.

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<sup>141</sup> Mireille Rosello, 'Introduction' in Césaire, Aimé *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, Newcastle Upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books Ltd, 1995, p49.

<sup>142</sup> Mervyn Alleyne, *Comparative Afro-American*, USA: Karoma Publishers, 2008, p138.

<sup>143</sup> Mervyn Alleyne, *Comparative Afro-American*, p138.

<sup>144</sup> Edgar W Schneider and Christian Wagner, 'The variability of literary dialect in Jamaican Creole' in *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Language*, Vol 21, Issue 1, 2006, pp45-95.

Schneider and Wagner argue that ‘Creole’ can be used as a narrative technique and as such this ‘literary creativity is an important means of expressing cultural identity’<sup>145</sup>.

Schneider and Wagner are first and foremost, linguists who have elected to examine a fictional text to ascertain whether the linguistic data in the text proves to be a valid corpus of material for a comparative analysis between real and fictional Jamaican speech. Of particular interest to my thesis is the way in which the author of the text is also subject to analysis in terms of his competency and validity in representing the creolised word. Schneider and Wagner ask ‘to what extent is an individual (the author of a literary work in the present case) capable of modelling and producing the variable performance of different speakers? Does an individual’s intuition on variable linguistic usage include a familiarity with adequate token frequencies by various speakers and styles?’<sup>146</sup> If their hypothesis is applied to the European writer what insights might be revealed? Is the linguistic data in such a text more or less valid? Linguistic critics, such as Sumner Ives, have argued that ‘nearly all examples of literary dialect are deliberately incomplete’, thus stressing that ‘the author is an artist, not a linguist or sociologist’.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Edgar W Schneider and Christian Wagner, *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Language*, p46.

<sup>146</sup> Edgar W Schneider and Christian Wagner, *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Language*, p49.

<sup>147</sup> Sumner Ives, ‘A Theory of Literary Dialect’ in J V Williamson & V M Burke (Eds) *A various Language: Perspectives on American Dialects*, New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971, pp145-77.

Similarly, Sylvia Holton states that ‘any literary writing of dialect must be regarded as suggestion rather than as authentic representation of the speech of a particular group of speakers’<sup>148</sup>. Holton argues that the author who creates a literary dialect must

depend upon accumulation of dialect pronunciations of particular words [...] he has previously heard [and] draw features from this mnemonic accumulation and imagine these features in new combinations.<sup>149</sup>

The result of this accumulation is that the author then through a ‘combination of memory and imagination’<sup>150</sup> re-presents this imagined speech as an appropriate vernacular for his characters.

Literary dialect is seen as a trope for lending credibility to the construction of a cultural context or as entertainment for the reader, giving rise to the question of readership or audience as can be seen in the works of Robert Le Page and Andree Tabouret-Keller (1985). Cynthia Bernstein argues that literary dialect should not be ignored but rather be seen as a stylistic device. Bernstein prefers to use the term ‘literary linguistics’ arguing that the ‘literary text is a legitimate source of linguistic data’<sup>151</sup>. In applying this notion of linguistic data to my reading of the selected texts, my concern is to excavate the Caribbean Creoles archived within these literary texts in order to examine the ways in which this informs the construction of the black body as archive and

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<sup>148</sup> Sylvia Holton, *Down Home and Uptown: The representation of black speech in American fiction*, Rutherford, New York: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984.

<sup>149</sup> Sylvia Holton, *Down Home and Uptown: The representation of black speech in American fiction*, p56.

<sup>150</sup> Sylvia Holton, *Down Home and Uptown: The representation of black speech in American fiction*, p56.

<sup>151</sup> Cynthia Bernstein, *The Text and Beyond: Essays in Literary Linguistics*, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1994, p239.

also creolises the archive. To read the black body as archive and understand the way in which it is constructed in the literary text is of particular concern to this thesis.

The black body surviving the tortuous middle passage would also be the vessel containing the beginnings of Creole languages. In addition, a factor that should be taken into consideration when looking at what other properties might be used to group Creole languages together would be their social history. At the same time, this is problematic since evidence is often fragmentary as suggested by Lalla and D'Costa (1990). The Creolists mentioned above, however, have indicated in their literature that there are a number of striking similarities among the historical processes through which Creole languages came into being.<sup>152</sup> Notably, many Creole languages evolved in the framework of European colonial expansion.

Bickerton (1988) identified three types of Creole. Firstly, there are Plantation Creoles which emerged in the plantations as they were worked by a large number of slaves from Africa alongside Amerindian slaves and indentured labourers (poor Europeans). Secondly, Fort Creoles developed at the fortified posts along the west coast of Africa

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<sup>152</sup> See Mervyn Alleyne, *Theoretical Issues in Caribbean Linguistics*, Language Laboratory, UWI, Jamaica, 1982; Derek Bickerton, *Dynamics of a Creole System*, CUP, Cambridge, 1975/ *Roots of Language*, Karoma Publishers, Ann Arbor MI, 1981; Frederick Cassidy & Robert Le Page, *Dictionary of Jamaican English 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, UWI Press, Jamaica, 2002; Robert Chaudenson, *Creolization of Language and Culture*, Routledge, London, 2001; Morgan Dalphinis, *Caribbean and African Languages: Social History, Language and Education*, Karia Press, London 1985; David DeCamp, *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*, Cambridge University Press, 1977; Robert Hall, *Pidgin and Creole Languages*, Cornell University Press, London, 1979; John Holm, *An Introduction to Pidgins and Creoles*, CUP, Cambridge, 2000.

where the Europeans set up their commercial activities. There would have had to have been some medium of communication between the Africans and Europeans and among Africans from different linguistic backgrounds. Finally, Maroon Creoles developed in the communities of escaped slaves. It is possible that Maroon Creole could have evolved from Plantation Creole and so may not exhibit much structural difference from it. However, if there had been divergence, this could be attributed to the fact that the maroon creoles developed in isolation from the metropolitan, European languages.<sup>153</sup>

In order to more fully understand the types of Creole mentioned above, account needs to be taken of the history of the slave trade and European expansion. Spain, Portugal, France, Britain and the Netherlands were the main nations involved in the colonial expansion. Approximately ten million Africans were captured and deported to the Americas.<sup>154</sup> Many did not survive. Historical research<sup>155</sup> shows that during the entire period of slavery, what with high death rates, low birth rates and high immigration rates the black population was immensely reduced.<sup>156</sup> This reduction in population would have had an effect on the way in which a

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<sup>153</sup> Jacques Arends, Pieter Muysken and Norval Smith, *Pidgins and Creoles: An Introduction*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, 1995, p16.

<sup>154</sup> Philip D Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*, USA: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972. The question of numbers has been disputed. Curtin suggests that the estimates are fallacious and were mostly based on nineteenth century information, none of which was based on historical information. New data suggests 12.5 million – see [www.slavevoyages.org/](http://www.slavevoyages.org/) (accessed July 2016).

<sup>155</sup> See Tables in Franklin Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism*, Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2012 [1978], pp259-270. Tables detail number of slaves supplied from Africa to Barbados; sugar production and slave population in selected colonies; Caribbean population by castes in early nineteenth century.

<sup>156</sup> See John Holm, *An introduction to pidgins and creoles*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp68-105.

language was acquired natively through transmission from one generation to the next.<sup>157</sup>

St Lucia provides an especially useful example in the light of its unusual linguistic background. While its official language is English, the primary vernacular is a French-lexicon Creole (Kwéyòl). More recently Kwéyòl co-exists with an English-lexicon Creole.<sup>158</sup> This primary vernacular, Kwéyòl, does not conform to the norms of a Creole continuum, that is, it does not exist in a diglossic relationship with the official language.<sup>159</sup> That this can be shown to be true also of some of the other Eastern Caribbean islands such as St Vincent, Dominica and to some extent Grenada renders the Eastern Caribbean of particular significance to this thesis, hence my examination of the use of Grenadian English and Grenadian French Creole in Collins *Angel*. When Creoles co-exist with unrelated official languages, they are largely constituted as separate linguistic systems. A focus on the Eastern Caribbean includes the francophone Caribbean in which French-lexicon Creoles co-exist with standard French. It is agreed by linguists such as Alleyne (1994) and Donald Winford (1994) that these creoles are separate language systems.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> The socio-historical background cannot be discussed fully here. Additional factors such as the social structure of the plantation and demography also need to be taken into account. Arends et al, *Pidgins and Creoles: An Introduction*, p18. For further reading see Curtin (1969) and Mintz & Price (1992).

<sup>158</sup> Mervyn Alleyne, 'Problems of Standardization' in *Language & The Social Construction of Identity in Creole Situations*, Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1994, p11.

<sup>159</sup> Mervyn Alleyne, 'Problems of Standardization' p11.

<sup>160</sup> Donald Winford, 'Sociolinguistic Approaches to Language Use in the Anglophone Caribbean' in *Language & The Social Construction of Identity in Creole Situations*, Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1994, p45.

A Creole continuum specifically refers to a range of language variation from a Creole base (basilect) to the standard or official language (the acrolect), which represents the target.<sup>161</sup> St Lucia, for example, has kept its French Creole while French itself has completely disappeared, so the sociolinguistic conditions are very similar to that in Dominica.<sup>162</sup> Whilst French Creole is the first language for most of the population in St Lucia (referred to as St Lucian Kwéyòl), in Grenada, English has been the official language and the language of education since the beginning of the nineteenth century.

### **Grenadian Creoles**

The linguistic situation in Grenada illustrates the long struggle for domination of the island between France and England. In 1498 Columbus landed on Grenada during his third voyage to the new world. Partly because of the Caribs<sup>163</sup>, Grenada remained uncolonised for more than 100 years after its discovery; early English efforts to settle the island were unsuccessful. A French company founded by Cardinal Richelieu purchased Grenada from the English in 1650 and established a small settlement. After several skirmishes with the Caribs, the French brought in reinforcements from Martinique and defeated the Caribs the last of whom leaped into the sea rather than surrender. In 1763 Grenada was formally ceded to Great Britain by the Treaty of Paris, the French then regained control in 1779. French traditions and

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<sup>161</sup> John Holm, *An Introduction to pidgins and creoles*, Cambridge: CUP, 2000.

<sup>162</sup> Lawrence D Carrington, *St Lucian Creole: A descriptive analysis of its phonology and morphosyntax*, Hamburg: Helmut Buske, 1984.

<sup>163</sup> See Beverley Steele, *Grenada: A History of its People*, (Oxford: Macmillan Publishers, 2003).

the French language were predominant. Grenada continued its see-saw relationship with France and England until it was restored to Britain in 1783 under the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>164</sup>

Like other islands in the region, Grenada was subjected to cultural and linguistic influences from the ‘super’ powers of the fifteenth to eighteenth century, much of which remain today. What these islands share is history, ‘their story’ reflected in the regions writing.<sup>165</sup> Antonio Benítez-Rojo writes:

we must conclude that the historiography of the Caribbean [...], reads like a long and inconsonant story favouring the legitimation of the white planter [...].<sup>166</sup>

It might be said, then, that Caribbean writers and intellectuals have, as a result, had to shoulder the burden of modern European history and indeed are haunted by this history. A legacy of that history is the presence in the entire region of ‘descendants of Africans’.<sup>167</sup> This in turn has had an impact on the linguistic changes that have occurred in the Caribbean archipelago.

The 1921 Census report for Grenada and Carriacou refers to a prohibition on the use of French Creole (referred to as patois in the report) and states:

English is the vernacular or mother tongue of the people [...]. The patois speaking element comprise 2.01. Since the prohibition in 1884, of the speaking of patois in the

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<sup>164</sup> Further information on the history of Grenada can be obtained from Steele (2003).

<sup>165</sup> See for example, Renu Juneja, ‘Uses of History’, in *Caribbean Transactions*, London: MacMillan Education Ltd, 1996, pp117-143.

<sup>166</sup> Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island*, USA: Duke University Press, 1996, p254.

<sup>167</sup> Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, USA: Duke University Press, 1996.

Primary Schools, the dialect has been slowly dying out and is now spoken only among the small number of the adult population of the rural districts.<sup>168</sup>

That the prohibition of speaking patois has been unsuccessful is demonstrated by Grenada still maintaining connections with its French Creole past as evidenced by Le Page and Tabouret-Keller<sup>169</sup> during their research in the 1950s. In 2001, Linguists Jo-Anne Ferreira and David Holbrook from UWI, St. Augustine /SIL International, presented a paper<sup>170</sup> outlining their findings from research conducted on French-Lexifier Creoles to determine the current ethno linguistic vitality of these language varieties <sup>171</sup>, that is, whether these varieties were really endangered. In the case of Grenadian French Creole, their results concluded:

that the French-Lexifier Creole spoken in Grenada is a dying language and that when the last of the oldest generation of Grenadians and Carriacouans dies out, the language will too. This is evidenced by several factors: first, the lack of anyone in the younger generations learning the language (as a first or second language); second, by a lack of a population of speakers who use the language on a regular basis; third, by the lack of competence in the language on the part of most speakers; and last, by the replacement of Patois by English or the English-Lexifier Creole in all domains of language use.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Grenada. Report and general abstracts of the census of 1921 as quoted in Le Page, R & A Tabouret-Keller, *Acts of Identity*, p52.

<sup>169</sup> *Acts of Identity*, p49. Further evidenced by a field trip I undertook in 2006 in which I witnessed the resurgence of Grenadian French Creole and the initiatives that have been put in place to enable the language to be taught.

<sup>170</sup> Jo-Anne Ferreira and David Holbrook, 'Are They Dying? The Case of Some French-Lexifier Creoles', 4th Annual Islands in Between Conference, Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, Castries, St. Lucia, 8–10 November 2001.

<sup>171</sup> The three French-lexifier Creoles in question are those spoken in Grenada and Carriacou, in Trinidad, and in Louisiana in the USA. David Holbrook conducted the surveys in Grenada and Carriacou, and Louisiana. Jo-Anne Ferreira conducted the survey in Trinidad.

<sup>172</sup> Jo-Anne Ferreira and David Holbrook, 'Are They Dying? The Case of Some French-Lexifier Creoles', p15.

During a period of fieldwork in Grenada in 2006 I interviewed the Curator<sup>173</sup> of the Carriacou Museum who informed me there were still a number of elders in L'Esterre, a village on the island, who had retained their French Creole. Additionally, I visited a high school in Grenada in April 2008 and identified resurgence in learning Grenadian French Creole which was now filtering into the schools. By May 2008 the Grenada Creole Society was established with its main remit being the promotion of Grenadian French Creole. This society has designed and developed a learning method to teach Grenadian French Creole and in 2011 joined social media networks in an attempt to further promote Grenadian French Creole.

Grenadian French Creole is considered to be the same language as St Lucian French Creole (Kwéyòl).<sup>174</sup> An initial exploratory small-scale study, conducted in 2005,<sup>175</sup> of St Lucian Kwéyòl speakers in London included their reactions when asked to read a Kwéyòl poem. An extract of this poem follows below:

Sa ou ka kwè lè ou palé kwéyòl  
Pa janmen ou-sèl  
Ki pa palé-i;  
Sa ou konnèt, sa ou ka apwann,  
  
Pa janman ou-sél  
Ki ka pwan-i. <sup>176</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Clemencia Alexander, Carriacou Museum, 26 July 2006.

<sup>174</sup> See <http://www.ethnologue.com/country/GD/languages> (accessed December 2015),

<sup>175</sup> See my Master's dissertation entitled '*Kawayib Kwéyòl: An mòso tapeswi*' (Caribbean Creoles: A piece of the Tapestry).

<sup>176</sup> Case study of the St Lucian Diaspora in the UK. Interviewed five families in the South East area of London to ascertain their knowledge of Kwéyòl and their views on its usage. Informal interviews were conducted and each individual was asked to self assess his/her fluency and understanding of Kwéyòl on a scale of one to ten, with one indicating no knowledge or understanding and ten indicating native speaker fluency. They were then asked to read the poem called Kwéyòl (see extract above).

What do you think when you speak  
Kwéyòl?  
It's never you alone  
Who speak it;  
What you know and what you  
understand, It's never you alone  
Who absorb it. (My translation)

The results of this study corroborate Ong's (1984) observation, referred to below, in that the participants expressed surprise and disbelief at the way in which their oral language was presented on the page. Yet, while the poem represented its particular aesthetic value, I would argue that the mere fact that it had been written down renders Kwéyòl not only a literary language but also distinguishes the function of the poem, at least in part, as a process of archiving St Lucian Kwéyòl. As outlined above, the position of language is central to my thesis. I question also whether the preservation of Caribbean Creoles within the literature raises its status to that of a 'high' language and what the implications and meanings of such a rise in status might be.

An implication might be that speakers of Creole begin to recognise the value of such a heritage. David B Frank, a linguist specialising in St Lucian Kwéyòl notes that:

the negative evaluations on Creole languages must be seen as a matter of perspective, usually coming from people who are in a position of relative power in the national scene but who are outsiders to the creole culture. The creole speakers themselves might accept that their language could be a corruption of a more prestigious, standard language, but that acceptance does not necessarily lead to the abandonment of the creole.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> David B Frank, 'We Don't Speak a Real language: Creoles as Misunderstood and Endangered Languages', Paper presented at A *Symposium on Endangered Languages*, March 2007.

Similarly, linguist Pauline Christie, in discussing Jamaican Creole writes of a society that ‘cannot even conceive of Creole as a real language’.<sup>178</sup> She argues that this reaction depicts the strong feeling of ideas about language in general where ‘a language must at least have an established written form and grammatical categories that parallel those traditionally identified for English.’<sup>179</sup>

### **Jamaican Creole**

George Lang argues that ‘few creoles have left a sufficient archive for in-depth investigation of their early history’.<sup>180</sup> However, Barbara Lalla<sup>181</sup> and Jean D’Costa’s<sup>182</sup> anthologies show how much valuable data can be gleaned from diaries, letters or travelogues. In tracing the history of Jamaican Creole they found that most of the surviving records of Jamaican Creole were scattered through various published works such as those mentioned above with much of the Creole speech appearing as fragments: a chance phrase or the odd word here or there. This occurrence can be described as ‘bis’, in Glissant’s terms, or as one would say in English ‘bits and pieces’ resulting in Jamaican Creole residing within the early Caribbean texts, embraced on either side by Standard

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<sup>178</sup> Pauline Christie, *Due Respect: Essays on English and English-related Creoles in the Caribbean in Honour of Professor Robert Le Page*. Jamaica: University of West Indies Press, 2001, p5.

<sup>179</sup> Pauline Christie, *Due Respect*, p6.

<sup>180</sup> George Lang, *Entwisted Tongues: Comparative Creole Literatures*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000, p120.

<sup>181</sup> Jean D’Costa and Barbara Lalla, *Voices in Exile: Jamaican Texts of the 18th and 19th Centuries*, USA: University of Alabama Press, 2009. Barbara Lalla and Jean D’Costa, *Language in Exile: Three Hundred Years of Jamaican Creole*, USA: University of Alabama Press, 2009.

<sup>182</sup> See *Voices in Exile* and *Language in Exile*.

English. In addition, Lalla and D'Costa have traced three hundred years of Jamaican Creole, referring to it as a 'Language in Exile'.<sup>183</sup>

The earliest recorded instance of Jamaican Creole was published in 1781 in the *Cornwall Chronicle*, a newspaper for the Planters and Merchants in Montego Bay, Jamaica. The first printing press was established on the island in 1720 and the first edition of the *Cornwall Chronicle* appeared in 1773. The edition referred to above was printed by James Fannin who became responsible for the *Cornwall Chronicle* from 1781-1788<sup>184</sup>. This particular newspaper was only published on Saturdays and the supplement contained letters, poems and so on, many of which were written under pen-names.

The text in question is a letter to the editor/printer of the newspaper in which the writer purports to relay an overheard conversation between two Negro slaves. What is not clear here is whether this work is fictitious or not. The location of the event is cited as 'Bubby Island' which immediately gives rise to the notion that this may indeed be a spoof as there is no location of said place name in or around Jamaica. The letter begins with an introduction in Standard English where the writer sets the scene and introduces the reader to Quashie and Quaco. When the two men begin to speak the reader is introduced to the Negroes' native tongue:

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<sup>183</sup> Barbara Lalla and Jean D'Costa, *Language in Exile*.

<sup>184</sup> Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America: With a Biography of Printers, and an Account of Newspapers*, Volume 5, USA: J Munsell Printers, 1874, p383.

**Quashie**

Brae Quaco, ho you do? Me been long for see you. How oonoo all do in Westmoreland?

**Quaco**

Brae Quashie, I but so so, for when belly no full, no comfort for me.

**Quashie**

Belly no full! You ‘tonish me Quaco; you look as if you bin yam. Tan. Massa-Gubna no send down ship (?) [*sic*] a Sava-lama, hab flour, beans, pease, and (yearee me good) oatmeal? and, Quaco, if you yam belly full of tharra, no talk dem word, “you but so so”

**Quaco**

Brae Quashie, if Massa Gubna send ship, he no send ‘e for me; me bin ax massa secretary for some nyanyam, him say, massa commissioners no put for me name in a book.<sup>185</sup>

The letter describes Quaco’s concern that his name does not appear on the distribution list for the recent supplies that have just come into port. Hubert Devonish, foremost Caribbean linguist for Jamaican Creole, argues that the language depicted is similar to that of modern day Jamaican Creole. However, he notes that the use of a plural marker when referring to a group or class of people is incorrect and this indicates that the writer is ‘making the text a bit more English than would have been typical of Afro-Jamaican speech in the late eighteenth century’<sup>186</sup>. Devonish argues that the use of ‘s’ on ‘commissioners’ is not necessary and unauthentic. Interestingly, there has been little analysis of the orthography used at this time although Devonish does make reference to the language shift that occurs and the fact that as early as 1780 ‘speakers in Jamaica may have had a sense of the existence of

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<sup>185</sup> Supplement to Cornwall Chronicle (Montego Bay, Jamaica), 13th Oct. 1781.

<sup>186</sup> Hubert Devonish, ‘Oldest Jamaican Creole Text’, <http://icclr.wordpress.com/2011/05/26/oldest-jamaican-creole-text/> (accessed 26 May 2011)

Jamaican Creole and English as separate and distinct language forms'<sup>187</sup>.

In line with Christie's argument that 'a language must at least have an established written form and grammatical categories' *The Telegraph* (3 July 2008) ran a story titled 'Bible to be translated into Jamaican patois'. The strap line reads:

*Plans to translate the Bible into patois - Jamaica's unofficial language - have ignited a fiery debate between those who say it empowers Jamaicans and traditionalists who say it dilutes the value of the Scripture.*

It is to be noted that an attempt had been made some sixty years earlier by Faith Linton, Jamaican linguist and member of the Bible Society, West Indies, whose proposal to translate the bible into Jamaican Creole was met with astonishment and opposition. Linton writes 'People were deeply ashamed of their mother tongue. It was always associated with illiteracy and social deprivation'.<sup>188</sup> In 2011 the debate surrounding Jamaican Creole continued with national and international coverage on the proposed printing of the King James Version of the Bible in Jamaican Creole. This translation was eventually published in November 2012 and raises concerns in relation to orthography and the steps that are being taken to archive Jamaican Creole. The preservation and language recognition <sup>189</sup> of Jamaican Creole are of concern to this

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<sup>187</sup> Hubert Devonish, 'Oldest Jamaican Creole Text'.

<sup>188</sup> [http://www.caribbean360.com/news/jamaica\\_news/jamaican-patois-bible-released-di-gud-nyuuz-bout-jiizas#ixzz3OKXxmrkw](http://www.caribbean360.com/news/jamaica_news/jamaican-patois-bible-released-di-gud-nyuuz-bout-jiizas#ixzz3OKXxmrkw) (accessed January 2015).

<sup>189</sup> The first steps in formally recognising a language is to have a version of the Bible printed in said language.

thesis in relation to the function of Jamaican Creole in the Caribbean short story.

### **A Limitless *Métissage*: Creolisation as Cultural Creativity**

Since the main argument of this thesis is that the literary texts of concern can be read as ‘creolised archive’, it is necessary to define creolisation. At the same time, it is difficult to use the term ‘creolisation’ without expanding on the context in which it is to be placed due to its varied applications. The ‘creolisation’ concept began life as a linguistic term. Brathwaite’s Creole-society thesis in his seminal work *Development of Creole Society in Jamaica* (1978) defines creolisation as the process of social and cultural change:

based upon the stimulus/response of individuals within the society to their environment and – as white/black, culturally discrete groups – to each other.<sup>190</sup>

Moreover, Glissant sees Creolisation as a ‘limitless *Métissage*, its elements diffracted and its consequences unforeseeable’.<sup>191</sup> He posits *Métissage* as the mixture of races and culture that sweeps away notions of racial purity and singular origin and states that:

creolisation’s most obvious symbol is in the Creole language, [...], creolisation carries along then into the adventure of multilingualism and into the incredible explosion of cultures.<sup>192</sup>

Brathwaite’s Creole-society model is predicated on a concept of social and cultural change, whereas Glissant’s idea of creolisation relates to the process of cultural and linguistic mixing and is constructed against a

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<sup>190</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, *Development of Creole Society in Jamaica*, p296.

<sup>191</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*. Trans. Betsy Wing. USA: University of Michigan Press, 2006 [1990], p34.

<sup>192</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, p34.

backdrop of *Métissage*. Cultural creolisation, as it concerns this thesis, is the emergence of a new culture that arises from the contact between different cultures. As such, the term ‘creolisation’ has itself gone through its own process, as scholars from disciplines such as history, anthropology and sociology have appropriated the term for their subject specialisms. So, although originally introduced by Brathwaite, it was Glissant who broadened the conceptual field covered by ‘creolisation’ so that it could be applied in or outside of the West Indies or the Americas, that is, in the diaspora.

Moreover, Stuart Hall, sociologist and cultural critic, in his essay on ‘Créolite and the process of Creolization’ locates the question of ‘creolization’ in the wider process of globalisation and concludes that ‘creolization is a historical and on-going process’ responsible for showcasing the Caribbean and Caribbean people as ‘modern’<sup>193</sup>. The anthropologist, Stephan Palmié writes of the diffusion of creolisation into discourses on ‘culture, local or global’<sup>194</sup> and argues that creolisation theory is ‘a mere reflex of the very conditions it seeks to denounce and supersede’ and may one day be an ‘object of, rather than a tool for anthropological inquiry’<sup>195</sup>.

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<sup>193</sup> Stuart Hall, ‘Créolite and the process of Creolization’ in Cohen, R and Paola Toninato (eds) *The Creolization Reader: Studies in Mixed Identities and Cultures*, Oxford: Routledge, 2010, pp27-41.

<sup>194</sup> Stephan Palmié, ‘Creolization and its Discontents’ in Robin Cohen and Paola Toninato, eds. *The Creolization Reader: Studies in Mixed Identities and Cultures*, Oxford: Routledge, 2010, p49.

<sup>195</sup> Stephan Palmié, ‘Creolization and its Discontents’ p59.

Charles Stewart in his edited collection *Creolisation* writes that ‘the concept of creolisation has a rich and varied history stretching back to the sixteenth century’.<sup>196</sup> He argues that whilst the term itself did not come into being until Brathwaite’s usage, the idea was already present the moment the term ‘Creole’ was coined. Scholars such as Stewart and Robin Cohen have stated that ‘Creole’ and ‘Creolisation’ (or alternatively Creolization with a ‘z’) are used in many different contexts and sometimes in inconsistent ways. Since the late twentieth century, ‘Creolisation’ has been used synonymously with terms such as ‘hybridity’, ‘syncretism’, and ‘transculturation’. In this thesis I will privilege Glissant’s definition of creolisation, as it supports my argument for not only reading literary texts as cultural artefacts but also when attempting to synthesise the linguistic culture of the Caribbean through/within the World Wide Web; Glissant becomes particularly relevant to Chapter Four, which identifies an ‘incredible explosion of cultures’ rendering the World Wide Web as a ‘creolised archive’.

### **Caribbean Voices: Twentieth Century Literary Creole Community**

Bibliographical material such as *Critics on West Indian Literature: A Selected Bibliography* (1979), *West Indian Literature: An Index to Criticism* (1981) and *Fifty Caribbean Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook* (1986) confirms that Caribbean literature is still in its infancy. In the words of Derek Walcott:

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<sup>196</sup> Charles Stewart, *Creolization*, California: Left Coast Press, 2007, p1.

Caribbean culture is – since it was permitted to be articulate – is just about two hundred years old. And that is ‘babyhood’ compared to any other culture.<sup>197</sup>

What this infancy means in terms of the technologised word and the transformed oral word is of interest to the argument that I develop.

A recent bibliography on Caribbean Literature by Marian Goslinga (1998) entitled *Caribbean Literature: A Bibliography* claims to make ‘a worthwhile contribution to facilitating the search for relevant material on the major traditions’<sup>198</sup>. The traditions to which this bibliography refers are related to the four major European language components of the Caribbean: English, French, Spanish and Dutch. Containing 3500 unannotated entries and divided into five parts, including a general section, each geographical area is sub-divided as follows: bibliography and bio-bibliography; dictionaries; anthologies; history and criticism; and individual authors.

Five years prior to this, in 1993 Kathleen M Balutansky et al published ‘Studies in Caribbean and South American Literature: An Annotated Bibliography, 1991-1992’ in *Callaloo*.<sup>199</sup> This bibliography is also divided into four sections: Anglophone Caribbean Literature, Francophone Caribbean Literature, Afro-Hispanic Literature and Lusophone Literature. Each section then contains entries under bibliographies, interviews, studies of poetry, fiction, drama and

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<sup>197</sup> Luigi Sampietro, ‘Derek Walcott on *Omeros*: An Interview in *Caribana*, 3, 1992-3, pp31-44.

<sup>198</sup> Marian Goslinga, *Caribbean Literature: A Bibliography* (1998), Lanham. Scarecrow Area Bibliographies. Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 1998.

<sup>199</sup> See *Callaloo*, Vol 16, No 4, On “Post-Colonial Discourse”: A Special Issue (Autumn 1993), pp 931-1033.

individual authors. Each of the 1312 entries is annotated enabling researchers to initially identify appropriate texts at a glance.

Within this bibliography there are only six references to ‘oral tradition’. The first relates to a poem by John Figueroa about Derek Walcott in which he responds to the American critic, Helen Vendler who criticised Walcott’s pentameters. Figueroa responds to Vendler with the following poem:

Roddy brodder, teacher Alix son,  
Bwoy, you no hear wa de lady say?  
Watch di pentameter ting, man.  
Dat is white people play!  
Wha de hell you read Homer.  
A so him name? - fa!  
Yu his from the horal tradition  
And must deal wid calypso and reggae na!

In support of Walcott’s use of Homer and Horace, Figueroa reminds Vendler that Walcott ‘his from the horal tradition’.<sup>200</sup> The second instance references an interview with Merle Collins<sup>201</sup> where Collins describes the importance of the oral tradition which has been passed down from her mother and grandmother, thus illustrating Wilentz’s ‘generational continuity’ theory, which is central to my thesis. The fifth instance also relates to my thesis in that it makes reference to Patrick Chamoiseau’s *Solibo Magnifique* (1991), in which the main protagonist dies during his storytelling performance. This is in effect death by the creole word.

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<sup>200</sup> John Figueroa, *The Chase*. London: Peepal Tree Press, 1992.

<sup>201</sup> Betty Wilson, ‘Interview with Merle Collins.’ *Callaloo* 16.1, 1993, pp94-107.

What both bibliographies definitely lack is adequate material on Caribbean oral literature. One reason for this may be Caribbean Literature's 'babyhood'<sup>202</sup> and as critical theory develops on the subject, so will research and documentation. It is hoped that this thesis will go some way towards contributing to the debate specifically in relation to the archiving of Caribbean Creole languages.

Bruce King's *West Indian Literature* (1995) charts the background to Caribbean literature starting with the discovery of the region by Columbus at the end of the fifteenth century. The chapter entitled 'The Beginnings to 1929' provides a review of the early literature of the region. Prior to the written literary tradition, the region, as part of its creolisation process, gave birth to the folk tradition brought by the African slaves. Some of these traditions have survived and have been incorporated into current day practices<sup>203</sup>. Anthony Boxhill highlights the impact that the folklorists who collected proverbs, songs and other aspects of Caribbean culture had in revitalising West Indian consciousness.<sup>204</sup> Not much discussion or analysis is undertaken of the collections mentioned<sup>205</sup> but I provide a comparative analysis in chapter three which briefly explores the Caribbean folk tale.

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<sup>202</sup> Luigi Sampietro, 'Derek Walcott on *Omeros*: An Interview in *Caribana*, 3, 1992-3, pp31-44.

<sup>203</sup> For example, Pocomania (Jamaica) and Shango (Trinidad). Also Steel Bands.

<sup>204</sup> Anthony Boxhill, 'The beginnings to 1929' in Bruce King (ed) *West Indian Literature*, London: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1995, p31.

<sup>205</sup> For example Martha Beckwith, *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (1924) and *Jamaica Proverbs* (1925).

Serafin Roldan-Santiago writes of a ‘literature-folklore continuum’ and argues that ‘its overlap and interaction has produced a most rich literature in the Caribbean’.<sup>206</sup> In other words, what Roldan-Santiago discusses is the way in which folklore elements function as reinforcement and refinement of thematic aspects and ideas and also the way in which these elements, for example, folk-speech serve as a structural form that transforms the written text into an ‘oral folk manifestation’.<sup>207</sup> An example of this structural form can be found in Selvon’s short story, ‘Down the Main’ from his short story collection *Ways of Sunlight* (1957). Creole is used not only in Selvon’s dialogue but in the narration as well. The first paragraph of the story reads:

WHEN THE WAR did over in Trinidad in nineteen-forty-five, it had a lot of fellars who leave the forces with plenty money that they get demobilised with. Frederick for one never see so much money a one time and he start to get on ignorant and spending free-sheet. By the time he begin to take stock he see that he only have a few dollars remaining from the three hundred that the government people demobilise him with.<sup>208</sup>

Typical Creole features are evidenced through Selvon’s use of ‘fellars’ (Creole English) instead of ‘fellows’ (Standard English) and similarly the absence of tense marker in ‘Frederick for one never see so much money’ instead of ‘has never seen’.

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<sup>206</sup> Serafin Roldan-Santiago, ‘Thematic and Structural Functions of Folklore in Caribbean Literature: The Case of the “Written” and the “Oral”’, *The Journal of Caribbean Literature*, Conway: Fall 2005, Vol 4, Iss 1, pp1-9.

<sup>207</sup> Serafin Roldan-Santiago, ‘Thematic and Structural Functions of Folklore in Caribbean Literature: The Case of the “Written” and the “Oral”’, p1.

<sup>208</sup> Sam Selvon, ‘Down the Main’ in *Ways of Sunlight*, New York: Longman Publishers, 1985, p28.

The written Caribbean literary tradition emerged in the early twentieth century.<sup>209</sup> The public education system introduced in the 1850s to develop some literacy amongst the freed slaves saw the blossoming of this literacy in the production of newspapers, journals and booklets. This, in turn, brought about the establishment of four literary magazines, '*Bim*', '*Kyk-over-al*', '*Focus*' and '*The Beacon*' in the late 1930s/early 1940s. *Bim* was first published bi-annually in Barbados under the editorship of Frank Collymore and appeared in 1942. *Focus* was published in Jamaica in 1943 and *Kyk-over-al* in Guyana in 1945. These magazines encouraged local writing through publication and reviews.<sup>210</sup> The circulation of these magazines between, as well as, within islands generated what Rhonda Cobham describes as 'an exchange of creative work and cultural information across the region that facilitated cross-fertilisation of ideas and interests'.<sup>211</sup> Olive Senior concerned with a productive interplay between the oral and the written argues that 'to claim the influence of the oral and assert its continued potency is not to devalue literary endeavour, but to enhance it'.<sup>212</sup>

Creole written literature may exhibit signs of the oral tradition such as a distinctive oral style of storytelling, long dialogues reflecting oral techniques, proverbial wisdom and so on<sup>213</sup>. However, colonial

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<sup>209</sup> See Kenneth Rmachand, *West Indian Novel and its Background* (1983).

<sup>210</sup> See Reinhard W. Sander, 'The thirties and forties'. In King, Bruce, ed. *West Indian Literature*, London: Macmillan Education, 1995, pp38-50.

<sup>211</sup> Rhonda Cobham, 'The Background', in *West Indian Literature*, ed. by Bruce King, p18.

<sup>212</sup> Olive Senior, 'The Story as Su-Su, the Writer as Gossip', in Lee, Maurice Angus (ed) *Writers on Writing: The Art of the Short Story*, USA: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005, pp41-50.

<sup>213</sup>For further aspects of oral tradition see Kamau Brathwaite (1974; 1984) and Morgan Dalphinis (1985).

education ensured the target language in which the literary product was written (namely European languages, English, French, Spanish, and Dutch). Initially this meant that very few literary products were written in the Creole languages or included creolisms. Reactions to this then led to the birth of various literary movements<sup>214</sup> such as creolité linked to ideas of nationalism and nation language. As Brathwaite has argued, the written literary traditions of the Creole societies can be classified into four main strands: influence from European literature with regards to style and content; re-evaluation of the African cultural heritage; orientation towards Creole society and culture; African influenced writing.<sup>215</sup>

In the early twentieth century, writers such as Claude McKay (1933), Roger Mais (1954), Edgar Mittelholzer (1952) and Louise Bennett (1942) also included folk material in their work. Caribbean Literary critics such as George Lamming, Gordon Rohlehr, Robert Le Page and Edward Kamau Brathwaite have documented the use of folklore materials.<sup>216</sup> Lamming writes that:

the West Indian novelist did not look out across the sea to another source. He looked in and down at what had been traditionally ignored. For the first time the West Indian peasant became other than a cheap source of labour. He became, through the novelist's eye, a living existence,

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<sup>214</sup> For example John La Rose, Kamau Brathwaite, Andrew Salkey and George Lamming belonged to the Caribbean Artists Movement (CAM) in the late sixties.

<sup>215</sup> Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *The African Presence in Caribbean Literature*, *Daedalus*, Vol. 103, No. 2, Slavery, Colonialism, and Racism (Spring, 1974), pp73-109.

<sup>216</sup> See Edward Baugh (ed) *Critics on Caribbean Literature: Readings in Literary Criticism*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978.

living in silence, and joy and fear, involved in riot and carnival.<sup>217</sup>

Likewise, Brathwaite, in his early essays probed the relationship between the West Indian writer and the folk.

Much that has been explored/reveiwed thus far has specifically dealt with Caribbean literature. Of Caribbean oral literature, Carole Boyce Davies in *Out of the Kumbla* (1994) states that ‘Caribbean oral literatures is still virtually untapped as a cultural/critical source’.<sup>218</sup> Between 1918 and 1930, work was undertaken by Elsie Clew Parsons<sup>219</sup>, Martha Warren Beckwith<sup>220</sup> and Zora Neale Hurston,<sup>221</sup> followed by Daniel Crowley,<sup>222</sup> Roger Abrahams and Jacob Delworth Elder during the 1950s-1970s. More recent work has been undertaken by Olive Lewin, an anthropologist and musicologist who has produced research on Jamaican folk songs, *Rock It Come Over: the Folk Music of Jamaica* (2000)<sup>223</sup> and Laura Tanna, author of *Jamaican Folk Tales and Oral Histories* (2000)<sup>224</sup>. In 2002 Daryl Cumber Dance published an anthology titled *From My People: 400 Years of African American*

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<sup>217</sup> George Lamming, ‘The Peasant Roots of the West Indian Novel’ in Baugh, Edward (ed) *Critics on Caribbean Literature: Readings in Literary Criticism*, USA: St Martin’s Press, 1978, pp24-25.

<sup>218</sup> Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido, *Out of the Kumbla*, New Jersey: AWP, 1990, p165.

<sup>219</sup> Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folklore of the Antilles: French and English Part 1*. New York: American Folklore Society, 1933.

<sup>220</sup> Beckwith, Martha Warren, *Black Roadways: A Study of Jamaican Folk Life*, Imprint Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1929.

<sup>221</sup> Hurston, Zora Neale. *I Love Myself When I Am Laughing: And Then Again When I Am Looking Mean and Impressive*. New York: Feminist Press, 1979 and *Folklore, Memoirs and Other Writings*. New York: Library of America, 1995.

<sup>222</sup> Crowley, Daniel J, *I Could Talk Old-Story Good: Creativity in Bahamian Folklore*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.

<sup>223</sup> Olive Lewin started producing work on Jamaican folk songs in the early 70s.

<sup>224</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Originally printed in 1984 and again in 1993.

*Folklore* which tells the history of a people who were denied literacy skills during slavery.<sup>225</sup>

The most recent publication on Caribbean folklore by Donald Hill<sup>226</sup> provides an overview of folklore in the Caribbean region, defining types of folklore and citing examples and texts. *Caribbean Folklore: A Handbook* (2007) has been described as a student guide book which ‘holds the potential to be most useful in a classroom environment where concepts and topics can be fleshed out and contextualized through guided discussion and research’.<sup>227</sup> Hill attempts to bring together disparate studies and sources and ‘present a structure, not a ‘theory,’ of how all this information may be comprehended’<sup>228</sup> while indicating the ways in which students can discover further information. The book is geared toward the undergraduate student and general reader in both content and style. What makes this text interesting for my thesis is Hill’s promotion of the use of Internet-based research and resources.

Benedict Anderson’s text, *Imagined Communities* (1991) in an attempt to break away from the idea ‘that everything important in the modern world originated from Europe’<sup>229</sup>, looks at the development of nationalism in the Americas. For Anderson, nation is defined as:

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<sup>225</sup> This collection tells the history of a people banned from reading and writing during slavery. Orality has enabled the survival of African traditions and wisdom. All genres of folklore are captured within this text: proverbs, folk songs, recipes and so on.

<sup>226</sup> Donald Hill, *Caribbean Folklore: A Handbook*, USA: Greenwood Press, 2007.

<sup>227</sup> Burbach, E Book Review, *Journal of Folklore Research*, February 2010, <http://www.indiana.edu/~jofr/review.php?id=778> (accessed 8 June 2010).

<sup>228</sup> Donald Hill, *Caribbean Folklore*, p5.

<sup>229</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso, 1991, pxiii.

an imagined political community [...] it is imagined because the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives an image of their community.<sup>230</sup>

Anderson's notion of community is challenged by Yael Tamir in 'The Enigma of Nationalism' (1995)<sup>231</sup> While Anderson states that communities are to be distinguished 'not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined'<sup>232</sup>, Tamir takes issue with Anderson's use of the term 'imagined' arguing that 'all human associations, even if no larger than families or primordial villages, could be [...] considered imagined communities.'<sup>233</sup> He goes on further to state that if the prerequisite for a community to be considered imagined and perceived as a whole is to refer to its image 'then all social groups even the smallest, are imagined communities'.<sup>234</sup> Whereas Tamir finds the term 'imagined community' uninformative, it is this very term that, when adapted to include Creole, in becoming *imagined Creole community*,<sup>235</sup> serves my focus of creating links between aspects of Caribbean culture and audience/participants of literature and the World Wide Web.

In considering each space, the textual space and the virtual space as an archive significant to Caribbean literary concern with memory, I will argue for a reading of the virtual space as textual space since the

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<sup>230</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p6.

<sup>231</sup> Yael Tamir, 'The Enigma of Nationalism', *World Politics*, 47 (April 1995) pp418-40.

<sup>232</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p6.

<sup>233</sup> Yael Tamir, 'The Enigma of Nationalism', p421.

<sup>234</sup> Yael Tamir, 'The Enigma of Nationalism', p421.

<sup>235</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. While the idea of an imagined community is contested, its definition holds currency for my thesis.

emergence of electronic literature or e-lit in the late twentieth century. Electronic literature ‘works with important literary aspects that take advantage of the capabilities and contexts provided by the stand-alone or networked computer’.<sup>236</sup> Importantly, I wish to argue that e-lit could go some way towards facilitating an answer to the question of how a community which is denied access to such public places of power archives their nuanced and complex experiences.

### **Space, Place, *Dis-sp[l]ace***<sup>237</sup>

In order to create links that allow a considering of the textual and virtual as archive with their inherent qualities requires a re-thinking of space and place. A critical concern of this thesis is with my university’s research centre – which links archiving and Creole texts. This is the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies (CCDS)<sup>238</sup> which I examine here in relation to space and place. Space and place are usually about the ‘where’ of things. Although seeming relatively simple these two words hold extremely complex concepts. The Oxford English dictionary definitions best relates to the space and place to which I refer:

Space: A particular place or location;<sup>239</sup>

Place: A small residential square or a side street (esp. a cul-de-sac) lined with houses; a short row of houses which

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<sup>236</sup> <http://eliterature.org/> (accessed January 2014).

<sup>237</sup> Nourbese Philip uses ‘Dis Place’ to signify the space between the African woman’s legs. See *Dis Place – The Space Between*, in *A Genealogy of Resistance and other essays*, Toronto: Mercury Press, 1997, pp. I use *Dis-sp[l]ace* in relation to the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies to signify the merging of ‘this space’ and ‘this place’ so that it becomes *Dis-sp[l]ace* (This sp[l]ace) if applying Yi Tuan’s theory on space and place.

<sup>238</sup> Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies, hereafter referred to as CCDS.

<sup>239</sup> "space, n.1." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, September 2015. Web. 22 November 2015.

originally stood by themselves or on a suburban road; any group of houses not properly classifiable as a street.<sup>240</sup>

Yet, it is not possible to formulate the concept of space and place without reference to the theoretical discussions that have occurred over the years in relation to these two terms. Drawing on the frameworks of literary studies and social geography, my aim is to provide a fuller account of the relation of CCDS to place. Place is a space that develops and is developed by the subjectivity and memory of its inhabitants. The difference between a space and a place seems critical.

Doreen Massey's theoretical analysis of space proposes three characteristics for an adequate conceptualisation of space. Space must be recognised, firstly, 'as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny'; secondly, 'as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist; as the sphere therefore of coexisting heterogeneity'; and thirdly, 'as always in the process of being made. It is never finished; never closed'.<sup>241</sup> In other words, for Massey, space is a social production; a sphere of possibility of multiplicity; space is always under construction.<sup>242</sup>

Current perspectives on theorising place have been most rigorously developed in the fields of geography and philosophy.<sup>243</sup> Geographers, John Agnew and Tim Cresswell have elaborated on these ideas creating

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<sup>240</sup> "place, n.1." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, September 2015. Web. 22 November 2015.

<sup>241</sup> Doreen Massey, *For Space*, London: Sage, 2005, p9.

<sup>242</sup> Doreen Massey, *For Space*, 2005, p9.

<sup>243</sup> Geographers Yi-Fu Tuan (1974, 1977) and Edward Relph (1976) and the philosophers Edward Casey (1993, 1996) and J.E. Malpas (1999).

a rich body of place-centred work across multiple disciplines.<sup>244</sup> As stated, above, theorising place has not revealed a consensus of agreement and there are notable differences between theorists. Cresswell's work provides a succinct summary and introduction to this discourse.<sup>245</sup> At its simplest, Cresswell defines place as 'a meaningful location'.<sup>246</sup> At the same time, borrowing from Agnew, Cresswell identifies three key elements of place: location, locale and a sense of place. Agnew's definitions are of relevance:

Location: a node that links the place to both wider networks and the territorial ambit it is embedded in.

Locale: a setting in which everyday life is most concentrated for a group of people.

Sense of place: symbolic identification with a place as distinctive and constitutive of a personal identity and a set of personal interests.<sup>247</sup>

Expanding further on these definitions, Cresswell states that 'Places are not always stationary', illustrated by the example of a ship, which 'may become a special kind of place for people who share it on a long voyage, even though its location is constantly changing'.<sup>248</sup> This definition is crucial to my discussion of CCDS especially since for locale, Cresswell moves slightly beyond Agnew's initial definition to emphasise that this 'means the material setting for social relations'.<sup>249</sup> 'Places, then, are material things', made up of concrete objects and a tangible materiality

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<sup>244</sup> See for example, Agnew 2002, 2005; Auburn and Barnes 2006; Cresswell 1996; Devine-Wright and Lyons 1997; Feld and Basso 1996; Hornstein 2011; Massey 1994; Saar and Palang 2009; Sack 1992, 1997; Seamon 1979.

<sup>245</sup> See Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004, pp15-51.

<sup>246</sup> Tim Cresswell, *Place*, p7.

<sup>247</sup> John Agnew, 1987, p16.

<sup>248</sup> Tim Cresswell, *Place*, pp7-8.

<sup>249</sup> Tim Cresswell, p7.

of surfaces, structures, geology, vegetation and other possible forms of biological life, and so on. Using the example of the Harry Potter novels' Hogwarts School, Cresswell notes that 'even imaginary places [...] have an imaginary materiality of rooms, staircases and tunnels that make the novel work'.<sup>250</sup> For Agnew's sense of place, Cresswell re-states this as 'the subjective and emotional attachment people have to place' - this gives place a 'relationship to humans and the human capacity to produce and consume meaning'.<sup>251</sup> How this becomes significant in an examination of CCDS relates to both access and validation within the university of Creole texts as books and archival material.

Since the mid-1970s much of the work on place has centred on moving place from a relatively universal concept of fixed location toward a conception that emphasised the roles of human experience and the attributing of meaning to such locations. In *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977), Yi Tuan raises two interesting questions: 'What is a place? What gives a place its identity, its aura?'<sup>252</sup> Tuan argues for a new type of geographical approach to place, one that moves beyond the purely spatial methodologies of mapping and measuring of space and place to include consideration of the psychological and sensory experience of human engagement with place.

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<sup>250</sup> Tim Cresswell, pp7-8.

<sup>251</sup> Tim Cresswell, pp7-8.

<sup>252</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977, p4.

Tuan distinguishes between ‘space’ and ‘place’ stating that space is abstract and unknown - ‘lacking significance other than strangeness’<sup>253</sup> - while place is concrete and meaningful. It is the phenomenon of experience that allows space to become place: ‘what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value’.<sup>254</sup> Moreover, Tuan notes that ‘space is transformed into place as it acquires definition and meaning’.<sup>255</sup> Tuan further notes that space and place are integral to one another, each requiring the other for definition.<sup>256</sup> While space can be seen as a geometrically-bound area that has volume and room for occupancy, places are more localised and—by definition—already inhabited. For Tuan, space can be moved through, while a place is the particular location at which movement is paused.<sup>257</sup> It is in these pauses that real experience occurs, and place is called into being.<sup>258</sup> If Tuan’s hypothesis holds then I suggest that the relocation of the university research centre CCDS, explored particularly in Chapter Four becomes *Dis-p[l]ace* (This sp[l]ace) doubling as a space that can be moved through alongside its particular location, as well as a rich critical archival space enabling crucial access at several levels of significance to Creole learners in the diaspora.

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<sup>253</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place*, p199.

<sup>254</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place*, p6.

<sup>255</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place*, p136.

<sup>256</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place*, p6.

<sup>257</sup> Yi-FuTuan, *Space and Place*, p6.

<sup>258</sup> This draws on ideas of phenomenology, a philosophical concept that many place theorists (for example, Casey 1993, 1996; Malpas 1999; Relph 1976; Sack 1997; Seamon 1979; Tuan 1977) draw from the writings of Martin Heidegger (1962) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1996).

This thesis aims to focus on the archiving, specifically of Jamaican Creole, Grenadian English Creole and Grenadian French Creole, through its literature. I examine the double archive, textual and digital. Additionally, I attempt to explore the ways in which the digital can be used to archive Caribbean Literature and Creole languages and in turn become an interactive tool for those wishing to learn a Creole language enabling links to the past, present and future.

### **Parameters**

Chapter One focuses on the ‘double’ archive – textual and digital - as creolised and seeks meanings of the archive particularly through application of Burton’s notion that not only can a text be a ‘source of evidence’ but it can also be ‘an enduring site of historical evidence and historiographical opportunity in and for the present’.<sup>259</sup> In this regard, I examine how Anim-Addo’s *Imoinda* deployed Aphra Behn’s novella *Oroonoko* (1688) as a ‘source of evidence’ in order to create a new and contemporary creolised archive through her neo-slavery libretto *Imoinda: Or She Who Will Lose Her Name* (2008; 2003)<sup>260</sup>. I specifically ask: what meanings might be gained from the literary representation of the black female body within this text when compared to the representation within Behn’s *Oroonoko*? How do these particular texts translate and represent black female subjectivity to contribute to an understanding of the creolised archive? How does

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<sup>259</sup> Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, p5.

<sup>260</sup> Bi-lingual Edition - *Imoinda: Or She Who Will Lose Her Name – A Play for Twelve Voices in Three Acts/Imoinda, colei Che Perder Il Nome – Opera dodici voci in tre atti*, translated by Giovanna Covi & Chiara Pedrotti, 2003. I will however refer to the edition published in 2008 and will refer to the text using the shortened title of *Imoinda*.

slavery relate to the Caribbean archive in this contemporary neo-slavery narrative? What meanings does the text reveal especially in relation to the paradigm of the neo-slave narrative as defined by Ashraf Rushdy (1999) and Arlene Keizer (2004) as contemporary novels that assume the form, adopt the conventions and take on the first-person voice of the antebellum slave narrative?

