

**Imagining Race and Identity in the Reading and Writing of Caribbean  
Literature: A Decolonial Psychological Perspective**

by

Alicia V. N. Levy-Seedat

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

in the subject of

**Psychology**

at the

**University of South Africa**

Supervisor: Professor Martin J. Terre Blanche

October 2022

### Declaration

Name: Alicia Vincenti Nerine Levy-Seedat

Student Number: 33255466

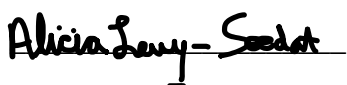
Degree: Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology (98555)

Thesis Title: **Imagining Race and Identity in the Reading and Writing of Caribbean Literature: A Decolonial Psychological Perspective**

*I declare that the above-mentioned research thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references (APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition style for references was applied).*

*I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.*

*I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.*



SIGNATURE

30 January 2023

DATE

### **Abstract**

Claiming fictional literature as a site of resistance to coloniality, this study has two aims. I consider critically the manifestations of (de)coloniality and decolonising psychological work evident in selected Caribbean literature. I also use my own fictional writing to provide a case study of how decolonial writing might be used to illustrate and explore how other-than-Western epistemology and ontology can offer space to re-imagine psychology and its praxis.

Creative Caribbean literature offers rich material to (re)animate psychologically oriented thinking about identity and 'race' and the contemporary experiences of racism, colourism, sexism, classism, economic exploitation, and homophobia using a decolonial lens. This study provides a critical decolonial reading of Jamaican Literature as a Subset of Caribbean Literature. I explore whether and how fiction, inspired by a decolonial turn, opens spaces for psychological oriented decolonial work. I underline the tensions in the shifts between coloniality and decoloniality in Jamaican writing including novels, anthologies of short stories, and poetry.

The conceptual schemas that underpin my practices of reading, thinking, and writing as both researcher and creative, are simultaneously decolonial theory and decolonial methodology. As such, the theory-methodology for this study is framed as interconnected concepts and ideas derived from Critical Race Theory, Black Feminisms, and Afrocentric and decolonial thought. The derived key decolonising practices include Critical Relationality and Scepticism, Intersectionality, Border

Crossing, Inscriptions of Indigeneity, Afro-Creolised Aesthetics, Faithful Witnessing, and Linguistic and Conceptual Subversions.

**Key Terms:** *Caribbean literature, decoloniality, creolisation, indigeneity, coloniality, racism, colourism, Jamaican psychology, Caribbean feminism, liberatory psychology, decolonial psychology*

## **Dedication**

*For Charlianne Vincenti and John Martin whose radical,  
decolonial love brought me into 'being'.*

## Acknowledgements

“Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world. All things break. And all things can be mended. Not with time, as they say, but with intention. So go. Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally. The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you.”

L.R. Knost

I would like to acknowledge all the healers of this broken world that I have the privilege to love, and be loved by, intentionally, extravagantly and unconditionally.

Family and friends have all nurtured this thesis to completion.

Special thanks to:

The Beloved Moh. My be all and end all. My kind and precious darling. 33 years later my heart still does funny things at the sight of you. This would never have happened were it not for your steady, patient, gentle wisdom. You are the true measure of a man.

The ‘Suns’ Zizi and Zaza...actually you are not only my light, but my air. I love you.

The Levy Fam – Sis, Dru Dru, Donna, Janelle, Jordanne, Justine. You carry my heart and my history. I love you all endlessly.

The Seedat Fam – Jamila and Iqbal, Faridah and Farouk, Aisha and Ziyaad, Sums, Ahmed, Fiks, Zacks, and every one of my precious cousin-sisters, cousin-brothers, nieces and nephews. How blessed I am to be one of your gam.

The Besties, friends who are family– Carms and Ger, Soup, Loop, Nads, Miss Jas, Dr Plo, Sal, Pal and Coach, Sindi, Liz, Jen, Lisa, Carol, Karen, Nasima and MS, Milly and Clarence, Mimi, Arlene, Fabster, Naaz, Tima, Umesh and Debs, Samed, Shidi, Zucchini, Dr Alban and Yasmine, Asho and Ravishing, Ashraf and Shereen, Farouk and Suraya, Goolam, Mrs J, Ma'am Tim. All your darling kids and parents who are now my darling kids and parents.

For those assisted with producing this document, especially Toughieda Basadien.

Prof Murray and Prof Phalafala - you gave me my first break, got me started and gave me of your time and efforts for which I will always be grateful.

The Decolonial Supervisor Martin. You took on this role with intention and embodied every single quality that it took me over three hundred pages to say can heal this broken world.

The ancestors – Mum, Dad, Ma, My cherished Aunts, Uncles and loved ones who guide, guard and protect me always.

My God and Father, The Almighty, The Merciful, from whom all blessings flow.

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Transgressive Enactments in Caribbean Literature.....	12
1.1 Introduction.....	12
1.2 From Postcolonial Thought to Epistemic Decolonisation .....	13
1.3 Decoloniality, Epistemic Freedom, and Decolonial Practices.....	16
1.4 The Decolonisation of Psychology: Storytelling as Decolonial Praxis .....	19
1.5 Aims.....	29
1.6 Chapter Layout.....	31
Chapter 2: Literature as a Source of Psychological Knowledge and the Problematics of Postcolonial Caribbean Literature .....	34
2.1 Introduction.....	34
2.2 Textual Analysis, Literary Criticism.....	34
<b>Table 1</b> .....	36
2.3 Storytelling as Knowledge and Praxis for the Discipline of Psychology .....	40
2.3.1 Psychology ‘in’ Literature .....	42
2.3.2 Psychology ‘of’ Literature .....	44
2.4 Problematics in Postcolonial Caribbean Literature.....	50
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework, Research Design, and Method.....	55
3.1 Introduction.....	55



3.2 The Caribbean Literary Seas: The Colonial Difference/Borderlands.....	57
3.3 Creolisation/Indigenisation.....	67
3.3.1 Creolisation as Indigenous ways of Thinking.....	69
3.3.2 Creolisation as Critical Praxis.....	72
3.3.3 Creolisation as Linguistic, Conceptual, and Aesthetic Subversion: Voice of the Subaltern .....	74
3.3.4. The Impact of Creole in the Decolonisation of the Teaching, Production, and Critique of Literature.....	80
3.3.5. Language as Aesthetic Subversion .....	83
3.3.6. Creole language as Aesthetic Subversion .....	88
3.3.7. Creolisation as Radical Interdisciplinary Caribbean philosophy: Disruptor and Liberatory Ontology.....	89
3.4. Methodologies of the Oppressed .....	97
3.5. Intersectionality.....	100
3.6. Black Feminism. Critical Relationality. Migratory Subjectivity. Border Crossings.....	105
3.7. Decolonial Feminism and the Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern .....	108
3.8. Faithful Witness .....	119
3.9. Selection Logic, Primary Texts, and Themes .....	124
3.9.1. Selection Logic .....	124
3.9.2. Diasporic Evolution as Impetus for Decolonial Literary Heuristic .....	126
3.9.3. Particularity as decolonial psychological praxis in literature .....	128

3.9.4. Caribbean Literary History Incentivises Decolonisation of Postcolonialism in Life, Politics, Identity, Citizenship, and Psychology.....	129
3.9.5. Creole Patwah as Decolonial Subversion and Epistemic Disobedience..	131
3.9.6. Primary Texts and Themes .....	134
3.10. Social and Epistemic Location, Projected Value.....	139
3.10.1. Social and Epistemic Location.....	139
3.10.2. Projected Value of the Study .....	141
Chapter 4: Bless Up I And I! Bless Up! Confronting the Coloniality of Being .....	143
4.1. Introduction: Desalinating The Caribbean Literary Seas.....	143
4.2. The ‘Jamaican Voice’: The Jamaican Being .....	146
4.2.1. Patwah.....	148
4.2.2. Naming and Shaming (or Claiming?).....	155
4.2.3. Understanding the Particularities of The Jamaican Voice.....	164
4.2.4. The ‘Colonial Voiceover’ .....	178
Chapter 5: Ef a Egg, We a Di Yolk - Confronting the Coloniality of Power .....	188
5.1. Migration: Maddaland, StepMotherland, and Motherland .....	188
5.1.2. Maddaland.....	188
5.1.3. Step/Motherland.....	202
5.2. Education, Religion, Political-Economy: Entangled Noose of Coloniality....	219
5.2.1. Religion: Belief can Kill, and Belief can Cure .....	229
5.2.2. There is no Such Thing as Justice. It’s ‘Just This’ .....	244

5.2.3. Colonial Education a Panacea of the Masses.....	250
5.2.4. Colonialism or Coloniality?.....	257
Chapter 6: Jah Know! Jah Know! - Confronting the Coloniality of Knowledge .....	264
6.1. Racism, Ra'schism', and RasTafari as Resistant Being 'I And I' .....	264
6.2. Creolised Religion Healing the Colonial Wounds. Faithful Witness, Biography, Autobiography .....	274
Chapter 7: A Decolonial Creative Writing Sample .....	301
Excerpt From the Original Novel <i>What is Black and White and Red All Over?</i> by Alicia Levy-Seedat.....	301
7.1 Introduction.....	301
Chapter 8: Analytical Insights and Provocations,.....	339
Contributions, Limitations, Reflexivity, and Recommendations for Future Studies.	339
8.1. Findings and Contributions.....	339
Figure 1 .....	346
<i>Decolonial Theory and Strategy Summary Chart</i> .....	346
8.2. Reflexivity, Recommendations, Future Study .....	347
References.....	352
Appendix A.....	378
Sample of Creative Writing with Decolonial Commentary.....	378

## Chapter 1: Transgressive Enactments in Caribbean Literature

### 1.1 Introduction

This thesis examines how a decolonial psychological approach to the reading and writing of literature might enable resistance to the aftermath of colonialism. I investigate how select Jamaican fiction, nested within the Caribbean literary genre, provides a space to promote the inclusion of marginalised voices and encourages indigenous modes of psychology, representation, and knowing. I also use my own fictional writing to provide a case study of how other-than-Western epistemology and ontology could offer space to re-imagine psychology and its praxis.

Arguably one of the most virulent effects of coloniality has been the entrenched falsehood that Western epistemology is the only, and the best, basis for knowledge production and thinking about identity and subjectivities. In order to position Euro-America as the epistemic ‘centre’ of the world, the knowledge systems and modes of knowing of colonised peoples were systematically demeaned, distorted, reconstructed, dislocated, and eradicated through a series of epistemicides and linguicides (Ndlovu-Gatesheni, 2018; wa Thiong’o, 1994).

The coloniality of power, knowledge, and being all worked together to produce an imperial reasoning that has conspired across time to relegate the colonised to a sub-human category with no knowledge, ways of creating new knowledge, and history. This has resulted in coloniality that is not only crudely repressive and dehumanising, but that is also insidious and subtle (such as microaggressions), often being normalised through ostensibly respectful engagements that are actually racist practices. (de Sousa Santos, 2007; Grosfoguel, 2011; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, 2018; Quijano, 2000). Such ‘Epistemic Colonisation’ is embodied in the very conception of psychology (Maldonado-Torres, 2018),

and a failure to decolonise psychology may be a form of epistemic violence in itself (Samuel & Ortiz, 2021). For this reason, decolonisation in psychological science is a critical area that must be addressed with a diligent awareness of both the colonial legacies in research practices and of the extent to which researchers rely on Western methods by default. As a first step towards such an examination of psychological enquiry, I provide a brief introduction to key concepts in decolonial thought and to the role of psychology from a decolonial perspective.

## **1.2 From Postcolonial Thought to Epistemic Decolonisation**

To situate my work within the body of decolonial scholarship I now introduce, clarify, and problematise several concepts and terms that are central to the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this study. These key terms are post-colonialism, postcolonial thought, decolonisation, coloniality, colonial power matrix, epistemic freedom, pluriversality, epistemologies of the South, epistemic justice, epistemic decolonisation and decoloniality.

**Post-colonialism** signifies the dismantling of direct colonial rule, the end of explicit territorial control and administration, as well as the attainment of political independence (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). At the time of independence in the colonies, **decolonisation** was assumed as the establishment of national sovereignty, self-governance, and control of state structures by the elite from among the colonised. While this circumscribed articulation championed the assumption of political control of state structures, it did not consider the complexities of colonialism that alongside the occupation of lands included the control of natural resources and human labour as well as the invasion of colonised peoples' cultures, knowledge systems, and minds. This partial representation of decolonisation overlooked the transformation of the political economy and socio-cultural systems of the colonial state that

henceforth remained relatively untouched (Mignolo, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020; Wallerstein, 1995).

These criticisms of the constrained comprehensions of political decolonisation are informed by the concept of ‘coloniality’, first introduced by Quijano (2000) to define Western Euro-American imperialism. Imperialism embodies forms of Western political, economic, and cultural dominance and control that survive direct colonialism. **Coloniality** is the continuation of Western Euro-American supremacy over colonised people long after the attainment of political independence and the dissolution of colonial administration.

Coloniality, as a logic and ideology, is perversely fluid and keeps evolving and reinventing itself to entrench the dominance of Euro-American modernity across the globe. Critiquing the term ‘post-colonialism’ as a misnomer, decolonial thought stresses that colonialism - central to capitalist and patriarchal domination - did not stop when the direct colonial occupation which is known as historical colonialism ceased (de Sousa Santos, 2018).

Quijano (2000) explains that coloniality is driven by a **colonial power matrix**; namely, intricate global structural arrangements and machineries of exploitative hegemonic control that define and regulate all dimensions of social, political, economic, spiritual, and cultural existence. Grosfoguel (2011) describes the colonial power matrix as a modern global system that entrenches a racial, ethnic, sexual, economic, epistemic, spiritual, linguistic, and gender hierarchy in its organisation of knowledge, power, and being. Grosfoguel (2011) and Quijano (2000) theorise that class, spirituality, knowledge systems, languages, gender, and other dimensions of existence are racialised and are manifest in the ways in which power, recognition, and status are assigned along a racial hierarchy. In this hierarchical ordering, race assumes primacy. Essentially, coloniality and modernity are two faces of the same phenomenon in which identity formations; laws, structures, and discourses of democracy; citizenship and belonging; and nation states were all created in the enactment of colonialism

(Grosfoguel, 2011; Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Coloniality is enduring colonialism, conceptualised as constitutive of modernity, founded on a “temporal rupture that distinguishes a traditional, agrarian past from the modern industrial present, and as a fundamental difference that distinguishes Europe from the rest of the world” (Bhabra, 2007, p. 1). Coloniality, revering geographical partitions, fabricates humans as connected, and yet separated, by supposedly dissimilar civilisations and cultures (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

The term **postcolonial thought**, attributed to the formative ideas of Homi Bhabha (2012), Edward Said (2014), and Gayatri Spivak (1988) evolved into distinct fields of studies in academe. Postcolonial thought as a significant intellectual intervention, perceives the material and socio-economic dimensions and consequences of colonialism as well as the implication of colonial knowledge systems in the fabrication of hegemonic discourses on colonised people. However, contending that there is no ‘post’ to colonialism, decolonial writers critique postcolonial thought for focussing primarily on the cultural realm of colonialism and its aftermath in its early formulations (Bhabra, 2014); and for failing to account for the “on-going intensification of imperialism into a supranational capitalist empire, which now operates beyond the coloniser-colonised divide in the sole interests of flourishing Capital” (Diouf, 2014, p. 4). Contesting the early limited reading of decolonisation, **decoloniality** refers to the present and continuing resistance to slavery, racism, colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy, and hegemonic epistemology; as well as struggles immanent to different geo-political sites troubled by coloniality (Maldonado-Torres, 2016; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). Decoloniality encapsulates the multi-dimensional transformation of the multiple hierarchies of the “modern/colonial/Western-centric, Christian-centric, capitalist/patriarchal world system” (Grosfoguel, 2011, p. 24).

The aforementioned concepts can be used to make sense of the value, as well as the limitations, of the works of prominent Caribbean authors such as Edward Kamau Brathwaite

(1964), George Lamming (1990), Sam Selvon (2021), Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul (2002), and the-island based Wilson Harris (1961), and Derek Walcott (1949) who were among those who revolutionised Caribbean literature with their seminal contributions. In the period of post-colonialism, Caribbean literature produced by such authors was influenced by the imperatives of political decolonisation and postcolonial thought. Inspired by the momentous political changes effected by post-colonialism and postcolonial thought, Caribbean authors, who established broad alliances with anti-colonial revolutionary figures from other regions based in metropolitan centres, imagined, and articulated a renewed sense of self, cultural pride, and national identity in their respective fictional writings. Postcolonial Anglophone Caribbean literature embodied stories about the experiences of racism, colonial domination, slavery, migration, and resistance (Figuroa, 2015), as well as narratives of cultural renewal and (re)formation of national identity (Brydon & Tiffin, 1993). In these respects, postcolonial Caribbean literature, like African, Asian, and Latin American literature, was constitutive of a ‘writing back’; an attempt at disrupting and over-turning colonial discourses and narratives of colonised people as well as recovering and inscribing colonised people’s cultural traditions - dislodged, distorted, and denied by colonialism - into postcolonial narratives and storytelling. The concepts of colonialism and decolonisation, found in earlier Caribbean literature and in particular the works of the migrant authors, are the scaffolding behind which the edifice of coloniality was constructed and remains. Moving away from coloniality, at the coalface of contemporary Caribbean literary expression and activism, is an emphasis on the concepts of decoloniality, epistemic freedom and decolonial practices by modern authors, which I now describe as the foundation of this thesis.

### **1.3 Decoloniality, Epistemic Freedom, and Decolonial Practices**



Decolonial thought offers a repertoire of concepts and ideas that might be seamlessly linked to build the interpretive and methodological framework for a psychological approach to the reading and writing of literature. Below, I detail the interpretive framework as a series of inter-locking claims. Decoloniality can be thought of as an aspirational journey towards pluriversal, socio-political, and economic formations; humanising knowledge systems and practices; and modes of being. Decoloniality as praxis - reflection and action - invokes epistemic freedom as a kernel concept and axis of decolonial activism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). It embodies non-hegemonic approaches to thinking, perceiving, comprehending, and acting (Grosfoguel, 2011; Mignolo et al., 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). **Epistemic Freedom** “is fundamentally about the right to think, theorise, interpret the world, develop own methodologies, and write from where one is located unencumbered by Eurocentrism” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018, p. 3). Epistemic freedom expressing cognitive justice, the liberation of thought and imagination from coloniality (de Sousa Santos, 2018), is not to be construed as the inversion of Eurocentrism into a place of subordination and/or the positioning of the Global South as majestic (Grosfoguel, 2017; Mignolo, 2007). Instead, epistemic freedom is about resisting the dominance of Euro-American thought; authoring and inserting plural knowledge systems into the global knowledge economy; and recognising and accepting numerous paths and modes of knowing and interpreting reality.

From the location of decolonial thought, epistemic freedom may also be enunciated as the autonomous right to assume an explicit rootedness in the epistemologies of the South.

**Epistemologies of the South** signify knowledges and ways of knowing evolving from socio-political and intellectual resistance to coloniality in both the geographical North and geographical South. These epistemologies of the South converge around overturning the hierarchical power and knowledge dichotomies in North-South relations; the de-centring of the Eurocentric North, invented as the exclusive and only valid knowledge systems; and the

validation of the South and their various knowledges and ways of knowing. Repudiating abstract universalisms, epistemologies of the South enact **pluriversality** - “the recognition of the co-presence of the different ways of knowing and the need to study the affinities, divergences, complementarities, and contradictions among them in order to maximise the effectiveness of the struggles of resistance against oppression” (de Sousa Santos, 2018, p. 8). Premised on **epistemic justice** (cultural and epistemological diversity), epistemologies of the South frame **epistemic decolonisation** as the retrieval, honouring, and insertion of diverse ways of knowing into the global ‘ecology of knowledges’ (de Sousa Santos, 2018). Epistemic decolonisation also requires the integration of formerly subjugated, restrained, and excluded knowledges. Epistemological decolonisation re-positions the Western canon as one of many canons, validates critical thought and perspectives from the Global South, and promotes critical dialogue between multiple epistemologies.

Proceeding from the above explication of epistemic freedom and epistemologies of the South, the repertoire of decolonial practices and strategies used in this study includes among others: Critical Relationality and Scepticism (Vázquez, 2009); Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989); Borderlands/crossing (Anzaldúa, 1987; Boyce Davies, 2017; James, 2013); Inscription of Indigeneity (Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 2020; Nettleford, 2005); Epistemic Repositioning (de Sousa Santos, 2018); Feminist Faithful Witnessing (Lugones, 2010; Moore, 2020); and Linguistic and Conceptual Subversions (Cooper, 1995; Moore, 2020).

The practices of Critical Relationality and Scepticism raise questions about received theories and their relevance outside of the parameters of Eurocentrism. Together with Border Crossing and Intersectionality they push back against exclusionary Western epistemology, foreground imaginative categories and modes of inclusive interpretation (Vázquez, 2009), and make visible connections between different forms of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989; Hill Collins, 2020). By claiming positionality, subjugated knowledges and voices are moved to an

empowered space and coupled with the assertion of Indigeneity insists on the retrieval and inscription of epistemologies of the South. Conceptual and Linguistic Subversions are critical to decolonial practices in that they expose the disingenuous tendencies of hegemonic academic and literary styles, which in the protection of colonial sensibilities and under the guise of creativity adopts sanitised language forms to conceal the harshness and cruelty of racism and other forms of hatred. Coloniality weaponises language. So, while there can be no denying that racist, gendered, and other forms of discriminatory language are deeply hurtful and odious, by adopting critical feminist thought (Moore, 2020), I suggest that such disturbing forms of writing may be created and even inverted into forms of decolonial fecundity that might be expressed through enactments of Faithful Witness and/or creative expressions of coloniality. This Feminist Faithful Witness can result in the active recognition, witnessing, and claiming of the pain, hurt, and resilience of oppressed peoples (Lugones, 2003). Each of these practices are explained in greater detail and are discussed along with other methodological issues in Chapter 3.

I do not propose these practices and strategies as technologies of a formulaic method. Instead, by my study subscribing to Sandoval's (2013) *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Section 3.4), these practices cohere to anchor creative writing and thinking as a process of liberatory consciousness namely, decolonising psychology and the social imagination. In the foreword to Sandoval's (2013) ground-breaking *Methodology of The Oppressed*, Angela Davis refers to Sandoval's writing as a bridge across a theoretical chasm that resituates and reinterprets major Western theories. This description can also be deemed as one of the hallmarks of the decolonial turn in psychology.

#### **1.4 The Decolonisation of Psychology: Storytelling as Decolonial Praxis**

Holland (1990) suggests that Literature played a significant role in Freud's discovery of psychoanalysis. Freud (1955) himself found it strange that the case studies he wrote read like short stories and he went as far as to say that they lacked the "serious stamp of science" (p. 160). In many ways these statements summarise the historically ambivalent relationship between the disciplines of psychology and literature. It is acknowledged that there is a relationship between the two, and yet, detailed research into the exact nature of how they complement each other has been neglected because psychology has been preoccupied with the task of constructing itself as a science with positivist leanings (Moghaddam, 2004). While traditional psychology has focused on discovering causes and universal laws of behaviour, Literature, by contrast, has typically used a more 'case study of the individual' approach to understanding human nature (Moghaddam, 2004).

The ongoing debate on the extent to which literature can be considered as a form of psychological study has been greatly advanced by the decolonial turn in psychology which has shown that storytelling can contribute meaningfully to psychological praxis (Samuel & Ortiz, 2021). This turn brought scholars and practitioners to the University of California Berkeley in 2005 for the first conference on decoloniality with the aim of discussing, creating, researching, and expanding ways of interrupting the colonial legacies of power that remain entrenched (Silva et al., 2022). Since that conference, some progress has been made in advancing decolonial research and aims in psychology, but Samuel and Ortiz (2021) found that decolonisation has become a 'buzzword' in the social sciences, often used without thoughtful discussion of what it means to (de-)colonise research. They also found that the term was potentially being used to subvert true social justice by diverting attention away from material and political change.

In early post-independence Jamaica, the process of decolonising psychology was based in the "uncovering of social psychopathology attributed to 500 years of oppression,

racism, and colonization” (Boback, 2020). Unsurprisingly, mental health treatment in the Caribbean was influenced by colonisation and slavery which had resulted in cruel and dehumanising European approaches to psychology replacing and eradicating traditional, Indigenous methods of communal care (Boback, 2020). In more recent times, one major practice in the decolonisation of Jamaican and Caribbean psychology has focused on researching and implementing psycho-historiographic cultural therapy (combining historiography with oral tradition). This decolonial praxis encourages the sharing of stories that explore a collective experience and the identification of social forces and group dynamics that influence change (Boback, 2020). Pursuant to this, the decolonisation of Caribbean psychological treatment has focused on cultural influences, language (Creole/Patwah) and the complexities of the interplay between culture and migration (Hickling & Paisley, 2012). These imperatives are consistent with the focus and methodology of this thesis. Research findings regarding health care of Caribbean migrants to America and Europe revealed that in the Caribbean:

common experiences are shared through cultural lore and folktale storytelling, which utilize wordplay and linguistic inventions that often result in semantic confusion particularly for listeners from different cultural origins... misunderstanding of Caribbean language and idioms may result in bizarre and sometime dangerous diagnostic interpretations that label culturally different behaviours as illness or misinterpret cultural expressions in ways that result in misdiagnosis. (Hickling & Paisley, 2012, p. 13)

One interpretation of these findings veers toward there being a need to reform Caribbean psychology not only based on the historical and continued struggle against mental

enslavement - as was emphasised in post-colonial times - but to expand psychological research, praxis, and treatment to incorporate a more contemporary, decolonial, particularised receptivity to the complexities of culture (identity, language, behaviour, practices).

In South Africa, decoloniality in psychology is intertwined with critical psychology and is sometimes a response to calls for a movement away from conventional Westernised psychology in Africa to an African psychology that stands on its own. A cursory survey of the titles of articles published in Southern African and African psychology journals over the past ten years reveals that the movement to decolonise psychology picked up pace after the tipping point of the 'Fees must Fall Movement' that critiqued the 'Rainbow Nation' discourse and redirected transformation toward decolonisation (Pillay, 2017). In 2017 and 2018 the critical psychology journal, *Psychology in Society*, published special issues featuring the topics *The Decolonising of Community Psychology* and *Psychology and Decolonisation*, respectively. Since these special issues there has been a marked uptick in articles explicitly researching decoloniality... although I would argue that as a percentage of total articles published the numbers remain woefully few. Even less impactful in local psychological research has been the study of the use of fictional/creative writing as psychological praxis. Although, commendably, there was a *Psychology in Society* (2017) special issue dedicated to Narrative Research, even this special issue did not feature any studies about fictional/creative writing as decolonial psychological praxis. In stark contrast to the storytelling method of this thesis, the focus in this special issue was on non-fictional storytelling.

The Narrative Research special issue reflected on several insights about the use of storytelling (non-fictional) in the decolonisation of psychology, including that narrative practice can contribute to radical scholarship and is radical to the extent to which it surfaces inequality and alleviates 'psychosocial wretchedness' (Canham & Langa, 2017). Canham and Langa make the point that narratives cover pain and suffering, but also contain joy,

celebration, resistance, subversion, and the alternative views of those living as marginal subjects. Narrative theory and methodology, they say, give access to everyday life experiences and meaning making that can usefully critique psychology in society. However, narrative work in psychology, in trying to achieve this, is confronted by the gap that can arise between what Bradbury (2017) calls ‘life and story’. Plainly put, troublesome aspects of analysis and translation of a story arise as it moves from the narrator, whose mind we cannot read, to the researcher, whose background and life may not allow them to fully appreciate the complexities and nuances of the tale they hear.

The advantages and aims of narrative research as decolonial psychological praxis are in keeping with those of the methodology and theories of this thesis. However, an interesting and obvious divergence between storytelling using creative fiction as psychological praxis and Narrative Research (as detailed in the special issue) is that in creative fiction the narrator and the researcher are one and the same person. This praxis also differs from that of autoethnography (e.g., Schmid, 2019), in which the narrator and the researcher are also the same person, yet the stories told are non-fictional, anecdotal, and autobiographical.

Therefore, in the methodology of this thesis, since the researcher is also the participant it can be assumed that the pitfall of the ‘potential gap between life and story’ (Bradbury 2017), is to some extent avoided. I would even argue that analysis of the story does not play the same role as a ‘measurable’ dependent variable in fictional writing as it does in narrative research since the writer/researcher has already decided on, and has the power to predetermine, the findings they want to present for their study. Perhaps peculiar to fictional storytelling methodology is the fact that it is acceptable that the novelist researcher is literally writing and creating the results they want. Indeed, in this psychological praxis the writer/researcher has agency, and even the imperative, to decolonise psychological science at multiple levels of complexity – either by alluding to it, or by explicitly telling the readers what and how to think decolonially.

So, for instance, if the storyteller/researcher wants to decentre Western science and psychology, or if they want to naturalise Indigenous knowledge, they simply create or tell a story that does just that!

To reiterate, when using creative writing as a decolonial psychological method (in the way that this thesis does) the researcher is not directly recording someone else's tale and there is no risk of making mistakes in the recording of, or in the disrespecting of someone else's story. In this method it is not so much the accuracy of the telling of the tale that is important (it is fiction after all), but rather the reader's engagement with that fiction that takes centre stage. The question then arises as to whether a gap can develop between 'life and story' in the reader's engagement with the author/researcher's story? I suggest that this is not a problem (at least not in the same way as in non-fictional narratives) because this technique, like psychotherapy, is intended to obtain information reflexively and so there really is no right or wrong analysis. There is only the drawing out and revealing of the reader's own colonial trauma that can then be communally confronted and healed depending on the unfolding of the fiction (this technique is detailed in Section 2.3.1). Further to this, the storytelling technique has implications and advantages for literature and creative writing as a method and space for collective healing from the colonial wound that will be explored in Chapter 3 with reference to the concept coined 'The Caribbean Literary Seas'.

This idea of researcher also being the participant who then actively manipulates the results of the study through persuasive decolonial storytelling can seem radical, but may appear less so in the context of Moghaddam's (2004) insight that not only is literature psychology, but psychology is literature. He points out that "the discipline of psychology and its research 'products' are located in and shaped by a particular historical and cultural context" (p. 519). He expands upon this idea by explaining that traditional psychological researchers' interpretations are dependent on a shared Western culture through which they



construct stories about phenomena commonly recognised as ‘data’ by their community. In this Westernised scientific storytelling, the young are trained to correctly tell and receive stories according to often arbitrary norms of conventional scientific culture. Says

Moghaddam: the dramatist is the experimenter who stages a play (the experiment), which has a script (the methods, procedures, and hypothesis) known to all the players (the scientists, confederates, etcetera), except one (the naïve participant) who is typically not included in the final version of the story. Understood in this way, ‘doing’ psychology is much the same as ‘doing’ literature and they both involve storytelling (Moghaddam, 2004).

The compatibility and overlap between the two disciplines make it appear reasonable to see storytelling and literature as potentially viable means through which to subvert colonial modes of psychological enquiry. We may even go as far as to say that based on Moghaddam’s conceptualisation, storytelling praxis, although not specifically named as such, has long been embedded in, and silently impacted upon, traditional psychology (including being the methodology used in Freud’s psychoanalysis as referred to in the introduction to this section). If this is the case, then this study’s use of storytelling methodology is not a radical departure from conventional psychology per se. It is merely the identifying and subversion of established scientific psychological praxis in the pursuit of decolonial aims is it not?

Like Moghaddam, Squire (2015) pondered the form and function of psychology noting that whereas conventional social psychology is like a detective story (in which facts are sought) and humanist social psychology is more autobiographical in nature (with a bent toward searching for empathetic understanding), critical social psychology resembles science fiction in that it is concerned with wanting to understand the structure of the world and invent ways of imagining it otherwise. Arguably the concerns of decolonial psychology, and indeed this study’s storytelling praxis, could best be seen as a fit within this last category of critical

enquiry. Squire notes that critical enquiry/psychology faces two opposing dangers - that this type of research can end up “too far from conventional representations of reality to be taken seriously as an alternative to them, but also close enough to these representations in some ways, to be co-opted into them” (Squire, 2015, p. 44). In conducting this study, and decolonial research in general, perhaps it is useful to contemplate Squire’s caution alongside Foucault (1980) who pronounced: “I am well aware that I have never written anything but fictions. I do not mean to say, however, that truth is therefore absent... One ‘fictions’ history on the basis of a political reality that makes it true, one ‘fictions’ a politics not yet in existence on the basis of a historical truth.” (p. 193). Next, three examples of fictional writing and narrative technique methodologies are provided to expand on how decolonial ideas are being received, disseminated, and perceived in contemporary psychology.

Hanna et al. (2016), Hickerson (2018), and Samuel and Ortiz (2021) conducted different types of studies that give insight about how storytelling, as decolonial praxis, functions to subvert coloniality in psychological enquiry. Hanna et al. (2016) undertook a comprehensive overview of Pulitzer award winning author Junot Diaz’ life and critiqued his creative writing. In so doing, they provided a window into his personal decolonial turn and the consequent unfolding of his decolonial imagination that functioned as social and cultural activism in his texts. Similarly, Hickerson (2018) reviews the decolonising potential of fictional writing by investigating Indigenous American writers who claim that their novels can heal people. Samuel and Ortiz (2021), on the other hand, explored decolonial storytelling not through fictional writing, but as a narrative technique of healing elicited from racialised groups “orally sharing their lived experiences” (p. 1). By comparing these three studies, I continue the overview of how storytelling praxis approaches and impacts the decolonisation of the discipline of psychology.

Junot Diaz' creative writing "envisions and articulates alternatives to the logic of coloniality" (Hanna et al., 2016, p. 8). The futurity of Diaz's novels utilises settings, plots, and characters to create alternative worlds and knowledges not yet recognised or even conjured. These new possibilities engender social movements, political praxis, and spaces for contestation that are in effect "a prelude", "a projective sense" and a "staging ground for action" (p. 9). His fictional writing is "oriented toward transformation, collective action", and a restless invocation of new possibilities; it also challenges the reader to decolonise ideologically and affectively (Hanna et al., 2016). Hanna et al.'s investigation concludes that Diaz's decolonial creative writing contributes to a "turn in hemispheric and planetary literature and culture" (p. 1).

Like Hanna et al. (2016), Hickerson (2018) investigates the impact of creative writing as decolonial praxis. She investigates ways in which novels attempt to operate decolonially to heal readers from colonial social aesthetics that define them as inferior. Hickerson finds that indigenous novels primarily heal readers by emphasising the need to find one's own community or to create a community that supports decolonial identity. By telling and listening to stories, communities unite around finding solutions to difference and to heal via communal reintegration and renewed relationships to one's own cultural history. She found that Indigenous writers changed the terms of sickness and health altogether by "portraying privileged Western characters as sick and the indigenous characters as capable of healing" (p. 22).

Whereas Hanna et al. (2018) and Hickerson (2018) show how fictional writing can be used as decolonial intervention into the state of the discipline and praxis of psychology, Samuel and Ortiz (2021) show how narrative techniques do the same. Samuel and Ortiz argued that there is a growing recognition of the dehumanisation of racialised peoples, that expediting the decolonising and indigenising of psychological science was imperative, and

that storytelling is an effective way of doing so. They also found that there has been a shift toward decolonising and indigenising psychological science over the last thirty years. Even though this growth in decolonised research has been in reaction to Western psychology and is sometimes seen as rehabilitation, there is also a keen desire in indigenous psychology to resist Western practices through centring the indigenous experience as a powerful source of knowledge production that stands on its own. Samuel and Ortiz (2021) state that the decolonial praxis of narrative storytelling frees the mind and creates space for the valuing of lived experiences in psychology. Their study concludes that narrative praxis results in a challenge to what counts as psychology and how it is practiced, and that this may function to “hold up a mirror to psychology to present a synthesis of decolonizing efforts thus far” (p. 9).

One drawback to narrative praxis, however, is that by turning stories into ‘data’ and tellers into ‘objects’ to be ‘discovered’ there is the risk of perpetuating colonisation. After reviewing articles about storytelling, Samuel and Ortiz deduced that various storytelling methods contribute to decolonising psychological praxis meaningfully, but differently, and so they suggest that researchers must explain exactly how they use storytelling in the context of the community they worked with. Samuel and Ortiz (2021) find that the decolonising of psychological praxis is an ongoing process rather than an end state. They conclude that key processes to decolonising psychological praxis involve denaturalising conventional scientific praxis as the standard of normalcy; and so, storytelling must deliberately attempt to understand reality from the perspective of the oppressed. This is achieved through recalling history, events, and experiences through the lens of the racialised.

An instructive South African example demonstrating Samuel and Ortiz’ (2021) findings regarding the value of using multiple ways of knowledge production and of representing and interpreting data outside of traditional Western methods of engagement is exemplified in the research of Segalo (2018). Segalo convincingly shows how visual

methods, such as embroidery, are successfully used by participants to narrate their own stories and move away from solely relying on text and spoken language. Given that I am Jamaican, I have chosen to use Jamaican stories and writing, in much the same way Segalo has effectively used localised iconography, to infuse the study with particularity and authenticity as is required in decolonial methodology. I speak more about this decision to use Jamaican stories and decolonial methodology in Chapter 3.

Considerable work has been done, and is ongoing, regarding decoloniality in general, decoloniality specifically in psychology, and the role of storytelling in the development of a decolonial psychology. It is this body of work that I aim to contribute to and extend in this thesis by moving beyond (auto-) biographical narratives to examine the potential emancipatory power of fictional storytelling. I also attempt to expand the focus beyond narratives involving those who have been politically, psychologically, and geographically displaced by colonialism while nevertheless remaining on their own continent, to those whose kin have been physically wrested away to start new lives far across the ocean.

### **1.5 Aims**

The overall aims of the thesis are two-fold: First, to discuss critically how selected fictional Jamaican writings, evocative of postcolonial Caribbean literature, embody influences of (de)colonial psychology and the associated machinations of the ‘power matrix’; second, to provide a case study - in the form of new fictional writing of my own - of how decolonial writing and treatment of themes related to race and colourism, economic exploitation, gender and sexuality, might be used to illustrate and explore how other-than-Western epistemology and ontology could offer space to re-imagine psychology and its praxis.

In engaging the first aim, I attempt to explain how and why, in relation to racialised, classed, gendered and hierarchical depictions of humanity, selected contemporary Caribbean writers continue to create fictional worlds that are populated by characters whose subjectivities are reflective of the postcolonialism that restricts decolonisation. I delineate how the selected authors use storytelling to elucidate these kinds of subjectivities and point toward decolonial psychological alternatives. Decoloniality emphasises identity (re)formation beyond ontic colonialism, dominant nationhood oriented and patriarchal narratives. I am therefore interested in probing narrative and thematic tensions, silences, ambiguities, and contradictions that are suggestive of such (re)formations of identity beyond colonial frames. I therefore engage in complex readings of fictional Jamaican texts and explore how they relate to multiple, shifting, Caribbean identities and create spaces for enacting decolonial psychology.

With respect to both aims, I expressly focus on illustrating how decolonial narratives dealing with themes of race, racism, colourism, sexism, classism, economic exploitation, and homophobia might reconfigure heterosexual love plots, heteronormative themes and the dominance of male figures and stories in Jamaican literature. Holding to this focus in the creative writing component is meant as an intervention to disrupt and de-centre the Eurocentric epistemologies and narrative traditions on which the discipline of psychology was founded. It is intended to inscribe epistemic disobedience and narrative plurality into Jamaican literature and psychology.

Approaching decolonial fictional writing as a contribution to both the social and epistemic justice agenda, I examine questions of alterity, authenticity, and the tensions of centres versus peripheries that are still implicated in this agenda. I explore how Creolisation/Indigenisation and related linguistic and stylistic strategies might embody a critical decolonial mode of thinking in psychology. In brief, holding the postcolonial as a

constraint to decolonial thinking, this study is focused on illustrating how postcolonial-decolonial tensions play out in select writings by Jamaican authors and in my own original creative writing. The intended end point is to reveal fresh insights and knowledge that can bolster modes of liberatory practice and resistance to coloniality within the field of psychology.

In summary, comprehending the persistence of coloniality and engaging the problematics commencing from the shaping influences of postcolonial thought on Caribbean life, psychology and fictional literature, this study adopts a decolonial approach to the reading and writing of contemporary Caribbean literature. This approach is taken because the telling of own stories - that are rooted in Caribbean culture and lived experiences - can denaturalise conventional scientific praxis as the standard of normality within the discipline of psychology. Specifically, Jamaican literature, as located within the larger body of Caribbean literature, offers fertile material to support and elaborate on the decolonial turn in psychology and its focus on re-thinking race, identity, and liberatory subjectivities.

## **1.6 Chapter Layout**

The thesis is structured to progress from a relatively abstract consideration of the imperatives and objectives of a decolonial psychological turn, to examining the ways in which these considerations manifest in the particularities of a Caribbean psycho-literary analysis (as is more fully described in section 3.1). This is followed by an attempt to grapple with these insights not only through academic analysis, but also by means of epistemic disobedience and creative expression, thereby hopefully providing a sample of a decolonial psychological imaginary derived from an other-than-Western knowledge perspective.

Following this introductory chapter, **Chapter 2** provides a history of textual analysis and literary criticism and their evolution as psychological praxis. I review the usefulness and

limitations of literature and literary analysis - its production and content - as a source of knowledge for psychology and its influence on storytelling as decolonial psychological praxis. I then analyse the trends in selected post-independence Caribbean literature. This includes describing the problematics emerging from the overarching ordering influences of postcolonial thought, highlighting its silences related to race, identity, and colourism; gender and sexuality; and labour and economic exploitation. Together these components explain how this study is positioned as a decolonial psychological literary intervention.

In **Chapter 3**, drawing on critical Black Decolonial Feminism, African philosophy, Black Atlantic and Black Consciousness intellectual traditions, I develop the conceptual and methodological edifice of my study. I also elaborate on the key practices of the study's decolonial approach including Methodologies of the Oppressed; Critical Rationality and Scepticism; Creolisation; Decolonial Feminism; Intersectionality; Border Crossing; Inscription of Indigeneity; Faithful Witnessing; and Linguistic and Conceptual Subversions. I summarise and give reasons for selecting the primary texts which are analysed in Chapter 4 to illustrate how (de)colonial influences such as diasporic evolution, particularity, Caribbean literary history and Patwah undergird Jamaican fictional writings. I detail my social and epistemic location and the projected value of this thesis. The conceptual schemas enunciated on in this chapter are simultaneously decolonial methods and theories of knowledge-making which lay the solid foundation for my practices of reading, thinking, and writing as both scholar and creative.

In **Chapters 4, 5, and 6** I proffer a critical decolonial commentary on select Jamaican novels, focusing mainly on Nicole Dennis-Benn's (2016) novel *Here Comes the Sun* and Kei Miller's (2017) *Augustown*. I consider whether and how fiction, impelled by a decolonial turn, may reprise coloniality in respect of race, colourism, economic exploitation, gender, and sexuality and yet still open spaces for decolonial work. I highlight the tensions between



silences and resistances and locate the critical reading of these two main novels against other Jamaican writing (including anthologies of short stories, and poetry) that explicate and accentuate (de)colonial themes.

**Chapter 7.** Here I engage in epistemic disobedience by exploring analytical, critical, and imaginative possibilities in Caribbean identities. I present a creative-critical sampling of a decolonial psychological imaginary using excerpts taken from my original novel, *What is Black and White and Red All Over?* My choice of the novel as my preferred creative genre is linked to the surge of vitalised long form prose fiction emanating from the contemporary Caribbean. This creative writing sample is offered as an activist intervention intended to exhibit decolonial psychological praxis, indigenous strategies and knowledges commonly found in Caribbean storytelling and life.

**Chapter 8.** Assuming a critical and reflexive stance in this concluding chapter, I focus on two matters. First, I highlight the major analytical insights and provocations that the study may offer for rethinking and reimagining 'race' and identity as framed by decolonising psychological thought. Second, I summarise the merits of assuming literature as a terrain of decolonial psychological work. I outline: Key Insights, Contributions, Limitations, and Recommendations for future studies.

## **Chapter 2: Literature as a Source of Psychological Knowledge and the Problematics of Postcolonial Caribbean Literature**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Although it does not follow the format of a traditional Literature Review, this chapter will still provide background to the ideas, and critically evaluate the readings and research, that underpin this study as a decolonial literary intervention. The intention of this chapter is to lay the foundation for understanding the power of bringing together decolonial psychology and literature (psycho-literary analysis). I table the historical evolution of literary criticism that evolved into the combined forms of psychological praxis that this study uses to analyse decolonising trends in Caribbean literature. Finally, I contextualise how and why the problematics of postcolonial history inevitably gave rise to the critical Caribbean Literature that I attempt to use to illustrate a decolonising and decolonised psychological imaginary.

### **2.2 Textual Analysis, Literary Criticism**

The history of textual analysis and literary criticism and their evolution as psychological praxis is helpful for understanding psychology as a knowledge source ‘**in**’ and ‘**of**’ literature (Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 refer). Therefore, I will now briefly define and provide a background that contextualises these methodologies. Textual Analysis is a methodology that involves understanding language use in all its forms, visual, written, spoken, symbolic, or pictorial (Allen, 2017). It can be argued that making sense of life experiences by analysing communication is practically ageless. However, one of the first instances of the formal systematic analysis of the written word dates back to analysis of the content and context of religious hymns by the Swedish state church in 1743; conducted to resolve controversial differences between the beliefs of Lutherans and Moravians (Dovring, 1954). This analysis formed some of the basis of what is known today as content analysis and

evolved into use as both a qualitative and a quantitative research methodology for social scientists, including psychologists (Krippendorff, 2018).

When used by psychologists, textual analysis is guided by what thinking inspires the current research in language and by the ways that a psychological construct appears in language via: patterns, everyday conversations, published temporal and cultural trends, social media, or the appearance of language anywhere. These considerations drive hypotheses, exploration, and interpretation of findings (Kennedy et al., 2021). Similarly, historically literary criticism has also been driven by the interpretation, judgement, and evaluation of literary works based on the ideological stance of the critic. In some ways the very value or worth of literature hinges on the critics' views of it. Thus, the major ideas that have guided how textual psychologists, critics, and in turn readers heavily influenced by critics, have understood literature have run parallel to the course of the history of philosophy (Brewton, 2021). It follows that the analyses (and their histories and ideologies) that undergird textual, literary, and psychological research will naturally influence research outcomes and is worth noting in the brief summary provided in Table 1.





Literary And Textual Analysis	Issues/Concerns	Approximate Date First Used	Key Authors
<i>Gender and Queer Studies</i>	Challenges paradigms of Western intellectualism by relying on an activist stance taken with the intention of changing the social order and rejecting/questioning of normative definitions, fixed categories, and dominant paradigms.	1990s  Early 1990s	Gender Studies - Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler, Hélène Cixous, Elaine Showalter  Queer Studies - Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Michel Foucault

Drawing on elements of most, or even all, of these various forms of literary and textual analysis, this thesis mainly deploys decolonial critical analysis. To understand this study, it is crucial to consider that in a decolonial cultural imaginary older-style postcolonial theory is thought to be a homogenising limitation upon the shaping of a liberated Caribbean literature. This is because postcolonialism is unable to capture the entrenched persistence of coloniality or its invidious contemporary permutations. Postcolonial theory, with its emphasis on independence, national identity, and self-governance, produced nationalist, and male-dominated narratives that silenced and marginalised alternative voices and women in Anglophone Caribbean literature (Donnell, 2007; Donnell & Welsh, 1996).

The politics of difference tended to be effaced in early postcolonial creative works, leading to limited representations of colourism, sexual variance and sexual self-determination. Instead, inclining towards (still) essentialist notions of race, gender, and sexuality, postcolonial narratives portrayed the female self, for example, primarily in mother-daughter relationships, and as an object for male sexual gratification (Kutzinski, 2001). The over-representation of the male heteronormative experience was accompanied by a tendency

to ignore complex, multifaceted, dynamic, and even dissensual features of identity (Hall, 2020; Wynter, 2003).

Conscious of these emphases and gaps, this thesis is located within the body of works of 21<sup>st</sup> century authors who are self-reflexive in writing a more subversive politics into Caribbean literature, specifically Jamaican literature. Such writings transcend cultural nationalism as a frame for organising equitable and just political sovereignty in a contemporary context and frequently interrogates inherited forms and politics - postcolonialism among them - to imagine new realities for Caribbean writing, psychology, and life (Harrison, 2017).

This thesis is a modest attempt to participate in Harrison's (2017) '4<sup>th</sup> generation' writing which, positioning literature as an agent of the socioeconomic and political times, considers fiction a profound force of decolonial psychological engagement. The four (somewhat overlapping) generations of anglophone Caribbean writing identified by Harrison run from the first half of the twentieth century until the present. The first-generation writings were from Caribbean immigrants to Britain who were concerned with psychological phenomena such as alienation and displacement. This phase was followed by two generations of literature written by migrants and their descendants who were educated and felt more at home in Britain than in the Caribbean. In their literature they concerned themselves with psychological issues of belonging and acceptance in their new lands.

The current fourth generation writers are concerned with nuanced representations of Caribbean psychology and diasporic life; writing about themes that include decoloniality, diaspora, race, class, gender, and sexuality. These concerns seem to give additional grounds for fourth generation authors to construe storytelling - shown in the introduction to be an important anti-colonial strategy (Baszile, 2015) - as both decolonial psychological and

literary praxis. I will now show how seamlessly the theories and methods of the disciplines of psychology and literature are woven together and provide the basis for this thesis.

### **2.3 Storytelling as Knowledge and Praxis for the Discipline of Psychology**

In her lecture at the University of Cape Town entitled *Idolatry of Theory: A Defence of Storytelling*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (as reported by Davids, 2021) observed that theories provide a framework to discuss the world, but insistence on preserving the sanctity of theory results in the silencing of any voice that complicates our accepted theory. She noted that by being inflexible we run the risk of rejecting “storytelling that enables us to deal with the world in all of its glorious and complicated messiness, because life is messy” (Davids, 2021, p. 2). She concluded by saying, “It’s not so much that we should discard theory, but more that we should acknowledge its limitations” (p. 2).

Adichie insisted that storytelling creates, enables, and fosters truth and beauty. She expressed the belief that if we allow theory to become a tyranny that blocks the truth inherent in situational experiences, we will not only miss a story’s power to enable human empathy and connection, but we will also miss creating opportunities to thrive and achieve maximum joy. For, said Adichie, “Storytelling reminds us that we are not a collection of logical bones and flesh, and because we are emotional beings, dignity and love matter as much as bread and water” (p. 2).

In a seeming nod to decolonial Faithful Witness (detailed in Section 3.8), Adichie discerned that leaving out a story’s imperfections (that do not fit into theory) can lead to grotesque injustices such as slavery and colonialism. According to her, it was the rigid adherence to theory and the telling of incomplete stories that led to the dehumanisation that made enslavement possible. The connection between theoretical tyranny and political tyranny to which Adichie refers is made all the more chilling and is exemplified by Grosfoguel’s



(2013) intricate weaving together and questioning of how it is “possible that the canon of thought in all the disciplines of the Social Sciences and Humanities in the Westernised university is based on the knowledge (theories created from incomplete stories) produced by a few men from five countries in Western Europe (Italy, France, England, Germany and the USA)?” (p. 74). Grosfoguel painstakingly makes the connection between distorted and incomplete knowledge/theory (re)production and the four major genocides/epistemicides that took place during the Long 16th Century period<sup>1</sup>. These genocides (against Jewish and Muslim origin populations in the conquest of Al-Andalus, against indigenous people in the conquest of the Americas, against Africans kidnapped and enslaved in the Americas, and the cause of the murder of millions of women burned alive in Europe accused of being witches in relation to knowledge structures) directly resulted in the extermination of knowledge and ways of knowing (epistemicides) that in turn justified the continued blood curdling period of conquest, extermination, and colonialism. Grosfoguel (2013) makes pellucid what Adichie merely touches on - that manipulated theory, distorted and with gaps, has been directly used to rationalise oppression and murder.

This thesis explores some Caribbean stories that have omitted imperfections and that have been rendered incomplete by Euro-American epistemology, ontology, theory, and praxis, inter alia, in the manner alluded to by Adichie. It is hoped that in so doing, this study brings to the reader’s attention significant examples of the destructiveness of coloniality. In

---

<sup>1</sup> The ‘Long 16th Century’ is a concept formulated by French historian, Fernand Braudel. It refers to the 200 years between 1450-1650. This is the period of the formation of a new historical system named the Modern World-System, or the European World-Economy, or the Capitalist World-Economy (Grosfoguel, 2013).

comparison, this thesis also offers up, as psychological praxis, contrasting decolonial Caribbean stories and storytelling, which can then be used to re-open options that have been limited in mainstream psychology and theories of psychology. Taken together these two types of stories can deepen understandings of the power and creativity inherent in the unique psychologies and behaviours that Caribbean people develop to resist and overcome the all-encompassing stranglehold that coloniality has had on their day-to-day existence. In adopting the decolonial attitude<sup>2</sup> and the centring of critical storytelling suggested by Adichie, this study hopes to contribute to the voicing of the real-life psychological solutions otherwise silenced by the idolatry of Euro-American theory. It is fair to caution that the idolatry of decolonial theory too can be problematic; for example, to see fictional writing/storytelling within this study as purely an attempt at illustrating decolonial theory would be such an idolatry. For as Adichie infers, there is always some sort of surplus of messiness and imperfection in a story that is valuable in and of itself whether it contributes to a decolonial imaginary or not! Pursuant to presenting storytelling as having the ability to deepen understandings that are invisible to and censored out by academic/theoretical writing, I will now review the usefulness and limitations of literature and literary analysis - its production and content - as a source of knowledge for psychology and discuss its influence as decolonial psychological praxis.

### ***2.3.1 Psychology 'in' Literature***

---

<sup>2</sup> This attitude critically questions hegemonic distortions and myths and interrogates the very production of knowledge and the mechanisms of racialisation and exclusion (Maldonado-Torres, 2018).

Smith (2015) suggests three areas of focus for combining psychology and writing. They are: the keen observation of human nature - perceiving people's behaviour, thought processes, and the way they make meaning of experiences and events; paying attention to body language and any form of nonverbal communication - descriptions of facial expressions and physical movements work best when they are at odds with what's happening and tell the reader, not what they already know, but what they don't know (Cron, 2012); and lastly, Smith advises looking to other writers for examples on how they conduct research and tell stories - salient advice for decolonial writers seeking fresh epistemology located outside of the academy.

Writers should constantly reflect on what kinds of things characters say. How do characters relate to each other? And how do they solve the problems life throws their way? For, responses to these questions linger with the reader long after they have closed a book. Given this, a good writer can use their relationship with the reader in much the same way as a therapist who encourages clients to express their own stories to unlock mysteries and differences between their narrative and the actualities of an experience or event. In this way, the storyteller can fill in gaps and even remake the story to create opportunities for life changing experiences (Chase, n.d.).

While incorporating this therapeutic technique into writing, the author can add a twist. They can either use this technique, as therapists do, to help readers work through their stories and resolve their issues, or they can use this technique to complicate issues for their characters. For instance, writers can tease and torment their characters to the point of exhaustion or of things becoming unbearable, making obvious the character's inner flaws, before making them resolve issues or take a turn in the direction of resolution (Chase, n.d.).

Additionally, writers can introduce unresolved psychological issues into a plot by creating internal conflict in characters. For example, a character can be caught between the

desire to not do something, and the drive toward an action motivated by unconscious internalised messages for which they are rewarded with conditional love. While using this sort of psychology **in** literature can be criticised for leaning toward a shallow, individualising, de-politicising impulse, this psychology can be adapted for use in healing the colonial wound. For instance, it can be used in decolonial storytelling that portrays characters caught in a tug-of-war between decolonising ‘smadditizin’ (decolonial self-actualisation - see 3.2) and self-denigrating behaviour that is reinforced by coloniality. For example, character flaws, and the motives or past events that helped create and solidify flaws such as feelings of inferiority or the Manichean valuing of Whiteness over Blackness, can subtly be presented as relatable instead of being judged. The purpose of this type of depiction is so that the reader may easily recognise their own flaws and the behaviour steeped in coloniality that they were either unconscious of or ashamed of and hiding. Behaviour that was possibly holding them back from decolonising and smadditizin. By using this storytelling technique - that draws the reader in to empathise and see themselves in character - decolonial writers can help characters and readers to release guilt and pain; and reject racism, colourism, and homophobia. Or they may not. For, as Adichie suggests, fiction should reflect the messiness of life.

These sample techniques should make quite clear the similarities between how psychologists and writers operate as they seek to understand people’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. These examples make it obvious that decolonial psychology can be used **‘in’** literature to elicit and represent new knowledge. I now move from thoughts on how psychology can be used to produce decolonial fiction, to taking a closer look at the psychological impact of several elements of literature and literary analysis.

### ***2.3.2 Psychology ‘of’ Literature***

In their classic text on the theory of literature Wellek and Warren (1963) define the psychology of literature as a study of the writer, a study of the creative process, a study of the rules of literary criticism, and a study of the effects of literature on readers. I will now discuss the relevance of these ideas to this study.

When speaking of studying the writer, Wellek and Warren are referring to the psychological study of the author as an individual and as a personality type (i.e., his or her traits, skills, etc.). This fits with the Western liberal tradition in which psychology is constructed based on individualised experiences and differences. However, this is at odds with the decolonial scholarship from which this thesis draws its theory and methodology; where more applicability is found in conceptualising collective psychological processes as intersecting experiences - particularly that of intersecting experiences of oppression (Grabe & Else-Quest, 2012).

In keeping with this decolonial tradition, in this study, I concentrate less on the individual (as a personality type) and more on the psychology of the individual as part of a collective, and on narratives of intersecting social and institutionalised oppression within former colonial communities. For this reason, the writer/researcher's social and epistemic location is far more germane than their personality. A decolonial writer creates characters based on what they know of coloniality, which will in turn be processed by readers based on their similar experiences of intersecting transnational social, economic, and political forces. This fact alludes to the importance of recording the writer's reflexivity of their own creative process and their intended effect on the reader as the reader interacts with the text.

Iser (1979) studied the interaction between a reader and text and concluded that by filling out the gaps and the blanks of a text the reader will reach its meaning. The gaps and blanks are everything that was not said explicitly in the text but was only tacitly suggested. In other words, the reader, in an ongoing experience, understands and assimilates a tangle of

what is strange in the text, and they then attribute meanings to what is being read. “Whenever the reader bridges the gaps, communication begins. The gap functions as a kind of pivot on which the whole text-reader relationship revolves” (Leitch, 2001, pp. 1676-1677).

Interestingly, writer Saidiya Hartman (2008) believes that it is not only the reader who can access new meanings and knowledge through filling the gaps and silences of literature.

Hartman believes authors too can benefit by bridging theory and narrative using an idea she calls ‘Critical fabulation’. This is a writing methodology where the author uses historical information combined with critical theory and fictional narrative to create meaning and credible sense of gaps and silences created by the absent voices of, for instance, the enslaved.

A later example of critical fabulation can be seen in her 2019 nonfiction book, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval* (Polk, 2019), in which Hartman explores Black intimacy as an act of radical freedom by young Black women in America. Hartman narrates true stories of the social upheaval created by these women through their everyday acts of free love. The book encourages readers to ‘fill gaps’ by reflecting on how crushing heteronormativity can be. This thesis sees the benefit of both author and reader filling gaps and silences in the reading and writing of literature to lend voice to the concerns of the subaltern and the disenfranchised using interpretation as well as archival information. In Appendix A I present a portion of the creative writing of Chapter 7 with side-by-side ‘Critical Fabulation’ commentary as an experimental method of depicting how psychology and Literature can work together to bring (de)coloniality to the attention of the reader. By recognising Leitch’s and Hartman’s differing perspectives, fiction is allowed to offer new understandings, psychologies, and knowledges that could otherwise be lost in those gaps and silences.

Santos et al. (2018) believe that in bridging gaps, readers reconstruct themselves, that is, if what they read helps them to understand the other and themselves more completely.

Santos et al. (2018) state that the application of psychological concepts to an analysis of a work of art should take into cognisance the limitations of these concepts as resources for understanding thought and behaviour. Literature interlaces fields such as history, philosophy, sociology, and psychology, but there is a particularly strong correlation between literature and psychology because both deal with human reactions, desires, perceptions, emotions, conflicts, and reconciliations... in short, the entirety of lives, imagined and real. Authors, by virtue of their representation of life, can open or close doors to new worlds for the reader, helping them to discover and understand the meanings of their existence while arousing feelings and emotions. And so, literature can raise consciousness, awareness, and enable the questioning of identity (Aras, 2015). All the intellectuals above (Iser, 1979; Leitch, 2001; Santos et al., 2018; Wellek & Warren, 1963) speak to the impact of the psychology ‘of’ literature. But it is Noam Chomsky (2008) who most pointedly describes the psychology ‘of’ literature as a knowledge source.

Chomsky (2008) names literature as one of the most significant ways of gaining knowledge about humanity, declaring that “it is quite possible - overwhelmingly probable, one might guess - that we will always learn more about human life and personality from novels than from scientific psychology” (p. 249). Chomsky (2008) can be read in conjunction with Adichie (Davids, 2021), as he credits the acquisition of knowledge through literature to the fact that whereas scientific theories formulate generalised universal laws and explanations, literature describes, and recapitulates, with dense specificity, the unique experiences of humans, modified by personal experiences and histories.

Reinforcing the importance of linking psychology and literature is Jung’s (1990) assertion that it is obvious that as “the womb of all sciences and arts”, the human psyche can be brought to bear upon the study of literature (p. 217). It is Jung’s opinion that “Psychology and the study of art will always have to turn to one another for help, and the one will not

invalidate the other” (1990, p. 218). However, this study diverges from Jung and other mainstream psychologists who theorise in the vein of the type of Euro American epistemology not central to this study. These psychologists categorically emphasise the use of individualised psychoanalysis; while this thesis instead advocates using the decolonial apparatus of focusing on the communal intersections of the matrix of power and coloniality, racism, and oppression. To emphasise this point, I will now continue to expound on a few decolonial divergences from the mainstream approach to the psychology of literature relevant to this study.

Traditional English Literature has been used to communicate and analyse several themes and complex mainstream psychological concepts and personalities. For instance: *Madam Bovary* (Flaubert, Lasfargue-Galvez, 2003) is associated with adulterous love affairs and living in a fantasy world to escape monotony and inspired the concept of ‘Bovarism’; *Romeo and Juliet*, (Shakespeare, 2008) is symbolic of hopeless romance; and *Great Expectations* (Dickens, 1861) is known to deal extensively with ambition and snobbery (Aras, 2015). Although, these and countless other examples of psychological syndromes abound in the traditional study of English Literature, less commonly (far less commonly) referred to are psychological concepts of coloniality derived from the decolonised studies of global literatures. This thesis attempts to open the possibility of exploring and popularising decolonial themes in global literatures as an act of epistemic disobedience; and its creative component subtly satirises the psychological themes found in mainstream literature. For example, in my creative writing I portray characters tending to an exquisite tropical garden gushing about the beauty of birds, snow, and plants of temperate countries which they have never visited or experienced; they do so using grand Shakespearean quotations that they have been taught by heart from primary level in school. This is done to show how our very experience of the world is mediated by the entwining of colonial literature and psychology in



a way incongruous to localised realities. By this same token, or logic, the thesis assumes that the power of coloniality can be countered and disrupted using decolonial literature comprised of more relatable psychology, motifs, knowledges, and understandings.

In conclusion, reading fiction provides new perspective not only through understanding plot, structure, character, and other formal aspects of literature. Reading involves travelling in the mind and through the social fabric of the characters; observing the choice of words and communal or individual events that infer something; evaluation of deep emotions; and finding the motives, instincts, desires, and the invisible behind the visible or the unsaid. That the reader visualises and experiences in or through the text and structure is unequivocal, and so the study of a literary work should equally draw attention to the reader's response to reading the literary work. Simply put, looking at psychology 'in' literature and the psychology 'of' literature emphasises how the reader brings the text to life as well as how the text brings the reader to life (Aras, 2015). In the case of text read from a decolonial perspective, the communal response (i.e., the response of readers to each other, as well as the reader's and author's response to each other) may be of significance. Literature, as a tangible instrument of diverse culture and heritage offers up multi-faceted analyses and samples of interdisciplinary knowledges (philosophy, psychology, sociology, economics, politics, and the like). In summary - literature is a rich source of psychology, as is psychology a wellspring of multiple interpretations and perspectives of human nature and experiences that make up our collective stories and knowledge systems. Joined together, psychology and literature can be a decolonial resource for the activist author. Having hopefully provided the foundation for understanding the power of bringing together decolonial psychology and literature, I now return to the specifics of Caribbean literature as potential decolonial intervention by reviewing literature that uses postcolonial history as context/foundation for ushering in 4<sup>th</sup> generational writing.

## 2.4 Problematics in Postcolonial Caribbean Literature

Notwithstanding the import of postcolonial Caribbean literature marked by a myriad of themes pertinent to the lived experiences of colonised populations, cultural heritage renewal, and affirming of afro-centric narratives on national identity (Brydon & Tiffin, 1993), this literature was mired in several problematics indicative of the failure to perceive the complex psychological manifestations of coloniality and the influences of limited articulations of decolonisation and postcolonial thought.

Postcolonial Caribbean literary narratives that privileged identity (re)construction, cultural renewal, and nation-building seemed to have been influenced by essentialised and nativist notions of race. These postcolonial narratives, especially of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd writing generations discussed earlier, were perhaps indicative of the prevailing spirit and tenets of Negritude detailed by Aimé Césaire (2001a), Léon Damas (2006), Rabaka (2015), and Léopold Senghor (1966). Negritude was integral to an African response that aimed to free Africans from the “restrictions, inferiority, and subjectivity constituted by catalogues of deficits and series of lacks” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 130). Negritude appealed to a supposed internalised commonness as part of the process of Africans (re)claiming their humanness, asserting their cultural heritage, and forming solidarities and socio-political connections in the aftermath of devastating colonialism. Negritude centred Africa and allowed colonised Africans at home and in the diaspora to trace their cultural, psychic, and ontological lineage to the African continent. Carter and Torabully (2002) contend that while the centring of Africa was undoubtedly critical for asserting individual and collective ontological presence and self-affirmation, Negritude accorded insufficient attention to the diversity of experiences in the encounter with colonialism across the continent of Africa and in the diaspora. They contend that Africa and the African diaspora are not singular monolithic

places. Africa, like other colonised places, is culturally diverse. In referencing identity primarily to Africa, Negritude seems to have overlooked the complexities inherent to identity (re)formation in the Caribbean space which is culturally heterogeneous. Like postcolonial thought and the assumption of limited framings of decolonisation, Negritude did not deliberate on the ways in which hegemonic European discourses manufactured ideologies of sovereignty and political independence to mask the peripheral location of post-colonial states in a heterarchical world order that comprises of several hierarchical divisions of people on a global scale (Mignolo, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Wallerstein, 1995). Following on these analytical interventions by Carter and Torabully (2002), Wallerstein (1995), and others, I submit that postcolonial Caribbean literature seemed to have ignored how, across culturally heterogeneous Caribbean spaces, identity (re)formation is shaped by cultural syncretism: diversity and cross-fertilisation of values; histories; customs; philosophies; and cultural interactions between people of diverse descent - African, Indian, Chinese, European, Indigenous, and Arab, for example (Carter & Torabully, 2002). Postcolonial literature pays insufficient attention to, if not elides, the transformative experiences of the transatlantic slave trade; indentured labour and migration; racism; and colourism.

Postcolonial fiction also assumed a male gaze (King, 2002). Kutzinski (2001) notes critically that early twentieth-century Caribbean writers were mainly male and middle-class who shifted the focus from the colonial government to Caribbean males and their preoccupations. Women's lives and experiences during colonialism and post-colonialism<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Reiterating that for clarity, this thesis uses the term postcolonialism to refer to theory or thought, and post-colonialism to specifically refer to the period after the Independence of former colonies, or post formal colonial administrative rule.

were neglected in the postcolonial Caribbean plot lines and stories. Postcolonial narratives tended to portray the female self primarily through mother-daughter relationships and as beings subordinated to males. So, these narratives overlooked and obscured the political agency of women; women's capacities to make decisions; women's abilities to develop complex connections and contribute to change in the social, economic, political, and family realms; and their help in the shaping of the nascent nation state (Annesley, 2006). The early postcolonial Caribbean literature was silent about women's gendered encounters with institutional power at a time when colonial patriarchy, as "a social structure that is male-centred, male-identified, male-dominated, and which valorises qualities narrowly defined as masculine" (Becker, 1999, p. 22), persisted in regulating male-female relationships, privileged males, and undermined women's political agency. The few female fictional writers who wrote about women's experiences in that early post-colonial period tended to be dismissed and their stories devalued by postcolonial nationalist politics (Donnell, 2007).

Postcolonial Caribbean fictional literature was dominated by heterosexual love plots and the sex lives of male figures. Feminist and queer experiences indicative of diversity in gender, sexuality, and sexual orientation were absent. Women were depicted as objects for male sexual gratification and sex was established as heteronormative; that is heterosexuality was inscribed as natural and ideal (Donnell, 2007; Donnell & Welsh, 1996). The over-representation of heteronormativity was accompanied by a tendency to neglect the politics of difference and the associated complex, multifaceted, dynamic, and even dissensual features of identity including sexual orientation and sexual self-determination (Hall, 2020; Wynter, 2003).

---

Despite the creative interventions of postcolonial female and queer writers, contemporary Caribbean literature continues to struggle with inherited hegemonic narratives of Black inhumanity, inferiority, uneven development, as well as heteronormativity. Against the backdrop of the dominance of males and heteronormativity some shifts began to occur in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1970s female Caribbean writers, for example Merle Hodge (2013) in her work *Crick, Crack Monkey*, began to raise women's voices and de-link from the male-driven nationalist discourse (Donnell, 2007). The literature produced by female Caribbean migrant authors in the 1980s introduced a greater diversity of themes reflecting "multi-layered cultural identities in their works... challenging the notions of roots, origins, ethnic backgrounds, traditions, and the limits of language to re-define their Caribbeanness" (Ilmonen, 2012, p. 9). Queer and female writers such as Jamaica Kincaid (1996), Michelle Cliff (1990), and Shani Mootoo (1993) tackled complex issues of gender, sex, and race. While such shifts may not be dismissed, the influences of colonial processes that organised humanity according to hierarchies of race, gender, religion, and sexuality - and that produced problematic constructions of being and personhood, sexuality, and socio-economic disparities - persist in the postcolonial Caribbean literary canon (Reddock, 2013). This renders marginal the narratives dealing with economic exploitation, other-than Christian-centric spirituality, and queer and gay experiences.

Contemporary Caribbean writers, as part of the African diaspora of the Global South - referring to people and spaces in both the geographical North and South affected by inequality and immersed in resistance against such inequality (Mahler, 2017) - continue to encounter coloniality. For purposes of my argument here, following Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018), we may fathom coloniality through three inter-related configurations of empire: physical, commercial-military-non-territorial, and metaphysical. The physical empire was established by means of direct physical violence, colonial administration and occupations, exploitation of

the bodies and labour of the colonised, as well as the inferiorisation of colonised people. The commercial-militarisation-non-territorial and metaphysical empires endure after the downfall of the physical empire. Explained as neo-colonialism by Nkrumah (1965), the non-territorial empire is the protraction of economic imperialism on a world scale despite the trappings of political independence and sovereignty. The metaphysical empire (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986) altered the mental and cultural universe of the colonised.

The metaphysical empire, as part of the process of effecting cultural deracination of catastrophic proportions (Bulhan, 2004; Fanon, 2007, 2008), also manufactured Eurocentrism: the dominant system of knowledge principles devised, created, and entrenched by Europe (wa Thiong'o, 1986). All these interrelated concepts and terms shed light on the coloniality embedded in Caribbean literature and psyche that Africans, including those in the Caribbean diaspora and other peoples of the Global South, “breathe in on a daily basis” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, pp. xi, ix). Despite thematic and narrative shifts, Caribbean literature remains a site of messy resistance to coloniality, reflecting dynamic tensions between the persistent influences and reproduction of Eurocentrism, insurgent decolonial thought, and decolonising epistemic and social justice practices. And so, I elaborate on and substantiate this central claim through an analysis of select Jamaican fiction. To summarily tie all the ideas of this chapter together let me re-state that in this thesis decoloniality is presented as a way forward that builds on the achievements of postcolonial thought in both literature and psychology.

## Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework, Research Design, and Method

### 3.1 Introduction

Approaching literature as a site of decoloniality, I will now elaborate on the theoretical conceptual framework that underpins and animates my thesis and the associated reading, thinking, and writing of contemporary Anglophone Caribbean literature with the intention of adding to the decolonial psychological imaginary. Whereas social science research typically treats theory as separate to method, from a decolonial perspective ontology, epistemology, and methodology are closely, if not inextricably, intertwined. For this reason, this thesis will embed decoloniality into the very logic and presentation of this study by amalgamating the headings of theory and method, and by discussing them together in an imbricated way. It seems fitting and inescapable that a thesis purporting to be based on a decolonial ethos, be written up using a decolonial design and framework.

Decoloniality, understood as praxis, embodies reflection and action, and includes theories and methodologies of knowledge-making in the on-going defiance of slavery, racism, colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy, and hegemonic epistemologies. Decoloniality is in part defined by the numerous struggles for **epistemic freedom** across different geopolitical sites, unsettled and besieged by coloniality, that create expansive structural and epistemic alternatives for individual and collective lives to flourish (Maldonado-Torres, 2016; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). Decoloniality involves resisting colonial meanings of the human; and instead thinking, writing about, and building generative ways of arranging power relations and knowledge economies to overcome the multiple hierarchies of the modern/colonial/Western-centric, Christian-centric world systems (Grosfoguel, 2011; Maldonado-Torres, 2016; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

Decoloniality could be thought of as comprised of four dimensions: *the structural* (overturning the Coloniality of Power and establishing fair access to resources); *the epistemic* (establishing the right to think, theorise, interpret, and develop methodology unencumbered by Eurocentricity); *the personal* (as a psychological dynamic it is a deep consciousness of and resistance to colonial socialisation); and *the relational* (generative and affirming human interactions) (Kessi et al., 2020).

Throughout the thesis I refer to the subtleties and interconnections of each of these four dimensions and their relevance in an assemblage of inter-related claims and ideas drawn from what may at first appear to be disparate literatures and scholarship. This method is in accordance with my study's conceptual framework that rests on the practice (method) of Critical Relationality observed by Black feminist thinker, Carole Boyce Davies (2002).

*Critical relationality* is a syncretic process of building and applying theory using the cultural values and beliefs, or the discursive frames of intelligibility through which we see, make sense of, and interpret world structures (Boyce Davies, 2002). Critical relationality enables negotiations between a range of theoretical constructs and concepts and is perhaps akin to border crossing (another practice of decoloniality that I will discuss further into this thesis). It is a quintessential animation of consciousness that defies and displaces the singularising and homogenising imperial, neo-colonial gaze. Using Critical Relationality allows the study to engage with Black Atlantic, Black Feminist, Black Consciousness, Critical Afrocentric, Decolonial and Queer Thought, and a range of theories that are embedded within, or resonant with, the epistemologies and methodologies of the South (Boyce Davies, 2002, 2017; de Sousa Santos, 2007; Ilmonen, 2012; Wall, 1997).

I will employ the practice of Critical Relationality to draw on all these seminal ideas which, simultaneously, are **methods** of approach in my engagement with the decolonial as well as **theories** of knowledge-making which underpin my practices of reading, thinking, and



writing, as research scholar and creative. As a decolonial method, Critical Relationality provides a bridge between conventional literary analysis and psychological praxis so that literary texts such as fiction, poetry, or even art critique is incorporated into discussions of social science theory and psychology. An example of how this is done is seen in the next section where I incorporate Caribbean poetry and history into my conceptualisation of the thesis' major theory/method entitled '**The Caribbean Literary Seas**'.

Specifically, this study will employ: Intersectionality; Borderlands/Crossing; the inscriptions of Creolity/Indigeneity; Faithful Witnessing; and Linguistic and Conceptual Subversions as informing methods of literary analysis and psychological praxis. I use these theories and decolonial methods to scaffold a creative-critical-psychological intervention of imagination and reading in respect of the contemporary Caribbean novel. I refer to this method of critique - that joins together decolonial psychology and literary criticism - as '**Psycho-Literary Analysis**'.

As explained, theories and methods overlap, but for conceptual ease, next, I discuss how this study will operationalise these theories/methods by describing ideas individually. Descriptions will be grouped according to how they organically and logically build upon and supplement each other. I also describe how I envision them being operationalised in the reading and writing of decolonial literature and the conceptualisation of liberatory psychology.

### **3.2 The Caribbean Literary Seas: The Colonial Difference/Borderlands**

Articulating a decolonial epistemic shift in his 2019 Holberg Laureate acceptance lecture, Paul Gilroy used a thalassic metaphor to propose a 'lowly orientation' - in opposition to the rarified habits of 'high theory' - that he said operates optimally at the changing level where sea and land meet. Using this prestigious occasion, he disavowed provincialised

epistemology (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018) and epistemic privileging by asserting that “lowly thinking stimulates concern with planetarity<sup>4</sup> and can foster the worldly outlook that is required if anti-racism is to be more than merely a parochial concern” (p. 5). Drawing on Gilroy’s insights and metaphor, I firmly situate this study within a ‘Caribbeanised’ version of the decolonial theory/method of *The Colonial Difference/Borderlands* (Anzaldúa, 1987; Mignolo, 2013; see below) that I name and refer to throughout this section as: **The Caribbean Literary Seas** – a decolonising psycho-literary device and space for readers and writers to confront coloniality in Caribbean writing. I now first explain why I have chosen, like Gilroy, to use the sea as a framing metaphor. Only after this contextualisation will I fully describe the study’s concept of *The Caribbean Literary Seas*, in hopes that this will create a vivid and complex understanding of this theory/method.

In his speech Gilroy references the “grey vault” of the sea, a phrase taken from Derek Walcott’s (1948) haunting poem that speaks about the ocean as the graveyard of history and of slaves thrown overboard to a watery grave. The poem’s opening lines provide a timely and ironic backdrop to global Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in which slave trader statues were torn down and tossed into rivers and harbours because protestors rightly argue that statues are not merely monuments of history, but are symbols of adoration (Gregory, 2021). Taken together, Gilroy (2019), Walcott (1948), and the BLM protests in 2020 inspire this study to seek a timely and appropriate metaphorical framework. Using a pelagic metaphor to investigate the psychology **of** and **in** Caribbean literature that monumentalises the history of

---

<sup>4</sup> Planetarity, “referring to an undivided ‘natural’ space rather than a differentiated political space”, intentionally contests the idea of a globe with divided and separate communities (Spivak, 2003, p. 72).

enslavement and decolonial resistance seems an appropriate vehicle for expressing epistemic disobedience in this thesis. Walcott's (1948) poem sets a solemn tone and demonstrates the aptness of how this study's theoretical framing weds Caribbean creative writing, psychology, history, decoloniality, and The Sea.

*The Sea is History*

Where are your monuments, your battles, martyrs?

Where is your tribal memory? Sirs,

in that grey vault. The sea. The sea

has locked them up. The sea is History.

First, there was the heaving oil,

heavy as chaos;

then, like a light at the end of a tunnel,

the lantern of a caravel,

and that was Genesis.

Then there were the packed cries,

the shit, the moaning:

Exodus.

Bone soldered by coral to bone,

mosaics

mantled by the benediction of the shark's shadow... (Walcott, 1948)

The grisly image of our enslaved ancestors' fused "coral to bone" brings to mind the coral barrier reef encircling Jamaica, famous for protecting beach bathers from sharks. These protected aquamarine coves are often managed by capitalistic hotels in an exclusionary way

so as to attract tourists - the 21st century version of the EuroAmerican invaders portrayed in Nicole Dennis-Benn's (2016) novel *Here Comes The Sun*. The insight being elicited from her novel - which is the primary node of the psycho-literary analysis that speaks directly to the study's theoretical framework - is not the usual decolonial connection between the rise in tourism and the underdevelopment of Caribbean countries<sup>5</sup>. In focus here, is the relationship between the tourist (whose every whim is catered to and whose entire visit is curated down to the creation of Island caricatures and "enclosed desirable spaces along the shoreline") and the locals who are "aliens in we own land" (Kamugisha, 2019, pp. 57-58). In studying the primary text, *Here Comes the Sun*, I look at the creation of mythical luxurious sea spaces that ensure the continual return of the coloniser or "extraterritorial citizen" to the island, perhaps reminiscent of the historical absentee island plantation owners coming and going (Kamugisha, 2019, p. 58). The creation of this mythical space involves epistemic violence that configures and confers post-independent citizenship upon its permanent local residents whose bodies and dignity are offered up for the good of the nation as they pander to every consumptive whim of the tourist.