From the macro narrative of slavery and its voices in the previous chapter the focus in this chapter relates to the voices of the present. Chapter Two offers a re-reading of selected Caribbean short stories from two single authored collections by the Jamaican author, Olive Senior, in order to question the nature and construction of the voices archived within the texts and the identity of the characters that speak. This chapter highlights two stories from *Summer Lightning* and three stories from *Discerner of Hearts*; namely 'Summer Lightning', 'Ballad', 'You Think I Mad Miss', 'The Case Against the Queen' and 'Discerner of Hearts'. I examine specifically Senior's use of the child voice affording an ironical viewpoint and the performativity of madness through the Creole word. I question how the Creole short fiction performs, the basis of the apparent security that Senior exemplifies in her use of Creole as literary orality and how effective is the representation of the Creole word in Senior's narratives as well as the meanings to be drawn from the polyphonic voices used and their performativity.

Chapter Three develops the examination of Collins' use of oral folklore and linguistic tracing as literary strategies for performing alternative

versions of history. In this instance the alternative version is of the Grenadian revolution. I argue that diction, characterisation and theme are foregrounded and this 'performance of history' through the literary text enables an alternative version to be memorialised and archived offering an important version of a truth through the vernacular of the Grenadian community. Riffing is as integral to the literary text as it is to performance and Collins deploys riffing as a literary technique within the novel through her use of Creole proverbs. I consider 'riffing' in this context as contributing to a Creole literary tradition. Since central to this chapter is a narrative that approaches the scale of the national, I further argue that the questions whose story is re-told, who is telling and who is re-membling demands a multiplicity, even as it draws on multiplicity of voices. Through a close reading of *Angel* I suggest that Merle Collins has been able to refigure/reframe the archive and supplement the traditional archive with a literary text that not only provides an alternative version of national history but at the same time is able to archive an earlier orthography of Grenadian French Creole.

In the final chapter, titled 'Creole Archiving, Diaspora and the Academy: Space, Place and Cyberspace' I seek to ground the argument of the Creole archive through examination of the local and the digital. I argue for the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies (CCDS) as not the traditional archive but as a vibrant, colourful, living archive. How might this particular archive be read? What meanings can be gained from the accessibility granted by this open place of learning which doubles as an archive? I consider, since control of the archive might be

equated to political power, how one accounts for the struggles that the CCDS has faced and how this space might allow full participation and access to its archive. I acknowledge that the history of the CCDS indicates an important process of archiving specifically in relation to the Creole text. What is the nature of the process? I argue that the creation of the Centre and its untenable links with local, national and international communities has enabled the Centre to go through a process of cultural creolisation. By cultural creolisation, which underscores the contacts and exchanges between different cultures, the space might be considered creolised and in turn, as archive this space becomes a 'creolised archive'. I trace the theory of the archive in order to lend some insight into the 'creolised archive'. I further investigate how a different space, the World Wide Web, that of cyberspace might act as a literary and linguistic interface for second generation Caribbean descendants who wish to learn about their heritage, specifically Creole languages and oral literature from the region. How is the text memorialised at the level of the student experience (learn.gold)? How does the World Wide Web evidence this? How does CCDS effectively memorialise these?

## **Chapter One**

### ***Imoinda or She-Who:* Creolising the Double Archive**

## Chapter One

### ***Imoinda or She-Who: Creolising the Double Archive***

Yet, I hope, the reputation of my pen is considerable enough to make his glorious name to survive all ages, with that of the brave, the beautiful and the constant Imoinda.<sup>261</sup>

Memory [...] is the activity that fuels the imagining of the past and the remembrance of the future.<sup>262</sup>

This chapter focuses on the ‘double’ archive as creolised and seeks meanings of the archive particularly through application of Burton’s notion that not only can a text be a ‘source of evidence’ but it can also be ‘an enduring site of historical evidence and historiographical opportunity in and for the present’.<sup>263</sup> In this regard, I examine how Joan Anim-Addo’s *Imoinda* deployed Aphra Behn’s novella *Oroonoko* (1688) as a ‘source of evidence’ in order to create a new and contemporary creolised archive through her neo-slavery libretto *Imoinda: Or She Who Will Lose Her Name* (2008; 2003)<sup>264</sup>. I specifically ask: what meanings might be gained from the literary representation of the black female body within this text when compared to the representation within Behn’s *Oroonoko*? How do these particular texts translate and represent black female subjectivity to contribute to an understanding of the creolised archive? How does slavery relate to the Caribbean archive in this contemporary neo-slavery

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<sup>261</sup> Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, London: Penguin Books, 2003, p77.

<sup>262</sup> Marlene Nourbese Philip, ‘In the Matter of Memory’. In Joan Anim-Addo (Ed.), *Centre of Remembrance: Memory and Caribbean Women’s Literature*, London: Mango Publishing, 2002, p4.

<sup>263</sup> Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, p5.

<sup>264</sup> Bi-lingual Edition - *Imoinda: Or She Who Will Lose Her Name – A Play for Twelve Voices in Three Acts/Imoinda, colei Che Perder Il Nome – Opera dodici voci in tre atti*, translated by Giovanna Covi & Chiara Pedrotti, 2003. I will however refer to the edition published in 2008. All further references will use the shortened title of *Imoinda*.

narrative? What meanings does the text reveal especially in relation to the paradigm of the neo-slave narrative as defined by Ashraf Rushdy (1999) and Arlene Keizer (2004)? Rushdy consciously argues that Neo-slave narratives ‘talk back’ to much, much more than just slave narratives and describes neo-slave narratives as:

contemporary novels that assume the form, adopt the conventions, and take on the first-person voice of the antebellum slave narrative.<sup>265</sup>

Rushdy also argues that the format of the neo-slave narrative is important to the author. That is to say, in the case of *Imoinda*, Anim-Addo has through the medium of the libretto found a way to give voice to the historically muted subject of slavery which while certainly important to the author is also of historical importance to the Caribbean region and a wider diaspora.<sup>266</sup>

For Charles Johnson, the slave narrative ‘whistles and hums’<sup>267</sup> with history. Such whistling and humming is brought to the forefront in Anim-Addo’s libretto. According to Keizer<sup>268</sup>, Caribbean writers are using slave characters and slavery to theorise about identity formation and to reconsider such established theories of subjectivity as psychoanalysis, Althusserian interpellation and performance theory. It

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<sup>265</sup> Ashraf Rushdy, *Neo-Slave Narrative: Studies in the Social Logic of a Literary Form*, USA: Oxford University Press, 1999, p3. Bernard Bell is credited with the initial definition of the neo-slave narrative as, ‘residually oral, modern narratives of escape from bondage to freedom’ (289). See Bernard Bell, *The African American Novel and its tradition*, USA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987, p289.

<sup>266</sup> Ashraf Rushdy, ‘The Neo-Slave Narrative’. In Maryemma Graham (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the African American Novel*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp87-97.

<sup>267</sup> Charles Johnson, *Oxherding Tale: A Novel*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985, p112.

<sup>268</sup> Arlene Keizer, *Black Subjects: Identity Formation in the Contemporary Narratives of Slavery*, USA: Cornell University Press, 2004.

is a reconsideration of performance theory that is relevant to this chapter which begins my overall argument.

In considering the performance aspect of *Imoinda*, I examine the changing nature of such a performance and the challenges/questions that emerge around authorship and how a black woman is able to traverse these challenges. Anim-Addo insists:

If there are moments when the human spirit should be celebrated, then surviving Atlantic slavery is certainly one of them. Since modernities have now taken descendants of the enslaved to Europe and the West in greater numbers, why not celebrate that survival through opera?<sup>269</sup>

That opera, as a national European tradition and art form, is appropriated as a means of restaging Caribbean history underscores the problematic that such an ‘extravagant of art-forms’<sup>270</sup> entails.

This chapter is specifically concerned with Anim-Addo’s libretto as a creolised archive and its meanings. The first section explores Anim-Addo’s use of chorality within the libretto. Chorality, in this instance, ‘refers to the way in which individuals, characters, situations and landscapes occupying a precise place’ within the economy of the text ‘are all gathered together by the author into an atmospheric unity representative of the historical moment being portrayed’.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Joan Anim-Addo, ‘Travelling with Imoinda: Art, Authorship, and Critique’, *Callaloo*, Vol 38 No 3, Summer 2015, p573.

<sup>270</sup> Rachel Cowgill, David Cooper and Clive Brown (eds), *Art and Ideology in European Opera: Essays in Honour of Julian Rushton*, Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010, p4.

<sup>271</sup> Glenn Pierce, *Manzoni and the Aesthetics of the Lombard Seicento: Art assimilated into the narrative of I Promesi Sposi*, London: Associated University Press, 1998, p52.

Section two defines the notion of double archive and seeks to illustrate the way in which Anim-Addo has used the ‘reputation of [*her*] pen’ to reconfigure a position which until recently has been firmly located and constructed through the lens of Restoration Literature. In order to tell Imoinda’s story and in so doing, Anim-Addo creates the paradigm of the creolised black female body as living archive.

In sections three and four I seek to explore the textual relationships that were formed and developed within this twenty-first century neo-slavery libretto that relies on a reclaiming of historical memory, myth and fiction. How the black female body is represented in the earlier revisions of Behn’s text is the focus of section five in which the alter(native) versions of Imoinda are examined. Finally, I explore the theatrical performance of *Imoinda* and the multiple ways in which the staging and associated activities contribute towards a creolised archive of concern to this thesis.

### **Transcultural Choralities: On board the ‘Nightmare Canoe’**

Borrowing Barbara Kowalzig’s term ‘transcultural chorality’ where she argues that ‘transcultural chorality does not work flatly in order to differentiate [...] but rather to establish connections between cultures’,<sup>272</sup> I hope to show that Anim-Addo has been able to articulate the link between cultures. Importantly, as Giovanna Covi has argued, Anim-Addo ‘revises the very reality that inspired Behn’s fiction and [...]

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<sup>272</sup> Barbara Kowalzig, *Transcultural Chorality*. In Renaud Gagné and Marianne Govers Hopman, (eds) *Choral Mediations in Greek Tragedy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp178-210.

takes on a different literary shape'.<sup>273</sup> Retrieving the black woman from the 'shadows of history' Anim-Addo is able to present Imoinda and indeed, all of the women within her text as subjects in history, subjects with agency and political power.

The 'historical moment being portrayed' is the Middle Passage. In Anim-Addo's libretto the reader is placed on board the 'Nightmare Canoe' <sup>274</sup> and witnesses the deconstruction and simultaneous reconstruction of a community that was and is yet to come. Anim-Addo narrates that tortuous journey from Old Guinea to the slave plantations in the 'New' Land. Act Two represents the Middle Passage and opens with the stage directions and it is here that no spoken words are necessary in setting the scene, the stage direction reads:

On board a slaveship. [...] Bales stacked ship shape. Dim lights. Wooden structure. Lanterns swing with the rocking, creaking, groaning of the slaveship. Shackled bodies on the bales come partly into the glare of the lanterns and then recede. Whipcrack. IMOINDA stumbles and falls into an open space among the bales. SAILOR ties her to a post. (55)

'Dim lights, 'groaning', and 'shackled bodies' reinforce Karavanta's perspective that Anim-Addo has been able to 'narrate the reduction of the African subject to chattel by describing the methods of incarceration and instruments of torture aboard' <sup>275</sup>the slaveship. Yet it is from this witnessing of torture that the strong community of women will emerge.

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<sup>273</sup> Giovanna Covi, 'Oroonoko's Genderization and Creolization: Joan Anim-Adoo's *Imoinda*'. In Rubik M, Figueroa-Dorrego, J & Dhuciq, B (eds) *Revisiting and Reinterpreting Aphra Behn: Proceedings of the Aphra Behn Europe Seminar ESSE Conference*, Strasbourg 2002, Entrevaux, France: Bilingua GA Editions, 2003. p83.

<sup>274</sup> Act Two Scene 1, p55.

<sup>275</sup> Mina Karavanta, the injunctions of the spectre of slavery: affective memory and the counterwriting of community, *Feminist Review*, 2013, p104.

Anim-Addo's *Imoinda* speaks not only of her experiences within the context of colonisation and slavery but also for the countless black slave women who have endured similar trials and tribulations.

Anim-Addo's use of the female chorus can be seen as an example of cultural practices within the communities thereby acting as the foundation for *Imoinda*'s survival. Aboard the 'nightmare canoe', they sing:

Chorus:        I am number eighty three  
                    Best to forget. Raped again yesterday  
                    Mouth stuffed with rope.  
                    Tossed and dashed and tossed again.  
                    Some new terror strikes the nightmare  
                    canoe. (62)

As indicated above, Anim-Addo re-imagines the subjectivity of the enslaved and through the use of the chorus on board the 'nightmare canoe' demonstrates Kowalzig's 'transcultural chorality'. Furthermore, through the gift of voice to those who were silent, Anim-Addo is able to shed a new light on the past, present and future. Of the Chorus, Natasha Bonnelame writes, 'they are the sounds of the drums and the women wailing in Old Guinea, they are the collective and the keepers of the slave's histories'<sup>276</sup>. Bonnelame argues further that the Chorus becomes the slave songs of the plantation community safeguarding the ancestral history of Old Guinea which *Imoinda* is destined to pass down to future generations.<sup>277</sup> *Imoinda*'s story is analogous with the history

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<sup>276</sup> Natasha Bonnelame, 'From Restoration to Creolisation: Joan Anim-Addo's *Imoinda* as 21<sup>st</sup> Century Afro-Modernist Woman' in *Imoinda: Criticism and Response, New Mango Season*, Vol 3.3, 2010, p228.

<sup>277</sup> Natasha Bonnelame, 'From Restoration to Creolisation: Joan Anim-Addo's *Imoinda* as 21<sup>st</sup> Century Afro-Modernist Woman', p228.

of the enslaved African woman: pregnant through rape; yet she chooses life, signifying the future of the Caribbean nation. This in turn can be indicated as the black female body as creolised archive.

In order to safeguard the memories she carries, relationships on board the ‘nightmare canoe’ and indeed, the plantation would need to be formed quickly. Mintz writes:

From the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, Caribbean plantation labour became adept at forming relationships quickly, especially dyadic relationships. Because the basis for operating in terms of known status categories was under constant pressure from migration and external coercion, they had to learn to deal socially with others, often in the absence of culturally-specific preconceptions about the meanings of individual differences in age, gender or physical variety.<sup>278</sup>

These dyadic relationships exist between Imoinda and her maid Esteizme and between Imoinda and the collective that is the chorus. Anim-Addo’s use of ‘repetition and re-enforcement’<sup>279</sup> imprints the pathways for cultural survival on the reader’s brain. At the same time, her use of Opera as a medium for telling Imoinda’s story, bridges the:

oral and the written narrative creating a space which at once speaks of the individual, and the multiple voices of the African presence in the Americas.<sup>280</sup>

These strategies alert the reader to the fact that ‘memory sees more than the eye’.<sup>281</sup> Also a Caribbean author, Beryl Gilroy argues that women writers use memory to ‘grasp consciousness and challenge the

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<sup>278</sup> Sidney W. Mintz, ‘Enduring Substances, Trying Theories: the Caribbean Region as *Oikoumenê*’, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 2: 2, June 1996, pp295-6.

<sup>279</sup> Beryl Gilroy, *Centre of Remembrance*, p114.

<sup>280</sup> Natasha Bonnelame, *Imoinda*, p229.

<sup>281</sup> Beryl Gilroy, *Centre of Remembrance*, p114.

currency of existence'.<sup>282</sup> Anim-Addo's portrayal of Imoinda is in line with Gilroy's premise that 'we use our bodies as store houses of hurt and graveyards of pain, anguish or terror'.<sup>283</sup> Imoinda's body is subject to hurt, pain, anguish and terror – sold to the slave traders, trapped on board the 'nightmare canoe', raped by the overseer and finally giving birth to the child of her abuser. Imoinda's story, then, is one of multiple memories which 'reside and remain in the body'.<sup>284</sup>

### **Reputation of [*her*] pen: Refiguring a Double Archive**

To further understand Imoinda's story I return to Behn's text. My first epigraph is the closing paragraph of Behn's *Oroonoko* and speaks to Behn's desire for Oroonoko, the main protagonist of her text 'to survive all ages'. Apparently, an afterthought, as I read it, Behn adds 'with that of the brave, the beautiful and the constant Imoinda'. It is 'the brave, the beautiful and the constant Imoinda' who is the main focus of this chapter. Critics of Behn such as Rhoda Trooboff (2004) have made reference to the fact that such a noble figure as Oroonoko is buried within the literary page thereby disallowing a portrayal on the stage. Indeed, in Thomas Southerne's adaptation of *Oroonoko* (1696) to which he begrudgingly<sup>285</sup> credits Behn, he writes in his introduction:

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<sup>282</sup> Beryl Gilroy, *Centre of Remembrance*, p114-115.

<sup>283</sup> Beryl Gilroy, *Centre of Remembrance*, p115.

<sup>284</sup> Paulette Brown-Hinds, 'In the Blood: Performing Memory in Paule Marshall's *Praisesong for the Widow*' in Anim-Addo, J (ed), *Centre of Remembrance*, London: Mango Publishing, 2002, p99.

<sup>285</sup> Rhoda Trooboff reads this credit as lip service, citing it as a stingy acknowledgment of his debt which is then followed swiftly by a critique of Behn's choice of literary genre. In fact the eighteenth and nineteenth century playbills archived in the Covent Garden Theatre, New York Public Library and the Folger Library fail to mention Behn's original authorship. See Rhoda Trooboff, 'Reproducing *Oroonoko*: A Case Study in Plagiarism, Textual Parallelism, and Creative Borrowing'. In Susan Iwanisziw, ed. *Troping Oroonoko from Behn to Bandele*, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing. 2004, pp108-140.

I stand engag'd to Mrs *Behn* for the occasion of a most Passionate Distress in my last Play; and in a Conscience that I had not made her a sufficient Acknowledgement, I have run further into her Debt for *Oroonoko*, with a Design to oblige me to be honest; [...] I have often wonder'd that she would bury her Favourite Hero in a *Novel*, when she might have reviv'd him in the *Scene*. She thought either that no Actor could represent him; or she could not bear him represented: [...] she always told his Story more feeling, than she writ it.<sup>286</sup>

While Behn attempts to configure a literary and historical space for Oroonoko, the same ambition does not manifest itself in the subsequent stage productions of *Oroonoko* where the noble black savage becomes a peripheral figure. If, as Southerne suggests, Oroonoko is buried within the literary text, then what does this mean for Imoinda? Anim-Addo's *Imoinda* articulates the long and complex history of Atlantic slavery, colonisation and Empire which is a haunting yet crucial and integral part of European history. The critical reception of this libretto, as for other diaspora literatures by ethnic minority authors, remains marginal.<sup>287</sup> Often the English classic travel narrative, although set in

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<sup>286</sup> Thomas Southerne, *Oroonoko: A Tragedy*. In Derek Hughes, (ed) *Versions of Blackness: Key Texts on Slavery from the Seventeenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

<sup>287</sup> For a detailed paper on critical reception see Barbara Christian, 'Fixing Methodologies: Beloved', *Cultural Critique*, Vol 24, Spring 1993, pp5-15 in which Christian outlines the critical reception of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, which is of relevance here as it serves as the precursor to the opera *Margaret Garner*. Also previously in 1949 Langston Hughes' libretto for *Troubled Island* received mixed reviews ranging from praise to dismissal and closed after only three performances. It was the first performance by a major opera company of an opera by an African American composer and librettist. The composer, William Still, felt that the music had been misunderstood because of the conventional expectations of opera. See Leslie Sanders (ed), *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes: Gospel Plays, Operas and Later Dramatic Works*, USA: University of Missouri Press, 2004.

the same historic period, remains blind to African–Caribbean experiences of imperial conquest.<sup>288</sup>

Correspondingly, Behn’s and Southerne’s texts remain blind to African–Caribbean experiences and portray black characters who are in conflict with, and who are also destroyed by, white Europeans. Yet Behn’s *Imoinda* is desired by her white captors with a ‘hundred white men sighing after her and making a thousand vows at her feet’.<sup>289</sup> Indeed, Southerne’s *Imoinda* undergoes a cultural bleaching and is played by a white woman on the stage.<sup>290</sup> Whereas playwrights such as Southerne (1696), John Hawkesworth (1760) and Biyi Bandele (1999)<sup>291</sup> have adapted Behn’s *Oroonoko*, Anim-Addo has elected to re-write and refigure Behn’s *Imoinda* in her libretto, *Imoinda*.

Anim-Addo’s re-writing and refiguring charts the development of *Imoinda*, Esteizme and the chorus of women who form new relationships despite the dehumanising affects of enslavement. *Imoinda* is firstly, ‘mistress *Imoinda*’ (12) daughter of a Kromanti warrior, then becomes twice betrothed ‘give me your hand’ (28) and ‘here’s my hand. She is yours. I have promised her to no-one else.’ (40) Losing her name on board the slaveship she becomes ‘Number one, six,

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<sup>288</sup> As the English travel narratives fail to give an adequate ‘speaking voice’ to this native-subject, the teaching of these literatures echoes a similar blindness as Anim-Addo (2006; 2008) & Les Back (2008), have routinely argued both collectively and individually.

<sup>289</sup> Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, p16.

<sup>290</sup> See Thomas Southerne’s adaptation of *Oroonoko* where *Imoinda* is introduced to the plot as the daughter of a white man serving in the royal court.

<sup>291</sup> See Biyi Bandele, *Aphra Behn’s Oroonoko in a New Adaptation*, London: Amber Lane Press, 1999; John Hawkesworth, *Oroonoko. A Tragedy as it is Now Acted at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. By Thomas Southerne with Alterations*. Dublin: G Faulkner, p Wilson and M Williamson, 1760 and Thomas Southerne, *Oroonoko*.

nine' (63) and once on the plantation is renamed 'Clemene' (74) and finally becomes a mother giving birth to 'a girl! And hope for new life again.' (94). It is the black woman, the black female body that is able to transcend the inhuman circumstances inflicted upon her and create a 'community of perseverance', to use Karavanta's words, 'through suffering thus propelling their present of slavery into the future of the Diaspora' and political power.<sup>292</sup>

I agree with Karavanta that Anim-Addo, through her retrieval of 'the black woman from the position of mute witness' and her presentation of the black woman as a 'subject in history' has been able to rewrite the history of colonial modernity and animate the archive.<sup>293</sup> In *Archive Fever* (1996) Jacques Derrida underscores that 'nothing is less clear today than the word 'archive'.<sup>294</sup> This is due, in part, to the cross-disciplinary nature of the term 'archive' and the way in which it has expanded. In effect and for the purposes of this chapter, I wish to argue that through close examination of *Imoinda*, it can be seen how the archive may be said to have become animated and hence creolised. If this hypothesis holds, how the process of creolisation reconfigures the archive needs to be fully explored.

From Derrida's psychoanalytical reading of the concept of the archive to Michel Foucault's definition of what the archive is not, that is, not 'the

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<sup>292</sup> See Mina Karavanta, 'Into the Interior of Cultural Affiliations: Joan Anim-Addo's *Imoinda* and the Creolization of Modernity' *Synthesis* 2015 <http://synthesis.enl.uoa.gr/fileadmin/synthesis.enl.uoa.gr/uploads/Issue7/4.Karavanta.pdf> [accessed December 2015].

<sup>293</sup> Mina Karavanta, the injunctions of the spectre of slavery, p47.

<sup>294</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 1996. p90.

library of all libraries’ and not ‘that which collects the dust’ but rather ‘the system of utterability’ and the ‘law of what can be said’, the debates surrounding the archive continue to expand upon archival space as a physical site and also as an ‘imaginative site’ with the boundaries constantly shifting<sup>295</sup>. It is the idea of an ‘imaginative site’ with the boundaries constantly shifting that is of particular importance in my reading of *Imoinda*.

Hamilton et al, in their introduction to *Refiguring the Archive*, emphasize that ‘the archive—all archives—every archive—is figured’.<sup>296</sup> Calling for a rethinking of the patterns that manifest themselves visibly and invisibly in archived material, they suggest, that the focus should be on ‘the particular processes by which record was produced and subsequently shaped, both before its entry into the archive, and increasingly as part of the archival record’.<sup>297</sup> For Hamilton et al, the archive is always being refigured.

It is a refiguring of the double archive that I wish to explore at this stage of my overall argument. In the introduction to my thesis I define double archive as the virtual archive (electronic storage) residing within the physical archive (buildings). I wish to expand on this definition in a literary context by suggesting that and illustrating how Anim-Addo’s libretto may be seen to function as an alternative double archive:

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<sup>295</sup> Voss, Paul J. & Werner, Marta L. *The Poetics of the Archive. Studies in the Literary Imagination*. 32:1. Atlanta: Georgia State University, 1999, pi.

<sup>296</sup> Carolyn Hamilton et al, *Refiguring the Archive*, p7.

<sup>297</sup> Carolyn Hamilton et al, *Refiguring the Archive*, p9.

literary and performance. As outlined above, the libretto as a written text is specific and concrete in form and content. It follows that as a text written to be performed, the libretto becomes the path to performance – an archive of oral and written texts.

Literary critic, Caryl Emerson, states that as a literary genre the libretto is often seen as a ‘vexed entity’. This is because not only is it expected to carry the narrative plot but it also can be, and is, read independently of its music and as such is seen as a ‘ludicrous literary experience’.<sup>298</sup> Of particular importance however is the concept that the libretto is a reduced version of the real thing. That is to say, the original source (a literary text) is adapted and the result either bears accusation of infidelity or on occasion may not be suitable for music. I highlight this concept to suggest that Anim-Addo’s text cannot be said to be a ‘vexed entity’ as her libretto is not a reduced version of the original source but rather a counter-writing of the history of a particular silence. As Karavanta argues, the text attends not only to the history of slavery but also to a history of silence in which the black woman is doubly expropriated.<sup>299</sup> I further suggest that in light of the above it is Behn’s text that is shown to be the reduced version. Anim-Addo’s rewriting of the history of the Caribbean as part of the Black Atlantic speaks to what Paul Gilroy (1993) describes as:

the desire to return to slavery and to explore in imaginative writing [...] a means to restage confrontations

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<sup>298</sup> Caryl Emerson and Rober William Odani, *Modest Musorgsky and Boris Godunov: Myths, Realities, Reconsiderations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p183.

<sup>299</sup> Mina Karavanta, ‘the injunctions of the spectre of slavery: affective memory and the counter-writing of community’ in Anim-Addo, J and S Scafe *affects and creolisation*, p47.

between [...] enlightened Euro-American thought and the supposedly primitive outlook of prehistorical, cultureless and bestial African slaves'<sup>300</sup>.

What makes Anim-Addo's text distinctive from other texts that address the middle passage is that her 'return to slavery' was written as a libretto. Of this choice, Anim-Addo says 'I had to write an opera [...] because the capacity shown by the African-heritage people to survive in the new world has to be a story celebrated in song, dance, music.'<sup>301</sup> The libretto, then, is a combination of all these genres: a performative genre that addresses the issue of textual silence and allows Imoinda's story to be told. To be more precise, as Karavanta concludes, 'by revising the genre of the libretto and inviting each operatic performance of her text to draw on the musical tradition that will host it', Anim-Addo's libretto 'represents the tradition of music, language and sound of other cultures whose original voices are lost, translated and distorted in the process of colonization'.<sup>302</sup>

This 'process of colonization' means that in Behn's text, Imoinda is figured as a Roman Goddess, 'the beautiful black Venus'<sup>303</sup>, whereas Anim-Addo, in contrast, chooses to create a more corporeal Imoinda, firmly within an African body as evidenced when Imoinda receives the news of her father's death:

**CHIEF MOURNER:**  
Daughter of the lion of Kromanti

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<sup>300</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* London: Verso, 1993, p220.

<sup>301</sup> Joan Anim-Addo, 'To Begin Our Knowing: The Claiming of Authority and the Writing of *Imoinda*' in Giovanna Covi ed *Voci Femminili Caraibiche e Interculturalita*.

<sup>302</sup> Mina Karavanta, 'Interculturality, Creolization and Joan Anim-Addo's *Imoinda* as a "Signifying Minority" Narrative In-Between Cultures'. p49.

<sup>303</sup> Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, p16.

Accept your father's funeral cloth.  
He left to fight our proud nation's wars  
And stayed to speak with the ancestors  
of his many noble deeds. (10)

She responds 'I am no stranger to death [...] have refreshments made ready for the mourners and the funeral party' (11). Furthermore, Anim-Addo complicates the position of this body within the European/African/Caribbean matrix. The reader meets Imoinda first in the public sphere of funerary rites where she is having her hair braided and tells her maid, 'about the corn row, I'd say start with a parting in the middle. Then make all the plaits travel uphill'<sup>304</sup>. The 'corn row' is a cultural marker in which Anim-Addo is able to signal Imoinda's purity and innocence. As bell hooks writes:

before we reach the appropriate age we wear braids, plaits that are symbols of our innocence, our youth, our childhood. Then we are comforted by the parting hands that comb and braid, comforted by the intimacy and bliss.<sup>305</sup>

Imoinda is comforted 'by the parting hands that comb and braid' and in this way, Anim-Addo indicates the characters as not Europeanised Africans; they are Africans. Moira Ferguson in *Subject to Others: British Women Writers and Colonial Slavery 1670-1834* (1992) states that 'eurocentric constructions of Africans and slaves' were constantly depicted in texts by white female authors who routinely 'misrepresented the very African-Caribbean slaves whose freedom they advocated' thereby allowing this misrepresentation 'to be so readily accepted as the

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<sup>304</sup> Joan Anim-Addo, *Imoinda: Or She Who Will Lose her Name*, p7.

<sup>305</sup> bell hooks, 'Straightening Our Hair', *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*, New York: South End Press, 1989.

reality of all African countries' <sup>306</sup>. Further, Rusdhy states that neo-slave narratives:

make sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit comments about white appropriations of the slave's voice and challenge white authors who attempt to contain and regulate the first-person representation of fugitive slaves.<sup>307</sup>

In contrast, Anim-Addo attempts to rectify this misrepresentation by constructing a story from the 'locus of impossible speech'.<sup>308</sup> That is to say, Behn's characterisation of Imoinda renders her voiceless, yet Anim-Addo has, to borrow from Nourbese Philip, been able to 'conjur[e] something new from the absence of Africans as humans that is at the heart of the text'.<sup>309</sup>

### ***Imoinda's Generational Conversation***

Central to the libretto is Imoinda, her maid (Esteizme), and Prince Oko. From the outset we learn that the libretto features two very powerful women, albeit in different ways. Imoinda is powerful as a maiden of the court, yet Esteizme's power stems from her relationship with the spirituality of the ancestors and mother earth. A key point to note at this stage is that throughout the eight scenes in the first act, Esteizme is only referred to through her status as maid and does not actually become 'Esteizme' until Act Two when they are onboard the slave ship, thus signalling the shift in power relationship and her coming into selfhood.

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<sup>306</sup> Moira Ferguson, *Subject to Others*, p6.

<sup>307</sup> Rusdhy, *Neo-slave Narratives*, p6.

<sup>308</sup> Saidiya Hartman, 'Venus in Two Acts', in *Small Axe*, Number 26, Volume 12, Number 2, June 2008, p3.

<sup>309</sup> Marlene NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!*, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2008, pp189-207.

Of that tortuous journey on the middle passage, Nourbese Philip writes of the resources that the African body contains, that of 'spirit', 'intelligence', 'memory' and 'creativity':

Time and again these resources impelling her to flee, run from, subvert, the institution of slavery. Is we bodies saving we – forcing we to live in them. We coming to understand that surviving needing the body. <sup>310</sup>

Imoinda's story is that of the black female body, embodying 'spirit', 'intelligence', 'memory', and 'creativity', arriving in the new world, a body which also contains the past, the present and the future. Anim-Addo in rewriting Behn's *Oroonoko* proclaims that the black woman is not silenced; rather, she writes:

what Behn does not know in 1688 is that we survived. Imoinda survives. Her descendants will rewrite that shared story.<sup>311</sup>

Survival is central to the generational conversation that Anim-Addo engages with her audience. Her strong collective of women preserve life, remembering that their children will be the emergent nation. Their story transcends time and signifies formations of resistance and survival.

Sarah Bruno in her thesis applauds the fact that some three hundred years later Behn's cause is:

taken up [...] by a black female playwright from Grenada, who sought to connect Imoinda's story to both her own transatlantic ancestry, as well as the history of transplanted African-Caribbean peoples as a whole. [...]

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<sup>310</sup> Marlene Nourbese Philip, *Genealogy of Resistance*, p91.

<sup>311</sup> Joan Anim-Addo, *Imoinda Birthing the Creole Nation: Rewriting Aphra Behn's Oroonoko*. In Margaret Rubik et al, *Revisiting and Reinterpreting Aphra Behn*, 2003, p80.

Thus, Behn could not imagine her Imoinda within a dialogue of creolisation, because Behn's historical position precluded her from realizing what the full implications of the creolising process would be.<sup>312</sup>

This re-telling by Anim-Addo, within a dialogue of creolisation, is in stark contrast to Behn's Imoinda who does not survive in the earlier text. Rather, Behn allows Imoinda to suffer a gruesome death at the hands of her beloved Oroonoko who:

with a hand resolved [...] gave the fatal stroke, first cutting her throat, and then severing her yet smiling face from that delicate body, pregnant as it was with the fruit of tenderest love.<sup>313</sup>

This 'cutting' of the throat speaks to a metaphorical and brutal silencing that is present throughout Behn's text. Behn's Imoinda is largely without a voice, with the narrator only permitting speech when Imoinda is questioned by the king and denies her marriage to Oroonoko. She utters, 'that, by all our power I do, for I am not yet known to my husband'.<sup>314</sup>

Whereas Behn's Imoinda and unborn child do not survive, Anim-Addo ensures that the shared story is both creolised history and 'family' history about which Anim-Addo has also written extensively<sup>315</sup>. Not only does Anim-Addo write Imoinda's h(er)story, it is also

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<sup>312</sup> Sarah Bruno, 'Sleeping Volcanoes: The Production (and Productivity) of Violence in Joan Anim-Addo's *Imoinda: Or She Who Will Lose her Name*, USA: Unpublished MA Thesis, 2013.

<sup>313</sup> Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, p72.

<sup>314</sup> Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, p 20.

<sup>315</sup> See Joan Anim-Addo, 'A Brief History of Juliana 'Lily' Mulzac of Union Island, Carriacou and Grenada: Creole Family Patterns and Scottish Disassociation'. In Covi, Giovanna, Joan Anim-Addo, Velma Pollard and Carla Sassi, eds. *Caribbean-Scottish Relations: Colonial and Contemporary Inscriptions in History, Language and Literature*, London: Mango Publishing, 2007, pp46-92.

simultaneously ‘hystory’ as suggested by Odile Ferly in ‘Women and History-Making in Literature’ where she posits the hypothesis that:

Caribbean women writers show the other facet of History: the history of the ordinary Caribbean people, and in particular women [...] what they produce is ‘hystory’. Hystory is the story told by the womb.<sup>316</sup>

In writing *Imoinda’s* story, Anim-Addo has elected to give her a voice initiating an absent conversation. By absent conversation, I refer to the fact that Behn’s *Oroonoko* could not have existed without the ‘silent’ *Imoinda* whose conversation although present in the text was never articulated. Their absent conversations consisted of talking with their eyes, for example, *Oroonoko* ‘told her with his eyes that he was not insensible of her charms’ while ‘*Imoinda* was pleased to believe she understood that silent-language of new-born love’.<sup>317</sup> Behn’s ‘silencing of the black woman as a subject in history’<sup>318</sup> speaks to what Toni Morrison describes as ‘invisibility through silence [...] to allow the black body a shadowless participation’<sup>319</sup>.

Importantly, this enables Anim-Addo to draw on Behn’s text as a ‘literary archive of imperialism [...] to write the history of colonization and slavery from the perspective of *Imoinda*’.<sup>320</sup> If Behn’s text might be considered the first and imperial archive, my argument is that as the first African-Caribbean libretto celebrating a Caribbean genealogy,

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<sup>316</sup> Odile Ferly, ‘Women and History-Making in Literature’ in Moira Inghilleri (ed) *Swinging Her Breasts at History*, Mango Publishing, London 2006, p43.

<sup>317</sup> Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, p16.

<sup>318</sup> Mina Karavanta, ‘the injunctions of the spectre of slavery: affective memory and the counter-writing of community’ in Anim-Addo, J and S Scafe *affects and creolisation*, p47.

<sup>319</sup> Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, USA: Harvard University Press, p10.

<sup>320</sup> Mina Karavanta, ‘the injunctions of the spectre of slavery: affective memory and the counter-writing of community’, p47.

Anim-Addo's text should be considered as reconfiguring and reanimating the archive to create a creolised archive. I suggest that the literary text as archive is creolised in the sense of how it is inflected by Caribbean realities; insider version of Atlantic history; and its family history perspective which is indicative in Anim-Addo's emphatic 'we survived'.

### **Imagining the Past: Collective Remembering**

My second epigraph speaks to memories that fuel the imagination and allow a collective remembering of the past. Nourbese Philip argues that there can be no 'imagining of the past or remembrance of the future without a confrontation with history [...] stolen, lost, mislaid, erased, embellished, hidden or found'.<sup>321</sup> Thus, Glissant describes history as being:

destined to be pleasure or distress on its own terms. After being folktale, story, or speech, after being record, statistic, and verification, after being a universal, systematic, and imposed whole, history insofar as it is the "reflection" of a collective consciousness today is concerned with the obscure areas of lived reality.<sup>322</sup>

I argue that in *Imoinda*, Anim-Addo is able to recreate, as defined by Glissant, the 'pleasure or distress on its own terms' in the world of the creole-yet-to-come. Drawing on Burton's notion that 'family history is a commemorative practice that creates a very specific kind of archive',<sup>323</sup> I seek to examine the creole-yet-to-come in Anim-Addo's *Imoinda* and the ways in which the text helps (re)create some of the

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<sup>321</sup> Marlene Nourbese Philip, *Centre of Remembrance*, p3.

<sup>322</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, p69.

<sup>323</sup> Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, p9.

missing archive of Eastern Caribbean Creole women's voices. *Imoinda*, a play for twelve voices divided into three acts is on an important level about memory. It is a text about collective traumatic remembering concerning a people who have not directly had that experience. It is the story of Atlantic Slavery.

Anim-Addo's re-writing of history catapults *Imoinda* into slavery but at the same time is able to depict 'Imoinda birthing the Creole Nation'.<sup>324</sup>

Your back, my child is a bridge.  
Push! Let it come. Let it breathe. (92)

I suggest that Anim-Addo's neo-slavery narrative depicts not only the birthing of the Creole Nation but also problematises questions concerning modernity and the Caribbean. The relationship between slavery and modernity is articulated by Toni Morrison in her article 'Living Memory' where she writes:

modern life begins with slavery [...] From a woman's point of view, in terms of confronting the problems of where the world is now, black women had to deal with "post-modern" problems in the nineteenth century and earlier.<sup>325</sup>

Morrison's observations are useful to my argument as I wish to highlight the impact that memory has had on the Caribbean writer's quest for a modernity that is distinct yet different from the European view of modernity. Like Morrison, Anim-Addo reminds us that 'the violence of the slave trade was not only an ending but a beginning'.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Joan Anim-Addo, 'Imoinda Birthing the Creole Nation Rewriting Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*' in Rubik Margarete, Figueroa-Dorrego Jorge, Dhuicq Bernard, eds. *Revisiting and Reinterpreting Aphra Behn*. In: *BilinguaGA*, 2003, p75.

<sup>325</sup> 'Living Memory: a meeting with Toni Morrison' in Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts*, p178.

<sup>326</sup> Maria Helena Lima, 'The Choice of Opera for a Revisionist History: Joan Anim-Addo's *Imoinda* as a neo-slave narrative'. In Faraclas, Nicholas, Ronald Severing, Christa Weijer,

Of the multiple relationships that exist within the libretto, for example, between Prince Oko and his manservant, between Imoinda and Esteizme, between Imoinda and the women aboard the slave ship, or Imoinda and her unborn daughter, it is my intention here to concentrate mainly on Imoinda's relationship with Esteizme. This is because theirs is a powerful relationship and indeed is one that has a crucial locational shift contingent upon memory, a key concern of the archive.

While in 'Old Guinea' Esteizme has the status of maid, though one who has been charged with protecting and keeping watch over Imoinda, she declares:

My burden is seeing far;  
Watching over you.  
So that you can grow, I wait;  
Watching over you. (8)

What becomes increasingly apparent is that Esteizme has a submerged memory of something that she has been charged to do. Although seeing it as a 'burden', she understands that she must 'wait' and 'watch' over Imoinda. However, once they are traded as slaves and are on board the 'nightmare canoe' Esteizme regains her true identity finally remembering that she was raised as a high priestess. Esteizme consoles Imoinda who believes that she is the cause of their misfortune:

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Elisabeth Ehteld and Marsha Hinds-Layne, eds. *Transcultural Roots Uprising: The Rhizomatic Languages, Literatures and Cultures of the Caribbean*, Willemstad: University of Curaçao and Fundashon pa Planifikashon di Idioma, 2013.

IMOINDA

I have caused unspeakable demons  
With so many instruments of torture  
to rise and escape from the bush of ghosts.

ESTEIZME

Imoinda such power is not yours  
Trust me, one who has watched over you. (56)

That these ‘unspeakable demons’ refer to the barbarity of the sailors on board the slave ship aptly named ‘The Greenwich’ speaks to the results of archival research in which Anim-Addo was able to locate and unearth ‘a truth’ that allows the resonance of slavery to be felt locally.<sup>327</sup>

Anim-Addo describes ‘The Greenwich’ as the nightmare canoe. Importantly this vessel and naming of it allude to an association with the middle passage and the journey from England to Africa to Barbados. This is the vessel that transports Imoinda to the slave plantation of the new land and in effect, to use Karavanta’s words, ‘forces [Imoinda] to disappear into the archives of slavery’.<sup>328</sup>

While on board the ‘nightmare canoe’ Esteizme remembers her true status of a high priestess, recounting a chance meeting with a wise sage, she says:

Once when still a little girl, so high  
A wise woman walked into our village  
Each of her eyes had a blue ring to it.  
She took me, “the serious one” she called me,  
To serve with her at the mountain peak  
Where the air is cool and blue and still.  
I had almost forgot. (60)

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<sup>327</sup> Mina Karavanta, ‘the injunctions of the spectre of slavery: affective memory and the counter-writing of community’, p48.

<sup>328</sup> Mina Karavanta, ‘the injunctions of the spectre of slavery’, p48.

When the slave ship is caught in a storm, everyone is frightened since the slaves believe that there is nothing they can do. At the same time, some of the slaves jump ship as the chorus sings ‘Fly! Fly to the bottom of the sea. / Find the portal back to old Guinea’ (62). This emphasizing of the conditions of slavery correlates with historical knowledge of the conditions of the slave ship. Both Esteizme and Imoinda speak to the enslaved women imploring them to rely on memories in order to survive. Through this remembering, Anim-Addo is able, as Beryl Gilroy describes, to ‘use memory to grasp consciousness and change the currency of existence’<sup>329</sup>.

It is Esteizme who keeps Imoinda alive and ensures that she is protected. At the slave auction, Imoinda is purchased because the Planter who has already purchased Oko notices an attraction between Imoinda and Oko, and wishes to ‘observe their story’ (67). Esteizme immediately falls to her knees, clinging to the Planter’s feet and implores to be taken too:

I beg you master  
Do not separate me from my sister  
I beg you. You’ll have no regrets. (68)

To which the Planter replies:

The ship’s papers – let me inspect them.  
[...]  
Males adult: one hundred and fifteen.  
Females adult: eighty six  
Boys: ninety eight  
Girls: sixty one  
By my sums, that makes a mighty number.

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<sup>329</sup> Beryl Gilroy, ‘On Creativity, Autarchy and Memory’, In Joan Anim-Addo, ed. *Centre of Remembrance: Memory and Caribbean Women’s Literature*, Mango Publishing, London, 2002, p115.

One more slave can hardly be noticed. (68)

Because Esteizme is purchased as a consequence of her intervention, she is once again able to protect Imoinda. Nevertheless, she is powerless to protect her from the fate of the enslaved woman, that of rape and brutality.<sup>330</sup> Imoinda's body ceases to be her own and becomes the property of another, similar to the earlier occasion when she was presented to the Chief in her homeland. In the same way, she is again presented as a gift to Massa Boss Brother, absent from the plantation for 'many moons past' (72). What is more, on her return, we learn through Esteizme, that Imoinda is pregnant:

ESTEIZME

You drank the bush tea at the right time?

IMOINDA

I drank, How I drank!

ESTEIZME

Still you do not see your days?

IMOINDA

No

ESTEIZME

And you sure the baby is not his?

IMOINDA

I have not known Prince Oko  
since we set foot upon this land. (78-79)

Fully embracing her role as priestess, Esteizme vows that the women on the plantation will dance for Imoinda and calls upon the ancestors, mama Aisa (mother earth), revealing not only her relationship as a

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<sup>330</sup> See M H Beckles 'Sex and gender in the historiography of Caribbean slavery', in Verene Shepherd et al. *Engendering History: Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective*, Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1995, p135 for detailed discussion regarding the brutality inflicted of the black woman's body.

friend but also that of a matriarchal-type figure in a network of women who are willing and able to support Imoinda through the pregnancy and beyond.

Questioning the ‘myth of the black matriarch’, Olive Senior in *Working Miracles* (1991) states that it [the myth] ‘is one of the most pervasive in Caribbean societies’.<sup>331</sup> If, as Senior asks ‘in what does the matriarch’s alleged power and dominance inhere?’ I would suggest that in the case of Imoinda and Esteizme the answer can be found in the conditions that they would have had to endure upon the ‘nightmare canoe’ and that Esteizme’s multiple relationships culminating with her connection to the ancestors and ‘mother nature’ afford her that ‘power and dominance’.

When Oko commits suicide, a distraught Imoinda wishing to take her own life is once again saved by Esteizme’s intervention. Esteizme reminds her of the ‘pikin’ within. ‘Pikin? Baby? No. I will have none’ (91), declares Imoinda, who, at that particular moment does not recognise the significance of the ‘pikin’ she carries within and cries: ‘since I cannot have my man; I will not have another’s pikin.’ (91) However, with the help of her network of women, Imoinda gives birth to a baby girl. Anim-Addo’s metaphorical use of Imoinda’s back as a bridge speaks to a positioning of Imoinda as a multifaceted conduit:

Your back, my child is a bridge  
And bridges come in different size,

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<sup>331</sup> Olive Senior, *Working Miracles: Women’s Lives in the English speaking Caribbean*, London: James Curry, 1991, p102.

Shape and look but are bridges for all that. (92)

Imoinda's body, then, becomes a vessel that connects generations but also serves to bridge the gap between cultures. Through a process of creolisation and despite the painful, unwanted pregnancies and births, Anim-Addo allows an adaptable population to emerge and change, while negotiating the various barriers inherent to the slave system. Covi proclaims that Anim-Addo's libretto has shown that 'slaves did survive! They did survive because women slaves gave birth even under conditions of slavery, which entailed being raped by their masters.'<sup>332</sup>

Imoinda's survival and the birth of her child signal another important relationship. As she subverts the system under which she lives, Imoinda is also able to actively remember the past whilst giving birth to a new generation, the first generation of the transplanted African-Caribbean – the Creole self. It is her Creole identity that allows a remembering of the customs of her ancestry. It is this memory that Beryl Gilroy refers to when she writes of 'mothers who learn to pass on to youth traditional or tribal knowledge of what must be remembered'<sup>333</sup> and this is what Anim-Addo achieves with her text. Using the trope of storytelling passed down to her by her own grandmother,<sup>334</sup> Anim-Addo operates within Gay Wilentz's framework of 'generational continuity' which is seen predominately as a woman's

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<sup>332</sup> Giovanna Covi, *Oroonoko's* Genderization and Creolization: Joan Anim-Addo's *Imoinda* in Rubik Margarete, Figueroa-Dorrego Jorge, Dhucq Bernard, eds. *Revisiting and Reinterpreting Aphra Behn*. In: *BilinguaGA* (2003) (p85).

<sup>333</sup> Beryl Gilroy, *Centre of Remembrance*, p114.

<sup>334</sup> See dedication in Anim-Addo, Joan, ed. *Framing the Word: Gender and Genre in Caribbean Women's Writing*, London: Whiting & Birch, 1996. Dedication reads 'to the memory of my grandmother [...] who, through her storytelling truly taught me the power of words'.

domain. In her telling of Imoinda's story, Anim-Addo is able to 'extend the cultural practices of the communities to the words on a page'<sup>335</sup> thus building towards a creolised archive.

### **Alter(native) Imoinda's: Will the real Imoinda please stand up?**

How these 'cultural practices' appear on the page and the representation of black female subjectivity is of relevance. While Behn's Imoinda is depicted as 'a beauty', 'female to the noble male',<sup>336</sup> other physical attributes have her constantly dancing, stumbling, fainting and more than willing to aid Oronoko in taking her life when she 'lays herself down before the sacrificer'.<sup>337</sup> Behn's representation of the black female body as beautiful but somehow clumsy is taken a step further in Southerne's adaptation where his Imoinda is represented as a white female, thus completely denying Behn's black Imoinda a place on the stage and effectively erasing her from the page. Indeed, it has been argued that Southerne's white heroine eclipses black female representations and appropriates a cloak of antislavery creating more sympathy for oppressed white feminism than African slavery.<sup>338</sup> In altering Imoinda's skin colour, Southerne enabled the women in his audience to visually identify with a white heroine. This visual identification is reinforced in a 'Prologue spoken by Mr Ryan on the first time of his playing the Part of Oronoko [sic]', he states:

If his Imoinda's Chast and beauteous too,

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<sup>335</sup> Gay Wilentz, *Binding Cultures*, p117.

<sup>336</sup> Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, p 16.

<sup>337</sup> Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, p72.

<sup>338</sup> Joyce Macdonald, *The Disappearing African Woman: Imoinda in Oroonoko after Behn*

That Copy, Ladies, he transcrib'd from you.<sup>339</sup>

In *Imoinda's Shade: Marriage and the African Woman in Eighteenth-Century British Literature, 1759-1808* (2012) Lyndon Dominique argues that Southerne's *Oroonoko* has created two white Imoindas 'one for the stage, the other for the pages of his published text'.<sup>340</sup> Dominique argues further that although the stage version of Imoinda is white and is seen as such, the textual version of Imoinda should be read as an African woman. He states that:

in performances of *Oroonoko*, Imoinda is *seen* as English and familiar; in the read versions of the play she is *understood* to be African and different.<sup>341</sup>

In effect, Dominique attempts to highlight what he considers to be the incorporation of Imoinda's whiteness into the African presence which is marked and fluid in Southerne's published text. Yet, what neither Behn's or Southerne's texts achieve is Imoinda's representation of the brutal truths of slavery in the new world and her shared story.

Bandele's text titled *Aphra Behn's Oroonoko in a new adaptation* (1999) follows a similar narrative to Behn's Coramantien in that he re-introduces the black Imoinda erased from Southerne's stage and for the first time performs the African section of Behn's novella that was omitted from earlier productions. Yet, the Surinam section draws greatly on Hawkesworth's adaptation. In an interview with Simon Reade, dramaturge at the Royal Shakespeare Company who worked

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<sup>339</sup> 'Prologue spoken by Mr. Ryan, on the first Time of Playing the Part of Oroonoko' in A Miscellaneous Collection of Poems, Songs and Epigrams. By several Hands. Dublin: T. M. Gent. Vol. I. 1711. pp44-45.

<sup>340</sup> Lyndon Dominique, *Imoinda's Shade: Marriage and the African Woman in Eighteenth-Century British Literature, 1759-1808*, USA: Ohio State University Press, 2012, p46.

<sup>341</sup> Lyndon Dominique, *Imoinda's Shade*, p56.

with Bandele, an explanation was given for the appropriation of Hawkesworth's Surinam section. Reade states that after Bandele had written the African part, which they loved, and which lasted for about 90 minutes, Bandele did not produce a second part and explained that he was not interested in writing the Surinam section.

Gregory Doran, the director, and Reade, the dramaturge, both recalled Hawkesworth's adaptation and decided to use it. Once edited, Bandele was asked to provide a few link passages. These are evident, for instance, in Part Two, Act One, Scene Two, where the slaves gather in a circle 'swaying gently in a ritual dance to Shango, the God of thunder and also the God of justice and fair play'<sup>342</sup> and again in Act Two, Scene Two, Bandele invokes Eshu, the trickster-god as a dialogue between Oroonoko and Imoinda.