Furthermore, *Here Comes the Sun* contextualises a psychological notion of selective citizenship, with its antecedents in colonialism, because the story seems to imply that the Caribbean waves that welcome the colonising tourist can offer a restorative swell to island citizens if they can only access the coves - which according to Dennis-Benn they cannot. Citizenship/subjecthood is a theme that encompasses several psychological dynamics of the

---

<sup>5</sup> Underdevelopment instigated because Caribbean countries are forced to stabilise their economies by perpetually earning increasing amounts of foreign exchange to afford importing vast amounts of foreign manufactured foods and goods (Kamugisha, 2019).

pernicious evolution of colonialism to coloniality; from the transatlantic crossings of the enslaved through to migration of the formerly colonised back to the home of their former colonial masters. These psychological dynamics echo throughout Caribbean literature and are often studied by theorists and critics. For instance, a similar intricate historical link between the sea, capitalism, coloniser, and resilience was made by renowned Jamaican decolonial theorist, Sylvia Wynter, who tracked “sea-change” (Wynter, 1970, p. 18). According to Wynter, sea change refers to the creation of an indigenous metamorphosed citizen emerging from the turmoil of the middle passage; the creation of “new humans in new lands”; and their resilient response to the capitalist plantation system which is the precursor to the tourist industry (Kamugisha, 2019, p. 170).

In this thesis I pull all these thoughts together and suggest that the decolonial psychological reading and writing of selected Caribbean texts provides a symbolic rectifying access to Dennis-Benn’s privatised tourist coves in which Wynter’s ‘sea change’ can occur. I name that psycho-literary space of rectifying access and change - The Caribbean Literary Seas. It is a space that counters Dennis-Benn’s neo-coloniser coves. I coin this term, The Caribbean Literary Seas, therefore, not only as an apt metaphor but as a psycho-literary decolonial theory/method. This theory/method is informed by the decolonial ideas of Mignolo’s (2007) *Colonial Difference*, which is the same as Anzaldúa’s (1987) *Borderlands*. The *Colonial Difference* or *Borderlands*, in effect, are the psychological realm where the colonised meets subjugator and where the coloniality of power is enacted and perhaps defeated. It is where strategies, agency, and adaptations are used to resist othering and the social inequality caused by coloniality. In this thesis, it is my contention that occupying the *Colonial Difference/Borderland* in fiction - *The Caribbean Literary Seas* - carries the potential for readers and writers to use storytelling to find epistemic freedom and access to cognitive justice based on diverse and democratic ways of knowing or making sense of one’s

own existence (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). I will now elaborate on the conceptual influences and details of the Caribbean Literary Seas which, when identified and probed, become a psychological decolonising realm and methodology.

I pattern the Caribbean Literary Seas (symbolic psychological Borderlands found in Caribbean literature) off of Erasmus's (2017) representations of the Indian Ocean as - borderlands that trouble racialised and binary notions of the slave as African and the free person as European; borderlands in which to question clear and stable divisions between slave and free person; borderlands that reveal complex meanings of freedom, un-freedom, settler, diaspora, race, and agency; and borderlands where the identity of the actors in the making of modernity, anti-colonial struggles, and the limits of colonial power are questioned (Erasmus, 2017; Hofmeyr, 2007). Additionally, The Caribbean Literary Seas are also a conceptualisation of what Vázquez (2009) describes as the experience or consciousness of living on or within a border, not crossing over it, and not belonging psychologically or physically within hegemonic society. Thus, The Caribbean Literary Seas are an epistemological space of encounters, for characters, readers, researchers, and writers, where subaltern voices are heard, and Indigenous knowledges and recovered memories can be used to confront Western colonial psychology. Researching The Caribbean Literary Seas in Caribbean creative writing allows this study to focus on inclusion and discovering new categories and modes of interpretation that can produce decolonial psycho-literary activism. Precedent for using the concept of Borderlands as research praxis can be found in Maria Lugones' (2010) research. Lugones (2010) claimed that Borderlands guided her thoughts and methodology because to her it was a place where epistemology dwells, and where the restitution of subaltern knowledge responds, resists, adapts, adopts, negotiates, rejects, integrates or ignores coloniality in her pursuit of decolonial feminism.

Further support for this study's Caribbean Literary Seas concept/theory/method comes from Erasmus' (2017) writing that conceptualises the oceans as a philosophical, emergent, epistemic space where the hegemony of Western modernity can be challenged. Like the transatlantic crossings, Erasmus describes an Indian Ocean that is:

A domain of lived experience that is configured by interconnected histories; by the exchange and movement of people, things and ideas; and by the circulation of technologies, communities and institutions; it is a space that enables critical inquiry into normative ways of knowing. (Erasmus, 2017, p. 4)

In conceptualising a comparable metaphor and psycho-literary theoretical framework for The Caribbean Literary Seas, I synthesised these compatible ideas (Anzaldúa, 1987; Erasmus, 2017; Gilroy, 2019; Hofmeyr, 2007; Lugones, 2010; Mignolo, 2007; and Vázquez, 2009) to formulate The Caribbean Literary Seas as a researcher-author-activist created theory/methodology that can identify and promote emergent epistemic shifts in psychology, literature and of course hopefully...life.

The Caribbean Literary Seas functions as a decolonising space of solidarity for those studying, reading, and writing psycho-literature. **As a theory/methodology it is operationalised by writing and/or internalising psycho-literature that - intentionally shows the effects of coloniality and how it is perpetuated; dismantles internalised racism, colourism and colonial thinking; critiques capitalism especially by addressing power structures and inequity; centres the Indigenous experience as knowledge and knowledge making; portrays conscious and unconscious resistance to oppression that, although often steeped in coloniality itself, is effective; disrupts ontology and epistemology that perpetuates coloniality; shows how defiance of coloniality doesn't**

**have to be formalised or inspired by victimhood but is commonly just an act of living and survival; shows how the oppressed live joyfully and with love; connects lived experiences to social activism as radical love and affirms diversity; shows resistance as natural, relatable, and honouring of culture; fosters honesty in the telling of the stories of the oppressed even when, or especially when, this honesty is ‘distasteful’, crude, socially unpalatable, and vulgar; questions, counters, and recontextualises hegemonic realities; fosters belonging within one’s own community or a decolonial community forged through border crossings; helps resolve and find solutions for divisions, psychic fragmentation, and pain emanating from coloniality.**

Describing The Caribbean Literary Seas as a ‘kitchen sink’ decolonial methodology would not be unfair, nor, given the omnipresence of coloniality, would it be inappropriate. Yet as a method/theory it is quite simple - The Caribbean Literary Seas convey culturally Caribbean narratives that can heal the colonial wound either by being written or read. These narratives usually operate by shifting the focus of trauma as an individual experience to a collective one, encouraging the (re)construction of identity using community and lived experience instead of in relation to colonial narratives. The Caribbean Seas methodology can be summarised as the use of Caribbean narrative to heal the colonial wound.

An example of how The Caribbean Literary Seas are operationalised as a decolonial theory and method in storytelling can be seen in this thesis’ psycho-literary analysis (see Chapter 4) of *Here Comes The Sun* (Dennis-Benn, 2016). For while in her story, as in real life, Dennis-Benn’s local characters are unable to access the actual Caribbean seas invaded by tourists, she uses their stories of resistance to create restorative access for readers-cum-activists to figurative Caribbean Seas...The Caribbean Literary Seas; a created space where her readers (and myself as researcher) are guided through, and can learn from, the local



subaltern liberatory psychology, knowledge, and indigenous epistemology that her characters use to square off with coloniality.

In the primary texts examined in this study, Caribbean Literary Seas are constantly renewed and filled by metaphoric rivers of Indigenous psychologies and knowledges that eventually serve to enlarge and decolonise global psycho-literary oceans, if you will. In analysing texts I use the metaphor of these Indigenous tributaries renewing Caribbean Literary Seas as counter to what Erasmus (2017) conceptualises as the circulation of ideas across the Indian Ocean that produced the notion that colonialism was more about “a contestation of universalisms” (p. 5) than about local encounters with global forces. In other words, the indigenous psychologies and knowledges this thesis investigates in Caribbean literature re-focuses attention to the fact that healthy Global oceans require feeder tributaries - for replenishment - and not merely for circulation of ‘contested universalisms’. The Caribbean Literary Seas, as method and theory, inspired and expanded by Indigenous epistemic tributaries, symbolically debunks the soul-destroying myth that there is only one universal mode of knowing which is purely colonial or Euro-American (Grosfoguel, 2013; Mignolo, 2007). For, whereas tributaries eventually run into and enlarge the sea, the reverse is never true. Seas, no matter how powerful, do not run back up mountains to increase the volume of the source!

One example of an indigenous tributary that swells The Caribbean Literary Seas has its source in the mountain range setting of Kei Miller’s (2017) *Augustown*, where readers are exposed to Indigenous spirituality and wisdoms that locals use to resist coloniality. This is a point profoundly portrayed in *Augustown* in various scenes where characters stridently reject Western psychology, spirituality, and epistemology. Instead of colonial universalisms, *Augustown* depicts Indigenous psychology and knowledge tributaries flowing to, as Gilroy and Wynter theorise, the point of change where sea and land meet. This study rests on the

assumption that within The Caribbean Literary Seas decolonial epistemic shifts and disobedience are successfully created by author and reader activists. This assumption gives rise to the study's method of specifically searching for and analysing the psychological effect of authors creating Caribbean literary Sea Borderlands.

As is dramatically captured by Kei Miller, in his story's mountain setting, Creolisation/Indigenisation is one source tributary that fills The Caribbean Literary seas. Creolisation/Indigenisation is a decolonial move, outlined in the next section, that results in epistemic shifts and disobedience within The Caribbean Literary Seas. To appreciate this point, we can look to literary critic and novelist, Édouard Glissant (2008), for whom Caribbean Creolisation started with colonisation, but did not end with the extinction of the indigenous population<sup>6</sup>. It continued with the addition, but not, he insists, dilution, of African cultures introduced by slavery. Glissant points out that these cultures come together as an experience of cultural relations that entails clashes, harmonies, deformations, retreats, repudiations, and attractions (Glissant, 2008). He depicts Creolisation as an entangled rhizomatic network, a multifaceted newness, an innovative multiplicity, with extensions in all directions (Glissant, 2008). Glissant's view of Creolisation converges wonderfully with Rex Nettleford's understanding (as described in Hume, 2017) of Indigenisation (Caribbeanness) as an 'awesome process' of social evolution and interaction (Bilby, 1980). Whereas Western philosophy presents itself as universal and not influenced by race, Creolisation represents a struggle for personhood, a struggle which Nettleford refers to as '**Smadditizin**' (decolonial

---

<sup>6</sup> The region suffered a genocide of its autochthonous people and was re-populated, in large part, by colonisers and the enslaved.

self-actualisation; see section 3.2), in a world where personhood is habitually denied on pretexts of race as defined by the colonial hierarchy (Mills, 2010).

In other words, as will be discussed with more granularity next, for contemporary decolonial Caribbean writers and thinkers Creolisation/Indigenisation theory is a disruptor of the mythologising Western epistemology and colonial racial hierarchy that was embedded in postcolonial Caribbean literature. This study uses Creolisation/Indigenisation as a major conceptual backdrop against which all other decolonial theories and methodologies are discussed. Consequently, I will now define and problematise this concept.

### **3.3 Creolisation/Indigenisation**

Despite its monumental contribution to raising formerly ignored discussions and fleshing out ethical dilemmas within Caribbean studies, postcolonial methodology and theory have been criticised as tending to reproduce racial, cultural, lingual, and religious otherness that originated in colonialism (LaVine, 2010). Ilmonen (2012) lists some of the complaints against postcolonial theory as being elitist; blurring the particular, local everyday experience; and totalising (Western, academic) discourse with the constructions and deconstructions of identity while legitimising itself as neutrally critical discussion. These criticisms led Carole Boyce Davies, amongst others, to demand a decolonisation of postcolonial studies (Ilmonen, 2012). Unlike postcolonialism, Creolisation is aggressively challenging of white, male, Eurocentric identity formations inherent in hierarchical, racial, and social classification systems that are indicative of the colonality of power and being (Gutiérrez Rodríguez & Tate, 2015). Perceived in this way, Creolisation is an element of a decolonial imaginary helpful for the (methodology) reading, understanding, analysis, and writing of Caribbean literature that this study uses to tease out elements of a liberatory psychology. Creolisation has had a plethora of meanings across time. Therefore, the difficulty in defining Creolisation

obliges the writer to state the specific meanings of the word and to contextualise its usage (Allen, 1998). I shall now do so.

Enslaved Africans called their children, born in the new world, Creole, to distinguish them as 'lower' in status than Africans born in Africa who were valued and considered more honourable because of their birth in the Mother Country. In this context, Creole meant outsider (Allen, 1998; Dwivedi, 2015). This is ironic, given that self-identified Creole Blacks in the Caribbean saw themselves as superior to newly arrived Africans. Such paradoxes attest to the diffuse contrariety of the term Creole. The colonial English used the term Creole to refer to those of mixed heritage whereas, at that time, for people located in the Caribbean, the term had no central connotation of race because Whites or Blacks, with either European or African heritage, were considered to be Creole. In this case, the term referred to those indigenous to the Caribbean (meaning locally born. Also see footnote 6). From such a perspective, Creole meant native (Allen, 1998; Bolland, 1998).

Even when the term Creole was used to mean native, it took on a host of conflicting connotations. For example, there was the term to 'creolise', which meant to lounge around elegantly in the manner of a plantation owner. The term began to evolve to mean one who has an affinity with, and intimate knowledge of, a place, expressed as commitment to it through experience or attachment. In this sense Creolisation represented the turning away from the African Mother Country by developing a nationalistic, and eventually, anti-colonial stance (Allen, 1998). This definition is supported by Stephan Palmié's description of Creole as once meaning "Island born slave" but evolving to become associated with the middle-class

intelligentsia (Mimic Men<sup>7</sup>) seeking a leading role in integrated newly independent Caribbean societies (Palmié, 2006). In this context the term Creolisation conjures exclusionary behaviours that functioned in the interest of the newly minted, powerful, local elite. This version of Creolisation reproduced racial colonial classifications that generated inequality and entitlement for local elites. Aaron Kamugisha specifically terms this phenomenon the “poverty of creole nationalism”; where the racial ordering of colonialism was left unchallenged and intact after independence even while hypocritically providing an ideological basis for national “coherence” (Kamugisha, 2019, p. 42). Based on this nuanced perspective, Creolisation rhetoric became a tool to marginalise originators of local cultural forms (e.g., Rastafarians). Creolisation was weaponised to exclude them if they resisted the elite’s appropriation of the term that was really intended to suppress blackness whenever these cultural forms were used as emblematic of collective national identity (Palmié, 2006). One of the problems of Creolisation then became the risk of its generating the fatal combination of folklorisation, exoticisation, and commodification of Caribbean culture (Palmie, 2006). Even where the term was famously inaugurated as a Caribbean cultural theory and described in complex and layered specificity by Kamau Brathwaite’s (1968) book *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820*, it was not able to fully shake off the criticism that it re-inscribed racism (Kamugisha, 2019).

### ***3.3.1 Creolisation as Indigenous ways of Thinking***

---

<sup>7</sup> A term, taken from V.S. Naipaul’s (1967) book of the same name, which referred to the formerly colonised, who thinking themselves inferior to the British, did their best to mimic their ways, thoughts, habits and systems.

Sylvia Wynter (1970), examined difficulties and constraints of the term Creolisation, outlining as a problematic the fact that it represented a false assimilation - where the dominated adopted elements of the dominant group or culture in order to obtain status or prestige. She preferred the use of the word **'Indigenisation'** to Creolisation, and used as an example of the Indigenous, the intrepid Jamaican maroon<sup>8</sup> who resisted dominant culture and survived and thrived by virtue of being indigenous. Allen (1998) concurs with a definition that equates being Creole to being Indigenous and expands on Wynter's definition by viewing the rejection of Western civilisation as a hallmark of Indigenisation. For example, Allen (1998) views Jamaican Rastafarianism and Haitian Vodoo as modes of Indigenous spirituality and culture that gave rise to resistance to cultural imperialism. It is necessary to specify here that this thesis is in concert with both Wynter and Allen, using the term Creolisation just as they do Indigenisation, sometimes interchanging the two. The intention behind recognising and using both terms interchangeably is twofold. One reason is to include and pay homage to the original, autochthonous natives of the Caribbean... which Wynter's definition can be criticised for ignoring or outright assuming an absence of (Jackson, 2012). The second reason is to explore Creolisation as a decolonial attitude brought to bear in Caribbean psycho-literary analysis in order to forcefully challenge race classification and the continued significance of its harmful effects *without* erasing the specificities and nuances of the concept's historical emergence. Bearing in mind, and carefully avoiding, all the stated pitfalls and grave limitations of the possible misuses of Creolisation as a term and theory, this

---

<sup>8</sup> Africans who escaped slavery and established free communities in the mountainous Jamaican interior. Legendary warriors with a complex reputation for being both freedom fighters and bounty hunters of enslaved runaways.

study turns to the work of Zimitri Erasmus who usefully and profoundly defines Creolisation as:

Processes by which ways of living and forms of community – for the most part (but not only) born of struggles against violent power – are forged to survive and to remake histories. These histories are intertwined in ways that do not obliterate social differences and they suggest several possibilities including complicity and resistance (not necessarily separate acts); domination and reciprocity; and various forms of intimacy and of distance. This diasporic history gestures towards fragments of multiple, mostly unknown elsewhere: historic, geographic, religious, cultural and epistemic elsewhere. (Erasmus, 2017, p. 3)

Defined in this way, Creolisation involves the entanglements of politics, culture, ideology, practices and histories of conquest, dislocation, and rupture that account for processes, behaviours, psychology, and epistemology that necessitate invention. According to Erasmus (2017) these processes turn contradiction, ambiguity, and doubt into a method by which identifications are continuously transformed and extended into new possibilities with no intention to universalise any possibility. I contend that this considered definition and operationalisation of Creolisation provides a psycho-literary methodological tool, a lens, extremely suitable to analyse and understand psychological, sociopolitical, economic, and identity issues peculiar to the Caribbean.

Although the concept of Creolisation is born of struggles on the part of subaltern indigenous communities in the Caribbean and elsewhere, its well-respected critics, such as Kamugisha (2019), fear that Creolisation re-inscribes antiblack racism in the Caribbean through leaving intact the bourgeoisie subjectivity that recreates racialised class oppression and valorises cultural mixing in a way that produces racist discourse. The response of this

thesis to this legitimate criticism is not to disavow the continued loathsome racism and colourism in the Caribbean, but to emphasise the value of Creolisation as a concept with which to think about transdisciplinary, transcultural, transethnic knowledge production (Erasmus, 2017). To achieve this, it is vital that this study incorporates a keen awareness of how culture is constitutive of class - which according to Kamugisha goes a long way to overcoming the outlined problematics of Creolisation - thereby rehabilitating the concept of Creolisation as an invaluable tool (Kamugisha, 2019). Having clarified in detail the history and philosophy of Creolisation, I hope it is easier to understand how and why this study uses Creolisation in the psycho-literary analysis of Caribbean Literature. From a methodological perspective, Creolisation can be seen as a form of critical praxis that is an unfolding process of action and reflection rather than a fixed set of procedures.

### ***3.3.2 Creolisation as Critical Praxis***

Creolisation as critical praxis - because of its roots in resistance, interdependent communities, and unequal power dynamics - offers other ways of coming to know, ways of knowing otherwise, and of making meaning out of history and the present that supplements and even supplants hegemonic knowledge systems (Erasmus, 2017). This makes Creolisation a living analytical concept, a theory 'on the go' - a theory in motion that transforms identifications congealed in contexts of dominance, loosening up new possibilities of seeing self and other (Erasmus, 2017). In this thesis, embracing Creolisation as praxis means identifying and rejecting the immorality and oppressive strictures of colonial race categories in favour of Indigenous psychologies, knowledges, and epistemology when reading the primary texts for decolonial insurgency. I now identify Caribbean decolonial scholars/ship that speak to how this thesis incorporates Creolisation as praxis.

On this note, according to Jamaican author and activist Rex Nettleford, Ras Tafari is an Indigenous culture that is an anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist force



in the matrix of social change (Phillips, 2011). By revering these values and “refusing the destructiveness of most Western civilization beliefs and practices” (Morris, 2005, p. v) rasta subalterns necessarily evolved outside of the Jamaican heteronormative colonial system, while disturbingly retaining its patriarchal and homophobic values. In considering Ras Tafari as Indigenous knowledge, Nettleford turned towards an intellectual engagement with these people considered social pariahs of Jamaican and Caribbean society at the time. He believed that Rastafarians growing locks, creating an Indigenised Creole lexicon, and having pride in their regal African ancestors were all modalities of protest and self-definition (Hume, 2017). Nettleford viewed Rastafarianism as the creative attempt of an Indigenous people to reform their own institutions, to meet new societal demands and to withstand new pressures. In short he identified this Afro-Creolised Indigeneity as a decolonial move.

Nettleford, like Allen (1998), adopts an interchangeable use of the term Creole with Indigenous. Taking my cue from these thinkers, and for reasons listed earlier, I adopt the interchangeable definition of Creolisation and Indigeneity precisely because both these concepts are situated within the array of decolonial theories that argue for resistance, active agency, and particularity. So, **Creolisation**, or **Indigenous thinking**, is used in this study to refer to any example of transformative energy within Caribbean Literature that disrupts and de-centers Western EuroAmerican psychology by offering alternative, localised knowledge systems - including, of course, localised language and spirituality (e.g., Patwah, Rastafarianism, Obeah). In the analysis section of this study my method is to pay pointed attention to, and state how, Nettleford’s views about Rastafarianism and Indigenisation are brought to life as critical praxis in the plot lines and characters of the primary texts. The intention is to reveal potential examples of modes of liberatory psychology. It is also helpful at this point to formally state what should already have been made clear, that in this study Creole as theory refers to the psychology, culture, knowledge, and language of the Caribbean.

These elements while discussed separately as nouns, taken together are also used here as adjective, verb, and adverb to describe the theory and methodology of this thesis.

### ***3.3.3 Creolisation as Linguistic, Conceptual, and Aesthetic Subversion: Voice of the Subaltern***

Nettleford, whose scholarship developed on the periphery of the Western academy, declared Creolisation to be a dynamic process of identity formation in which “race, identity and protest were a trinity that closely interact within the social evolution of contemporary Jamaica” (Nettleford, 1970, p. 10). He saw Indigenous identity as a reckoning with colonialism and the challenge of self-governance. He also thought that Caribbean cultural identity was constructed from lived experience that, if cohesive, could promote a regional identity and thus become a prime vehicle for economic development<sup>9</sup>. Most significantly, and in direct response to critics of Creolisation as antiblack, Nettleford thought it important to celebrate African heritage as inherent in the Caribbean Indigenous. His writings referred to ‘Afro-creolisation’<sup>10</sup> as a sacred, secular, cultural identity revering of African heritage, which

---

<sup>9</sup> Between 1958 and 1962 several Caribbean countries formed what was known as The West Indies Federation. This was a failed attempt to create a single unitary state, independent of Britain, with ambitions of bolstering financial and geopolitical power in the region. The idea behind this formation was that there was developmental and economic power to be gained from regional unity.

<sup>10</sup> Afro-creolisation is not to be confused with Afro-creole nationalism, which originating in 1926, was a Black middle-class movement ideologically in favour of national coherence that largely left unchallenged colonial notions of a ‘natural’ racial hierarchy (Kamugisha, 2019).

would destabilise Eurocentric conceptualisations of art and national patrimony. An example of his translating Afro-creolity into a radical Caribbean aesthetic praxis is seen in the way he popularised folk music traditions, including the Jamaican Indigenous practices of Kumina (an ancestral veneration religion) and Pocomania (an Afro-Christian syncretic religious expression) (Hume, 2017). For Nettleford “aesthetics found in the indigenous rituals and dances of rural Jamaica were visibly asserted, reformulated, and reinterpreted by performers and audiences alike” (Hume, 2017, p. 3). He catapulted these secretive cultural expressions into venerated national icons of ingenuity and survival. By relating Nettleford’s ideas to, or finding parallels between, his ideas and the stories and characters of the primary texts, I suggest that the decolonising effects of Indigeneity in Caribbean literature (also popularised by Nettleford through performance and audience) can be available for readers and writers who may internalise his psychology of Smadditizin Indigeneity.

Using the vantage point of his research, which was conducted outside of traditional Western methodologies, Nettleford (2005) championed the benefits that marginalisation from the pedigreed realm of Academia could bring to academic outsiders seeking far-reaching impactful epistemology. This thinking is not without precedent, as it is exhorted by preeminent colonial critic Ashis Nandy who, among others, insists that the West has not only produced colonialism, but informs interpretations of it, controls dissent to it, and through colonising the mind... created apologists of colonialism within academia (Nandy, 1983). Kamugisha (2019) reads as though in agreement with this epistemic disobedience, asserting that the reason that Caribbean academic enquiry has been gradual is because its chief theorists (including psychologists and literary critics) are more committed to radical social change than the type of scholarly manuscripts that would be recognised by the Western academy. Arguing in concert with Nandy, he stresses that the profound epistemological decolonisation inherent in Caribbean scholarship is antithetical to Western academic

recognition. The conferring of Western recognition on Caribbean scholarship is often absent because the intense multidisciplinary Caribbean approach to expression defies any easy categorisation and requires intellectual inventiveness for a sincere appreciation of its value. This is an opinion that is reflected in Nettleford (2005) where he declares that Caribbean researchers should not be stuck in the received/inherited epistemology and methodology that has been tightly controlled within the British academic system of individualised faculties and protected by arrogant Americanised “God-is-on-my-side certainty” (p. vi). Instead, he advocated searching the rugged, varied, and complex Caribbean ‘landscapes’ for serviceable ontology and cosmology based in local history and contemporary realities - even if this would mean using “bulldozers, pickaxes, hoes, fingernails, and bare hands!” (p. vi). In short, one should not be discouraged by the fact that the ‘Caribbeanness’ of decolonised research belies and defies scholarly distinction within a Eurocentric academic framework (Kamugisha, 2019; Nandy, 1983; Nettleford, 2005). Fully aware of (and pleased with) the irony of advocating epistemic disobedience within a PhD thesis about decolonial psychology, I submit that reading and writing Caribbean literature with a Creolised decolonial sensibility provides opportunities for exploring the interdisciplinary, inventive, non-conformist (to the Western Academy) knowledge, and psychology which Nettleford, Nandy and Kamugisha advocate. I return to this dilemma in Chapter 8 in order to fulfil my commitment to presenting my reflexive thoughts as a part of the methodology of this study.

Notably, Rex Nettleford dreamt of Indigenous language as a potentially powerful antidote to the imperialism housed in the Western Academy. He famously asked, “Why can’t the Jamaican child grow to feel free to use any language appropriate to his needs?” (Wagar, 1981, pp. 160-161). Pressing home the significance of Caribbean Indigenous language, celebrated Caribbean linguist Maureen Warner-Lewis notes that “the reliance on International English is a profound index of the colonial mental residue in the knowledge base, affect and

cultural medium of the region's creative writers and their indigenous audience" (Warner-Lewis, 2003 p. 25). She elaborates by observing that Caribbean creative writers increasingly gained self-awareness and national confidence in proportion to the extent that they were able to incorporate diverse and authentic vernacular into their writing. Warner-Lewis' critical observation about language use and the accompanying psychological benefits are important phenomena that this study pays special attention to as a method of analysing creative writing from which liberatory psychological praxis can be elicited.

Indigenous language usage was part and parcel of Nettleford's possession of a keen appreciation of "the dynamic process of creolisation witnessed in diverse religious practices, eclectic music traditions and the resistant speech patterns that he construed as revealing of the tenacity of the Afro-creolised population of the Caribbean" (Hume, 2017, p. 1). So strongly did Nettleford believe in the tenacity of the Caribbean population, that he perceived of them as having a voice within, which specifically never left the Caribbean writer. It is this inner voice/being that I see as an inspiration for the concept of 'The Jamaican Voice' that I detail as a particularly effective decolonial strategy in section 4.2. For Nettleford, commitment to the national vernacular culture was an epistemic disobedience used in pursuit of the decolonisation of the Caribbean spirit, psychology, and imagination. He had the profound conviction that this required artists and writers to work in their native tongue and to use Indigenous epistemologies to examine cultural phenomena and processes that are the lived reality of Caribbean citizens (Hume, 2017).

Nettleford's provocative question and his thoughts are reminiscent of another decolonial scholar, bell hooks, who argues that it is a travesty for publishers to edit street language into Standard English for white audiences (Chua & hooks, 1994). hooks reflects on the decoloniality of French feminist writing, unfettered by standard English rules, asking "wouldn't it be nice if I could write a book like this?" (Chua & hooks, 1994, p. 17). For

hooks, audience is crucial because writing is a form of activism, and by her logic, being eloquent about decolonisation is rendered irrelevant if only the privileged are reading the theories and stories. Valuing narrative as a teaching tool, hooks advocates that using vernacular and personalised, familiar experiences in writing makes an impact on lives outside of the academy. These techniques, says hooks, create a mutuality between reader and writer that bridges theory and practice by giving a voice to the subaltern (Chua & hooks, 1994; Middleton, 1994). For hooks, language is a place of struggle (and as this thesis has tried to show so far, a place or function of psychology) and so words are in fact action and resistance that defy domination and boundaries (Olson, 1994). Like Nettleford, hooks is passionate about seeing beauty and artistry in the everyday life of the poor and subaltern, connecting critical resistance, agency, and empowerment of the oppressed to aesthetics (Kalmanson, 2012). I interpret their thoughts as a classic description of the resistance and psychological border crossings of the primary texts' authors, characters, and readers, which take place within the Borderlands of The Caribbean literary Seas. As a part of my methodology, I will conduct psycho-literary analysis to delineate clear instances of all these scholar's decolonial ideas - especially regarding the aesthetics of language and its connection to audience - for further research into, and potential inclusion in, a liberatory Psychological imaginary.

Both Nettleford's and hooks's theories on the decolonising potential of Indigenous language use reflect Glissant's (1996) theory of 'Poetics of relation'. In his theory - that this study interprets as a useful tool for directly integrating Creolisation with the theory of The Caribbean Literary Seas - Caribbean islands and the sea have a metaphorical reach back through geography and time. Glissant (1996) creates an 'archipelagan' viewpoint where Creole is language that represents and contains the history of Indigenous peoples, European colonists, and African slaves. It is as though the shared, non-systematic, changeful, and open-to-the-unexpected knowledge to which Glissant refers is fittingly symbolised by the cluster of

islands that popped up throughout the Caribbean seas in a hodgepodge manner, but whose proximity to one another hint that they are visible manifestations of some shared submerged landscape. According to Glissant, Creole must resist universalisation, for like the Caribbean islands of its origins, this language is set within the restless movement of the sea, and encounters, innovation, unpredictability, and epistemic shifts (Glissant, 2008). Says Glissant, from this standpoint, one can look backward in time and outward toward the sea to relate or make connections to a complex, interwoven past that augers potential for a future of creativity and newness. Glissant's Creolisation theories are a perfect fit for the framing of *The Caribbean Literary Seas* as a site of decolonial exploration and knowledge production; their appropriateness can inspire psychologists and activists to generate equally bespoke theoretical frameworks and methodologies for future studies.

In this study, creole expression is a subversive language used not merely for communication, but for resistance to (and reconfiguring of) those oppressive elements of the dominant culture that participated in its historical creation. This echoes the sentiment Dabhoiwala (2020) expresses when he says:

Just as the British Empire was an oral creation, sustained through spoken as well as written and printed words, so too (and to a much greater degree) were the spiritual, legal, and political cultures into which most West Indian slaves had been born, and that they adapted in their Caribbean purgatory. For all these reasons, slaveowners obsessed over slave talk. They could never control it, yet feared its power to bind and inspire—for, as everyone knew, oaths, whispers, and secret conversations bred conspiracy and revolt. (Dabhoiwala, 2020, p. 7)

In channelling all these ideas, this study seeks to highlight Caribbean writing that uses Indigenous language and writing that speaks about Caribbeanness as an inclusive Creolisation of psychology attained through the beauty of Indigeneity in all its forms and not merely as a mark of nationalism. Accordingly, one methodology of this thesis is to read primary texts searching for linguistic heterogeneity (texts not only centring standard English) that mirrors and enacts psychosocial cultural difference, political democratisation, and in some instances, valorisation of subaltern knowledges and wisdoms. In this study's psycho-literary analysis Nettleford's, Glissant's, and hooks' theories about the radical aestheticism and subversive use of Indigenous/creole language are called upon to provide depth and substance to understanding local idiom and language use in Caribbean fiction (as written by authors and spoken by characters).

Incorporating the thoughts and methods of these theorists into this thesis enables a pragmatic turn away from a traditional Western-centred language, ontic, and epistemological framework. I take the view that a nuanced, situational, and positional understanding of Creolity and Creole language in contemporary anglophone Caribbean writing will engender the activism and social justice action intrinsic to creating a decolonial psychological/ literary imaginary. In practice this means recognising the significance of using Creole language as opposed to exclusively using Standard English. It means thinking about all the ways this tension between language choice and Western psychology can play out, in not just the plot lines, but in the politics of the production and distribution of Caribbean literature that can potentially result in a popularised decolonised psychology. And so, I look at this next.

### ***3.3.4. The Impact of Creole in the Decolonisation of the Teaching, Production, and Critique of Literature***

The 19th century Caribbean primary classroom was a diluted version of the English working-class education where Creole was considered broken English to be corrected at



school (Sindoni, 2010). The Bible was used a reader to teach children language in pre- and post- emancipation, followed by two other very influential teaching texts, the Royal Reader and assorted Irish Readers (Tiffin, 2001). The history of literary education in the Caribbean was one of persistent Anglo-control and Anglo-orientation, with locals believing at first that literature was something produced by the British, then eventually, that local literary culture was colonised by Western capital and pop genres. Newspapers were also influential in early literary production but they were enmeshed with imperial and colonial dialect and so were not a source of creole writings. Journals<sup>11</sup> eventually sped up the critical process of establishing Caribbean literary traditions by encouraging local writing, albeit predominantly male. Only in the eighties were exclusively Caribbean oriented texts developed and branches of multinational publishing houses opened in the Caribbean with increasingly localised content to cater to local readership (Tiffin, 2001). Knowing this background is significant to understanding how colonial education and religion was and is an enforcer of The Christian Civilising Mission (discussed in detail within the analysis section as a major contributor to coloniality). This study's primary texts are extensively analysed bearing this historical background in mind so that the coloniality of literature and education can be discussed as major sources of (de)coloniality that readers and authors can mull over as having affected their own lives and psychology. Characters in the novels who are afflicted by the coloniality of knowledge via colonial education and The Christian Civilising Mission via the church,

---

<sup>11</sup> Examples/names of some early influential Anglophone Caribbean academic journals and magazines were: The Beacon (1931-1933); The Bim (1942); Focus (1943); Kyk-over-all (1945-1961); Abeng (1969); Savacou (1970-1980); The Journal of West Indian Literature (1986-2016).

who then undergo personal psychological decoloniality, are extensively discussed in the analysis chapter. This psycho-literary analysis is performed specifically in keeping with the thesis' stated aim of offering or inspiring liberatory psychological moves.

The Caribbean writer's concept of the audience changed markedly since the time of British supremacy. During the 1980s Caribbean literature, distinguished by Creolised language and sensibility, became more widely recognised around the world, climaxing in the acclaim of Saint Lucian author, Derek Walcott's, acceptance of the Nobel Prize in 1992 (Ilmonen, 2012). Such recognition was a prime representation of the epistemic shift created by Indigenous feeder tributaries flooding into and swelling The Caribbean Literary Seas, which in turn expanded global seas of knowledge. With this prestigious award, Indigenous language and knowledge replenished global oceans and debunked the universalism of Euro-American epistemology. The exploration and celebration of this type of epistemic shift is at the very heart of the decolonial aims of this thesis and creates a path to adding to liberatory psychology and decolonial literary archives.

Decolonial scholars (Nettleford et al.) surmise that the Creolisation of language has produced an epistemic shift in Caribbean literature. This is a major accomplishment given that "English was an important agent of civilization... (and that) Colonial education in the English Caribbean was designed for, and continued to be promulgated in the service of, colonialist control... (and) stressed the universal/imperial at the expense of the local" (Tiffin, 2001, p. 44). For a long time, regional dialects were neglected and disclaimed, but debates around the value of Creolisation in Caribbean literature began to change the value and purpose of local dialects and the literature itself. Creolisation, as ideology and praxis, has facilitated a move away from the once standard, highly prestigious English of the colonisers, towards the flourishing of local dialects (Creole) in Caribbean stories. Author C.L.R. James (2013) notes that the Creole adaptations were necessary to provide for complex, insurgent

language needs that were not met by colonial English. Tellingly, such a shift has had a profound effect on how identity, and thus, psychology, is imagined and constructed by a new generation of Caribbean writers who were able to gather up scattered pieces of history and cobble them together as novel, Creolised, sensibility that they proudly identified as resilience. This study maps out how the primary texts use creolisation of language subversively, paying particular attention to how the voice (Patwah as ontological being – referred to in this study as *The Jamaican Voice*) and thoughts of the subaltern produce a psychology that is liberated and liberating.

### ***3.3.5. Language as Aesthetic Subversion***

Language as signification, aesthetic expression, and cultural and knowledge production is seminal to the explication of border crossings (concept discussed in more detail later in this section) and so it may be productive to consider linguistic subversions as a crucial practice of epistemic decolonising work in psycho-literary analysis. Coloniality weaponises language. In response, linguistic subversions can be used to expose the disingenuous tendencies of hegemonic literary styles, which in the protection of colonial sensibilities and under the guise of creativity, adopts sanitised language forms to conceal the psychological harshness and cruelty of racism and other forms of hatred. Racist, gendered, classed, and other forms of discriminatory language are deeply hurtful and obnoxious, yet are naturalised in hegemonic and psychological discourse. In defiance and rejection of this, using disturbing forms of writing and vulgarity as literary devices that are inspired by critical feminist and liberatory thought (see Moore, 2020) may be innovated as forms of decolonial fecundity to disrupt middle-class colonising codes of aesthetics by puncturing hyper-respectability (Cooper, 1995). I now provide an example and explanation of how aesthetic subversion works in the arts in general and then connect this decolonial subversive methodology to

language at the end of this section. This example makes clear the methodology that I use in my analysis and creative writing.

Disturbing forms of writing (and other modes of decolonially fecund artistic expression) push back against orthodox aestheticism through their connection to epistemic disobedience and critically relational work. To illustrate this I reference author Zadie Smith (2020) who when writing about artist Kara Walker's exhibition in the London Tate Modern (2019), entitled "What I want history to do to me", witnesses the artwork as "unsettling and unsettled, existing in a gray zone between artist's statement, perverse confession, and ambivalent desire... the eye finds no comfortable place to rest in the image...seeking resolution, desiring a satisfying end to a story so strikingly begun... (and) in unresolved motion, referring upward to the image, which only then refers us back down to the words, ("what I want history to do to me") in endless, discomfiting cycle" (p. 1).

The artwork contains jarring images and so has, as may be expected, provoked varying epistemic engagements by different audiences. Smith (2020) explains that Walker's portrayal of a Black woman's anatomy, including her buttocks and bare breasts, seems to be interpreted epistemically by African Americans as a grotesque eroticisation of Black women by White women, and as an offensive "Mammy" figure<sup>12</sup> (Smith, 2020, p. 1). In contrast, says Smith, Caribbean people appear to witness the image from a different epistemic and

---

<sup>12</sup> A 'mammy' is a deeply offensive fictional figure depicted as a large, dark-skinned, motherly, enslaved woman who cared for the children and the domestic needs of a white household. This hurtful, racist, and grotesquely inaccurate stereotype of African American women originated from the history of the Southern U.S.

political location: they interpret the image as a depiction of the mythologised leader Nanny of the Maroons. Here is a wonderful example of the importance of epistemic and social location; as well as of the globalised knowledge, wisdom, and sensibility that decolonial scholarship (and this thesis) declares as critical to de-centring Western psychology and epistemology.

Noting the varied reactions to the exhibition, and perhaps as part of the work of decolonising orthodox practices of aestheticism, Smith (2020) raises a range of questions:

What might I want history to do to me? What is the correct artistic response to history like that? Which aspects should be obscured or tidied away or carefully contextualized to protect the viewer's sensibility? In what relation do we stand to our ancestors if we insist, we cannot now even stand to hear or see what they themselves had no choice but to live through? Is not the least we owe the sufferings of the past a full and frank accounting of them? The word "salacious" withers before the historical truth. Salacious: having or conveying undue or inappropriate interest in sexual matters. What is the appropriate level of interest in the interrelation of sex and violence in our history? (Smith, 2020, p. 4)

Such questions may be considered as a decolonising intervention on 'rethinking thinking' about the aesthetics of art and language that can more broadly be transferred to understanding and researching the psychology **in** and **of** literature. Smith (2020) observes that even though Walker is criticised for "an unnecessary or inappropriate cultivation of the grotesque, of a prurient interest ('salaciousness'), in fact, Walker's aestheticising methodology keeps our gaze fixed and provokes emotional turmoil and thereby resists any denials and obfuscation of the odious cruelty of enslavement.

Through this form of art and literary expression, Walker does not just reclaim but “eroticizes, aestheticizes, fetishizes, and dramatizes” (Smith, 2020, p. 3). She pushes the boundaries of aestheticism and foregrounds the labour that artists and writers as creative analysts might engage in by being strong enough to withstand judgement/projection while, in fact, projecting ideas back to people in a way which forces expanded and new thinking. Walker herself, perceiving that her critics assume that “if the work is reprehensible, that work is also me, coming from a reprehensible part of me”, seems to entreat writers and artists to consider how to make art without shame, being cowed, or terrified by the opinion of others (Smith, 2020, p. 6). And so, in refusing to be judged as a “shameless Black woman” with a perverse imagination, just because she depicts the noxiousness of history in raw form, Walker also concludes that whereas “a white thing is simply what a white person does”, blackness is a test that one passes or fails (Smith, 2020, p. 3). In response, Walker re-directs the hermeneutics of shame to mean “the shame of being multiple” and not a singular “black thing” and declares through her work that “blackness is so many things”; it is an inclusive identity that stands up against the judgements that hold her as the wrong kind of artist/Black woman/person, exhausted by the judger’s endless projections upon her (Smith, 2020, pp. 6-7).

In this way Walker’s work is a beacon of epistemic decoloniality, providing guidance on the potential of aesthetic subversion within Caribbean Literature and decolonial psychology. Walker and Smith seem to challenge the commonly held idea that decolonial creative work has to always fall into the realm of acceptability or comfort for those with impressive activist credentials. Based on Cooper (1995) and Moore (2020), I assert that activism and the reading and writing of literature that accurately recreates coloniality is not, nor should it be, a comfortable experience for the reader. If jarring, shocking, crude, and even hurtful language and imagery can better help readers to really see and empathise with those

who experience the pain of colonialism, then its usage is fair game - including in this thesis. This carries immensely influential learnings for my and other researchers' consideration when generating decolonised psychological interventions and theory.

In this study, aesthetics in epistemic decolonising work is comprehended à la Smith's astute observations of Walker's controversial exhibition, as the:

Self-defined job of gathering all the ruins... of history - everything abject and beautiful, oppressive and freeing, scatological and sexual, holy and unholy - without attempting perfect alignment, without needing to be seen as good... so as to stand up for the subconscious, unsaid and unsayable, for the historically and personally indigestible, for the unprettified, for the autonomy of an imagination that cannot escape history, and - more than anything else - for black freedom of expression itself.  
(Smith, 2020, p. 7)

Cooper (1995), Moore (2020), Smith (2020) carry striking messages for the decoloniality of language and aesthetics that provide a framework for the psycho-literary methods of analysing novels in this thesis, and for my writing style that produced the fictional component of this thesis. In my analysis I adopt the idea that language is disruptive and undermining of colonial sensibilities, especially when it carries unsettling and downright disturbing forms. This is a methodology that author activists can use to capture the reader's attention and shock them into asking the kinds of questions that Smith (2020) and Moore (2020) say that aesthetics should elicit from us. In this case the psychological effects of this form of writing could prove probative and cathartic for a reader blocked (from accessing deeper introspection or insights) by what Cooper (1995) deemed a colonially invoked hyper-respectability.

### 3.3.6. *Creole language as Aesthetic Subversion*

The Walker artistic expressions that Smith (2020) writes about demonstrates that words are actions and practices of resistance that defy domination and boundaries and are intertwined with the processes of decolonising literary imaginations (Kalmanson, 2012; Nettleford, 1993a; Olson, 1994). During the 1980s Caribbean literature distinguished by Creolised language and sensibilities presaged an epistemic shift that de-centred the standardised ‘prestigious’ English of the colonisers. Author C.L.R. James explained this shift was an adaptation to “our own requirements” necessary to give “revolutionary range and peculiar depth which colonial English did not have” (as quoted in Kamugisha, 2019, p. 128). This shift influenced how a new generation of Caribbean writers imagined and constructed identities and thought about audience. Caribbean writers “adopted a more dynamic view of selfhood, one in which the fragmentation inherited from history is no longer a failure” but a “source of creolised sensibility” (Ledent, 2000, p. 77). Donnell (2015), suggests that twentieth century writing inspired by Creolised sensibility may be the means by which African culture crossed the Atlantic, survived, and creatively adapted to its new environment in a rich, rewarding and new form of ‘Caribbeanness’ (Donnell, 2015). I believe, and attempt to demonstrate in the analysis of stories, that what these theorists found to be true of the unfolding of Creolity in Caribbean Literature may hold true and is transferable to a liberatory psychology imaginary.

Drawing on the work of Dabhoiwala (2020) and Glissant (1996, 2008) discussed earlier in this section, we may comprehend Creole (and its aesthetic) as a subversive embodiment of decolonising work that is more than a language of communication; it exemplifies syncretic modes of creative cultural production as well as rebelliousness and collective resistance and an alternative to (or the overturning of) the oppressive elements of the dominant culture. The effects of the use of Creole in the reading and writing of Caribbean



Literature obviously present examples of how Creolity as a theory and praxis can model subversiveness for readers; but it also begs the question of whether the decolonising effects of the use of Creole would remain true in a psychological therapeutic setting and as a language of instruction for Caribbean students of Liberatory Psychology.

### ***3.3.7. Creolisation as Radical Interdisciplinary Caribbean philosophy: Disruptor and Liberatory Ontology***

The combination of radical, Indigenous, interdisciplinary Caribbean thought has contributed to global thought over the last two centuries even as it has unsettled the assumptions of Western canonical disciplines (Kamugisha, 2019). Nettleford saw Caribbean Creolisation as creative imagination that lay beyond “the reach of the vile Oppressor” (Hume, 2017, p. 3). As a Caribbean writer himself, he had a productive, multidisciplinary approach to the generation and transmission of cultural knowledge, seeking strategic alliances across disciplines. His Caribbean interdisciplinary tradition - like that of other Caribbean intellectual giants such as “Erna Bromberg (novelist/sociologist), Kamaloodien Brathwaite (poet/historian), Aimé Césaire (poet/political theorist), Eduardo Glissant (novelist/cultural theorist) and Alejandro Carpentier (novelist/cultural historian) - explodes the boundaries of established disciplines in the Western Academy” (Kamugisha, 2019, p. 5).

Nettleford’s interdisciplinary, socio-political theorising, Indigenous literature, and critique is one example of many bodies of works (including that of Glissant, Michelle Cliff et al.) championing uniqueness and diversity amid oppression. These decolonial writers undertook literary experimentations through which the uniqueness and/or difference to the hegemonic were depicted as both unifying elements and revolutionary alternatives to static postcolonial national identities. This idealistic, humane, and dynamic epistemic Creolisation, inclusive of the creolised language and spirituality championed by Nettleford et al., provided a relevant challenge and reformation to politically problematic and limiting notions of

nationalistic identity and therefore psychology. Creolisation as ethically and racially diverse Indigeneity, disrupts concepts of nation and nationality, and is a counter to universal assumptions of the superiority of Western colonial culture, epistemology, and Psychology. It embraces the principles of interconnectedness and interdependence (Glissant, 1996). The diversity and openness of Creolisation confers recognition on the subaltern located outside of the colonial matrix of power. Creolisation embraces a cultural and spiritual politics of knowledge most readily recognised in the moments when subalterns express the agency that affirms their capacities (Gutiérrez Rodríguez & Tate, 2015). This thesis seeks to channel the spirit of Caribbean scholars and creatives to identify similar radical, interdisciplinary, philosophical elements of Creolisation in Caribbean literature; embracing their thoughts, as researcher, is intended to model/present the option for other researchers, readers, and authors to recreate or even merely ponder the effects of radical, interdisciplinary, Caribbean philosophy and Creolisation in their own lives and personal psychology.

Even though the colonial white/black binary continues to be an important influence in Caribbean literature, Creolisation, as disruption, assumes identity to be multi-dimensional, pluralistic, fluid, and always in process (Hall, 2020). Caribbean Creolisation is shaped by the region's multi-racial and multi-ethnic historical ancestry. And so, Hall (2020) defines Creolisation as a diasporic identity or a 'Caribbeanness' that imagines and inscribes the merging of African, European, Asian and American (among other) ethnicities. Paul Gilroy (1993), like Hall, in his paradigm-shifting, *The Black Atlantic*, offers a profound theory of transatlantic Caribbean identity. He conceives of the Black Atlantic as a space of transnational cultural construction, where culture is not specifically African, American, Asian, Caribbean, or British, but a combination of all these influences. Both Hall's and Gilroy's ideas about culture involve themes that transcend ethnicity and nationality to produce something new. Hall and Gilroy give credence to Donnell's (2015) suggestion that

contemporary writing with a Creolised sensibility may be a means by which African culture crosses the Atlantic, survives, and creatively adapts to its new environment in a rich, rewarding, and new form of ‘Caribbeanness’. Donnell theorises that a Caribbean literary space could potentially be an ongoing source or flow of meaning between multiple cultures embodying decolonial pluriversality and diversity. If so, then a central question of this study asks and tries to establish if embracing Caribbeanness would not also facilitate the flow of newness and meaning within the field of Liberatory Psychology? The theoretics of Creolisation, as expressed by Donnell (and all scholars cited in this section), is a key underpinning of this thesis. To expand on this, next, a closer look will be taken to see how Nettleford’s Afro-creolisation can and is used in the reading and writing of Caribbean Literature. I try to show Afro-creolisation can be extrapolated for use in a Liberatory Psychological imaginary. I now outline how the thesis recruits radical, interdisciplinary, Creolised philosophy toward realising the aims and enquiries of the study.

This study assumes that using Rex Nettleford’s smadditizin lens, and drawing on his theories of Afro-creolisation, will provide an important psycho-literary tool for analysing disruptions of Caribbean cultural identity; as well as its use will bolster an understanding of the struggle for personhood in situations of racism, colourism, sexism, and other ‘isms’ that resist coloniality in Caribbean Literature, psychology, and life. Paradoxically, this thesis discusses the complexity, creativeness, and in some instances genius, of Caribbean writing that subverts and may even seem oppositional to ostensibly anti-colonial tools and language. I look at how such subversive writing upends and disrupts sensibilities as a means of reclaiming subaltern power within the colonial difference/borderlands of The Caribbean Literary Seas (Sandoval’s theory of “oppositional consciousness” explained in the next section refers).

Like that of numerous other thinkers in diverse cultural contexts, Nettleford's position rejects the characterisation of Eurocentric modernity as universal and inclusive, arguing that Eurocentrism, in effect, invisibilises Black people. One such thinker, Sylvia Wynter saw the postcolonial Caribbean crisis as a shift from territorial imperialism to epistemological imperialism wherein the Caribbean, after independence, had not come to terms with the need for ontological sovereignty. Wynter's corpus of radical Caribbean philosophy recognised the Cartesian fallacy that invented secular man based on one 'type' - that of the Western bourgeois man - that created the terror of colonial reason where everyone (or every one?) else was a subtype of otherness (Kamugisha, 2019). The Cartesian fallacy has proven deeply antithetical and problematic to the decolonial project. Claiming that the mind is distinct from the body and producing onto-epistemological dualisms, Western philosophers such as Descartes claimed that knowledge production was independent of temporalities, spatial particularities, or any embodied experiences of reality. Consequent to such dominant philosophical thought, European explanations of knowledge and humans were fabricated along mind-body, material-metaphysical, and other dualisms (Grosfoguel, 2013). The universalisation and imperialisation of the European subject as knowledge agent is predicated upon colonial expansion that enabled the creation of racial, patriarchal, and epistemic power structures. When enmeshed with global capitalist expansion, fabricated discourses and social arrangements defined other-than-Western people (and women in Europe itself) and their respective epistemologies as inferior and as outside the European heteronormative West (Grosfoguel, 2013).

Constituting metaphysical dismemberment (wa Thiong'o, 1986), the coloniality of knowledge based on imperial logic, and propped up by the colonial power matrix, reduced the colonised to the sub-human and/or non-human categories and as having no knowledge and epistemic abilities (de Sousa Santos, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). Whereas direct

forms of colonialism involved political and territorial occupation, **coloniality of knowledge** may be understood as constituting epistemicide and linguicide, the annihilation, distortion or suppression of colonised peoples' knowledge systems and ways of making meaning of reality and iconographies, names, and languages respectively (Grosfoguel, 2013; Quijano, 2000; wa Thiong'o, 1986). Systems and practices of the coloniality of knowledge, consistent with the binary, othering, and polarising logics of coloniality, glorified and universalised Western civilisation, knowledge, and cultural forms. This was done while simultaneously denigrating, destroying, and silencing the colonised peoples' knowledge and cultural systems (Kessi et al., 2020). In a major epistemic shift using the concept of **Smadditizin**, Nettleford challenged European and Cartesian ontology by reorganising Indigenous knowledge to be the constitutive Caribbean norm. **Smadditizin** is resistance where the interests of groups that rests on the sub-personhood of others is contested and devalued, and power is restored to marginalised and Creolised groups (Mills, 2010).

Nettleford's writings on Ras Tafari is viewed here as an invaluable tool as I go about trying to exemplify the rejection of the machinations of white solipsism that Descartes claims is the only means of knowledge production where "I" achieves certitude (Grosfoguel, 2013). In contrast, Nettleford presents the Ras Tafari belief in the intrinsic unity of humanity as an alternative system of knowing. Rastas believe that Jah (God) lives within people and they refer to themselves as 'I and I', indicating the alignment of the self with the spirit or being within. When referring to themselves or others, Rastas use the phrase 'I and I' or 'the I and I' to refer to "us". "them" or "you" (configurations of groupings of people instead of individuals) as a sign of equality and oneness of all people (Niaah, 2011). In this thesis I proceed from the assumption that the collective 'I and I', that affirms understanding and knowledge, rejects the Cartesian 'I'. Aside from confronting the coloniality of knowledge, Nettleford's exposition of Ras Tafari, as an example of epistemic freedom, configures how

this study scrutinises the psychological impact and representation of Indigenous spirituality and culture in both its creative and critical components. It is important to emphasise that this research is not intended to produce a critique of Rastafari as a religion, but rather is intended to analyse the psychological repercussions of Rastafarianism as Indigenous spirituality - as an act of epistemic freedom, decolonial knowledge producer, and liberatory psychological force moving toward an epistemic shift. In this thesis, Rastafarianism as Indigeneity is viewed as a sublime example of Caribbean Epistemic Decoloniality. And so, a methodology that I use is to highlight instances of this form of epistemic freedom that I observe in the primary texts.

Therefore, in this study Epistemic decoloniality is not simply the relegation of Eurocentrism and its assertion of the supposed superiority of other-than-Western thought (Grosfoguel, 2017; Mignolo, 2007a). Epistemic decolonising work is seen here as generative when thought about as enactments of epistemic agency, namely, the astute attentiveness and reflection of the customs and shared practices fundamental to epistemic interactions within knowledge creating environments (Elgin, 2013). Epistemic agency flourishes when the formerly colonised assume an insurrectionist attitude, resist abyssal thinking<sup>13</sup> (de Sousa

---

<sup>13</sup> “A term, coined by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007) that refers to a specific particularity of modern Western thinking that divides the world into what can be thought of, understood, and/or imagined and everything else. By assuming that only what can be imagined can also exist, modern thinking actively erases from reality and existence anything that it cannot imagine. Thus, it creates an abyss between what it can and cannot imagine. The fundamental characteristic of **abyssal thinking** is that it does not allow for the co-presence of what is imaginable and of that which is not. What modern thinking cannot imagine is actively

Santos, 2007), and perceive themselves to be epistemic authorities (Maldonado-Torres, 2016; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). As epistemic agents the formerly colonised “think of themselves as, and act as legislating members of a realm of epistemic ends: they make the rules, devise the methods, and set the standards that bind them” (Elgin, 2013, p. 135).

Therefore, epistemic agency, as decolonial practice, revolves around disruptions to the dominance and universalisation of hegemonic Euro-American thought and the underlying epistemologies of ignorance - exclusionary and polarising contemporary hegemonic power and knowledge structures. This practice (re)claims and (re)inscribes other-than-Western world views, knowledges, and epistemologies of the South into the realms of knowledge making. It authors several paths and modes of knowing and interpreting reality. Following this comprehension of epistemic agency, a central aspect of the work of epistemic decoloniality that I try to incorporate in this study is focused on overturning the epistemology of ignorance - founded on false and limiting beliefs. This means overturning a structural order that construes racism, sexism, classism, patriarchy, and a plethora of other discriminatory (re)iterations. In this milieu the epistemology of ignorance becomes fringe thinking. Alert to the machinations of the epistemology of ignorance, epistemological decoloniality foregrounds resistance to socio-cultural practices that authorise un-mindfulness, falsifications and fabrications about the colonised and colonisers and the persistent impacts of the coloniality of power and knowledge (Mills, 2007).

---

produced as non-existing, irrelevant, and untrue.” (Saude, S. 2020) <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/global-citizenship-education-and-sustainability-otherwise/92417>

Alongside the work directed at resisting and perhaps even eliminating epistemologies of ignorance, epistemic decoloniality is about retrieving, honouring, and authoring epistemologies of the South, of which Nettleford's work is a prime example. Bound up in this thesis' psycho-literary analysis, framing theory, and methodology is the epistemic decoloniality that is deeply concerned with "the recognition of the co-presence of the different ways of knowing and the need to study the affinities, divergences, complementarities, and contradictions among them in order to maximise the effectiveness of the struggles of resistance against oppression" (de Sousa Santos, 2018, p. 8).

Nettleford's theories about Rastafarianism and Smadditizin, as described in the writings of Phillips (2010), emphasise self-liberation and social transformation through accentuating re-education on matters of race, class, culture, and identity. In this regard Nettleford's theories fulfil perfectly all the previously described criteria of epistemic decoloniality that I subscribe to in conducting this research. Nettleford stated the case for reconfiguring education so that it locates the centre of learning within the knowledges and psychologies of the oppressed. Accordingly, this means connecting the development of social consciousness among the disadvantaged with true liberation. Echoing Mudimbe's (1988, p. 169) belief that "a move towards renewed respect for indigenous ways and the conquest of cultural self-contempt may be the minimal conditions for cultural decolonization", Nettleford promoted the idea that Jamaicans should create knowledge and epistemological systems that cherish the equality and justice inherent in the valued Indigenous instead of the Eurocentric ideologies of self above social group. He believed that by doing this, Jamaicans would realise the personhood necessary for liberation - they would smadditize (Phillips, 2010).

Nettleford especially believed that women should spearhead development, and so his ideology resonates well with Joan Anim-Addo's (2013) study of Gendered Creolisation. Anim-Aldo probes race, Creolised history, and a gendered landscape and in so doing adds to



the arsenal of decolonial literary analytical tools that I use in this study. Anim-Aldo contributes the profound understanding that the Creolising of social structure is like that of language change, which in this study is examined in the selected text as evidence of epistemic shifting and decoloniality. She impacts this thesis through my adoption of her notion of Creolisation which states that any hostile contact that ruthlessly disregards one as worthless, produces something new, which in turn becomes normalised within a community (Anim-Aldo, 2013). The Creolised understandings of both Caribbean literary giants, Nettleford and Anim-Aldo, along with all the theorists mentioned, Erasmus, Wynter, et al., is viewed in this study as foundational to a radical Caribbean philosophy. This philosophy, by virtue of its interdisciplinary nature detailed earlier, is also foundational to Liberatory Psychology.

The outlined nuanced Creolised, interdisciplinary, radical, Caribbean philosophy provides a useful theoretical framework and methodology with which I can mount a decolonial psycho-literary reading of contemporary Caribbean literature. It also extensively informs and sensitises my creative writing that is presented in Chapter 7. The section that follows will locate this interdisciplinary Creolised philosophy as one amongst an arsenal of methodologies of the oppressed that should be recognised as a combined powerful force that can help to build a liberatory psychology. In conducting this research I take the position that the relentless destructiveness of coloniality requires the combative strength offered by the solidarity of collective opposition located in the unifying methodologies of the oppressed described by Sandoval (2013).

### **3.4. Methodologies of the Oppressed**

Chela Sandoval (2013) recognises that to resist the ruthless, unrelenting demands of transnationalising capitalist forces that are levelling new kinds of oppressions across all colonial categories, social actors self-consciously harness a dissident mode of consciousness.

This she terms the methodology of the oppressed, and states that it makes possible a strengthened unifying psychic terrain and a collective wielding of power by differential social movements. Complementary to radical interdisciplinary Caribbean philosophy, Sandoval's (2013) critical interpretation of the methodologies of the oppressed is not as individual apartheid-like theoretical domains, but is conceptualised as cohesive imaginations, all with the common quest of revolutionary resistance. Thus while causes and oppressions faced may differ from group to group, their technologies and strengths (oppositional consciousness) when studied and harnessed together create a stronger resistance.

Sandoval's rationale is that categorising separate theoretical, scholarly, and activist domains tends to reproduce a divisive re-enactment of conceptual colonial geographic, sexual, gender, and economic power. This divisiveness often happens even though, paradoxically, activist interventions seem uniformly, fundamentally, committed to the advancement of a similar deep structure of liberatory knowledge. To this end, Sandoval identified five broad methodologies of the oppressed, or oppositional consciousnesses, that resonate with decolonial psychology's objective of creating a world into which diverse activist particularities consolidate effective liberatory power. Briefly, Sandoval states that the five forms of consciousness constructed by the oppressed are:

1. ***Semiotic Perception*** - Perceptions of objects-in-culture as signs of power to be taken in, read, and interpreted. This is consciousness that is readable; a tool used for making meaning of signs and interpreting mythology.
2. ***The Deconstruction of Supremacy*** - A method of decolonisation that makes ideology inhabitable by all through the deconstruction or transformation of those sign-systems of power and mythology interpreted using semiotic perception.

3. *The Meta-Idologising of Signification* – A radical process of creating new, reformed, higher levels of signification onto older dominant ideology. Creating new ethical and political standards to create democratic social change.
4. *Differential Perception* - Manipulating one's own consciousness, shifting back and forth through zones of form and meaning that facilitates ideology to be interpretable and transformable when necessary.
5. *The Deployment of Consciousness* - A mode or consciousness consisting of all oppositional ideologies that is a transcendence of them, allowing utilisation of each as a tactic, or movement amongst them as a departure point. It is this methodological level of consciousness with which this thesis is mainly concerned because it encourages the use of one, all, or a combination of, the methodologies of the oppressed to democratise and decolonise knowledge/making.

At this juncture, it is important to stress that the true usefulness of Sandoval's methodology of the oppressed to this thesis is revealed in how it offers cohesion of all the theories and methodologies outlined in this chapter. Resonant with my method of Critical Relationality, I use these 'methods of the oppressed', that although separate, create a flow and overlap between this study's theories and praxes which Sandoval says is the 'deployment of consciousness' that binds them.

In other words, the theoretical framework and methodologies of this thesis are chosen, brought together, and used to reveal how the primary texts radiate "a set of technologies [a decolonial psychological imaginary] for decolonising the social imagination ...that are guided by democracies and commitment to the equal distribution of power" (Sandoval, 2013, p. 183).

Inspired by Sandoval's interpretation of the methodologies of the oppressed, I criss-cross between methodologies (consciousnesses she describes) that are useful to bringing deeper understandings, new insights, and knowledge to bear upon the reading and writing of literature in order to heal the colonial wound. If Sandoval is correct, then I envision that the collective strength of the methodologies of the oppressed will be greater than any one methodology that I could employ in this thesis. It stands to reason that I can draw on the strength of the collective oppositional consciousness, that Sandoval advocates, in hopes of more effectively contributing to a decolonised liberatory psychological imaginary.

### **3.5. Intersectionality**

Intersectionality as a critical methodology of psycho-literary analysis describes what Caribbean writers (such as Michelle Cliff, Nicole Dennis-Benn, Honor Ford-Smith, Jamaica Kincaid, and Andrea Levy) have so profoundly illustrated in their work - representations of knowledge gained through excavating the overlapping oppressive effects of hegemonic systems of power. These writers, along with those of the primary texts critiqued, all share what Sandoval deems an 'oppositional consciousness' - or understandings developed by the marginalised through reclaiming knowledge from the academy where it had become defanged or domesticated. In so doing, authors generate epistemic shifts in their writing that result in new analytical frameworks for thoughts, feelings, and activism capable of combating intersecting colonial psychological oppressions. In this thesis, the theory of Intersectionality is one of a repertoire of tools used for examining the decolonising of the social imagination and psychology observed in Caribbean writing.

Ilmonen (2012, pp. 35-36) highlights some of the productive tensions that Intersectionality elicits by questioning: "How are our ways of thinking linked to ideas about race, gender, heteronormativity etc.? What kinds of knowledge do hegemonic positions of

identity produce and why? In what ways does this knowledge construct our subjectivities?"

By my searching for answers to Ilmonen's questions in Caribbean Literature, Intersectionality is rendered an epistemological frame with liberatory objectives. The theoretical orientation of this thesis is in sync with Ilmonen's thoughts that:

An intersectional perspective keeps in mind the various, but often invisible, structures of oppression which can be read in novels, interpreted from cultural products or from socio-political practices... (and) is connected to political liberatory movements in the background (e.g. the Gay Rights Movement, the Civil Rights Movement etc.)...Intersectional theorising offers thus an ethical perspective in analysing novels describing multiply marginalised subjects... (Ilmonen, 2012, p. 36)

As useful as Intersectionality is as a psycho-literary analytical method, it is not without its decolonial centred criticisms which it is important to recognise if it is to be methodologically useful to this study and contribute to a truly liberated psychology. Intersectionality originated in the Western liberal tradition as a narrative in which oppression is constructed based on individualised experiences. For this reason, it is critiqued as being at odds with decoloniality which conceptualises racism foremostly as social and institutionalised oppression within colonised communities (Hira, 2016; Kurtis & Adams, 2017). Resolution to this criticism could be derived from the feminist scholarship of Grabe and Else-Quest (2012), who suggest the expansion of Intersectionality to the concept of **Transnational Intersectionality**. In this problematised version, importance is placed on contributing to social change by focusing on and critiquing empire building and imperialism in an increasingly globalised capitalist world. This means that intersections between gender,

ethnicity, sexuality, economic exploitation, and social hierarchy are contextualised and understood as political forces rather than as individualised differences or experiences.

Intersectionality is usually applicable in the case of individual oppressions or experiences according to Western concepts such as patriarchy - which although experienced by the colonised, is an antagonistic, one-dimensional way of looking at relationships between men and women. This is viewed as problematic by decolonial scholars who in contrast emphasise researching a multiplicity of relational dimensions between people (e.g., as father/daughter, niece/aunt, neighbours, cousins, lovers, etc.) with loving relationships as its core focus. So, for instance, Figueroa (2015), Maldonado-Torres (2007), and Sandoval (2013) exhort that decolonisation requires a commitment to new ethics and the re-imagining of human relationships. This requires us (and certainly me in conducting my psycho-literary analysis) to read lovingly, widely, and deeply with a decolonial attitude; and to wilfully, subjectively, insert practices and interpretations of love into epistemology.

Another danger of using the individualistic lens of traditional Intersectionality is that it leans toward the levelling of all oppressions by failing to make a distinction in the hierarchy of human suffering wrought by coloniality. This makes Intersectionality potentially unsuitable to understanding oppression rooted in slavery, where Black people were not even recognised as human beings (Betemps, 2019; Ilmonen, 2012)!

Finally, related to the danger stated in the previous paragraph is the fact that in Intersectional theory there is a lack of acknowledgement that liberation can be used as one intersecting road to oppress individuals on another road. For example, intersectionality does not account for the ways that LGBTQI+ or feminist liberation at times could exclude and undermine the liberation of the colonised. It is even criticised for promoting imperial narratives such as Islamophobia; as well as for stereotyping and demonising the 'third world' as backward and repressive, with the only possibility of developing nations' redemption

being through the adoption of Euro-American hegemonic ideologies and values (Hira, 2016). Intersectionality tends toward upholding the concept of universal knowledge, whereas pluriversalism is integral to decoloniality (Betemps, 2019; Ilmonen, 2012). I bear these problems and tensions in mind as I read the primary texts for instances of effective Intersectional decolonial moves.

Far from all these decolonial critiques of Intersectionality rendering it impotent, such challenges further insights and open pathways for dialogue; forge coalitions between a cross section of activists; and expand epistemic freedom through its use as one of several problematised decolonial tools. This is precisely what Sandoval means when she advocates that the most effective means of bridging social movements is via the ‘deployment of consciousness’ - using oppositional ideologies in a way that is a transcendence of them. This means that decolonial scholarship (including this thesis) should not treat discussions of Intersectionality as a stand-alone theory, but rather seek ways in which to find depth and new understandings using every theory and method possible, including intersectionality, to represent and understand daily living in the fight against coloniality. And so, notwithstanding critiques of Intersectionality, this thesis builds on the intersectional idea that there is an interrelatedness to elements of oppression. Along with this idea the study employs Sandoval’s suggestion that its divergence with decoloniality can be resolved via the ‘deployment of consciousness’. I recruit this idea/methodology and describe instances where drawing on a problematised Intersectional awareness of Caribbean literature can provide textured, nuanced, and layered descriptions of oppression by using situated narratives.

Reading and writing with a background of a problematised Intersectional understanding provides deeper insight into the psychology behind how characters negotiate between the different identities and forms of domination they are experiencing within their particular societies. An example of this can be seen, for instance, in stories of queer

characters struggling with misogyny (e.g., *Here Comes the Sun*), or where citizens are depicted as oscillating between their nationalism and their resistance to entrenched coloniality (e.g., *Augustown*). Although the intricacies of marginalisation can be unwieldy and hard to define, they become relatable through plots and subaltern characters that mirror everyday situations with empathy that audiences can identify as examples of the real life and colonial society that they know intimately. Such stories and characters potentially provide fertile examples of decolonial wisdoms, behaviours and psychologies for readers and researchers. Ilmonen's (2012) Intersectional psycho-literary analysis of Caribbean literature provides one model of how this thesis can use a Creolised version of Intersectionality to contribute to a decolonial psychological imaginary. Specifically, I document and critique examples of how these theories play out in the lives and stories of characters faced with conflicting yearnings and ideologies.

Ilmonen (2012) uses Intersectional methodology as a contextual methodological tool and a culturally situated paradigm to show how context produces certain phenomena. An example of Ilmonen's methodology is evident in her description of how Michelle Cliff's novels emerged from a Creolised Caribbean society. Conjoining these two theories of intersectionality and Creolisation represents an interesting challenge given that one theory seeks to identify individual strands of culture that are oppressive, while the other has its foundation in interwoven culture, language, and ethnicity born in resistance to oppression. It is here that Sandoval's Deployment of Consciousness and Boyce Davies' Critical Relationality taken together determine how this thesis can bridge such a potential divide as was faced by Ilmonen (2012). In analysing Caribbean Literature, I assert that a full understanding of the theories/concepts/methodologies outlined in this chapter allows reader, researcher, and writer to use their own agency to bind theories together, or dismiss them, as they deem appropriate, to forming a liberating and liberatory psychological imaginary. I use a



‘Critically Relational, Creolised, Deployment of Consciousness’ methodology to emphasise and express relatable and authentic subaltern perspectives; situated histories and ideologies; and social justice and liberation in the service of healing the colonial wound. Further examples of this type of blended methodology used in this thesis will be discussed in the next section. Returning to the concept of this study creating Caribbean Literary Seas - a site of Borderlands/colonial difference, epistemic shifts and disobedience, and knowledge-production - I now progress to argue the significance of Border Crossing and Feminism as theory/methods of this thesis.

### **3.6. Black Feminism. Critical Relationality. Migratory Subjectivity. Border Crossings**

A major instance of cohesive deployment of consciousness is seen in the relationship (transcendence) between Crenshaw’s theory and other **Black Feminist Methodologies**, some of which emerged directly out of her Intersectional philosophy. For example, Patricia Hill Collins says that by embedding her thoughts in Intersectionality she replaced her use of the term "Black feminist thought" with a more generalised applicability of her theory to include all women and not only African American women (Hill Collins, 2002). Champion of Black Feminism, bell hooks, too felt that the adoption of Intersectionality contradicted ideas that gender was a major factor on its own determining a woman’s fate (hooks, 2014).

Besides Hill Collins and hooks, a significant example of theoretical transcendence comes from the scholarship of Carole Boyce Davies upon whose methodology and theory this study is firmly located. Having lectured on Black Left Feminism, Boyce Davies called for a decolonization of postcolonial studies and extensively used a literary technique called **Critical Relationality** - aimed at wider negotiations between several theoretical views while still affirming the logic of Intersectionality (Ilmonen, 2012). Boyce Davies’ literary technique is a quintessential deployment of consciousness that defies and displaces the imperial, neo-

colonial tourist gaze by engaging feminist, Afrocentric, and similar theories. She takes what is applicable and relevant from these theories and discards the rest, not fearing the mixing of theory and the personal into her own writing. She understands theory as a lens through which we see and interpret the world as “discursive ways of making sense of structures of values and beliefs which circulate in any given culture” (Wall, 1997, p. 457).

For Boyce Davies, Black women’s writing positively redefines identity as it “re-connects and re-members, brings together, Black women dislocated by space and time” (Boyce Davies, 2002, p. 3). She coins the term **Migratory Subjectivity** to describe Caribbean Subjects’ **Border Crossings** - their being constantly in the process of belonging to several overlapping home places, communities, and identities which renders labelling them a limiting, false coherence. Migrants, for reasons of survival or ambition, subjectively choose to crisscross over defining borders of identity, community, professions etc. In this thesis, both of these concepts are particularly relevant methodologically and inspire a search for similar/related decolonial moves as I read and write about migratory themes in Caribbean literature.

Critical Relationality allows the reader, author, and researcher a means to inhabit the colonial difference, or to move around in the Borderlands of The Caribbean Literary Seas using Migratory Subjectivity. Migratory Subjectivity provides an excellent vantage point for anyone wanting to engage new spaces outside of the hegemonic limitations of coloniality. Border Crossing brings together all, or any chosen, affiliations of the individual reader/writer/researcher in a similar deployment of consciousness as problematised Creolisation and Intersectionality.

James (2013), like Boyce Davies (2017) and Trotman (1993), writes about Caribbean-style boundary crossing. His ideas about Border Crossings are based on lessons he learned from playing cricket around the world. For example, his overlapping of social commentary

with commentary on the game contends that what happens inside the ‘boundary line’ in cricket affects life beyond it, and the converse is also true. Quite simply, he was expressing that for Caribbean folk there was no static space, and they were always moving around between definitions of themselves and their occupations in a way peculiar to migrants. The cluster of theories derived from such particularised Caribbean wisdoms provide a relevant decolonial methodology to understanding the psychology of migratory characters **in and of** literature. Together these theories create a lucid theoretical framework and contextualised psycho-literary methodology through which I can engage a decolonial attitude in the reading and writing of Caribbean Literature; and eventually participate in the generation of liberatory psychology.

Having detailed how the theories of Creolisation, Intersectionality, and Border Crossing concurrently provide decolonial methodological foundations to this thesis, I now segue into decolonial feminist theory as yet another deployment of consciousness methodology that guides this research. I start this explication of my guiding theory by drawing on Lugones (2010) whose **Feminist Methodology** provides insurgent insight into how reconceptualising sex and gender outside of racialised, capitalistic, Western articulations re-humanises representations of subjects that were intentionally stripped of their complexity and their very humanity. She catalogues the pernicious ways in which the Christian Civilising Mission was instrumental in bestialising the colonised in service of providing brutal access and hierarchical control over black bodies. Colonisation, according to Lugones (2010), aggressively and reductively ‘invented’ the colonised. Lugones (2010) explains how the colonised responds to, resists, and rejects coloniality, referring to her ongoing enquiry as a process of decoloniality. In this research project I seek to use the colonial difference of The Caribbean Literary Seas just as Lugones does - as a place of encounter where voices are heard, memories are recovered, and resistance is brought to life. I explore the ways in which

the writers use their craft to help readers understand how ‘the invented’, as Lugones terms them, can re-invent themselves and their fates through decolonial psychological means.

Instances of Decolonial Feminism within Caribbean Literature complementary to Lugones’s will be described next; starting with a contextualisation of Caribbean feminism and the distilling of background information into an understanding of how and why Caribbean feminism is central to theory and methodology of this thesis’s psycho-literary analysis.

### **3.7. Decolonial Feminism and the Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern**

Caribbean feminist and gender studies pioneer, Patricia Mohammed, in her search for an Indigenous Caribbean feminist voice located, three movements, or waves, which articulated the daily struggles and activism of feminism in the Caribbean. The first movement is historically located within the regional political struggles; the second wave contemplated the linguistic meanings of gender framed by culture, class, and ethnicity within the region; and the third examined these meanings as linked to Western feminist ideas of sexual differences between genders (Mohammed, 1998). Detailed tracing and historicising of the feminist movement in the Caribbean is too vast and complex an endeavour to do justice in this limited space. I will instead refer to important contributions of the movement in so far as they can elucidate the impact of women in the reading and writing of decolonial Caribbean Literature that may contribute to a liberatory psychology imaginary.

More than being a geographical space, Mohammed (1998), like other Creolisation scholars, embraces the idea that the Caribbean is heavily defined as a political space, a place of ‘becoming’ since the abolition of slavery right through into the twentieth century with the addition of various ethnic groups. The Caribbean, she says, is no longer a site of plantations. She expands her thoughts regarding this political space by metaphorically declaring that there never was a Caribbean Sea but there was instead:

a wide open-mouthed river with currents which run back and forth across the Atlantic, to Africa and Europe, far east to India and China, and now especially northwards to the United States and Canada...The Caribbean, open to imperialism and global forces, finds itself between sovereignty and openness - a small eddy in a large stream, but an eddy all the same. (Mohammed, 1998, p. 10)

These thoughts incisively set the scene for this section by connecting Caribbean feminism to the study's theme of The Caribbean Literary Seas as a space of epistemic shifts where global influence meets Indigeneity. I now enlist this congruent metaphor and the preceding psycho-literary theory/methodology to define the Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern, situating her role as an important one within the future of decolonial feminism and psychology.

The history of Caribbean feminism is bound with the history of feminism in the United States, but the role and status of Caribbean women is rooted in slavery and colonisation. A fact critical to understanding the evolution of Caribbean feminism is that in inventing the colonised, the enslaved were reduced to satanic, less than human, aggressively sexualised primitives in need of transformation (Lugones, 2010). The archetypal construction and mainstream (media) representations of male colonial subjects as hyper-masculine and hyper-sexual is at the core of their dehumanising disempowerment (Gutiérrez, 2011). However, according to Lugones, colonised men were also purposely feminised to humiliate them and render them not human and not men, while Black women were further denigrated to being not human... and not men... and not women (Lugones, 2010).

This gendered coloniality, in large part, explains how racism and colonialism, combined with sexism, shaped the lives and relationships between men and women in the Caribbean. The legacy of this destructive triad, together with a plethora of other indignities

tied to the commodification of the colonised, resulted in the stereotyping of Black masculinity. The brutality of slavery and the master's invasion of the intimacy between Black men and women - by virtue of assumed rights over their bodies - was initially blamed for the emasculation of the Black male. However, this blame was eventually mysteriously conferred to Black women and became entrenched as discourse. Elided in this discourse is the second mystery - that Caribbean women emerged from the same system of oppression with their 'femininity' and strength intact. Mohammed insists that both these mysterious colonial discourses still exist and demand further investigation (Mohammed, 1998).