Despite Bandele's attempt to depict an Africanised version of eighteenth century Africa, his portrayal of Imoinda bears interrogation. Even though Bandele had restored her blackness, he fails to recognise the black female body as equal and powerful. Thus, Bandele's Imoinda becomes the victim of multiple rapes by her own people. Bandele's African kingdom is 'a place of betrayal, brutal sexuality, violence and exploitation', <sup>343</sup> where Imoinda castrates and kills the aged King when he attempts to force her to perform fellatio. She is then raped by the

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<sup>342</sup> 'Biyi Bandele, *Aphra Behn's Oroonoko in a new adaptation*, 1999, p80.

<sup>343</sup> Jessica Munns, *Reviving Oroonoko 'in the scene': From Thomas Southerne to 'Biyi Bandele'*. In Susan Iwanisziw, ed. *Troping Oroonoko from Behn to Bandele*, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2004, p189.

King's chief adviser and his men before being sold to the white slavers.

Bandele deviates from Behn's novella in which Imoinda kills herself.

Nevertheless, Bandele does not permit his Imoinda to survive:

as she makes to stab herself, OROONOKO stays her hand, takes the dagger away, and grabs her in a tight embrace. [...] Then, in one swift movement, OROONOKO breaks her neck.'<sup>344</sup>

Jessica Munns in 'Reviving *Oroonoko* 'in the scene': From Thomas Southerne to 'Biyi Bandele'<sup>345</sup> notes that Bandele's 'idea of retelling from an African perspective an English narrative that simultaneously condemns and exculpates the three-way trade in objects and people between, England Africa and the West Indies is exciting'.<sup>346</sup> Yet, I wish to argue that the excitement to which Munns alludes is in relation to Bandele's stage portrayal of a colourful African world and bears no relation to the excitement caused by Anim-Addo's subversive re-writing of Behn's 1688 proto-novel.

Anim-Addo's *Imoinda*, a woman-centered narrative, highlights the importance of women as repositories of cultural and historical memory, ancestral forgiveness and the maternal founding of the Caribbean Nation. It is the black female body, then, that Anim-Addo wished to excavate from Behn's textual page to claim her rightful place, if not on Southerne's stage, then on the twenty-first century stage. She states:

I imagine because there's such an absence of black people on the [...] operatic stage [...] then to me it would be truly

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<sup>344</sup> 'Biyi Bandele, *Aphra Behn's Oroonoko in a new adaptation*, part two act two scene 5.

<sup>345</sup> Jessica Munns, Reviving *Oroonoko* 'in the scene': From Thomas Southerne to 'Biyi Bandele'. In Susan Iwanisziw, ed. *Troping Oroonoko from Behn to Bandele*, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing. 2004, pp174-193.

<sup>346</sup> Jessica Munns, Reviving *Oroonoko*, p192.

a celebration to see black characters and singers on stage performing opera.<sup>347</sup>

In *Blackness in Opera* (2012) Naomi André et al argue that blackness in the opera is either conflated with minstrelsy<sup>348</sup> or it automatically associates blackness with a generic conception of ‘otherness’. The editors of this collection state that:

despite changing ideals about representing ‘reality’ onstage, and despite increasingly sophisticated and nuanced portrayals of black characters, there still exists the tacit assumption that the presence or portrayal of ‘blackness’ inherently provides an alternative to traditional (that is, white, European, or both) power structures, even if a norm for blackness is established within the world of the opera.<sup>349</sup>

That is to say, André et al suggest that opera operates along a spectrum in which the standard, white and/or European is at one end and blackness/otherness is at the other. As Bruno states:

even as Eurocentric notions interact with or balk at representations of blackness the two ideals occur in a dichotomy which ignores the inter-fluidity and cross cultural exchanges that white and black interactions have always engendered.<sup>350</sup>

As indicated, the fact that Southerne’s *Imoinda* was played by a white woman may well have been as a result of theatrical traditions in that it was uncommon for women to follow the male tradition of ‘blacking up’ and Southerne would have been appealing to the sensibilities of his female audience. This would have also allowed white actresses at that

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<sup>347</sup> Serena Guarracino, ‘*Imoinda*’s Performing Bodies: An Interview with Joan Anim-Addo’ in Anim-Addo, J & Scafe, S, eds. *I Am Black/White/Yellow: An Introduction to the Black Body in Europe*, London: Mango Publishing, 2007, p220.

<sup>348</sup> The art or practice of a minstrel.

<sup>349</sup> Naomi André et al (eds), *Blackness in Opera*, USA: University of Illinois Press, 2012, p7.

<sup>350</sup> Sarah Bruno, ‘Sleeping Volcanoes: The Production (and Productivity) of Violence in Joan Anim-Addo’s *Imoinda, Or She Who Will Lose Her Name*, MA Thesis, Lehigh University, April 2013.

time to play the role without having to blackface.<sup>351</sup> Yet, if we take for instance Shakespeare's *Othello* (1603), Dympna Callaghan (2000) has argued that 'Othello was a white man'.<sup>352</sup> What Callaghan is referring to here is the fact that *Othello* was originally written for a white man in blackface makeup. In 1999, Hugh Quarshie, a black British actor, made a similar argument when he declared:

If a black actor plays Othello does he not risk making racial stereotypes seem legitimate and even true? When a black actor plays a role written for a white actor in black make-up and for a predominantly white audience, does he not encourage the white way, or rather the wrong way, of looking at black men. [...] Of all parts in the canon, perhaps Othello is the one which should most definitely not be played by a black actor.<sup>353</sup>

So, in the contemporary staging of *Imoinda* what are the problematics associated with casting? Rushdy's notion of the 'white appropriations of the slave's voice' is of relevance here. On the page, 'race' is visualised and explicit while on the stage performances rely on what the audience see with regards to race; and how the audience makes sense of, and interprets what they are seeing. The 'white way, or rather the wrong way, of looking' are issues that were faced in the first full length production of *Imoinda* discussed below.

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<sup>351</sup> See Wylie Sypher, *Guinea's Captive Kings: British Anti-Slavery Literature of the XVIIIth Century*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942, p21 in which Syper suggests that it was more acceptable for theatre audiences that *Imoinda* be white. Queen Anne and her ladies had been criticised for wearing blackface in Jonsons' *Masque of Blackness* (1609), but Englishwomen representing Moors had evidently worn black masks and make up in London after the Restoration. See Anthony Gerard Barthelemy, *Black Face, Maligned Race*, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1987. See chapter three.

<sup>352</sup> See Dympna Callaghan, 'Othello was a white man', *Shakespeare Without Women: Representing gender and race on the Renaissance stage*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000, pp75-96.

<sup>353</sup> Hugh Quarshie, *Second Thoughts About Othello*, Chipping Campden, UK: International Shakespeare Association, 1999, p5.

### **Staging *Imoinda*: Towards a Live Performance**

One aspect of performativity is that of the techniques used by Anim-Addo and is central to the rewriting of Imoinda's personal history and the collective history of the African diaspora. Covi writes:

music is foregrounded and dance is released, clearly not because Anim-Addo aesthetically chose the opera, but because she substantially decided to liberate linguistic and bodily communication from authorial control and let all characters speak.<sup>354</sup>

As Covi suggests, Anim-Addo not only gifts Imoinda with voice but an entire cast who are able to share the pluralities of their history through a multiplicity of bodily expressions. It is the female collective who can be heard 'wailing' (7) in the distance and when the 'shadow of the whip falls' it is again 'female figures [that] fill the shadows' amidst the 'rumble of pain and song' (55). Anim-Addo's choice of libretto has not only enabled her to 'liberate linguistic and bodily communication' but has empowered a collective performativity of individual and shared suffering. The chorus of women implore Imoinda to listen to her body, through dance and song they sing:

WOMAN  
Don't ask us. Dance. Trust your eyes. (89)

ESTEIZME  
Heed the spirits. Trust your eyes.  
They speak through our bodies. You'll hear no lies. (90)

Anim-Addo is able to perform characterisation through cultural specificity. That is to say, through hair, funeral rites, bonding between

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<sup>354</sup> Giovanna Covi, *Oroonoko's* Genderization and Creolization: Joan Anim-Addo's *Imoinda*, in Rubik, Margarete, Jorge Figueroa-Dorrego and Bernard Dhuicq (eds) *Revisiting and Reinterpreting Aphra Behn*, France: Bilingua GA Editions, 2003, p87.

women and so on, all of which connects the remembrances of their African ancestry to their transplanted location.

Questions of performance relate to my consideration of the archive not least because it involves a passing on 'by ear' or to be more precise what Gertrude Stein refers to as 'syncopated time',<sup>355</sup> in that the audience experiencing a live performance is always in a state of temporality. That is to say, 'the time of the play/[libretto] (story time) in relation to the emotion of the spectator (emotional time) in the audience'.<sup>356</sup>

Likewise, Karavanta states that *Imoinda* is written in the form of an intercultural libretto, and as such:

the text invites its constant translation and simultaneously performs the transculturation of the genres of tragedy and opera. In other words, the text as a libretto is an invitation to the musical tradition and operatic heritage of the host culture.<sup>357</sup>

In terms of musical tradition, the libretto is open to multiple modes of directorial interpretation once it moves from the page to the stage. Collaboration with the composer is required alongside questions of authorship. That *Imoinda* did not emerge through the traditional route, that of the Composer contacting the Librettist, is of significance.

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<sup>355</sup> Gertrude Stein, 'Plays'. Stein, Lectures 93–131.

<sup>356</sup> Johanna Frank, 'Resonating Bodies and the Poetics of Auralty; Or, Gertrude Stein's Theatre' in *Modern Drama*, Volume 51, Number 4, Winter 2008, p502.

<sup>357</sup> Mina Karavanta, Into the Interior of Cultural Affiliations: Joan Anim-Addo's *Imoinda* and the Creolization of Modernity, *Perspectives from the Radical Other. Synthesis*, 7, 2015 <http://synthesis.enl.uoa.gr/perspectives-from-the-radical-other-7-2015/mina-karavanta.html> (accessed December 2015).

Traditionally, operatic criticism has disregarded the librettist with more weight being given to the composer and the musical score. Paul Robinson's main argument in *Opera, Sex and Other Vital Matters* (2002) is that 'a libretto is not a text as we ordinarily understand the term'. For Robinson 'any interpretation of opera derived exclusively, or even primarily, from the libretto is likely to result in a misreading'.<sup>358</sup> David Levin disagrees and in his text *Opera through Other Eyes* (1993), responds to 'a history of opera criticism that places music at the centre and the suppression or banalization of the libretto that has enabled that criticism'<sup>359</sup>. Levin argues that the ambiguities and the complexities of the libretto's linguistic text cannot be ignored.

As Anim-Addo rightly states, the operatic world was not equipped to deal with 'the cultural heritage of a black woman' and even still one who 'dared to conceive of and articulate the operatic performance'<sup>360</sup> that was envisioned for *Imoinda*. Such was the acclaim afforded to this libretto the result of which was the publication of a bilingual edition in 2003. Covi, the editor and translator writes:

this was a text that produced transformative effects not only in terms of my perception of the Caribbean, but most importantly in terms of my own self perception. Watching an African woman deported to the New World into slavery, and listening to the expression of her suffering, resistance and heroic survival performed through the creolization of an Italian genre—the opera—could not leave me intimately indifferent. Why would Anim-Addo use opera to give a voice and the center of the stage to Aphra Behn's silent character Imoinda, [...]? Why would

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<sup>358</sup> Paul Robinson, 'Reading Libretti and Misreading Opera', *Opera, Sex and Other Vital Matters*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002, pp30-31.

<sup>359</sup> David Levin, *Opera through Other Eyes*, USA: Stanford University Press, 1993, p2.

<sup>360</sup> Joan Anim-Addo, 'Travelling with Imoinda', p576.

she choose an Italian mode to break the silence on the brutality of gendered slavery? There is more to this choice than just the need to sing, in order to tell of and to celebrate survival—the survival of the raped and enslaved woman, her child, her community, of women and men who endured unspeakable humiliations, deprivations and violence for generations, and now are telling that tale.<sup>361</sup>

It is a ‘telling [of] that tale’ which has enabled *Imoinda* as libretto to function outside of the traditional libretto/musical score combination. Linda and Michael Hutcheon theorise both the libretto and musical score as scripts. That is to say both are ‘only instructions for performance’.<sup>362</sup> If, as Robinson suggests ‘an opera cannot be read from its libretto’ and further that a libretto ‘has no meaning worth talking about except as it is transformed into music’<sup>363</sup> what meanings can be interpreted from the numerous interactions that have taken place on a textual level resulting in the libretto functioning, as I mentioned earlier, as a double archive: literary and performative.

In considering performance, *Imoinda* was first performed as a ‘rehearsed reading’ in London in 1998, for which no musical score was developed. An initial extract of the libretto was then performed in 1999 and a full production staged in New York in 2008 at School of the Arts (SOTA), Rochester, New York. The 1999 London performance was staged in the Conservatory at the Horniman Museum, itself an archive, and signals the beginnings of a parallel archive. The director for the

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<sup>361</sup> Giovanna Covi, ‘Creolizing Cultures and Kinship: Then and There, Now and Here’, *Perspectives from the Radical Other*, *Synthesis* 7, 2015. <http://synthesis.enl.uoa.gr/perspectives-from-the-radical-other-7-2015/giovanna-covi.html> [accessed December 2015].

<sup>362</sup> Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death*, London and Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996, pxvi.

<sup>363</sup> Paul Robinson, *Opera, Sex and other Vital Matters*, pp341-342.

Horniman performance of *Imoinda* was Juwon Ogungbe who, interestingly, was also the composer for Bandele's adaptation of Behn's *Oroonoko* discussed earlier.<sup>364</sup>

As Karavanta argues, *Imoinda* challenges 'Western concepts of mortality, as manifested historically in opera' and transforms the way the 'modern audiences respond to witnessing these concepts on stage'<sup>365</sup>. Moreover, through operatic power, *Imoinda*:

Bring[s] together dramatic narrative, staged performance, a literary text, significant subject matter [...], and complex music in a particularly forceful way.<sup>366</sup>

For Karavanta, *Imoinda* performs an 'excess' not only of 'effect' but of 'affect': and the audience<sup>367</sup> is challenged to share knowledge<sup>368</sup>. It is a sharing of knowledge that occurred with the first full stage production held in New York, the result of a collaborative project, signalling the cultural potential of the text. Students from SOTA worked closely with

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<sup>364</sup> It is highly likely that Juwon Ogungbe would have been working on both productions at the same time as they were staged just under a year apart..

<sup>365</sup> Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon. *Opera. The Art of Dying*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 2004, p2.

<sup>366</sup> Hutcheon and Hutcheon, *Opera, The Art of Dying*, p7.

<sup>367</sup> It is important here to cite the Hutcheon's analysis of audience and of the openness of the libretto as a text that can be transformed by each production: "A word is needed to explain what we mean by the 'audience.' Do we mean real people watching a particular production? The answer is: not really. [...] In other words, each time even the same production is staged, the audience members will see something different, and, of course, they will respond individually in different ways. The variety of possible responses and interpretations is immense. For this reason, the 'audience' here is, in a way, a virtual one. Throughout our own discussion, however, we will be using what Kier Elam calls the 'dramatic texts' of the operas, that is, the libretto and the score, and not the 'performance texts' of particular productions. We acknowledge that scores and librettos are only relatively fixed texts, for new scholarly work produces new editions with some frequency. Yet they are still the shared raw materials, if you like, with which a production team (a second group of artist-interpreters) then works: directors, conductors, designers, singers, musicians, and so on. A specific production is, therefore, the collective interpretation of a second group of artists, but it remains only one possible reading of the dramatic texts. And audience members will, in turn, interpret that reading in their own multiple ways" (See Hutcheon and Hutcheon pp13-14).

<sup>368</sup> Mina Karavanta, 'Into the Interior of Cultural Affiliations: Joan Anim-Addo's *Imoinda* and the Creolization of Modernity', p80.

<http://synthesis.enl.uoa.gr/fileadmin/synthesis.enl.uoa.gr/uploads/Issue7/4.Karavanta.pdf> (accessed March 2016).

Glenn McClure, the composer and Alan Tirre, the musical producer, to research elements of the Atlantic Slave trade, illustrated in *Imoinda*, writing music that added an additional artistic layer of meaning.<sup>369</sup> McClure's musical composition consisted of a blend of cultural sounds; musical instruments from West Africa, the Caribbean and Europe were used so as to connect all parts of the transatlantic world. Articulating his decision to cast colour blind, Tirre states: 'slavery is everyone's history not just black history'.<sup>370</sup> Consequently, the role of Esteizme was given to a white female student.

Then, in April 2013 a large-scale choral piece, entitled *The Crossing*, composed by Odaline de la Martinez, and developed from Anim-Addo's libretto, *Imoinda*, was performed in the USA by the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra in commemoration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. This choral piece received its UK Premiere in November 2014 and was staged in a church. I return here to my question surrounding authorship. On both occasions, details of the librettist were omitted from all publicity and advertising material. This omission begs the question of a misappropriation of the work by the Composer. However, when challenged, assurances were given that this would not occur again. Yet in August 2015, whilst undertaking further research on *Imoinda* I conducted a brief search on the Internet. This search revealed that funding had been awarded to the Composer

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<sup>369</sup> See [www.gold.ac.uk/wow](http://www.gold.ac.uk/wow) (accessed April 2016).

<sup>370</sup> Workshop debate held on 7 November 2009.

for a US Opera company to begin phase one of *Imoinda*.<sup>371</sup> Yet, again, details of the librettist were omitted and the Opera Company was contacted directly and asked to rectify this error. They were issued with the following from the librettist:

Specifically, permission to use *Imoinda* is contingent upon rights of attribution. I am to be consulted and my name is to appear on all publicity and material from the project in any medium published, copies of which I expect to receive.<sup>372</sup>

Furthermore, in November 2015, a number of video clips (three to ten minutes in length) of phase one by OperaEbony appear on Youtube<sup>373</sup> and as previously indicated the librettist received no prior notification.

Altogether, the events outlined above and others that space does not allow me to mention<sup>374</sup> give rise to the question: who has the rights to the performance piece? Or as stated by Anim-Addo:

In 2000, a Millennium Festival Award had made possible my approach to a composer of my choice to write the score for *Imoinda*. A year or so later with the score in hand, or at least the score for Act One, whose opera was in the making: the composer's or my own? The reality of authority weighted on the side of the composer comes as an initial shock to the writer who first develops the project and then engages the composer. Such a process also

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<sup>371</sup> See <http://operaebony.org/imoinda.html> (accessed August 2015). See also the composer's press release which has the following statement: *Imoinda* is a 60-minute opera in one Act with five main characters and a chorus/dancers. The grant will allow Martinez to make a video of scenes from *Imoinda*, giving an overview of the opera as a whole. The video will then be sent to opera companies with the purpose of future performance. New York City based Opera Ebony will be creating the video with Hope Clarke directing and Martinez conducting. <http://nickythomasmedia.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Odaline-de-la-Martinez-Opera-America-Awards.pdf> (accessed August 2015).

<sup>372</sup> From email correspondence dated 16 August 2015.

<sup>373</sup> See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccec7jg-yH8>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0b2h1T9KCs>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WUHPdp-8DBo>

<sup>374</sup> See Joan Anim-Addo, Travelling with *Imoinda*: Art, Authorship, and Critique, *Callaloo*, Volume 38, Number 3, Summer 2015, pp570-581.

serves to shift considerably questions of power and authorship as status and contested claims.<sup>375</sup>

The ‘authority weighted on the side of the composer’ is possible due to the way in which the ‘operatic text’ is viewed. That is to say, that the libretto is viewed as having no meaning without its music!

In essence the Composer has steered the libretto *Imoinda* as marketable as a slave trilogy – an opera in three parts. Act One from the original work is titled *Imoinda*, Act Two *The Crossing* and Act Three currently has a working title of *The Plantation*. The Composer’s website states:

The whole trilogy will be performed by Scott Stroman and the Highbury Opera Theatre in October 2016 as part of the 6th London Festival of American Music and Black History Month.<sup>376</sup>

Of the performances to date the one that has remained most true to Anim-Addo’s vision is the SOTA production.

### **Critiquing *Imoinda*: Workshops, Museums and Classrooms**

Three different kinds of performances occurred in 2009 and 2013. In 2009, I was awarded an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Student-Led Initiative award for a project entitled ‘Words from Other Worlds: Critical Perspectives on *Imoinda*’. The aim of the project was to host a multi and interdisciplinary interactive postgraduate workshop to collectively develop a range of critical perspectives on Anim-Addo’s

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<sup>375</sup> Joan Anim-Addo, Travelling with *Imoinda*: Art, Authorship, and Critique, *Callaloo*, Volume 38, Number 3, Summer 2015, p577.

<sup>376</sup> <http://nickythomasmedia.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Odaline-de-la-Martinez-Opera-America-Awards.pdf> (accessed august 2015).

libretto. The project sought to address the absence of critical attention given to *Imoinda* by producing a virtual and print collection of student perspectives. My aim was to make African-Caribbean presence known beyond the reading list of the English university classroom to the virtual global space of the internet. This student-led initiative created a shared arena through the interactive and collaborative framework of the workshop, a special issue journal and web space.

During the workshop, the transition and transposition of the original literary work into visual art and opera was illustrated and analysed by academics who were previously involved with the libretto; from translating to designing through to staging. Furthermore, geographical and temporal borders were bridged and traversed through the use of technology: speakers from Italy and the United States intervened in the discussion through a live video conference. Covi contributed virtually to the debate and contended that translation is a challenging, 'impossible,' yet a necessary cultural and political task. Lima, McClure and Tirre clarified the process through which the Rochester School of the Arts (SOTA) had performed *Imoinda*. In particular, McClure, the composer, and Tirre, the music producer and conductor of *Imoinda's* performance (2008) explained that the combination of music and text, the intermixture of African rhythm and Western instruments, and the confluence of musical techniques and personal involvement had played crucial roles in the performance.

By giving voice to this marginalised text through public and collaborative discussions, the malleability of the text was explored when read through the eyes of drama, music, art, literature and museum studies. Such a dynamic interdisciplinary approach endeavoured to produce a range of contemporary, 'new' ways of looking at and beyond the text within a radically ever-changing digital world that offered a space to explore the oral and visual culture from which *Imoinda* emerges.<sup>377</sup>

In July 2013 a group of North American undergraduate students, from SUNY Geneseo, under the leadership of Professor Maria Helena Lima and Dr Viv Golding took part in a two day workshop at the Pitts Rivers Museum, Oxford. At this workshop, students were able to handle museum artefacts from African cultures linked to *Imoinda's* journey from Africa to the Caribbean. Their workshop, entitled 'Imoinda's Trail'<sup>378</sup> proved to be extremely valuable in enabling students of different cultures to articulate concepts of 'motherhood', 'identity', and 'nation' and so on. Students were empowered to be imaginative and creative by developing a series of papers and digital 'trails' or journeys through the museum, highlighting points of contact with *Imoinda*. In placing the text in a museum workshop context, Anim-Addo's libretto is made visible in a space - a prestigious museum - that traditionally

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<sup>377</sup> The print journal and DVD have been published and were launched on 26 October 2010. The website is active and contains information on the project, events as well as short films which act as critical learning tools. See [www.gold.ac.uk/wow](http://www.gold.ac.uk/wow) [accessed April 2016]. A copy of the DVD is included in this thesis.

<sup>378</sup> Further details regarding this project can be found in a special issue of the online journal *Synthesis, Special Issue, Perspectives from the Radical 'Other'*, Spring 2014. <http://synthesis.enl.uoa.gr/>.

excludes ideas of those ‘other’ than white male and the middle classes. At the same time, such an event speaks to my ‘double archive’ as re-defined above.

Similarly, in November 2013 in an ‘intercultural space of un-learning’<sup>379</sup> a group of secondary school children (14-16 year olds) engaged with the libretto in a project titled ‘Imoinda’s Children’ to produce drawings and poetry based on their imagining of Imoinda.<sup>380</sup> A two-minute video showcasing their work based on the text and the debates surrounding key issues that they found was also produced.<sup>381</sup> Inspired by the success of the ‘Imoinda’s Children’ project, the teacher proceeded to re-write acts one and two of *Imoinda* for her year 8 students (ages 12-13) and produced lesson plans enhancing the bank of critical learning tools.<sup>382</sup>

I wish to consider these performances, workshops and related activities in light of archivist Matthew Reason’s critical work on the relationship between archive and performance. Film and Theatre Director, Peter Brook states that a live performance is:

an event for that moment in time, for that [audience] in that place – and its gone. gone without a trace ... the only witnesses were the people present; the only record is what they retained.<sup>383</sup>

Read in this context, a live performance and the ways in which it is archived is limited and bound by specific temporal conditions. Brook

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<sup>379</sup> Emma Burch, *Imoinda’s Children: Growing up in her Shadow*, Unpublished reflection, December 2013.

<sup>380</sup> Unpublished poetry and drawings can be found in Appendix 1.

<sup>381</sup> See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PsGdTfXoU2U> [accessed April 2016]

<sup>382</sup> Samples of lesson plans in Appendix 2.

<sup>383</sup> Matthew Reason, ‘Archive or Memory? The Detritus of Live Performance’, *New Theatre Quarterly*, 19:1, 2003, pp85-86.

suggests that ‘the only trace of the live performance event can and should be the audience’s memory’<sup>384</sup>.

In contrast, Reason has argued that the performance leaves much more behind than has been captured in the audience’s memory, for example, costumes and sets, musical scores, programmes, reviews, photographs, video recordings and so on. For *Imoinda*, this is already true as the original manuscript is currently held in the archives relating to the Talawa Theatre Company<sup>385</sup>. As Reason notes, ‘anything that is remotely associated with the performance can belong to an archive’.<sup>386</sup> To be more precise, taking the published editions of *Imoinda*, the live performances and all of the resulting documentation, for example, what transpires is that additional resources have been created to add to the performance archive that is *Imoinda*.

This performance archive speaks to the notion by the archaeologist, Michael Shanks, that archaeology is another kind of ‘memory practice where past is translated into present’, so that, according to Shanks, ‘we are all archaeologists now’. Further, he argues that ‘archives are all about narratives of origin, identity and belonging, and the politics of ownership, organization, access and use’<sup>387</sup>. By excavating *Imoinda* from Behn’s text, Anim-Addo has claimed ‘ownership, organisation,

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<sup>384</sup> Matthew Reason, ‘Archive or Memory?’, p85.

<sup>385</sup> Records of Talawa Theatre Company, V&A Department of Theatre and Performance, See archival record GB 71 TTC/5/1/60.

<sup>386</sup> Matthew Reason, ‘Archive or Memory’, p83.

<sup>387</sup> Michael Shanks, *Archive and Memory in Virtual Worlds*, A talk at the Media X conference, USA: Stanford, 2008, <http://documents.stanford.edu/michaelshanks/302> (accessed 26 March 2013).

access and use' taking *Imoinda* from the page to the stage and back to the page.

With some further deliberation on the question of the archive, I wish to suggest that in *Imoinda*, Anim-Addo has been able to create a 'double archive' as well as a 'creolised archive'. That is to say, not only is *Imoinda* archived within the text but through the operatic performances that have occurred and are still to come. These new performances, alongside the publications, workshops, videos and web site only serve to reiterate Reason's suggestion that the researcher, in this instance Anim-Addo, has been able to create this double and creolised archive 'constructing, selecting, editing and speaking for the archive' confirming that 'as you perform, you must record, and as you create you must document'.<sup>388</sup>

Likewise, as highlighted above, a past that is contained within the archive is being 'constantly revisited, re-read, reappraised, reinterpreted, revised and rewritten'.<sup>389</sup> I suggest further that Anim-Addo, in the case of *Imoinda*, has succeeded with this revisioning, re-reading, re-appraising, re-interpreting and re-writing in not only archiving but also creolising the archive. Moreover, as suggested by Nourbese Philip in another context, Anim-Addo has been able to define *Imoinda's* character with the 'text of the African's history and memory

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<sup>388</sup> Matthew Reason, *Archive or Memory*, pp84-85.

<sup>389</sup> Brent Harris, *Refiguring the Archive*, p162.

[...] inscribed upon and within that body'<sup>390</sup>. This body in turn becomes the archive containing all the tools that are necessary for spiritual and cultural survival resulting in a creolised archive that is important in 'balancing the relationships between history and memory'.<sup>391</sup>

In this chapter I have examined the ways in which the 'reputation of Anim-Addo's pen' has enabled the formation of Imoinda's story archive. Excavated from the 'source of evidence' that is Behn's text, Anim-Addo has refigured the 'double archive' and has created the beginnings of a 'creolised archive'. In humanizing the slave population, Anim-Addo charges Imoinda 'not to forget'. The libretto displays a shift in audience thereby signalling transference in the portrayal of white responsibility in the slave trade and in so doing has fashioned a real historical context for her retelling.

The network of women that make up the chorus is significant in its figuring of memory and specifically cultural memory of 'Old Guinea', or Africa. The key to resistance in the cruel conditions marking, to use Glissant's words, 'the irruption' into the new world modernity for African-heritage peoples is memory. Throughout the libretto we are reminded of the force of the whip but also that what is remembered 'the whip can't undo' (19).

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<sup>390</sup> Marlene Nourbese Philip, *Centre of Remembrance*, p5.

<sup>391</sup> Marlene Nourbese Philip, *Centre of Remembrance*, p5.

Anim-Addo's (re)membering, multiplicity of relationships and use of history has enabled the 'silenced woman slave' of Behn's text 'to turn into agency and a whole collectivity of African slaves speaks through her voice'.<sup>392</sup> In telling Imoinda's story Anim-Addo reveals a narrative that is often excluded from history and literary texts. As such, the final paragraph of Behn's novella, which is the epigraph with which I began this chapter, interestingly, does not end with Oroonoko, but instead Imoinda, perhaps leaving a doorway for her story to be told. The playwrights who adapted the Ur-text, I suggest, read the closing line of Behn's novella as a loss in the fate of the African people in the Caribbean. Throughout the many adaptations of Behn's text, all of which focus on Oroonoko's story, it is Anim-Addo's 'pen' that has brought the African Imoinda to the forefront of the literary imagination whilst at the same time refiguring the 'double archive' enabling one to read a 'creolised archive'.

Having begun to develop my thesis through an examination of performance writing of the neo-slave narrative, I return to the mid-twentieth century to offer an analysis and investigation of the Caribbean short story as archive for Jamaican Creole through the works of Olive Senior. Re-reading selected short stories from Senior's *Summer Lightning* and *Discerner of Hearts*, I question the nature of the voices archived within the text and the identity of the characters that speak. I ask: how effective is the representation of Jamaican Creole within this

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<sup>392</sup> Giovanna Covi, 'Oroonoko's Genderization and Creolization: Joan Anim-Addo's *Imoinda*', p85.

literary discourse and what meanings are to be drawn from the polyphonic voices used? I question how Jamaican Creole lends itself to acts of performativity within the text as short fiction?

## **Chapter Two**

### **Short Fiction Archiving Voices: Performativity of Madness and the Creole Experience**

## Chapter Two

### Short Fiction Archiving Voices: Performativity of Madness and the Creole Experience

“Writing?” she said, as if I had said whoring. “So when are you going to settle down and have children?”<sup>393</sup>

[...] to capture the voices of both the tellers or talebearers and of those who get spoken about; of writing the story as if it were being told.<sup>394</sup>

Chapter one focused on refiguring of the neo-slavery libretto *Imoinda* as a double and creolised archive that reclaims a narrative that is often excluded from history and literary texts even as it is implicated within both the production of writing and its reception.<sup>395</sup> In this chapter, I seek to offer a new way of reading selected Caribbean short stories from two single authored collections by the Jamaican author, Olive Senior, in order to question the nature and construction of the voices archived within the texts and the identity of the characters that speak. If Senior might be thought of as a descendant of the network of women in *Imoinda* ‘charged not to forget’, then the characters with which Senior peoples her ‘imagined communities’ are particularly significant in the representation of Caribbean Creoles, specifically Jamaican Creole, and culture within this literary discourse.

The first epigraph taken from ‘An Interview with Olive Senior’ (1988), refers to a discussion between Senior and an old school friend following

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<sup>393</sup> Charles Rowell, ‘An Interview with Olive Senior’, *Callaloo*, No 36, 1988, pp480-490.

<sup>394</sup> Olive Senior, ‘Lessons from the Fruit Stand: Or. Writing for the Listener’, *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol 20, No 1 (Summer, 1996), pp39-44.

<sup>395</sup> See Alison Donnell, *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History*, London and New York: Routledge, 2007, p138.

the publication of Senior's first book in 1972. Since then, Senior has written three collections of short stories: the award-winning *Summer Lightning* (1986), *The Arrival of the Snake-Woman* (1989) and *Discerner of Hearts* (1995) refuting the implication in the epigraph that writing is an unrealistic pursuit specifically for women. The second epigraph taken from 'Lessons from the Fruit Stand: Or, Writing for the Listener' (1996) describes Senior's desire to recreate the oral tradition on the page, a practice which becomes evident in her collection of short stories through her adaptation of Creole for the page. Given the nature of Caribbean society formed by and through Atlantic Slavery, creative writing as publication was not a cultural product that was anticipated from the Caribbean, at least not from the descendants of slaves<sup>396</sup>. It is hardly surprising then, that most of the Caribbean writers that Senior knew of in her childhood were those who had chosen exile that would allow access to a literary culture<sup>397</sup> – only Vic Reid, fellow Jamaican and author of *New Day* (1949) stayed at home making a living as a journalist.<sup>398</sup> Reid's *New Day* written entirely in Jamaican Creole may have had an impact on Senior and driven her desire to write in Jamaican Creole.<sup>399</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> See Marlene Nourbese Philip, *A Genealogy of Resistance*, p41-56. In 'The absence of Writing or How I Almost became a Spy' Philip describes her surprise at becoming a writer. The pull of the motherland and the suitable professions desired by Caribbean parents for their offspring, that of, Lawyer, Doctor, Teacher or Nurse.

<sup>397</sup> Writers, such as Claude McKay, Jean Rhys and Eric Walrond went abroad to become part of other literary cultures.

<sup>398</sup> Charles Rowell, 'An Interview with Olive Senior', p481.

<sup>399</sup> [https://www.nlj.gov.jm/BN/Reid\\_Vic/hn\\_reid\\_vs\\_044.pdf](https://www.nlj.gov.jm/BN/Reid_Vic/hn_reid_vs_044.pdf) See Newspaper review image from National Library of Jamaica in Appendices which indicates the critical responses to his work.

The nature of publishing in the mid 1900s in the Caribbean region was non-existent for literary texts<sup>400</sup>, specifically fiction, and those who wished to pursue a literary career had to do so from outside the region. This exile sparked a debate in which Kamau Brathwaite was concerned that the writer's physical disconnection from his roots would interfere with 'an exploration and mapping of the physical, social, moral and emotional territory that is ours'.<sup>401</sup> His contemporary, George Lamming, making a case for the 'pleasures of exile', argued that West Indian novelists remained rooted in the experience of the West Indian peasant majority stating that 'the substance of their books, the general motives and directions are peasant'.<sup>402</sup>

How Senior's writing relates to this debate may be seen in her short story collections where the majority of her stories are set in rural Jamaica, a significant part of her Creole experience, one familiar to Caribbean people across the region. Initially, Senior found it difficult to get *Summer Lightning* (1988) published as 'people didn't want to publish Creole'<sup>403</sup> and she was asked to rewrite the stories in Standard English but refused to do so, thereby dishonouring the people and

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<sup>400</sup> Book publishing in the English speaking Caribbean is a relatively recent phenomenon. Prior to the 1960s there were sporadic attempts by individuals and even large firms like the Gleaner Company's Pioneer Press in Jamaica, but some semblance of sustained publishing activity did not come to the region until the post-independence period. In that first immediate post independence period, the initiative to set up publishing operations came from British educational publishers who established either wholly-owned subsidiaries or went into partnerships with local business interests like the Collins/Sangster imprint in Jamaica. See Ian Randle, 'Swimming Against the Tide: The Challenge of Legal Publishing in the English Speaking Caribbean', *International Journal of Legal Information*: Vol. 37: Iss. 2, Article 8, 2010.

<sup>401</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, 'The New West Indian Novelists', *Bim* 32, (1961), p278.

<sup>402</sup> George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile*, (1960), p38.

<sup>403</sup> Charles Rowell, 'An Interview with Olive Senior', *Callaloo*, p486.

culture she was writing about.<sup>404</sup> Interestingly, in terms of exile, *Summer Lightning* was published while Senior was still in Jamaica. This meant that Senior was dependant on the metropolitan publisher and all of its associated risks, such as the possibility of having to make concessions/amendments to 'suit foreign tastes'<sup>405</sup>. The manuscript was taken on by Longman Publishing who accepted the stories as they were. For Senior, staying at home to write was 'a considerable act of faith'.<sup>406</sup> *Discerner of Hearts* (1995) was published in Canada, Senior's new diasporic home, almost a decade later. In this later collection Senior enacts multiple border crossings, in terms of a Canadian literary citizenship and as a self-exiled writer living in Toronto but memorialising Jamaica in her fiction.

This chapter highlights two stories from *Summer Lightning* and three stories from *Discerner of Hearts*; namely 'Summer Lightning', 'Ballad', 'You Think I Mad Miss', 'The Case Against the Queen' and 'Discerner of Hearts'. I examine specifically Senior's use and archiving of the child voice and the performativity of madness through the Creole word. These stories lend themselves to my enquiry as the characters' portrayal/performance within these texts speaks to my argument of the way in which the Creole word technologised, is able to perform on the page in a continuum that is rendered visible throughout the genres of Caribbean oral literature. By this I mean that the reader/listener is able to experience orality, specifically, through the rhythms underscored and

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<sup>404</sup> Charles Rowell, 'An Interview with Olive Senior', *Callaloo*, p486.

<sup>405</sup> Charles Rowell, 'An Interview with Olive Senior', *Callaloo*, p486.

<sup>406</sup> Charles Rowell, 'An Interview with Olive Senior', *Callaloo*, p486.

techniques used by Senior. As outlined in the introduction Senior's techniques resonate with Russell Kaschula's 'technauriture' in which orality, the written word and technology meet.<sup>407</sup>

To investigate the nature of Senior's orality – which serves as basis for her authority - the chapter is divided into eight sections with each examining a different kind of performativity. In the first section I examine the role of the storyteller in Jamaican society and the traces of this tradition that lend themselves to support my analysis for the authority with which Senior's use of Creole is foregrounded. In examining what Senior refers to as the 'arrival' of the Creole word where she states: 'my characters arrive with their language, whether it's English or Creole'<sup>408</sup>, this chapter interrogates the ways in which several travelling protagonists function within these short stories. While the protagonists are usually returnees or new arrivals who might speak in a range of registers, Senior privileges her use of the Creole word over Standard English. She states:

as a writer I feel privileged to have access to two worlds. One of them is an oral culture that is not ossified by tradition but which has a life of its own and continues to thrive apart from the scribal. But I am also a scribal person. What I do is mediate between the two worlds. Mediate between a private act (writing) and a communal one (voice), for this implies a teller and a listener, and thus implicitly invites participation.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> See 'The Emergence of a Technologised Auriture', pp45-58.

<sup>408</sup> Olive Senior, 'Interview with Dominique Dubois and Jeanne Devoize', in *Journal of the Short Story in English*, No 26, Spring 1996, Presses De L'Universite D'Angers, pp13-25.

<sup>409</sup> Olive Senior, 'Whirlwinds Coiled at My Heart: Voice and Vision in a Writer's Practice', in Brydon, Diana and Marta Dvořák (eds), *Crosstalk: Canadian and Global Imaginaries in Dialogue*, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012, pp21-38.

As George Lang states, 'Creole writers cannot escape the diglossic dilemma', yet Senior is able to negotiate this 'diglossic dilemma' through her mediation between 'a private act (writing) and a communal one (voice)' as the opening lines of 'Ballad' indicates:

Teacher ask me to write composition about The Most Unforgettable Character I Ever Meet and I write three page about Miss Rilla and Teacher tear it up and say that Miss Rilla not fit person to write composition about and right away I feel bad (100).

Writing and speech are juxtaposed from the outset and Lenora instinctively turns to the tradition of oral storytelling for her tribute to Miss Rilla.

Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of 'utterance' where he refers to two aspects of the voice - intonation and dialogism - and Édouard Glissant's 'relation', the fluidity of the Creole Word and the construction of the Creole voice are explored. Senior's use of monologue in her short stories and the mixture of Standard English and Jamaican Creole is a construction that, in Bakhtinian terms, 'contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two 'languages', two semantic and axiological belief systems'.<sup>410</sup> I question how effective is the representation of the Creole word in Senior's narratives and what meanings are to be drawn from the polyphonic voices used.

Sections two and three take as their point of departure a focus on the Creole voice that is attributed to the child narrator and explores the

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<sup>410</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Dialogic*, pp304-5.

themes of loss and betrayal within the ‘imagined communities’<sup>411</sup> of Senior’s fiction. In these communities, children are featured as being reared by aunties, grandmothers, distant relatives or admired adults whilst the biological mother and/or father remains peripheral to the narrative or is present only through their absence. This child-shifting practice is evident in Caribbean reality.<sup>412</sup> Outside children such as the ‘nameless boy’ character in ‘Summer Lightning’ and Lenora in ‘Ballad’ are indicative of what Senior describes as the ‘problematic nature of kin relationships’ which ‘stems from the practice of both men and women having children with different partners’<sup>413</sup>. Close reading of ‘Summer Lightning’ highlights the aunt’s inability to mother when she ‘has no idea what to do to entertain or amuse a boy child of that age’ and the uncle who tolerated the boy as it ‘was not his sister [...] who had made the disastrous marriage’ (5-6). Likewise in ‘Ballad’ Lenora recounts how MeMa is not her birth mother and that her father had conducted an affair with ‘a lady friend he was keeping one time over at Morningside’ (102). In order to avoid any embarrassment with her church peers MeMa elected to raise Lenora as one of her own. Section four provides a brief linguistic analysis of Jamaican Creole in ‘Ballad’.

In sections five, six and seven I draw on a recurrent theme in the selected short stories – one of madness or temporary insanity – and seek to scrutinise the notion of madness and the ways in which Senior

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<sup>411</sup> Drawing on Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* discussed in the introduction of this thesis.

<sup>412</sup> See Olive Senior’s *Working Miracles* (1991) in which child-shifting is described and reasons given for the prevalence of this practice. See pages 12-18.

<sup>413</sup> Olive Senior, *Working Miracles*, p20.

uses language to perform madness in her narrative of twentieth century Jamaica. The performativity of madness is significant in this thesis and supported by Glissant's argument in *Caribbean Discourse*, that the Caribbean exists in a profound historical lacuna and that the middle passage left the Caribbean population stranded in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Glissant writes:

what is the Caribbean in fact? A multiple series of relationships. We all feel it, we express it in all kinds of hidden or *twisted ways*, or we fiercely deny it. But we sense that this sea exists within us with its weight of now revealed islands. [...] Ordinarily insularity is treated as a form of isolation, a *neurotic* reaction to place. [...] It is only those who are tied to the European continent who see insularity as confining. A Caribbean imagination liberates us from being smothered.<sup>414</sup> [My italics]

One ensuing result of this exile has been the loss of the sense of self and an inability to make sense of one's position in the world. A cultural and historical rupture that challenges Caribbean authors trying to create a sense of self acknowledges both the connections to, and separation from, Caribbean roots in Africa. In other words, and re-iterating Glissant, 'we all feel it, we express it in all ways'. Glissant's emphasis is on '*remaining where you are*'<sup>415</sup>, that is to say, every geographical place is a site where other places meet and so it is possible to meet the world not just by travelling but also by dwelling too. 'Twisted ways' and 'neurotic reactions' can be read as symptomatic of the techniques deployed by the Caribbean writers who have perceived the departure into the wider world as a means of gaining knowledge. Senior argues that 'choosing to speak through the point of view of the supposedly

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<sup>414</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, p139.

<sup>415</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, p139.

insane can also be seen as part of a methodology for re-imagining the world we have inherited.’<sup>416</sup>

Similarly, Erna Brodber laments:

to be anything but crazy in the Caribbean [...] was crazy; the whole place is crazy. There is no model for sanity in the Caribbean. [...] How can there be [?] The whole business of slavery and us trying to make a society is not a sane thing. You have to be mad to create anything out of that confusion.<sup>417</sup>

I contend that madness becomes a trope for ‘a Caribbean imagination [that] liberates us from being smothered’. However, space does not permit any attempt at a diagnosis of the particular strains of madness affecting the fictional characters of Senior’s work. As stated in Lillian Feder’s *Madness in Literature* (1980) and other critical works<sup>418</sup> that explore the portrayal and significance of ‘madness’ in literary texts, study of literary madness requires some knowledge of ‘psychoanalytical theories of mental functioning and psychopathology where they provide essential clues to the symbolic nature and expression of such characters’.<sup>419</sup> Evelyn O’Callaghan sought expert medical opinion in her ‘treatment’ of the mad woman in the literary text to test Feder’s hypothesis. For O’ Callaghan this proved problematic as she states that ‘so much of the literature on mental illness seemed to [...] be oriented

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<sup>416</sup> Olive Senior, *Lessons*, p43.

<sup>417</sup> Opal Palmer Adisa, *Three Landscapes: Jamaican Woman Writers at Home and in the Diaspora*, p169.

<sup>418</sup> See Lillian Feder, *Madness in Literature*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980. Also Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.

<sup>419</sup> Lillian Feder, *Madness in Literature*, p10.

towards a European or North American context',<sup>420</sup> O'Callaghan used a conceptual framework of the self<sup>421</sup> in which to examine the development of the 'madwoman' figure in Caribbean fiction. I wish to highlight here that while my study will draw on O'Callaghan's framework, my concern is particularly the way in which the Creole language is used to perform madness. Through her use of diction associated with madness, for example, 'right off her head', 'straitjacket to Bellvue asylum' (D 28), as well as 'acting like mad-ants all day', and 'brayed like a donkey', (D49), Senior enlightens her readers.

Glissant notes the standard colonialist understanding of Creole as language: 'According to traditional textbooks, Creole is a patois that is incapable of abstract thought and therefore unable to convey 'knowledge'<sup>422</sup>. Contrary to this attitude, Glissant sees Creole language as a kind of camouflage, a protective language of the people.<sup>423</sup> In the manifesto titled 'In Praise of Creoleness', Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant define Creoleness, as a consciousness that is rooted in colonial history but that is also created through immigration, emigration, and intranational migration. Their manifesto presents the proposition of the positive effects of developing Creole into a standardised language calling for originality in the realm of literature that will provide the origins of a new politics and history.

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<sup>420</sup> Evelyn O'Callaghan, Interior Schisms Dramatised: The Treatment of the "Mad" Woman in the Work of Some Female Caribbean Novelists', *Out of the Kumbia: Caribbean Women and Literature*, Trenton: Africa World Press, 1994, p91.

<sup>421</sup> O'Callaghan draws on R D Laing's famous study, *The Divided Self: A Study of Sanity and Madness*, which deals with patterns of schizoid/schizophrenic behaviours.

<sup>422</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, p182.

<sup>423</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, p12.

Whatever the limitations of the manifesto<sup>424</sup>, there is much that is useful about the definition.<sup>425</sup> The Caribbean writer in his/her struggle to find a literary language is able to produce ‘creolised cultural products’,<sup>426</sup> as Michelle Cliff terms it, which combine the British literary tropes with Caribbean symbols and metaphors of a rich oral tradition.

### **‘A Story you a tell me’: Jack Mandora me nuh choose none**

When Caribbean critic, Kenneth Ramchand, championed the Trinidadian writer, Sam Selvon as the first West Indian author to ‘close the gap between the language of narration and the language of the fictional character’,<sup>427</sup> he was referring to Selvon’s short story ‘Brackley and the Bed’ in which both Standard English and West Indian Standard were replaced and the story written completely in ‘dialect’ or as I read it in ‘Trinidadian Creole’<sup>428</sup>. Ramchand argues that the West Indian writer who possesses both ‘WIS and dialect’ is able to use a range along this language continuum to vary the distance between the ‘voice of narration and the voice of the character’<sup>429</sup> and in so doing is able to negotiate the ‘diglossic dilemma’ to which Lang refers.

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<sup>424</sup> In an interview in *Le Monde* Confiant describes the limitations he has experienced with writing in Creole. ‘When I write in Creole I cannot play because I am obliged to build a tool [...] I repeat that writing in French is a pleasure whereas writing in Creole is a toil’. See Edgard Sankara *Postcolonial Francophone Autobiographies: From Africa to the Antilles*, 2011, p4.

<sup>425</sup> See Isabelle Constant, Kahiudi C. Mabana (eds) *Antillanité, créolité, littérature-monde*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013, pp27-36.

<sup>426</sup> Michelle Cliff, ‘With the Logic of a Creole’, *Snow on the Canefields: Women’s Writing and Creole Subjectivity*, USA: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p197.

<sup>427</sup> Kenneth Ramchand, ‘The Language of the Master?’ in *The West Indian Novel and its Background*, Trinidad: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983. p102.

<sup>428</sup> Sam Selvon. ‘Brackley and the Bed’ in *Ways of Sunlight*, New York: Longman, 1985. p139.

<sup>429</sup> Kenneth Ramchand, ‘The Language of the Master’, p102.

Ramchand's analysis is as relevant to Senior's work as it is to Selvon's.

For example, in 'Ballad' when Big Mout Doris is describing the death of

Miss Rilla, she says:

To tell yu truth we nevva like the dead body on the truck but she didnt look so bad you know she just look like she sleeping and how we did fine out that is dead she dead is that she did lean over on Jennie on the bench and Jennie say 'Hi Miss Rilla allow me to breathe no man you heavy to support yu know and we all want catch we little sleep before we reach town' (105).

In addition, Senior's narrative strategy renders the speaker breathless in her haste to describe to her attentive audience the demise of Miss Rilla. In the same way that Selvon's work sought to 'convert this oral impression into a visual one, so that the page becomes a tape recorder'<sup>430</sup>, likewise, Senior has enabled her text to function as a technologised Creole product, by virtue of being on the page, so that whether read aloud or silently, the syllables and phonetic relations permit the page to function as a 'tape recorder'. The reader is drawn into the emotiveness of the experience felt by the accompanying passengers as Big Mout Doris continues:

Then Jennie did try ease her back on her side of the bench and all the try she try she couldnt budge her for she like dead weight and then Jennie touch her and notice that she cold cold so she try wake her and she callin and shoutin so hard she wake up everybody else in the truck but not Miss Rilla and then Jennie give out 'Lord Jesus I think is dead Miss Rilla dead on me' and everybody start bawl out fe Jesus and we finally come to a real understanding that is dead she dead in truth so we knock on the window to get Poppa D to stop the truck and at last he must study that something wrong for he stop the truck and he come round

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<sup>430</sup> Martin Zehnder, *Something Rich and Strange: Selected Essays on Sam Selvon*, London: Peepal Tree Press, 2003, p119.

the back and he shout out: 'Is what happen to the whole lot of you eh?' (105-106).

Senior's use of capitalisation and lack of punctuation is a literary strategy that often resulted in editors thinking that she did not 'know how to punctuate'<sup>431</sup>. Big Mout Doris is given a speech pattern that is continuous and which goes on at great lengths, mimicking a true gossip. In using this narrative technique, Senior is able to maintain correspondence proximity with the oral and thus communicates to the reader the utter despair of those who bear witness to Miss Rilla's passing.

Senior has repeatedly confirmed her security with the use of the Creole word, describing herself as 'racially and socially a child of mixed worlds'<sup>432</sup> and of being embedded in worlds which were poles apart divided by race and class but cemented by the process of creolisation. For Senior, the concept of the voice is crucial as it is 'the means by which we bridge the two traditions of the scribal and the oral'.<sup>433</sup> Although writing from an early age, Senior was not to find what she describes as, her *true* voice until she allowed her characters to speak in their own voice. For instance, in 'Ballad' Senior allows her protagonist to speak thus: 'Is same way Blue Boy would say' (100). Notably the voice is not in Standard English but in Jamaican Creole. Senior says:

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<sup>431</sup> Hyacinth Simpson, 'The In-between Worlds of Olive Senior', *Wasafiri*, 23:1, 2008, p13.

<sup>432</sup> Charles Rowell, 'An Interview with Olive Senior', *Callaloo*, No. 36 (Summer, 1988), 480-490, p481.

<sup>433</sup> Olive Senior, 'The Poem as Gardening, the Story as Su-Su: Finding a Literary Voice', *Journal of West Indian Literature*, November 2005, Vol. 14, Iss. 1/2. Rooting and Routing Caribbean-Canadian Writing, pp 35-50.

once the character is allowed to speak, then everything else that contributes to story-narrative, scene, setting, description, other characters etc. will automatically fall into place, for speakers do not arrive empty-handed. They bring their entire worlds with them.<sup>434</sup>

Senior, then, in negotiating the 'diglossic dilemma' says:

It's natural for me when I write about that world [...] I don't have to consciously switch from one to the other; it comes naturally.<sup>435</sup>

Lang argues that the 'use of a language other than the Creole puts the latter on a slippery slope of assimilation and extinction'.<sup>436</sup> In line with Bakhtin's heteroglossic theory, Senior is able to use this multiplicity of stratified languages interchangeably so that Standard English and the Creole word 'mutually supplement one another' intersecting in different ways.<sup>437</sup> By this, I mean that they encounter one another and co-exist in the consciousness of real people – first and foremost in the creative consciousness of the writer.