Once the reins of power were passed from the European colonial masters to the elite and middle-class Black males in the post-colonial state, so too were the obscure aspects of dominant colonial ideas regarding citizenship, ideology, heteronormativity, and patriarchy that rendered women dependants of men and second-class citizens constrained by burdensome conservative gender formations (Kamugisha, 2019). It is little surprise then, that the first and second movements of Caribbean feminism were caught up with postcolonial, nationalistic imperatives and the promotion of feminism as a middle-class initiative that excluded poor and working-class women. Unlike their middle-class counterparts, these excluded women were not fighting for the right to have professional working lives since they were already working women deemed "independent and aggressive in their own right" (Mohammed, 1998, p. 20).

This exclusion only deepened when Euro-feminism appeared in the Caribbean in the mid-to-late 1970s. In this wave, white middle-class experiences were generalised as being experiences of all women regardless of race, class, ethnicity, culture, politics, religion sexual orientation etc. (Soares, 2006). This lack of the feminist movement establishing foundation within Caribbean societal experiences meant there was a clear disconnect between the largely middle-class feminists - who did not seem to be really interested in the emancipation of poor

women - and the “majority of women who suffer ideological and social marginalisation and oppression precisely because they are women” (Soares, 2006, p. 188). There evolved a local ‘Women’s Movement’ that distanced themselves from the ‘foreign imported feminism’ and that subordinated the imported brand of feminism for the localised gender discourse that was gaining popularity within the Caribbean academy (Soares, 2006). But this too was an imported discourse that failed to capture either the imagination or the struggles and experiences of working-class women. Many of the working-class issues of women, such as the desire to have a spiritualised feminism, were seen as ‘backward’ and so they remained marginalised within the movement (Soares, 2006).

What then was determined to be the future of Caribbean feminism in the late twentieth and twenty-first century? According to Mohammed (1998) the burden of the feminist agenda is to concretely demonstrate a reordering of the sexual divisions of labour so that arguments arising out of ethnic, racialised, and classist divisions are not resolved through violence and warfare. While the postcolonial struggles of feminism were mired in nationalism and independence projects, the pertinent contemporary decolonial question is - how is the weight of inequality felt by young women and men of today? In thinking about a response, another question emerges for young women and men of the Caribbean – does inequality at all compel either of them to change, afford democratic rights to those lacking them, and to struggle for transformation? Mohammed foresaw that the future of Caribbean feminism was dependent on how, and whether, fertile grounds were well prepared for fresh ideas and practices to emerge (Mohammed, 1998). Soares, meanwhile, perceived the most important task of Caribbean feminism as being its own liberalisation and democratisation through engaging relevance and social justice goals (Soares, 2006).

In tandem with, and in response to, the visions and conclusions of these Caribbean feminists, I offer four specifically decolonial feminist methods that are used in this study in

order to implement a decolonial activist attitude when I read and write Caribbean literature in a search for liberatory psychology. Abstracted from Mendez (2015) these are: historicising gender within multiple histories and bodies; developing a practice of connecting power dynamics with racialised bodies; identifying colonial relations of power and modes of relating that serve contemporary capitalism and oppression; and, considering diverse liberatory possibilities and alternative modes of relating available from subaltern communities. I also suggest that a closer look at creative representations of The Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern (that is defined next) in the reading and writing of literature can bring these goals to life in relatable and empathetic ways that inspire the psychological epistemic shifts, newness, and social activism suggested by Mohamed and Soares.

The literature shows that the exclusion of the poor and marginalised, as well as the continued gendered coloniality in everyday life worked to the detriment of the women's movement in the Caribbean. Marginalisation and the fact that, according to Kamugisha (2019, p. 59), "Caribbean women's citizenship has been constrained by gendered violence, poor access to reproductive health rights, lower wages for comparable work, higher rates of unemployment and the burden of disproportionate amount of caregiving work" makes a Caribbean centred and informed feminism all the more vital. In this thesis I contend that The Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern represented in the primary texts offers up culturally relevant insights, resilience, and creative psychological solutions found by Caribbean women in their everyday lives. I explore this idea through the work of Postcolonial theorist Gayatri Spivak (1988) who presents a compelling ethical stance that makes discursive room for the subaltern to exist by bridging the gap between the realities of the poor and working class and the mainstream. Drawing from Spivak's conceptualisation of the role of the subaltern and thinking with Sandoval's concept of oppositional consciousness models a way to connect representations of women in Caribbean literature to the historical unrealised good intentions



of feminism. Together they provide the foundation for deeply engaging Caribbean feminism and psychology within decolonial literature.

Best known for her 1985 article *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak concludes that 'she' in fact cannot speak because while she may make utterances, she is not understood or listened to by the mainstream. This is so because speaking is a transaction that requires the acknowledged roles of both speaker and listener. Spivak (1988) declared that to get beyond the vicious cycles of abuse toward the subaltern it is necessary to remain open-hearted and embrace the subaltern as an act of love rather than attempt to narcissistically recreate the subaltern in one's own image. This embrace will likely be unrequited because the differences and distances are too gaping (Kilburn, 2017). This yawning divide is the basis of Spivak's (1988) definition of the subaltern as not merely one who is marginalised or oppressed, but as one who has limited access or no access at all to cultural imperialism/the mainstream - she dwells in a space of difference. So as to ensure that the subaltern can exit this space of difference, Spivak says that activists should not attempt to speak for the subaltern but should work for them and should actively work against the state of subalternity (de Kock, 1992). The crucial gain I derive from Spivak's definition of the subaltern is the understanding that 'de-hegemonising' the knowledge of those who hold position and power means the powerful unlearning of their privilege so that the dominant can truly enter the position of the 'other' or subaltern (Kilburn, 2017). I agree with the idea that fresh psychological understandings and knowledge, which significantly shift epistemology, can result from aligning with the subaltern within their own defined existence instead of attempting to speak for them. Transforming this theory into methodology means searching Caribbean Literature for instances of when and how this alignment and working for the subaltern is depicted, and to what extent it successfully creates a decolonial psychology for characters than can be

emulated in real life. This thesis investigates the idea of The Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern as a means to come to such insights.

In the primary texts, as in life, **Caribbean Black Feminist Subalterns** are women who in a world of capitalistic exploitation, misogyny, racism, and excruciating cyclical poverty, assert dignity and somehow devise means to construct liveable spaces and strengthen their families and communities. They are Mavericks who do not formally belong to, nor do they see themselves as, feminists in a formal activist group. They often perform non-traditional roles and perform unconventional and even unheard-of employment for females while having to endure inhumane, subjugated, and destructive relationships and conditions at home. As Spivak makes painstakingly clear, subalterns may cry out reacting to these conditions, but remain unheard! The primary texts not only provide examples of The Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern's oppressive lives and resilience for the reader to empathise with, but they also show the myriad ways in which these Mavericks attempt to puncture coloniality and middle-class respectability through radical acts of subversion of the status quo – including paradoxically hurtful behaviour and language steeped in coloniality.

The definition of The Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern and her decolonial resilience strategies connects directly with themes in Carolyn Cooper's critical work *Noises in Blood* (1995). Cooper regards noise and vulgarity as a means of disrupting middle-class codes of hyper-respectability in Jamaica. These elements create an active site of working-class psychological resistance against colonial comportment. For example, Patwah (Jamaican Creole), often a working-class dialogue in Jamaican writing, can express crude or vulgar descriptors that put a person or behaviour in their place and context. Sometimes, so blatant is the crassness, that the audience is taken aback, and the inherent injustice of the situation's power dynamic is immediately recognisable, laid bare for scrutiny and condemnation. For instance, the commonplace habit of Jamaicans defying all so-called social graces in creating

cruel names on sight for absolute strangers based on glaring physical traits, such as a missing limb, is an example of this. So, instead of the missing limb being regarded as a disability, as it is thought of in mainstream society, the stranger's blasé acceptance of the cruel name becomes the passing of a test of strength that renders them equal to, if not victorious over, both their fate and the 'namer' who is testing them. I review if and how writers and their characters (especially *The Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern*), consistent with Cooper's theory, effectively neutralise social class inequality by employing this psychological technique of using vulgar descriptors and shocking rhetoric.

Furthermore, Cooper declares that the practice of writing in Patwah assists with literary decolonisation by allowing Caribbean authors to take local control of the language of criticism, taste, and judgement. In an act of epistemic disobedience, these authors buck the trend of the persistent use of metropolitan English as the language of literary criticism and fiction by writing about their own using contextualised epistemology and ontology (Tiffin, 2001). This results in knowledge and epistemological practices not flowing exclusively in one direction toward the Caribbean. In this way, again, *The Caribbean Literary Seas* are enlarged and enriched by local indigenous language, knowledge, psychology, and epistemology tributaries and in turn expand global literary oceans. By homing in on language practices like these in the selected texts, this study takes seriously the endeavour of effectively entering (what Spivak calls) the space of difference with the intention of advocating for the subaltern rather than speaking for them. Additionally, it is intended that by embracing Cooper's theoretical ideas, and by engaging in the decolonial praxis of authentically reading and writing about *The Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern* using her own language, a Caribbean decolonial feminist agenda, epistemic disobedience, and an epistemic shift in psychology are promoted in this thesis. Given that patwah is the shared natural language of both the subaltern and author (as well as, probably, the intended

audience), its deliberate use should not be seen as a hypocritical attempt by the author to do precisely what Spivak warns against – being spokesperson for, or attempting to give the subaltern dialogue which then defeats the claim that she cannot speak. Instead, the writing of the story using patwah should just be seen for what it is – the natural/effective mode of communication for Jamaicans that potentially provides access into the space of difference, which the use of standard English would prevent.

The Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern mode of expression and psychological resistance, as seen in the primary texts, can be situated in Lugones's (2010) feminist border thinking theory. Lugones describes coloniality as inherently violent against spirit, intellect, and body, leaving no room for convivial descriptions or expressions of its rejection. At the same time, she finds that anger is the only moral expression and self-defence against coloniality (Lugones, 2010). In this study I take a position consistent with Lugones (2010) and observed the feminist subaltern characters to see if the very vulgarity and offensiveness that they engage in is an expression of justifiable moral anger that can coherently be read as acts of psychological defiance, resistance, and insurgency. It follows that subscribing to Lugones's position implies the belief that meaningful writing about subaltern resistance regards their assertive, provocative, and even shocking insurgent style, as fitting psychological self-defence against coloniality. This writing style, decolonial attitude, and praxis guide the psycho-literary analysis as well as the creative writing component of this study.

In the spirit of interdisciplinary Caribbean radical philosophy, the final research that is read in tandem with this study is that of sociologist Asef Bayat (1997). His research creates profound context and understandings of The Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern and pulls together all the other studies that inform this thesis's conceptualisation of her and explanations of her radical power. Bayat carefully researched what he called 'un-civil

society' or subalterns and their informal methods of resistance, and in so doing makes the epistemic shift away from the conventional Western ways of viewing the activism practiced by the disenfranchised in the Global South. Bayat makes several points that searingly discredits commonly held ideas that subalterns are merely victims... and destructive ones at that. He shows how the poor, especially the urban poor, who have been outcast and disenfranchised in the ways that Spivak describes subalterns, use behaviour that is natural, logical, free-form activism, and is a moral response to ensure survival.

According to Bayat, the subaltern's very rational, calculated response to being driven outside of society is one of surreptitious offence and is not driven by the same individualistic, competitive elements of formal social movements<sup>14</sup>. Instead, they are driven by necessity and a desire for autonomy, and they create self-generating, action-oriented resistance that ends up in collective gains for their communities. For them, their strategies are mundane and daily in nature, as is the oppression they experience. And even though they are just doing what is needed for survival and are unaware of the broader social repercussions of their resistance, their struggles become transformative and uplifting for their entire group. Profoundly, Bayat

---

<sup>14</sup> In the 1950s hundreds of thousands of poor Iranians migrated from small villages to big cities to improve their lives or to survive. To escape private landlords, unaffordable rent, and overcrowding they settled in large unused urban plots and established illegal settlements. The illegal settlements consolidated their communities by bribing bureaucrats to bring in amenities to what were once wastelands. These communities burgeoned and became a counter force without intending to be! What started as an uncoordinated act of survival resulted in a powerful societal movement that successfully brought change and improvement in their communities. (Bayat, 1997)

(1997, p. 56) found that the subaltern's "everyday forms of resistance perspective has undoubtedly contributed to recovering the Third World poor from 'passivity', 'fatalism' and 'hopelessness' - essentialist features of the 'culture of poverty' with its emphasis on identifying the 'marginal man' as a 'cultural type'". All the theorists described in this section put forth a compelling argument that I incorporate and hold as intrinsic to a decolonial examination of how *The Black Feminist Subaltern in Caribbean Literature* embodies and inspires a psychology of activism that is worthy of emulation by the reader and writer. At the very least these theories allow for the re-conceptualisation of the Black Feminist subaltern as a powerful agentic being and not a victim. Specifically, it is Bayat's elucidation of informal resistance that provides the scaffolding on which this study can build a psycho-literary analysis of the decolonial primary texts' representations of the presence and effectiveness of Feminist Subaltern activism. The notion, extracted from Bayat (1997), that the feminism of *The Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern* is not intended as a coordinated act of feminism, and that they do not see themselves as belonging to a formal grouping, but perform their resistance as survival, is a defining characteristic seen in the selected texts.

Kamugisha (2019) holds that Caribbean feminists and writers dazzle readers and transform literary landscapes in the arena of social and political thought, making signal contributions to every field of inquiry, by unmasking the ruses of postcolonial citizenship. He correctly claims that Caribbean feminists leave an indelible mark that "revises the conditions of possibility through which Caribbean people conceive of their belonging and citizenship within their nation states" (Kamugisha, 2019, p. 3). Additionally, decolonial feminist reading and writing evokes the pathos necessary to encourage us to de-hegemonise our dominant position and unlearn our privilege so as to erase the space of difference between us and *The Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern* for whom we can then work and advocate effectively (de Kock, 1992; Kilburn, 2017; Spivak, 1988). However, because it is so easy to slide over from

attempting to use psycho-literary analysis to learn from or merely understand the Caribbean Feminist Subaltern's mode of liberatory psychology, into actually speaking for, or making inaccurate or overblown claims about her agency, the spirit of Spivak's strategy should be a constant caution in the critiquing and creative writing process. Perhaps the writer and researcher's frequent periodic reflexivity and revisiting of their own intentions and leanings in portraying and analysing text can be a useful means to avoiding such a pitfall, or at any rate, can help them to identify and state when and why they fail.

The study provides examples of how The Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern characters ultimately inspire fresh psychology, language subversion, knowledge, and epistemology through which to lift the dominant out of the world of colonial exploitation, and in so doing, concomitantly open a way out of subalternity for these feminist Mavericks (de Kock, 1992; Kilburn, 2017; Spivak, 1988). The Deployment of Consciousness (Sandoval, 2013) toward theoretical understandings of subalternity and theories of Caribbean feminism inspire the decolonial attitude that this study uses in the reading and writing of Caribbean literature with the intention of contributing to a Liberatory Psychology imaginary.

### **3.8. Faithful Witness**

I now turn to Faithful Witness to provide another example of the critical praxis that derives from, and bolsters, the decolonial theory and methodology of this thesis. I think in cohesion with Boyce Davies, hooks, Maldonado-Torres, Nettleford, Sandoval, and Spivak et al. who posit that voice, articulation, audience, and a demand to be recognised or to be seen, are vital and ethical considerations for decoloniality. The decolonial feminist concept of Faithful Witness, introduced by Maria Lugones (2003), is an autobiographical and biographical method that encapsulates these considerations: taking seriously the knowledges and psychologies of those historically silenced and side-lined by forming collaborations with

them to fight multiple and systemic oppressions. Engaging this method as decolonial researcher, reader, or author, requires challenging single narratives and dominant perspectives that dehumanise or render invisible the powerless such as the Black Subaltern Feminist in anglophone Caribbean literature. One way that Figueroa (2015) suggests for conveying multiple narratives in literature is by using multiple narrators or presenting multiple perspectives of the same moments or experiences. Challenging dominant narratives also means developing different literacies; re-imagining human relationships; reading and producing new meanings; or, as Lugones phrases it, growing many worlds of sense and being at ease in multiple worlds (Lugones, 2003). I adopt all these methodologies in this study.

Because the theories framing this study show that using a decolonial attitude means taking truth seriously, taking the plurality of knowledges and voices of the marginalised seriously, taking historicism and engaging multiple materialities as a fundamental; it is imperative to analyse the many ways that authors with a decolonial attitude deploy Faithful Witness to seek truth in the reading and writing of Caribbean literature. Support for this thesis adopting this methodology and attitude can be found in Figueroa (2015) who is emphatic that Faithful Witnessing cannot occur without research/ers practicing a decolonial attitude given that “it is a critical element of reading decolonial imaginaries” (Figueroa, 2015, p. 3). For Figueroa, this method requires articulating or “witnessing” the unseen consequences of the colonality of power upon the marginalised (Figueroa, 2015, p. 3). I conduct the methodology of this study in concert with Figueroa and other scholars such as Wanda Pillow and Laura Beard, discussed next, who effectively model this ‘witness’ methodology in their research.

Pillow (2019) extensively researches the effectiveness, theoretical responsibilities, and role of a decolonial attitude in Faithful Witness methodology, finding that there is a need for epistemological diversity and the centring of conceptualisations from the Global South. She finds that witnessing involves three elements: the person bearing witness; the



text/narrative of testimony; and the audience. According to Pillow, this methodology links the past to the present; is purposeful; requires humility and reflexivity; and requires that the reader be open to hearing a different kind of truth while participating in what is essentially a feminist, political act of aligning with Black people disenfranchised by coloniality (Pillow, 2019). This method, concludes Pillow, allows the researcher to seek new patterns of knowing and holds them responsible for not merely being spectators, but for being engaged in active pursuit of liberatory epistemology that is aligned with the powerless and disenfranchised.

I adopt Pillow's methodology for the psycho-literary analysis of this thesis and build on her insights by incorporating perspectives derived from Beard's (2018) writing. Researcher of Indigenous women's writing, Laura Beard, provides a wonderful example of how unremitting attention to the power of Faithful Witness in indigenous storytelling challenges readers to serve as witnesses and "become imbricated in the stories so that we take up the responsibilities of respect, reciprocity, and obligation in relation to the stories we witness" (Beard, 2018, p. 152). It is an exercise that can reverse the process of colonisation that ordinarily leaves us disconnected, or prevents us from respecting, and bearing responsibility for, one another (Beard, 2018). Beard highlights an intriguing overlap and, dare I say, methodological triangulation to the act of faithful witness - for this thesis's psycho-literary analysis methodology, my takeaway is that in Faithful Witness there is the witness of the story; there is sometimes the witness of the character/narrator's observations or tale; and then there is the embedded reader and writer who takes on the responsibility of bearing witness to what is being introduced as history or new knowledge for the future in real life. At any point, the layering of all these witnesses and testimonials can affect or effect the policies, actions, and words in the present or in the archival past of people who are repeatedly told they do not belong, are expendable, or not valued (Pillow, 2019). To my mind as researcher,

herein lies the potential impact of decolonial literature as social activism and liberatory psychology.

Beard's (2018) observations evoke a deep relatedness to this study and its pelagic metaphorical framing when she recounts how her own literary exploration compelled her to use witness as a medium for critical activism. She studies a novelist, Lee Maracle, who bears witness to the Stó:lō<sup>15</sup> people's history of violent oppression and resilience in the story, *Celia's Song*, reasoning that "Fiction is powerful truth" (Beard, 2018, p. 82) and "Even the waves of the sea tell a story that deserves to be read. The stories that really need to be told are those that shake the very soul of you" (Maracle, 2014, pp. 6-7). These characteristics and practices of Faithful Witness make it a suitable decolonial activist methodology for psycho-literary research. As Beard suggests, it is a means by which this study can really look at the psychological conditions, consequences, and manifestations of coloniality in the reading and writing of Caribbean Literature in a way that is meaningful and bears responsibility.

In summary, Faithful Witness, along with all the theories outlined in this theoretical chapter, generate excellent impulses for a decolonial analysis of contemporary anglophone Caribbean writing that can contribute to liberatory psychology. These methodologies, especially Lugones's (1987) feminist methodology, provide this study four key dimensions

---

<sup>15</sup> The **Stó:lō** are a group of First Nations peoples inhabiting the Fraser Valley and lower Fraser Canyon of British Columbia, Canada. *Stó:lō* is the Halqemeylem word for "river". The Stó:lō are *the river people*.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St%C3%B3l%C5%8D&oldid=1101080807>

with which to interrogate the multiple psychologies, meanings, and knowledges that can exist within The Caribbean Literary Seas. They are discursive critiques and contestations of dominant ideologies and practices; interactional analysis that seeks to draw the formerly excluded and their various strengths into positions of power; agentic exploration - where subjects use extraordinary creative measures to assert their own sense of themselves; and structural critiques that discern the effects of globalising economies and neo-liberal practices including migration and exploitation (Martinez-Vázquez, 2009). It can be credibly argued that the theoretical/methodological research laid out in this section, like Caribbean literature itself, tells a complex, multi-faceted decolonial story about how we can expect new understandings and fresh subaltern perspectives and psychologies to be revealed in the primary texts. This theoretical/methodological chapter, as a whole, shows that not only should Indigenous knowledges and novel modes of interpretation be used and/or generated, but that perhaps the reading and writing of Caribbean Literature can even unearth uncommon liberatory methods of psychology within the texts. In this way, the entire thesis can be said to bear witness to the resilience and defiance of the Caribbean and her Creolised people represented in the decolonial literary works.

I will end this sub-section just as I began, by declaring that the conceptualisation of The Caribbean Literary Seas is the same as that of the Borderlands space of colonial difference that drove Lugones's (2010) research. I therefore accept Lugones's suggestion that reaching beyond the fragmentations and complex interconnections of the space of colonial difference makes us all "possible companions of resistance" and means performing the subversive act of seeing domination and not fearing interpretations that clash with common sense (or might I add, Westernised psychology!) (Lugones, 2003, pp. 7-11). It also seems befitting to end this sub-section by quoting Linda Tuhiwai Smith, the trail-blazing, decolonial researcher of Indigenous methodology who said that witnessing is a means by which

Indigenous and colonised people can “make claims and assertions about [our] rights and dues” (Smith 2012, pp. 144-45) ...and I would add... about our psychology.

### **3.9. Selection Logic, Primary Texts, and Themes**

In keeping with the stated epistemic disobedience of this thesis, I deviate from presenting the standard Social Science research categories of “Sampling” and “Participants” which are not appropriate to this study’s chosen decolonial methodology and design. Instead, the requisite and equivalent evidentiary information and data normally derived from those research categories are embedded within this study’s Selection Logic, Primary Texts, and Themes which I now detail.

#### ***3.9.1. Selection Logic***

The main thrust of this thesis is that storytelling is decolonial psychological praxis. This thrust prefigures the selection logic of the chosen texts. To that end, it is important to make the distinction between the ground-breaking decolonial literature that directly and openly critiques psychology, as opposed to fiction that harnesses the intangible power of abstraction and free flow which reveals and teases out psychology as and for critique and decoloniality. African American author of *Native Son* (1940/2016), Richard Wright, is famous for the former writing style. In his fiction he focuses on racial themes and direct critiques of Euromerican psychology/philosophy and psychologists/philosophers such as Freud and Hegel (Gilroy, 1993). Meanwhile, the latter literary style of critique is used in this thesis to unpack defining insights of the relationship between Caribbean literature and decolonial psychology (psycho-literary analysis), one such insight being that if a writer just simply tells the story, the decolonial psychology will evolve and reveal itself to the reader and the author. Primary texts were selected accordingly.

As is the case with Windrush writing, the allegorical consequences of tides leaving and returning to the Caribbean shore is a pertinent overarching metaphor in this thesis and texts were chosen to emphasise this. I, along with the selected authors, explore the psychological effects of modern-day Caribbean migration. I specifically look at three types of migration that seem to impact the psychological (de)coloniality of Caribbean people's psychology and writing. These are migrations to and from: the Motherland (Britain); the StepMotherland (America); and the Maddaland (Jamaica, most especially the rural areas of Jamaica commonly referred to as 'country', once considered the region of the plantation but which now is more commonly the territory of neo-colonial tourism). A migratory theme, directly or indirectly, permeates all of the texts that I study in this chapter.

Following Black Feminist and Intersectional methods, the decolonial psychological reading of Caribbean Literature involves the re-centring of text, and places colonial imperatives on the periphery. Quijano's (2000) power matrix and Hill Collins's (2002) matrix of domination provides the thesis's rationale for actively re-framing the Caribbean sensibility in literature as one of power rather than as one of deprivation. Furthermore, I try to ensure that in re-centring epistemology I do not retain coloniality as a default benchmark, stealthily projecting itself from the margins.

To avoid the re-centring of colonial imperatives being simplistic and unintentionally reactionary means that both the selection of texts and the ensuing psycho-literary analysis adopts critical relationality to alert the reader selectively and purposefully to the power and jouissance of indigeneity, alterity, and pluriversality of decolonial Caribbean literature. Primary texts are selected to as far as possible steer away from inherited, formulaic traditional literature, criticism, and psychology; and commentary highlights the Jamaican world using situational, discursive, re-imaginative, and reflexive analysis.

Since the psycho-literary analysis chapters intend to disrupt the monumental foregrounding of English and American imaginative and critical literary canons that have served to obscure the great diversity of writing, psychology, and thought emanating from the post-war Caribbean (Brown & Rosenberg, 2015); it feels fair to say that my focus on Caribbean literature is in of itself a decolonial act. For as Sylvia Wynter argues, “to write for West Indians at all is revolutionary” (1968, p. 27). All the texts selected for analysis are approached using Wynter’s mode of insurgency to promote the pluriversalism and heterarchy that actively visibilises difference for the reader. Importantly in this instance visibilising difference undermines the colonial use of difference (including mythical differences) to demonise, dehumanise, and justify oppression and slavery. This means that while alerting the reader to the damaging effects of the colonality of difference, I try not to make the analysis devolve into only emphasising difference. Instead, the primary texts are actively selected and read to reveal how decolonial psychology soars above rather than is tethered by colonality.

### ***3.9.2. Diasporic Evolution as Impetus for Decolonial Literary Heuristic***

Paul Gilroy (1993) concludes that there have been three phases of Black/African diasporic evolution. They are heuristically identified as first, that of the liberation of the body, or the struggles against slavery; second, the struggles to win human rights which were coupled with the liberation of culture, language, and self-creation; and finally, the pursuit of independence for Black people to have control over the direction and pace of their own development.

Caribbean Literature, often described as migrant or exilic literature, captures all three phases of diasporic evolution when describing the transatlantic movement of Black people through to their migration from the Caribbean to Europe and America. Thematically, contemporary migration is not only identified in this thesis as a physical relocation but is

regarded as a psychological ‘Colonization in Reverse’. This is a phenomenon in which the formerly colonised, emboldened by their newly found sense of citizenship and national belonging, venture to the coloniser’s lands to recapture materially and mentally what had been taken from them. Literature used in this study was selected to capture this specific diasporic psychological phenomenon as well as other similar representations of the ‘impertinent’ and confident decolonial strategies of resilience typical of Caribbean folk.

Gilroy’s third diasporic phase stresses a marked desire of Black people to use music and culture as a favoured vehicle to demonstrate the reconciliation of art and life. Dovetailing from this sentiment, I have selected to use literature that tentatively suggests, or more germanely, assists with querying whether decoloniality ushers in a fourth heuristic diasporic phase – that of ‘Sanctuary’? To explore this possibility, I chose texts that show how decolonial writing can provide a literary sanctuary that I name ‘The Caribbean Literary Seas’. This metaphorical literary space illustrates bell hooks’s notion that the aesthetic and artistry within the everyday life of the marginalised can bridge critical resistance and the ability to still experience pleasure and beauty (Kalmanson, 2012). I attempt to show that within these Literary seas there can be a radical Caribbean aesthetic through which writers speak differently about ‘Caribbeanness’ as beauty and resilience rather than as nationalism (distinguishing decolonised literature and psychology from postcolonial thought in literature and psychology). This radical aesthetic is inclusive, not reactionary, complex but open. The Caribbean Literary Seas, or Literary Sanctuary, is a psychological space of nurturance, re-energisation, and communion, where reader/writer/activists can creatively express and contemplate their weariness and wariness and how they (in)effectively overcome them. Although this can be a psychological space of rest, it can also be seen as a space of not-so-restful re-calibration and rearmament, if you will. Fiction is selected to portray and flesh out

this sanctuary concept as a possible fourth evolutionary diasporic heuristic phase and 21<sup>st</sup> Century decolonial psychological move.

Gilroy (1993) continues his exposition of diasporic phases by deliberating on the sad possibility that oppression has been a reality for so long that it has become tradition and even culture. I emphasise that the selected fiction rejects this notion in favour of portraying Caribbean Indigeneity/Creolisation as not being solely steeped in oppression, but as being defined by rebellion and victory such as that of the Maroons<sup>16</sup>. This makes the process of selecting primary texts a critically relational act of choosing what, and how, to remember, thereby privileging the decolonising impetus of survival through faithful witness and not the colonial gaze.

### ***3.9.3. Particularity as Decolonial Psychological Praxis in Literature***

Additionally, fiction is selected to reveal the critical distinction between the essentialisation of nature that typifies racism; and the particularisation of culture, positionality, and radical universal diversity (detailed below) that are hallmarks of decoloniality. To support this idea, I choose literature that brings to life what this study refers to as the ‘Jamaican Voice’. These are stories that demonstrate the historically, contextually,

---

<sup>16</sup> Maroons were Jamaican ex-slaves who defeated the ‘Great’ British army by using their sophisticated homegrown tactics and superior knowledge of the local terrain. They forced the British into the first ever treaty with freed slaves. Their name is synonymous with wily survival and thriving through indigeneity. Tragically, like most complex and divisive colonial history, there is also the deeply disturbing fact that some Maroons were said to recapture runaway enslaved people on behalf of the British.



and culturally specific humaning essence of Jamaican life and strategies of thriving. To bolster *The Jamaican Voice*, by contrast, I include texts that amplify its opposite - *The 'Colonial Voiceover'*. This voiceover exemplifies the corrosive effects of coloniality. It is a racist, sexist, homophobic, misogynistic narrative that attempts to override the 'smadditized' (actualised) self.

#### ***3.9.4. Caribbean Literary History Incentivises Decolonisation of Postcolonialism in Life, Politics, Identity, Citizenship, and Psychology***

It is as helpful to note what Caribbean literature was left out of this thesis as it is to justify that which was selected. Section 2.4 on the Problematics of Postcolonialism gave explicit reasons for the exclusion of some literature. Other disqualifying elements are hinted at where I detail the selection prerequisites. I will now give a brief historical overview of Caribbean Literature as it pertains to categories of texts included or left out dependent on the degree to which they reflect decolonial values. In 1994, Carole Boyce Davies called for the decolonisation of postcolonial studies (Boyce Davies, 2002). From this call it can be inferred that Caribbean literature was still heavily reflective of ideology and language not in sync with decolonial values. For purposes of clarity and to contextualise the arguments of this section, I reiterate that these decolonial values include resistance; new understandings and knowledges; the normalisation of feminist and indigenous thought; radical economic freedom that critically rejects capitalism; 'disobediently' de-linking from Euromerican thought; and the pursuit of liberatory practices. Texts that reflected or aided in pondering these values were carefully selected.

The start of modern Caribbean writing emerged in the early 1900s with work such as Thomas MacDermot's *Becka's "Buckra" Baby* (1904/2021) or seminal publications from Jamaica's first Indigenous publishing house such as MacDermot's *One Brown Girl And 1/4*, (1909). Caribbean Literature really started to develop as a corpus in the 1920s (Rosenberg,

2016). At that time literature from the islands and mainland territories, where English is the official language, was hailed as ‘West Indian Literature’ (Udofia, 2013). Today this distinction is not strictly adhered to. In the 1950s, West Indian Literature was popularised through mostly male writers who had migrated to the United Kingdom. Even though I have specifically not selected their novels to be included in this study, their postcolonial contribution to the corpus underpins decoloniality. And so, to give postcolonialism its due, I critically and historically locate their work as precursors to the decoloniality in psychology and literature that served to narrow down the texts that were selected. Apropos of this, I start this historical contextualisation with commentary on the significance of Windrush boom writers/ing, considered the authors and era that catapulted Caribbean literature into fame.

Multiple recent media reports describe the humiliating and disgraceful treatment of the ‘Windrush Generation’ being denied modern day British rights and services. This optimistic generation first arrived in the UK from the Caribbean between 1948 and 1972 at the invitation of the British Government who were facing a labour shortage due to the destruction caused by World War II. Named after the ship on which they arrived, the ‘HMT Empire Windrush’, these immigrants have paid taxes and insurance for decades, but were never formally made British citizens (Hull, 2018). Instead, new legislation, introduced on the back of hostility toward present-day fresh migrant waves into the UK, has resulted in the Windrush Generation losing jobs and facing deportation from Britain – the only home they have ever known since either birth, or their arrival as children.

This shameful betrayal of Caribbean-Britons bears out the bleak, cautionary tale of material (de)coloniality that the realism of postcolonial Windrush novelists could never adequately have imagined or conveyed despite the power of their anti-colonial fiction. These literary mavericks coalesced a discrete field motivated by a period of resistance that can be suitably furthered by the modern-day defiance of decolonial literature. They established the

postcolonial canon of Caribbean Literature and in so doing provide an explanation as to how Caribbean writing is inextricably linked to its history of colonial domination (Figueroa, 2015); and why questions of national identity became the last and most resistant marker to be decolonised in Caribbean fiction (Brydon & Tiffin, 1993). Although some literary critics (e.g., Brown & Rosenberg, 2015) question how this canonisation has obscured the great diversity of post-war Caribbean writing, it is commonly accepted that migrant writers were harbingers of change to Caribbean creative writing. Referred to as the ‘boom years’ of the 1950s and 1960s, the writing of this time consolidated broad alliances between global revolutionaries based in metropolitan centres; and voiced a sense of self, landscape, and national ambition, which reflected an era of sweeping transformation in ‘post-empire Britain’ (Wambu, 2011).

To advance the social activism of the Windrush postcolonial era, this thesis uses a decolonial lens to examine literary representations of the psychological complexities of hospitality and hostility, and of the belonging and refusal exemplified by the present-day betrayal of Caribbean-Britons written about in the primary selected texts. Although I honour and try to build on their gigantic contributions, I have chosen to exclude these Windrush male authors as a symbolic corrective to the under-representation of the (practically invisible) female and queer voice in early postcolonial literature. *Here Comes the Sun* (Dennis-Benn, 2016), the main text around which my psycho-literary analysis is based, is considered to be Caribbean Queer literature that challenges the heteronormative ways of viewing the world, specifically as regards to sexuality and gender identity.

### ***3.9.5. Creole Patwah as Decolonial Subversion and Epistemic Disobedience***

Even before the Windrush writing, pre-Independence Caribbean literature is written in the language of the Colonisers - English, French and Spanish - with no text from the original (autochthonous) inhabitants who were virtually wiped out by these colonisers (Brathwaite,

2019). The use of Caribbean dialect in literature came about in 1945 and rose to a crescendo in the sixties. Even though the inclusion of Creole was an exciting step in the direction of decoloniality, the period was still a conservative patriarchal one, with mainly male writers such as George Lamming - *In the Castle of My Skin* (1991/1953); V.S. Naipaul – *The Mystic Masseur* (1957), *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961); Vic Reid - *New Day* (1949); Samuel Selvon - *A Brighter Sun* (1952), *The Lonely Londoners* (1956); and one of the only prominent female writers, Louise Bennett-Coverley - *Jamaica Labrish* (1966b) (Britannica, 2021). For reasons already stated I have excluded all these major works except for the poetry of Louise Bennett-Coverley.

Densely metaphorical symbolism and surrealism made an appearance in francophone Caribbean Literature in works such as Aime Césaire’s (2001) *Return to the Native Land*, re-emerging in the sixties in the writing of Guyanese author Wilson Harris in his book *Palace of a Peacock* (2021). This writing technique, while having the rhythmic and elemental tones of the Caribbean, is not the best fit to showcase The Jamaican Voice. Instead, I selected texts that link the earthy grittiness of Patwah to the realism and ‘grung wisdom’ (grounded wisdom) of, for instance, the Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern<sup>17</sup> that this study tries to characterise as a sublime example of contemporary decolonial resistance.

My selection includes novels, anthologies of short stories, and poetry. However, *Here Comes the Sun* by Nicole Dennis-Benn (2016), a contemporary novel set in Jamaica against the backdrop of the tourist industry and representing the latest iteration of the capitalist

---

<sup>17</sup> Labelled and described in the thesis as female mavericks in survivalist mode, who achieve and perform 'traditional' male roles in misogynistic, patriarchal societies that abuse and oppress them for being Black (mostly, but not exclusively, poor) and female.

plantation economy, is the main text for my analysis. The decision to select Jamaican fiction is motivated by three primary factors.

First, the core themes and narrative plots of the selected fiction are salient to the central arguments and focus of the study. The selected fiction is evocative of a ‘Caribbeanness’: the shared and distinct histories, myths, rituals, spiritualities, traditions, cultures, geography, and sensibilities of the region. The authors of the selected fiction engage with the (re)construction of Afro-Caribbean identities and indigeneity, and importantly, resonate with global, localised, and diasporic colonised peoples’ experiences. The selected Jamaican novels have layered plots in which the characters take readers through complex, multi-dimensional, and interlocking experiences of economic exploitation, racism, colourism, classism, sexism, and homophobia. These tales of exclusion and oppression interwoven with privilege are mostly set in independent Jamaica. For example, Nicole Dennis-Benn’s novel, *Here Comes the Sun*, which serves as the primary axis of critical analysis is used as a node of provocation and is extensively referenced against other influential Jamaican literature to locate the argument within broader decolonial parameters.

Second, given that I am a Jamaican, English first language and Patwah speaker, I limited the selection to Anglophone Jamaican literature.

Third, I adopted Grosfoguel’s (2011, p. 30) “radical universal decolonial anti-systemic diversity” that encapsulates resistance to the abstract universalising impulse of Eurocentric epistemologies. Eurocentric epistemologies absorb the particular into the formation of Western similitudes. In resistance to this abstract universalising impulse, **radical universal decolonial anti-systemic diversity** builds off of a decolonial universal through affirming multiple ‘local particularities’ joined together by a common anti-capitalist, anti-patriarchal, and anti-racist language arising from various locations across the South. The selection logic subscribes to the key thesis - proposed by de Sousa Santos (2007) and

Grosfoguel (2011), as well as other decolonial thinkers - that resistance to coloniality assumes different forms across several sites and is shaped by a multitude of epistemologies.

To put Grosfoguel's (2011) ideology into practice I purposely select ideas and thoughts of local (Jamaican) writers and yet consciously seek to relate them to decolonial scholarship of the larger Global South. While other instances of this method will become evident in subsequent chapters, a glaring example of how this thesis engages Grosfoguel's (2011) ideas are evident in the use of Nettleford's exposition of Ras Tafari that eschews popular Eurocentric epistemology in favour of local particularities. Further, I have intentionally not selected methodology from the work of any writers or intellectuals who are from outside of the Global South.

Notwithstanding my interest in articulating the particularities in postcolonial and decolonial Jamaican fiction, throughout this study my intention is to communicate through a "common critical language" (Grosfoguel, 2011, p. 30), that resonates and travels across multiple sites of resistance (in the Caribbean, or for that matter, any region) (Fine, 2006). And so, the analysis of the selected texts is underpinned by the 'decolonial universal' epistemologies of Africa, South America, Asia, and the Middle East (amongst others).

### ***3.9.6. Primary Texts and Themes***

Below I summarise the key themes covered by each of the selected fictional pieces and describe how they respectively lend themselves to the core focus of my study. Although many texts are cited in this study, not all texts are extensively covered and may only be briefly referenced where they provide a particularly salient portrayal of a theme.

The characters of *Here Comes the Sun*, by Nicole Dennis-Benn (2016), take readers through intricate, nuanced, and interconnected experiences of economic exploitation, marginalisation, racism, colourism, classism, sexism, homophobia, as well as the moral conservatism and entitled heteronormative realities of Jamaican life. The themes also deal

with the nexus between the ‘**Christian Civilising Mission**’ (an adaptation of the Christian ethic to the secular and capitalist goal of colonisation, regarded here as a specific force of coloniality and a stated tool of imperialism and power), masculinised politics, and exploitative economics. There is a palpable quality to the storylines that conveys the crude and violent dimensions of coloniality. The excruciating story of the personal tragedies experienced by the three main female characters is also the story of the influences of coloniality in its adaptive manifestations. Nicole Dennis-Benn’s book offers me - the critical reader - substantive material to probe and illustrate how a decolonial approach might be used to analyse the novel’s plot, structure, narrative, characterisation, voice, and themes which, with differing degrees, reflect the tensions and influences of coloniality as well the impulses of decolonial thought and psychology.