Literary critic, Hyacinth M Simpson describes Senior's writing as 'performance texts' or indeed 'stories in the moment of performance'.<sup>438</sup>

This might be exemplified through the following:

So is what sweet you so, you little facetty bwoy? You never see stone fling after car yet? You want me to bus on in yu head? Say somebody shoul da call police? So why you don't do it, since you so shurance and force-ripe? (81)

Mimetically oral, Senior's writing is designed to be heard, experienced on an auditory level and this aural event/performance is achieved

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<sup>434</sup> Olive Senior, 'The Poem as Gardening, the Story as Su-Su: Finding a Literary Voice', p35.

<sup>435</sup> Hyacinth Simpson, 'The In-between Worlds of Olive Senior', *Wasafiri*, 23:1, 2008, pp10-15.

<sup>436</sup> George Lang, *Entwisted Tongues*, p143.

<sup>437</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, p292.

<sup>438</sup> Hyacinth M Simpson, Voicing the Text, *Callaloo*, Volume 27, Number 3, 2004, p831.

through the technologising of the Creole word creating- ‘technauriture’ - the three-way dialectic discussed earlier. Experiencing Senior’s work on an auditory level implies that there must be a listener and Senior argues that imagining ‘a listener is basic to the origins of the short story’.<sup>439</sup> Storytelling requires a storyteller and all the traditions that are associated with that role. Senior believes that her work is influenced greatly by the oral traditions as she grew up in a community where she listened to stories every night and this reinforced her desire to ‘utilize the voice’<sup>440</sup> in her work. Fundamentally, a storyteller, Senior recognizes and manipulates the expressive possibilities of the speaking voice.

As a storyteller in the oral tradition, Senior has a responsibility to educate and instruct. All forms of oral storytelling have a formulaic beginning and end such as ‘once upon a time’ and ‘happily ever after’ in a European context or ‘cric, crac’, and ‘Jack Mandora, me nuh choose none’ in a Caribbean context. The opening ‘cric’ requires a response ‘crac’ from the audience before the story is told. The formulaic ‘Jack Mandora’ ending usually signals that the storyteller is not accepting any responsibility for the tale told. In *The Dictionary of Jamaican English* (2002) the formulaic phrase ‘Jack Mandora, me nuh choose none’ is glossed meaning ‘this is not directed at anyone in particular’— but with the implication that if the shoe fits, one may put it on’.<sup>441</sup> Senior

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<sup>439</sup> Olive Senior, *Lessons*, p39.

<sup>440</sup> Olive Senior, *Lessons*, p39.

<sup>441</sup> F G Cassidy and R B LePage (eds), *The Dictionary of Jamaican English*, Jamaica; University of West Indies Press, 2002, p239.

extends this interpretation by calling attention to the ‘seeming paradox of both a distancing from and a sharing of responsibility for the story’<sup>442</sup> evident in the phrase. That is to say, on the one hand, the subject matter may not (always) be of the storyteller’s choosing (dictated as it usually is by social events); the storyteller assumes no responsibility for the veracity of the subject matter. But on the other hand, the intense desire to ‘talk story’ itself marks an awareness among participants in the oral event that ‘words are intrinsically powerful and that one must be careful in handling them [...] (otherwise why try to absolve oneself?)’.<sup>443</sup> Audience participation is integral to the storytelling event which is ‘successful when both teller and listener collaborate in and share responsibility for making meaning’.<sup>444</sup> Senior’s exposure to ‘storytelling, “hot” preaching, praying and testifying’<sup>445</sup> enables her to transpose some of the storyteller’s art to the page.<sup>446</sup>

Senior recalls that in the Jamaican village where she grew up stories and storytelling were everywhere: ‘storytelling was our entertainment, our radio and newspaper, and our socializing agent’<sup>447</sup>. In an interview with Marlies Glaser, she adds to the omnipresence of storytelling that of song:

[f]or every single night of our lives we were told stories, and orality pervaded the culture, because song is also important. People sang as they worked, and there were special work songs for all activities.<sup>448</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> Olive Senior, *Lessons*, p40.

<sup>443</sup> Olive Senior, *Lessons*, p40.

<sup>444</sup> Voicing the Text, *Callaloo*, p837.

<sup>445</sup> Charles Rowell, ‘An Interview with Olive Senior’, p480.

<sup>446</sup> Charles Rowell, ‘An Interview with Olive Senior’, p483.

<sup>447</sup> Olive Senior, ‘Lessons’, p41.

<sup>448</sup> Marlies Glaser, ‘A Shared Culture: An Interview with Olive Senior.’ *Caribbean Writers:*

For the Caribbean woman writer employing the tradition of oral storytelling assumes the long-established role of the woman as the person in the community who ensures the endurance of tradition and the indispensable bond with the past.

Stewart Brown describes the role of women in the oral tradition as that of ‘a conduit of myth and legend’<sup>449</sup>, meaning that it was their contribution to the ‘verbal arts’ – telling stories to younger generations – which has been crucial for the preservation of the oral tradition, and consequently also for its later use in literature.<sup>450</sup> Women, however, do not only assume the role of protectors of tradition but also that of the link with the past as a whole. This idea, of linking with the past as a whole has already been formulated in the previous chapter.

The use of colloquial language in dialogue and narrative is one of the main features of orality: the performative character of these written texts. The vernacular is an important part of this performative quality, for as Warner-Lewis notes, ‘performance is intrinsic’ to vernacular speech.<sup>451</sup> Furthermore, Senior employs numerous elements that are characteristic of spoken language as well as a first person narration, techniques which further heighten the performative quality of her

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*Between Orality and Writing*. Marlies Glaser and Marion Pausch (eds) Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 1994, p77.

<sup>449</sup> Stewart Brown, ‘Introduction’. *The Oxford Book of Caribbean Short Stories*, Stewart Brown and John Wickham. (eds) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. pp. xiii-xxxiii.

<sup>450</sup> Stewart Brown, p. xxvii.

<sup>451</sup> Maureen Warner-Lewis, ‘Language Use in West Indian Literature’, In Albert James Arnold, Julio Rodríguez-Luis, and J. Michael Dash (eds) *A History of Literature in the Caribbean: English- and Dutch-speaking countries*, Volume 2, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2001, p25.

stories. Senior is able to develop from these characteristics – and the performance aspect that is intrinsic to them – stories that are highly mimetic of genuinely oral tales and as I mentioned earlier can be called ‘performance texts’ or ‘stories in the moment of performance’.

### **Pickney should be seen and not heard**

Senior’s short story collection *Summer Lightning* is mainly concerned with the child’s experience and perception of the world. Of the ten stories in the collection seven have central child protagonists: ‘Summer Lightning’, ‘Love Orange’, ‘Bright Thursdays’, ‘Do Angels wear Brassieres?’, ‘Confirmation Day’, ‘The Boy who Loved Ice Cream’ and ‘Ballad’.

The girl protagonist in ‘Love Orange’ elaborates her own concepts of love and death, using the metaphor of an orange to define love that can be shared. In ‘Bright Thursdays’, Laura struggles with issues of identity and class status. ‘Do Angels wear Brassieres?’ has religion as its main focus and Becca (in the role of the trickster figure) outwits the archdeacon with her riddles. Much like Becca’s story, the protagonist in ‘Confirmation Day’ is an adolescent girl who sees the religious ceremony as a threat to her identity. Finally, ‘The Boy who Loved Ice Cream’ fantasises about the ice cream which can only be bought once a year on market day.

‘Summer Lightning’ and ‘Ballad’ are the focus of this section. ‘Summer Lightning’, opens: ‘The man came to stay with them for a few weeks

each year. For his ‘nerves’ they said’ (1). The title story of the collection focuses on a ‘nameless’ boy and his secret hiding place – the Garden Room. The travelling protagonist in this story is a sinister elderly gentleman who is a regular yearly visitor to the house. All we know of him is that he suffers from some kind of ‘nervous’ illness. He too is nameless. Indeed the only characters whom Senior ‘names’ in this short story are the Rastafarian men. Brother Justice, the aunt and uncle’s penman<sup>452</sup>, becomes a good friend and mentor to the boy. Brother Justice was not initially a Rastafarian and it is only after engaging in deep discussion with a ‘passing Rastaman’ that Brother Justice disappears for forty days and forty nights and re-appears with ‘his beard and his matted hair and his bible’ (5).

By introducing a religion indigenous to Jamaica, Senior is able to authenticate the character of Brother Justice as a moral and emotional compass in the boy’s life. The aunt, uncle and elderly gentleman are all from the same elite social class, whereas Brother Justice is working class. He is trusted by the boy but disliked by the aunt who believes that since his return he has ‘lost that respect for them which had been inculcated in men like him for centuries’ (6).

The aunt’s dislike for Brother Justice stems from her insecurities regarding caring for the boy. The child-shifting practice referred to earlier is evidenced in ‘Summer Lightning’ as we learn that the boy has

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<sup>452</sup> Pen is a cattle farm on enclosure. Penman is the man charged with the care of the cattle. See *Dictionary of Jamaican English*, p345.

been taken on by his aunt and uncle because of the disastrous marriage choice made by his mother. He is removed from a home described as 'small and snug' and mistakenly, he believes, placed in a 'big house with the perpetual smell of wax, the heavy mahogany furniture, [and] the glass windows' (5). The boy likens this transition to being placed in 'a suit many times too large and to which he could never have hopes of growing to a perfect fit' (5). On his arrival to the big house, Brother Justice becomes the only person the boy feels comfortable with as his aunt and uncle 'had no idea what to do to entertain or amuse a boy child of that age' (6).

Senior's use of the words 'small and snug' depict the nature of the loving home that the boy has been taken from which is contrasted to the 'big house' and 'heavy mahogany' all of which signal dark and unfeeling. Language holds the power to bring things into being by naming them. Language gives a sense of identity without which one is lost. Not only does Brother Justice have a name but he is the only one who is given a voice with direct speech as evidenced when he tells the boy "Lightning only strike liard" (1) during the recurring mid-afternoon thunderstorms to which the boy's reaction is to 'live in agony of mid-afternoons when sheet lightning washed the house' (1). Alongside the boy, Brother Justice has been given narratorial properties and thereby injects a double-voicedness into the text. In line with Bakhtin's theory on utterance where intonation is described as always at the boundary 'between the verbal and the nonverbal, the said and the unsaid', there is much in this story which is left unsaid. The reader must interpret the

intonation hidden between the lines. Brother Justice's narrative voice shifts between the verbal and the nonverbal. Nonverbal, for example:

He feared and disliked the old man for a reason that shamed him deeply, something that had occurred while his father was still alive and he was a young boy about the Pen, and something which he never liked to think about. [...] He knew the man was not watching the chickens or what he was doing. He was watching *him*. And watching him the way he should be watching a woman (7).

Brother Justice's 'fear', 'dislike' and 'shame', illustrate that there is a former history between Brother Justice and the old man. Throughout the text there runs an indication of paedophilia and when the boy is in the presence of the elderly gentleman, the focalisation of his narrative voice allows the reader to listen to his interior dialogue, watch his emotional anxiety and note his confusion and bafflement when danger looms and 'he first sensed his presence, then felt his breath' (10).

The construction of the boy is that of an innocent child with some peculiar mannerisms often retreating into his secret place – the garden room – but in a manner similar to someone with an obsessive compulsive disorder. He had a routine which he always carried out on entering the room 'close all ten jalousies, lock the doors' (2). Although alone, he was never lonely. The closing of the windows and doors unlocked the doors of his mind allowing him to occupy a different space, a world in which he was the master. Through the boy, the reader gains an insight into Senior's childhood experiences 'the powerlessness,

frustrations and lack of understanding by the adult world, [and] the alienation felt as a child'.<sup>453</sup>

The boy often retreats to his fantasy world as it is the only space in which he is understood. It is a space that his aunt and uncle are not allowed to enter. It is this fantastical space that allows him to view the old man as 'not quite ordinarily human' and imagine him as a 'space traveler in baggy clothes cast adrift from his planet' (4). Senior's strategic placing of an everyday work tool – the box level – in the hands of the boy enhances his fantasy world as he imagined that 'the green fluid in which reposed the eye, [...] winked at him when he tilted it' (3).

In his innocence the boy is unaware that the old man is 'watching him the way he should be watching a woman' (7) in much the same way as he had watched a young Brother Justice many years ago. Brother Justice, however, is not unaware and commits to keeping a watchful eye from a distance on the boy and the old man. When sexual abuse looms:

All through his body the boy suddenly felt drained and weak. Through a film like that covering the eye of the spirit level he saw the man advance towards him (10).

It is to Brother Justice that the boy turns for help. The language used throughout this short story is Standard English and it is Brother Justice alone who is given the Creole voice when he says 'Lightning is Jah triple vision. Is like X-ray dat' and 'when Jah want to search I out Jah send the lightning to see right through I' (1). Senior is able to insert Rastafarian influences within Brother Justice's Creole and the reader is

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<sup>453</sup> Charles Rowell, 'An Interview with Olive Senior', p484.

presented with lexical and grammatical features which are not found in Jamaican Creole. In effect, the mix can be read as a strategy of resistance to build up a cultural barrier against a hostile environment. In the sentence 'Jah send the lightning to see right through I', the deictic 'I' replaces the standard 'me'. Rastafarian speech also replaces the 'we', which is seen as divisive with the more communal 'I and I'. Senior's choice of a Rastafarian as the boy's only lifeline can be read as an indication of a new path towards an autonomous identity for the boy in contrast to the alien atmosphere of his relatives' home. For the boy, as danger looms and the sky holds more 'than a hint of summer lightning' (10), he has faith that Brother Justice will hear his silent call.

### **A Monument for Miss Rilla: Praise-song and Ballad**

In comparison, 'Ballad' is written entirely in Jamaican Creole and is the longest 'short story' in the collection. Divided into eight sections it tells the story of Lenora and Rilla. The voice used in the text is personal and individualistic, for example: 'When MeMa go on so I just sit quiet quiet [...] I call her MeMa though she really not my mother at all' (102), but it is also layered and multiplex, offering stories within a story. In Bakhtinian terms, 'the words are active elements in a dialogic exchange taking place on several different levels at the same time'<sup>454</sup>. This simultaneity is the concept behind Bakhtin's dialogism. Simultaneity occurs in the dialogue between the author, the characters and the audience and also in the dialogue that the reader has with the characters and the author.

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<sup>454</sup> Michael Holquist, *Dialogism*, London: Routledge, 1990, p69.

Lenora initiates the initial dialogue with the reader in the opening paragraph of the story when she says:

Teacher ask me to write composition about The Most Unforgettable Character I Ever Meet and I write three page about Miss Rilla and Teacher tear it up and say that Miss Rilla not fit person to write composition about and right away I feel bad the same way I feel the day Miss Rilla go and die on me (100).

Lenora is intent on alerting the reader to the strong emotions that she has for Miss Rilla and so her opening paragraph is delivered without any pauses, with no punctuation – no commas, no full stops. This effective narrative technique that Senior uses in her stories lends an oral flow to the written word. When Lenora is denied the opportunity to write about Miss Rilla, who is the matriarchal figure in her life but whom the community fails to recognise as the surrogate mother type, she draws upon the resource of oral culture. What Senior signals here is the paradigm that even though Miss Rilla is not a fit subject for the written discourse that encodes that society's European-derived ideologies and values, her story because it is of value will still be told.

Lenora's story is one of rebellion, against a system that refuses to allow her to express her culture through her chosen character, Miss Rilla, for her composition. The telling of Miss Rilla's life takes on music-like qualities as Lenora tells the reader:

I wish I could make up a ballad for her like they do for famous people in the old days [...] and when we come to the sad part we can have something like a chorus (100).

By this Lenora is referring to the order in which the various parts of the story emerge as she feels that there are parts of her story that, maybe, should appear in a different order:

Now it look like I gone and spoil this ballad story for this is not the way I want to tell it at all. The part about Miss Rilla dying is the end part and it really should start at the beginning (109).

In effect, Lenora has not 'spoiled' the ballad story and close reading reveals that Miss Rilla's story does have a chorus as evidenced by the elegiac evocation of Miss Rilla that appears at the end of most sections. 'O Lord. No more laughing. No more big gold earring' (104); 'Ai, no more laughing. No more Miss Rilla [...]' (108); 'O Lord I confuse confuse. No Miss Rilla to tell me what to do. No Blue Boy playing music [...]' (112); 'I only know no more bake things, no more Miss Rilla, all the laughing done' (115); 'Poor poor Miss Rilla. Ai my child, poor Poppa D' (118).

Miss Rilla has been ostracized by her community for her transgressive and sinful behaviour; yet, Miss Rilla embodies the indigenous culture rooted in traditional and folk values and is a valued surrogate mother to Lenora. Marginalised in her family home because of the colour of her skin and possible mixed roots, Lenora has Miss Rilla and Blue Boy as her only friends. Yet again the reader is introduced to the practice of child-shifting. However on this occasion it has a doubleness about it, in that MeMa, Lenora's stepmother, has children by Lenora's father and agrees to raise her as she cannot 'stand the embarrassment that it cause with her church sister' (102). Accordingly, Lenora is aware that she is

not wanted or loved like MeMa's other children and finds solace in the home of Miss Rilla who loves her because she doesn't have any children of her own.

Senior's construction of Lenora addresses issues concerning race and identity. By gifting Lenora with a slightly darker skin than her step-siblings, Senior has given Lenora a societal advantage. Her colouring is somewhat similar to that given to Miss Rilla and is seen by MeMa as Lenora's passport to a brighter future:

But teacher only like you because you darker than my children and is only that you red and not so black like him and everybody saying how black man time come now and they all sticking together and my children come out too good colour to suit him (109).

Yet again, reference is made to hair. Whereas Imoinda's hair is 'corn row' uphill, Lenora's hair is 'natty head' and 'natty and red' (110) in comparison to MeMa's children who have 'straight hair better than chiney hair' (109).

In contrast to the Rastafarian religion in the title story 'Summer Lightning', Lenora does not believe that Miss Rilla will have gone to heaven 'since all the time I know her she never even go to church' (115). Through the use of her own voice Lenora is able to tell Miss Rilla's story in words that allow her to reject received authority in favour of wisdom not found either in church or in Teacher's 'verb and things' (134).

### **Verb and Things: Noticeable features of Creole**

The language use in 'Ballad' reveals some of the basic characteristics of Jamaican Creole typical of all of Senior's short stories. Most of its lexicon derives from the English language and comprises words derived from other European languages, such as Portuguese ('pickney' meaning child), and Spanish (machete), as well as words derived from African and Amerindian languages.<sup>455</sup>

In comparison to Standard English, omissions at the grammatical level are a frequent feature of Creole. Inflexional suffixes such as the possessive marker ('s), past tense of regular verbs (-ed) and third person singular of present tense (-s) are eliminated. Examples of these omissions are: 'Mass Curly('s) goat' (101), 'when Miss Rilla die(d)' (100) and 'he say(s)' (116).

The musicality of Creole in written prose is recognised mainly through the repetition of lexical and syntactical forms and rhymes. An example of this repetition is reduplications, that is, lexical constructions formed by the repetition of the same lexical item, derived from African linguistic features.<sup>456</sup> For example, 'loud loud laugh' (101), 'fire me a box hot-hot' (102) 'sweet-sweet voice' (103), 'I confuse confuse' (111) and so on. These reduplicated forms achieve intensity of expression.

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<sup>455</sup> For examples of words derived from languages other than English see Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, pp20-21.

<sup>456</sup> Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and its Background*, p85.

Senior is able to alternate between a stylised Caribbean Creole for the narrating voice and a rawer Jamaican Creole for her characters' speech.

As evidenced when MeMa voices her contempt for Lenora's friend:

'Look at that wutless good-fe-nutten a gwan there nuh. [...] Is pure Coromantee nigger live over there like that bwoy Zackie that did tief Mass Curly goat yu no see how the lot of them redibo and have puss eye?' (101)

Senior uses phonetic spelling to transcribe the Creole pronunciation: 'wutless' (worthless), 'good-fe-nutten' (good-for-nothing), 'gwan' (go on), 'nuh' (now), 'bwoy' (boy), 'tief' (thief), and 'yu' (you). The noun 'tief' is used as a verb replacing 'to steal' in the passage above and is an example of a grammatical device, namely a functional shift. A further example of a noun functioning as a verb is 'prison' used in place of 'imprison': 'is only because Miss Rilla offer to pay for damages that they dont prison him (130). Similarly adjectives can be used as verbs: 'I would fraid what I see' (108). In this instance 'fraid' deriving from the adjective 'afraid' is used to replace 'to be afraid'.

### **Performing Madness**

In terms of her own identity, Senior describes her race and class, her moving between two worlds and the feeling that she belonged to none. This state of non-belonging and being divided may be seen as a kind of schizophrenia. Critic, Simon Gikandi defines a schizophrenic text as:

one in which subjects realise their knowledge through their 'split consciousness' and their suspension in a void between official language and the patois.<sup>457</sup>

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<sup>457</sup> Simon Gikandi, *Writing in Limbo: Modernism and Caribbean Literature*, London: Cornell University Press, 1992, p235.

With this knowledge and experience Senior sets out to produce a literature that would allow the Caribbean woman writer to 'speak with our own voices' and to produce a literature that would be 'written from the inside out instead of from the outside looking in'.<sup>458</sup>

Kathleen Balutansky writes that 'Caribbean women's writings are not mere sub/versions of Caribbean male narratives'. She suggests that 'writings by Caribbean women are autonomous and diverse expressions of a woman-centred Caribbean experience'.<sup>459</sup> I am interested in the way that Senior, as part of her representation of woman-centred Caribbean experience, draws upon the i-mage, in Marlene Nourbese Philip's terms, of madness, in the stories in *Discerner of Hearts* (1995) and how this is portrayed through her use of Creole language. Philip discusses the way in which the Caribbean writer has the ability to create new i-mages that 'speak to the essential being of the people among whom and for whom'<sup>460</sup> the text is written.

The i-mage of perceived madness presented in this chapter can be read as a metaphor for the broken Caribbean consciousness from post slavery to the production of these stories. As suggested earlier, madness is resonant with the historical rupture, particularly slavery, challenging Caribbean authors to create a sense of self. Evelyn O'Callaghan states that:

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<sup>458</sup> Simon Gikandi, *Writing in Limbo*, p490.

<sup>459</sup> Kathleen Balutansky, Naming Caribbean Women Writers, *Callaloo*, No 13, 1990, pp539-550.

<sup>460</sup> Marlene Nourbese Philip, *She Tries HerTongue*, p78.

women writers are dealing with the West Indian “quest for identity” - using the psychic damage and distorted self-image of the individual as metaphors for a kind of pervasive “illness” to which our societies are prone as a result of the colonial encounter.<sup>461</sup>

An examination of the effects of the colonial encounter, cannot be undertaken without reference to language. Philip describes the effects of this encounter as ‘the almost absolute destruction and obliteration of African languages’.<sup>462</sup> George Lang posits the view that ‘Atlantic creoles were born out of the chaos of the slave trade as a response to the *brutal disruption of community*’<sup>463</sup>. In agreement with Lang, Philip refers to this same disruption of community as ‘the linguistic rape and forced marriage between African and English tongues’. The resulting Creole is a language capable of ‘great rhythms and musicality’.<sup>464</sup>

Linguists such as Holm, agree ‘that when speakers of a Creole remain in contact with its lexical donor language there has been a historical tendency (eg in Jamaica, where English is the official language) for the Creole to drop its non-European features, often replacing them with European ones. This process is known as de-creolization and can result in a continuum that becomes the vernacular.<sup>465</sup> As Holm argues, those varieties farthest from the superstrate are called the ‘basilect’, those closest to it, the acrolect, and those in the middle ‘mesolect’<sup>466</sup>.

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<sup>461</sup> Evelyn O’Callaghan, ‘Interior Schisms Dramatised’, *Out of the Kumbla* (1994), Africa World Press, p104.

<sup>462</sup> Marlene Nourbese Philip, *She Tries Her Tongue*, p81.

<sup>463</sup> George Lang, *Entwisted Tongues*, p106.

<sup>464</sup> Marlene Nourbese Philip, *She Tries Her Tongue*, p89.

<sup>465</sup> John Holm, 2000, p10.

<sup>466</sup> See Crystal (1990) for further clarification on lect – a term which refers to a collection of linguistic phenomena which has a functional identity within a speech community (cf dialect, sociolect etc).

Examination of Senior's writing indicates movement along this Creole continuum ranging from Standard English through to Jamaican Creole. Senior often uses Jamaican Creole as the language of narration and as the language of direct speech. For example in 'Ballad':

I a-listen from round the side of the house [...] is only silence I hear. Then Miss Rilla say slow-like, "well, a jus a run a Mass Curly shop to get a little oil before dark for Poppa D never remember bring me a drop from town."  
(103)

Further, Senior's fictional characters within her short story collections are readily identifiable by the Caribbean reader or reader familiar with the Caribbean and are representative of figures that can be found in the community. Senior is aware of her ideal reader or target audience – readers in the Caribbean – and her short stories depict a concern with Caribbean, specifically Jamaican reality. Senior is, therefore, able to create the i-mage referred to earlier in this chapter of 'speaking to the essential being of the people among whom and for whom the text is written'.<sup>467</sup>

It can be argued that *Discerner of Hearts* (1995), a collection consisting of nine stories, is mainly concerned with place and character in rural and urban Jamaica. Characters in this collection, include a Madwoman who is the main protagonist in the story from which this section draws its title; Cissy and the Blackartman; Uncle, a returnee from the motherland; who arrives 'without a heart' and angry with the Queen; Eric, a mild-mannered businessman who has an affair with Sybil Pearson; and Miss Lynn and her poor husband, Arnold. These

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<sup>467</sup> Marlene Nourbese Philip, *SheTries Her Tongue*, p78.

characters relate to the stories that are linked through a theme of madness, though only a selection of the characters will be further discussed.

The protagonists in these stories all exhibit varying degrees of temporary insanity or madness. By madness, I mean a physical and mental breakdown, a fragmentation of self or loss of mind. These are only a few of the characteristics that can be assigned to the label of 'madness' and are appropriate as evidenced in O'Callaghan's use of the conceptual framework of the self, referred to earlier. What is interesting in Senior's writing is the way in which she conveys the madness of her fictional characters through her use of language and the i-mage which the language portrays. Since *Discerner of Hearts* works very much at the level of oral narrative it can be argued that Senior's role, as identified earlier, becomes that of storyteller or in Glissant's terms 'the *djobbeur* of the collective soul'.<sup>468</sup>

### **Yu tink I Mad, Miss? Is Mad dem Mad!**

In an interview given in 1986, Senior refers to growing up in a society where the 'spoken word' was important and children were entertained by adults telling them stories. For Senior, 'the sound of the voice is extremely important'<sup>469</sup> a sample of which drawn from the opening pages of the narrative is replicated below:

You Think I mad, Miss? You see me here with my full  
head of hair and my notebook and pencil, never go out a

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<sup>468</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, pp68-69.

<sup>469</sup> Anna Rutherford, 'Interview with Olive Senior', *Kunapipi* 8. 2 (1986) pp11-20.

street without my stockings straight and shoes shine good for is so my mother did grow me. Beg you a smalls, nuh? Then why your face mek up so? Don't I look like somebody pickney? Don't I look like teacher? Say what? Say why I living on street then? Then is who tell you I living on street? See here, is Sheraton I live. All them box and carochies there on the roadside? Well, I have to whisper and tell you this for I don't want the breeze to catch it. You see the wappen-bappen on the streetside there? Is one old lady ask me to watch it for her till she come back. And cause mi heart so good, me say yes. I watching it day and night though is Sheraton I live. For the old lady don't come back yet. Quick before the light change for I don't eat nutten from morning. I don't know is what sweet you so. But thank you all the same. Drive good, you hear (75).

The extract above, the first of ten conversations that the protagonist initiates with her 'community of neighbours', is a mixture of Standard English and Jamaican Creole and commences with the protagonist introducing a question to which she immediately provides the response. The reader is allowed to visualise the performance that is being played out. Senior's use of a speech act known as 'tracing' derived from the fusion of Asante rituals of verbal abuse with the Scottish tradition of 'flyting' involves the calling out of a name and a public demonstration of conflict.<sup>470</sup> Isabella is the tracer projecting herself into the public eye demanding to be heard and seeking validation for her unfortunate circumstances. Her 'community of neighbours' are unwilling witnesses to this act of tracing as the tracees are not present.

The tracees are the charmer, Jimmy Watson, the uneducated, wanton woman, Elfreida Campbell, Isabella's mother, Miss Catherine and Dr

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<sup>470</sup> For further information on tracing see Jean D'Costa, 'Oral Literature, formal Literature: The Formation of Genre in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 27, 4 (Summer 1994): pp663-76 and Roger Abrahams, *The Man-of-Words in the West Indies: Performance and the Emergence of Creole Culture*, (1983), p130.

Bartholomew, the psychiatrist at Bellevue. The 'community of neighbours' consists of different family groupings: courting couples; mother and daughter and young men. Referring back to Lang's '*brutal disruption of community*', Senior's 'fictional community' exhibits signs of this '*disruption*'. In *Discerner of Hearts* specifically, the reader is invited to witness the aftermath of this disruption in the stories 'You Think I mad, Miss?', 'The Case Against the Queen' and the title story 'Discerner of Hearts'. Critic, Horace Goddard, describes the pace, language and real life situations in *Discerner of Hearts* as 'dizzying to the point of madness',<sup>471</sup>

How insane is Senior's protagonist when she says 'well I have to whisper and tell you this for I don't want the breeze to catch it' (75) or when she talks about being smarter than everyone else and says 'tree never grow in my face neither' (76). Senior's writing demonstrates her writerly skill with humour, yet even while Isabella is being laughed at, she is able to give guidance when she says, 'don't mek that young man behind steering wheel have business with you before you married' (77) and 'you better mind is nuh laugh today, cry tomorrow' (77). The question are these the signs of a madwoman or of someone who has been hurt and betrayed by the people that she loves remains with the reader. Furthermore, 'you better mind is nuh laugh today, cry tomorrow' exemplifies Senior's use of proverbs and can be associated with the wily skills of survival and ancestral wisdom which would have been necessary during slavery. They contain hidden messages. They

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<sup>471</sup> Horace Goddard, *Kola* 12.1, 2000.

‘say without saying’ as Glissant highlights, referring to the hidden orality as a ‘literature striving to express something it is forbidden to refer to and finding risky retorts to this [...] censorship every time.’<sup>472</sup>

Senior’s madwoman protagonist, Isabella Francina Myrtella Jones, stands at the intersection of Lady Musgrave Road and Hope/Old Hope Road. An aspect of tracing is that those being traced are usually not given a chance to respond. By placing herself in this arena, Isabella has ensured that the tracees cannot respond. It is this space in which Isabella has a captive audience and hopes to garner support whilst they wait for the traffic lights to change. The junction becomes Isabella’s courtroom where she expects her ‘community of neighbours’ to pass judgement in her favour. The reader is able to visualise Isabella with disheveled hair and ‘carochies’ and ‘wappen-bappen’ on the roadside. Senior’s use of Jamaican Creole ‘carochies’ and ‘wappen-bappen’, does not detract from the reader’s ability to understand what is being represented. ‘Carochies’ – trash, rubbish, things of little value and ‘wappen-bappen’ – slum house made of miscellaneous pieces of wood and metal are identifiable as such because Senior makes this evident through the questioning of the passing motorists as to why Isabella is living on the street. Through Isabella’s conversations with the ten passing cars we gain an insight into her life, mind and that of the ‘fictional community’.

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<sup>472</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, p68.

With each conversation, Isabella's tragic story is revealed. From her failure to become a qualified teacher through to her imagined pregnancy and perceived loss. Isabella is not seen as a danger to the community as she is constantly watched by the authorities in the space that she has claimed as her own, evidenced when she tells a commuter: 'You see that police fellow there from morning? [...] like a thorn in mi side? [...] Is what do him ee?' (79)

Isabella is perceived as suffering from a mental illness by her family and friends although she attempts to defy this labelling. One aspect of her imagined world remains throughout and that is the birth of her child. However, initially she describes the baby as a girl weighing 'seven pound, six and a half ounce' (77) and again as an 'eight and three-quarter pound, [...] spanking baby boy' (80) and finally 'ten and a half pound' (80). At first, it might appear that Isabella has given birth to three children due to the different weight sizes recalled, but the reader quickly realises that she is referring to the same child on all three occasions. The language that she uses switches depending on whom she is having a conversation with alongside her own emotional state, ranging from 'and since when dutty bwoy like you think you can eggs-up so talk to Miss Catherine daughter' to 'Hello, my sweet little darling. What you have to give me today?' (76)

Isabella might be considered as a woman whose mind has suffered a psychotic break due to her infatuation with a young man who makes her pregnant and then runs off with a woman who can just about sign her

own name.<sup>473</sup> The multiple characters in her monologue are seen as avatars of herself created in order for her to find a way through the turmoil. Yet, could it be that Isabella is the victim of a great injustice? Becoming pregnant, unable to complete her teacher training and finally as an unmarried mother having to give birth to a baby that she is not allowed to keep are compelling factors to fracture the psyche.

My reading of Isabella's madness foregrounds an alternative possibility, one of betrayal and deceit and a glimmer of the idea that there might be some truth in Isabella's story. Senior's writing is realistic but she is also aware of the 'great ineffable mystery that lies at the core of each life, at the heart of every story'<sup>474</sup> and has been able to write that mystery into the story. Isabella's initial introduction to the reader has her holding a 'notebook and pencil' and makes reference to the teaching profession and that she was 'brighter than all other pickney around' (76). In *Working Miracles*, Senior states that 'female public servants such as teachers had to resign if they got pregnant' and that 'Mothers' aspirations for middle- and upper-class girls [...] in the 1960s was for an education leading to a profession and/or a husband'.<sup>475</sup> Isabella's recollection of her mother Miss Catherine, Dr Bartholomew and Jimmy Watson is consistent along with her own memories of 'the baby already

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<sup>473</sup>Hyacinth M Simpson, 'Voicing the Text': The Making of an Oral Poetics in Olive Senior's Short Fiction, *Callaloo* 27.3 (2004) pp829-43. Simpson argues persuasively that Isabella's 'schizophrenic delusions are rooted in a crisis over her sexuality [...]' and that 'the mad woman's public act of tracing brings unhealthy, distorted and ultimately destructive social beliefs and perceptions about female sexuality to public attention in an effort to help individual women and the community move toward more liberating and affirming views of female sexuality' (841).

<sup>474</sup> Charles Rowell, 'An Interview with Olive Senior', p484.

<sup>475</sup> Olive Senior, *Working Miracles*, p72.

on the way. I could feel it kicking inside me' (80). All of which lead to Isabella willing the authorities to allow her the opportunity to speak in court and respond to her unanswered charges.

Isabella's obsessive repetition of phrases such as 'Is from morning I don't eat' to 'don't eat a thing from morning' to 'don't get a thing to eat from morning' gives the reader a sense of her despair and desolation. Yet, amidst this apparent hunger, she is lucid and at the end of the monologue is able to list her six questions. The first question relates to her missing child 'Is who take away my child?' Her fourth question relates to her mother, Miss Catherine, who has abandoned her in her time of need and whom Isabella believes has been the victim of obeah practices. She asks 'Why my mother Miss Catherine never believe anything I say again. Why she let me down so? Is obeah them obeah her too why she hand me over to that Bartholomew?' Her final question is a spiritual reference to God when she cries 'what I do why him have to tek everybody side against mine?' (82) Senior is able to insert an additional folk belief system into the narrative, that of obeah, thereby giving Isabella's story a primary orality connection to 'the other world which lurks not too far beyond our everyday existence'.<sup>476</sup>

Isabella wishes to have her day in court, to have her story heard. In her plea to 'stand up in front of judge and jury' she has constructed her own court at the roadside and through the speech act of tracing has become the Judge with her 'community of neighbours' as the jury.

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<sup>476</sup> Charles Rowell, 'An Interview with Olive Senior', p484.

### **Dis/functional Heart: This Functional Heart**

In 'The Case Against the Queen' Senior uses the i-mage of a suitcase, bowler hat and three-piece suit as a metaphor for Uncle's commitment to and argument with England and its monarch. This story, written in Standard English, revolves around Uncle's return from England without a heart. He tells his niece:

That's not my heart you hear beating. I don't have a heart anymore. That's a mechanical contrivance they put inside of me. Ticking like a clock. They took my heart out when I went into hospital there. The doctors attached some wires to my head and when I was unconscious they took my heart out and put in this machine. ... It was advantage-taking to the highest degree. I wrote to the Queen about it (42).

Uncle, who has returned to his homeland, has not only lost his heart and his mind but also his true language. Thus, 'no thank you' was all he ever said in a voice which was 'fruity and melodious, so cultured, so precise', words formed around a 'ripe plum in his mouth' (40). Many people in Uncle's community have returned 'from foreign' with some type of insanity, leading his niece to voice her fears 'was there something in the atmosphere of foreign [...] that made people go mad [...]?' (49) It is suggested that specifically, England, the motherland, is not all it appears to be and the Caribbean psyche becomes fragmented when in close contact with it or perhaps with the effects of the aftermath of slavery.

Uncle's story is narrated by his niece, who bears the same name as his departed sister, Girlie. Girlie immediately alerts the reader that all is

not right with Uncle as since his return from England 'he had not taken off his three-piece suit' (38). His mother believes that too much studying has caused 'brain strain' as she refuses to use the word mad. Whereas his father snaps 'Lawd, woman, is foreign mad him' (48).

Senior states that her stories all come from an image of some kind, a visual image or phrase that triggers a response. Senior's central image for Uncle stems from her memory of a man who used to walk past her house everyday when she was living in an up-market area of Kingston. Dressed exactly as Uncle in the story he would pace up and down her street in the same stiff manner.

Can Uncle's fragmented mind be likened to experience similar to Foucault's ship of fools? Foucault, in *Madness and Civilization* refers to the ship of fools carrying the sane and the insane in search of sanctuary and sanity that ends up sailing aimlessly, never arriving. Glissant enhances Foucault's theory and argues that the Caribbean islands have become 'ships of fools'<sup>477</sup>. Metaphorically speaking, the Caribbean people were forced to take their journey into the Caribbean and like Foucault's madmen belong to neither the city they arrived at, nor the city that they left behind. Uncle makes his journey from the Caribbean to Europe and suffers yet another psychotic break. He returns home leaving his wife and child behind. His madness is permeable and begins to seep into the household resulting in his father

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<sup>477</sup> See Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*.

wishing his son 'had the kind of madness that you could lock up, so nobody would know about it' (50).

### **Discerner of Hearts**

In comparison, 'Discerner of Hearts', the title story of Senior's third short story collection, is a tale of love, jealousy and voodoo. In response to Theresa's question 'what is a 'Blackartman' and why are there so many flags towering above his house'? Cissy replies "[...] you faas too much. [...] 'Not everything good to eat good to talk' (3). Senior thus immediately invokes the orality of Creole language described in Jean Bernabe et al's manifesto, '*In Praise of Creoleness*', where they suggest that *la créolité* must be redefined as incorporating but not being reduced to language, history, race and culture. Creoleness, for them, is described as a consciousness that is rooted in colonial history but that is also created through immigration, emigration, and intranational migration. The Caribbean writer is called upon to 'inseminate Creole in the new writing'<sup>478</sup>. The oral nature of Creole is seen as a way of reclaiming Caribbean history beyond the confusion of colonial history. Creoleness and a resistance to colonial identifications are to be found, perhaps in Creole languages of the Caribbean:

Our Creole culture was created in the plantation system through questioning dynamics made of acceptance and denials, resignations and assertions. A real galaxy with the Creole language as its core, Creoleness, has, still today, in its privileged mode: orality. Provider of tales, proverbs, "titim", nursery rhymes, songs, etc, orality is our intelligence; it is our reading of this world, the experimentation, still blind of our complexity. Creole

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<sup>478</sup> Jean Bernabe, Patrick Chamoiseau and Ralph Confiant, 'In Praise of Creoleness', *Callaloo* 13: 1990, p895.

orality, even repressed in its aesthetic expression, contains a whole system of countervalues, a counterculture; it witnesses ordinary genius applied to resistance, devoted to survival.<sup>479</sup>

It has been argued by some critics, for example, Michele Praeger, that 'Chamoiseau's theoretical reflections on the conteur (storyteller) are undeniably masculinist'.<sup>480</sup> James Arnold invokes gender issues when he asks the question as to 'whether negritude was not a specifically male response to the pressures of colonialism from a clearly gendered perspective'.<sup>481</sup> Furthermore, Maryse Condé addresses the absence of the female figure in these nationalist movements and sets out, in her fiction *Moi Tituba* (2005) to demystify the version of history put forward by male Caribbean authors.<sup>482</sup> In *La Parole des Femmes* Condé writes:

The role of the woman within liberation struggles prior to and after the abolition of slavery has been largely concealed. Often working on the small plantation as a servant (in charge of the cooking, childcare [...]), she has in many cases been responsible for collective poisoning of masters and their families [...]<sup>483</sup>

This inner strength and subversive nature are evidently reflected in Senior's protagonist, Cissy, whose reply to Theresa is in the form of a proverb which basically tells her that there are some things that must not be spoken. Again Glissant's 'saying without saying' may be invoked. Senior gives her protagonist further proverbs such as 'Lizard drop on me' (14). Such everyday hidden code allowed slaves and their

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<sup>479</sup> Jean Bernabe, Patrick Chamoiseau and Ralph Confiant, 'In Praise of Creoleness', p895.

<sup>480</sup> Michele Praeger, *The Imaginary Caribbean and the Caribbean Imaginary*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2003, p112.

<sup>481</sup> A James Arnold, 'Negritude: Then and Now, in Arnold, A James, Julio Rodriguez-Luis, and J. Michael Dash (eds), *A History of Literature in the Caribbean: Volume 1: Hispanic and Francophone Regions*, USA: John Benjamins Publishing, 1994, p483.

<sup>482</sup> Maryse Condé, *Moi Tituba*, France: Mercure de France, 1986.

descendants to be able to pass on secret messages and in this case ‘everyone knew that a croaking lizard losing its grip on the ceiling and dropping onto a woman meant only one thing’ (14) - pregnancy.

The madness in this protagonist is brought about through voodoo imagery – of the ‘blood and feather and grave dirt’ kind. As in ‘The Case Against the Queen’, the protagonist’s madness is portrayed to the reader through the use of Standard English:

[...] she began to talk wildly to Theresa about going mad, about wandering spirits, and her Aunt Millie, [...] (18).

It is the narrator who relays this message of madness to the reader and in doing so the protagonist is silenced and given no language in which to speak. So it was too with her Aunt, condemned to Bellevue Hospital by her own people when she too had been cursed:

They had done something their people had never done before: asked the police to come and take one of their own [...] for there was mad and there was mad, and they knew that no power on earth could help her (28).

In order to imagine Cissy’s fate the reader must enter her world of Obeah to understand that which she fears the most, that which is not given words and hence no i-mage.

The stories examined use a mixture of Standard English and Jamaican Creole to depict the characters ‘madness’. In terms of the Caribbean woman writer, Condé refers to ‘mental breakdown’ and ‘madness’ as themes in their work and argues that:

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<sup>483</sup> Maryse Condé, *La parole des femmes: Essai sur des romancières des Antilles de langue française*, p4. Original text in French. Paris: L’Harmattan, 1979.

Whenever women speak out they displease, shock or disturb. Their writings imply that before thinking of a political revolution West Indian society needs a psychological one. What they hope for and desire conflicts with men's ambitions and dreams.<sup>484</sup>

Philip argues that:

in the absence of any other language by which the past may be repossessed, reclaimed and its most painful aspects transcended, English in its broadest spectrum must be made to do the job.<sup>485</sup>

Furthermore, Philip states, that it would be wrong to 'say that the colonial experience can only be expressed in Standard English or only in the Caribbean demotic'<sup>486</sup>, the name she gives to Creole. Language is always a dilemma for the Caribbean writer, but it is with the tool of language that the Caribbean woman writer will transcend and write her 'Caribbean yellow at 3 o'clock any day now'<sup>487</sup>.

Like Simpson, I agree that Senior's 'stories in the moment of performance' are resonant with the Creole dramatic monologues of Louise Bennett.<sup>488</sup> Senior's performance texts are ironically constructed first person narratives; but it is the dramatic, theatrical quality of Senior's speakerly texts that sets them apart from more conventionally conceived first-person narratives and reconfigures the isolated, individualistic experience of reading into the more immediate and intimate collaboration of speaker and listener, performer and audience.

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<sup>484</sup> Maryse Condé, *Order and Disorder*, pp131-132.

<sup>485</sup> Marlene Nourbese Philip, *She Tries Her Tongue*, p18.

<sup>486</sup> Marlene Nourbese Philip, *She Tries Her Tongue*, p84.

<sup>487</sup> Olive Senior, *Gardening in the Tropics*, p18.

<sup>488</sup> Louise Bennett, 'Jamaic ooman'. Bennett's work still stands as the earliest examples of a successful attempt to capture the speaking subject and the speech event on the page.

Senior's writing successfully transposes to the page much of the storyteller's art. Her stories are often open-ended, inviting the reader to complete the story. Senior is well aware that it is her job as a writer not to say it all - she is one half of the equation (reader-writer). The story only becomes complete when it is read and the reader enters the world that has been created.<sup>489</sup> Importantly for this thesis, Senior foregrounds the Creole word in her work and deploys the language of the people alongside the language of the colonizer. Living in a diglossic culture where Standard English is the 'high' language and Creole is the 'low' language, it can be argued that like Caliban, Senior adopts the 'mask' of the coloniser in order to survive/succeed.

What cannot be missed is that Senior uses the varieties of Creole in the linguistic continuum ranging from the basilect to the acrolect, from orality to literacy. Lamming writes:

the peasant tongue has its own rhythms ... and no sophisticated gimmicks leading to the mutilation of form, can achieve the specific taste and sound of [...] prose. For this prose is, really the people's speech, the organic music of the earth.<sup>490</sup>

Senior's prose is 'the people's speech, the organic music of the earth' and as such provides not only as Gikandi argues 'a point of entry into Caribbean oral culture'.<sup>491</sup> It archives the orality of the culture. In 1988 Ramchand stated that 'once there came into existence a class of West Indians who combined Standard and dialect in their linguistic competence, the two registers became open to influence from each

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<sup>489</sup> Charles Rowell, 'An Interview with Olive Senior', p483.

<sup>490</sup> George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile*, p45.

<sup>491</sup> Simon Gikandi, *Writing in Limbo*, p108.

other.’<sup>492</sup> It is at this point that Senior enters the picture to begin an archiving particularly through the voices.

Senior’s use of language and narrative techniques alongside aspects of the oral tradition demonstrate as stated earlier that orality ‘has a life of its own’<sup>493</sup> and that the Caribbean writer is able to draw on the oral traditions using proverbs, riddles and tracings for poetic inspiration.

For Senior:

voice is a literary device that allows [her] to communicate with readers at a deeper level and [...] to be true to the people, situations and cultures [...] because it does not objectify.<sup>494</sup>

In this chapter I hope that I have been able to show how Senior’s use of Standard English and Jamaican Creole has been instrumental in the construction of the child’s voice and the performance of madness in the selected short stories. At the same time, they exemplify a different layer of archiving.

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<sup>492</sup> Kenneth Ramchand, ‘West Indian Literary History’, *Callaloo* 11.1, 1988, p105.

<sup>493</sup> Olive Senior, ‘Whirlwinds Coiled at My Heart’, p28.

<sup>494</sup> Oliver Senior, ‘Whirlwinds Coiled at My Heart’, p28.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Riffing on Orality and Archiving Feelings: Memorialising Her(story) in Merle Collins' *Angel***

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#### **Riffing on Orality and Archiving Feelings: Memorialising Her(story) in Merle Collins' *Angel***

“Go on chile  
take what ah din get  
you hear  
ah has no money to leave  
all ah have  
is in you head”

(Merle Collins, ‘Nabel-String’, *Because the Dawn Breaks!*)<sup>495</sup>

In the previous chapter I added further to my examination of the literary text as a creolised archive and explored the ways in which the Creole voice has been articulated in short fiction, the construction of the identity of its characters, and the polyphonic nature of the voices illustrated. This chapter explores Merle Collins’ use of oral folklore and linguistic tracing as literary strategies for performing alternative versions of history. In this instance the alternative version is of the Grenadian revolution. I argue that diction, characterisation and theme are foregrounded and this ‘performance of history’ through the literary text enables an alternative version to be memorialised and archived offering an important version of a truth through the vernacular of the Grenadian community.

The title of this chapter, ‘Riffing on Orality and Archiving Feelings’ signals my interest in exploring the ways in which the act of storytelling, the role of the storyteller and the use of orality is central to the process of archiving both personal and national histories in Collins’

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<sup>495</sup> Merle Collins, ‘Nabel-String’, *Because The Dawn Breaks!*, London: Karia Press, 1985, p4.

oeuvre. The concept of 'riffing' relates to jazz aesthetics. As described by literary critic, Mark Busby:

riffing is a jazz technique where an artist improves upon another artist's musical leitmotif until it takes new shapes and creates new sounds. In this way the artist achieves the present-ness of the past.<sup>496</sup>

Busby's definition bears similarity, for example, to Henry Louis Gates Jr's term 'Signifyin(g)' – a concept elaborating on the nature of African American literary intertextuality.<sup>497</sup> Much has been written about jazz in relation to African American literature but also to Caribbean writing. Notably, Kamau Brathwaite has written about a jazz aesthetic in the Caribbean context. Brathwaite argued that while there is 'no West Indian jazz'<sup>498</sup> the region and the music shared 'certain fundamental elements and essences.'<sup>499</sup> Brathwaite uses the idea of jazz as an aesthetic model<sup>500</sup> to analyse Roger Mais' *Brother Man* (1954). His analysis reveals 'certain rhythmic, thematic and structural features'<sup>501</sup>, justifying the comparison to jazz and signalling *Brother Man* as an example of the 'jazz novel'.<sup>502</sup>

For Brathwaite, the 'jazz novel' will deal with:

a specific, clearly defined, folk-type community, it will try to express the essence of this community through its form. It will absorb its rhythms from the people of this

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<sup>496</sup> Mark Busby, *Ralph Ellison*, Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991, p82.

<sup>497</sup> See Henry Louis Gates Jr, *The Signifying Monkey* (2014) in which he argues for a theory of interpretation based on the African American vernacular tradition of 'signifying'. Signifyin(g) is a satirical African American oral tradition that assumes many forms such as marking, loud-talking, testifying, calling out (of one's name), sounding, rapping, playing the dozens' (57). In Bakhtinian terms, Signifyin(g) is inherently dialogic, always existing within a relationship with an other.

<sup>498</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, 'Jazz and the West Indian Novel', *Roots*, p59.

<sup>499</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, 'Jazz and the West Indian Novel', *Roots*, p61.

<sup>500</sup> Brathwaite's use of 'model' refers to using the techniques of jazz as a way of seeing; a critical tool.

<sup>501</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, 'Jazz and the West Indian Novel', p103.

<sup>502</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, 'Jazz and the West Indian Novel' p107.

community, and its concern will be with the community as a whole, its characters taking their place in that community of which they are felt and seen to be an integral part.<sup>503</sup>

Collins' *Angel* is examined in this thesis as an example of Brathwaite's 'jazz novel'. Through *Angel* we meet the 'folk-type community' and 'absorb its rhythms'. Collins' deployment of the jazz aesthetic of 'riffing' throughout the novel enables her characters to 'take their place within the community'. The process, here referred to as rifting, is as integral to the literary text as it is to performance. My argument is that Collins deploys such rifting as a literary technique within the novel, notably through her use of Creole proverbs. The 'riff' is a sign of repetition and multivocality and thereby 'serves as an especially appropriate synonym for troping and for revision'.<sup>504</sup> I interrogate what 'riffing' in this context, contributes to a Creole literary tradition and its archiving.

In considering a history that is at once both personal and national to Collins, as *Angel* illustrates, this chapter will read two texts alongside each other. These are Collins' short story 'Madelene',<sup>505</sup> approached in this context as personal and domestic, and her historical novel *Angel* (1987 and 2011 editions) read as a national narrative that is simultaneously personal. Colombian writer, Gabriel García Márquez, who positions himself as a Caribbean writer, notes that storytelling 'embodies the possibility that an oral storytelling chain can function as

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<sup>503</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, 'Jazz and the West Indian Novel', p107.

<sup>504</sup> Henry Louis Gates Jr, 'A Theory of the Tradition', *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, p114.

<sup>505</sup> Merle Collins, 'Madelene' in *Rain Darling*, London: Women's Press, 1990, pp68-85.

an alternative archive to hegemonic history'<sup>506</sup>. That is to say, that Collins has been able to inscribe her memories of the 1983 massacre into her historical fiction, as prior to the publication of *Angel* these events were mostly absent from the written histories of the region, surviving predominantly in local oral accounts. If, as Jennifer Harford Vargas suggests, 'fictional representations of historical events can function as powerful forms of testimony'<sup>507</sup>, then the question who is afforded the textual space in which to remember these narratives and testimonies is a crucial one which is of particular concern in this chapter.

That Collins' narrative approaches the scale of the national is important to my thesis. No other Grenadian author before her has told the national story in this way. Moreover, in *Angel*, the questions whose story is re-told, who is telling and who is re-remembering demands a multiplicity of stories, even as it draws on a plethora of voices at times similar to Senior's. Like the epigraph above, Collins' novel speaks to a 'telling and re-remembering' and the valuing of oral way(s) in which memories are transmitted. Such orality is crucial as it serves as an intervention into the historical archive. Through my reading of *Angel* I wish to suggest that Collins has been able to refigure/reframe the archive and supplement the traditional archive with a literary text that not only provides an alternative version of national history but at the same time is able to archive an earlier orthography of Grenadian

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<sup>506</sup> See *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1987) in which Gabriel García Márquez's novel re-imagines the 1982 United Fruit Company Massacre in Colombia from the perspective of his fictional character who is charged not to forget the events.

<sup>507</sup> Jennifer Harford Vargas, 'Novel Testimony: Alternative Archives in Edwidge Danitcat's *The Farming of Bones*' *Callaloo*, Volume 37, Number 5, Fall 2014, p1162.

French Creole and orally transmitted encoding of different versions of knowledge.

In considering different versions, Evelyn O'Callaghan theorises that Caribbean women writers consistently create 'versions' within the oral story-telling tradition:

where new forms are created from a process of altering, supplementing, breaking, echoing, mocking and playing with that original'<sup>508</sup>.

I suggest that, in supplementing the traditional archive with an alternative version of a nation's history, Collins who might appear to be 'playing with that original' is also countering. What might an interpretation of Collins' 'breaking', 'echoing', 'mocking' and 'riffing' in 'Madelene' and *Angel* suggest?

One interpretation is that through this refiguring/reframing of the archive, Collins is able to use the medium of fiction and the novelisation of memory to testify against the violence involved. Thus, she provides an alternative version of national history through living memory, by which I mean an archiving of an event that has recently occurred. Furthermore, my reading enables a questioning of the role of the author who disrupts notions of writing and archiving. Collins, through the use of linguistic and poetic strategies, is able to decentre Standard Written English whilst simultaneously placing Grenadian English Creole and Grenadian French Creole in the archive.

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<sup>508</sup> Evelyn O'Callaghan, *Woman Version: Theoretical Approaches to West Indian Fiction by Women*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993, p10. O'Callaghan's use of 'version' is borrowed from Dick Hebdige's study of Caribbean music and refers to the practices of producing 'new' music by rearranging the tracks of original reggae songs. See Dick Hebdige, *Cut 'n' Mix: Culture, Identity and Caribbean Music* (1987).

I shall examine the journey of self-discovery for the main protagonist, Angel. I explore the familial relationships between mother and daughter, their tensions and the impact of communal memories on the protagonist and I examine the linguistic haunting<sup>509</sup> within the novel and how they are archived. I question Collins' rewriting of the second edition of *Angel* (2011) following the report from the Grenada Truth and Reconciliation Commission and finally, I interrogate the way in which Collins effectively archives cultural traditions within the novel, thus addressing an aspect of Caribbean culture that is missing from the traditional archives.

### ***Angel* as an Archive of Feelings**

Collins has described her first novel, *Angel*, published in 1987 as a bildungsroman, a coming of age novel.<sup>510</sup> Corroborating this view, critics such as Maria Helena Lima read *Angel* as a *testimonio*. Lima argues that the testimony of Collins' fiction is one of transformation in attitudes, ideas and language<sup>511</sup>. Moreover, Collins' *testimonio* is a musical to-ing and fro-ing with various interludes symptomatic of 'riffing' as indicated, above, through the discussion of the text as a 'jazz novel'. While the novel's principal focus appears to be the development of the character Angel as she progresses from childhood to adulthood,

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<sup>509</sup> See Jean D'Costa, 'The Caribbean Novelist and Language: A Search for a Literary Medium', in Lalla, Barbara, Jean D'Costa and Velma Pollard (eds), *Caribbean Literary Discourse: Voice and Cultural Identity in the Anglophone Caribbean*, USA: University of Alabama Press, 2014, p73.

<sup>510</sup> Merle Collins, 'Orality and Writing: A Revisitation', in *Winds of Change: Transforming the Voices of Caribbean Women writers and Scholars*, P Lang, 1998, p42.

<sup>511</sup> Maria Helena Lima, 'Revolutionary Developments: Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven* and Merle Collins's *Angel*, *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 24:1, January, 1993, p43.

it can also be read as a commentary on the development of Grenadian society, and its coming of age as a nation. The themes of Grenada's decolonisation, revolution and independence are key concerns in the novel and run parallel to Angel's personal story. As a result, *Angel* can be read as an alternative version of Collins' island's history as seen through the eyes of the Grenadian community.

Initially set in the village of Hermitage, which is also the place of Collins' birth, the novel charts three generations of Grenadian women, through a portrayal of Ma Ettie, Doodsie and Angel. Although the novel's main focus are these three women, *Angel* pays homage to a community of women, not only mothers and daughters, but sisters and aunts too. The novel also depicts a community's reaction to their lived experience during a specific period of time in Grenadian history, focusing on the revolution of 1979 and the events leading up to the US invasion in October 1983.

Historian Richard Slotkin argues that 'a novel can be as accurate as a history in telling what happened, when and how'.<sup>512</sup> He reiterates further that historical fiction has the advantage in the way that it presents its evidence and represents conclusions. For Slotkin, 'the documentation of any large complex human event is never fully adequate or reliable'.<sup>513</sup> If, as Slotkin suggests, 'novelising an event is to see it from within',<sup>514</sup> then Collins' 'novelising' represents an event that

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<sup>512</sup> Richard Slotkin, 'Fiction for the Purposes of History', *Rethinking History*, Vol 9, No 2/3, June/September 2005, p221.

<sup>513</sup> Richard Slotkin, 'Fiction for the Purposes of History', p223.

<sup>514</sup> Richard Slotkin, 'Fiction for the Purposes of History', p225.

has occurred and she experienced during her lifetime. As such she is not required to:

learn in detail who the citizens of the past were, where they came from, what kinds of things they would know, how they would think and talk about them [...] to pretend to forget what *you* know—how events will turn out, what later generations will say it all meant.<sup>515</sup>

Indeed, as echoed by Lima, ‘Collins becomes the living witness to a historical process faithfully recreating both characters and society in a state of becoming’.<sup>516</sup>

*Angel* then, incorporates Grenadian history and fictionalises history to retell the Grenadian revolution. I suggest that, through this historical fiction, Collins is able to archive an alternative version of Grenadian history alternative that is, to whose? Drawing upon Édouard Glissant’s theory concerning the relation between history and literature in which he argues that it is ‘collectivity that becomes the subject of the narrative’<sup>517</sup> when history and literature are brought together, I will examine the way in which Collins’ memories influence her retelling of history and how this history is portrayed and indeed performed through a plethora of voices from within the novel’s community.

That *Angel* is Collins’ response to her country’s psychological trauma related to the massacre and US invasion is important. All of the interactions within the novel are informed by the socioeconomic or

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<sup>515</sup> Richard Slotkin, ‘Fiction for the Purposes of History’, p225.

<sup>516</sup> Maria Helena Lima, ‘Revolutionary Developments’, pp44-45.

<sup>517</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, p108. Glissant suggests that the European novel’s individualism is not for the Caribbean. He posits the idea of the ‘collective novel’ to help create a new nation and a new people ‘liberated from the absolute demands of writing and in touch with a new audience of the spoken word’.

political situation. The text narrates thirty years of political turmoil in Grenada from the point of view of the working class. Covering the period in Grenadian history when Eric Gairy, (depicted as Leader in the novel), began his activities as the founder of the Grenada Manual and Metal Workers Union in 1950 and his subsequent rise to power and reporting the developments during Gairy's government such as the establishment of the New Jewel Movement.<sup>518</sup> An exploration of the archival material currently held about this period of events documents a nation undergoing radical change. The fight against colonialism, the rise of the Black Power movement, the revolution in Cuba, USA's anxieties, countries seeking independence and national liberation were all to play a part in future events.

In *Angel*, Glissant's history/lived experience destined to be 'pleasure or distress *on its own terms*'<sup>519</sup> is presented through the charting of the lives of Ma Ettie, Doodsie and Angel, three black female revolutionary characters. That is to say, it is through Collins' female protagonists that the reader gains insight into the revolution as experienced by the local community. By using the term 'revolutionary' I do not refer to the political sense but rather seek to underscore that Collins' characters are narrators of the revolution at differing levels. For example, during the run-up to the election for the teachers' union, there is a staff faction which does not want Angel to be elected to the executive. As Collins writes:

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<sup>518</sup> For further details see <http://www.thegrenadarevolutiononline.com/manifesto.html> (accessed February 2016).

<sup>519</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, p69.

Me? I fraid allyou, Angel. These ideas youall have dey not me style. Allyou talkin about bourgeois and reducing influence of big business an all kine o ting that soun like danger talk to me (241).

The rhetoric adopted by Angel is interpreted by her colleagues as ‘danger talk’ or revolutionary resulting in her non-election. Angel returns home disappointed, to engage in similar revolutionary dialogue with her mother. At home she talks about backward teachers and their inability to change the curriculum or adopt new approaches to language coupled with her desire to heave ‘dem out de window!’ Her mother responds:

[H]ow allyou expect everybody to agree wid everything one time? Me, I more revolutionary dan allyou (242).

‘I more revolutionary dan allyou’ is Doodsie’s admission that they both share a similar revolutionary standpoint. Interwoven into the text are themes of self-discovery, linguistic haunting, memories and history itself. Linguistic haunting refers to the challenges faced with regards to language. Collins states that the term ‘Creole’:

is a fairly recent, academic formulation. It was just “the way we talk”, “we kind of language” or plain old “bad English”. It still is usually regarded as such. [...] The ongoing search for a name and for explanations of the grammar of languages forged in the Caribbean represents a perception that these languages are not dialects of English or French or Dutch but have structural differences related to the history and structure mainly of African languages.<sup>520</sup>

Whereas in Chapter One I focused on *Imoinda*, a text which relies on historical memory, in Collins’ writing of *Angel* it is precisely her personal memory of the events of 1983 that led to the writing of *Angel*. From my reading of interviews given by Collins about these events, I

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<sup>520</sup> Merle Collins, ‘Writing and Creole language politics: voice and story’, in K. M. Balutansky, M. Sourieau (ed.), *Caribbean Creolization. Reflections on the cultural dynamics of language, literature and identity*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998, pp89-95.

posit the idea that through *Angel*, Collins has been able to create an archive in which her emotions and feelings are deposited. Anne Cvetkovich theorises that a text can be organised as an ‘archive of feelings’. She writes:

[A]n exploration of cultural texts as repositories of feelings and emotions, which are encoded not only in the content of the texts themselves but in the practices that surround their production and reception.<sup>521</sup>

Collins’ focus on the Grenadian revolution and specifically October 1983 when the Prime Minister and members of his party were killed, serves as an entry point into her fictional community’s archive of feelings. Her personal interviews can be placed as part of the archive that reflects the emotions and confusion of that tragic and traumatic period in Grenadian history as the content frequently interconnects with the dialogic narrative of *Angel*. In an interview with Betty Wilson, for example, Collins describes her reasons for writing. She states:

I think *Angel* also came at a period when I was looking at, looking back at, the whole period of Grenadian history and kind of looking behind headlines at the things that were happening [...]. *Angel* is definitely the product of 1983 and of the crash of October 1983 [...] and about the whole of that trauma and my moving out and looking back at it all and feeling that, as so often happens the focus remains on the principal actors.<sup>522</sup>

Collins’ ‘looking at, looking back at’, ‘looking behind’ are indicative of the literary strategy of memorialising. That is to say, whereas memorialising relates to the creation of temporary or permanent memorials, these memorials alone cannot perform the function of memorialising. As Dipesh Chakrabaty argues, memorialising occurs when events we want to remember are put in a relationship with

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<sup>521</sup> Anne Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*, London: Duke University Press, 2003, p7.

<sup>522</sup> Betty Wilson, p102.

certain practices to create rituals of remembering and are usually collective in nature.<sup>523</sup> The Grenadian events of October 1983 have left many material traces such as Fort Rupert (now renamed Fort George), the Maurice Bishop International Airport, which David Scott likens to a morgue<sup>524</sup> and the public monument erected by the Americans. For Collins, witnessing the collapse of the Grenadian revolution, this is an event that, for her, 'is a moment of rupture, of catastrophe, that is impossible to exactly remember and yet impossible to exactly forget'.<sup>525</sup> It is this process of memory and forgetting, particularly the events of October 1983, which are a recurring theme in Collins' fiction and poetry and in effect enables her to memorialise the making and unmaking of the revolution.

For example, in the novel, after the fictionalised New Jewel Movement has come to power, protagonist Angel asks her mother Doodsie how she thinks the revolution is faring. Doodsie's response revolves around the large copper pot standing dormant in her yard, a pot that she reports was the recent site of a friend's complaint that the new airport is 'base for Cuba and Russia' (242), and that Angel in turn recalls as central to the old harvesting practice of 'dancing on the cocoa' (243). The copper pot emerges as the layered site of anti-imperialist critique and maternal cultural memory. Doodsie's reply to her pot-sitting friend is 'if all airport that size is base, America musbe have about three

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<sup>523</sup> See Dipesh Chakrabaty, 'Remembering 1857' in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol 24 No 19, (2007), pp1692-1695 for an informative discussion on the practice of memory.

<sup>524</sup> David Scott, 'The Fragility of Memory: An Interview with Merle Collins', *Small Axe*, Number 31, Vol 14 No 1, March 2010, p79-163. Scott writes of a bitter contrast between the bright, spacious, tourism-friendly and modern feel of the airport given the destruction and ruin - grief and death - upon which the airport stands. For Scott, the airport is the 'epitaph to a now unusable, unrestorable, and barely remembered past' (79).

<sup>525</sup> David Scott, 'The Fragility of Memory', p 81.

hundred or more. What do if we have one?' (242) Miming the harvesting motion she witnessed as a little girl Doodsie sings:

Manman o!  
Manman o  
Mwen wivé  
Mwen wivé  
Mamo o  
Mwen wivé  
Pwangad waya pike mwen! (243)<sup>526</sup>

The pot is symbolic in transmitting the rich communal past from mother to daughter. 'Dat is yesterday ting,' Doodsie reminds Angel about the dancing ritual, 'All you just keep allyou head. Dis [the revolution] is something powerful. Allyou don let it go, non. Ay!' (243).

Collins' narrative focuses on the female collective as well as collective memory and her(story) is the collective 'we' representing the Grenadian community of women. Her female characters speak not only as individuals but also blend their voices to form a polyphonic space similar to Senior's that resists the pressure imposed by the culture of colonialism. Collins' collective draws on the 'frameworks of memory', as described by Maurice Halbwachs, from which generations construct the temporal relations between collective pasts, presents and futures.<sup>527</sup>

Beverley Ormerod in her paper, 'Attitudes to Memory' states that sometimes two types of memory are evoked – historical memory and private memory. For Collins, 'memory is a very strange thing', she states further:

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<sup>526</sup> Translation: Mother, I have arrived, Take care lest the wire prick me.

<sup>527</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, (ed). And trans., Lewis Coser, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

I'm always cautious with memory. Because I realise that sometimes I say things and then realise it's not me remembering that; that is what was handed down to me as a memory.<sup>528</sup>

Ormerod argues that in the case of private memories, the individual concerned is sometimes able to 'use memory creatively, in order to confront the past and reappraise it in a way that brings about spiritual healing or helps a character towards self-discovery and positive action'.<sup>529</sup> Collins protagonist, Angel, undertakes her journey of 'self-discovery and positive action' in the sense discussed by Ormerod as follows below.

### **Revolution Reality: Self-discovery and Positive Action**

Angel's journey of self-discovery is a long one from childhood to adulthood and the key institutions which shape this journey are education and family. Educated in a catholic girl's school, Angel is subjected to the nun's belief that 'she should ask her mother to have her hair ironed or straightened so that it would look decent' (114). That is to say that unless one adopts the colonial ideas of beauty such as straight hair one is not seen as conforming to the norms of propriety. Colonial ideology encourages Angel to reject her racial identity and she is constantly in awe of the:

girls who had long ponytails, fair skins and no cousins rolled up around their heads, tossed their heads, laughed a lot and looked pretty and confident in the streets, just like the ones in all the books (114).

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<sup>528</sup> David Scott, 'The Fragility of Memory', p95.

<sup>529</sup> Beverley Omerod, 'Attitudes to Memory: Reappraisal and Self-Discovery in the Works of French Caribbean Women Writers', *Centre of Remembrance*, p17.

As Merle Hodge writes, 'the ones in all the books' are symptomatic of the imagery drilled into the Caribbean child through the colonial education system. She states:

One of the things that I was aware of was that whole business of all these Caribbean and African people going to European countries and discovering *there* that all they'd been told about their own countries was a lot of hogwash, and that their own culture was valid.<sup>530</sup>

Angel is unable to see that her mother is 'pretty and confident' since European imagery has taught her to believe that everything about her culture 'was [not] valid'. She, therefore views her mother as unglamorous with fingernails that are 'stained from peeling provisions' and not like those women in the books wearing 'one of those frilly white aprons which made kitchen work look so inviting' (114). Because of these perceived flaws, Angel resorts to walking a few steps ahead or behind of her mother when they are out together. So ashamed is Angel of her own 'indecent hair' that she finally convinces her mother to change her hair style and 'Monday morning found Angel with ironed hair and a tiny ponytail' (115).

Angel's school is also responsible for undermining her self-worth through its Christian teachings on marriage, family and denigration of local beliefs. Thus, she experiences a deep sense of shock when it is revealed in the religious knowledge class that:

not only was living together without being married a mortal sin, but if a Catholic got married in a non-Catholic church, then that was no marriage and the person and the whole family was living in sin (108).

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<sup>530</sup> Kathleen Balutansky, 'We Are All Activists: An Interview with Merle Hodge'. *Callaloo* 41 (1989): p654.

Considering the makeup of her family, itself typical of the Caribbean family<sup>531</sup>, Angel imagines that they are all destined for hell. On confronting her mother and ‘plead[ing] with Doodsie to get married to her father again, in the Roman Catholic Church’ (108), Angel is further distraught. Yet, her mother rejects the ideology of the Catholic Church and informs Angel that everything will be alright as ‘me an God going to sort it out when ah reach up there’ (108). What Doodsie signals in this exchange is her belief of the direct relationship that she has with God that negates the need to converse through the Catholic Church. Doodsie establishes rather, a power struggle between the roles of parent and religion in the education and indoctrination of Catholic children. However, this conflict does not represent a simple dichotomy as evidenced through Ma Ettie, a Creole speaker, whose prayers are in Standard English:

Lord, let this tribulation pass from us. Let not our enemies triumph over these your children, Lord. Take a thought to the life and salvation of the little children in that burning house. [...] thy will be done (5).

Collins is also able to insert into the archive an individual and community response to religious ideology. At Secondary School, Angel desires to become the privileged ‘other’ not only with straight hair but notably, as an angel in the school play – a position reserved for white or pale-skinned girls. As echoed by Sylvia Wynter in her interview, ‘The Re-enchantment of Humanism’ with David Scott, of particular

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<sup>531</sup> See Oliver Senior, *Working Miracles: Women’s Lives in the English-speaking Caribbean*, USA: Indiana University Press, 1991.

significance is ‘the belief that the fact of blackness is a fact of inferiority and that of whiteness a fact of superiority’.<sup>532</sup>

Wynter argues that the policies of racial slavery constructed a genetic value differential between humans placing the white, western, Christian subject as the zenith of this valuation. In light of such a construction of what it means to be human, Wynter considers how we might reconfigure the human differently.<sup>533</sup> In creating this ‘archive of feelings’ Collins’ fictional writing bears significant resemblances to her own personal experiences and is evidenced through her own time at a catholic high school which she remembers as ‘a lot of racism’, ‘a lot of condescension’.<sup>534</sup>

Angel, successful in navigating the higher levels of the school system, is influenced by the cultural imperialism of British colonialism and imagines that she can be transformed into:

one of the ladies in some love story, long blond hair flying in the unruly wind, blue eyes sparkling, laughing up at some dark-haired young man of indeterminate colour (113).

This cultural imperialism prefigures the island’s rejection of colonial or neo-colonial imagery as Angel grows to love black as beautiful with the impact of the black power movement. Collins’ narrative explores the

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<sup>532</sup> David Scott, ‘The Re-enchantment of Humanism: An Interview with Sylvia Wynter’ in *Small Axe*, 8, September 2000, pp119-207.

<sup>533</sup> See, Sylvia Wynter, ‘Unsettling the Coloniality of being/power/truth/freedom: towards the human, after Man, its overrepresentation – an argument’ *CR: The New Centennial Review*, Vol. 3, No.3, pp257-331. 2003.

<sup>534</sup> See Jacqueline Bishop and Dolace Nicole McLean, ‘Working out Grenada: An Interview with Merle Collins’, *calabash: A Journal of Caribbean Arts and Letters*, Vol3 Num 2, Fall-winter 2005, p53.

function of education in 'nation-formation and decolonization'.<sup>535</sup> She equips her protagonist with an evolution of consciousness that allows her ultimately to reject the world that the colonial school has created.

When Angel leaves Grenada to start her university education in Jamaica, she meets a new set of friends and is set on a journey of rejection of the imposed colonial values. Collins signifies the impact of these new friendships by Angel's new image of the self and specifically the cutting of her hair into a fashionable afro. This is significant because the afro emerged as a marker of black pride in the 1960s, when the black liberation movements proposed the slogan 'black is beautiful' to contest the hegemony of white aesthetics with 'black' grounded aesthetics. The afro hairstyle was adopted as an outward affirmation of an empowering sense of black pride.<sup>536</sup> Yet Angel's sense of pride in her new look is dashed by her mother who remarks:

Look at you head! Like it don't see a comb in years. What is that? Black Power? Black dirtiness! (174)

Yet beyond mother/daughter, Hodge predicts in the light of the Liberation movement that it is the advent of black power ideology which will have a salutary effect on relations between black men and women in the Caribbean. This is a consideration that Doodsie has yet to come to terms with. As Hodge suggests, it is the revaluation of black womanhood that will ultimately restore black manhood.<sup>537</sup> Furthermore, Hodge states that the 'violence of our history has not

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<sup>535</sup> Maria Helena Lima, 'Revolutionary Developments', p46.

<sup>536</sup> See Paul Dash, 'Black hair culture, politics and change' in *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 2006, 10:1, pp27-37.

<sup>537</sup> Merle Hodge, 'The Shadow of the Whip: A Comment on Male-Female Relations in the Caribbean', in Orde Coombs (ed), *Is Massa Day Dead?*, New York: Doubleday, 1974.

evaporated. It is still there [...] in the relations between adult and child, man and woman'.<sup>538</sup> As such, Doodsie's verbal assault on Angel is symptomatic of an internalisation of a violent and traumatic past.

It is Doodsie's belief that finally as an educated young woman, Angel should be presenting herself in a particular manner so that she gains the respect of others. Doodsie, who has constantly fought with her husband over Angel's education, since he believes that girls start school and never finish or if they do they get married, lose their name and 'somebody else get the praise' (102). Doodsie now sees this battle for, and Angel's success with, education as having enabled Angel to have her own formulated opinions on race, colour, class and gender to which Doodsie disapprovingly remarks:

you spoil de way for any other girl children I have after you. So is a good thing I don have none. Because no way dem would smell university an certainly not Jamaica. Not when I see what it do to you (174).

There are multiple levels of narration at play here. On the one hand Doodsie wants the best education for her daughter but is also not ready to accept the militant tendencies that she perceives have occurred with Angel. No matter the outcome, Angel has succeeded with her mother's imperatives of 'study you head' and 'study youself' (102). The reader is witness to the growing of Angel's political consciousness and involvement in the revolutionary government that is formulated through her university education. When Angel joins a group called Search, initially at their meetings they discuss the living conditions in hall, student loans and other practicalities, until the discussion widens

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<sup>538</sup> Merle Hodge, 'The Shadow of the Whip', p1.

to include the communities outside the university and finally the black power movement in America. The students also discuss the possibility of having the same sort of power in the Caribbean to which Angel disagrees, citing her experience of Leader as an example:

‘But here in the Caribbean we have Black Power.’  
‘But it not doin us no damn good,’ said Angel suddenly.  
‘Look at Leader!’ (157)

The reference to ‘black power’ here resonates with Doodsie’s earlier comments of ‘black power?’ ‘Black dirtiness?’ in relation to the rumours and gossip that are circulating around Leader’s corruption. Yet Collins’ memory of a 1970s Grenada is one of a new movement promoting ‘People’s Assemblies’. She writes:

It was the Black Power time and people say the new generation believe in Black Power. Young people looking on and say *time reach*. The older heads from 1951 saying, what you talking Black Power? Come and meet the original Black Power. Was us. It happen before. So now is a question of who really serious, of who blacker than who.<sup>539</sup>

Significantly, Collins’ statement on Black power speaks to a period in Grenadian history of a community determined to be heard. The political landscape was such that young and old were unhappy and the community were ‘voicing their reactions against, for example, the repressive attitudes of Gairy and against colonial attitudes in the country generally’.<sup>540</sup>

Collins is able, once again, to translate her memories into the literary text thus creating an archive of feelings. Such feelings of anger, irritation, sadness and fear, for example, are evidenced in the novel:

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<sup>539</sup> Merle Collins, ‘Tout Moun ka Pléwé (Everybody Bawling)’, p12.

<sup>540</sup> Jacqueline bishop and Dolace Nicole McLean, ‘Working out Grenada: An Interview with Merle Collins’, p56.

‘very annoyed’ (85), ‘feeling the fear’ (5), ‘more irritated’ (87) and ‘drained, angry, sad, puzzled’ (175). It is these memories that further fuel Collins’ protagonist in her journey of self-discovery. As evidenced when Angel returns from University and is involved in a dispute with her mother over a picture of ‘Leader’ hanging on the wall of the family home. Collins writes:

Ah mean dammit to hell! It upsetting enough having the man ruling the country and so many asses supporting him! But how you could have his picture up on the wall in you house? (188)

Angel is incensed further when her mother, although herself disliking Leader, defends her husband’s right to display whatever picture he chooses in his house. The final straw for Angel stems from Leader’s views on educated people which she has heard during a meeting in town:

I actually hear that man at a meeting in town [...] telling people that if they look an see that is the educated people who study in university abroad that causin the trouble in the country now, they would realise that educating they children ain make no sense [...] an meanwhile he own children in university abroad [...] (190)

With intense anger Angel is driven to ‘positive action’. She throws a pair of scissors at the picture. This action breaks the glass and she removes the picture from the wall. That Collins transfers her own ‘self-discovery’ to her protagonist is a practice that is not uncommon among writers.<sup>541</sup> Collins attended the University of the West Indies in

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<sup>541</sup> See novels by Merle Hodge *Crick Crack, Monkey* (1970) and Zee Edgell *Beka Lamb* (1982). Both novels depict their protagonists’ transition from girlhood to puberty as they discover how they are perceived within patriarchal colonial societies and learn how to negotiate these perceptions. These novels are narratives of self-discovery. Likewise Michelle Cliff’s *No Telephone to Heaven* (1987) expands narratives of female self-discovery into narratives that situate protagonists both within the counter-history of the Caribbean and within a contemporary postcolonial, transnational world.

Jamaica and in an interview published in 2005 she describes her experience of Jamaica as follows:

I came to have a different sense of self. I came to be more conscious of the psychological and social messages I got growing up, to question them and examine them. Jamaica in the early 1970s made me conscious of myself as a black person and of my inheritance as a Caribbean person in the world.<sup>542</sup>

Michel-Rolph Trouillot<sup>543</sup>, anthropologist and cultural critic, states that human beings participate in history both as actors and as narrators. In Trouillot's sense, Collins is both 'actor and narrator' in her retelling of the Grenadian revolution. She assumes these roles in order to reinforce her(story), and as Glissant suggests with reference to the relationship between history and literature and a 'collective consciousness', brings to life through her fictional world, the consciousness of the Grenadian community. I argue that her key strategy uses the voices of oral narrative. Through exposition, inner dialogues and action, Collins' novel functions as a kind of oral storytelling in which the voices of oral narrative are foregrounded. So successful is Collins that Lima praises the novel for its 'powerful oral quality' and the way in which 'the novel achieves the effect of an ongoing conversation among characters'.<sup>544</sup> It is this 'ongoing conversation' that proves to be an effective tool in the shaping of not only the protagonist's consciousness but that of the community as well.

As Collins has stated, it was during the period of revolutionary excitement in Grenada that she realised her interest in orality and the

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<sup>542</sup> Jacqueline Bishop & Dolace Nicole McLean, *Working out Grenada*, Calabash, p54.

<sup>543</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot is a Haitian Historian. See Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, p2.

<sup>544</sup> Maria Helena Lima, 'Merle Collins *Angel of History*', *Swinging her Breasts*, p56.

drive to incorporate the ‘rhythms of Grenadian speech-patterns and proverbial expressions’ in her writing.<sup>545</sup> It is the rhythms and proverbial expressions that I read as ‘riffing on orality’. Her first collection of poetry *Because the Dawn Breaks!* (1985) published only two years after the tragic events of 1983 and two years before the publication of *Angel* is dedicated to the Grenadian people and contains poems of excitement, joy, celebration, disappointments and sadness. The collection also speaks to the revolutionary period and change in Grenada in the year 1982 to 1983 leading up to the US invasion.

For example, the poem titled ‘The Search’ holds resonance with the group, ‘Search’ that Angel joins while at university in Jamaica and where she goes through the process of political self-discovery. In the poem Collins writes:

I remember  
  
The form  
of my guilt  
The blackness  
of the dotted line  
on the white paper  
Name  
Okay  
Nationality?  
Pen poised  
Hand encircling paper now  
Guilty fingers seeking  
To hide  
Nationality?<sup>546</sup>

‘The blackness of the dotted line on the white paper’ can be read as symbolic of the change in Angel’s desire, notably skin colour from ‘pink and white, white, an really cute’ to ‘she too dark for angel now. Where

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<sup>545</sup> Merle Collins, *Writing fiction, Writing Reality*, p29.

<sup>546</sup> Merle Collins, ‘The Search’ in *Because The Dawn Breaks!*, Karia Press: London, 1985, p8.

you ever see black angel?’ (60) A desire to be the privileged ‘other’ is a constant topic of discussion in the text and impacts on Angel’s concerns with regard to her racial identity - on the one hand light enough to become her namesake and all at once too dark.

In relation to nationality, Collins’ protagonist, Angel is reprimanded by fellow senior students for not displaying the tag that tells them where she is from:

‘Where you from, Freshette?’  
And irate voices had shouted ‘*Where is your badge,  
Freshette?*’  
‘The freshette not wearing her badge?’  
‘Well wait, non! Like dis one take over!’  
‘De freshette is de queen o Grenada, man! She in control!’  
‘Dat is wey she from?’  
‘Yeh, man, dat is Grenada queen!’ (132)

Collins is a ‘Grenada queen’. In her poetry, she writes of her struggle with nationality and how through the mere act of completing a form, one is forced to determine/declare one’s nationality and nationhood. As a Grenadian woman during the pre-independence period Collins writes of ‘going through all of these growing pains about nationalism and having to call ourselves ‘British’’,<sup>547</sup> referring to nationality as something that had to be ‘pencilled in’ whereas the ideal scenario would have been to ‘pen in’ Grenadian. The notion that one’s identity can be erased is strongly articulated in the poem as when faced with the question of race the response is:

But  
Her own pen poised  
She  
Struggled with her own

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<sup>547</sup> Brenda Berrian, ‘We Speak Because We Dream’ Conversations with Merle Collins, in Boyce Davies, Carole (ed) *Moving Beyond Boundaries: Black Women’s Diasporas*, Volume 2, London: Pluto Press, p32.

Mammoth problem  
Race?  
Looked at my hand  
Below  
At the neatly pencilled  
“African”  
Goggled  
Grinned  
Said with awe  
I put  
“Black”<sup>548</sup>

That Angel’s period of study takes place in Jamaica can be read as a type of ‘exile’ enabling Collins to work through her identity as a black Grenadian woman. Correspondingly, the destruction of her father’s picture can be read as a double rejection of patriarchy and neo-colonialism. In effect, Angel is no longer the ‘little matité (54) girl. Significantly, she has become a fully grown woman with her own voice and opinions. For example, when Angel and her mother argue about her non-attendance at church, Angel replies:

Why de hell ah mus go to church eh? [...] Why de france I mus go an siddown an hear some blasted pries stan up in he ivory tower shoutin stupidity bout ting he don know nutting about? Even de Christ allyou talkin about was fightin against people like dat same blasted pries who tink he so great! (173)

Angel is able not only to voice but to rage against the concerns that she has with regard to her family’s religious choices. Given the stance that her mother takes earlier in the novel about the direct conversations she is able to have with God, it seems ironic that Angel is now embroiled in an argument with her mother over the very same religion. Angel’s consciousness has evolved so that she moves from ‘passively conforming to Christian [...] to rejecting this indoctrination with an

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<sup>548</sup> Merle Collins, ‘The Search’ in *Because The Dawn Breaks!*, Karia Press: London, 1985. p9.

iconography of revolution embodied'<sup>549</sup> in the image of the Rasta child. Through the multiplicity of narrative techniques, namely the decision to place the focalisation with the ordinary people, and the related decision to choose Creole as the novel's main language, Collins is able to convey not only the evolution of Angel's consciousness but that of the Grenadian community as well.

### **Butterfly Born: Memories and M(other)ing**

The background to Collins' female characters is significant in that they are the custodians of Grenada's traditions and narrators of their own history. Collins is able to insert into the archive aspects of female subjectivity, namely community memories that would otherwise be forgotten. Collins who is often asked whether *Angel* is autobiographical<sup>550</sup> and if the voices and stories within the novel are constructed or representative of her individual or of collective memories of her Grenadian community, invariably talks down or denies the autobiographical. Collins argues that the work is not 'straight autobiography' as it 'dramatizes particular facets of existence, in an effort to understand [...] how events in Grenada during the neo-colonial and post-independence period could have led to the 1980s and beyond'<sup>551</sup>.

In *Tout Moun ka Pléwé* (Everybody Bawling) Collins recalls the events of Hurricane Janet when it hit Grenada in 1955. Collins writes:

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<sup>549</sup> Maria Helena Lima, 'Revolutionary Developments' p47.

<sup>550</sup> Merle Collins, *Writing Fiction, Writing Reality*, p25.

<sup>551</sup> Merle Collins, *Writing Fiction, Writing Reality*, p25.

I was four years old. In fact, it was seven days before my fifth birthday. I remember looking outside our house in Hermitage on the morning after Janet. I *believe* this is *my* memory, but I couldn't write this piece as autobiography because memory sometimes tends to be fiction, even when we think otherwise, so let's call this a true piece of fiction.<sup>552</sup>

Collins' notion of 'true fiction' is useful. Other writers privilege different terms.<sup>553</sup> *Angel* clearly resonates with the personal and Collins' use of personal anecdotes blended into the novel can be read as a technique used to evoke emotional responses or further a mechanism for archiving feelings. Can *Angel* be categorised as a 'true piece of fiction'? The question of what a 'true piece of fiction' might resemble, could be drawn from Collins' treatment of Ma Ettie and Doodsie. Ma Ettie and Doodsie could be read as bearing similar characteristics to Collins' Grandmother and Mother. For example, Collins describing her mother and the hurricane writes:

My mother says that the night before Janet she was in the kitchen turning, in the way that woman always have to turn in the kitchen [...] her aunt [...] called out to ask her, *What you doing there? Why you don't go inside? You don't hear they say storm coming? So you don't afraid storm then?* And although my mother wasn't really one for obeying – and this is my mother saying, not me – and although she was thinking *Ki storm sa? ... Every time they only bawling storm, storm and no storm coming*, for some reason she decided to obey. So she went inside. And because she had a little piece of kitchen inside the wall house that Aruba money build, she continued what she was doing ... Anyway she went inside the wall house and next morning, when she looked outside, there wasn't one piece of board where the kitchen had been standing the evening before<sup>554</sup>.

In *Angel* a similar situation is described as seen through the eyes of Doodsie and Ma Ettie:

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<sup>552</sup> Merle Collins, 'Tout Moun Ka Pléwé (Everybody Bawling)', *Small Axe*, 2007, p1.

<sup>553</sup> See Roxann Bradshaw, 'Beryl Gilroy's "Fact-Fiction": Through the Lens of the "Quiet Old Lady"', in *Callaloo*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Spring, 2002), pp381-400.

<sup>554</sup> Merle Collins, 'Tout Moun Ka Pléwé', p2.

‘Dey sayin hurricane comin in truth, you know.’

[...]

Doodsie managed to persuade her mother to move some of her own things into the house. But Ma Ettie decided that she would stay in her own house and go over to the wall house only if things really started getting bad. [...] By seven o’clock the wind was already high and the little house was shaking, shaking. [...] She walked over to Doodsie’s house, head bowed against the rushing wind. She pushed open the porch gate. There was a whooshing sound of something collapsing behind Doodsie’s house. Ma Ettie paused. ‘Ay’ she heard Allan shout. ‘Is de kitchen, yes.’ (35)

As outlined previously in the discussion on historical and private memories, Collins’ use of her private memory, that of hurricane Janet, in the text allows her to ‘confront the past and reappraise it in a way that brings about spiritual healing’<sup>555</sup>.

Collins’ narrative also enables the reader already familiar with the history of Grenada to identify the character of Leader with that of the rise and fall of Eric Matthew Gairy, the first Premier and First Prime Minister of Grenada. Angel’s views on Leader’s reluctance to improve the country’s educational system echo the reality of Gairy’s reign when he allows the educational system in Grenada to decay. Eighty-two schools were in ruin and during 1967 to 1979 only thirty six percent of the primary school teachers had any training while only seven percent of secondary school teachers were professionally trained.<sup>556</sup>

Although Collins was not present in Grenada when Gairy’s government was overthrown, her portrayal in *Angel* of events at that time, run

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<sup>555</sup> Beverley Omerod, *Attitudes to Memory: Reappraisal and Self-Discovery in the Works of French Caribbean Women Writers*, Centre of Remembrance, p17.

<sup>556</sup> Beverley A Steele, *Grenada – A History of its people*, p364.

parallel with her views on 'being part of the process',<sup>557</sup> as she describes the socio-historical process and particularly action for social change. 'Being part of the process' refers to, the fight for equality of the classes, better living conditions and education for all, specifically in the years culminating in invasion/intervention of 1983.

So confused and traumatized was Collins, as many activists of the period that, following the 1983 events she felt compelled to expel from her mind the plethora of voices residing within her consciousness through the documenting of these numerous stories which culminated in *Angel*. Collins' 2005 interview reveals conflict and confusion that was occurring pre and post murders. Collins recalls a personal sense of incoherence at the events and an awareness of a community so in crisis that the US invasion was a welcomed intervention. She relays:

This was all so confusing for and traumatic for me that I tried to sort some of my thoughts in writing.<sup>558</sup>

Thus, not only does *Angel* deal with the events of the revolution and leading up to the invasion but it also contains stories within a story and is resonant of an archive and of memorialising. As such, Collins challenges the 'received images of history'<sup>559</sup>, retelling her(story) from multiple points of view. What soon becomes extremely apparent and clear to Collins is her opinion on the US invasion. She cites 'I know where I stand on [the invasion]. It's easy: That was wrong'.<sup>560</sup> These feelings are re-iterated through *Angel* who says:

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<sup>557</sup> Merle Collins, 'Writing Fiction, Writing Reality', p23.

<sup>558</sup> Jacqueline Bishop and Dolace Nicole McLean, 'Working out Grenada', p 59.

<sup>559</sup> Maria Helena Lima, 'Revolutionary Developments', p49.

<sup>560</sup> Jacqueline Bishop and Dolace Nicole McLean, 'Working out Grenada', p57.

Is our country still, Carl. We wrong. We do real stupidity. But nobody don have a right to invade (274).

It is the female voices like Angel's in this narrative that enable the memorialising of her(story). To understand and evaluate the roles of the female characters presented in the text, one must have a sense of the relationship between mother and daughter or indeed mother and child. In *Angel* the central characters, Ma Ettie (Grandmother/Mother), Doodsie (Mother/daughter) and Angel (Daughter/Granddaughter) illustrate a generational relationship that allows a full appreciation of the protagonist's development. Mother and daughter are allowed to speak for themselves and for each other.<sup>561</sup> As Lima suggests, Collins writes in the voices of mothers as well as daughters.

From the first page of the novel, the presence of the community is a vivid one. People straining on tiptoe, small figures, enveloping skirts, fretful sounds from babies on shoulders, all of which are indicative of a community coming together in one place.<sup>562</sup> The first mother that we encounter is Maisie, a worker from the De Lisle estate, whose metaphorical description of the burning cocoa is that of an ungrateful child. This humorous description of children who do not acknowledge their own mother and who must be punished immediately signals the theme of generational conflict that Collins builds upon throughout the novel.

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<sup>561</sup> See Marianne Hirsch, *The Mother/Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989. For Hirsch the woman as daughter occupies the centre of reconstructed subjectivity while the woman as mother remains in the position of *other* (p136).. Collins reverses this erasure of the mother, and the daughterly act of "speaking for her" (p16) allowing both to speak for themselves.

<sup>562</sup> Merle Collins, *Angel*, p1.

Ma Ettie, Angel's grandmother, is introduced as the matriarch who very rarely leaves her home and is often positioned by the window silently watching or at times imparting words of wisdom such as 'Ah don want no quiet confusion brewin in me yard, non!' (12) or 'Every day is seep seep in de yard under de window dey.' (26) to finally 'pull[ing] her head part way inside and start[ing] to close the window' (28). 'Confusion brewin' and 'seep seep in de yard' are metaphorical representations of the trouble that Ma Ettie can see in the near future for her son.

Ma Ettie expresses her displeasure at her daughter, Doodsie's, line of work. She argues that 'we was never dis kine of people' (51). This is because Doodsie has no choice but to get work on the estate carrying cocoa baskets on her head, that is, as a labourer. Doodsie has to hear her mother berate her for undertaking this kind of labouring work and the constant reminder that Doodsie's grandmother was a seamstress and teacher, 'a very bright lady' who 'wus never under the cocoa' (51), that is, a labourer in the field.

Collins states that there is 'friction in most mother and daughter relationships', <sup>563</sup> which might be interpreted as relative to two generations often with similar ideas searching for solutions with different resources. Ma Ettie wants Doodsie to be more like her even if it means that her children are without a father figure. Yet, before Doodsie was born Ma Ettie realised, as she states, 'that there was no joy

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<sup>563</sup> Brenda Berrian, 'We Speak Because We Dream.' Conversations with Merle Collins in Carole Boyce Davis (ed) *Moving beyond Boundaries, Volume 2: Black Women's Diasporas*, Pluto Press: London, 1995, p37.

in life with a husband who was always drunk' (51). Thus, she promptly left with her children. As the novel advances, although Ma Ettie ages and is prone to lapses of forgetfulness, yet, her recall of memories long gone is vivid and the reader is allowed a glimpse of Ma Ettie's past and of the tensions experienced with her own mother, Ma Grace. Doodsie is rejected by her grandmother who scornfully speaks of 'dat fatherless child dat come to spoil the family name' (51), a cultural reference to 'outside' children as discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>564</sup>

The first section of *Angel* focuses on Doodsie and her circle of friends and family, facilitating Collins' adaptation of the conventions of individual development to a communal model. Doodsie is introduced first at the burning of the De Lisle plantation as she observes from the hilltop with the rest of the community, for she has returned to Grenada following a spell in Aruba where her husband, Allan, has been working. Throughout the novel it is clear that Doodsie regrets returning so soon and this feeling is evident in her letters in which she writes to her friend encouraging her to stay in Aruba as long as possible. The epistolarity<sup>565</sup> introduced within the novel, acts as supplementary material for this 'archive of feelings', whilst simultaneously deploying the narrative technique of storytelling in which further stories are relayed.

At the same time, whereas Ma Ettie left her unfaithful and drunk husband, Doodsie elects to stay with Allan even though he is unable to provide for her in the way that her mother believes that he should.

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<sup>564</sup> See Chapter Two on Olive Senior in this thesis.

<sup>565</sup> Collins uses the literary strategy of the epistolarity to introduce the views of those in the diaspora.

Doodsie states 'Me, I stayin. My children go have father, they going to school an [...]' (51). What is evident is that Doodsie is determined that her daughter Angel will have a different life to the one that she has. This determination is further reinforced when Doodsie observes Angel at play. Collins writes:

Doodsie looked across at her daughter [...] She wondered what Angel would grow up to be. One sure thing, if I have anything to do with it, she not going to have my kind of life.' (56)

Yet, Doodsie is unaware that the very thing that she wants for her daughter is the same as her mother wanted for her.

Both Doodsie and Ma Ettie have similar educational experiences. Doodsie's is one of movement and migration with her character being described as embodying the oral tradition. Doodsie has a way of seeing and a form of intelligence inscribed not only in Creole but also in the oral storytelling form in which Creole carries the past into the future.<sup>566</sup> Doodsie also embodies strength, determination and intelligence shaped not by book learning but by folk wisdom. Yet, she is able to recognise that her children are growing up in a different kind of world. These traits of female strength, determination, intelligence and folk wisdom, can be found in Collins' female protagonists and are modelled on her 'mother, aunts and other mothers'.<sup>567</sup>

Collins poem, 'The Butterfly Born' pays homage to the experiences of grandmother, mother and daughter, moving from the French Creole through to English Creole to Standard English as evidenced below:

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<sup>566</sup> See David Scott's 'Fragility of Memory' p160.

<sup>567</sup> David Scott, 'Fragility of Memory, p160.

Alé asiz anba tab-la!  
Zòt fouten twop.<sup>568</sup>  
Go an' siddown under de table!  
You too fas'.  
[...]  
Woman  
Step forward  
Something new  
Something true<sup>569</sup>

Collins traces the transition between generations, different ways of thinking and perceptions of the world even as she urges woman to 'step forward'. Much like her poem from the same collection entitled 'The Lesson' which has its focus on education and reveals an aspect of Collins' grandmother which is similar to that of Ma Ettie, the poet explores the 'something true' of womanhood. Yet again, the personal is mined for the fictional or literary. Similarly, in *Angel*, Ma Ettie's mental state becomes evident 'and more and more she talked and laughed to herself and answered eagerly when Ma Grace called' (86).

It is notable also that Ma Ettie's connection to the spiritual world becomes more apparent as she often has conversations with those who have gone before her. For example, after the hurricane, Ettie could hear Ma Grace's voice riding strongly on the wind 'Ettie! Etta-y-y-y!' (36). Furthermore, she often sees Papa in her grandson, Simon (86). Collins inserts into her narrative the religious Warner<sup>570</sup> figure in the character

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<sup>568</sup> Grenadian French Creole. Translated in the two lines immediately following.

<sup>569</sup> Merle Collins, 'The Butterfly Born' in *Because The Dawn Breaks!* pp27-33.

<sup>570</sup> A Warner is a religious figure who appears under various names in traditional Caribbean culture, such as 'seer', 'prophet' or 'wayside preacher'. This person appears at times of social crisis or tension. Miss Greenidge was Grenada's wayside preacher and was arrested on a number of occasions for her denunciation and prophetisation of the People's Revolutionary Government. See Patrick Taylor, *The Encyclopaedia of Caribbean Religions: Volume 1: A-L; Volume 2: M-Z*, USA: University of Illinois Press, 2015, p1107.

of Ole Man Evans. Thus, Ma Ettie reminisces of the old days when you could hear ‘Ole Man Evans’ voice announcing a death’ (30).

Likewise in her poem ‘The Lesson’, Collins writes:

I  
could remember  
Great Grand-Mammy  
Brain tired  
And wandering  
Walkin’ an’ talkin’  
Mind emptied and filled  
Bright  
Retaining  
And skilfully twisted  
By a sin  
Unequaled by Eve’s  
Great Grand-Mammy  
Living proof  
Of de power  
of de word<sup>571</sup>

‘Walkin an’ talkin’ equated with ‘de power/of de word’ are Collins’ memories of her grandmother. The style of writing allows a visual performance to take place in the mind but also to be archived within the literary text. Of this style of writing Collins states:

I cannot write without seeing all of these actions [...] I get the feeling that I want to put them on stage, that instead of writing them and letting the reader struggle with the images, I also want to do a form of writing that puts a lot of movement on the stage.<sup>572</sup>

Collins’ desire for performativity on the page can be read as an extension of the oral tradition and the narrative use of performative action that enables the oral form to be written in such a way as to mimic performativity. To mimic these imaginary performances, Collins visualised that she was reading her writing to her grandmother, thereby, hearing the voices of the community, but more importantly,

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<sup>571</sup> Merle Collins, ‘The Lesson’, pp15-22.

<sup>572</sup> Betty Wilson, ‘An Interview with Merle Collins’, p101.

hearing the generational voices of her bloodline. Explaining the use of orality in her work, Collins describes it as the 'voices' that she hears. I suggest that this derives at least in part from early childhood when Collins' contention with two conflicting voices began. These were the voice of the school system which was seen as the correct voice and the voice of the community.

So what of the tensions between Doodsie and Angel and the transmission of memories? As already discussed Angel has obtained the book knowledge required of her by her mother and from a revolutionary, socialist and feminist perspective, she feels that Doodsie has submitted herself to patriarchal domination by her husband. Angel disapproves of her mother's actions in that she appears to be unable to make decisions in her own house she may as well have been 'a manservant' (189). Yet, despite their differences, Angel acknowledges the role that her mother has played in her political and intellectual development. In effect, theirs is a relationship in which they are both searching for solutions with similar ideas but with very different resources – the generational gap and colonial education.

Doodsie fails to see that the characteristics that she dislikes in Angel are a result of her own influence. Similarly, Angel rebels against her own subconscious awareness that she is becoming her mother.<sup>573</sup> For example, while at university, Angel, discussing national politics, recalls her mother's earlier claim about Leader:

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<sup>573</sup> Lorna Goodison, *I am becoming my mother*, London: New Beacon Books, 1986.

‘But it not doing us no damn good,’ said Angel suddenly. ‘Look at leader!’ [...] I actually said that! she marvelled. It was a line borrowed straight from Doodsie in answer to arguments about Leader’s control of the country. Jesus, though Angel! I said that! She focused more intently on the conversation (157).

Significantly, this is the first moment in which Angel recaptures the memory of her mother who used to say ‘that man Leader just want everything for himself’ (52). At the same time, transmission of memory is shared by other women in the narrative. For example, Aunt Jessie tells Doodsie, ‘I don like all this confusion [in relation to Leader] at all at all’ (27), whereas Ma Ettie reminds Regal that Leader’s ideology does not produce an ideal society but rather a world of fear and uncertainty, saying:

‘I don’t know what this worl comin to at all’ [...] ‘Allyou young people mus wait let ting work deyself out. Is God worl; he go fix it.’ (28)

Such sharing of memory I suggest, represents a reconciliation of the individual with the community through an act of remembrance.

### **We speak in headlines: Language of Resistance**

The spectre of *glottophagie*<sup>574</sup>, or "linguistic cannibalism", is never far away. As a "dominant, imperial" language, English threatens to eat up [*Gaelic*] language and culture.<sup>575</sup> [My italics]

Colonial history of English inflects the literary vernaculars ... (O’Connor 2006: ix)

While my two epigraphs refer specifically to the Gaelic language, they seem useful when examining the Creole languages of the Caribbean. In *Haunted English*, Laura O’Connor explores ‘how the colonial history of

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<sup>574</sup> Term coined by Calvet, Louis-Jean, *Language Wars and Linguistic Politics*, Michel Petheram, translator, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>575</sup> Laura O’Connor, *Haunted English: The Celtic Fringe, the British Empire and De-Anglicization*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, pxiv.

English inflects the literary vernaculars' of three Anglo-Celtic poets<sup>576</sup>. O'Connor's insights, though referring to the ways in which her selected poets resolve their dilemma of writing in the colonial tongue by conjuring up the ghost voices of their Celtic literature, she argues that English inflected with the traces of Gaelic idiom and vocabulary is haunted by the residual traces of colonial atrocities against the Gaelic speaking inhabitants of Scotland and Ireland. This seems highly relevant to the analysis of Grenadian Creoles.