*Small Island*, a novel by Andrea Levy (2009), tells the story of a young couples’ migration from Jamaica to Britain, referred to as the ‘Motherland’ in my study. After migration both the husband, a war time serviceman, and his wife, a trained teacher, encounter the harsh realities of life in ‘Great’ Britain. The plot and story lines allow readers to accompany the characters through their multiple lived experiences and psychological transformations as unwelcome migrants in Britain and the paradoxes and stressors their lives in Britain produce. The story highlights how migrants enact agency to enter closed and parochial British English communities even when bigoted locals do not recognise migrants’ talents and skills. The novel’s plot juxtaposes the characters’ experiences in Britain - the Motherland, and America - the StepMotherland, with the quality of their lives and material conditions in Jamaica - the Maddaland, prior to migration. The juxtaposition deftly produces a story of multiple journeys from idolisation of the ‘Great’ Britain to scepticism. The text allows this study to analyse the paradoxical encounter between migration and identity (re)formation in the context of coloniality.

*How to Love a Jamaican*, by Alexia Arthurs (2018), is a collection of short stories set in the United States of America (USA), referred to in this study as the ‘StepMotherland’. In these stories the USA is portrayed as the ‘new’ home for Jamaican migrants who are jaded by the unfilled promises of the Motherland portrayed by Arthurs as a chimera. Arthurs invites readers to live with the characters and the pain, pleasures, ambiguities, and contradictions they encounter as migrants as well as, later in the novel, as returnees to their home country ‘Maddaland’. These short stories are about the allure and hurt, as well as the hierarchisation of labour produced by capitalism. The themes and characterisations articulate the struggles of Jamaican migrants as underclass menial labourers, including nannies and cleaners, and their intersecting experiences of racism, colourism, and patriarchy - the dogged menaces of coloniality. Reflective of the myriad social and psychological responses that migrants may develop under conditions of social marginalisation, racism, sexism, patriarchy, and economic exploitation, many of the short stories invert the plot lines. Resisting the hackneyed postcolonial tropes that create stories of people fleeing jingoism, patriarchy, and the harshness of life in their island countries to seek refuge in the cosmopolitan centres of the safe West; a few of the short stories are about daughters returning, often sent back by their mothers, to Maddaland, to heal from the wounds of coloniality. As analyst-reader I find these stories instructive as far as they help to examine how, compared to the USA, the home country, Jamaica, is defined as a psychosocial healing and rejuvenating space. This is a distinct decolonial theme, or resilient psychological behaviour, which moves reader and social actors away from the postcolonial tropes of migration as act/strategy of healing.

*Lionheart Gal: Life Stories of Jamaican Women* by Honor Ford-Smith and Sistren (1987) is an edited collection of (auto)biographies which provide first-hand witness accounts of political and economic turmoil during postcolonialism in Jamaica. The (auto)biographies traverse the themes of education functioning as a vehicle of the Christian Civilising Mission,



race, racism, classism, and migration. The backdrop of all the stories is a society steeped in coloniality noticeable in the arbitrariness and oppressiveness of the justice system, especially as encountered by poor Black people and young males. The collection also embodies (auto)biographies of The Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern. These stories seamlessly connect and inter-link around the exploits and triumphs of the Jamaican heroine ‘Nanny the Maroon’, an enslaved woman who displayed great courage in resistance to colonialism. Her Indigenous wisdom and resistant spirit are invoked to embolden the resistance of The Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern. In the Preface to the book Honor Ford-Smith (1987) describes the spirit of ‘Ni’ (Nanny the Maroon), as resilient, enduring, and as ever faithfully appearing when needed to assist the oppressed. I reference these stories against Nicole Dennis-Benn’s *Here Comes the Sun* to demonstrate how writers can use the decolonial techniques of truth telling, folklore, and faithful witness to retrieve Indigenous psychology and knowledge. These stories examine how the stories’ appeal to invoke ‘Ni’s’ spirit (found in The Caribbean Black Feminist Subalterns) may be an exaltation of the generative role of local knowledge, history, and wisdom in decoloniality. These stories and their morals can strengthen a decolonial archive and add to a liberatory psychology imaginary.

*Augustown*, a novel by Kei Miller (2017), deals with spirituality in the setting of a rural town where a Ras Tafari Prophet emerges to enthrall and captivate his immediate community and people from all over the island of Jamaica. Miller, through his characterisation and narrative plots, seems to entreat readers to witness and consider how indigenous spirituality and spiritual knowledges may counter the coloniality of the Christian Civilising Mission. In the novel Miller’s writing style and sub-plots promote and celebrate Jamaican spirituality, epistemology, folklore, role models, wisdoms, biography, and psychology. The novel invites a deep engagement with Rastafarianism; an engagement that goes beyond a mere Western-centric critique of Rastafarianism’s merits and limitations as an

ideology and religious spirituality. With respect to the aims of my study, the novel presents material that facilitates an examination of how indigenous spiritualities, notwithstanding their contradictions (and yes, failings), may operate to dislodge the assumed superiority of Western Christian spirituality. Overall, the novel is epistemically disobedient and exposes the reader to a localised ontology, cosmology, and psychology.

*By love Possessed* is a collection of short stories authored by Lorna Goodison (2012). Situated within complex relationships and dominant political and economic structures, Goodison's characters in the short stories exemplify and display the disproportionate psychological power inherent in small acts of resistance to the everyday encounters of injustice in the criminal justice, labour, and economic realms. Goodison's stories also deal with the theme of migration and the complicated Jamaica-USA political, social, and cultural dialectics. The ways in which Goodison assumes a writing style and language inclusive of Patwah and collective 'Jamaicanisms' in her anthology of short stories creates analytical space to study how the coloniality of language may be inverted as an act of resistance. Her writing celebrates the validity of other-than-Western languages as practices of decolonial thought and psychological praxis.

*Talking of Trees* is an anthology of poetry produced by Olive Senior (1985). Her poems, including *Colonial Girls School*, enunciates on the interactions between social class, colourism, and education as an entrenching axis of coloniality of power, knowledge, and being. For purposes of this study her poetry animates thoughts on the complexities implicated in eliminating colonial education and for liberating ways of knowing and being. Senior's dynamic satirisation of colonialism helps me, as reader-analyst, to scrutinise how untransformed education in the postcolonial context might perform coloniality with damaging effects on the psyche; and exemplifies how writing decolonial forms of poetry and the associated renditions may be social activist enactments that encourage psychosocial healing.

Olive Senior's writing style, emblematic of decolonial pedagogy, encapsulates autobiographical consciousness - a 'grung wisdom' (grounded wisdom) - that brings to life decolonial psychological praxis (Bucknor, 2011).

*Jamaica Labrish*, a collection of poetry by Louise Bennett-Coverley (Miss Lou) (1966b), reflects Jamaican peoples' lives and cultures in a way that is painful, joyous, and resistant to coloniality. Bennett-Coverley's poems enable Intersectional comprehension of how humour and other literary and psychological devices may be used to name and render visible historical oppression experienced in the Motherland. Her poems such as *Colonization in Reverse* help to exemplify the dynamics underlying the makings of a decolonial approach to literature and decolonial psychology. Miss Lou's poetry validates and legitimises Jamaican creole, Patwah. Through the mobilisation of Patwah in her poetry, Miss Lou renders the working class, otherwise located on the periphery of Jamaican power structures and society, visible. More to the point, her Patwah effects a presence of the working classes in Jamaica's literature, television, and entertainment. There is a richness to Louise Bennett-Coverley's poetry that permits nuanced exploration of how poetic expression and writings may be sites of decolonial psychological praxis that includes identity reconstruction. They offer multiple modes of ontological presence beyond the narrow discourses of nationalism and racialised cultural rejuvenation.

### **3.10. Social and Epistemic Location, Projected Value**

#### ***3.10.1. Social and Epistemic Location***

Rejecting the myth of a "disembodied neutrality and objectivity" (Grosfoguel, 2011, p. 5), and embracing the emphasis on lived experience in connection to others and their context, I submit this study as an act of epistemic disobedience in which a writer/researcher/psychologist delinks from hegemonic modes of detached observation

(Mignolo, 2013). This thesis is influenced by my own social and epistemological location including my Caribbean heritage and early formative educational and social experiences in Jamaica. I was born in the era of postcolonialism, and so my social consciousness was awakened by the zeitgeist of political independence, nation-building, and cultural revitalisation. The public debates in that period of postcolonialism, as well as my senior high school education, heightened my awareness about the complexities of the decolonial project, especially as they relate to our everyday cultural practices, educational curricula, and our selection of stories.

My interests in these issues were deepened during my undergraduate years at Howard University, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU - founded to educate students of African American descent) based in Washington D.C., USA. At Howard University I engaged with the fictional writings of novelists and poets such as Toni Morrison, Chinua Achebe, Nikki Giovanni, and Marcus Garvey who eloquently describe and capture the complex material and psychological depths of Black lives. These writers and poets deepened my understandings and encounters of colourism and my experiences of being Black, and a woman, in the world. In my experience, how my own 'race' and colour seem to be perceived (and reacted to) changes according to the geo-political location of my observer. Together these experiences impact on my own journey of healing from the colonial wound. Mignolo and his co-authors describe the colonial wound as:

the experience of the racialized subject, the wounded subject, because racialization is always a classification and a ranking, and that classification is not embedded in 'nature' but is man-made (human-made). And the wounded subject is not necessarily the poor or the subaltern, but it could be you or me. The colonial wound cuts across

social classes, and it is both racial and patriarchal. (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014, p. 201)

The colonial wound is the consequence of the invention of essentialised human difference (Mignolo, 2007b).

Even though I affiliate to the political and epistemological meanings of ‘Black’ articulated by Black Consciousness as critical awareness of anti-black racism, independent liberatory thought, and as modes of solidarity among the oppressed (Steve Biko, 1998; Aimé Césaire, 2001; W. E. B. Du Bois, 2015; Frantz Fanon, 2007, 2008; Marcus Garvey, 2004; and Léopold Senghor, 1966; et al.), I have been troubled and provoked by many racist and racialized encounters in Jamaica, Washington DC, and in South Africa which is my current home. This study, inspired by Grosfoguel’s (2011) call to decolonize postcolonial stories, and hooks’s (2014) appeal to writers to be social activists, is therefore embedded in the personal-collective decolonial struggle and journey of healing from the colonial wound. I share this journey of racist and patriarchal provocation, decolonial struggle, and healing, embodying decolonial modes of thought, creativity, and being (Mignolo, 2018) with many others in my multiple communities of significance.

### ***3.10.2. Projected Value of the Study***

The projected value of this thesis in the decolonial literary-psychological context is that both the creative writing and the critical commentary may serve as resources for emergent decolonial and South-centred knowledge archives and liberatory psychology. In as much as the creative writing is deeply connected to my own ongoing political and personal journey in respect of decoloniality, if I successfully situate myself as a thinker, storyteller, and communicator, then my writing might encourage reflexive discussions about collective and personal identity, psychology, and liberation within situations of decolonisation. My

writing will be born of, and therefore belong to, the communities that produced me; and my/our story will be a small embodiment of the larger societal struggle for healing, authenticity, and humanisation.

I now start the psycho-literary analysis chapters of this thesis challenged by the words of C.L.R. James who rebuked colonial dominance and called for a new reality grounded in what he evidently saw as a Caribbean authenticity boundless in scope and possibilities:

Nobody knows what the Caribbean population is capable of. Nobody has ever attempted to find out. The only history that's there is the accumulation of facts and fantasies of intellectuals [who are] physically, mentally, and psychologically products of the colonial plantation system, telling the people what they ought to do to accommodate themselves to the very system which in all its brutalities is stifling and strangling them. (Trotman, 1993, p. 51)

I will now “attempt to find out”.

## Chapter 4: Bless Up I And I! Bless Up!<sup>18</sup> Confronting the Coloniality of Being

### 4.1. Introduction: Desalinating The Caribbean Literary Seas

Perhaps an apt, although by no means perfect, metaphor to capture the difficulty of achieving psychic decoloniality, is a comparison of this sisyphian task with an attempt to remove all the salt from the Caribbean Sea. The futility of such a task renders it bizarre. So too, attempts to completely rid The Caribbean ‘literary seas’ of coloniality. Where would one begin or end the challenge of purging the psyche of coloniality? Desalination requires an intensity of heat that evaporates and destroys, and causes to disappear completely the very nature of the thing from which one is trying to remove the salt. Results could be successful, but pyrrhic.

This chapter will not approach a decolonial psychological reading of Caribbean Literature as if it were an extractive, desalination exercise. As can be seen when I study Dennis-Benn’s (2016) *Here Comes the Sun* for decolonial moves, this is not solely a mission where vestiges of coloniality are to be doggedly sought out, removed, or destroyed using the intense heat of a decolonial literary Caribbean sun. Rather, I will attempt to dilute away the salience of coloniality by using a reconfiguring and additive approach or Borderlands thinking (Lugones, 2010; Mignolo, 2013) to value alternative knowledges and voices that exist on the margins of the colonial matrix of power. I will show how Caribbean writing enables a fundamental psychological paradigm shift, in which Indigenous spheres of

---

<sup>18</sup> ‘Bless up’ is a Jamaican greeting that encapsulates respect, affection, and the conferring of/wishing for divine favour upon the person being greeted; it expresses extreme gratitude for and over them.

influence and subversive power create sanctuaries of nurturance and confrontation for those who dare to challenge social injustice and oppression (Hill Collins, 2002) - *The Caribbean Literary Seas*.

This decolonial psychological reading of Caribbean writing focuses on how authors immerse themselves and their readers in restorative and curative Caribbean Literary Seas that are constantly renewed by tributaries of Indigenous knowledge. This reading will focus on diluting the 'salt' of coloniality to a tolerable or even useful level, using epistemological feeder springs. Using wellsprings such as those that come up and out of the mountainous heartlands of Jamaica; from where the Maroons defeated the 'Great' British army using their superior knowledge of local terrain and sophisticated home-grown tactics; and from where the Maroons forced the British into the first ever treaty with freed slaves.

This study explores how authors attempt to lead readers to the Borderlands, the merged space where traces of coloniality are constantly flooded with fresh Indigenous knowledge rivers flowing into welcoming aquamarine Caribbean Literary Seas that buoy both body and soul in their restorative swell. These are the decolonial Literary Seas where one can author, research or read stories in which one can see oneself, whoever that is, clearly. Because in its glassy waves all colours shine brightly, and distinct body parts are magnified and vividly seen...as connected to the whole. Reflected back to anyone in the Literary Sea's embrace is a situated sense of self, lived reality, and agentic particularity.

This psychological decolonial commentary discusses how Caribbean writers portray that the further one drifts out away from Maddaland shores, the more treacherous and



overpowering the enormity of Step/Motherland<sup>19</sup> waters can seem. For those are the freezing waters that Conquistadors once battled, they are the transatlantic oceans described by Gilroy (1993) and Hall (2020), a psychological space where one can be overwhelmed, lost or drowned. Metaphorically, those transatlantic waters are yawning colonial oceans with a murky emptiness, where at best, one can spot a shadowy, distorted body part that seems disconnected from the whole. This chapter will investigate how The Caribbean Literary Seas can be a psychological sanctuary of, and for, decolonial activists who have grown weary from their modern day, backward, transatlantic crossing.

Assuming the understanding that an Indigenous Caribbean episteme constantly renews and enlarges literary seas can serve to debunk the powerful and soul-destroying myth that global knowledge is purely colonial or Euro-American (Grosfoguel, 2013; Mignolo, 2007). This conceptualisation is the starting point for this chapter's psycho-literary analysis. The idea that Indigenous source knowledge has the power to increase a liberatory psychological imaginary. In this analysis I try to use readings to recreate a decolonial imaginary that allows readers to accompany authors as they cross borders; subvert language as an act of resistance; correct hegemonic distortions using situated knowledge; re-inscribe thoughts and actions; reconnect us with relatable, (auto) biographical, faithful-witness storytelling; and highlight the Maroon style reinvention of struggle and resistance.

Though decolonial writings within The Caribbean Literary Seas can engender a sense of self, they are not necessarily peaceful. This writing can be a violent, albeit transformative, psychological encounter for readers and authors because it takes them through the

---

<sup>19</sup> Step/Motherland is the abbreviation used to refer to both StepMotherland and Motherland, aka America and Britain.

subversion, displacement, and extraordinarily disruptive and creative awakenings of smadditizing characters. One tongue-in-cheek intention of this analytical chapter is to symbolically lead traditionalist literary critics and psychologists of the Global North to, like their British forebears who battled the Maroons, ‘sign a treaty’ with critical decolonial Jamaican writings, epistemology, and psychology.

#### **4.2. The ‘Jamaican Voice’: The Jamaican Being**

Hussein Bulhan (2004, p. 252), observes that once colonisers “conquered the people and occupied the land, they assaulted the world of meaning, because no system of oppression lasts without occupation of the mind and ontology of the oppressed”. This succinctly explains the psychological effects of the ‘coloniality of being’ that normalises hellish conditions and the dehumanisation of the oppressed. The ‘coloniality of being’ creates an excessively visible or invisible subject that is a non-person. Frantz Fanon (2007) refers to these subjects as ‘the damnés’<sup>20</sup> or the condemned of the earth.

The coloniality of being permeates the European philosophy that created doubts about the very humanity and ontology of colonised people. Maldonado-Torres (2007, p. 246) terms this “misanthropic scepticism”. Early philosophical declarations of European humanity such as “you are human”, when applied to Black people became a racist and cynical, rhetorical question such as “Are you completely human?” (p. 246). “You are rational” became “Are you really rational?” (p. 246). The Cartesian formulation “I think, therefore I am”, supposedly a universal - to whites - was customised to “I think I am inferior, therefore I am inferior” for the damnés (p. 246).

---

<sup>20</sup> French word meaning ‘the damned’.

Fanon (2007) holds that a political and epistemic intervention in the coloniality of being would involve the *damnés* becoming primary agents of transformation. A psychological decolonial reading of Jamaican Literature constitutes such an epistemic intervention by revealing a subalternate ontology, a situated ego, or a 'being', that for convenience I will refer to in all its complexity as '**The Jamaican Voice**'. In the readings to follow, this voice functions as a psycho-literary transformative agent for the Jamaican *damnés* by radically disrupting the coloniality of being. While obviously this is not an essentialised being but a representation of a plethora of voices striving for freedom, The Jamaican Voice refers to a liberatory essence in Jamaican Literature. It is collective even when a character is speaking alone. Meaning, it embodies the ontology and knowledges of a people's history, culture, and lived experiences of oppression used as an effective tool to reclaim personhood for the colonially de-othered (smadditization). Decolonial Jamaican writing uses this authentic narrative Jamaican Voice as a literary and psychological device to fortify characters. These strengthened characters, consciously and unconsciously, exemplify a quintessentially Jamaican way of existing in the world that can interrupt, and become an antidote to, coloniality. Although, obviously, not all Jamaicans may identify with this Voice, many, if not most, will certainly be able to identify the Voice or liberatory essence by virtue of having lived with other Jamaicans or in Jamaica and by having been communally exposed to it.

The Jamaican Voice is suffused with a down to earth quality derived from age old wisdoms that accord respect to peripheralised Voices. This element of The Jamaican Voice is typified by Jamaican author Olive Senior's writing style of autobiographical consciousness. She describes her autobiographical consciousness as one deeply embedded in Jamaica, no matter where she travelled (Simpson, 2008). Senior's style sets the tone for this study's focus on the migratory psychology of Jamaicans. Senior immerses herself in the alterity, privileging

ancestral wisdom sourced from those marginalised by society. She calls this “putting an ear to the ground”, and recounts that rural Jamaican community elders explain the source of their wisdom by saying “grung tell me wud” (the ground tells me words) (Bucknor, 2011, p. 12) Her writing makes a case for the primacy of a psychology that is rooted in rural communities, and that privileges the value of the lives of everyday people. Bucknor calls her style of writing ‘grung’ poetics, which is a decidedly non-European style of writing based on the art of listening to underground or submerged voices (Bucknor, 2011). The next section will investigate how The Jamaican Voice/Being in literature functions to induce decolonial knowledge-making and is frequently identifiable in Patwah - the ‘grung’ writing/language of contemporary authors.

#### ***4.2.1. Patwah***

Patwah is the creole Indigenous language of Jamaicans considered to be a heteroglossia of various dialects and languages. It is considered the life blood of Jamaican culture; a thought which is inherent in Maldonado-Torres’s (2007) reference to language signifying being.

One of the decolonial contributions of all the novels investigated here, is to position Patwah as a decolonial mode of knowledge-making through creolised language, a methodology that can potentially be used in liberatory psychology. The Patwah Jamaican Voice in storytelling generates knowledge and meaning by helping readers and writers to make sense of social relationships, and collective and cultural realities, precisely because it is based on the ‘grung wud’ of the local community. In these Jamaican novels, Patwah adopts a ‘grung’ knowledge-making mode that is not at all like the scientific, jargonised form associated with academic intellectualism in Psychology. In all these stories, Patwah becomes a powerful epistemological tool to effectively transmit culturally embedded knowledge. Thus, Jamaican decolonial grung writing and Patwah makes an epistemic contribution that is

assumed to be more widely representative of, and accessible to, the psychology of the alterity. This writing, the Patwah Jamaican Voice, reaches, impacts, and moves what bell hooks (in Chua & hooks, 1994) considers to be the most important audience - the masses located outside of the academy. As a result, it can convincingly be debated that at a certain level, the novelists who use Patwah become social activists and champions of the type of pluriversalism that can contribute toward shifting global perspectives and knowledges when their texts become popularised amongst ordinary people. The following excerpt, illustrating class specific challenges of the Jamaican masses, conveys how characters sharing a very particularised grung wisdom of the alterity use patwah dialogue that immediately cues the reader not to necessarily expect the type of advice that would be conveyed between members of the upper classes:

Thandi regrets saying anything, sensing her complaint might be interpreted as her wanting less out of life. Less opportunity. Less chance of attracting the type of boys her mother and sister want her to attract (the type who will be at the party for sure). Less chance of acceptance in school. Less chance to flunk school—the only ship on which black girls like her could float, given that their looks will never do it for them. Her mother tells her this too. “Di only thing yuh have going for you is yuh education. Don’t ruin it.” Meanwhile, the unintelligent “brownins” in school end up with modeling contracts, or with boyfriends with money they can spend on them. (*Here Comes the Sun*, p. 21)

Ordinary West Indians (the masses) have speech patterns that suggest a person’s class, level of education, age, and self-concept (Hodge, 2011). Take for instance the following excerpt from *Here Comes the Sun* (2016) that immediately reflects the damaged

self-concept and coloniality of an uneducated Jamaican that would not have seemed authentic or conveyed the person's belonging to a 'lower-class' had the dialogue been spoken in standard English and not Patwah:

"Luckily yuh 'ave good hair already," Miss Ruby says. "Good, coolie hair. Yuh daddy is a Indian?" "I don't know," Thandi says, still staring up at the planks in the ceiling. "Never met him." "Tsk, tsk. Well, God played a cruel joke on you. Because, chile, if yuh skin was as pretty as yuh hair, you'd be one gorgeous woman." Miss Ruby isn't saying anything Thandi hasn't heard before. Her mother says the same thing, often shaking her head the way she does over burned food that has to go to waste. "It's a pity yuh neva have skin like yuh daddy." Thandi is neither the nutmeg-brown that makes Margot an honorable mistress—a rung lower than a bright-skinned wife—nor is she black like Delores, whose skin makes people sympathetic when they see her. "Who want to be black like dat in dis place?" (p. 20)

When English is spoken in the Caribbean it is not spoken as though it were the special property of anyone, and it is infused with a special quality by virtue of 'tone' even when there is no creole vocabulary or syntax (Walcott, 1986). This 'tone' is but one element of The Jamaican Voice.

At a basic level, The Jamaican Voice is mostly, though not exclusively, expressed using Patwah. Kei Miller speaks to the impact and origins of Patwah by writing: "It's funny, isn't it, this whole process—how various dialects bleed into each other; how every language is a graveyard of languages, how every language is a storehouse of history" (Miller, 2017, p. 216). Inherently Patwah "expresses the refusal of a people to imitate a coloniser...and is the

movement from obedience to revolution” (Ford-Smith, 1987, p. XVIII). It is “a language which is political and central to power relations” (p. XXIX).

Both authors’ observations of the power of Patwah are illustrated in *Augustown* (Miller, 2017) when the arrogant and racist colonial master attempts to dominate by learning it. In an ironic twist, this character, Sir Leslie Probyn, the Scottish Colonial administrator posted in Jamaica, inverts Ford-Smith’s theory by attempting as coloniser to imitate the colonised. He believes that mastering Patwah will give him respect and authority over locals, and will help him to keep them subjugated:

You think this place make only for blackman? Eh? He thought the words in his head, but would never say them aloud. He took a perverse pleasure in mentally practising the pidgin language of whatever place he was posted to. Look at me and look at you, nah! Like yu out to drown in yu ownna sweat! And Probyn imagined that, after a time, a measure of respect and awe would emanate from the guard towards him, a kind of concession of his right to be there and to govern. (Miller, 2017, p. 116)

Probyn’s character is written as the embodiment of the coloniality of being. Yet, with the delicious complexity inherent to the decolonised Jamaican Voice, we are also shown that while Patwah is a necessary element of its definition, it is not sufficient. Miller pointedly uses this scene with Probyn to remind the reader that for as liberatory as Patwah is, it is only one part, one atom of The Jamaican Voice - the Jamaican way of existing in the world - that liberates Jamaicans. As the story unfolds, we see that while Probyn could master Patwah speech (at least in his head), he is never able to master The Jamaican Voice and dominate the island or control how people view him as was his expressed wish in the above quote.

Profoundly, although the coloniser imitates the colonised, he is still never able to possess, nor is he able to subjugate, the liberatory Jamaican Being!

We see further proof of the coloniser's (Probyn's) impotence in two particular scenes in which *The Jamaican Voice* forcefully confronts the coloniality of being. In one scene an "uppity mulatto" Jamaican, Mr. Azaar, scolds Probyn for not resolving the problem of the "negroes" seeking increased power and independence (pp. 69-70). Mr. Azaar speaks down to Probyn in a way that leaves the racist seething at both the truth of the criticism, and the rank disrespect evident in this "coloured's" overbearing manner (p. 69). This scene exemplifies how a local uses a version of *The Jamaican Voice*, which is typical, but is not solely the domain of, the Jamaican upper classes. It is infused with the authority and type of confidence that Probyn has never experienced from the colonised:

Azaar slammed his hand on the table, causing even the governor to jump. "What you mean, you don't see why this is a pressing matter?" he bellowed. "Look here, Mr. Governor. With all due respect, you don't seem to understand how things work on this island...Mr. Azaar tried again "Mr. Governor, sir. Let me talk plain. You don't like me. You see me as a brash little uncouth man. I know that. Of course I know that. And to be honest, I couldn't give a flying fuck what you Limeys think of us. After you leave this bloody island, I'll still be here..." And Richard Azaar shrugged magnificently as if depositing the weight of the world in the governor's lap. (pp. 72-74)

In the second example, Probyn's embitterment is laid bare in a scene where he violently flings a book across the room. He is rankled out of his characteristic colonial master insouciance because the book, written by a neo-colonial American Harry Frank, criticises the



British for their glaring failure in the Caribbean; it outlines a rapid deterioration in rule and governance of the former colonies. For Probyn, and the reader, the description of the British powerlessness is a reminder of the stark reality that the Jamaican being is no longer colonised, and is rapidly moving toward liberation:

Indeed, a journey to the West Indies is apt to cause the American to rearrange his notions of the relative efficiency of the English, and the French or ourselves, as colonisers. We are sadly in need of a Colonial Office and a corps of trained officials to administer what we dislike to call our colonies, but even our deserving Democrats, or Republicans, as the case may be, scarcely hamper the development of our dependencies as thoroughly as do its medieval-minded rulers that of Jamaica. (p. 71)

Together these scenes serve to drive home that *The Jamaican Voice*, as representative of the Jamaican being that confronts the coloniality of being, dwells in the intricacies of Patwah, but is also a much larger psychological phenomenon that the coloniser could neither replicate nor capture.

Turning to other characteristics of Patwah and its relationship to *The Jamaican Voice* leads to the critical work of Carolyn Cooper, *Noises in Blood* (1995). Cooper regards noise and vulgarity as a means of disrupting middle-class codes of hyper-respectability in Jamaica. These two elements create an active psychological weapon of working-class resistance against the oppressiveness of colonial comportment. Bucknor (2009) uses Cooper's work as a point of departure to argue that Afro-Caribbean speech rituals become a revolutionary psychological weapon against discursive oppression. He elaborates by drawing on various Caribbean performance critics, such as Brathwaite (Britannica, 2021) and Rohlehr (1992),

who explore the relationship between Caribbean writing and oral traditions and performances to convincingly establish that there is indeed a relationship between speech performance and literary studies, specifically between ritual speech performance and postcolonial resistance. He goes as far as to state that speech sound has been used to express revolt against colonialism, poverty, and patriarchy by female characters in Caribbean writing. Bucknor (2009) continues on to argue that sound is as significant as sight in the Afro-Caribbean speech rituals and expressive performances that aid postcolonial subjects' survival of discursive and physical atrocities. While space does not allow me to do justice to the depth of Bucknor's (2009) theories, I believe his and Cooper's (1995) accounts of the various roles and elements of the Afro-Caribbean voice sets precedents for interpreting speech rituals as postcolonial/decolonial resistance practice in real life and the literature that captures it.

Their ideas certainly provide conceptual purchase for the critical theory that Patwah, often a working-class dialogue in Jamaican grung writing, uses the performance of crude or vulgar descriptors to put a person or thing in their place so blatantly, that an audience is taken aback and recognises certain truths immediately. The psycho-literary discussions that follow are based on this idea - that Jamaican authors sometimes neutralise colonial social class inequality by using indelicate or even profane descriptors typical in Patwah speech. For example, the use of Patwah grung writing in Lorna Goodison's (2012) *By Love Possessed* is colourful, banal, and open in its delivery - "Bag a sugar gal", "Kitchen Knife", "Swine Posse", and "Cracklin Rosies" are but a few indelicate Patwah character names in *A Love Possessed* (Goodison, 2012) that make this point. Literary critics say of Goodison's writing that it is some of the most effective in the dominant expression of Jamaican creole. Goodison privileges Patwah usage, not merely as dialogue, a form to which many readers have already become accustomed, but as a narrative voice or as a means of articulating a complex interiority (Murray, 2012). The narrative voice to which Murray refers is an embodiment of

The Jamaican Voice and it is not always insulting or demeaning as in the case of the Goodison character names mentioned above.

In other selected texts there are examples of the simplicity of a Patwah descriptive name bestowing honour by being complimentary and declarative. In such cases The Jamaican Voice is a decolonial psychological ploy used to cut through the colonial tradition of hierarchically evaluating a person's worth based foremostly on their race or shade. Instead, the informal, sometimes crass, Patwah descriptors concisely sum up a person's gift, pronouncing that in of its own right, the described talent is beyond comparison and needs no further amplification. It confers high status, conveying that one has reached the ultimate level of their talent. For example, in Lorna Goodison's story *The Help Weight* (2012, p. 18), one character was simply known as "the cow bredda" (the cow brother) because he was good at looking after cattle. Another example of this is seen in the naming of the *Augustown* (Miller, 2017) character 'Soft-Paw', a gangster whose talent was to silently and stealthy creep up on his victims undetected. This type of naming is a quite common means of conferring respect (showing awe) in Jamaica - even if, as is the case with Soft-Paw, the talent itself is not 'respectable'. A similar real-life example that depicts this cultural trend is found in the popular name of the current Jamaican Prime Minister who is, deservedly or undeservedly, known as 'Bro Gad' (Bro God). Translated from Patwa this means that he is the ultimate version of a loyal friend. i.e., Bro (brother) - meaning loyal and trustworthy Friend. And Gad (god) - qualifier used to mean the person has attained a godlike level or extreme and ultimate version of something. In this case it is trustworthiness or brotherhood. I will now flesh out how using the Patwah Jamaican Voice to name in these stated ways can be considered a decolonial literary and psychological device of empowerment.

#### ***4.2.2. Naming and Shaming (or Claiming?)***

A distinctive feature of *The Jamaican Voice*, identified in the primary novels, is its matter of fact, irreverent, almost cruel naming of people and places. Names are often without irony and declare things to be just like they are. The effect of *The Jamaican Voice* naming is in line with Cooper's (1995) suggestion that Jamaican vulgarity completely rejects the formality and properness that are the hallmarks of the colonial world. For example, in the story *The Emancipation of a Household Slave*, the main character relates that she asked "one big foot lady" for directions and explains that another character was openly called "Miss Piggy" because she was fat and black (*Lionheart Gal*, p. 92). Immediately formality dissipates, middle-class social graces are dispensed of, and a working class grung essence dominates, taking control of the scene (Bauer & Calude, 2020; Beers Fägersten, 2007; Wiecha, 2010). In this way the power of the Jamaican subaltern is established as the authority within the setting (using grung language). While there are obvious criticisms to be made about the use of such descriptors, the reader is asked to suspend them as they contemplate the force of this psycho-literary, culturally driven strategy that elevates the normally subordinated class to a position of dominance over where the story goes, and by design, facilitates a psychological 'takeover' of the authority by the classes ascribed to subalternity by coloniality.

A more detailed understanding of this insurgent technique is found in Kei Miller's (2017) utilisation of *The Jamaican Voice*'s crude naming habit. Miller effectively emphasises the symbolic defeat over the coloniality of being in the story *Augustown*, where a once highly respected teacher spectacularly falls from grace. The teacher has an elegant, Christian inspired name - Mr. Saint-Josephs. In the tale, the teacher suffers a dramatic descent into madness after his eye is gouged out with the same scissors that he used to cut off a student's dreadlocks in a shocking act of racial self-hatred. Saint-Josephs is then reduced to being called "Oney" by the community that once held him in high respect (p. 179). The teacher's

plummet, partial blinding, and the community's derision of his abhorrent racist act are all efficiently summed up by this simple, yet profound, re-naming. Most significantly it becomes a symbolic tag that marks the trouncing of the racist coloniality of being. The new name establishes that after the respected teacher performs this gross injustice, the community removes the power of the saintly teacher and instead confers it to the Indigenous Ras Ta Fari. Both the renaming and the removal of a 'Civilised Christian' name succinctly reveals the community's emphatic disapproval of the blasphemy shown toward the Indigenous religion and the rasta child's humanity. The name is spoken casually as if to use the newfound informality as a mark of disrespect. This mocking name emphasises the distance of his fall from grace; will keep the story of the teacher's humiliation alive; and his ejection from a community wounded by his racism; complete long after normalcy is restored to the school. Miller subtly demonstrates this when he describes in the quotation below, that the classroom of the teacher's transgression is casually, like his downgraded renaming, corrected and set aright:

On the evening when this man stopped being Mr. Saint-Josephs and became instead the one-eyed madman, Mrs. G stayed back after seeing him off in the ambulance. It was she who mopped out the classroom, then rearranged the desks in a neat and tidy order. (Miller 2017, p. 180)

The deeply tactless and jeering Jamaican Voice in this sample of Miller grung writing is used as a decolonial psychological device to empower the underdog. The name seems to purposely communicate the victory of Indigenous spirituality over the coloniality of being inherent in the Christian Civilising Mission. The repeated absence of any social grace in the naming of people in Jamaican novels is so dramatic and colourful that they counter the

invisibility imposed by the coloniality of being. As Cooper (1995) theorises, the crudeness of Patwah disrupts middle class respectability, and interestingly in this case, the very acerbity of a character's name insurgently renders his victim (and not him) seen and de-othered. This points to the far reaching and multi-dimensional psychological effects of this decolonial technique in Jamaican writing and society.

In another easily understood example of this decolonial psychological strategy, a character in the story *Jamaica Hope* is unceremoniously named "Cowboy Bob" because he went away for years to do farm work in America and all he had to show for it was "a big hat, boots and a radio" (Goodison, 2012, p. 30). As we learn more about Cowboy Bob it is revealed that he, quite impressively, managed to extricate himself from both the slavish capitalism of America - where he worked like a mule - and from an abusive relationship with a woman who respected him less than her dog. As can be seen in this case, by performing extraordinary feats and by surviving circumstances that render their true qualities visible, Jamaican characters often overcome the coloniality of being and regain their personhood. They smadditize!

The Jamaican Voice/being is brought to life for the reader who can see that, in fact, the humorous name is also a psycho-literary device that forthrightly and concisely is used to give Cowboy Bob his due. We learn that he is actually not just another poor farm worker. Once the comical name draws our attention to him, he is no longer invisible; the plainspoken descriptive makes the reader zone in on him and invites us to take notice of other impressive details we may have missed had he not been separated out from the community for our attention. This writing technique in a clever, back-handed way draws empathy from the reader and is effective in connecting her/him to the underlying decolonial justice that a tale exhibits. It also makes clear that the character's psychological disposition is made of stern stuff, and we are unconsciously made to watch closely and maybe admire how he effectively

navigates StepMotherland and triumphantly returns to Maddaland. This type of character naming can be interpreted as a psycho-literary writing technique (and coup of sorts) that points out a real-life overthrow of coloniality. It is a wonderful example of how the reading and writing of decolonial literature produces and reveals knowledge **in** psychology and **of** psychology.

Another Goodison character, “King Quarter Past Midnight”, in the story *The Help Weight*, is named for his extremely dark colour (2012, p. 1). Goodison frequently uses The Jamaican Voice naming technique to establish the character’s flaws and a community’s views of these flaws. She then flips the power dynamic of the story in favour of the outliers. So, for example, King Quarter Past Midnight emerges as Mr. Nathan Aitken; a man who leaves the island, betters himself, returns with a white Irish wife and expects his jilted, now very accomplished Jamaican ex, to be his mistress. The reader watches him climb the social ladder up and out of the trappings of his colour which were pre-determined by Jamaican colourism and classism. He then arrives at the place where we can see him as a flawed man with a multi-dimensional, interesting story, and not merely as a man ‘flawed’ because he is ‘blacker than midnight’. In a world where personhood, or identity, is denied primarily because of race, the smadditizin in this story - brought sharply and effectively to the reader’s attention by his naming - counteracts the invisibility and the damnés wrought on to the character by the coloniality of being. With the characteristic messiness of decoloniality, it does not render him perfect, or erase his faults, but rather, it animates him with a complexity that is humanising/smadditizin. This is the profound particularity of the psychology of The Jamaican Voice/being that decolonises a character and provides the reader with the opportunity to see past the strictures of colourism and coloniality.

These stories show how The Jamaican Voice does not ‘desalinate the Caribbean Literary seas’, but subversively places characters along the status colour line of Jamaican

colonialism in order to then dilute and reduce the salt/coloniality to a useful/tolerable level. They show how novelists use this Voice as a decolonial psycho-literary device to turn situations upside down and inside out for our thorough inspection. So, instead of invisibility, the hyper-visibility of Black people (that Maldonado-Torres says is enforced through colourism and the coloniality of being) is convincingly undercut when a plot eventually renders a person's colour to be the least remarkable thing about them! The unravelling of the withering quality of a racial name such as 'King Quarter Past Midnight' serves to free characters (and readers) from a superficial emphasis on the one dimensional colonial hierarchy of colour and being. Such a literary character embodies Nettleford's decolonial thinking of how a subaltern ontologically self-engineers themselves into being and belonging to the Jamaican collective - this is true whether or not they consciously or intentionally claim blackness, since what they end up doing is claiming their right to just exist as they are... to just 'be', as (flawed) human beings (Mills, 2010). A radical Jamaicanised psychology is at play where a **'naming and shaming' becomes a 'claiming'**. This process of visibilising race, smadditizin, and finally, admission to the collective, debunks the Western philosophy that aspires to present colourlessness as inclusive and universal (Mills, 2010).<sup>21</sup> Setting aside this hegemonic world view allows the reader to 'see' the positional psychological impact of The Jamaican Voice decolonial move.