As Kathleen Renk in *Caribbean Shadows and Victorian Ghosts* (1999) has argued, 'literary studies have ignored the vital textual connections between Caribbean narratives and nineteenth-century British and colonial discourse.'<sup>577</sup> In this instance, the 'Victorian Ghost' in question is Standard English, which Collins has already highlighted as dominating her childhood years, when she writes of having had to diverge from what she had learnt of the nineteenth-century British novel whilst at the same time 'employing techniques used there as well as in the African novel, the Caribbean novel, and in the voices of Caribbean oral storytelling'<sup>578</sup>.

In Grenada, while the official language is English the primary vernacular was French alongside a French-lexicon Creole. However, English now co-exists with an English-lexicon Creole, which the

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<sup>576</sup> W B Yeats, Hugh MacDiarmid and Marianne Moore.

<sup>577</sup> Kathleen J Renk, *Caribbean Shadows and Victorian Ghosts: Women's Writing and Decolonization*, USA: University Press of Virginia, 1999, p2.

<sup>578</sup> Merle Collins, 'Writing Fiction, Writing Reality', p42.

Grenadian journalist, Alister Hughes, refers to as Grenadianese.<sup>579</sup> In this thesis the vernacular referred to is Grenadian English Creole. Grenadian French Creole (GFC) is now virtually extinct and when in use GFC did not conform to the norms of a Creole Continuum, that is, it did not exist in a diglossic relationship with the official language.<sup>580</sup>

An important part of what Collins achieves in her narrative is a preservation of GFC even though it has almost completely disappeared. At the same time, the use of Creole forms in literature is subject to the acceptance of a wider audience. The linguistic choice that an author makes particularly involving Creole cannot entirely be her own. People use it – odd words and phrases – but Creole nonetheless. It has to be understood in the light of the role that the publisher plays – also the role of ‘gatekeeper’ - since it is the publisher who determines what gets published and what is deemed to be acceptable literary language.<sup>581</sup> Women’s Press, the publishers of *Angel* welcomed this particular novel and its use of the Creole voice as it was post-Grenada revolution and interested a press that perceived its role as radical. Collins, on questioning her decision to use the Creole voice states that ‘it was the only thing to do at the time. It was the way I could feel close to my characters and hear them clearly’.<sup>582</sup> Collins use of SE, GEC and GFC within her text constitutes a resistance to Lang’s ‘slippery slope’ and an

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<sup>579</sup>Hughes, Alistair, “Grenadianese”, accessed October 2007,

<http://www.cavehill.uwi.edu/bnccde/grenada/conference/papers/hughes.html>.

<sup>580</sup> Alleyne, Mervyn, “Problems of Standardization” in *Language & The Social Construction of Identity in Creole Situations*, Marcyliene H. Morgan, (ed), Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1994, p11.

<sup>581</sup> See also the recent Booker Prize Winner (2015) Marlon James. All of his books are substantially written in Jamaican Creole.

<sup>582</sup> Jacqueline Bishop and Dolace Nicole McLean, ‘Working out Grenada: An interview with Merle Collins’, *Calabash: A Journal of Caribbean Arts and Letters*, Volume 3, Number 2(Fall-Winter 2005): pp53-65 ; p60.

acceptance of the linguistic ghosts which although haunt each other also rely on one another to survive.

Collins' use of proverbial statements as subtitles that tend to act as warnings for certain sections of the novel relates to the need for the reader to be aware that everything is not what it seems. 'We speak in headlines'<sup>583</sup> writes Collins. That is to say, Collins is referring to the ways in which a whole philosophy of life can be encapsulated into a short proverb. As a result, throughout *Angel* the reader is faced with subtitles within each chapter, each telling a story or having a particular meaning central to what the chapter depicts. Proverbial in nature, some are written in Grenadian English Creole and others in Grenadian French Creole. In total, there are seventy eight subtitles, seven of which are written in Grenadian French Creole.

Gade mize mwen, non!  
Sa ki fe'w?  
Tim Tim  
Vini ou kai vini, ou kai we!  
Pwangad waya pike mwen!  
Papa-met oh!  
Tout moun ca playwei!

These proverbial statements act as a recurring riff throughout the narrative. The resulting effect is that what can appear as an abrupt interruption into the narrative becomes a free flowing jazzisticology.<sup>584</sup> That is to say, that each proverbial statement is a riff that has enabled the Grenadian oral tradition to thrive. As historical fiction, Collins' novel is particularly significant in its narrative choices, that of Creole as

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<sup>583</sup> Brenda Berrian, 'We Speak Because We Dream.' Conversations with Merle Collins in Carole Boyce Davis (ed) *Moving beyond Boundaries, Volume 2: Black Women's Diasporas*, Pluto Press: London, 1995, p39.

<sup>584</sup> For further details on jazzisticology see Graham Lcok and David Murray, (eds) *Thriving on a riff*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

the main language and the perspective of the ordinary people. At the same time, *Angel* may be considered an oral text which incorporates the epistolary as a narrative strategy, so that Collins is able to offer a deconstruction of the orality/writing dichotomy. Fourteen letters appear in the novel and the act of writing and reference to written texts occurs regularly, validating Creole as a written language. The exchanging of letters which can be read as an intimate act, also allows the reader insight into the significance of events occurring in wider society through the voice of the people, or the vernacular.

Caribbean Creole Languages, apart from being constantly devalued by their speakers<sup>585</sup>, have been much debated ranging from the ‘view that they are inferior dialects’ through to ‘not being languages in their own right’<sup>586</sup>. George Lang states:

Creoles are enmeshed in a sense of history, since the epic of slavery or similar massive cultural dislocation is their underlying grand narrative’.<sup>587</sup>

In the past the use of Creole in literary works was often dependent on the particular genre or discourse type. Creole was more likely to appear in dialogue and in comic discourse, rather than in narration. Early Caribbean writers such as Michael Scott and the anonymous writer of *Marly*, indicated Creole speech by metanarrative comment or they included relatively short utterances. An example of a relatively short utterance occurs when Marly is seeking employment and recounts his tale to the captain of the ship on which he arrived. Much to his chagrin,

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<sup>585</sup> Creolophobia: the obsessive fear of creole, especially among native speakers. See Lang, George, *Entwisted Tongues: Comparative Creole Literatures*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000, p153.

<sup>586</sup> Morgan Dalphinis, 1985, p14.

<sup>587</sup> George Lang, *Entwisted Tongues*, 2000, p193.

the captain and mates are amused at his predicament as they are aware that his countryman had rejected him solely on the basis that he could not speak Gaelic. Even the slaves on the plantation are aware of this and when they see a person seeking employment they ask ‘Can you talk Gaelic? For if you can’t massa no employ you’.<sup>588</sup> Writers such as Collins, today, no longer use Creole simply to represent dialogue. Creoleness is embedded within their narration.

For example, ‘**When better can’t be done let worse continue**’ (6) is the first major riff which appears in the novel. In this instance, the story within a story is constructed as a letter which Doodsie is writing to her best friend Ezra who is living in Aruba. Doodsie’s letter describes the situation in Grenada and the effect that Leader is having on the country: ‘I know we need a change but not in this way’ (7). Doodsie makes reference to the fact Leader is still involved in union activities just like he was when he too was in Aruba. These events mirror the reality of Gairy’s political career as he was expelled from Aruba for union activities. Collins’ use of fictional tact is extremely important and Carolyn Cooper states that Collins ‘effectively uses the mask of artifice to both protect herself and extend her account beyond the merely factual’.<sup>589</sup>

Another riff which portrays elements of Gairy’s reign is ‘**Gade mizè mwen non**’ (12), which is Grenadian French Creole for ‘look at my trouble’ and again tells the story of strikes, rights for estate workers and

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<sup>588</sup> Anon, *Marly: or, A Planter’s Life in Jamaica*, Oxford: Macmillan Publishers, 2005, p9.

<sup>589</sup> Carolyn Cooper, ‘The Preconditions of Revolution: Merle Collins’ *Angel*’, in *Caribbean Quarterly*, Vol 41, No 2, (June 1995), pp57-70.

the fall in the price of cocoa. Much like the performativity discussed in the earlier chapters of this thesis, the novel opens with the burning of the De Lisle estate which can be read as a theatrical event. As the estate burns, the spectators in the crowd:

slap! Slap! against face, feet [...] toes scratched impatiently against shins; air was whistled in through teeth. People stamped their feet to send the flies away. [...] 'Sh-h-h-h! Hush, baby, hush! (1)

'Slap!, slap!, stamp, stamp', 'Sh-h-h-h hush, baby, hush' has a musical quality to it which resonates with carnival or a public musical event. Simultaneously, the crowd is forced to witness the burning of the products of their labour and to think about the personal loss when Maisie, referred to earlier, jokingly likened the cocoa to a disobedient child. She states:

Ah plant you, ah pick you, ah dance in you, but you so damn ungrateful, you don even know you mudder (3).

This joking, which is itself a local popular riddle, results in Collins' use of another proverbial statement which also appears as a recurring riff later in the novel, that 'tongue an teeth doesn laugh at good ting, non!' (3) or '**Not all skin-teet is good grin!**' (8) The affirmation of laughter in such difficult circumstances encapsulates the complex mood of the crowd, one of anger and simultaneously the capacity to take something bad and make a joke.

Similarly, the use of '**Tim Tim**' (78) signals the start of a storytelling session to which the entire community attends in anticipation of a good folktale from the griot, Jeremiah. Jeremiah tells the story of Papa Nono who works on the big estate planting cocoa. One day his boss

offers to give him a lift. At first Papa Nono is not keen as it is raining and his boots are full of mud and he is fearful of muddying the car, but his boss insists. Jeremiah allows the audience to visualise the story by acting various parts. In effect, he puts on a performance, thus:

Papa Nono cross de road. As he passin behin de car to get in, he study say, well it raining, an he boots full up ah mud' Jeremiah considered his feet. 'He feelin well shame to dirty up boss car. So me man [...] Jeremiah reached down, held on to his imaginary boots, 'pull out he boots [...] Jeremiah pulled, quick behin de car. He put dem down togedder in de bush behind de car on de side o de road an he sneak in easy an siddown dey in de back o de car (80).

That Papa Nono has finally accepted the lift comes at a great cost because he leaves his boots behind and ends up having to walk all the way back to collect them! Papa Nono's story is a too familiar Grenadian folklore and an essential part of the text in that it allows the reader to understand the stories that the community tells as an important part of shaping who they are.

At the beginning of the novel, Leader's rise to power occurs when the Grenadian people come together in order to stop being exploited by the landowners. This follows years of having to work their small piece of land and then:

when the cocoa they ask you to plant in between well in its growth now, they takin away the piece of land from you and give you a new piece to do the same thing'(10-11).

Cousin Maymay explains to Doodsie that 'Is the same story all over. Is vye neg on the groun an bakra beke on top. We always startin, always in the beginning' (11). With this refrain, Collins is able to demonstrate the cyclical crop husbandry that takes place over and over again. Other

references include land, gender and biblical issues to name a few. In contrast, Doodsie builds her house on a plot of land given to her by her mother. When her husband is asked to register the land, he does so in his name. Challenged, he replies ‘even though it in my name, is obvious it belong to both of us. What is yours is mine. We together. We not separating. So what is the problem?’ (9)

Further instances of the religious ideologies referred to earlier are revealed as there are allusions to ‘the greatest story ever told’ – the bible – and ‘in the beginning [...]’ the text is littered with symbolic references to this story, ‘Jesus smiled down [...] His blue eyes watched her every movement’ (6), ‘Made the sign of the cross. The Lord will provide’ (11), ‘god self see is not so for people to live’ (11) and ‘Believe me Papa God [...] I don want to be a doubting Thomas; but I really hope you provide in truth!’ (12)

The image of Christ on Doodsie’s wall is an initial fascination for Angel and given her name she soon aspires to be the angel at the top of the Christmas tree. Yet, as she gets older, she begins to resent this image of Christ and on return from university she is very vocal about the way she feels:

christ inside us dey sey [...] an every time ah tink of a white man wid a globe floatin aroun somewhere inside me [...] I want to go to the doctor (174).

As discussed earlier in this chapter Angel’s reaction to Leader’s picture where she smashes it is just as intense as her reaction to the picture of Christ ‘a white man wid a globe’. As Lima writes, what Collins reveals

to the reader here is ‘the evolution in Angel’s consciousness.’<sup>590</sup> In *Angel*, Collins also manages to regain her own confidence about using the ‘power of fictitious re-creation to tease out the truth’<sup>591</sup>.

### **Text as Testimony: Speak(ing) in codes about 1983**

‘Teasing out the truth’ could be said to be a remit of the Grenadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (hereafter referred to by its official acronym of TCRG) which was set up in 2001 to address the unresolved tensions surrounding the events of October 1983, namely the murder of Maurice Bishop and several cabinet members and the US Invasion. This commission was modelled on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission of interest to this thesis for not only refiguring but reframing the archive. Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, a means of addressing the past for a nation, attempt to heal the wounds of atrocity and to provide an attempt at answering hitherto unanswered questions. In effect, these commissions are an attempt at restorative justice. As such, restorative justice becomes a space in which past crimes are uncovered and acknowledged. The remit of the TRCG was to provide Grenada and Grenadians with an opportunity to become ‘reconciled and permanently healed’.<sup>592</sup>

Investigations were conducted through public hearings, letters, outreach programmes, interviewing family members of the deceased and looking at publications and research conducted during and about the period under investigation. These findings and documents add to

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<sup>590</sup> Maria Helena Lima, ‘Merle Collins’ *Angel of History*, *Swinging Her Breasts History* p53.

<sup>591</sup> Merle Collins, *Writing Fiction, Writing Reality*, p24.

<sup>592</sup> *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Grenada Report*, vol 1 pt 1, Terms of Reference 3c.

the official archive. The Commission made a number of recommendations, yet it is notable that although the investigation was completed by 2002, the final report was not released until 2006. This report now represents an official narrative about Grenada's traumatic history narrated in Collins' *Angel*. Yet, David Scott argues that the TRCG failed in its mission of national reconciliation and Jerome McCalpin notes that many of the Grenadians that he interviewed were unaware of the Commission or its remit, thus posing the question, as to whose memories are included.<sup>593</sup>

Another noted failure is the absence of testimony from the Grenada 17.<sup>594</sup> Much of this is of concern to this thesis in relation to Collins' second edition of *Angel*, published in 2011. The 2011 edition has a revised and extended ending in which Collins attempts to revisit the events that at the time proved too raw.<sup>595</sup>

Twenty-four years later, the voices of those years are clearer [...] I find it more possible to capture their confusion and their passion. Hence this re-issue of *Angel*, with the door opened again so we can listen more quietly to the end of the story.<sup>596</sup>

How does Collins engage with truth, reconciliation, mourning and nationhood to refigure the novel's closure? Is rewriting an attempt to reconcile the past and allow the silent to speak? While the TRCG does

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<sup>593</sup> Jermaine O McCalpin, 'Written into Amnesia? The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Grenada', *Social and Economic Studies*, 62: 3&4, 2013, pp113-140.

<sup>594</sup> The Grenada 17 are seventeen political, military and civilian figures who were convicted of various crimes associated with the overthrow of the Maurice Bishop government of Grenada in 1983 and the subsequent murder of Bishop. McCalpin argues that the Commission should have met with the Grenada 17 'as the biggest prospect for fostering or sowing the seeds of national reconciliation lay in hearing from these imprisoned leaders as their roles and responsibilities in the events leading up to the assassination of Maurice Bishop and his colleagues' (126).

<sup>595</sup> See [www.peepaltreepress.com](http://www.peepaltreepress.com) (accessed November 2015).

<sup>596</sup> Merle Collins, *Angel*, Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2011, p7.

not address the effects of the invasion on the Grenadian Community *Angel* (2011) attempts to do this textually. Collins states that some thirty years later the crisis is still unmentionable and as an event that has occurred during living memory, people still ‘speak in codes about 1983’.<sup>597</sup> For Collins, the novel is a vehicle through which one can exhume and examine the past.

Collins cites her experience of working in the archive when researching material for her PhD as the initial impetus for the 1987 novel *Angel*. Through the realisation that the documentation contained within the official archive was not representative of the truth, in that, the documents revealed the kind of exchanges between the colonial officers and governors in Grenada and the events during the Gairy period she states:

I cannot quote foolish texts like this in my thesis. It’s published; it has some kind of authority.<sup>598</sup>

For Collins, the reality was that there was an absence of the Grenadian voice, an absence of the voices of the community that experienced the atrocities that have been archived. It was at this juncture that Collins decided to write, in her words, ‘a different kind of thing’ searching the archives of her memory, ‘reformulating and shaping a lot of the voices’<sup>599</sup> in her head.

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<sup>597</sup> David Scott, *Fragility of Memory*, p152.

<sup>598</sup> David Scott, *Fragility of Memory*, p144.

<sup>599</sup> David Scott, *Fragility of Memory*, p148.

Much like the cyclical crop rotation, reconciliation is not only a process, but is a 'cycle that will be repeated many times'.<sup>600</sup> This cyclical process is evident in Collins writing as many of her texts share the themes of the search for truth, justice and reconciliation. As emphasised previously, the first edition of *Angel* can be read as offering a kind of *testimonio*, depicted by Lima, as achieving:

its documentary quality through its multiple narrative centres which convey sometimes overlapping, sometimes conflictual versions of self and history.<sup>601</sup>

If we read the text as testimony and juxtapose it with the TRCG, then it carries a particular resonance. The main function of a Truth Commission is that its findings are based on testimony, documenting an individual's story and experience of the events. This enables the individual's story to be acknowledged, in a public forum, whilst at the same time moving beyond the trauma.<sup>602</sup> As an official bureaucratic mechanism, the language of the Commission was Standard English, given that the report was destined for an international audience. The original version of *Angel* with its 'documentary quality' depicted the revolution, government collapse and the invasion, yet it failed to narrate certain events, especially Angel's experiences of the coup and invasion.

Is this omission a failing? Collins was, after all, a witness to the events and in a number of interviews and articles has alluded to the trauma

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<sup>600</sup> Antjie Kong, *country of My Skull: Guilt, Sorrow and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa*, New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000, p386.

<sup>601</sup> Maria Helena Lima, p45.

<sup>602</sup> See Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History After Genocide and Mass Violence*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1999, p67.

she suffered.<sup>603</sup> The 2011 edition with entirely new sections of text recounts the chaos and devastation surrounding the executions and also places emphasis on Grenada's reaction to the US military invasion. While I have been able to focus on Angel's journey of self-discovery in the beginning of this chapter, the revised novel seems to emphasise Angel's self-interrogation of her beliefs and the questioning of what the revolution really stands for. This deconstruction of her self is delivered via an interior monologue in the penultimate chapter under the subtitle **'What side you on?'** What follows is 'a crisis of truth'.<sup>604</sup>

In other words, Angel's questioning highlights the instability of available information and the difficulty of ascertaining who is to be trusted and what information is accurate. The addition of the sections subtitled **'They're here!'** **'Let's Go!'** and **'Where you going, Angel?'** deals with Angel's home as a site of political discussion and familial fidelity. Memories of Ma Ettie become fused with Angel's stream of consciousness whilst she tries to come to terms with the chaos that is enveloping her. These sections mirror closely Collins' personal memories<sup>605</sup> of events reinforcing Collins as not only author but witness. Referring to the invasion she states:

Eventually, the drones came over, bombing. So then everybody rushed inside of the caves. And they were bombing across the mouth of the caves. And so people are trying to dig further inside. And we are all inside there with bombs coming down.<sup>606</sup>

Likewise, in *Angel* Collins writes:

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<sup>603</sup> See interviews by Betty Wilson, David Scott.

<sup>604</sup> April Shemak, p52.

<sup>605</sup> See David Scott, 'Fragility of Memory', pp133-134,

<sup>606</sup> David Scott, 'Fragility of Memory', p134.

To the caves! Get in to the caves!' People tumbled into each other trying to get to the caves [...] Angel threw herself on the ground and crawled deeper into the caves as a world of terror exploded over her head. [...] They bombing right across the mouth of the cave. [...] They trying to flush us out! (2011; 323)

That the 'bombing across the mouth of the cave' bears a direct correlation to Collins' personal experience signals her use of narrative strategy to testify and document events. Having taken up arms to fight in the invasion and finding herself plagued with doubts and questions that she is unable to find answers for, Angel decides to leave the fort and not fight. Surprisingly, the commanding officer arranges for Angel to leave the fort undercover. The addition of this section can be read as a kind of symbolic reconciliation, in that, the commanding officer sets his politics aside and relates to Angel on an individual level saying:

I understand. I look at you, I see how you're feeling and I think of my wife, and of my children. [...] I will put you in the back of the vehicle and when they stop for the medicines, you get out. (2011; 328)

This section is a pivotal change from the original text and this new edition examines the profound ambiguities of Angel's experience. In revealing Angel's ambivalence, Collins signals the difficulties raised by the notions of truth and reconciliation. Since conversations must be had, Collins situates this in the McAllister home signalling that reconciliation has to occur within the spaces of family and community. Incorporated into this act of reconciliation is the national silence. That is to say, the national silence surrounding the wounds and destruction of the coup and the invasion. This is evidenced by Angel's father, Allan, who states 'Let's not talk about this thing, eh! Nothing anybody could do, so let's not talk about it' (2011; 335).

## **Griots: Cultural and Literary Mothers**

Let me tell you a story. For all I have is a story. Story passed on from generation to generation, named Joy. Told for the joy it gives the storyteller and the listener. Joy inherent in the process of storytelling.

(Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other*, 119)

What is transmitted from generation to generation is not only the stories, but the very power of transmission.

(Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other*, 134)

The epigraphs above resonate with my epigraph taken from Collins' poetry at the beginning of this chapter. All three epigraphs underscore Gay Wilentz's theoretical framework with reference to 'generational continuity' which describes 'cultural and literary mothers [who] have passed on traditions and customs of their heritage to generations of children'.<sup>607</sup> These 'literary mothers', using their bodies as archive, survived the middle passage and in doing so allowed the oral narrative to survive. Additionally, echoing the thoughts of Marlene Nourbese Philip, the African female:

[...] brought with her nothing but her body and all the memory and history which that body could contain.<sup>608</sup>

In addressing the role of the African female as bearer of history, Trinh T. Minh-ha writes further that 'every griotte who dies is a whole library that burns down'.<sup>609</sup> For Trinh and similarly for Collins, 'every woman

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<sup>607</sup> Gay Wilentz, *Binding Cultures*, p. xiv.

<sup>608</sup> Marlene Nourbese Philip, *Centre of Remembrance*, p. 4.

<sup>609</sup> Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989, p. 121. It is useful to note that Trinh appropriated this quote from African Historian Amadou Hampaté Ba whose original quote (in translation) in relation to the male storyteller reads 'An old man who dies is like a library that burns'. Trinh's appropriation places the often forgotten contribution of women to the art of storytelling at the forefront.

partakes in the chain of guardianship and of transmission'.<sup>610</sup> Collins' female characters are the custodians of Grenadian tradition through their adherence to French Creole, oral culture and hence a sense of community. The women in the text are the tellers of an alternative version of Grenadian history. This is not one taught in schools but one that can be described as the communal memory, the repository of the accumulated wisdom of the preceding generations in the form of Grenadian English Creole and Grenadian French Creole proverbs.<sup>611</sup>

Given that it is traditionally the female of the house who is the storyteller of Caribbean tales and, as Beryl Gilroy (2002) writes, 'it is mothers ...[who] learn to pass on to youth traditional or tribal knowledge of what must be remembered,' what meanings might be gained from the representation of the black female body within the text? Through Anim-Addo's heroine, Imoinda, we have seen the emergence of the Caribbean nation and with that the emergence of a strong female black body. As Trinh suggests 'the world's earliest archives [...] were the memories of women'.<sup>612</sup>

Yet, as Wilentz reminds us, 'the world of tradition [...] is male-dominated and the traditions being passed on from mothers to daughters are often in direct opposition to the rights and health of the women themselves'.<sup>613</sup> Since archiving has also been an extension of colonial practice and power, Collins' novel offers a counter-memory, a

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<sup>610</sup> Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman*, p121.

<sup>611</sup> Carolyn Cooper, 'The Preconditions of revolution – Merle Collins' *Angel*, Barbadoes: University of the West Indies, 1992.

<sup>612</sup> Trinh T Minh-Ha, *Women*, p121.

<sup>613</sup> Gay Wilentz, *Binding Cultures*, pxxxiii.

revisionist version of history, exposing the ways official archives are more about silencing than telling the truth.

The enslaved woman used her body as an archive for the songs, tales and legends. Even at a time when families would have been broken up and dispersed, the black female body maintained the 'cultural continuity' allowing, for example, Anancy to come to the Caribbean. Wilentz argues that the process of telling stories/tales 'remains part of a mothering process of diaspora orature'<sup>614</sup>.

My argument is that Collins draws on the tradition of orature as a structuring device and as a means of constructing a less authoritative relationship with her readers. Interleaving of Creole proverbs gives a heightened significance to the incidents and stories within each chapter. This technique provides a reframing of Grenadian perception and elicits a chorus-type response to events within the community. Grenadian French Creole is placed in the mouths of the older female generation and functions as a cultural reference to a tradition of language that is not intentionally passed on as evidenced when Aunt Jessie is speaking secretively to Doodsie in the presence of Angel says: 'Palé Patwa!' [...] 'Se kon sa nonk-li yé. Se kon sa tout nom an famni-a yé' (55).<sup>615</sup>

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<sup>614</sup> Gay Wilentz (1992) 'Towards a Diaspora Literature: Black Women Writers from Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States' in *College English*, Vol 54, No 4 (April 1992) pp385-405.

<sup>615</sup> Translation: Speak Patwa! That's what his uncle is like. All the men in the family are like that'.

Collins' women are gifted with a creativity that is encoded in the oral histories allowing them to speak their wisdom in song, story and proverb. It is from the mouth of Sister Miona Spencer wearing a red and black headtie, identical to that worn by Ma Ettie in the opening pages of the novel, signalling kinship and support of the revolution, that we hear a poem that she recalls from memory. Sister Spencer's recitation is a performance, one that is resonant with the history of both de-culturation and re-acculturation. By this I mean that the language used is expressive of the 'collective creative capacities that shape the creolisation processes.'<sup>616</sup> The performance is encapsulated in the proverb 'Sense make befoh book' (267), as Sister Spencer is not only a grandmother but also a student of the Literacy programme.

Collins infuses the performance using calypso, orality and memory as narrative techniques. Sister Spencer declares, 'I have it in me pocket here, but de eyes not too good today [...] I forget de glasses, so I hope I could remember it well' (247). As a 'cultural and literary mother', a custodian of culture who has returned to learning, Sister Spencer reveals to the community:

Me at me age ah in school again!  
Wey you ever hear dat  
In dis country here!  
Me granchilren in secondary  
Dey not payin a cent!  
Ay! Wey you ever hear dat  
In dis country here. (248)

It is evident that Sister Spencer is not in need of her glasses and that the tradition of orality has prevailed. Her performance delivered in the locally produced language of the community, namely Grenadian

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<sup>616</sup> Carolyn Cooper, p3.

English Creole, speaks directly to the community. The result of this cultural tradition is that members of the community applaud and shake her hand, requesting, 'You could give me a copy of it, sister?' with an agreement that Sister Spencer's 'is the kind of talent that was there hidin all de time, dat the revolution bringing to light'.<sup>617</sup>

These requests for a copy of the Sister's poem signal a desire for the poem to be archived and preserved not only in memory but in the written form as well. The role of the griot is portrayed through the letters that are exchanged throughout the text and which allow the authors of these letters to operate in a space in which they are able to communicate freely about their political views. The art of letter writing and exchange between the women takes place between Doodsie and Ezra, Doodsie and Jessie, Angel and Doodsie, and Angel and Janice.

The correspondence between Doodsie and Ezra, in particular, is representative of an intimate, personal form through which women communicate. Yet Collins places this exchange in a zone between private and public language. Although personal and informal, the writing contains commentary on social concerns, such as the political corruption of Leader. For example, Doodsie writes:

to tell you the truth Ezra, the country need a shake up like this, even though I know the kine of person Leader is. I not too sure I like the way they doing things. There is a lot of violence that startin up [...] (6).

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<sup>617</sup> Carolyn Cooper, 'Grenadian Popular Culture and the Rhetoric of Revolution: Merle Collins' *Angel* in *Caribbean Quarterly*, Vol 41, No 2 (June 1996), pp57-70.

The reader is given insight into Doodsie's inner thoughts and her views on the revolution. In a later letter to her friend she again voices her opinion:

we friend Leader reach the top where he was aimin for  
and he have a lot of support but me, I not supporting him  
at all (52).

Doodsie's reaction to the letters that her sister has kept speaks to the premise that her sister is unwittingly keeping a private archive. Doodsie remarks 'so you get dem an tie dem up neat neat as if dey ha to go in exhibition!' (13) Doodsie's first recall of an earlier letter is almost like she is telling a story and Jessie is hearing it for the first time and having to interject, much like a call and response. What transpires is that Jessie shared this letter with the community and in her words 'we well enjoy dat' (14). As Doodsie reads the letter aloud, Jessie intermittently responds with 'Dat does help', 'Yes, Gadé bet-la', 'Ah well know!' and 'Po djab o!' (14-15). The musical structure of riffing referred to previously is evident, with the extracts from the letter likened to verses, while the one-line response constitutes the chorus.

As emphasised earlier, as if to preserve African cultural heritage, the black female body as archive survived the middle passage. The oral narrative by virtue of its constant transformation and survival is seen as an act of resistance. Can the oral narrative be truly archived? Does the oral tale resist being archived? Collins' short story 'Madelene' from her collection *Rain Darling* (1990) focuses on a shift from national history to personal and domestic history. 'Madelene' is a story of family, traditions and home, a person's native land. Through the protagonist's

storytelling, her niece, Corinne, is able to learn of her family history. Using a traditional folktale Madelene teaches Corinne about greed and the consequences of it. 'Madelene' can be read as a story about storytelling thereby embodying García Márquez's 'oral storytelling chain [...] as an alternative archive'.<sup>618</sup> Using the technique of the traditional folktale, Collins allows Madelene to speak in Grenadian French Creole.

Within the opening paragraph of the short story the reader experiences through Madelene friendship, love, pain, death and family history. From 'being closer to her', through to 'friends and relatives and everybody always passing through' (68), the reader is witness to Madelene's life in New York. Madelene's loss is evident in the image of her sister that she sees in the face and eyes of her niece. Gifted with the voice of the griot Madelene performs the tale of Konpè Macucu, Konpè Tigre and Konpè Zaè (Monkey, Tiger and Spider) in a story of greed.

Yet again, Collins can be shown to deploy the literary technique of riffing in, for example, Konpè Tigre and Zaè down by the river, signified through the syncopated 'wind and water', 'wind and water'. Meanwhile back at the camp Konpè Macucu, 'watching the food and he waiting', 'he watching the food and waiting', 'he scratching his head he watching and he waiting', 'he scratching his chin, he watching and he waiting'. It is at this point in the tale that the reader is introduced to the familiar image of the chicken-hawk that populates Collins' oeuvre. In this tale,

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<sup>618</sup> Jennifer Harford Vargas, 'Novel Testimony: Alternative Archives in Edwidge Danitcat's *The Farming of Bones*' p1162.

she is known as Konpè Gigi swooping in to dispose of the greedy Macacu who has eaten all the food. The tale serves as a vehicle for Madelene to deliver a proverbial message to Corinne about greed and the effects that life can have on the psyche.

Much like Senior's madwoman figure discussed in Chapter Two, Collins allows Corinne to play with the idea of madness, escaping it as she begins to understand the pressures behind her own mother's tragic story:

[She] had begun to understand and become so angry with the pain of understanding and drinking and smoking that she talked herself out of madness. (76)

Corinne is able to glean a more rounded image of her mother through the stories recounted by her aunt. At the same time, she is frightened that she does not know enough of her family history and that all will be forgotten if she does not become the receptacle for these stories – or the body in which the personal narrative is archived.

Historically, through slavery, the black woman was seen as a commodity and 'the key to an internal reproduction of labour'.<sup>619</sup> Her value calculated in terms of 'material output and childbearing', she was often seen as a sexual object. Hilary Beckles notes that the 'predominate [*sic*] image associated with the representation of the black woman was that of great strength – the symbol of blackness, masculinity and absence of finer feelings<sup>620</sup>.'

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<sup>619</sup> Hilary Beckles, 'Sex and Gender in the historiography of Caribbean Slavery' in Shepherd et al (eds) *Engendering History: Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective*, 1995, p135.

<sup>620</sup> Hilary Beckles, 'Sex and Gender in the historiography of Caribbean Slavery', p135.

Black women were not seen as ‘women’ as ‘they know not how to nourish and care for their young [...] and could not construct a binding and building culture of domesticity’.<sup>621</sup> In *Angel* the discomfort felt by Collins’ protagonist is apparent when she achieves twenty-fifth place in the scholarships examination and is hugged by her mother, which is described as ‘an unusual treat’ (105).

That this display of love and affection is described as ‘an unusual treat’ is symptomatic with the way in which the novel conveys a sense of communal closeness and intimacy. The oral quality of the loosely structured conversations creates an atmosphere of an informal exchange between people who are very close to each other. The thoughts and feelings of the characters are presented in free indirect speech in Standard English or Grenadian Creole.<sup>622</sup>

Collins’ narrative style draws the reader into various parts of not only Grenadian history but also the wider history of the Caribbean. Reference is made to Columbus and his ‘discovery’ of the Caribbean when Angel’s friend, Helen, sights land and shouts out “Land, allyou! Land!” to which Joy replies “Awight, Columbus! Who dere already could go to hell! Is who comin dat matter!’ (169). Collins’ reference to Columbus signifies another type of haunting, that of history. The Caribbean writer is able to weave his/her narrative so that it becomes an aspect of literary historical reality in which the characters operate.

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<sup>621</sup> Hilary Beckles, ‘Sex and Gender in the historiography of Caribbean Slavery’, p135.

<sup>622</sup> See *Angel* pages 30, 54, 86, and 153.

Caribbean writers have developed cultural and narrative forms which represent and resist the European grand narrative of history inaugurated by Columbus and the modern moment. While Simon Gikandi suggests that entry into the European terrain of the modern has more often than not demanded that the colonized peoples be denied their subjectivity, language and history, Collins' fiction suggests an alternative stance. It tells about the effect of historical events on the ordinary people, their role in the developments, the conflicts and confusions and the disappointment in the failure of the revolution and the US military intervention. Gikandi further adds that one could argue that Caribbean writers have sought new modes of expression and representation by rejecting modernity and by seeking ancestral sources from Africa and India.<sup>623</sup>

Collins' *Angel* succeeds in inserting an alternative voice, an alternative version of Grenadian national history into the archive. Through the use of Grenadian English Creole and Grenadian French Creole Collins has been able to use discourses and languages that are suitable to express the experiences of women and members of the working class. *Angel* chooses an oral mode in which Creole plays an important role. Collins situates her text in a highly political context, implicitly repudiating an aesthetic that privileges language and the literary as such. *Angel* celebrates oral, Creole culture as a Black working-class women's culture too. For Collins 'working out the story of Grenada is working out the

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<sup>623</sup> Simon Gikandi, *Writing in Limbo*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1992, p2. It is useful to highlight the distinction between the socio-historical term 'modernity' and the cultural movement of 'modernism'.

story of humanity and [...] being in the world'.<sup>624</sup> *Angel* serves as an act of remembrance, not just individual memories but collective community memories as well. Personal and political are archived in the literary text thereby memorialising her(story).

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<sup>624</sup> Jacqueline Bishop and Dolace Nicole McLean, 'Working out Grenada: An Interview with Merle Collins', p65.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Creole Archiving, Diaspora and the Academy: Space, Place and Cyberspace**

## Chapter 4

### Creole Archiving, Diaspora and the Academy: Space, Place and Cyberspace

The history of any archive is a history of space which becomes the material measure and foundation of the archive's power and visibility as a form of public culture.<sup>625</sup>

Archives are always already stories: they produce speech and especially speech effects, of which history is but one.<sup>626</sup>

If we want our language to survive we have to ensure its rightful place in the cyberspace.<sup>627</sup>

To ensure its [creole] propagation, a cyber-community for it will have to emerge gradually, whereby a group of people communicate in Creole using communication and information technologies, [...].<sup>628</sup>

While in Chapter Three I position the archive as personal in relation to the archive as national, here I propose to consider the local as glocal. The concept of glocal is important to my argument as it illuminates the endemic nature of social tensions that arise from the interaction between the global and the local. Conceptually, glocal speaks to the process of emphasising the critical importance of thinking globally while acting locally. Unlike the previous chapters which have conceptualised three genres of literary text as archive, this chapter seeks to push the boundaries of the archive that much further as I will posit both the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies (referred to

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<sup>625</sup> Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*, p245.

<sup>626</sup> Antoinette Burton, *Archive Stories*, p20.

<sup>627</sup> See (HANA/Afrol News 4.11.2007) [www.afrol.com/articles/17139](http://www.afrol.com/articles/17139)

<sup>628</sup> This three-day linguistics conference was held during Festival Kreol under the theme "The future of Creole is in its functionality." Currently Creole is not as prominent as it could be on the web says Ronny Adonis, the Chief Technology Officer from Reliant Unified Solution, See (HANA/Afrol News 4.11.2007), [www.afrol.com/articles/17139](http://www.afrol.com/articles/17139)

hereafter as CCDS)<sup>629</sup>, a university research centre and the digital, CCDS' virtual learning environment (VLE), as non-traditional archives.

The definitions of archive so far discussed may be considered conventional in that they equate in the main to the physical. Unsettling these, I wish to re-introduce the concept of the 'creolised archive'. Notably in Harriet Bradley's 'The Seductions of the Archive: Voices Lost and Found' she suggests that the term archive is 'loosening and exploding'<sup>630</sup> thereby allowing a theoretical space in which the notion of historical and power structures can be challenged. Likewise, Marlene Manoff, head of the humanities library at MIT has argued that archival theory offers a rich ground for debate and discussion for librarians and archivists. Manoff states:

Archival theory would benefit from more interdisciplinary conversation with fields like sociology, media studies, [...] and even literary studies where scholars are confronting similar issues and harnessing theory as a way to make connections and transcend the limits of traditionally constituted disciplines.<sup>631</sup>

My approach is from a position of literary studies, specifically Caribbean literary studies where the literary text might be used as a theoretical tool to address and theorise issues of concern. In this instance, I wish to 'harness theory as a way to make connections' between the process of creolisation and archival theory.

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<sup>629</sup> The Centre for Caribbean Studies was re-launched as the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies on 15 October 2015 and is located at Goldsmiths, University of London. I will sometimes refer to it by its original name.

<sup>630</sup> Harriet Bradley, 'The Seductions of the Archive: Voices Lost and Found' *History of the Human Sciences* 12,2, May 1999, p117.

<sup>631</sup> Marlene Manoff, 'Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines' in *Libraries and the Academy*, Vol 4, No 1, (2004), p22.

As such, this chapter constitutes a microhistory<sup>632</sup> of CCDS, essentially a local history. Its object is to understand, at a microhistorical level, how CCDS as archive might be read and experienced through its multi-layered activities. A microhistorical approach allows for a change of scale of observation as its main premise. For Lara Putnam, microhistory ‘reduces the scale of observation, often to the level of personal encounters or individual life histories’.<sup>633</sup> Similarly, historians Carlo Ginzburg and Carlo Poni define microhistory as:

the intensive investigation of a relatively well defined smaller object, most often a single event or a village community, a group of families, even an individual person.<sup>634</sup>

Drawing on oral history and my personal experience/involvement (2004 to present day) with CCDS, and taking particular account of CCDS’ website which provides specific information on its history, alumni and conference series I focus primarily on key events related to CCDS evolution: its genesis with the current Director, Joan Anim-Addo, its emergence into the field of literary conferences and its current positioning in the HE sector. Little scholarly analysis addressing the centre’s history and growth exists. Like other university research

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<sup>632</sup> Microhistory emerged during the 1970s from a small group of Italian historians (Carlo Ginzburg, Giovanni Levi, Edoardo Grendi and Carlo Poni), who were dissatisfied with the state of academic history. Microhistory is an analysis that endeavours to reduce the scale of observation to the microscopic. That is to say, instead of dismissing small incidents, stories or anomalies in the source material as trivial, they are given the same historical consideration as those that appear to have greater or larger significance. Microhistory is a useful concept for my analysis because, as Italian Marxist historians Ginzburg and Poni explain on the one hand, it allows for a scaling of focus which permits a reconstitution of ‘real life’ unthinkable in other kinds of historiography and on the other, proposes to investigate the invisible structures within which that lived experience is articulated.

<sup>633</sup> Lara Putnam, ‘To Study The Fragments/Whole: Microhistory and the Atlantic World’, *Journal of Social History*, Volum 39, Number 3, Spring 2006, p615.

<sup>634</sup> See Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon and István M. Szigjártó, *What is Microhistory?: Theory and Practice*, Oxon: Routledge, 2013.

centres dedicated to the study of Caribbean literature and culture, CCDS has its genesis in a specific founding voice, in this case, that of Joan Anim-Addo.<sup>635</sup> Yet CCDS is not built on Anim-Addo's voice alone, but the voices of many – academic scholars, students and the local community.

Microhistory's proclivity for the margins, the exceptions, the uncommon, makes it an ideal methodology for exploring CCDS' history as an archive, a history not included in grand narratives, such as CCDS' struggle for additional staffing and resources, its difficult relationship with an English literature department following its strong association with a Community Education department<sup>636</sup> and its presence generally in a higher education institution. Using contact zone theory to support microhistorical methodology, I will highlight the research and teaching tools emerging from CCDS and contributing to the archive, specifically the virtual learning environment.

### **Negotiating the Contact Zone**

Theorist and critic, Mary Louise Pratt coined the term 'contact zone' borrowing from the sociolinguistic notion of a 'contact language'.<sup>637</sup> Pratt's theory of the contact zone explains the encounter and points of

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<sup>635</sup> CCDS emerged as the result of a re-launch (2015) by the present Director, Joan Anim-Addo. The Centre for Caribbean Studies before it was founded through community action. See Joan Anim-Addo, *Longest Journey: A History of Black Lewisham*, London: Deptford Forum Publishing Ltd, 1995.

<sup>636</sup> Professional and Community Education (PACE), Goldsmiths, University of London.

<sup>637</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London/New York: Routledge, 1992. 'Contact language refers to improvised languages that develop among speakers of different native languages who need to communicate with each other consistently, usually within the context of trade. Such languages begin as pidgins, and are called creoles when they come to have speakers of their own (6).

contact between colonising and native cultures. Pratt defines contact zones as:

spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrically relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery or their aftermaths as they are lived out in the world today.<sup>638</sup>

It is this theory of ‘disparate cultures meeting, clashing and grappling’ that Pratt applies to classrooms as points of contact for various and competing languages and perspectives. Drawing on her experiences as a parent of a school age child and as a university teacher, Pratt outlines what a classroom might look like if thought of as a contact zone as opposed to a unified community. She analyses moments when teachers fail to acknowledge or deal with dissent. The example given is of an instance when her son is asked to write about a helpful invention that he would like for his own use. His idea was for a vaccine that would inoculate him with answers for stupid homework assignments. The response he received from his teacher, ‘the usual star to indicate the task had been fulfilled in an acceptable way’.<sup>639</sup> For Pratt, the result is that conflict and difference get dealt with by not being noticed. Consequently, Pratt calls for the classroom to be a space where voices of difference do get heard, even if at the cost of some conflict or confusion. In effect, Pratt imports difference into her classroom through assigning her students a number of readings from diverse cultures. Thus, students are brought ‘in contact’ with writings from

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<sup>638</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, ‘Arts of the Contact Zone’, *Profession 91* (1991): pp33-40.

<sup>639</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, ‘Arts of the Contact Zone’, *Profession 91* (1991): pp33-40.

various cultures. However, Pratt fails to address how she gets her students to negotiate the difference.

For critic, Richard Miller, ‘competing modes of response’ often define the way in which ‘business gets conducted in the contact zone of the classroom’ leading to unsatisfactory debate where questions are ignored or unasked ‘with the result that vital contextual information often is either never disclosed or comes to light very late in the discussion’<sup>640</sup>. Miller extends Pratt’s idea of the contact zone by imagining it not as a space which one can form simply through bringing differing groups and views together, but as a forum which one can only keep going through a constant series of local negotiations, interventions, and compromises. Thus, the contact zone becomes something more like a process or event than a physical space and, as Miller theorises, is a local and shifting series of interactions among perspectives and individuals.<sup>641</sup>

I wish to argue that the CCDS classroom presents the opposite to Pratt’s classroom in that it is the students who are from diverse cultures and have been able to negotiate the ‘contact zone’. I suggest that through a process of cultural creolisation, as defined below, ‘contact zone’ as it currently resides in the archive, is refigured as ‘meeting zone’ where ‘disparate cultures meet’ – *a coming-together of cultures to debate similarities and differences*. Furthermore, this ‘meeting zone’

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<sup>640</sup> Richard Miller, *Fault Lines in the Contact Zone*, p390.

<sup>641</sup> Richard Miller, *Fault Lines in the Contact Zone*, p390.

does not only take place in the physical space but in the virtual space as well. I wish to argue that the CCDS classroom extends both Pratt and Miller's notions of how knowledge can and should be shared. Not only is it a space in which diverse knowledge is shared but the ways in which these ideas are negotiated is of significance to CCDS as a creolising space.

### **Theorising Space and Cyberspace**

As I have been arguing throughout this thesis, notions of space and place are central when considering the position of the archive in relation to Caribbean culture. Of particular interest to me is the relevance of space/place and the power structures embedded in these ideas. Furthermore, with the onset of the digital age and our ability to exist in the ether, to cross physical and digital divides, I wish to explore what displacement might look like. In the introduction to this thesis I outlined briefly concepts of space and place from Massey, Creswell and Tuan, finally settling on Tuan's definition, where he argues that space and place rely on each other. He extends his thesis further to suggest that space can be moved through, while a place is the particular location at which movement is paused.<sup>642</sup>

The displacement of CCDS began with an email informing the director of the centre's upcoming relocation and, more importantly, that could be read as its erasure due to the lack of prior consultation. It would be snatched up from its residential street lined with houses – a space

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<sup>642</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place*, p6.

consisting of two rooms inside a house – a home, and relocated to the third floor of a tower block with limited accessibility for the community. The allocated space is insufficient for the research material, books, furniture and so on and still remains inadequate at the time of submitting this thesis.

If Tuan's hypothesis stands, what implications might there be for CCDS, originally located in a particular place and whose recent relocation means that it has been situated in a 'space that can be moved through' as well as in a 'particular location at which movement is paused'. I wish to suggest that CCDS has been displaced. Taking this one step further I would like to explore the possibilities of a merging of the terms 'space' and 'place' to create '*sp[l]ace*'. If I then consider the idea of '*this sp[l]ace*' and in turn adopt the Creole word for 'this' so that it becomes '*dis*' ('th' is replaced with 'd') the result for 'this space', 'this place' '*this sp[l]ace*' is *dis-sp[l]ace* doubling as a space that can be moved through alongside its particular location.

Given the onset of the internet, the mobile phone and new technologies, 'place' has been conquered by 'space' as these technological gadgets facilitate access to a 'space' regardless of where they are placed. Location becomes to some extent irrelevant. To expand on the definitions of 'space' and 'place' discussed earlier, geographer, John Agnew states:

In the simplest sense place refers to either a location somewhere or to the occupation of that location. The first sense is of having an address and the second is about

living at that address. Sometimes this distinction is pushed further to separate the physical place from the phenomenal space in which the place is located. Thus place becomes a particular or lived space. Location then refers to the fact that places must be located somewhere. Place is specific and location (or space) is general.<sup>643</sup>

If space is general then, how might cyberspace be defined? The origin of the term 'cyberspace' stems from the visual arts in the late 1960s prior to the existence of the internet and was attributed to an artist collective known as 'Atelier Cyberspace'. Carsten Hoff, architect and survivor of 'Atelier Cyberspace' recalls in an interview in 2015 that cyberspace:

was simply about managing spaces. There was nothing esoteric about it. Nothing digital either. It was just a tool. The space was concrete, physical.<sup>644</sup>

In terms of managing spaces, the term 'cyberspace' has, like archive, loosened and exploded allowing the theoretical possibilities that accrue to any expansion. The first use of cyberspace in literature occurred in the 1982 short story *Burning Chrome* by science fiction author, William Gibson. Present-day usage of the term no longer implies or suggests immersion in a virtual reality. Rather, current technology is sufficient to allow access regardless of a geographic location. Scientists Rain Ottis and Peeter Lorents define the term as follows:

Cyberspace is a time-dependent set of interconnected information systems and the human users that interact with these systems.<sup>645</sup>

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<sup>643</sup> John Agnew, 'Space and Place' in J. Agnew and D. Livingstone (eds.) *Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*. London: Sage, 2011, p318.

<sup>644</sup> <http://www.kunstkritikk.com/kommentar/the-reinvention-of-cyberspace/> (accessed 21/12/2015).

<sup>645</sup> Rain Ottis and Peeter Lorents, 'Cyberspace: definitions and Implications' in Edwin Leigh Armistead (ed.), *Proceeding of the 5th International Conference Information Warfare and Security*. Australia: Edith Cowan University, 2010, pp267-271.

It is this definition that best suits my thesis in that the insertion of 'human users' is crucial to my discussion concerning the ways in which cyberspace can assist with the paradigm of the imagined Creole community yet-to come. Ottis and Lorents argue that 'cyberspace is an artificial space', one that is created by humans for human purposes and that without this intervention, cyberspace, would stagnate and fall into disrepair and eventually cease to be. All of this is relevant to a virtual creolised archive and my concern with the archiving of Caribbean Creoles and culture. How might a different space than that of cyberspace, act as a literary and linguistic interface for second-generation Caribbean descendants who wish to learn about their heritage specifically Creole languages and oral literature from the region but cannot rely on the space I was privileged to use? How is the text memorialised at the level of the student experience (learn.gold)? How does CCDS continue to archive all of these?

### **CCDS: A Microhistory**

The space from which my desire to research Caribbean Literature arose, is located in a tiny corner of New Cross, South East London in a place of learning, that is also a space of Higher Education. For a number of years I have dwelt in this particular archive, a space of belonging, a feeling of home, an environment where one learns of one's past and at the same time of the future.

The history of CCDS, a lengthy one, begins by being championed by the people for the people, according to the university archives. I had to

search for the official record and for the Centre's beginnings. The Centre was seen as a much needed entity for the Caribbean community of a specific period. I was unaware of the nature of the building within which I studied and of the archivist preparing to pass on knowledge from teacher to student until the student becomes a teacher and continues that oral tradition of passing the knowledge on<sup>646</sup>. What follows is my archive story.

I propose to take selected examples from CCDS as archive and expand upon these to illustrate how each sample of microhistory might be read in terms of the 'creolised archive', a) the past, and b) the present. In terms of 'a particular place or location' my first contact with CCDS occurred in 2004. At this time it was located on a small, partially residential, side street 'lined with houses'. Indeed its space consisted of two rooms inside a house. In essence it was home. If CCDS is considered as home, to what extent might Burton's theorising of home as a space which stages 'dramas of remembrance' apply? I suggest that the creation of CCDS and its largely untenable links with the local, national and international communities have enabled CCDS to engage a process of cultural creolisation, in effect, by performing as creolised space through its practices, activities and events. I suggest that this process of cultural creolisation taking place within CCDS, involves ideas and theories meeting, being exchanged, shaped and reshaped once again, allowing us to historicise and read the space as a 'creolised archive'.

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<sup>646</sup> See chapter three where generational continuity is explored.

That CCDS is in effect a living breathing archive might be evidenced through its practice of inclusive education, involving not only classroom education but also bi-weekly student-led activities ranging from Caribbean Forums to specialised poetry readings and its international conference series. In attempting to enrich the local community, CCDS has a practice of education which seeks to creolise the diaspora by articulating Caribbean history whether inside or outside the academy. CCDS pays attention to both. As Anim-Addo notes ‘creolising addresses [...] a historical specificity deriving from the plantation.’<sup>647</sup> That is to say, CCDS is a space of community-building, of relationships inclusive of the local Caribbean community, signalling a connection with home, or Caribbean culture. As Glissant reminds us ‘*remaining where [we] are*’<sup>648</sup>, opens up the possibilities, as stated previously above, of meeting the world not just by travelling but also by dwelling.

CCDS is the space from which the literary text as archive emerges; the creolised literary text shared with both students and the wider community. In my introduction to this thesis I described the notion substantiating a refiguring of the archive and how access is granted. In this chapter, I wish to further argue for CCDS as not the traditional archive but as a vibrant, colourful, living archive. What meanings can

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<sup>647</sup> Joan Anim-Addo, ‘Gendering Creolisation: Creolising Affect’, *Affect and Creolisation*. Spec. issue of *Feminist Review* 104, 2013, p11.