---

<sup>21</sup> 'Colour-blindness' is a controversial and fallacious Euro-centric, Westernised ideology in which the value of 'not seeing race' is believed to avert racial discrimination and inequality. In actuality, 'colour blindness' has been shown to reinforce rather than challenge white supremacy (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020; Ramasubramanian & Miles, 2018).



As mentioned earlier, the naming habit embodied in *The Jamaican Voice*, at a first glance, seems disrespectful, and may even seem reminiscent of the dehumanising colonial habit of ‘slave naming’<sup>22</sup>. I argue that within these texts, this very commonplace Jamaican custom, or *Voice*, takes on an insurgency that has the opposite effect on readers, and of course the characters. I earlier established that name-calling recruits back into the fold (‘claims’), those whose physical appearance or flaws have alienated them. It does so by rendering them ‘seen’ in society where they would normally be invisibilised and ignored by virtue of their flaw. A result of this naming (calling out a flaw) psycho-literary technique is that it removes the damoclean sword hanging over the character who has been existing in a psychological state of angst waiting to be found out or derided for their flaw. Quite commonly in Jamaican literature and life, if a trait exists or is obvious, it is casually and publicly ‘called’ out. The ‘calling out’ element of *The Jamaican Voice* short-circuits the torturous waiting. This public naming naturalises ‘this thing’ being called out, and ensures the person no longer stands out purely for ‘the thing’ which is no longer novel, or for that matter interesting.

---

<sup>22</sup> "The settlers’ facetious spirit found its fullest expression in ridiculous or pejorative nicknames given to slaves, faithfully copied in the transfers. One might think that naming slaves might have reflected conscious - if jocular and harmless - references to be patriarchal or imperial patrician lifestyles, which the slaves made possible, but there was a more sinister logic to the choice of Cape slave names. Naming slaves was a domestic ruse to diminish the dignity of the slaves in daily life and to establish differences among slave groups." (Shell, 2016, p. 1)

A cascading effect of The Jamaican Voice naming, shaming, and claiming is that it gives characters a fresh start. Unlike the way in which slave naming re-entrenches the power of a master (see footnote 22), The Jamaican Voice naming empowers the peripheralised. The sting of the coloniality of being is lost when the decolonial writer subverts the significance of the damnés' hypervisibility. This subversion is exemplified in *Augustown* (2017) where the character Gilzene and her community are inured to her supposed ugliness:

But long before Miss Lou had recognised her great-granddaughter's ugliness, Gilzene had been aware of it herself. It had been pointed out to her by her fellow students, by teachers and even by complete strangers on the road. And this pointing out had never been done in a cruel or malicious way, but rather as a simple matter of observation, or as an easy way to differentiate her from others. "Ugly gyal (girl)!" vendors might call to her, or school acquaintances who either didn't know or had forgotten her name. So, Gilzene understood her ugliness in much the way that she understood that Tuesday followed Monday, or that one plus one was equal to two. That is to say, she knew it as a simple and a shruggable fact. She did not feel down about her ugliness, or indeed, that ugliness was aesthetically inferior to beauty. (Miller, 2017, pp. 83-84)

Later in the story Gilzene is able to rise up and out of her 'ugliness' to 'being' the prized singer whose beautiful voice heroically unifies the community when they momentarily doubt their beloved prophet Bedward. This community doubt was brought on by Prophet Bedward failing to miraculously levitate, as he was used to, because he was crippled by the

ridicule of Babylon<sup>23</sup>. It is Gilzene's talented singing that imbues the community with the power to overcome the stultifying colonial gaze of Babylon who had come to witness the stupidity and inanity of Black masses in revolt:

And now everybody get the understanding that Gilzene did get. A man cannot rise on his own. Not even a powerful man like Alexander Bedward. Him did need us. Him did need Augustown. It was we who had to push him up into the sky. It was we who had to show our faith to the governor and everybody else. So now all of us join in on the song, all of us raising our hands and praying. All of us hoping and believing and being people together again. All of us singing, Fly away home to Zion, fly away home! He start to rise again. Steadily, steadily, rising. Babylon get quiet all at once. Babylon don't have no more laugh to laugh. Babylon confounded. And now the governor man who been quiet the whole time find his voice to shout. 'Get him down! Get him down!' But none of us pay him no mind. We wasn't going to let Babylon divide us again. We keep our eyes on the Master and our voices on the song. (Miller, 2017, p. 87)

---

<sup>23</sup> Rasta term referring to Western political and economic domination, cultural imperialism, colonialism, or any form of oppression. They also think that the police and soldiers are agents of the colonial state and call them 'Babylon' (Murrell et al., 1998).

Here, the naming Jamaican Voice deactivates the potential of Gilzene's physical traits (ugliness) to define and limit her. It becomes a "shruggable fact, no more or less aesthetically inferior than beauty" (p. 84). From her newfound 'claimed' place within the collective, Gilzene then finds her own Jamaican Voice that is her true talent and empowering essence. Miller enshrines the decoloniality of The Jamaican Voice in Gilzene when he writes that she sings her community to freedom, overcoming Babylon and the coloniality of being. In this profoundly written moment of 'naming, shaming and claiming', The Jamaican Voice becomes the Jamaican decolonial being. As if Gilzene's personal smadditizin is not enough, Miller manoeuvres the characters and audience (including us) into observing a superlative communal psychological defeat of the coloniality of being when Gilzene helped smadditize her entire community by having them all "...hoping and believing and being people together again" (p. 87). The scene shows the power of a Jamaican Indigenous spiritual enactment to be victorious over the matrix of power, the political (the governor present), the military enforcers (the police), and the Christian Civilising Mission. It is also an exultant collective psychological moment for the subaltern crowd and their prophet that conveys the rejuvenating experience that readers, researchers, authors, and tired social activists can encounter and replicate within the space of The Caribbean Literary Seas - seas from which the salt of coloniality is not removed but diluted into a useable form.

#### ***4.2.3. Understanding the Particularities of The Jamaican Voice***

The preceding sections explored examples of Jamaican writing that show how subversive and insurgent The Jamaican Voice can be. By virtue of these qualities, the Jamaican essence and way of being in the world actively confronts and counters the coloniality of being. However, it is fair to note that this perspective of the role of The Jamaican Voice (using 'Patwah' and 'Naming, Shaming, and Claiming') as decolonial

embodiments can be critically viewed as somewhat romanticised. If the concept of The Jamaican Voice is problematised, by drawing on the psychology of oppression as delineated by Frantz Fanon, it is equally reasonable to interpret these qualities as elements of an auto-oppressive script.

Auto-oppression, according to *The Psychology of Oppression*, occurs in situations of prolonged oppression, when an oppressed group internalises the oppressor without. These groups assimilate self-destructive social behaviours, injurious to themselves, loved ones, and neighbours (Bulhan, 2004). While elements of The Jamaican Voice can be seen as enactments of decoloniality, the inherent denigration and cruelty of the naming/shaming and the insistence on calling out physical/flaw descriptions can also be criticised as being auto-oppressive. I will now present the rationale for seeing it as the former, based on the premise that these decolonial moves are derived from a Jamaican decolonial, knowledge, indigeneity, particularity, and grung wisdom which Jamaicans intimately and precisely understand as ways of being. For while The Jamaican Voice may contain elements of auto-oppression as set out by Bulhan (2004), it is worth suspending focus solely on these elements so as to see more clearly the liberatory impetus also inherent in this Voice.

In the stories we have examined, Jamaican characters have an understanding and pride in the inner workings of The Jamaican Voice/Being that points to a rejection of the auto-oppression explanation of their familiar modes of survival. At this juncture it seems relevant to ask - How do decolonial activist writers navigate the tensions that emerge from the revering of particularity and the romanticising of situatedness to the point of eliding the auto-oppressive psychological danger? Alexia Arthurs's (2014) work gives some account of how Jamaican authors chart this difficulty by clarifying the importance of understanding the particularity and the idiosyncrasies of The Jamaican Voice as a decolonial psychological strategy.

In this section we look closely at how Arthurs and other Jamaican writers hint at, yet resolve, the existence of inner-tensions that arise amid the throes of decoloniality, including the possible difficulties in identifying the difference between auto-oppression and resilience within the Jamaican psychology. Certainly, there is an ‘inbetweenity’ that mark these tensions wherein decolonial writing becomes a process of journeying from high to low points of reflexivity characterised by the contradictions of auto-oppression. Nonetheless, there is a crucial dimension of *The Jamaican Voice* that is impacted and defined by the situatedness, the potency of, proximity to, and understanding of, *The Jamaican Voice*. As noted, when interpreted critically, these elements (such as ‘naming and shaming’ or the seemingly cruel ‘calling out’) seem to render the voice as super destructive and dehumanising. Yet a decolonial attitude of investigation reveals that these crude elements are also credibly deployed as effective survival tools within the plot lines of Caribbean literature that reflects Jamaican common culture (see Cooper, 1995). It is at this stage in our analysis that we can engage with the messiness of decolonial commentary, where we can see slippage between enactments of decoloniality back to coloniality. It is here that the reader can discern that decoloniality in Caribbean Literature is often riddled with ‘salty’ ambiguity and contradiction.

Even while acknowledging these conflicting discourses, it is my position that on closer inspection the implied auto-oppressive psychology in *The Jamaican Voice*, when contextualised, recuperates the decolonial powers of *The Jamaican Voice*. These powers then prevail as resilience rather than pathology. In clearer terms, while ‘harshness’ and ‘crudeness’ (generally defined as auto-oppression) results in psychic damage, when deployed as *The Jamaican Voice*, these qualities often result in resilience - depending on the nuanced and complex understanding of group particularities, and on the character’s sense of firmly tethered belonging to the claimed collective. Perhaps this distinction can exist because the

psychology of *The Jamaican Voice* is communal and situated in a common history of hardship and coloniality. It is this hardship that binds and lets its club members ‘in on’ the joke and not become the ‘butt of’ the joke. In effect, the ‘naming’ of *The Jamaican Voice* is not in fact ‘shaming’ (as with auto-oppression) but is instead ‘claiming’ - a psychological process of belonging and understanding. The result of this Jamaican decolonial psychological process is empathy, loyalty, camaraderie and belonging so unconditional that a name is merely a ‘shruggable fact’. This process is summed up by Eduardo Glissant’s characterisation of Creole speech as crude when witty and which at its climax “does not release an appreciative smile but the laughter of participation” (1989, p. 21). In these few pithy words Glissant perfectly describes the phenomenon of empowering resilience inherent in *The Jamaican Voice* and absent from auto-oppressive behaviours.

In the introduction to this chapter, I theorised that *The Caribbean Literary Seas* can provide sanctuary for decolonial activists. I suggested that if writers employ Borderland thinking and (re)visit the Indigenous and subaltern knowledges, epistemology, and ontology of the Caribbean, that this can possibly rejuvenate their ‘being’ or *Jamaican Voice* and contribute to the decolonial turn in Psychology. This implies that Indigenous knowledge and psychology holds the power to provide novel ‘Maroonesque’ modes of resistance to coloniality (see footnote 16). I have asserted that accessing and understanding (particularity) the Indigenous knowledge and psychology suffused in *The Jamaican Voice* affects how healing this knowledge and psychology really is. Building on this thought I now submit that studying migration through literature provides insight into the psychological effects that immersion and distance has on the particularities and situated knowledges that make Indigenous knowledge more (or less) potent and therefore more or less healing and decolonising. Here again Alexia Arthurs (2014) profoundly speaks to the value and

intricacies involved in understanding The Jamaican Voice based on exposure and proximity to Jamaica and ‘Jamaicanness’.

Her work conveys that one factor indispensable to The Jamaican Voice as a tool of decolonial psychology is that all parties exposed to this Voice - the speaker, the listener, the object, the subject - must inherently understand the complex, almost inexplicable rules of The Jamaican Voice. Alexia Arthurs (2014) keenly captures some of these rules and the subaltern psychology of The Jamaican Voice in her story *We eat our Daughters* when a Jamaican American character Renee observes:

There is a way to be cruel that seems Jamaican to me. But I’ve heard other islanders say the same thing, so maybe it’s a Caribbean thing. Though Africans and African Americans tell me that it’s a similar way with them, so maybe it’s a black thing. It’s saying exactly what you think, regardless of how it will affect the listener. Perhaps this is the language of the oppressed—the colonized, the enslaved. Maybe our kind doesn’t have time for soft words. My friend, from Jamaica same as me, says that she prefers this to people talking behind her back. I don’t know that I agree. (Arthurs, 2014, p. 129)

In this example, by virtue of being born Jamaican, Renee is exposed to The Jamaican Voice which interestingly shares commonalities with the Voice of other formerly colonised peoples. But, also by virtue of growing up within the hegemony of America, she cannot fully intuit it or experience it as liberating as opposed to merely “cruel” (p. 129). Renee’s experience of The Jamaican Voice is quite different to that of Gilzene the character in Kei Miller’s (2017) *Augustown* described in the previous section. The character Gilzene being from Rural Maddaland is completely immersed in, is far more connected to, and able to draw



from, the grung wisdom and powerful subaltern psychology of *The Jamaican Voice* than the character Renee who was raised in cosmopolitan StepMotherland, has less submersion in *The Voice*, and is closer to other traditional psychological influences. Gilzene understands it and is therefore set free, smadditized by, the same elements of *The Jamaican Voice* that Renee finds “cruel” (p. 129).

Although the harshness of *The Jamaican Voice* is shared by the Voices of other formerly colonised folk, Arthurs (2014) lends insight into the specificity of the psychological function of the harshness of *The Jamaican Voice* by observing that it psychologically prepares one for the harshness of life in ways peculiar to Jamaica. She creatively presents this to the reader in *Light-Skinned Girls and Kelly Rowlands*. One of her characters, Kimberly (who had lived her formative years in Jamaica) assesses the resilience of her friend, Cecelia, who though Jamaican by ancestry, was raised in America - StepMotherland. Kimberly’s verdict was that Cecelia could not escape some of the Jamaican essence that made her resilient, but this resilience was watered down by an American sensibility. A critical contemplation of this scene will have the reader wondering whether the harshness and cruelty that Arthurs identifies as typically Jamaican, is a decolonial psychological enactment, or are in fact vestiges of the auto-oppressive script in which one becomes complicit in one’s own oppression. Arthurs seems to suggest the former, attributing a textured understanding and usefulness of this enactment to Jamaican particularity and lived reality.

We can ruminate and come to our own conclusions by analysing a scene - discussed more extensively later on - where Arthurs describes *The Jamaican Voice* as comedic, dramatic, performative, and seemingly unreal (inaccessible) to the Jamaican American:

Cecilia could be dramatic like that. Once, on a bus, I heard someone say that Jamaicans are the comedians of the Caribbean. But I think it's more true that we're the performers of the Caribbean. (Arthurs, 2014, p. 21)

Through careful crafting and wording, Arthurs leads the reader to contemplate the notion that proximity to Maddaland rootedness/grung wud provides varying degrees of the decolonial psychological resilience that characters use to successfully navigate StepMotherland. To support this supposition Arthurs portrays the Jamaican American enacting psycho-social behaviour consistent with Bucknor's (2009) and Cooper's (1995) theory that Jamaican performance in a social space converts that space into a site of psychological resistance. The scene suggests an alternative underlying psychological explanation to auto-oppression, and invites exploration of public enactments and decolonial psychologies inherent in Jamaican American Border Crossings. I attempt an exploration now.

To unpack the significance of these behaviours, I begin by appreciating how Arthurs (2014) projects to her reader that the characters in her stories not only fluidly shift between cultural and psychological borders, but break them down as well! I identify this transgressive behaviour as migrant Border Crossings (Boyce-Davies, 2002; James, 2013).

The space that Jamaican migrants inhabit in Arthurs's short stories engender the inherent violence of coloniality that cannot appropriately be confronted with conviviality. Jamaicans in StepMotherland must develop psychological strategies of resistance and crisscross between cultural and psychological borders to negotiate inequalities of race, gender, culture, sexuality, and even language. In Arthurs's stories Jamaicans constantly transition across unnatural boundaries to physical spaces in which they are the prohibited and must be nimble to thrive by assuming Americanised cultures and identities. Arthurs writes her stories in a way that acknowledges the pain of otherness and critiques the effects of

structural neoliberal practices and displacement. Her Jamaican migrant characters who Border Cross into forbidden spaces contest expectations for inclusion and use extraordinary creative psychological measures to assert an agentic control.

When authors, including Arthurs, and the characters they create engage in the subversive psychological confrontation of StepMotherland paradigms, they often end up rejecting hegemonic narratives in favour of their Jamaican Voice. By doing so they disrupt and challenge the foundations of Western epistemology. Confrontational texts introduce the psycho-literary concept that migrant physical Border Crossings take them into the psychological Borderlands of The Caribbean Literary Seas with the result being that their Jamaican Voice is reinforced and drowns out the coloniality of being<sup>24</sup>. This is epistemic

---

<sup>24</sup> The similarity of the two terms (Border Crossings and Borderlands) lends itself to confusion or the incorrect assumption that they are grammatical forms of each other. It is important to clarify that Border Crossings (Boyce-Davies, 2002; James, 2013) is specifically used here to refer to the decolonial strategies of migrants moving effortlessly back and forth between different realities and well defined identities as a method of survival; e.g. switching from being in a culturally powerful position as a Jamaican mother to a culturally powerless position as an American blue collar worker such as a nanny...then returning back to being a Jamaican mother after work. Whereas, Borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987) refers to existence within the psychic social space where there is resistance to binaries in which two cultures meet and a third cultural hybrid is created. It is the psychological and social space, often referred to in Chicano/a feminist scholarly discourse and literature, where there is an effort to challenge hegemonic colonial power. The Borderlands, in immigrant narrative, are a psychic place of perpetual connection and contestation between colonial heritage and new identity.

disobedience in which *The Jamaican Voice/Being* performs enactments of Indigenous spirituality and particularised expressions that can be used in a decolonial psychological imaginary. In stories of upheaval and confrontation, ancestral voices are heard, memories are recovered, stories of resistance are found and retold (Martinez-Vázquez, 2009). In this way discoveries of new psychologies and ways to exist in StepMotherland are created based on inclusive perspectives, Indigenous knowledge constructions, and histories of resistance that reinforce social justice hitherto unheard of for Caribbean migrants. What appears to be significant is that this process, while not necessarily excluding the possibility of hybrid cultures being formed (e.g., *Chicano Borderlands*, see footnote 24), seems to mostly encourage Jamaicans to return to their roots and double down on their Jamaican Being. Authors and readers alike can absorb the smaddification, the Creolisation, the counter-discourses, used by characters within *The Caribbean Literary Seas*. Caribbean authors create a potential sanctuary that can provide psychological healing, rejuvenation, confrontation, and liberation for all who ‘swim in’ *The Caribbean Literary Seas*.

Arthurs’s (2014) tales portraying Jamaicans expressing moral anger and self-defence while navigating StepMotherland exemplify the decolonial fictional writing just described. These texts serve to expand liberatory psychology, map strategies of defiance and survival, as well as create fresh ontological understanding. Arthurs deepens the discussion on how *The*

---

Although *Border Crossings* can lead one into psychic *Borderlands*, these crossings do not necessarily result in the creation of hybridity. Migrants engaging in *Border Crossing* may move between the binary cultures, keeping each intact or defiantly choosing one over the other as a preferred identity (Anzaldúa, 1987).

Jamaican Voice operates within The Caribbean Literary Seas by suggesting that close proximity to, and understanding of, The Jamaican Voice - as an indicator of performative expression à la Bucknor (2009) and Cooper (1995) - fosters decolonial psychological resilience. The following scene exhibits her thinking:

I imagined that as an only child, she had been coddled—her parents asking how her day was and actually listening, quick to knead every one of her anxieties away. But there was also a little of that Jamaican wildness in Cecilia. She was the woman from a movie we once watched together that woman with mascara running down her face, the quiet one, now standing in the rain in her lingerie because she had to beg the man to stay with her. Cecilia could be dramatic like that. Once, on a bus, I heard someone say that Jamaicans are the comedians of the Caribbean. But I think it's more true that we're the performers of the Caribbean... Sometimes, I really did feel sorry for Cecilia because her upbringing meant there were so many black references that she was completely unaware of—one time I brought up the television show *Girlfriends* and was horrified to discover that she'd never heard of it. She had only ever been to Jamaica as a baby, and then for her high school senior trip, when she and her classmates had stayed at a resort. Every time her parents visited, she was in school or otherwise unable to go, and no one had thought it important enough for her to see the version of Jamaica not printed on postcards in resort gift shops. How could I describe to her the white flesh of a Jamaican apple—an apple totally unlike any American one? How could she understand my disappointment when I moved to Brooklyn as a child and discovered that the apple I loved was unavailable to me in this new place?

How could she understand the loss of not being able to eat a fruit I picked by hand in my grandmother's yard? How to have a conversation about the fact that some things, some parts of ourselves, are tied to other, faraway places? These kinds of silences between Cecilia and me felt as though something had been stolen from us. Who was to blame? Her parents? White supremacy? Assimilation? And why did it matter to me that she understood and appreciated our shared heritage? (Arthurs, 2014, pp. 12-13)

In contemplating the “wildness” (described by Kimberly; Arthurs, 2014, p. 21) of *The Jamaican Voice* as a form of resilience, my interpretations are cautioned by Maria Lugones (2010). Lugones critically historicises the characterisation of white women as sexually passive and fragile; and conversely, Black women as tough, strong, and sexually aggressive. This characterisation of Black women, says Lugones, is used as justification for their enslavement and the continued coloniality of being that conveys their suitability for back-breaking labour. I argue that the coloniality of Gender and Being that Lugones warns against is countered by a localised interpretation of feminine resilience in Jamaican Literature.

The alternative interpretation found in Jamaican Literature is based on a nuanced contextualising and reimagining of the island's history that is typical of decolonised thinking. In this counter history the resilience of Jamaican women is attributed to their centre of gravity being attained through their grung heritage of freedom, instead of through an identity of enslavement. My critical relational reading of Arthurs's representation of the Jamaican fighter spirit found in her female Jamaican characters is interpreted by drawing on the Indigenous historical legacy of 'Ni', commonly known as 'Nanny the Maroon' - the ultimate decolonial spirit outlined in *Lionheart Gal* (1987). Honor Ford-Smith and Sistren describe Ni's legacy, and the tale-telling that preserved the history of Caribbean women, as forming “a

kind of bedrock of consciousness of female resistance among Jamaican women... offering an inspirational code for struggles of women in the region...these stories are invaluable in the effort to change the effect of oppressive forces on our lives..." (Ford-Smith & Sistren, 1987 p. XV). By using the energy of 'Ni' to inform a decolonial psychological reading of the Borderlands scene in Arthurs's work, the tale becomes what Ford-Smith desires decolonial tales to be: "a re-discovery of our heritage that serves to release power for political action" (p. XVI). Therefore, a Jamaican woman's "wildness" (Arthurs, 2014, p. 21) is decolonially reinterpreted as Ni Caribbean feminist resilience and resistance in contemporary StepMotherland America. Through using a Jamaican decolonial lens for interpretation Lugones's theory, while a good caution, is rendered not completely relevant or applicable as it would be elsewhere. I employ Critical Relationality to adopt a localised perspective on what 'wildness' means as a descriptor of and to Jamaican Black women. I now expand upon the reasoning that proximity to a localised perspective is important to absorbing it - in good ways and in bad.

The story *Light-Skinned Girls and Kelly Rowlands* strengthens the idea that not just The Jamaican Voice, but also the insipid Colonial Voiceover<sup>25</sup> can be reinforced through psychological contiguity with Jamaica and Jamaicans. The story keeps the reader reminded that coloniality is the modernised, constantly updated form of colonialism. In this instructive scene, Kimberly uses a Jamaican psychology of 'if we no laugh, we cry'<sup>26</sup> wry humour to

---

<sup>25</sup> Fully unpacked in the next section; it is the destructive colonial overriding of, and drowning out of, The Jamaican Voice.

<sup>26</sup> Jamaicans, when facing adversity, often seek out the morbid humour in a situation and remark "ef yu nuh laugh, yu cry". Translated to mean one has to laugh, which is better

subtly confront her mother's homophobia. The reader can quickly ascertain that Kimberly connects her mother's homophobia to a Jamaican colonial heteronormative rootedness that is kept alive through a contemporary technological virtual Facebook fix that overcomes physical space and keeps psychic Jamaicanness close by:

When I told my mother that Cecilia was coming for the weekend, she said that I had to go to the Korean store to buy a few things, and then she called me over to show me the Facebook accounts of two of her high school classmates, who'd gotten married now that gay marriage was legal in New York. They were both women. One of them was pretty and curvaceous, and had been married to a man at one point, and the other one looked like a butch lesbian. "Mi cyaan believe it," my mother said. "No one love man more than Shantel and look here! Jamaican come America and marry woman. Jesus! Di devil know who fi fool." "What if I was gay?" I asked. "Are you gay?" My mother turned to me, suddenly interested. "No." "Good." (p. 20)

Throughout her collection of stories, Arthurs issues warnings that one's Being is affected by connections to one's home with the proviso that this is not always a good thing. In this instance as the character slyly, while maintaining the culturally obligatory mother-daughter respect in tone, denounces her mother's blatant homophobia, Arthurs effectively

---

than the alternative which is to cry. It is a psychological form of self-comfort, as well as a way to reassure the listener that you have come to terms with the tragedy that has befallen you.



combines both *The Jamaican Voice* and its Colonial Voiceover to give readers something to think about. This again reveals the usefulness of the psychology **in** literature, and **of** literature.

In yet another exemplification of the powerful effect of proximity to Maddaland on Jamaicans, Arthurs creates a scene where the yawning gap between the two friends, complicated by shade and class, boils down to a lack of ‘Jamaicanness’ for the Jamaican born character Kimberly. Kimberly attributes what she sees as her own political savvy, to her proximity to her Jamaican heritage. At the same time, she decries Cecilia’s distance from Jamaica as the reason that her friend is lost and racially unconscious:

“Black people like you don’t have to think about race as much as the rest of us do.” “What are you talking about?” “In many ways middle-class black people have the same ideologies as white people. Because more than any of us, they want what white people have. Your parents are Jamaican and you don’t know anything about the country—” “Fuck you,” Cecilia said, and I could see that she meant it. In the past we would say “Fuck you” between giggles. “You’re a nigga like the rest of us,” I said then, and I meant it too. She turned and started walking away from me. (p. 25)

Throughout her stories Arthurs has cogently outlined that the consequences and particularities of understanding *The Jamaican Voice* is a credible, nuanced alternative explanation to that of the “cruelty” (Arthurs, 2014, p. 129) of *The Jamaican Voice* being auto-oppression. Arthurs’s stories and characters seem to tell the reader that cruelty as deliberate and taught resilience is the crucible that creates an inflection point - the psychology of resistance to the coloniality of StepMotherland. I will now turn to discussing *The Jamaican*

Voice's antithesis - The Colonial Voiceover; the psychic violence inherent in the evils of coloniality aptly described by Lugones (2010):

To see the coloniality is to see the powerful reduction of human beings to animals, to inferiors by nature, in a schizoid understanding of reality that dichotomizes the human from nature, the human from the non-human, and thus imposes an ontology and a cosmology that, in its power and constitution, disallows all humanity, all possibility of understanding, all possibility of human communication, to dehumanized beings. (Lugones, 2010, p. 751)

#### *4.2.4. The 'Colonial Voiceover'*

**The Colonial Voiceover** is a term used in this thesis to describe the corrosive language of coloniality that seeks to reify black inferiority through patent racism and colourism. This Voiceover is often made manifest in Jamaican fictional writing in such a graphic way that the reader cannot help but reflect on it instead of ignoring it as is often required for the perpetuation of coloniality. In scrutinising Jamaican Literature for examples of decoloniality, it is helpful to first recognise the achingly painful and destructive coloniality of being that Fanon articulates as Black people telling themselves they are inferior. It is equally vital to recognise the colonial voices and characters that embody **misanthropic scepticism** - a questioning of the very humanity of colonised people (Maldonado-Torres, 2007) - that can quite easily be confused with or drown out The Jamaican Voice which this study equates to the historically, contextually, and culturally specific humaning essence/being of Jamaican life strategies and psychology of thriving that is easily recognised by many Jamaicans. In this way an essential and clear distinction can be made between this liberatory Jamaican Voice that visibilises colour, sex, gender, or any other trait blocking a character

from smadditizin (realising their personhood); and the Colonial Voiceover that is a racist, sexist, homophobic, misogynistic narrative attempting to override the sense of self. I will now examine how Decolonial Jamaican writings identify coloniality and the Voiceover in compelling ways that makes it unlikely that the reader will miss its tragedy, making its identification useful to embracing the need for liberatory psychology.

Nicole Dennis-Benn (2016) shows an exceptional skill for depicting coloniality, and specifically, the coloniality of being, in her work *Here comes the Sun*. Dennis-Benn's characters repeatedly voice the brutal racism and colourism that they have endured and internalised from early childhood. Her depictions of the Colonial Voiceover portrays children told covertly and overtly by society and their parents that to be black is the worst possible thing one can be. Dennis-Benn's writing vividly portrays a colonial Jamaican society in which blackness is synonymous with poverty, hardship, ugliness, certain failure, and unhappiness; and in which, conversely, the lighter one is, the greater one's chances of being loved, accepted, and favoured to the point of inevitable success and happiness.

Racist social division compellingly portrayed by Dennis-Benn is described by Fanon as Manichean psychology. A Manichean existence is not based on reciprocal affirmations but rather on opposites cast into good versus evil, black versus white, beautiful versus ugly, intelligent versus stupid etc. (Bulhan, 2004). The duality of Manichean psychology creates interdependence where one is defined by one's opposite. Does this mean that the decolonial Jamaican Voice is dependent on, and even draws power from, its opposite the Colonial Voiceover? Again, the messiness of Jamaican Liberatory writing rears its head showing "the futility of desalinating the sea", showing the slippage between decoloniality and coloniality. Dennis-Benn negotiates this messiness by deploying the energy of tensions created by Manichean psychology to catapult her characters out of many forms of colonial oppression.

An example of this Dennis-Benn technique is evident throughout her book where she repeatedly connects the two words ‘black’ and ‘ugly’ until they become inseparable and synonymous weapons of coloniality. She has the characters enact the oppression of Manichean psychology in their speech and beliefs by equating poverty and failure with blackness. The following series of heart-breaking excerpts show that in this novel, racism and colourism intersect with gender and are heavily misogynoir:

Thandi felt certain the loss had to do with her darker complexion, which she believes is the reason for the burdens that weigh as heavily as the textbooks she carries for subjects she has no interest in studying. (p. 18)

She saw an ugly woman—an ugly black woman with bulging eyes too wide to be peered into before looking away, and nose too flat on the broad face. In this sketch she was not human, but a creature. This is how her daughter sees her—bull-faced and miserable. All Delores’s secrets and insecurities are exposed in the gaze of this child. (p. 190)

But after seeing Miss Violet, the ugliness of being black and poor remains like intaglio on her mind. (p. 216)

“But Mama!” Thandi cries. “I don’t want to be black any longer. Where’s dat going to get me? Nowhere.” (p. 219)

“You see that lady’s fair skin? See how pretty? Yuh g’wan stay black an’ ugly if you stay playing in the sun.” (p. 227)

A sneer creeps up Delores's black ugly face. (p. 230)

“Yuh t'ink dem man deh want a black gyal pon dem arm in public? Dey like yuh to fuck. Not to marry. So know yuh place.” (p. 108)

A psycho-literary reading of *Here Comes the Sun* makes it clear that coloniality is alive and well within the Manichean tropes that its contemporary characters burden under. The excerpts make the case that Dennis-Benn intends to leave the reader in no doubt that the challenge of the decolonial psychology of *The Jamaican Voice* is to speak louder than, to drown out, to counter, the Manichean Colonial Voiceover. Some more very explicit scenes that epitomise the Colonial Voiceover are:

Thandi has seen the effects of the crème on the women who use it, the lightness coming into their skin, and the darkness receding like a sinister shadow around their hairline...women and girls who were nothing before have become something, their newly lightened faces rendering them less invisible and more beautiful, worthy of jobs as front desk clerks, bank tellers, models, head sales associates, and in some cases flight attendants. (p. 17)

Besides, now that her skin will be lighter, she doesn't have to settle for a boy like Charles. (p. 25)

Had it not been for her high color, Kensington wouldn't be considered beautiful. Or even be considered for the job. (p. 74)

The girls in River Bank would have loved to catch the attention of a young man like that. Visions of light-skinned, pretty-haired babies would certainly dance in their imaginations. Add cubits to their height among other downtrodden women who could only choose from “ole neggars” who gave them nothing, except picky-head “pickneys” and swollen black eyes. (p.103)

Miss Ruby hums while she rubs Thandi. She is in a rare good mood. “In no time yuh g’wan be as white as snow white,” Miss Ruby promises. “You mean light brown?” “Same difference.” She touches Thandi’s face. “Trus me when I say this. Yuh g’wan see the doors open up so wide.” (p. 148)

She is tall, a hibiscus in a weed garden. The waiters fuss over her, and other diners look to see what all the fuss is about. They are excited to see up close for the first time the big hazel eyes that light up the tourism billboard ads, and the golden-honey-toned skin on every moisturizing commercial, including Queen of Pearl crème, which is all the rage. Some of Margot’s girls use the crème, against her advice. Why would anyone want to permanently damage their skin to look like a beauty queen who was born that way? (p. 178)

How can she ever explain that she wanted to be fair—like the Virgin Mary or the nuns and girls at school who take their lightness for granted? Thandi doesn’t know what’s worse in the eyes of this woman of God—the discovery that she could be correcting God’s mistake and even blasphemously suggesting that he made one; or the assumption that she has fornicated and

gotten pregnant. Thandi's eyes catch on a poster on the wall. In bold letters it declares: YOU ARE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD. Below the words, a frail girl who looks like the Virgin Mary is piously bowing her covered head, her milky white skin glowing in a light that appears to be descending from heaven. (p. 211)

The other girls walk right by her as though they don't know her. Dance-hall music soars in the open air and Thandi adjusts her dress, hoping someone will ask her to dance. All the pretty brown boys have found all the pretty brown girls. (p. 223)

The boy stands up straight. Thandi tucks her hair behind her ears, confident that he can see her lighter, brighter face. She has dreamed of this moment, approaching a fair-skinned boy as though it is her birthright. The boy holds Thandi's stare. With a slight drop of his head, he looks her up and down as she gets closer and closer to him. As Dennis Brown's voice hits a high note, soaring into the star-filled indigo sky, the boy's dimples disappear and he wrinkles his nose and walks away. Thandi has been acknowledged and dismissed in the time it takes to get to the other side of the dance floor. The belly-skip of possible love with a cream-skinned mulatto is nothing compared to the vile liquid that presently shoots through her veins. Her hope wilts on its stem before it can bloom into promise. Miss Ruby was wrong. Bleaching her skin doesn't make them see her as beautiful. (p. 224)

This welter of manichean descriptions and tragic portrayals of childhood, are not just examples of internalised racism. They are also cleverly used by Dennis-Benn as perfect decolonial examples of “Antiromance Bildungsroman: that resists heteronormative, canonical representations of innocent childhood” (Francis, 2011, p. 337). In *Here Comes the Sun*, there is a rewriting and rethinking away from childhood innocence, refocusing to the oppressiveness of a colonial childhood. In this Antiromance Bildungsroman plot, childhood, particularly that of poor Black girls, is not romanticised but seen through adult eyes. In psycho-literary terms these examples reflect the coloniality of developmental psychology and sexuality that this thesis views as in need of fleshing out and attempts to portray in its creative component.

Nicole Dennis-Benn’s writing is not sentimental and gives realistic psychological insight into the scarred interior lives of Black children. She brilliantly captures the decolonial Antiromance Bildungsroman in one heart breaking scene in which a mother, Delores, ‘educates’ her child Thandi about dating boys. It is out of a distorted, cynical sense of duty, and even, she feels, motherly love that Delores tells Thandi:

‘Dey tek one look at yuh black face an’ know yuh desperate enough fi spread yuh legs at di first compliment. Dey see yuh true color before yuh tell dem yuh name. Dey know dey can tell yuh anyt’ing an’ yuh black self believe it an’ accept it, ’caw we so use to getting di leftovers. Who yuh know really love a black girl for more than what’s between her legs? Yuh is a pretty black girl, but is my duty as yuh mother to teach yuh dese t’ings. Put somet’ing in yuh head. Chile, yuh know how much yuh coulda get? Ten thousand U.S. dollahs! Dat can tek yuh from here to eternity, pay fah yuh education an’ everyt’ing. Use yuh head, chile. Yuh can’t place more value on dis boy an’ his foolish



love over money. If it mean so likkle to you, then you'll lose everyt'ing.  
 'Membah dis, nobody love a black girl. Not even harsel. Now get up an' guh  
 get yuh pay.' (Dennis-Benn, 2016, p. 267)

By psycho-literary analysis of yet another antiromantic bildungsroman scene we gain insight into how it is that from childhood Delores is made to believe that her blackness makes her an object of derision to be laughed at and scorned by loved ones and strangers alike:

That morning Delores thought she did a good job putting her outfit together in preparation for a day in the big city. But the girls were all snickering, shoulders hunched and pretty ponytails in white ribbons jerking back and forth. Delores should have listened to her mother. "If me was suh big an' black, me woulda neva mek scarecrow come catch me inna dat color. Yuh bettah hope di people inna Kingston nuh laugh yuh backside back ah country." The girls' laughter followed Delores all the way back through the gate like the smell of dog mess she never stopped to get rid of. The humiliation was worse than the swarm of flies. It was as though a veil had lifted from her eyes. When she looked down, all she saw was her black skin and how it clashed with the dress. With her surroundings. With everything. It had collided with the order and propriety of the colonial mansion that day, and the uniform line of those high-color Catholic schoolgirls. Something about that trip changed her, and on the bus ride back her home looked different: the sea-green of the nauseating sea, the sneering sun in the wide expanse of a pale sky, the indecisive Y-shaped river that once swallowed her childhood, and even the red dirt from the

bauxite mines caked under her worn heels, seemed like a wide-open wound that bled and bled between the rural parishes. (Dennis-Benn, 2016, pp. 82-83)

Just as the Jamaican society is riddled with racism and colourism, so too is *Here Comes the Sun* instructively riddled with intense portrayals that sear the destructiveness of the psychology of the coloniality of being into the reader's consciousness. One scene that conclusively demonstrates this, and summarises all the racist themes of the book, is when Delores scolds her fellow market seller Mavis about her habit of skin bleaching and covering from the darkening rays of the sun: "Mavis rolls her eyes" and retorts "If me was as black as you, Delores, me woulda invest me money inna bleaching cream. Who want to be black in dis place? A true nobody nuh tell yuh how black yuh is." (Dennis-Benn, 2016, p. 77).

While some of these extracts (e.g. Mavis's scolding her daughter for bleaching) may seem to cross over from the earlier described decolonial move of Jamaican straight talking (that allows characters to transcend racism) to the dehumanising Colonial Voiceover, the point to be made here is not just that decoloniality is messy, but that understanding the difference between the two is a particularised and contextualised system of knowledge that Jamaicans understand by virtue of 'being' Jamaican. I referred earlier to the fact that often the rules of these decolonial moves are complex and even unwieldy. I reiterate the fact that these decolonial strategies are more easily, and maybe over time even instinctually, understood by Jamaicans who are submerged in the culture and specifics of this web of rules.

As this chapter explains, the proximity and unlimited exposure to these decolonial moves and rules makes the knowledge of how to understand and use them more easily accessible to Jamaicans. It is important to clarify that it is not the intention or scope of this thesis to explain all the intricacies and rules of Jamaican decolonial psychological strategies, but merely to give examples of how they are used as legitimate, functional, alternate

epistemologies, knowledges, ontologies, and psychologies outside of the Western mainstream. By providing these examples I am attempting to support the notion that alternative psychologies not only exist, but can be studied for potential contributions to decolonial psychology and praxis. The plethora of examples from Dennis-Benn's decolonial Jamaican writing that uses *The Jamaican Voice/Being*, its particularity, and Creolity, to confront the Colonial Voiceover head on, critically defies Manichean psychology. By confronting and overcoming the colonality of being rather than being defined as its opposite (as is the defining mode of Manichaeian Psychology) *The Jamaican Voice* emerges as a significant tool of decolonial liberatory psychology as much as it is a device of psycho-literary analysis.