<sup>648</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, p139.

be gained from the accessibility granted by this open place of learning which doubles as an archive? As Jacques Derrida argues:

there is no political power without control of the archive, if not memory. Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and access to the archive, its constitution and its interpretation.<sup>649</sup>

If control of the archive is equated to political power how does one account for the struggles that CCDS has faced? Such struggles might include access to funding and access to a suitable space. In light of these, how can CCDS allow full participation and access?

Although CCDS does not present itself primarily as archive, I argue that in preserving the wealth of history and memory within it that it functions as such. The term archive has expanded and a number of humanities and social science scholars<sup>650</sup> have expanded on the meaning and role of archives both politically and scholarly, adopting terms such as ‘postcolonial archive’,<sup>651</sup> ethnographic archive’<sup>652</sup> and ‘liberal archive’<sup>653</sup> to name a few. It is in this context that I re-introduce the term ‘creolised archive’ not only in relation to the literary texts that I have previously examined but also in relation to CCDS.

For as Burton emphasises:

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<sup>649</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans Eric Prenowitz, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995, 4 note 1.

<sup>650</sup> See *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 32, 1, Spring 1999, pp1-28; *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire*; *Diacritics* 30, 1 (Spring 2000), pp25-48.

<sup>651</sup> Sandhya Shetty and Elizabeth Jane Bellay, ‘Postcolonialism’s Archive Fever’ in *Diacritics*.

<sup>652</sup> George E Marcus, ‘The Once and Future Ethnographic Archive’ *History of the Human Sciences* 11, 4, November 1998, pp49-64.

<sup>653</sup> Patrick Joyce, ‘The Politics of the Liberal Archive’, *History of the Human Sciences* 12, 2, May 1999, pp35-49.

archives do not simply arrive or emerge fully formed; nor are they innocent of struggles for power, in either their creation or their interpretive applications.<sup>654</sup>

As such CCDS is an unconscious archive that has been shaped by social political and technological forces. I refer to CCDS as unconscious precisely because its remit has never been that of an archive though it certainly archives books, theses, journals and so on. Burton re-enforces further that:

all archives come into being in and as history as a result of specific political, cultural and socio-economic pressures – pressures which leave traces and which render archives themselves artifacts of history.<sup>655</sup>

Thus in 1979, through political, cultural and socio-economic pressures, the local Caribbean Community of New Cross, South East London decided that there was an urgent requirement for a space and place that would enable the academic study of Caribbean culture and the sharing of advice about the academic needs of the Caribbean communities. Establishing a timeline requires a delving into the university archives to find that some thirty odd years ago a small working party was set up in 1980 and after some detailed and lengthy conversations with the University Administration, the Caribbean Studies Centre was born.

It is important to note that this entity was the first of its kind in the UK with other universities quickly following suit<sup>656</sup>. Initially set up with

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<sup>654</sup> Antoinette Burton, p6.

<sup>655</sup> Antoinette Burton, p6.

<sup>656</sup> Centre for Caribbean Studies at Warwick University was established in October 1984. In 2010 on its 25th anniversary, the Centre was re-named the [Yesu Persaud](#) Centre for Caribbean Studies. Caribbean Studies Centre at London Metropolitan was established in 1988 and was closed by the university circa 2011. Centre for Colonial and Postcolonial studies established at University of Kent in 1994. Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies established at SOAS,

two co-ordinators, CCDS has for the last fifteen years been held together by one Director, Joan Anim-Addo, and a small ‘community of learners’.<sup>657</sup> That CCDS still stands today is a credit to the dedication of the Director, who I will also sometimes refer to in this chapter as the archivist. As stated above, CCDS’ remit was never one of archiving. Its mission being:

- to become a leading international Resource and Research Centre for the study, promotion and dissemination of Caribbean and Diaspora culture.
- to develop and capitalize upon its unique position as the only Caribbean-led Research and Resource Centre within a University environment that documents, promotes and fosters the history of Caribbean culture locally and globally.
- to continue to develop with a range of contemporary practitioners including writers, performers, oral historians, and technologists, the representation and promotion of Caribbean cultural knowledge and heritage in the UK, and internationally.
- to do this through an exploration of historical and contemporary cultural practices throughout the globe.
- to inspire and provoke critical discussion to promote the Centre’s aims.<sup>658</sup>

As such, CCDS remains uniquely placed as the only Caribbean-led Research Centre within the University sector which has a distinctive focus on the local community and academic concerns. Its strong record of involvement with the local community (as well as nationally and internationally) means that it is highly regarded by its peers. This is

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University of London in 2007. Centre for Latin American and Caribbean Studies established at Newcastle University in 2014.

<sup>657</sup> By ‘community of learners’ I refer to the postgraduate students who have maintained links with CCDS even after they have finished their programme of study or whilst engaging in study.

<sup>658</sup> See Joan Anim-Addo, ‘Triennial Review of the Centre for Caribbean Studies, 2012-13’.

evidenced through its commitment to secure funding and its research activity detailed and discussed below.

### **CCDS: Politics of the Archive**

The archive that is CCDS is constantly under threat. Several recent initiatives by a number of agencies within other universities threatened to erode the lead assumed by Goldsmiths and CCDS both in terms of programming initiatives and potential student catchments. These departments quickly recognised the potential to be gained from attracting Caribbean heritage students and/or establishing a Caribbean Studies academic programme. For example, in September 2005, at the invitation of another London campus CCDS Director was invited to participate in a session where it became clear that the aim was to set up a new and wide ranging Caribbean Studies programme. It also became evident that the reason for the invitation was in recognition of the work with which she had been involved and a concern to secure her ideas for the development of a rival programme.<sup>659</sup>

Mindful of this potential external threat, the Director put forward a proposal (Appendix 3) to the University administration that foregrounded the Centre as a 'magnet' arising from her vision to enhance and develop the role of the Centre in its mission to focus upon the academic study of Caribbean culture and to advise on the academic needs of Caribbean communities at all levels. The proposal addressed

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<sup>659</sup> In 2004 CCDS ran an MA in Caribbean Literature and Creole Poetics. A programme that was popular and successful with its first cohort graduating in 2005.

the need for the Centre to develop and offer a coherent structure of programmes, conferences and related activities and opportunities for the widest audience and particularly black Caribbean students. The proposal sought financial backing that would allow the Centre to function independently. This proposal failed to traverse the bureaucratic university committee system and the Centre continued to function with the Director and the small 'community of learners'.

The failure of the proposal did not deter the members of CCDS and throughout the years that followed numerous bids were submitted to a number of research bodies to secure external funding for important research. For example, in 2011 an application was submitted to the European Research Council (ERC) to fund a project titled 'Knowledge(s) and Equality: Signifying Diversity through Intercultural Approaches to Literary Studies'. Within this application CCDS was described as follows:

that the learning space of the Centre emphasises the long and complex process of history involving Atlantic slavery, colonisation, Empire, and more recent migrations, as well as the poetics of relation, creolization theories and participation in the debate on postcolonial studies is perhaps to be anticipated. The Centre is also a privileged space for the development of intercultural dialogue and the promotion of intercultural actions.<sup>660</sup>

The main focus of this project questioned the absence of black scholars in English Departments, a concern which still remains as relevant today. The application was rejected. Similarly, in 2013, an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Large Grants bid was submitted

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<sup>660</sup> Joan Anim-Addo, ERC Application 2011.

(requested funding approximately 1.5 million) for a project titled ‘Transformative Crossroads: Translational Spaces, texts and practices’. This project sought to examine tension as key to translating cultures in the classroom, the research field, and the workplace. With the notion of zones of translation, the project visualised contact between various cultures as moments of production of new alliances, discourses, ways of living and creating, as opposed to the common view propagated by the media in which tensions appear as only the cause of persecutions, violence and wars. Yet again, funding was refused.

However, bids for smaller amounts were successful and included a £7000 grant for a project entitled ‘Black Body in Europe’<sup>661</sup>, an AHRC student-led initiative grant of £1850 for a project entitled ‘Words from Other Worlds’<sup>662</sup> and an AHRC Research Network grant of £45,000 for a project entitled ‘Behind the Looking-glass: ‘Other’-cultures-within translating cultures.’<sup>663</sup> Each of the above projects were instrumental in raising the profile of CCDS within the HE sector and externally as well, thus enabling CCDS, as stated in its mission statement, to adhere to its main focus that of keeping Goldsmiths at the forefront and cutting edge of Caribbean and Diaspora research. Paradoxically, CCDS has to secure a future that will protect a past.

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<sup>661</sup> See [www.gold.ac.uk/caribbean/blackbody](http://www.gold.ac.uk/caribbean/blackbody)

<sup>662</sup> See Chapter one for a full discussion on this project.

<sup>663</sup> Outputs from these projects can be found at [www.gold.ac.uk/caribbean](http://www.gold.ac.uk/caribbean); <http://wordsfromotherworlds.blogspot.co.uk/>; <http://www.comparativecriticalconversations.blogspot.co.uk/>

### **Digital Cosmopolitans: Creolising the Web**

The digital space can provide the place in which CCDS' past and other ideas on Caribbean culture and language are contained and/or archived. Using Benedict Anderson's theory of 'imagined community' I argue that the internet can provide the global or indeed glocal space for an 'imagined Creole community' and that the Web can effectively serve as an interactive archive for Caribbean oral literature. How then might technology support or resist the exclusivity of books, museums and so on to allow greater access to Caribbean Creoles and through this process contribute to the building of a virtual Caribbean language community in cyberspace?

As my third epigraph notes, for any languages to survive, they need to be available more widely. Virtual spaces need to be both created and maintained for the preservation and archiving of Caribbean Creoles and oral literatures. In this way, the Web might be seen and experienced also as a literary interface. The question then becomes, how will our Creole languages and literature be represented in this context?

As a proficient computer user, I have always been under the impression that the Internet and the World Wide Web were synonymous. These two terms are used interchangeably every day by many of us. Although not originally synonymous, they are now used as one and the same in our everyday terminology. The 'Internet', sometimes referred to as the 'Information Superhighway' or 'Cyberspace', is a worldwide series of

interconnected computer networks which transmits data, such as email or file transfers. These computer networks are accessible by the public and are linked, for example, by copper wires, fibre optic cables or wireless connections. These Networks can be academic, government, business or domestic.

The 'World Wide Web' (WWW), on the other hand, is a collection of interlinked documents or other resources which are accessed via the Internet. The Web therefore is an Internet service. Other examples of Internet services are Email and Newsgroups. The Web makes it possible to view images, film clips, and listen to sound recordings and it is this multiplicity which makes the Web an invaluable tool for my research. I like to think of the Internet as an enormous book and the Web as chapters and pages within it. When I describe the difference to my children I refer to the Internet as 'a road' and the Web as 'the cars' which run along it. The Web can be read as an archive of archives.

There are various issues surrounding research on the Web. Immediate questions that spring to mind concern the validity and authenticity of the information that is so readily available and in what way the information on the Web might differ from that in Books. Who uses the Web and do you have to be computer literate in order to use it? These are all questions that need to be addressed. Scholars such as Renée M

Sentilles<sup>664</sup> argue that the virtual archive cannot readily replace the real archive in terms of sources. I wish to argue that in this particular instance the virtual archive can act as a virtual map to the physical archive and as such resonate with Sentilles' view that 'it can greatly enhance our scholarship'.<sup>665</sup>

Currently the Internet is governed by a voluntary body, the ISOC,<sup>666</sup> which is responsible for promoting global information exchange through Internet technology. Édouard Glissant, poet and literary critic noticed the changes that the internet would bring about, stating that:

The internet – for the first time in human history – is open to everyone and addresses everyone. The internet broadens the concept of literature, incorporating the necessity of complete information from everywhere. The internet opens up a stupendous mingling of tongues [...].<sup>667</sup>

It is this Internet technology that I wish to utilise in an attempt to make the Creole literature and culture of the Caribbean more visible and to use the resources of the Web to preserve our Creole cultures and to open up Glissant's 'stupendous mingling of tongues'.

In contrast, Thomas L McPhail, communications theorist and author of *Electronic Colonialism: The Future of International Broadcasting and*

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<sup>664</sup> Renée M Sentilles, 'Toiling in the Archives of Cyberspace' in Antoinette Burton (ed) *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and The Writing of History*, p145.

<sup>665</sup> Sentilles, p145.

<sup>666</sup> Internet Society (ISOC), <http://www.isoc.org/internet/history/brief.shtml> (accessed March 2016).

<sup>667</sup> *A Peppercot of Cultures*, p267.

*Communication* writes of ‘indigenous internet sites’<sup>668</sup> and the fact that they are currently in the minority. McPhail states that these sites are aimed at either keeping expatriates informed or helping children to obtain knowledge about their ancestral roots. He states further that for any one of these sites which have their pages written in a language other than English, there are at ‘least 100 pages of English text’<sup>669</sup>. This therefore makes the Internet not only US-centric but English dominated as well and renders the Internet as a ‘leading purveyor of electronic colonialism around the globe’.<sup>670</sup>

While McPhail’s electronic colonialism theory deals mainly with the capture of the mind by, for example, the major broadcasting companies for the benefits of their advertisers and does not deal specifically with the issue of Creole, it is a theory that I will attempt to ‘go a piece of the way with’.<sup>671</sup> In my attempts to locate a place in cyberspace, I wish to argue that while this process of electronic colonialism is taking place, the Caribbean region, which McPhail describes as ‘peripheral’<sup>672</sup>, will be able through its people who are dis/placed in the diaspora to develop internet sites which will be capable of not capturing, as

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<sup>668</sup> Thomas L McPhail, ‘The Internet: The New Frontier’, *Global Communication: Theories, Stakeholders, and Trends*, 2006, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, p311.

<sup>669</sup> Thomas L McPhail, ‘The Internet: The New Frontier’, p311.

<sup>670</sup> Thomas L McPhail, ‘The Internet: The New Frontier’, p311.

<sup>671</sup> Taken from Boyce-Davies, Carole, Chapter 2 – Negotiating Theories or ‘Going a Piece of the Way with Them’ *Black Women, Writing and Identity* 1.1 (1994).

<sup>672</sup> McPhail places the evolution of the internet at the foot of what he calls core nations, such as North America, Europe and Japan. He then describes Semiperipheral nations as playing catch up in an attempt to mimic these innovations. He argues that the Semiperipheral nations are hindered by lack of funding and lack of high tech entrepreneurs. This situation he says is exacerbated for the Peripheral nations.

Electronic Colonialism Theory dictates, but, expanding and enhancing the mind.

Sentilles argues that traditional sources are noted to allow the reader to go back and review the information source. Web sources that disappear make it difficult for that particular source of information to be reviewed. Cyberspace as the archive of archives enables the passing of knowledge or indeed the shaping of an imagined creole community. Much like the traditional physical archive, the virtual archive has its limitations. However, I suggest that CCDS as archive is able to utilise the virtual and plant the seeds for the shaping of its virtual creole community.

This shaping and reforming leads to the question of access. Some parts of the world are more wired than others, yet, for those of us in the diaspora it is possible for us to shape our own Internet resources. A limitation of electronic archiving is that resource-rich cultures and institutions dominate Internet use thereby determining what is present on the Web. This is much more difficult for resource-poor cultures without the financial capabilities to digitally archive primary materials.<sup>673</sup>

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<sup>673</sup> For example see discussions on the Grenada National Archive whose physical building was destroyed during Hurricane Ivan in 2004 and the records are currently in storage awaiting digitisation. Small grants have been awarded and the process has begun, yet some ten years on only a small portion of this extremely important work has been carried out.

Yet, media scholar, Ethan Zuckerman states that:

a future of connections across lines of language, culture and nation is made more possible by the rise of the internet. Our economic and creative success depends on our becoming digital cosmopolitans, on embracing inspirations and opportunities from all parts of the world. To build the tools we need to thrive in this emerging world, we must understand how we're connected and disconnected.<sup>674</sup>

'Digital cosmopolitans' referred to by Zuckerman people my 'imagined creole community' and it is specifically the building of tools to enable preservation of one's cultural heritage that I underscore. Moreover, Zuckerman writes further that in order to create lasting connections in cyberspace one must move towards a physics of connection. He reiterates that:

our first step towards that goal is establishing a better understanding of what we actually do, and don't do, and whom we hear and don't hear, when we use the internet.<sup>675</sup>

CCDS' website set out to ensure that all of its activities were always available on the Internet with access to its site freely available. In other words, CCDS might be said to be seeking through its website, Zucherman's 'physics of connection'. Yet, the site is hosted on the University's servers and as such is bound by the rules and regulations of the institution. So, although CCDS' site has a valid domain name and a certain sense of authority, there is always a risk to brand and image changes as happened with the recent re-branding of the University's website in 2015.

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<sup>674</sup> Ethan Zuckerman, *Rewire: Digital Cosmopolitans in the Age of Connection*, New York: W Norton and Company Inc, 2013, pp36-37.

<sup>675</sup> Ethan Zuckerman, p37.



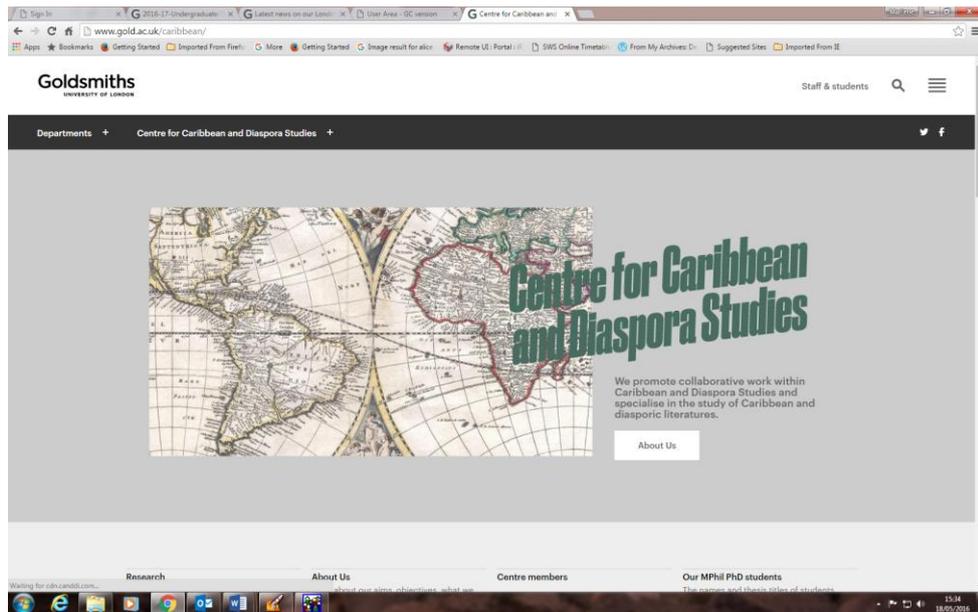


Figure 2: New site (2015)

During this re-branding exercise access to CCDS' web pages became fairly non-existent and the ability to update quickly and easily proved challenging. The first version of the new site had the map illustrated below (figure three) as its main image.



Figure 3: Welcome Map for International Students

This map was used on a number of departmental sites aimed at welcoming students from across the world. In CCDS we did not feel that this accurately represented our main focus, that of the Caribbean. As such once editorial access to the website was regained we were able to replace the ‘International Map’ with a more appropriate map where the Caribbean is placed at the centre of the World (see figure four below).



**Figure 4: World Map**

Whether CCDS is then the gatekeeper of its own pages becomes debatable. These ‘pages’ in the virtual rather than the textual sense, it can be argued, have a shelf life much like the book that eventually becomes out-of-print. The Internet is able to provide access to nontextual sources conveying sound, images and movement.

This is advantageous for CCDS as it allows the Internet to be used as a teaching tool not only for research purposes but for disseminating and discussing approaches to Caribbean literature. Thus, the digital platform allows CCDS to disrupt notions of power. The digital allows CCDS to re-align ideas of Caribbeanness and language, histories denied access in texts. It also allows for greater distance in knowledge travelled as it can reach a wider audience.

### **Creole Bytes: A Virtual Learning Environment**

This critical teaching tool can be found in CCDS' virtual learning environment. A virtual learning environment is first and foremost an educational resource based in a computer and brings together learning tools and information to assist study. There are three main properties to a virtual learning environment: storage – it can store educational materials; linkage – provides links to other stores of educational resources, and communication – provides electronic communication tools.

Yet, the virtual learning environment does not exist in cyberspace alone. Hardware and software are required, for example, computers, printers, and so on. As such this links back to my notion of the 'double archive' outlined at the beginning of this thesis where the virtual resides in the physical. The virtual learning environment is not just a replication of the physical classroom. The physical classroom requires a teacher and a number of students. Within this setting, knowledge acquired is that possessed by the teacher alongside the knowledge that

the students already possess and bring to the classroom in order to share. This transfer of knowledge is the hallmark of the traditional classroom.

As discussed above, the CCDS classroom is a 'meeting zone'. Without interaction between those who inhabit this place, it is not a learning environment. Besides the teacher and the students, the physical classroom contains additional resources, for example, whiteboards, overhead projector and so on. The CCDS classroom contains all of the above and more. An analysis of the CCDS classroom sets the standard for what the virtual learning environment might provide.

In cyberspace, the virtual learning environment is a site where participants (as they do not always have to be registered students) have common access to educational resources stored in an electronic format on a server. Materials such as video, audio, documents and articles are made available. One advantage of the virtual learning environment is that it can provide access to material that is stored elsewhere such as electronic libraries. Communication is also facilitated on an individual, one-to-one, or group setting. Neither is the virtual learning environment just an electronic replica of a physical learning environment.

In effect, virtual learning environments are perfectly situated to provide new tools that facilitate learning and different styles of teaching and learning. For example, the learning is more resource-based than

teacher-centred, yet, this requires the student to possess the relevant information-seeking skills. Good practice for a virtual learning environment will be one that promotes collaborative working between students with the added benefit of a greater sharing of insights generated through focused discussions. Notably, the user's end of the virtual learning environment does not exist in cyberspace. The user must be in proximity of a computer which in turn is located in a physical space in a room (whether that be at home, work or the university). Thus, the virtual learning environment is not completely virtual. It is also physically real.

Learn.gold (<https://learn.gold.ac.uk/>) is CCDS' virtual learning environment, running Moodle 2.8+.<sup>678</sup> A search of learn.gold using the term 'Caribbean' returns five course areas. These are 'Caribbean Women's Writing', 'Caribbean Women and Representation', 'Postcolonial Theatre', 'Interculturality, Text, Poetics 15-16' and 'Literature of the Caribbean 15-16'. Four of these course areas belong to CCDS and my focus will be on 'Literature of the Caribbean 15-16', a postgraduate module.

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<sup>678</sup> Moodle is a learning platform designed to provide educators, administrators and learners with a single robust, secure and integrated system to create personalised learning environments. For further details see <https://moodle.org/about/> (accessed March 2016).

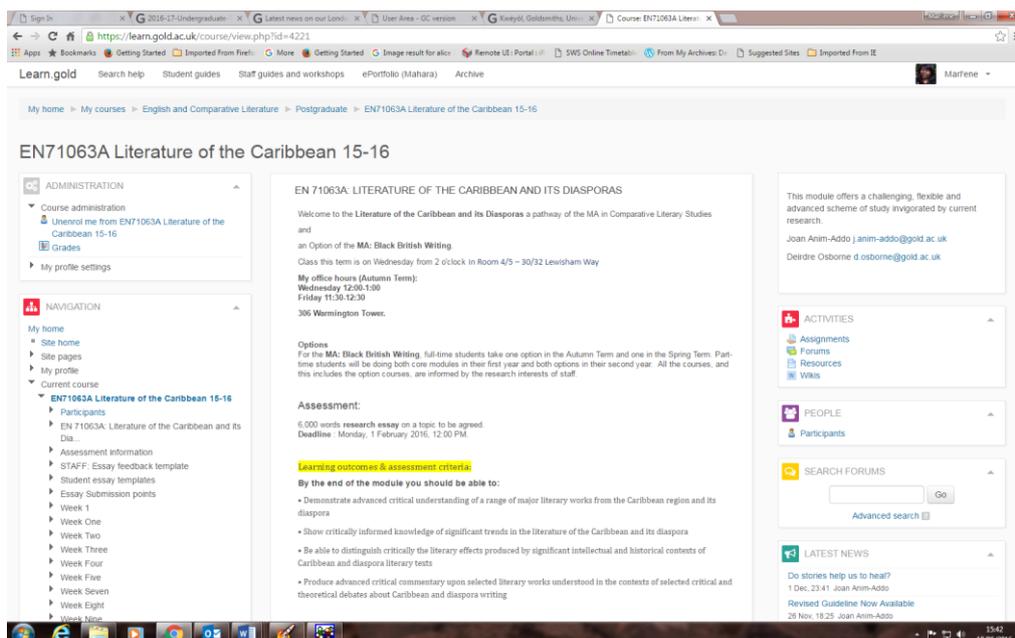


Figure 5: Sample of CCDS VLE page

The course area is described as ‘offering a challenging, flexible and advanced scheme of study invigorated by current research’.<sup>679</sup> On entering the course area the student finds a step-by-step eleven week programme outlining the focus of study and a list of required readings (primary and secondary sources). Additionally, given the history of vulnerability in publishing in Caribbean literature, the teacher has provided downloadable files of publications that are extremely difficult to acquire or are out-of-print. Furthermore, the teacher has provided a detailed template which outlines the process for structuring assignments. All of this information is available to the student at any time of the night or day. Moreover, the teacher uses the ‘news’ and ‘discussion’ forum aspects of the virtual learning environment to communicate with the students.

<sup>679</sup> See <https://learn.gold.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=4221> (accessed March 2016).

This particular module has a cohort of twenty-four enrolled participants, twenty-one of which are students but not necessarily students of CCDS. This module ran in the autumn term, that is, September to December, yet the data shows that students have accessed the course area within the past thirty days signalling its resourcefulness long after the module has ended.

### **Beyond Text: Writing for a Digital World**

Secondary material and learning resources relating to Caribbean writers are available on the internet, yet of the Caribbean authors discussed in this thesis so far, how many have a visible presence on the web in terms of their literature and how can this be translated into archival practice? I decided to investigate the virtual presence of Anim-Addo, Senior and Collins through a web search<sup>680</sup> and to undertake a brief analysis of audio/visual material found in relation to a sample of the texts discussed in the first three chapters of this thesis.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Google</b>	<b>Google Scholar</b>	<b>Videos</b>
<b>Joan Anim-Addo</b>	3380	286	11
<b>Merle Collins</b>	32700	814	298*
<b>Olive Senior</b>	57600	1190	794*

What meanings can be interpreted from the data above? Curwen Best, argues that when we think in terms of the Internet, the Caribbean writer is often 'bundled with other colleagues from the region and

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<sup>680</sup> These web searches were conducted in December 2015.

abroad as part of larger project interests'.<sup>681</sup> An in-depth exploration of the data for the three Caribbean women writers in this case study reveals some interesting points. Anim-Addo and Collins have dual roles as writers and academics and so their presence on the web is projected on two fronts. Anim-Addo appears through her affiliation with Goldsmiths, University of London and Collins through her affiliation with the University of Maryland in the US. Senior appears in a single role as a writer. Common to all three is that they are physically located in the diaspora yet virtually in, what I call, an 'imagined creole community'.

The figures given above do not signal popularity of one writer over another but rather closer investigation of the returns reveals that quite a few of the 'returns' are not relevant. For example, the 298 and 794 video returns for Collins and Senior respectively yield more than seventy percent of videos that bear no relation to their work. Anim-Addo's emergence on the digital platform is a fairly new one and as such all eleven video returns are relevant. The google scholar returns are much more accurate as these relate to books, chapters, articles in which the writers have been cited or indeed their own works. What follows is a close reading of one YouTube video, that relates to Anim-Addo's neo-slavery libretto *Imoinda* and an audio recording of Senior's short story 'You Think I Mad Miss', to demonstrate the interpretative opportunities that this platform reveals.

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<sup>681</sup> Curwen Best, *The Politics of Caribbean Cyberculture*, New York; Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p30.

The first video is an extract from *Imoinda* titled ‘Love duet’ (2015) and is performed by two black actors from the OperaEbony Company in the US. This video relates to the appropriation of *Imoinda* as discussed in Chapter One. The video itself has been viewed eighty two times but no comments have been left. Running for a period of four minutes forty seconds the video performs the first two pages of Act One Scene 7 which in the text is titled ‘Imoinda’s guest chamber’.

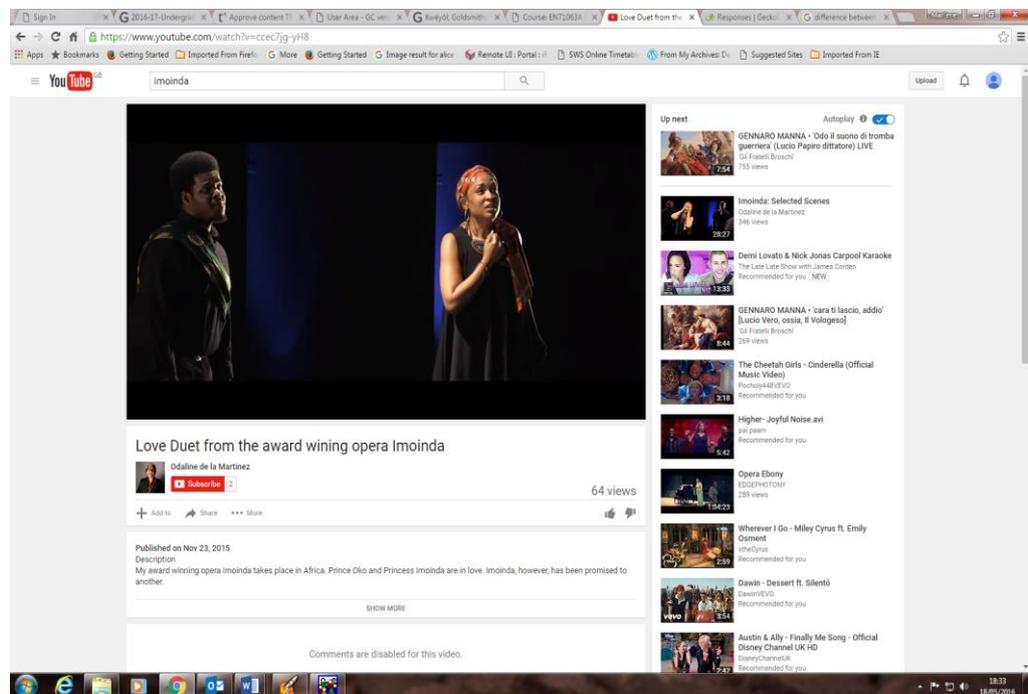


Figure 6: Love Duet

The stage set is minimal and the actors are dressed in black with a hint of colour used for a sash for Oko and a headscarf for Imoinda. In the libretto the stage direction and first two pages (quoted here at length) read:

PRINCE OKO: (*Tapping on the door and calling softly*)  
Imoinda! (*MUSIC – “Enchanted Night”*)

MAID:  
(*Going to the door*) Too late!

PRINCE OKO:  
Let me in.

IMOINDA:  
Open the door (*Enters PRINCE OKO*) Leave us.

MAID:  
Madam, I dare not.

PRINCE OKO:  
I command you. (*Exits MAID*) Imoinda will you marry  
Sitiangolu?

IMOINDA:  
There is death upon your head  
should I call out your name.

PRINCE OKO:  
This carving I gave is sign enough  
of our betrothal.  
As I rode back from the forest,  
the new moon guiding the way,  
my thoughts ran always to you, my bride.  
The moon will be our witness; you're my bride.  
(*Lights fade*)

PRINCE OKO:  
Let the moon light on our act of oneness  
(*SONG – “We Are One”*)  
softly polish your body as we touch.  
Mould your form into mine we are one.

BOTH:  
Moon, moon mark our bodies as we touch;  
with the stars be our witness, we are one.

PRINCE OKO:  
Imoinda we have nothing to hide.

IMOINDA:  
My Prince Oroonoko, we have nothing to hide.

BOTH:  
Moon, moon mould our bodies as we touch.  
With the stars be our witness. We are one.

PRINCE OKO:  
One knocking heart; one body. We are one.

IMOINDA:  
One knocking heart; one body. We are one.

BOTH:  
With the stars be our witness; we are on.  
(“Moon Witness”)

*(Lights fade. MUSIC. A knocking grows louder) (50-51)*

It is important to note that in the video performance the MAID is absent and this is significant because in the libretto she is Imoinda’s protector and does not immediately allow Prince Oko to enter Imoinda’s chamber. For the video performance there is no ‘tapping on the door’ and the performance is reduced to the following:

*(PIANO MUSIC constantly playing)*

PRINCE OKO:  
Imoinda!  
Let me in.  
Open the door.  
I command you.  
Imoinda! Will you marry Sitiangolu?

*(Enter IMOINDA)*

IMOINDA:  
There is death upon your head  
should I call out your name.

PRINCE OKO:  
Imoinda!  
Let the moon be our witness; you’re my bride.  
Let the moon light our oneness  
softly polish our bodies.  
Mould your form into mine we are one.

BOTH:  
Moon mark our bodies as we touch;  
Moon mark our bodies as we love.  
Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! We are one.

Let the moon be our witness  
with the moon as our witness  
Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! We are one We are one.

Moon mark our bodies as we touch;  
Moon mark our bodies as we love.

IMOINDA:  
Let the stars be our witness we are one  
Let the stars lit our oneness we are one

BOTH:  
Softly polish our bodies.  
Mould our forms into oneness  
We are one, we are one.<sup>682</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain whether the reduction in the first two pages of the Act is to enable the scene to be showcased for potential opera companies. However, the removal of Prince Oko's speech when he speaks of his betrothal to Imoinda is significant. The speech depicts the struggle that Prince Oko has been through to win Imoinda's hand and the absence of the speech alongside the removal of the line relating to their 'knocking hearts' changes the inherent danger that they are about to face and makes the current scene much more romantic than the original, which is both romantic and frightening at the same time.

A solo piano plays throughout this brief staging and does not reflect Anim-Addo's vision of 'sound'. As she stated in a recent interview:

about the sound, though, I was clear that I wanted percussion. As you would have noticed, I stipulated drums and again I was aware that I was working against many operatic traditions.<sup>683</sup>

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<sup>682</sup> Taken from the YouTube video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inX1bKwGxfU> (accessed March 2016).

<sup>683</sup> Lisa Marchi, 'The Transformative Potential of *Imoinda*: An Interview with Joan Anim-Addo', *Synthesis: Perspectives from the Radical Other*, <http://synthesis.enl.uoa.gr/perspectives-from-the-radical-other-7-2015.html> (accessed March 2016).

It is the premiere staging of *Imoinda* by the students from SOTA that remains true to Anim-Addo's vision of 'percussions and drums' as can be heard in the video extracts on the CCDS website.<sup>684</sup>

In comparison, finding a digital version of Senior's short stories on the web proved much more difficult. The Caribbean Writers Summer Institute Digital Archives is a virtual database of performances and moments featuring Caribbean literary and cultural figures. An innovative initiative by the University of Miami, this digital archive features seventeen videos of Senior reading from her short story and poetry collections. Specifically, there are two recordings of 'You think I Mad Miss' (1993 and 1994) and one recording of the 'The Case against the Queen' (1995).

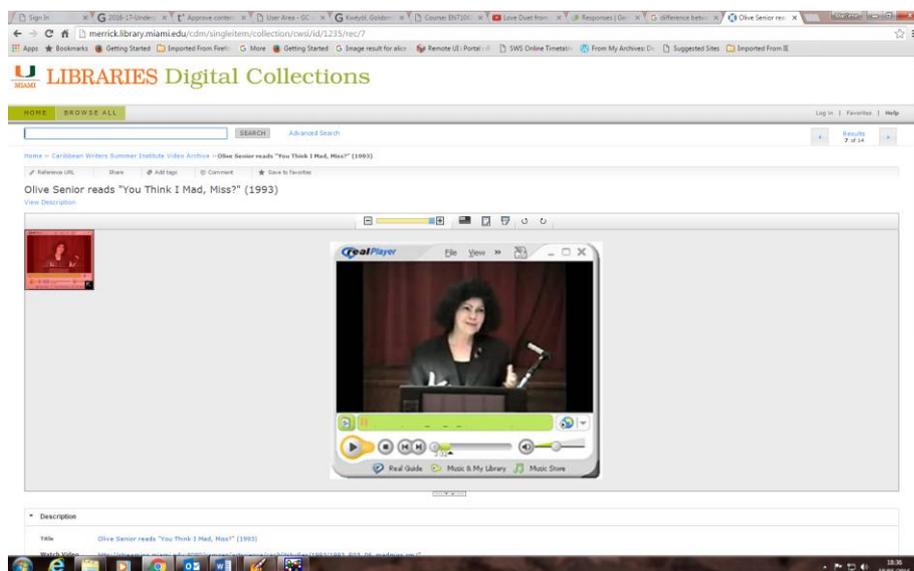


Figure 7: Senior reading from 'You Think I Mad, Miss?'

<sup>684</sup> [www.gold.ac.uk/wow](http://www.gold.ac.uk/wow) (accessed December 2015).

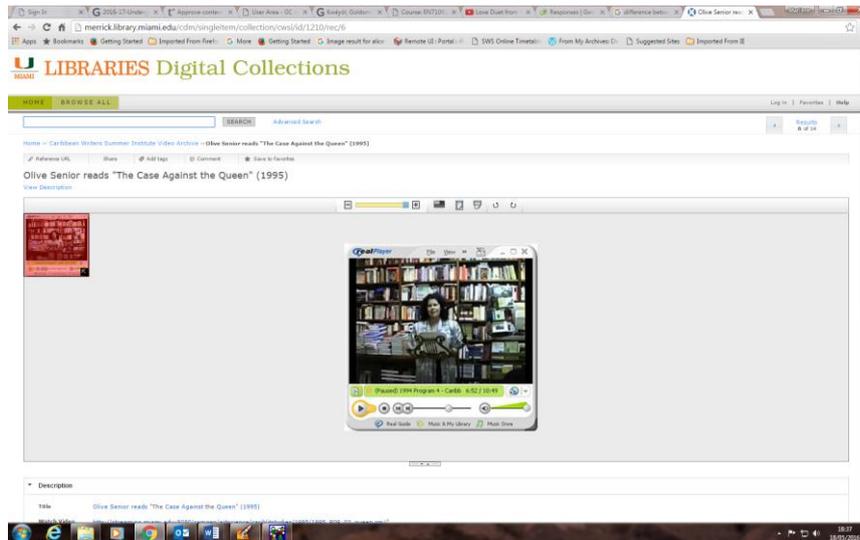


Figure 8: Senior reading from 'The Case Against the Queen'

These recordings range from eighteen minutes to thirty two minutes long. The video streams are as a result of the Institute's Summer workshop conducted throughout the 1990s. The auditory experience is such that one is transported into the pages of the text. However, my focus was to find a visual rather than aural performance of Senior's short story 'You Think I Mad Miss'. After much trawling of cyberspace I located a performance of Senior's work read by Jamaican artist, Leonie Forbes and dramatised by Trinidadian actor Rhoma Spencer.<sup>685</sup>

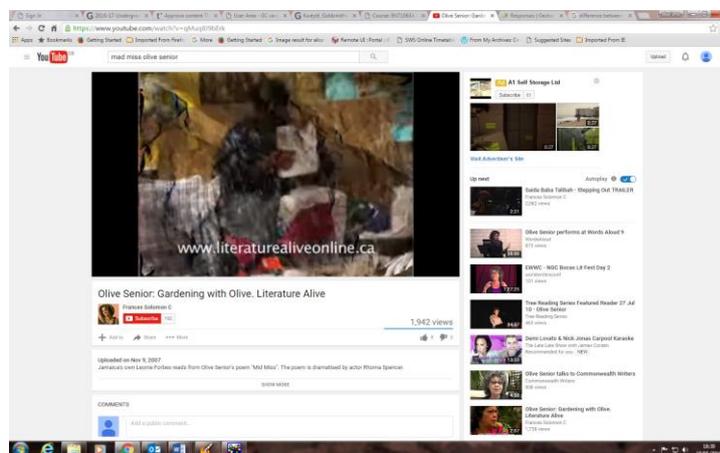


Figure 9: Dramatisation by Rhoma Spencer

<sup>685</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMuq8J9bErk> (accessed March 2016).

This video in itself is not a full performance but is interspersed with Senior discussing aspects of this particular short story. Yet, this video production acted as a stimulus for a one woman show 'Mad Miss' by Theatre Archipelago which opened in Toronto in May 2005 with Rhoma Spencer as lead. This reinforces Senior's short stories as 'stories in the moment of performance'.

### **A Centre of Interpretation: Conferences, Courses and Symposiums**

Having explored the ways in which the texts are performed digitally, I now wish to consider the performativity of the 'creolised archive'. If, as sociologist Thomas Osborne proposes, we think of the archive as a 'centre of interpretation'<sup>686</sup> and push the analogy of archives as 'sites of knowledge production', then how the activities within CCDS are read and interpreted are of particular importance. I wish to argue that through its programme of academic activities, CCDS has been able to become 'a site of knowledge production' with the resulting scholarship contributing to the archive. Drawing on Burton again, she argues that the 'novel as legitimate archives', in other words as makers of History, 'forces us to confront the limits of the official archive by acknowledging the power of literature to materialise those countless subjects who may never have come under the archival gaze'.<sup>687</sup> The result is an expansion

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<sup>686</sup> Thomas Osborne, 'The Ordinarity of the Archive', *History of the Human Sciences*, 12, 2 May 1999, p52.

<sup>687</sup> Antoinette Burton, p11.

of the definition of archival material to view oral and print cultures as legitimate and powerful articulate archival locations.

The question of what counts as knowledge and indeed what objects are appropriate for study is an important one. For the Caribbean peoples in the diaspora, a place that they can call their own is a vitally important space. The transformation in certain fields of study requires a rethinking of what belongs in an archive and what it means to be a 'creolised archive' in the physical sense. This place could be described as library, museum and archive, a coming together of the independent structures that are archival statures on their own. As such CCDS is not only international but transnational as well.

Through its many different guises CCDS is able to question the colonial version of events through reinterpretation and re-contextualisation. CCDS places the 'other' at the centre and exposes the distortion and manipulation of the historical record. Indeed within CCDS and borrowing from Burton, there 'lingers an assurance of concreteness, objectivity, recovery and wholeness'.<sup>688</sup> The researcher is allowed to somehow connect to the past as a means of interpreting the present and anticipating the future. This 'recovery and wholeness' allows the researcher to challenge, reframe, and refigure that which is in its archive. It also allows for a contributing to the archive in order to fill gaps and correct omissions.

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<sup>688</sup> Harriet Bradley, 'The Seductions of the Archive: Voices Lost and Found', *History of the Human Sciences*, 12, 2 (May 1999), p119.

Reading CCDS as a place which doubles as an archive, I invoke Carolyn Steedman's thinking of the archive as 'a concrete space where those involved with the historical disciplines engage with material objects'.<sup>689</sup> Like Osborne, one might rely on the metaphorical use of archive and its very elasticity, in that 'it goes beyond such a literal reference' or that 'it can be used to do so'.<sup>690</sup> On examining the institutionalisation of the archive and exploring the establishment of libraries and museums, it becomes evident that these transformations of the modern archive into a public space and resource enabled the formation and education of what historian Patrick Joyce terms 'the liberal citizen' upon which an increasingly democratic state depended.<sup>691</sup> CCDS's 'community of learners' can be read as Joyce's 'liberal citizens' whose passionate support for open access and for the creation of this creolised archive has made information 'accessible for all'<sup>692</sup>.

Of relevance to this chapter is my reading of the 'Report on The Second International Conference of Caribbean Women Writers' (1990). It is important here to note that the specific focus of this particular conference series was the Caribbean women writers themselves. The first conference of Caribbean Women Writers took place in 1988 in Massachusetts, USA. Its main focus was on Caribbean women who had published poetry and fiction in English and who had, until that

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<sup>689</sup> Marlene Manoff, 'Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines', p18.

<sup>690</sup> Osborne, p53.

<sup>691</sup> Joyce, p35.

<sup>692</sup> Joyce, p41.

moment, never been recognised as a group. Resulting publication from this conference was Selwyn Cudjoe's *Caribbean Women Writers: Essays from the First International Conference* (1990). In the introduction Cudjoe explains the emergence of this conference series and the overwhelming response from Caribbeanists all over the world. He states that the publication:

is a very important document that records a very significant event in the history of Caribbean literature. It seeks to rescue and give expression to voices that have not always been heard as loudly and as clearly as they should have been. I hope it will help us to view Caribbean literature in a more comprehensive manner in future (7).

Those who attended the conference were authors, who in many cases were 'meeting one another for the first time; [...] being made aware that there was a considerable body of literature that they had created'.<sup>693</sup> The second conference was held in Trinidad at the University of the West Indies in 1990 and was attended by authors and critics. Greene notes the focus on orality with several conference delegates breaking 'their own silence by beginning their presentations with recitations'.<sup>694</sup> Yet, there were still some delegates who felt silenced. Greene concludes her report with the argument that conferences on Caribbean women writers should remain in the Caribbean as:

to hold future conferences outside the Caribbean would be to deny both kinds of nurturing – that of the established writer and that of the would-be writer - and in courting the other kind of nurturing (international attention), what has already bloomed could dry up.<sup>695</sup>

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<sup>693</sup> Sue N Greene, 'Report on the Second International Conference of Caribbean Women Writers', *Callaloo* 13 (1990), pp532-538.

<sup>694</sup> Sue N Greene, 'Report', p533.

<sup>695</sup> Sue N Greene, 'Report', p538.

In spite of this, the first London conference of Caribbean women's writing was organised by the Caribbean Studies Centre (now CCDS) at Goldsmiths, University of London in July 1994. This conference should be considered as important, if not more so, as Cudjoe's conference of 1988. Whereas the main focus of Cudjoe's conference was Caribbean women *writers*, the focus of the UK conference was Caribbean women's *writing* signalling inclusivity for those in the diaspora studying this body of work as an academic discipline.

The conference titled 'Framing the Word: Gender and Genre in Caribbean Women's Writing' was a huge success in terms of knowledge shared and gained and resulted in a publication of the same name in 1996.<sup>696</sup> Of this conference and the discipline, Anim-Addo states:

The turn of the twentieth century marks an historic moment for Caribbean women's literature. This body of work, more and more inclusive, increasingly representative of all Caribbean women, continues to expand, the range and vitality of the writing constantly attracting new readers. Not only have individual texts penetrated the ivory towers of universities as far afield as Britain, Australia, the USA, Italy and the Caribbean, but courses, specifically focused on Caribbean women's writing, are gradually been made available in higher education institutions world wide.<sup>697</sup>

As such, the 'body of work' continues to expand and to date, CCDS currently runs four courses 'specifically focused on Caribbean women's writing'. Three more conferences followed the success of the first: 'Centre of Remembrance' (1996), 'Sub Versions? Dub Versions (1998) and 'Swinging Her Breasts at History' (2001). Additionally, two further

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<sup>696</sup> Joan Anim-Addo (ed), *Framing the Word: Gender and Genre in Caribbean women's Writing*, London: Whiting and Birch Ltd, 1996.

<sup>697</sup> Joan Anim-Addo, 'Introduction', *Framing the Word*, pix.

publications were added to the discipline of Caribbean women's writing: *Centre of Remembrance: Memory and Caribbean Women's Literature* (2002) and *Swinging her Breasts at History: Language and the Body in Caribbean Women's Writing* (2006).

In line with the impetus for Caribbean courses to be made available in Higher Education institutes, 2004 saw CCDS launch the first programme of its kind in the UK - an MA in Caribbean Literature and Creole Poetics. This postgraduate degree programme developed students' specialist knowledge and critical understanding of Caribbean Literature in English and in English translation. The course also covered the evolution of Caribbean Creoles, in part by looking at the impact of West African based Creoles on the Caribbean and the resulting literature. This cohort of students (all female, 3 full-timers and 1 part-timer) was to become the first 'community of learners' or Joyce's 'liberal citizens' referred to earlier and would set up the monthly Caribbean forum to open out discussion to a wider group.

Its first Caribbean Forum meeting took place in November 2004 titled 'Creole Artist/Creole Artefact: Joan Anim-Addo and Paul Dash in conversation'. This was my first interaction with Anim-Addo's operatic work, *Imoinda*, discussed in chapter one. Dash provided an autobiographical account of his route as an emerging artist. Both Anim-Addo and Dash gave invaluable insight into the experience of the Caribbean artist creolising artistic production and the richly rewarding, often painful, project that this can be.

Similarly in October 2005 (during Black History Month) the Centre hosted two events: 'An Evening with Kamau Brathwaite' and a two day International Symposium entitled 'Caribbean Connections / Creole Realities'. 'An Evening with Kamau Brathwaite' took place on Thursday 13 October 2005. The dialogue began with the Director acknowledging that Kamau Brathwaite needed no real introduction though his audience might need reminding that he always offered the unexpected. Brathwaite did not disappoint. Starting exactly as he meant to go on, he turned the evening on its head from the outset by taking questions first and moving to his 'readings' second.

Brathwaite is poet, historian, teacher, campaigner, fighter, wordsmith [...] the list goes on, and the audience's task was to stay tuned to Brathwaite's multiple presence. His response to questions took the audience into, around and beyond his work. The audience were, amongst so much else, treated to insight into 'Sycorax style' (his explosive and controversial technique of presenting material on the page so that the reader is able to hear and encounter the meaning at multiple levels). The audience were given fascinating regional and personal histories that were relentless in their indictment of the problems facing the Caribbean and its writers, and offered invaluable understanding of the role that music and rhythm have played in his work.

Brathwaite's 'readings' began with 'Donna' from his collection *Born to Slow Horses*<sup>698</sup>; a publication which for him has special importance since it signals that publishers 'have finally realised what Sycorax's language means and have accepted the notion of Sycorax'<sup>699</sup>. The readings were electric. In addition to the Director's description of Kamau as 'a giant of contemporary Caribbean thought'<sup>700</sup>, the evening reinforced the meanings of this very special writer and his thinking.

The 'Caribbean Connections/Creole Realities' Symposium took place on Friday 28 and Saturday 29 October 2005. In line with its aim, this International Symposium brought to the fore a range of important Caribbean connections more usually submerged within the larger debate in Creole and Caribbean Studies. Papers, presented by academics and postgraduate students researching in the field, offered an exciting opportunity to participate in current debates within the growing field of Caribbean Studies. The range of disciplines represented included visual art, anthropology, music, fashion and, of course, literature with refreshing connections made between the academy and the 'real' world. The presentations on 'The Reggae Sound System as a Social, Technological and Sensorimotor Apparatus', 'Rude Boys, Ghetto Girls and Outrageous Sexualities: The Impossible Translations of Transnational Identity Politics' and the development of multi-media resources for the study of Creole languages demonstrated

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<sup>698</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, *Born to Slow Horses*, USA: Wesleyan University Press, 2005.

<sup>699</sup> An evening with Kamau, 13 October 2005.

<sup>700</sup> Joan Anim-Addo, 'An Evening with Kamau', 13 October 2005.

the quality of research at the Centre and Goldsmiths and the overwhelming sense of energy involved.

A challenging and thought-provoking symposium, it provided time and space for issues of Caribbean and Diaspora Studies illustrating an important direction for the Centre and Goldsmiths, developing the Caribbean voice, both locally in Lewisham, nationally and internationally. Academics researching in the field had much to say about the symposium and are quoted at length:

I would like to applaud both the high quality of the papers presented and the diverse disciplines that were represented in the programme from visual arts to literary studies, critical and cultural theory and fashion theory. [...], the conference provided a telling opportunity of what the Caribbean Centre can contribute to an institution like Goldsmiths which prides itself in being a creative, innovative place offering a truly interdisciplinary ethos. By drawing together colleagues from different departments and units in Goldsmiths with other UK and international scholars, the Centre showed what an asset its operations are for the image Goldsmiths would like to project. Activities like this symposium and a strong Caribbean centre would be enormously helpful in attracting further national and international interest in Goldsmiths.<sup>701</sup>

This has been a stimulating gathering in the true tradition of conferences organised by the Caribbean Centre which I have attended since 1994. The symposium was significant also because it allowed outside visitors to see the excellent range of quality work produced by Masters and PhD students in Caribbean Studies. I think this sets a benchmark that other institutions might successfully follow. The debate thanks to the student participation was particularly invigorating and committed. It is also rare for such a small event to open up to non-Anglophone perspectives and to include scholars from different disciplines and do full justice to the field of Caribbean Studies which cannot possibly be tackled otherwise. This symposium confirmed yet again that the Caribbean

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<sup>701</sup> Antonio Sanchez (University of Birmingham), 2005.

Centre deserves more visibility and support to provide the much needed forum for the enhancement of Caribbean Studies in Europe.<sup>702</sup>

Both of the above quotes illustrate the effect that CCDS had, and continues to have, on the academy. The recommendations for ‘a strong Caribbean centre’ and a ‘much needed forum’, given in 2005, are as relevant today as they were eleven years ago in arguing for a raised ‘visibility’ of Caribbean studies as a discipline and Caribbean research centres in general.

Following on from this strong tradition the Centre was to further enhance its academic status through three additional high profile conferences, one of which has not yet been published and so will be highlighted at length here as another sample of microhistory. Like most conferences, CCDS International conference series was captured for contemporaries and for history primarily through its conference programmes. I will focus my inquiry on the conference programme, because the relationships of conferences to their printed documentation lie at the centre of this microhistorical study. Printed documentation includes the call for papers, conference report and so on. I draw on a range of microhistorical strategies viewing microhistory in Levi’s terms as ‘a series of practices and methods rather than a theory’.<sup>703</sup>

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<sup>702</sup> Giovanna Covi (University of Trento, Italy), 2005.

<sup>703</sup> Giovanni Levi, ‘Microhistory and the Recovery of Complexity’, in Fellman, Susanna and Marjatta Rahikainen (eds), *Historical Knowledge: In Quest of Theory, Method and Evidence*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2012, pp121-32; 126.

These include a microscale of description,<sup>704</sup> and the exceptional normal.<sup>705</sup> I am relying on the notion of a fractal relationship between the unpublished conferences and the discipline as a whole. By disseminating the conference-as-event beyond the circle of those who directly experienced it, the conference programme allows one to gaze through the inscriptions at the conference itself as a consequential enactment and lived experience of the discipline at a particular moment in time. Thus, this sample of microhistory can suggest how such events and publications serve to develop and sustain a discipline and its scholars.

The year, 2007, with its centennial focus on the abolition of the slave trade and its impact on the Atlantic world including slave colonies of the Caribbean was no better year in which to further the debate concerning Caribbean women's writing. Specifically, the conference theme 'Writing, Diaspora and the Legacy of Slavery' sought to embed the central motif of burden of production/reproduction which fell to African-Caribbean women in the immediate aftermath of abolition and to extend this to contemporary issues of writing and representation within the region and the diaspora. Assuming Creole culture to be a significant part of the legacy of Atlantic slavery, meanings of creolisation inscribed within artefacts of the culture were fruitfully read.

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<sup>704</sup> Giovanni Levi, 'On Microhistory', in Burke, Peter (ed) *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001, pp97-119; 99-102.

<sup>705</sup> Edoardo Grendi, 1977, pp506-520.

The conference was attended by some fifty delegates from as far afield as Australia, the USA and Barbados. This was a two day conference and the conference programme had parallel sessions with a keynote given by Sue Thomas from Australia titled 'Reading the Burden of Production and Reproduction in early Anglophone Caribbean Women's Writing and Narrative'. The conference programme was a mixture of panel presentations, poetry readings and roundtable discussions. The variations in the session formats enabled different forms of learning and participation. The conference programme provided abstracts for the presentations organised under themed panels.

The sixth International Caribbean Women's Writing Conference: 'Comparative Critical Conversations' took place in June 2011. Yet again, more than fifty international delegates from countries including Australia, Trinidad, Japan, Egypt, Canada and the USA, attended this two day event. The Keynote lecture was given by Professor Maria Helena Lima who reminded the audience of the need to become Comparatists, in order to allow the body of work that is Caribbean Women's Literature a 'room of its own'<sup>706</sup>.

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<sup>706</sup> Maria Helena Lima, 'Comparative Critical Conversations', CCDS, Goldsmiths, University of London, June 2011.



**Figure 10: Professor Maria Helena Lima - Keynote Lecture**

Discussions on issues concerning affects and Creole poetics as well as female subjectivity and gender relations led to further debates on spoken word, auto theorising and diasporic remembering. Guest Poet and Author M NourbeSe Philip delivered a lecture based on her poetry collection *Zong!*<sup>707</sup> in which she explored the connections, both personal and objective, between law and poetry and how these led her to the "un/writing" and (re) righting of the Zong<sup>708</sup> episode.



**Figure 11: Marlene Nourbese Philip - *Zong!***

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<sup>707</sup> M NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!* Toronto: Mercury Press, 2008.

<sup>708</sup> *Zong!* is equal parts song, moan, shout, oath, ululation, curse and chant. It excavates the legal text to reveal the irrational at the heart of "reason." Memory, history, and law collide only to metamorphose into the poetics of the fragment. See also Patricia Saunders, 'Defending the Dead, Confronting the Archive: A Conversation with M. NourbeSe Philip', *Small Axe*, June 2008 12(2), pp 63-79.

Critical comparisons were made between the post-national and transnational, through the works of Paule Marshall, Michelle Cliff and Dionne Brand alongside explorations of historical trauma and the literary imagination. Anim-Addo, founder of this series of international conferences, delivered a stimulating paper on the configurations of African-Caribbean women's histories in current twenty-first century literature. Adopting an archaeological approach, Anim-Addo examined the reconstruction of women's histories in Austin Clarke's *The Polished Hoe* (2003) in comparison to Merle Collins's *The Colour of Forgetting* (1995). The significance of this conference is that through the construction of a conference website, the essence of this conference has been captured and archived resulting in a visual and acoustic cataloguing of events which make up this 'creolised archive.' Abstracts can be found on the conference web site alongside an audio recording of the Conference Poem.<sup>709</sup>

The two-year AHRC funded Research Network mentioned, above, brought together leading academics from ten universities, and employed methods and perspectives from across the fields of literature, museum studies, linguistics, history, sociology and anthropology to examine the determinants and impact of the construction of cultural identity and the act of translation as collaboration and shared knowledge. The group's collective transnational scholarship

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<sup>709</sup> See <http://www.gold.ac.uk/caribbean/comparativecriticalconversations/>

Short versions of the papers presented can be found on the web, and future publications are planned to include a Special Issue of the journal, *Feminist Review*.

highlighted a rich seam of cultural translation in the ‘relative and related’ intersections of creolisation, Britishness and Global English of interest to scholars, teachers, creative artists, museum educators and education professionals.<sup>710</sup> The proposal premised on translation as collaboration and shared interdisciplinary knowledges gathered researchers whose collective scholarship is grounded in transcultural discourse, and intersected theoretical questions on the complexities of cultural translation. Aimed at critically questioning meanings of cultural translation, by regarding first, texts marked by creolisation, a discourse originated through intercultural exchanges.<sup>711</sup>

Out of this research network emerged two further international conferences. The first ‘Other Cultures Within: Beyond the Naming of Things’ was held at the Kluge Center, Library of Congress, Washington, USA in April 2012.<sup>712</sup> The second, titled ‘Perspectives from ‘Other’ Cultures Translating Cultures’ was held in London in 2013.

It has been useful to return to the primary sources that of the conference programme, not only to reconstruct the disciplinary past but to teach it to the next generation of scholars. Through this microhistory the added value of studying these sources in their original context is revealed. Microhistories are distinctive in incorporating both emic and etic perspectives. I argue that the international

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<sup>710</sup> Joan Anim-Addo, ‘Case for Support’, AHRC Application for ‘Behind the looking-glass: “‘Other’-cultures-within” translating cultures’, 2011.

<sup>711</sup> See Glissant and Brathwaite.

<sup>712</sup> This event took place at the Library of Congress and was recorded and is archived on the LOC website. The transcript can also be found in the appendices.

conference series both at home and abroad represents what microhistorians call the ‘exceptional normal’, that is:

an event or practice that viewed in the context of modern ‘scientific’ enquiry, seems exotic, remarkable, or marginal, but that, when properly investigated, that is, placed or coded in its proper context, reveals its own logic and order.<sup>713</sup>

As such, microhistory does not narrate the normal or describe the exceptional but rather it interprets their relationship, ‘shedding light on the normal and lending more than anecdotal significance to the exceptional.’<sup>714</sup>

I suggest that the conferences outlined above, and indeed CCDS conference series, are examples of the microhistorical concept of the exceptional normal and can be read as an interaction ritual (IR). I draw briefly on Randall Collins interaction ritual theory in which he defines interaction ritual as an:

instance of mutually focussed emotion and attention producing a momentarily shared reality, which thereby generates solidarity and symbols of group scholarship.<sup>715</sup>

Collins highlights four factors that constitute an IR: group assembly, a barrier to outsiders, mutual focus and a shared mood. All of these can be applied to CCDS international conference series. That is to say, that combined these factors lead a group to develop a rhythmic coordination

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<sup>713</sup> John Brewer, ‘Microhistory and the Histories of Everyday Life’, *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 7, No 1, 2010, pp87-109; 97-98. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/147800410X477359> (accessed April 2016).

<sup>714</sup> Bruce McComiskey (ed), *Microhistories of Composition*, Colorado: Utah State University Press, 2016.

<sup>715</sup> Randall Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004, p7.

and synchronisation to their conversation and as such participants get 'caught up in the rhythm and mood of the talk'.<sup>716</sup>

By describing the conferences through the template of Collins 'interaction ritual' I assimilate it to normal intellectual practices in academic disciplines. Yet, on each occasion core participants return to engage in 'rhythm and mood of the talk' embodying their own identities and uniqueness of CCDS' conference series. It is the chronotope that defines the event or series of events and its written documents as exceptional. To my knowledge the CCDS conference series was the first of its kind in London to focus on Caribbean women's writing and continues to do so.

### **CCDS: A way forward**

The history of CCDS and its current activities place it at the forefront of Caribbean related studies in the UK and beyond. CCDS' transnational and transatlantic exchanges taking place can be read as a continuation of Caribbean women's oral histories. In the words of Grace Nichols' 'I is a long memored woman' or indeed the collective 'we are' as CCDS continues to evoke critical memories and now in the digital age, can preserve these counter narratives.

In determining a way forward for CCDS, I adopted a POUT<sup>717</sup> analysis in place of the traditional SWOT model, in which the acronym stands for:

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<sup>716</sup> Randall Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, p48.

- **Predicament's benefits/Potential**
- **Outcome-based visions/Opportunities**
- **Unnoticed/Unnameables**
- **Transformatives/Triggers**

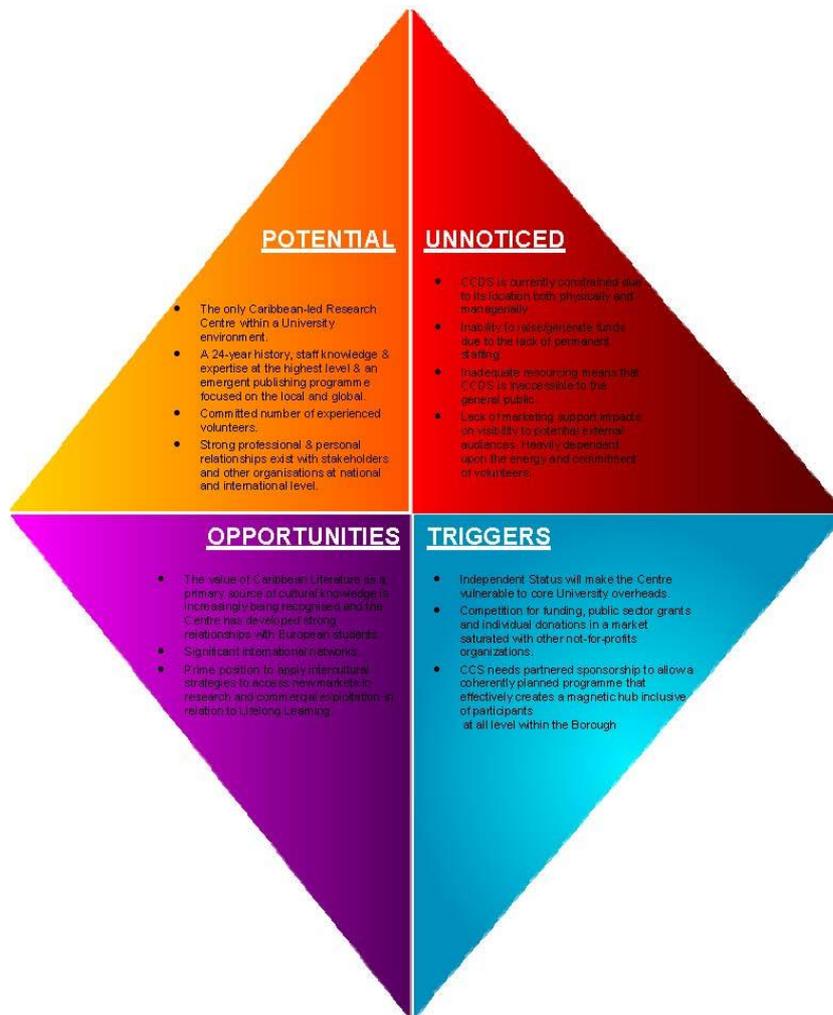


Figure 12: POUT Analysis<sup>718</sup>

<sup>717</sup> Adopted from the design field.

<sup>718</sup> Larger image in the Appendices.

### *POTENTIAL*

- The only Caribbean-led Research Centre within a University environment.
- A 24-year history, staff knowledge & expertise at the highest level & an emergent publishing programme focused on the local and global.
- Committed number of experienced volunteers.
- Strong professional & personal relationships exist with stakeholders and other organisations

### *OPPORTUNITIES*

- The value of Caribbean literature as a primary source of cultural knowledge is increasingly being recognised and the Centre has developed strong relationships with European students.
- Significant international networks.
- Prime position to apply intercultural strategies to access new markets in research and commercial exploitation in relation to Lifelong Learning.

### *UNNOTICED*

- CCDS is currently constrained due to its location both physically and managerially
- Inability to raise/generate funds due to the lack of permanent staffing.
- Inadequate resourcing means that CCDS is inaccessible to the general public.
- Lack of marketing support impacts on visibility to potential external audiences. Heavily dependent upon the energy.

### *TRIGGERS*

- Independent Status will make the Centre vulnerable to core University overheads.
- Competition for funding, public sector grants and individual donations in a market saturated with other not-for-profits organizations.
- CCDS needs partnered sponsorship to allow a coherently planned programme that effectively creates a magnetic hub inclusive of participants at all levels within the Borough.

In this chapter I have attempted to demonstrate the ways in which the research activities of CCDS reminds us of things we know – or thought we knew- heightened by the qualities of lived experience. For example,

the intellectual pleasure scholars feel in talking and thinking together. Microhistory changes meanings by recontextualising them in the creolised community of the conference, a landscape which is populated by academics, graduate students, ideas and traditions. As an exceptional normal, I suggest that CCDS' conference series are at the leading edge of scholarly practice and is as important to the disciplinary formation and advancement as journals, textbooks and monographs. Reading CCDS as archive prompts a rethinking of Creole languages and culture in which we design finely-tuned studies to trace ideas, scholars and scholarly networks through intellectual ritual (IR) chains and examine inscriptions of these events as historical artifacts and scholarly contributions.

**A Creolised Conclusion:  
Is information we want,  
an we want it clear and simple!<sup>719</sup>**

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<sup>719</sup> Merle Collins, *Angel*, p249.

**A Creolised Conclusion:  
Is information we want, an we want it clear and simple!**

Through an analysis of selected genres as ‘creolised archive’, this thesis has shown how the selected texts - libretto, short story and novel - through their various levels of performativity have been able to create a new archival space for the Caribbean within which to document and preserve Caribbean cultural traditions. When I first set out to explore the notion of a ‘creolised archive’ I could not have envisaged the breadth of research required and the direction which my thesis would take. So many possibilities were brought to the fore to be explored through linguistics, literature, culture, memory and their various intersections.

This thesis has led me to several separate, yet related conclusions. In the introduction, I asked how Caribbean Creoles might be considered to be archived within the literary text and whether the text archived or performed or indeed whether it should be considered as both archiving and performing, thereby functioning as a ‘creolised archive’. Multiplicity and fluidity of language, as I have discovered, play a part in creating a ‘creolised archive’ and the in-depth textual analysis of all three genres demonstrate the themes and narrative choices that link them together.

In examining the use of language, a concern with history, and the art of storytelling, it became apparent that the texts are rooted in the authors’ cultural backgrounds. Additionally as well as re-reading the literary

text as ‘creolised archive’, I also sought to read a university research centre and its associated web pages and virtual learning environment as a ‘creolised archive’.

In Chapter One, I argued for the creation of a new and contemporary ‘creolised archive’ through the medium of the libretto – an unusual genre for Caribbean literature. I concluded that Anim-Addo has refigured the double archive creating the beginnings of a creolised archive. In Chapter Two I developed the ‘creolised archive’ further in my reading of Senior’s short stories as archive for Jamaican Creole and the construction of the voices archived within the text. I questioned the performativity of Jamaican Creole and concluded that Senior’s prose is able to archive the orality of culture. Chapter Three examined the literary strategies used for performing alternative versions of national history. I argued that this ‘performance of history’ through the literary text enables an alternative version to be memorialised and archived. Finally, in chapter four, I moved from the literary space to the physical space in a higher education institution and argued for a new way of reading this place of learning as an addition to the ‘creolised archive’ the space from which the Creole literary text emerges.

A limitation to this study has been that of the digital. In a world transformed by digital technology, events like conferences, seminars and so on can be experienced virtually, synchronously and asynchronously, inscribed, interpreted and circulated by participants and observers as and when they happen. What I initially hoped would

be a large part of this study now has the potential to be developed into a new and exciting project.

My analysis in the preceding chapters demonstrated the rich and complex interplay between speech and writing, word and sound, oral and print, and performance and text. The development of orality in the Caribbean novel and short story is still negatively affected by an anti-folk, anti-oral bias nurtured under colonialism. In reclaiming submerged aspects of a communal self, and excavating hidden portions of a rich, plural heritage, I argued that these texts have, simultaneously, created a 'creolised archive' in effect preserving Creole language and culture. In the preservation of Creole language I do not refer to it in terms of an endangered language but rather in terms of the orthography that is inscribed in the text.

As shown, orality is a theory and practice of writing that assesses and demonstrates the narrative potential of Caribbean Creoles, enabling a reconfiguration of aesthetic paradigms, so that story forms, tropes, speech genres, rhythms, religious rites and so on from the oral tradition, function as models for fictional creations. I have argued that the experimentation of orthographical and typographic inscriptions transforms the written text into an aural experience. Close reading of the selected texts provided a number of examples of the practice of orality. That is to say, in the sense of an engagement with oral traditional forms and in terms of writing shaped to approximate speech.

Moving from the performance text of *Anim-Addo* to the short stories of Senior and then to Collins' historical novel suggests that Caribbean literature will see more engagement with the word as sound rather than the word as sign. Collins' inclusion of a traditional folktale in her novel supports my re-reading of the text as archive. The folktale survives in the novel by being revised and updated to reflect contemporary concerns.

My discussion of the oral tradition in this thesis focussed mainly on speech performances. Yet, the oral tradition, and the wider oral context which sustains it, is neither fixed nor static. As stated above, old stories and tropes are being updated and revised, alongside which new forms of oral expression and new models of speech performance are constantly being generated. A further extension to this thesis might be to focus on the emerging short story writer identifying more recent oral creations and their influences on the poetics of both established and emerging short story writers.

The stylistic principles of storytelling govern the narrative context created by Senior, analysed in Chapter Two. At a thematic level, the storyteller's narrative has furthered the recuperation of part of the Caribbean orature and oral history, that is, the region's social history of labour migration through a matriarchal social perspective, and folktale and oral story. Senior, as a cultural historian, pursues the revivification of the cultural legacy of the oral tradition in order to educate the

younger generation, and simultaneously engages in archiving. The educational purpose of storytelling is asserted in Collins' short story 'Madelene', discussed in Chapter Three, with the storyteller advising Corinne on social and cultural issues.

Moreover, the oral narrative style of the storyteller manifests through the appropriation of his/her oral rhetoric and narrative strategies produced in Caribbean Creoles. The presentation of Creole language(s) in the texts analysed shows that Creole language(s) are being clearly legitimated in writing as the rightful linguistic signifier of cultural identity. This firm validation of Creole in the narratives corresponds with a clear militant standpoint against the cultural domination by Western and literary standards.

This thesis, short title, 'Orality in the Body of the Archive' has depicted the archive on both a textual, physical and digital level. Traditional archival theory has mainly projected an idealisation of the archive that emphasises an unselfconscious body of records, a single creator and the presence of an original order that will reflect that creator. This traditional theory neglects the numerous contributions that help to create archives and the impossibility of capturing a truly original order. The story of the archive is usually lost in the conventions of archival description. It is such a lost story, as demonstrated in my analysis of the 'creolised archive' that is being performed in the space of the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies.

Throughout this thesis not only have I read selected texts as ‘creolised archive’ but I have demonstrated that within the body of the archive various levels of performativity occur. Ranging from the performance of black female subjectivity through to the ways in which Creole languages are used to perform aspects of the fragmented mind alongside a retelling of national history. The ‘creolised archive’ is a fluid space open to multiple interpretations. A significant outcome to this project is the way in which the Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies as creolised archive has been able to perform within a white Western institution.

This thesis has posited that archiving has often been much more complex than archival theory suggests. It has argued for an appreciation of orality as performance: both primary and technologised performance; and for a better representation of a university research centre within the higher education sector. In reading the literary and the digital text as ‘creolised archive’ I call for a new archival space in which representations of Creole language and culture are memorialised.

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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix One

### *Imoinda: Trans-global Conversations*

#### DVD in back cover

**Filming and editing by:**  
Fabio Batista dos Santos

**Production Team:**  
Natalia Bonelajane  
Marlene Edwin  
Tatiana Harma

**Cover design:**  
D&PS, Goldsmiths,  
University of London

This DVD showcases conversations on Joan Anim-Addo's libretto, *Imoinda: Or She Who Will Lose Her Name* (2008) which took place during a one day workshop, *Words from Other Worlds: Critical Perspectives on Imoinda* held at Goldsmiths, University of London in November 2009. The workshop was attended by postgraduate students and academics from the UK, Europe and the USA who explored the malleability of the text in the disciplines of drama, music, art, literature and museum studies. Alongside the collection of critical papers which can be found in *Imoinda: Criticism & Response, New Mango Season, Vol 3.3* (2010) we hope that this DVD encourages you to start engaging more actively with *Imoinda* in as many imaginative ways as possible.

*Imoinda: Trans-global Conversations*

**Imoinda:**  
Trans-global Conversations

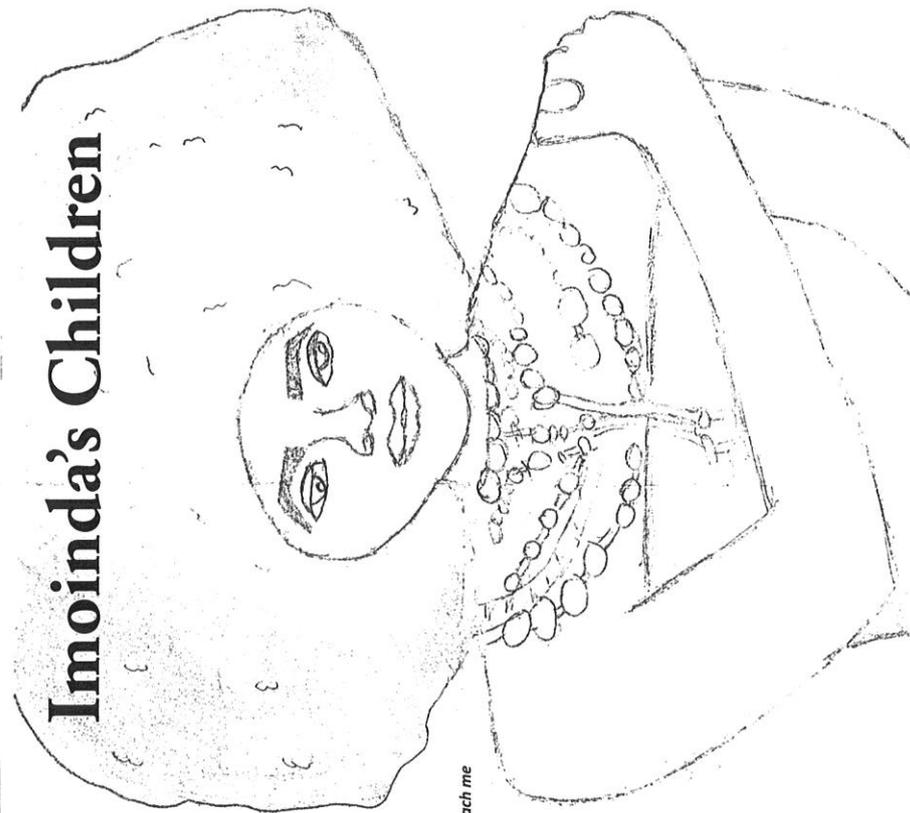
BEYOND TEXT Arts & Humanities Research Council publishing Goldsmiths UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

## Appendix Two

### Imoinda's Children

(Poems from year 10 and 11 students at Harris Academy, Peckham - December 2013)

*No amendments have been made to the original work*



#### **Imoinda's Children**

**By Emma Louise Burch**

*Inspired by the wonderful children who teach me everyday.*

**Life**

**The root of all that was**

**And all that will be**

**The birth of creation,**

**In the breath we use**

**To find our way**

**We remember the face**

**That bore no name.**

**She holds her name**

**In us**

**Who stand here before you**

**To teach you**

**That it was not in vein**

**For we are here.**

Imoinda

By Kenya Freitas

*She was a gift from God,*

*Her beauty was established in many ways.*

*She was intelligent, intellectual and*

*superior, "black is beauty".*

*As they say "black is beauty,*

*She was one of a kind,*

*She had a unique frame of mind.*

*Her beauty was never sorrowful.*

*Her beauty shined from within*

*Her beauty shined from within.*

*But it never dimmed.*

*She was an inspiration.*

*Her mistakes never put her down,*

*Because her success was never renounced.*

Sorrowful Imoinda

By Deborah Adeladun

Before all of this I was independent, but now dependent to see what have now descended.

But why can't I just end.

Pain, hurt, dismantled is it person I have now become,

is this what being a woman feels like?

Because I don't want it anymore

I thought I fell in love, it was perfect

Now I'm here in a slave ship it feels like it reflected.

I fell like an endless hill; I always have my ups and downs,

But is it too much just to feel the happiness in my heart,

Having a baby girl is a change in my life,

But I don't want her to go through the pain that I have.

Acceptance of the character

By Julia Nita

Long before the Transatlantic Slave Trade or even before colonisation,

This continent had no feel of trepidation.

It flourished and flourished before its citizens' eyes

And never have they dreamed of the darkness that was going to fall upon!

The knowledge of the elders useless became,

And the children's screams were vague...

Women had no say and men had no force

Against the enemy that had no remorse.

The pigmentation of your skin has no relevance,

For too many conflicts were based on this insignificant aspect.

Too many lives were lost, far too many hurt...

Acceptance of the character is what the human nature fails to comprehend.

## Appendix Three

### Sample Lesson Plan – Emma Burch

**Task 1: Match the correct call with the correct response**

Olly Olly Olly!

AHHHHHHHHHHH!

Everybody say yeh yeh!

Oi Oi Oi!

If your having a good time tonight let me hear you scream!

Yey Yeh!

**Epic Thinking: Where would you hear these call and responses being used? Why are people using them?**

Figure 13: Slide One

**Lesson Title: Crick Crack**

Lesson aim: To explore the oral tradition of call and response in Caribbean storytelling.

Date: 09/12/13

**Epic Thinking: What does the term 'call and response' mean? Can you define it in your own words?**

Figure 14: Slide Two

## The Caribbean Oral Tradition



Caribbean oral tradition is derived from a mixture of traditions brought together in the Caribbean in the 16<sup>th</sup> century when enslaved African citizens were taken there to be sold.



Around the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Amerindian tribes (Of which Taino and Arawak are two examples) were under attack from the English and Spanish colonisers who wanted to take over the Caribbean and the Americas.



The Amerindian oral tradition fused with the African oral traditions to create the Caribbean oral traditions we know today.



The Caribbean oral tradition was a way of passing on the histories of these people from generation to generation through stories, dance, song and poetry.

Figure 15: Slide Three

## Crick Crack

In Caribbean story-telling, the story teller communicates with her audience using the term 'crick' to which they must respond saying 'crack'. This method is repeated throughout the story to ensure that all are engaged on the journey together. If one person is not paying attention then the community circle is broken. Listeners must also respond through sound imitations of what is being described throughout the story.

**Task: Sit in the circle and prepare for story time...**

When I say 'Crick'

*[Small text block containing a story snippet, partially illegible]*

You say 'Crack'

Figure 16: Slide Four

**Final Thoughts...**

What would happen if the oral tradition of the Caribbean did not exist?

Why is it so important that oral stories from the Caribbean are performed?

**Epic Thinking: Do we value stories more if they are performed rather than being written down? Why?**

Figure 17: Slide Five

## Imoinda

**Crick?** There once was a beautiful young princess called Imoinda, who lived in a prominent village in West Africa with her family. She was a stubborn young girl, who did not like to be told what to do. Like most young girls her age – for she was now fifteen – she thought she was grown enough to make her own decisions. But like most fifteen year old girls, burgeoning on the horizon of womanhood, Imoinda often made very bad decisions and ended up regretting her stubbornness, though she was often far too stuck in her ways to ever change them. **Crick?**

One hot, sunny afternoon, Imoinda went walking in the forest looking for flowers when she caught sight of Prince Oko. Prince Oko was a handsome young man, yet looks never did impress Imoinda very much and the fact that her father so desperately wanted her to marry Prince Oko made him utterly repulsive to her. **Crick?** “Imoinda!” cried Prince Oko, desperately trying to find a path through the trees to reach her. “Oh Great”, Imoinda mumbled to herself, rolling her eyes a little as she slowed her pace and half-turned to address him. “Good afternoon Prince Oko” said Imoinda in the most exaggerated tone she could get away with without causing immediate offense. “Imoinda, I was hoping I would find you here. You see...I have just attended your father and he has agreed upon something that is of much delight to myself, and I hope, in time, to you too Imoinda”. Imoinda could not help the panic from setting into her face as she stumbled back on a branch and slipped to the ground. Luckily for Imoinda, Prince Oko was so excited that he presumed the panicked look he had observed was related to the fall and not to what Imoinda knew to be the truth behind Prince Oko’s words: They were to marry.

Imoinda cried herself to sleep for 10 nights, hidden away inside her room where she allowed only her maid to enter. She vowed she would not eat until her father changed his mind, though unbeknown to him, Imoinda had her maid sneaking in food so that she didn’t go hungry. **Crick?** On the eleventh night, Imoinda was just settling down to another night’s wailing when a scream pierced through the air around her, echoing from wall to wall. Imoinda’s mother came rushing down the corridor screaming and crashed against Imoinda’s door. Imoinda was scared. She had never heard her mother scream like that before and she knew something must be terribly wrong. She rushed to the door and unhooked the latch that had prevented anyone from entering. Imoinda’s mother stood in silence, a horrified look on her face. Tears streamed down her eyes. “Imoinda, it is your father. He’s, he’s dead.”

Imoinda crashed to the ground, helpless and distraught. A million feelings rushed through her all at once and it was too much to bare. She screamed out in pain and crashed her hands against the floor. Her mother fell down beside her and held her tightly. They cried. They all cried: Family, servants, maids, even the moon curved downwards and dropped a clouded tear. For when a wise man is lost from this earth, the tears must fill the void between the then and now, to bring about the seeds we need for change. **Crick?**

Figure 18: Slide Six

## Imoinda

Imoinda mourned for two years. And on her seventeenth birthday, she decided to accept Prince Oko's hand in marriage. In loyalty to her father, she had learned to love him and she believed that, even though she had previously despised him, she had made a wise decision. **Crick?**

They had shared their afternoon walks for some time now and used the time to discuss all kinds of matters. Today however, they walked in silence. Two days ago they had heard a rumour that there had been an attack on a neighbouring tribe and lots of the villagers had disappeared. Word had spread that the white man was coming and – though she put on a brave face – Imoinda was scared. They had decided that they would move on in the coming days, to find somewhere safer, but Imoinda didn't want to wait.

That night the women gathered together for a secret meeting. They sensed the danger coming and had decided that since the men would not listen to them they were taking matters into their own hands. They collected up the children and food supplies and began making their way inland. The maids were instructed to inform the men of their departure, and to tell them of their route so that they could find them when daylight came. **Crick?**

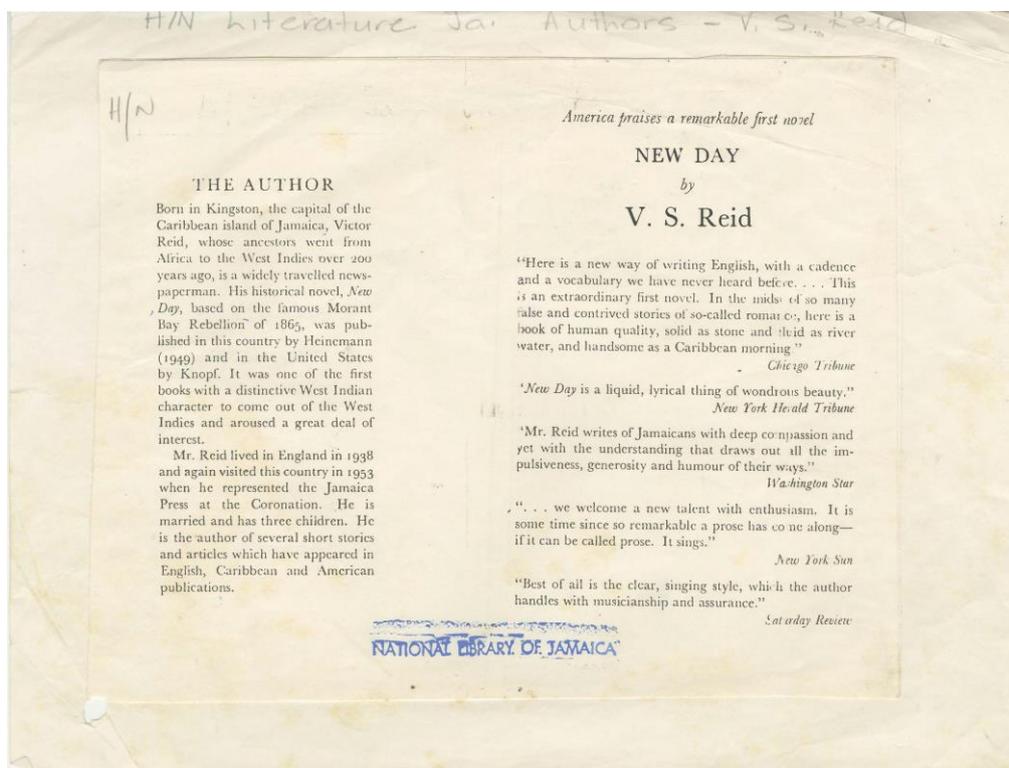
6 days and 6 nights past and the women heard nothing. No one came, not even the maids. When all was secure and the new village space was decided upon, Imoinda decided to go back and find the others. She knew the women would not approve it so she waited until they were sleeping and left a peace sign in the soil to let them know she was safe. She journeyed back across the land, using the tree branch to support her when she was tired. She did not sleep. She did not eat. She blessed her mouth with water only when she could not do without and when she finally arrived at the clearing where her village had once been, everyone was gone. **Crick?**

Imoinda shouted out for Prince Oko, without thinking, without feeling fear. In the distance she heard a call: A man's voice. It sounded like her Uncle Otu. She called again and upon hearing Uncle Otu's command to run, she darted toward the sound. She ran for what seemed like hours, screaming out to let him know she was on her way to him. It wasn't until she had reached the clearing and gazed upon the beaten back that she realised: Through all his instructions she had failed to see the truth. Her uncle had been shouting: "Run child, run!" He had willed her to run to freedom, but where she had come, there was none. She was beaten, she was shackled, and as she stood inline in front of the Tribal African warrior she had once called friend, a single tear dripped down her cheek. It was the last time she knew home. **Crick?**

**Figure 19: Slide Seven**

## Appendix Four

### Newspaper Review – V S Reid



## **Appendix Five**

### **Caribbean Centre – Three/Five Year Plan**

I would like to submit the proposed 3-year plan, outlined below, for your consideration.

I envisage 2 distinct parts to this as follows:

1 Consolidation of outreach activities: Local (community initiatives); National and international (Caribbean -European initiatives)

2 Academic programme development: the Caribbean 'Magnet' programme

### **Background**

The achievements of the Caribbean Centre have been somewhat overshadowed recently by a number of difficulties which serve to highlight the need for focus and coherence as key principles in the planning of programmes offered by the Centre.

The tremendous potential which the Centre holds for contributing to the fulfilment of Goldsmith's mission to the local community, and for effective delivery of its services, especially in relation to Caribbean Studies and Caribbean peoples, remains as crucial at this time as it did when the Centre was instituted.

The history of the Caribbean Centre is laid out in the flyer entitled 'The First Fifteen Years ', (to be updated) which also outlines the rationale for the existence for such a unit. The principal terms of reference as highlighted by this document were and still are: -

i) the academic study of Caribbean culture

ii) advice on the academic needs of Caribbean communities

During the long period of drastic cuts to funding within the University , the Centre, partly through instability occasioned by some shifting between departments, began to lose its focus and to perceive itself as somewhat marginalised and undervalued. In the meantime, the Centre's resource support dwindled. In particular, the lack of a full time Head of Centre and staff employed other than as sessional employees at the Centre, together with a reliance upon volunteers has led to rather mixed results for the Centre and the community it aims to serve.

## **Achievements**

During the last five years the Centre has been especially successful in its outreach activities. It remains one of our overall strengths. A wide range of community events have brought members of the public into Goldsmiths and has also taken 'Centre' staff out into the local communities. As a result, the Centre enjoys a great deal of credibility within the local community. We have also created and maintained significant local and international networks.

The Caribbean Women Writers' Alliance (CWW A) alone has a membership, currently, of over 200. We have created opportunities for publication by creative and academic writers concerned with the Caribbean voice, and issues related to this, within higher education and in the world of publishing.

Academic and creative publications brought about by CWW A members currently represent exciting and innovative practice within the UK and Europe in the field of academic study of Caribbean literature.

We have been directly responsible for the literary production of many new and established Caribbean heritage writers in the UK. In concrete terms the project has so far been directly responsible for the development of three anthologies introducing readers to more than fifty new writers, along with the work of illustrators. We have also, in collaboration with London writers' groups collaborated in the developing and publishing of the work of 25 young writers.

The centre has benefited greatly, in terms of prestige and its positioning within academic circles, from the range of innovative international conferences and seminars held over the years. The first 3 UK conferences on Caribbean women's literature have been held at Goldsmiths and attracted delegates from the West Indies, USA, Italy, Canada, Germany, France, Belgium, Spain, Norway and Sweden as well as the UK.

The regular publication of Mango Season, the magazine of the Caribbean Women Writers Alliance has, in addition to raising the profile of the Centre and its work, attracted more than 200 individual subscriptions.

All of the above has meant that the 'Centre':

- a. offers provision that is taken up by a very diverse population
- b. has established a high local, national and international profile.
- c. provides a level of activities well beyond its staffing resources
- d. is driven by a primary concern to fulfil its role
- e. enjoys a College/PACE framework which is supportive enough to allow such a rich and diverse range of activities to flourish

Within the past 3 years it has become clear to me that two strands of development require prioritising. Firstly, the development of certificated courses leading to an enhancement locally and nationally of the academic status of the Centre; secondly, research which focuses upon Caribbean community needs.

### **Enhanced Academic Status**

Given the current focus in higher education on research and accreditation and bearing in mind the needs of the Centre's target audience to be as involved in such academic activities as the rest of the College community, the indications are that the future of the Centre lies in the respect it commands as an academic unit. Since 1988, the development of academic courses has been a stated aim.

Currently, 3 certificated courses take place within the Centre's remit. These are the 'Access Course: English with Caribbean Studies'; the 'Certificate in Caribbean Studies' and the 'Black Political Movements' course which is in the part-time degree framework. In addition, Jacob Ross's SF course: 'Caribbean Texts Linking Reader and Writer' has successfully recruited and there are plans to seek accreditation for this course in the next academic year.

In terms of the development of academic status, the Caribbean Centre has, in the first instance, clearly to be seen to be offering a rational choice of part-time courses. A plan for the development of such courses is currently being discussed with Len Platt and individually with a number of possible contributors. However, at every stage of our planning, it needs to be borne in mind that accredited courses are relatively expensive for students and this factor needs to be addressed in the Centre's overall plan so as to ensure that in its provision, the Centre remains true to the vision it retains.

### **Researching Community Needs**

The Caribbean community is arguably one of the most researched groups within the U.K. It is in the interest of Goldsmiths and the Centre to seize the initiative in this field and to develop and compile a range of research in relation to the needs of the community as well as to respond to those needs in a way that is consistent with the Centre's brief e.g. the development of courses and academic events that respond directly to those needs.

### **External Threats**

Several recent initiatives by a number of agencies within other universities threaten to erode the lead assumed by Goldsmiths and the Centre both in terms of programming initiatives and potential student catchment. These departments have quickly recognised the potential to be gained from attracting Caribbean heritage students and/or establishing a Caribbean Studies academic programme. For example, in

mid-September at the invitation of another London campus I was invited to participate in a session where it became clear that the aim was to set up a new and wide ranging Caribbean Studies programme. It also became clear that it was in recognition of the work with which I have been involved and a concern to secure my ideas for the development of a rival programme that I was invited.

While the potential competition may provide an 'edge' to provision for students, we at Goldsmiths need to be alert to the danger of having the initiative embodied in the 'Centre' (and all that represents ) appropriated at this critical point.

This proposal seeks to address the issue highlighted so far through the development of coherently planned, selected academic activities which will effectively create a magnetic hub within the Centre so as to attract substantial numbers of students at all levels of course provision.

These planned 'magnet' activities are informed by the 1988 recommendations of the Academic Board highlighting 3 key objectives pertaining to the Caribbean Centre:

- i) the development of certificated courses
- ii) the expansion of opportunities for black people in higher education
- iii) The need to lead London U niversity in this field

These objectives are central to the proposal as set out below.

### **Proposal -The Caribbean Centre ' A Magnet'**

The 'Magnet' Proposal arises from a comprehensive vision for enhancing and developing the role of the Caribbean Centre in its mission to focus upon the academic study of Caribbean culture and to advise on the academic needs of Caribbean communities at all levels.

The proposal addresses the need for the Centre to develop and offer a coherent structure of courses, conferences and related activities and opportunities for the widest audience and particularly black Caribbean students.

Specifically, there is concern to:-

- i. build on foundation work already done within the Centre so as to develop a clear focus in the way in which the Centre functions within the College and the wider community
- ii. enable the Centre to assume a lead position in practice beneficial to the College, and the fostering of a community interested in a variety of Caribbean Studies courses and related issues.

iii.

develop and promote a coherent range of certificated courses led by a core of staff associated with the Centre

To this end the project, envisaged over a 3-year period, will as a first measure:

- seek to pilot a recruitment drive for students interested to take up Caribbean Studies courses
- develop a database related to effective recruitment and the take up of Caribbean Studies Courses. The database will also be a useful tool for monitoring and measuring, in
  - statistical terms, course take-up levels and trends, information dissemination (mail
  - shots, events notification etc.)
- establish a Caribbean Studies pathway through the part-time degree, and attract and support significant numbers of students to this programme
- rationalise a programme of 'open door' events involving Caribbean and Black academics so as to directly address issues of black academics in higher education
- develop and expand the work of Mango Season to attract library subscriptions within the UK and Europe
- lay the groundwork for re-establishing courses in Caribbean Studies at post-graduate level

### **Resource implications**

The effective implementation of the above will require the following: -

1 Fractional staff with sound knowledge of the Caribbean community, related issues and concerns; skills in fund raising/ data collecting and electronic information management and information dissemination (mailshots, database management and upkeep etc.) In addition, the post holder will be responsible for:-

- fundraising
- setting up and maintenance of database
- maintaining dynamic information links including web pages
- support for advertising programme to students
- support for Mango Season development, specifically library subscription within Europe and the UK

- support for a black academic forum programme which acts as a form of mentoring support for HE students
2. A tenured i.e. permanent post for the Head of Centre to ensure continuity and consolidation of programming as well as the effective co-ordination and implementation of the Centre's activities.
  3. Further core Centre staffing as the programme develops.

### **Implementation Schedule**

The implementation of the Programme for the centre is envisaged in two parts over a three-year period:

- i) Consolidating the activities and programmes that are already established
- ii) Developing the range of services.

### **Consolidation**

\* A three-pronged approach to the consolidation of outreach activities i.e. local (courses and locally based events) national (conferences and papers) and international (e.g. Caribbean - European initiatives such as Mango Season).

-Local: the basis of this will be a system of affiliation of Caribbean focussed groups to the Centre based on a shared interest in Centre related activities e.g. CWW A

-National: a coherent programme of events is to be planned and publicised. Also, the biennial Caribbean Women ' s Literature Conference established over the last 6 years will continue to offer a critical literary focus.

-International: See Biennial Conference details above, the next of which is scheduled for the year 2,000. In addition, the work of Mango Season and its value internationally needs to be recognised across the College

\* Consolidation of current academic programme organised on a rational basis to be carefully monitored

### **Areas for Development**

\* A coherent and rational Course programme which establishes incrementally a range of certificated courses at all levels and seeks to develop the take up of existing courses.

-Access: the ' Access Course: English with Caribbean Studies' (Distance Learning) needs to be developed in the first instance in terms of its student numbers and a doubling of current numbers on this course will

be sought initially. (Subsequent reviews need to bear in mind that many potential student enquiries cluster around a perception of the course as a Caribbean Studies rather than an English course.)

-Certificate: ' ; the 'Certificate in Caribbean Studies' similarly needs to be developed in the first instance in terms of its student numbers. For this course also, a doubling of current numbers will be sought initially.

-Part-time degree: 'Caribbean Cultural Studies' (CCS) is currently part of the degree programme. The course did not recruit well enough to run during the current academic year. For the following academic year, however, a clearly defined CCS route will be in place. (Details to be submitted). Student recruitment is seen as a vital part of the development plan for this course. The 'Black Political Movements ' course currently running is within the part-time degree framework and part of the Centre's remit as agreed with Len Platt.

-SF courses: Jacob Ross's SF course: 'Caribbean Texts Linking Reader and Writer' is of specific interest to the development plans for courses being proposed in that it constitutes a pilot of the method of recruitment central to the proposed development plans. The course, which has successfully recruited, has been developed upon the following principles:

- i. joint planning
- ii. specific targeting of students based on knowledge and experience in the field of Caribbean literature and the needs of aspiring Caribbean heritage writers
- iii. direct marketing rather than reliance on the part time course booklet
- iv. careful and specialised introduction (J acob Ross & I together tutored the first intake of students)
- v. consultation with students in relation to their needs for subsequent development

A doubling of student numbers from 7 to 15 within 2 terms of the above course indicates the potential value in the method outlined. It is, therefore, such principles which will inform the proposed development of courses within the 3 year plan. A necessary approach is to revise and build on the traditional ways of publicising courses, taking on board the ways in which our targeted students obtain information i.e. bookshops, community centres and related venues and other courses that are usually conducted within the statutory sector.

\* The development of support funds to attract students on to certificated courses and to offer enhanced academic activities which in turn support the academic programme is vital particularly as the course programme develops. In part, the SF course above, has benefited from CWW A events as least a third of the participants Are CWW A members.

-recruitment drives, development of courses that respond directly to students' needs thus ensuring a broader and more secure basis for reaching and attracting students are all implicated.

\* Development of Mango Season with a view to diversifying readership, circulation and subscriptions. This will involve improving the publication to include more pages and enhanced production values as a way to reflect the Centre's aspirations and quality of service.

-an allocation of time for this activity needs to be agreed.

In practical terms the Consolidation and Development plans outlined above should lead to the Centre's enhanced role as :

- a) a section of the College that functions in a coherent manner to deliver a range of certificated Caribbean Studies courses
- b) a location of research practice acknowledging the scale of research interest in the specific field of Caribbean related issues
- c) a section of the College which makes a specific contribution to the college's RAE input through research activities related to teaching
- d) a Centre which challenges academic thought and practice through national and international communication of an interesting programme of research and debate
- e) a Centre which attracts a substantial number of interested students and affiliated Caribbean focussed groups
- f) an important and exciting space of academic practice for the Caribbean community catering to its needs at all levels
- g) a space which empowers the Caribbean community and leads in significant debate within that community and in communicating across the College

### **Schedule**

- **Immediate**

- Centre launch: proposed date: 1st week December
- identify College sources of support for different strands of the proposal
- prepare & publish Centre based programme of 'open door' events

- **Short term**

- by January make available detailed outline of the basic Caribbean Studies pathway through the part-time degree framework
- by January appoint Fractional staff member (please see above)
- begin to establish dynamic methods of recruitment
- begin to establish programme of affiliations

- **Medium term**

- secure tenure for Head of Centre
- establish a core of Caribbean Centre associated staff
- implement a range of strategies for recruitment
- develop and expand work of Mango Season

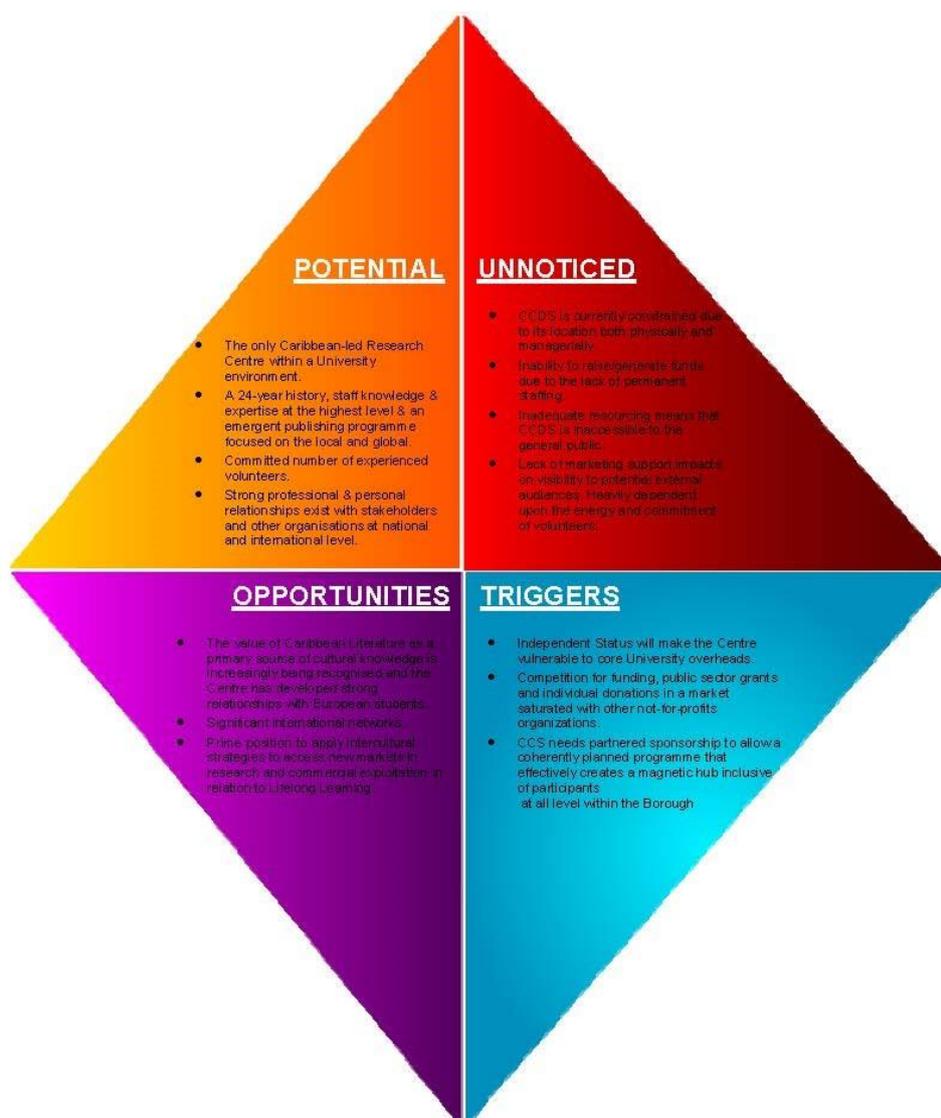
- **Longer term**

- implementation of the full range of services outlined in the proposal
- review the possibility of Caribbean Studies course at post-graduate level
- prepare for International Conference on Caribbean Literature in the year 2,000.
- assess and evaluate the activities of the Centre with a view to further development

**Joan Anim-Addo**  
**July 2005**

## Appendix Six

### POUT Analysis Image



**FIGURES**

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Figure 1: Original Centre for Caribbean Studies Website.

Figure 2: New Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies Website.

Figure 3: Welcome Map for International Students

Figure 4: Map of the World

Figure 5: Sample of CCDS VLE page.

Figure 6: Love Duet.

Figure 7: Olive Senior reading from 'You Think I Mad, Miss?'

Figure 8: Olive Senior reading from 'The Case against the Queen'.

Figure 9: Dramatisation by Rhoma Spencer

Figure 10: Professor Maria Helena Lima – Keynote Lecture.

Figure 11: Marlene Nourbese Philip – *Zong!*

Figure 12: POUT Analysis image