## Chapter 5: Ef a Egg, We a Di Yolk - Confronting the Coloniality of Power

### 5.1. Migration: Maddaland, StepMotherland, and Motherland

#### 5.1.2. *Maddaland*

National identity is one of the last tropes in Caribbean Literature resistant to decoloniality. Along with making this observation about 20<sup>th</sup> Century Caribbean studies, Brydon and Tiffin (1993) questioned if ‘nation’ remains a viable marker of identity. Certainly, this is a relevant question in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, given that Caribbean women have already experienced the failure of the independent nation state to deliver “happy endings” in life and literature (Francis, 2011, p. 339). In novels such as *Abeng* (Cliff, 1995); *The autobiography of my mother* (Kincaid, 1996); or *Wide sargasso sea* (Rhys, 2001), the postcolonial masculine and nationalism tropes were so potent that even when women narratives were present, they did not focus on the individual woman, but portrayed the female self primarily in mother-daughter relationships that mirrored the powerful and powerless dynamic of the coloniser and colonised. Seanor (2011) provides an overview of this theme offering one possible explanation of why/how this relationship as opposed to, for instance, a father-daughter or mother-son relationship was apt, and represented well, the coloniser /colonised and the postcolonial authority/colonised relationships. Seanor theorises that in postcolonial literature the female character’s identity struggles are often conflated with a struggle to separate themselves from a colonial past. These struggles are symbolised in the daughter’s struggles with their mothers from whom they battle to separate. She gives insight into the workings of this trope by drawing on the work of Sigmund Freud:

Sigmund Freud, in his quest to document female sexual development, concludes “normal” development occurs once the young female transfers her

desire from the mother to the father. However, these strong mother-daughter bonds stem from a pre-verbal fixation on the part of the daughter for the mother that the young woman is unable to grow out of, much less transfer her affections to her father... mothers and mother figures are painted as all powerful, all knowing, and all-encompassing in terms of their far-reaching impact on their daughters, similar to the deep-penetrating effects of slavery and colonialism... (p. 1)

Seanor turns Freud's Oedipus complex on its head in her analysis saying that within the mother-daughter trope:

Heroines express long-lasting desire for their mothers, while their fathers are relegated to the peripheries of their lives and affections. We never see evidence of the transferal of affection from mother to father; rather once puberty begins these women begin to resent the subservient positions of their mothers and find Oedipal replacements for their affections. (p. 1)

And so, according to Seanor (2011) the effects these Freudian pre-verbal fixations have on female characters and their families serve as apt metaphors for the Caribbean and its struggle for freedom and independence from their sordid (post)colonial pasts.

An extension of this mother/daughter, coloniser/colonised metaphor is somewhat updated and represented, in later Caribbean writings, as a decolonial relationship that describes the power dynamic between neo-colonialism and the migrant female. Although this updated metaphor is insightful, it has been further probed for relevance and gendered coloniality by: Anim-Addo (2013); Boyce-Davies (2002); Hill-Collins (2002); Crenshaw

(1989); and Lugones (2003). The result is that the migrant and mother-daughter tropes of postcolonial Caribbean Literature were still found wanting and in need of greater decolonisation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

For instance, the over-representation of the male heteronormative experience in postcoloniality was accompanied by a tendency to ignore the complex, multifaceted, dynamic, and nuanced features of identity (Hall, 2020; Wynter, 2003). In the post-independence period, both male-and female-authored novels established sexual normality as exclusively heterosexual. This established heteronormativity meant that, for the most part, homosexuality was “unseen” in Caribbean literature, and if it existed, it was depicted as “immoral and abnormal” (King, 2002, p. 27). Heteronormativity was represented even in novels by acclaimed feminists such as Carole Boyce Davies, Myriam Chancy, and Evelyn O’Callaghan (Kutzinksi, 2001). Even today, some contemporary Caribbean feminists are disinclined to rethink their essentialist positions regarding gender, sexuality, and race. They ignore the female self in any other form except the “mother-daughter” relationship common in Caribbean literature. A highly regarded Caribbean literary critic such as Carolyn Cooper, for example, still seems quick to defend homophobic texts and has accused U.S.-based ‘Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation’ (GLAAD) of being “imperial overlords” (Kutzinksi, 2001, p. 169).

Francis (2011) describes how the postcolonial, heteronormative, nationalistic identity supported by some sectors of Caribbean feminism, placed constraints on articulations of sexuality. She writes, “the sexual lives of Caribbean people have been matters of imperial and national state interest and central to colonial and postcolonial articulations of citizenship” (Francis, 2011, p. 2). Francis (2011) analyses narratives and practices that ‘wed’ citizenship and political belonging to heterosexual bodies and reproduction, namely, marriage

and birth. This idea is labelled ‘sexual citizenship’ by David Evans (1993) who stresses that the regulation of gay bodies and different racial and gender configurations are connected to political rights and citizenship. Francis (2011) explains that this problematic notion of sexual citizenship creeps into Caribbean literature when females are portrayed as sexually unliberated or free from sexual violence, or as in the case of Romance Literature, when coercion is fabricated as consent. Problematic notions of sexual citizenship are perpetuated when in Romance Literature heterosexual love plots liberate the heroine from oppression into domesticity. In Francis (2011) this problematic sexual citizenship is a re-articulation of the notion of the Anglo male as a conqueror of colonial lands, nature, and female bodies.

In this section I intend to show that while the nationalism and mother-daughter tropes are still very prevalent in Jamaican Literature, they seem to have been given a decolonial makeover to what I will call a ‘madda-dawta’ relationship by some writers, reflecting a decolonial turn in Caribbean psychology and epistemology. Whereas the hallmark of postcolonial representation was the struggle for independence and powerlessness at a personal and national level, in contemporary Literature, Jamaica - the “Maddaland”, is now an independent country, a place of Indigenous power, and the maddas and dawtas are now female Mavericks. These mavericks are regularly depicted as what I defined and referred to in chapter three as **Caribbean Black Feminist Subalterns**: peripheralised women who harness personal power not as an expressed political act, or in overt and conscious solidarity with a collective rallying for the women’s rights that define liberal Western feminism, but

rather out of an inner sense of Jamaican Being (mostly nonconscious<sup>27</sup>) and survivalist defiance that propels them to defeat their oppressive circumstances. The Caribbean stories of these mavericks are not necessarily ones that achieve the “happy endings” (Francis, 2011, p. 339) that eluded them in postcolonial literature, but they are tales of resistance, and of women harnessing personal power to survive in a deeply misogynistic, heteronormative society. They are tales that confront the coloniality of power from which examples of Caribbean psychology may be gleaned and studied in order to add to a decolonial liberatory psychology.

Delores, Margot, and Thandi, personae from *Here Comes the Sun* (2016), are three examples of Caribbean Black Feminist Subalterns. Each of these women single-handedly tries to break through the proverbial glass ceiling and overcome the coloniality of power that disadvantages women in their community. Delores, the eldest of the three, is a maverick because she attempts to break free of the poverty and strangling racism of her colonial childhood. This is true in several ways. She rejects the Colonial Voiceover that tells her that her blackness makes her inferior. For as much as she struggles with her childhood demons, she has rejected bleaching away her blackness. Although she is a humble market seller, she is

---

<sup>27</sup> The word nonconscious is a social psychology term referring to all the processes people are not consciously aware of (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007). I specifically used nonconscious instead of unconscious to emphasize that the psychological process, of which the subject is unaware, is not a temporary or brief state – as can be implied in the use of “unconscious” where a person may usually be conscious but for one reason or other ceases to be aware and may then return to a conscious state. A nonconscious person is unaware over a prolonged period of time or permanently.



savvy, financially independent, hardworking and is the most successful higgler<sup>28</sup> in the market. Delores pushes her daughters (Margot and Thandi) to better their lives by striving to overcome the colonial obstacles that their Blackness and poverty create. While it is true that her own coloniality, especially in the form of colourism and homophobia, makes her oppressive to both her daughters, she is unrelenting in pushing them to succeed. In Delores's own distorted, and even abusive way, she still believes her children can be strong, successful women that overcome the cycle of poverty. Delores epitomises the Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern in its most unrefined form.

Margot (Delores's eldest daughter), also deeply damaged by the coloniality of being, never stops fighting to be a professional success, a maverick, a first time Black female manager in her field. Even though she herself faces the oppressive coloniality of power every day she insists on creating a bright and empowered future for her younger sister Thandi. Margot has no professional role model, or for that matter support, in her field. Her auto-oppressive tactics are self-harming and cruel to those around her, and even up until the end of the story she never shakes her own colourism and oppressive manner. But one can persuasively argue that these failings make her energetic and persistent efforts to be promoted and to support Thandi's dreams all the more remarkable, and that they are the resilient, insurgent 'Ni' warrior acts of a Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern.

Finally, Thandi. Delores's youngest child. She is the repository of her sister's and mother's dreams to be the best at school and to become a doctor. She is also a victim of the savagery of the coloniality of being and power in modern times. She bleaches her skin in the

---

<sup>28</sup> Patwah word for street seller. Usually refers to women who are well known for their financial and selling prowess.

misguided belief that it will better her life. She fights her desires to be an artist and instead works hard to gain the academic grades that will ensure that as one of the only Black girls in a colonial school she will qualify for entry into the Island's prestigious medical school.

Thandi is a maverick because she bravely attempts to confront her own coloniality of being. She is petrified of her own blackness, of disappointing her family, and of failure. Yet, Thandi breaks free and pursues her love for art and her love for a 'poor Black boy' (Charles) - both passions that she has always associated with failure. This unlikely act of rebellion against her seemingly immutable colonial destiny makes her a Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern.

The bravery and pioneering spirit of these three women in an environment that from birth has beaten them down, that has given them no reason to hope, and every reason to succumb to the coloniality of power, has seen them rise to be the best that they can be. These characters represent the ultimate decolonial feminists, not because they gain a literary "happy ending" (Francis, 2011, p. 339) per se. Nor is it because they are devoid of the deeply damaging psychological traits that are propagated by coloniality. The psycho-literary analysis of this thesis identifies them as Caribbean Black Feminist Subalterns because they chose to keep resisting the racist, misogynistic oppressive society that has robbed them of all personal power. Indeed, they chose to start trying even when every experience in their lives, including their family relationships (which were damaged and often defined/marked by coloniality), discouraged them from making any attempt to chase their dreams. These decolonial Caribbean Black Feminist Subalterns redefine the terms of their struggle using indigenous wisdoms, and psychological strategies that they have invented, as they battle the coloniality of power. They embody the Maroon 'Ni' Feminist spirit as they fight for their rights as outcast women and for the rights of their female relatives using their own standards, psychology, knowledge, and invented strategies. It is important to bear in mind that although their stories suggest that they have family support, this support in of itself came with mixed

and damaging realities. This is evident given that the character's internalised coloniality oft times meant that their advice and influence veered toward being questionable, resulting in harmful family influence that the characters on the receiving end had to either work through or fight against, picking and choosing how to engage that support in a critically relational way.

If these Maddaland women of *Here Comes the Sun* characterise the psychology of the decolonial Caribbean feminist, portrayed in their capacity as individual beings (as opposed to the mother-daughter postcolonial representations discussed in the introduction), then the women of *How to Love a Jamaican* (Arthurs, 2014) epitomise the 21<sup>st</sup> Century decolonial version of the madda-dawta relationship. Arthurs's short stories are set in StepMotherland, but she creates a decolonial context by using a reimagined nation state which is the restorative Maddaland of Jamaica. This is not a place to escape from, as it is portrayed in postcolonial literature, but is a place to escape to. Maddaland in decolonial literature, in *The Caribbean Literary Seas*, is a place for characters, authors, researchers, readers, and activists to re-connect with personal power and strength. In Arthurs's writing the Jamaican Maddaland is a place of grung poetics and wisdom, where peripheralised characters and subaltern voices hold immense value. Arthurs elects to portray decolonial Maddaland as the place where children are sent to from StepMotherland to be healed or protected from harms that have befallen them in the place she depicts as a capitalist, soul corrupting, society. In this way, the postcolonial mother-daughter relationship becomes inverted from one in which the daughter migrates to escape the mother, to a decolonial one in which the madda (or often the grannie), is the rescuer or nurturer of the beaten down dawta and grandchildren. In decolonial literature and psychology Maddaland is not merely defined as a former colony. It holds its own and is a sanctuary even when its materiality and lingering coloniality does not altogether bear this description out. This is so because as a refuge and respite from capitalism, and in offering a

return to belonging, citizenship, and the familiar, it is potentially a place in which to pause, sometimes rest and reconnect in a way that is empowering and healing.

Aside from being a retreat from StepMotherland, re-imagined psycho-literary Maddaland is also a space of escape from the oppressive past which is symbolised by rural postcolonial Maddaland. The essential difference between Maddaland and Rural Maddaland may well be more symbolic than it is based in the realities of the living conditions to be found in the two places; reinforcing that Maddaland is a symbolic space of return. For just as it is true that The Jamaican Voice is often victorious over the Colonial Voiceover, decolonial Maddaland, the sanctuary, represents a place of retreat and victory over the coloniality of power represented by postcolonial Rural Maddaland. A psycho-literary analysis of the Rural Maddaland described in *Lionheart Gyal* (Ford-Smith & Sistren, 1987) should prove helpful to appreciating this contrast. In *Lionheart Gyal*, Honor Ford Smith and Sistren describe the coloniality of power by illustrating the excruciating slave like conditions of postcolonial Rural Maddaland that can be traced directly back to plantation cruelty:

“My fadda no believe inna no discipline at all, but murderation. Just pure beating. When him beat, him beat deadly.” (Ford-Smith & Sistren, 1987, p. 5)

“Him strip we naked and tie we up pon a big breadfruit tree in front a we gate...him start beat we wid a piece a truck tyre...him beat we to excess.” (p. 8)

“Dem strip me naked and gimme five different beating. My big Breda beat me, my fadda beat me.” (p. 48)

“Dis beating ting is a tradition ting. Inna slavery dem use di murderation on di plantation and den our fore-parents, when dem lef out a slavery dem believe di only solution is beating.” (p. 17)

“During service...me only see when Mass Sam tek a sipple jack and give her one lick cross her back...home lick her again and again...me start think bout it ‘how can a man keep church and beat di memba dem?’ Me ask meself.” (p. 67)

“Charlie was my big bredda...a him dem mek beat. Him no beat no weh else, but inna di front yard...when him beat, it come in like a torture movie...him rip me clothes and tie me on pon di soursop tree and whip me wild him belt.” (p. 204)

The repugnant coloniality of power deeply rooted in postcolonial Rural Maddaland offers readers, attempting a critical psycho-literary analysis of Jamaican literature, a dramatic comparison to the decolonial Maddaland reimagined as a place of healing and strength in the sanctuary of The Caribbean Literary Seas. Contemporary decolonial Jamaican writers choose to lift to the forefront of their novels images of Maddaland as not just a peaceful refuge, but as a place that becomes a sanctuary because it re-energises and empowers its citizens. In this way Maddaland is not only the dreadful colony where slavery never came to an end but is recreated as an Indigenous psychological space populated by the liberated.

This decolonial re-imagination creatively posits that damaged Step/Motherland migrants return to Maddaland, in flesh, thought, cultural habits/traditions, and being, almost as an act of expiation to be made whole again. Writers steeping migrants in the Maddaland

psychology, values, and customs that heal their being, draw on the formidable decolonial psychology and spirit of ‘Ni’ (Nanny the Maroon) to counter the coloniality of power that is so painfully exposed in these stories. In Jamaican folklore ‘Ni’ never dies. Maroon tradition says that such a leader cannot be destroyed; she merely moves to another point of struggle where she can be more useful (Honor Ford Smith & Sistren, 1987). This is a perfect decolonial move or antidote to the ever modernising, ever reinventing, coloniality. The ‘Ni’ spirit enacted in decolonial 21<sup>st</sup> Century writing, has moved the point of struggle (so to speak) by recasting the oppressive postcolonial Nation State to the Maddaland sanctuary that heals colonial wounds through empowering those weakened and dispossessed by capitalism.

Pivoting from what we learn in *Lionheart Gyal* to *How to Love a Jamaican* may make it easier to glean that by Alexi Arthurs (2014) writing poignantly about children returning to Maddaland (for healing and the re-grounding of their Jamaican essence), she engages in the activism and epistemic disobedience that this thesis investigates. Arthurs’s stories certainly reveal new understandings, constructs situational and useful knowledge, and disabuses readers of any lingering ideas that the coloniality of power is not damaging. Conversely, Arthurs shows that it is, in fact, not a power but a weakness that can be overcome using localised wisdoms and psychology.

Curiously, before unrolling her decolonial narrative, Arthurs reprises the postcolonial Mother/Daughter theme in the very first story *Light Skinned Girls and Kelly Rowlands* (p. 157). In this story, second generation Jamaicans observe the love/hate relationships their mother had with their grandmothers who they despised in life, and yet worship in death. The character Kimberly sums up this relationship when she asks Celia: “Do you think it’s because your mother is Jamaican? Caribbean mothers want to eat their daughters” (p. 12). The importance of this seemingly backward reaching story being the first in the collection of short stories is that it provides a benchmark for what turns out to be an increasingly decolonial

reading journey. This postcolonial benchmark effectively gives us a comparison for the decolonial treatment Arthurs gives her later stories. We progressively refocus our attention to Maddaland as a font of inspiration for maddas and dawtas who are emboldened by their Ni Jamaicanness to create subversive methods of survival in America. By the end of the book, we may be so infected by their ‘see how far we have come’ sense of accomplishment that it could inspire a lifting of this liberating psychology from the pages into a real life decolonial psychological imaginary. In these short stories, curative Maddaland is contrasted against the capitalist StepMotherland where slavish working hours, pursuits of the ‘American dream’, consumerism, and the chase after elusive economic freedom, slowly drains life and alienates mothers from daughters. Some excerpts from *How to Love a Jamaican* (2014) that illustrate this are seen in the following list of quotes that although lifted out of context are not cryptic because they each are written like insightful mini-stories. I provide several quotes not just because they evidence the frequency with which the theme is repeated, but because the weight of the content and wording gains cumulative strength when grouped and read together outside of the larger plot(s):

She had just moved from America, since her parents thought it would be valuable if their fourteen-year-old left the jungles of Brooklyn to be educated in the Jamaican way by her grandmother. (p. 35)

Ms. Honey was thinking she did a good job squeezing the slack American ways out of her granddaughter... (p. 36).

Pam and Curtis brought Stacy to Jamaica because they didn't know what else to do with her. They believed that her old-time granny would straighten her out. (p. 52)

When Stacy was growing up, Pam was always working overtime so that they could buy a house. And when she and Curtis bought a house, she worked overtime so that they could pay the mortgage, the water bill, the electric bill, and all the other bills that came with owning a house...Before she had children, she had hoped that she would see her daughter as more than a daughter, as a person with desires and her own set of truths, but it turned out that all she saw was a child who needed from her. She determined that what a daughter needed was to be fed, clothed, baptised, and protected from men... (pp. 55-56)

She had had to send her daughter to her mother, and she hoped that the old woman would be tough. Maybe, she thought, maybe the formula so many Caribbean mothers use on their daughters wasn't the worst thing. Maybe, she thought, it was sacrilege for daughters to discuss their sex lives with their mothers, and what a daughter needed was not a confidante but a woman who loved her enough to show her some of the harshness that the world was ready and able to give her. (p. 55)

Then she is wrapping her arms around me and whispering a quick prayer because she watches on the news the ways in which America can swallow black sons. (p. 73)



My mother's voice comes into my head, so I smile. She would call the couple sleeping and the woman putting on her makeup on the train 'slack.' She would be horrified. She would say that Americans don't have any shame, and she would warn me, 'Please, Samson, I didn't bring you to this country to take up them ways.' (p. 77)

And isn't this what Tiffany's mother prayed against? She worried that she would lose her daughter tragically in America, a place that, according to the television and newspapers, took daughters and later spit out their bones. (p. 87)

Her body would be flown back home and her mother, who believes that America is where young girls come to die, would be quick to tell everyone that this is exactly what she expected to happen, all her fears realised. (p. 95)

No amount of years living in America could convince us that this place (Jamaica) isn't our home. (p. 107)

If Arthurs starts our reading with the postcolonial mother-daughter trope, she certainly unravels this relationship in a full circle journey from StepMotherland back to Maddaland and madda-dawta, eventually completing the decolonial storytelling in the final tale aptly and ironically titled *Shirley From a Small Place*. This is the story of a Jamaican girl, Shirley, who migrates to America and becomes a superstar. Described by StepMotherland magazines as the most beautiful woman in the world, Shirley attains the ultimate in the American capitalist

dream - fame, wealth, hero worship. This can lead the reader to believe that migrating to StepMotherland helps Shirley to overcome the coloniality of power. But Shirley also eventually loses everything of value within herself, and becomes so broken, lonely, and unhappy that the reader soon realises that Arthurs is really depicting StepMotherland as the contemporary site of the coloniality of power that it is. Shirley leaves her 'success' behind and returns to the simple Jamaican psychological refuge that is her mother's healing food and restorative energy - her mother's home, Maddaland, in the sanctuary of The Caribbean Literary Seas. Arthurs choosing to end with this story not only calls on the reader to reject swallowing whole the uncritical assessment of capitalist America as paradise, but also offers us a reimagined psychology and Maddaland as sanctuary and bulwark against the modernist coloniality of power.

The postcolonial symbolising empowerment as escape to the comforts of capitalism and a 'better life' is revealed as not the only true story. Arthurs eventually offers readers a reworking of the old tropes. In this alternative decolonial version dawns return to maddas to reconnect with or to find personal power, and StepMotherland is not a true replacement for Maddaland. Through this updated reconfiguration, readers are offered a psycho-literary confrontation with the coloniality of power in which characters find credible homegrown authority over their lives and circumstances. This story holds immeasurable insights into how re-evaluating the epistemology, ontology, and psychology of the West can benefit those seeking renewal and comfort within their own culture and homelands.

### ***5.1.3. Step/Motherland***

*Lionheart Gal* (Honor Ford-Smith & Sistren, 1987) entreats readers to recognise the Ni (Nanny the Maroon) spirit in Jamaican stories. They are also presented with a fresh understanding that two images may not be opposite in the way that they are frequently taught to believe using the binary dialectic of Western Epistemology. The principal decolonial

observation of this novel is that readers must reassess their sense of the rules of resistance and limits of power. To do this, one must recognise the spirit of Ni that can be found in odd places and is reconfigured across time and space where ordinary women become Black Caribbean Feminist Subalterns who determine struggles, victories, and defeats for themselves. Ford-Smith & Sistren (1987) assert that drawing on the spirit of Ni in tale-telling releases what is most poetically true about postcolonial struggles, and encodes what is overtly threatening to the powerful, into covert images of resistance.

A decolonial psycho-literary analysis of Jamaican literature reveals that the spirit of Ni permeates contemporary depictions of Step/Motherland in all the ways that Ford-Smith and Sistren (1987) outline. They observe that reading and writing with this spirit creates a space for the re-contextualisation of postcolonial migration to and from Step/Motherland. To fully appreciate this re-contextualisation, we can study the characters in the poetry of Louise Bennett-Coverley (1966a), and enlist their personification of the Ni spirit to help delineate a phenomenon eponymously described in her poem *Colonization in Reverse*. This poem describes, tongue in cheek, Jamaican migration to Motherland as an inversion of the expropriation and exploitation that characterised British colonisation. Through this inversion comes a challenge to the globalised matrix of power and a direct confrontation to the coloniality of power. I will now present this poem and go through the ways in which the poem reveals a psychology of resistance and ‘reversal’ of coloniality.

***Colonization in Reverse***

Wat a joyful news, miss Mattie,

I feel like me heart gwine burs

Jamaica people colonizin

Englan in Reverse

By de hundred, by de tousan  
From country and from town,  
By de ship-load, by de plane load  
Jamaica is Englan boun.

Dem a pour out a Jamaica,  
Everybody future plan  
Is fe get a big-time job  
An settle in de mother lan.

What an islan! What a people!  
Man an woman, old an young  
Jus a pack dem bag an baggage  
An turn history upside dung!

Some people doan like travel,  
But fe show dem loyalty  
Dem all a open up cheap-fare-  
To-England agency.

An week by week dem shippin off  
Dem countryman like fire,  
Fe immigrate an populate  
De seat a de Empire.

Oonoo see how life is funny,  
Oonoo see da turnabout?  
Jamaica live fe box bread  
Out a English people mout'.

For wen dem ketch a Englan,  
An start play dem different role,  
Some will settle down to work  
An some will settle fe de dole.

Jane says de dole is not too bad  
Because dey payin she  
Two pounds a week fe seek a job  
dat suit her dignity.

me say Jane will never fine work  
At de rate how she dah look,  
For all day she stay pon Aunt Fan couch  
An read love-story book.

Wat a devilment a Englan!  
Dem face war an brave de worse,  
But me wonderin how dem gwine stan  
Colonizin in reverse. (Louise Bennett-Coverley, 1966a)

According to Ashley Dawson (2007), this poem displays a “witheringly ironic attitude toward the imperial legacy that connects Caribbean colonial subjects to the British motherland” (p. 3). This poem describes migration as a wilful and aggressive act that radically challenges the history of subjugation by overturning the spatial and cultural apartheid that cemented colonial rule (Dawson, 2007). Essentially the poem describes the fact that former colonial subjects are taking the fight against imperialism to the doorstep of Step/Motherland. The colonised are reversing the power dynamic, constructions of historical narrative, knowledge, and perception, as they colonise the colonisers. This surely is a superlative psychological decolonial turn in which the previously ‘discovered’<sup>29</sup> (the formerly colonised) ‘discovers’ (gains new knowledge and understandings of, demystifies, creates new and more accurate perceptions of) the ‘discoverers’ (the colonisers) and rewrites the narrative that informs their national psyche.

In current decolonial Caribbean stories, the ultimate ‘Colonization in Reverse’ describes migrants sending money<sup>30</sup> home to family in Maddaland - a reinvented capitalism

---

<sup>29</sup> Refers to the obviously incorrect, absurd, and offensive notion that European explorers could discover lands already populated with Indigenous peoples; thus, starting the imperious mythology of colonialism in the Caribbean and elsewhere.

<sup>30</sup> Migrant “remittances continue to play a central role in the lives of many families in the Caribbean. Although they help support national economies and provide governments in almost all of the region with additional foreign exchange, their fundamental role is to offset the worst for the poorest, and enable recipients, in most cases, to be able to live a better life... in absolute terms there were a total of US\$8.3 billion in remittances to the Caribbean last

that reverses the historical trend of colonial resources being looted and used to benefit the Empire - Motherland<sup>31</sup>. There are numerous significant examples in Jamaican literature of the “boxing of bread out of the coloniser’s mouth” (line 27) styled migrant remittances sent from Step/Motherland to sustain families back home in Maddaland. Examples are seen in stories such as: *The Helpweight, Bella Makes a Life, and Jamaica Hope* (Goodison, 2012); *Here Comes the Sun* (Dennis-Benn, 2016); *Exodus a Run, Rockstone a River Bottom no Know Sun Hot, Me Own Two Hand, and Veteran by Veteran* (Ford-Smith & Sistren, 1987). All these tales mention, or are centred around, a bread winner who goes to Step/Motherland to seek their fortunes to support family back home and inadvertently supplement and build the Jamaican Maddaland economy. The confrontation of the coloniality of power exhibited in

---

year. In the case of the Dominican Republic there was a 4.8 percent growth to a total of US\$3.16 billion, for Jamaica, a rise of 0.6 percent to US\$2.04 billion, and for Haiti a 3.4 percent fall to US\$2 billion.” (Jessop, 2022, p. 1).

<sup>31</sup> Colonisers stole incalculable amounts from the colonies: Britain’s historical debt to the African continent is said to be in the trillions of pounds and their economy was exponentially transformed by the (in)direct stimulus drawn from slavery and the plantation economy (Drayton, 2005); Haiti was forced to pay \$21 billion (in today’s dollars) in “reparations” to the French slaveholders it had overthrown (Sperling, 2017); and it is estimated that Britain took \$45 trillion in today’s value out of India (Hickel, 2018).

this theme is literal because it challenges the very structure and ordering of capitalism within the matrix of power. Most significant to this study is that this disruption also challenges the psychology of (de)coloniality in profound and useful ways, by undercutting Euromerican ontology and by establishing the Jamaican Being in ways which I will now describe using psycho-literary analysis of Jamaican Literature.

The Jamaican fictional rendering of the ‘Colonization in Reverse’ theme deals a body blow to the coloniality of power while unravelling the coloniality of being. Jamaican novels feature migrant reports of the ugliness and shocking inferiority of Step/Motherland. These rebarbative portrayals strip naked the colonial myth that Step/Motherland is a paradise superior to Maddaland. The immigrant’s ingrained sense of self, their Jamaican Voice that identifies and calls out the glaring flaws of Step/Motherland in these stories, openly debunks the myth of its superiority, and should lead the reader to question their own perceptions of the West. In yet another psycho-literary decolonial coup, 21<sup>st</sup> Century stories highlight how Jamaican immigrants use their habits, culture, ontology, and Indigenous epistemology to improve their individual status, and to in turn, improve the Step/Motherland societies that they ‘colonize in reverse’. This demonstrates what is suggested in the conceptual introduction of this chapter - that while coloniality can be metaphorically viewed as an occupying tide that engulfs Caribbean lands, decoloniality is more like Caribbean Indigenous feeder tributaries that replenish The Caribbean Literary Seas and eventually enlarge (as well as dilute the salty coloniality of) global oceans. Examples of how authors and readers are exposed to the decolonial psychology that reshapes theory, self-perceptions, and thinking about coloniality **in**, and **of**, literature emerge. The psycho-literary analysis supporting this claim is described next.



The Jamaican Voice in *lionheart Gal* picks up on the Jamaican habit of casually naming Step/Motherland “Foreign”<sup>32</sup> (Honor Ford-Smith & Sistren, 1987), which this study interprets as the decolonial view of Britain and America as alien, distant, and in some instances, disappointingly flawed. Paralleling Arthurs’s (2014), *Shirley From a Small Place*, Andrea Levy, in her novel *Small Island*, captures this disappointment in the oft repeated, disdainful rhetorical question of newly landed Jamaican immigrant, Hortense: “Is this the way the English live?” (Levy, 2004, p. 20). It is made abundantly clear to the reader that the migrant’s view of Motherland is a bitter let-down when Hortense tells her husband: “This place is disgusting. I caan believe you bring me all this way to live like this. You make me come here to live like an animal?” (p. 26). Further along in the story her soldier husband, Gilbert, summarises this migrant disgust of the realities of Motherland, which serve as counter discourse to the dominant narrative of Western Superiority, by envisioning for the reader a scenario where Britain is depicted as a mother who asks for a long-lost son’s (i.e., citizens of former colonies) help. Gilbert describes a son who has fantasies of reuniting with his beloved mother but is appalled to find that all he dreamt about was fake:

Let me ask you to imagine this. Living far from you is a beloved relative whom you have never met. Yet this relation is so dear a kin she is known as Mother. Your own mummy talks of Mother all the time. ‘Oh Mother is a beautiful woman-refined, mannerly and cultured.’ Your daddy tells you, ‘Mother thinks of you as her children; like the Lord above she takes care of

---

<sup>32</sup> Jamaicans use ‘Foreign’ as a noun for an overseas location, usually Britain or America. e.g., “I am going to Foreign” or “She is now living with her family in Foreign”.

you from afar.' There are many valorous stories told of her, which enthrall grown men as well as children. Her photographs are cherished, pinned in your own family album to be admired over and over. Your best, everything you have that is worthy is sent to Mother as gifts. And on her birthday you sing-song and party. Then one day you hear Mother calling - she is troubled, she need your help. Your mummy, your daddy say go. Leave home, leave familiar, leave love. Travel seas with waves that swell about you as substantial as concrete buildings. Shiver, tire, hunger - for no sacrifice is too much to see you at Mother's needy side. This surely is adventure. After all you have heard, can you imagine, can you believe, soon, soon you will meet Mother? The filthy tramp that eventually greets you is she. Ragged, old, and dusty as the long dead. Mother has a blackened eye, bad breath and one lone tooth that waves in her head when she speaks. Can this be that fabled relation you heard so much of? This twisted-crooked weary woman. This stinking cantankerous hag. She offers you no comfort after your journey. No smile, no welcome. Yet she looks down at you through lordly eyes and says, 'who the bloody hell are you?' (p. 93)

This blistering narrative leaves a reader in no doubt as to the shocking 'discovery' of the inferiority of Motherland as compared to Maddaland. It is a vicious decolonial twin beheading of the mythical Motherland beasts of the coloniality of being and power. This accords with the conceptualisation in this thesis's introduction imagery of terrifying, murky, transatlantic waters that lie beyond the aquamarine warmth of The Caribbean Literary Seas.

Because *Colonization in Reverse* takes the fight against imperialism to its source, it is pertinent that Levy takes a decolonising jab at how unreconciled British Natives are with this

immigrant day of reckoning and potential reversal of the power dynamic. She does this by writing scenes that include several xenophobic British characters who just cannot accept the equality, and at times superiority, of Jamaican Immigrants. For example, Hortense is reduced to tears at the humiliating rejection she receives when she dares to seek employment as a teacher. Even though she is qualified, the British education department refuses to recognise her qualifications. The department clerks, who are less qualified than Hortense, block her from even submitting a job application. The coloniality of power is both illustrated by, and confronted in, the scene where Hortense tries to stand her ground and submit her application even after being humiliated, insulted, and blocked from doing so. Levy creates in Hortense a Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern who bucks the entire Motherland system of racism and oppression. Via this character creation Levy can do what al-Din et al. (2018) describe as the author using a counter-discursive strategy to question stereotypes, reverse imperialist fixed binaries, and deconstruct Eurocentric myths of superiority, authority, and civility.

al-Din et al. (2018) argue that Levy achieves a writing-back to the centre of the Empire by creating a canonical counter-discourse to destabilise assumptions perpetuated in classic English Literature. I find that the counter-discourse to which al-Din et al. refers also demonstrates the historically, contextually, and culturally specific humaning essence of Jamaican life and psychological strategies used by migrants to not just survive but thrive. So far, I have sought to demonstrate the various techniques of reading and writing with a Jamaican Voice that presents characters as ‘normal’ people that live lives, flawed or not, that end up breaking the bounds of race. But Levy uses this same technique - of eradicating colour as a defining characteristic - and expands upon it with flourish by employing it when humanising even weak, racist characters.

She elevates counter-discourses to not merely be a simplistic tit for tat writing-back that meets the myth of White superiority with examples of either White inferiority or Black

superiority (although she certainly does this too); instead, she humanises characters by making them all compelling, based on the backstories of their lives. She paints a picture that enables the reader to see all races on an equal footing: equally flawed; equally complex; equally capable of good and bad - often at the same time; equally skewered by, and imbued with, the prejudice of coloniality; and equally victimised by racial stereotypes - although not equally victims of oppression and racial discrimination.

It bears repeating that this expanded decolonial writing strategy does not merely reproduce an endless regurgitation of the style of point and counterpoint that is often weaponised to reject racist stereotypes. Levy uses sophisticated instances of her characters inverting and challenging the Eurocentric superior-inferior binary to build up a perception that by the end of the novel once and for all reshapes and humanises understandings of the Maddaland and Motherland characters as equals. One way in which she achieves authenticity (with this technique) is by using autobiography and faithful witness to give an accurate and fair account of the migrants' lives in their own small island, Maddaland, versus the eventually discredited images of Motherland which the migrants see for the small island that Britain really is. Levy substantiates this narrative by accurately documenting racism, the cruel treatment of Blacks, and the political and historical events of the Windrush generation. She reflexively inserts her own positional perceptions as a person of Jamaican descent and as a child of parents who migrated to Britain shortly after WWII (al-Din et al., 2018). In this way, the reader is presented with a believable view of small island Motherland as small in culture, generosity, decency, cleanliness, and even power! This autobiographical and faithful witness quality seems to give the reader a front row seat to watch the myth of a superior Motherland disappear from the minds of the Jamaican characters as they go about their daily lives in the same way that Levy and her parents must have done as well. Take for example these thoughts expressed by Hortense and Gilbert:

How the English built empires when their armies marched on nothing but mush should be one of the wonders of the world. I thought it would be combat that would make me regret having volunteered, not boiled-up potatoes, boiled up vegetables – gray and limp on the plate like they had been eaten once before. Why the English come to cook everything by this method? (p. 84)

England had shrunk. It was smaller than the place I left...I had to stare out at the sea just to catch a breath. And behind every face I saw were trapped the rememberings of war. (p. 275)

‘There you are’ he said to me, pushing the loaf forward enough for me to see a thin black line of dirt arching under each fingernail. It was Mrs. Bligh who came and took the bread from him. Her dirty hand having pinch up my loaf as well, she placed it into my shopping bag. Then she tell me loud for all to hear, ‘This is bread.’ She thinks me a fool that does not know what is bread? But my mind could not believe what my eye had seen. That English people would buy their bread in this way. This man was patting on his red head and wiping his hand down his filthy white coat. (p. 217)

Unwrapping and placing the fish and chips on the plate I tell her, ‘You know what the English do?’ ... ‘they eat this food straight from the newspaper. No plate. Nothing.’ I knew this high-class woman would not be able to keep her face solemn in the presence of such barbarity. Scandalised, she could not stop herself staring on me in disbelief,’ Yes, from the newspaper! ... ‘Not everything,’ I tell her, ‘not everything the English do is good.’ (p. 214)

But this was my home, it was for me to tell her when to sit, when to come in, when to warm her hands. I could surely teach this woman something, was my thought.

Manners! (p. 149)

Now, why should this woman worry to be seen in the street with me? After all, I was a teacher and she was only a woman whose living was obtained from the letting of rooms. If anyone should be shy it should be I. (p. 151)

‘Is this where you buy your materials?’ For all the cloth seemed to be spread about the floor. There was little room to tread. Bolts and bolts of cloth thrown this way and that all about the place. Some of it dirty. Some of it ragged and fraying. And two old women looked to be crawling on their hands and knees through this mess of cloth while the assistant just daydream behind a counter...(p. 217)

Hortense compares the way the English sell cloth with the Jamaicans' way:

How the English treat their good materials like this? In Jamaica, I told Mrs Bligh, all the cloth is displayed neatly in rows for you to peruse the design, the colour. When you have chosen you point to the bolt that the assistant will then take up for measuring. She understood what I was telling her but still she look surprise on me, saying, ‘Oh, do you have drapers where you come from?’ (p. 217)

How can an Englishwoman expect me to wash myself in the same place where I must clean up the vegetables? It was disgusting to me. (p. 217)

For none was so mysterious to me than how, in God's name, a woman such as I found herself residing in the household of people like the Andersons. (p. 60)

As she moved past me to ascend the stairs to return to our room, her nose lifted so far in the air it was a wonder her neck did not break. Now this was the story that my mind conjured. Queenie had in some way insulted my fiercely proud wife. Her hat a little old-fashioned? Her English not so good? Who knows? But a slight none the less for which Hortense took grave offence. (p. 314)

'I did not bring you to England to scrub a floor on your knees. No wife of mine will be on her knees in this country. You hear me?' (p. 208)

al-Din et al. (2018) describe Levy (2004) as endowing her characters with a sense of pride that glaringly contrasts with the repulsive behaviour of the white characters, and that shakes the fixity of the Eurocentric sense of privilege, reversing the order of the superior-inferior binary system. Further to this, Levy goes as far as to compare the morality of the Jamaican characters against that of the colonisers... using their own Western heteronormative values! She does this by introducing smaller storylines that display the common betrayals and the cheating of British men and women such as that of the landlady and her husband - Queenie and Bernard.

I have argued that one weighty contribution, among others, that *Small Island* makes to decolonial psychology and epistemology emanates from the author's painstakingly deconstructing colonial stereotypes in which Motherland is construed as superior and Maddaland inferior. al-Din et al. (2018) explain that stereotypes split the world into the

irredeemable primitive ‘other’ and the generous, civilised, benevolent European. Consequently, the coloniser maximises their self-esteem, can ease their conscience, and justify the atrocities they perform against the colonised. al-Din et al. argue that the psychological effect of stereotyping is to make people feel good about themselves, thinking their group better than the ‘othered’ group and that coloniality has established the widespread stereotyping which fosters racism, discrimination, and prejudice. According to al-Din et al. (2018) colonial stereotyping has led to psychological pathologies such as identity crises, self-alienation and deculturalisation. Levy initially reflects such pathology in her character Hortense who is shown to be severely afflicted by the coloniality of being when she obsequiously admires the white women who work at her school in Jamaica. She seeks to mimic their colonial British elocution and comportment, thinking them naturally intelligent, while describing her Jamaican Black students in hateful ways that reveal her psychological identity crisis:

Sixty children fidgeting like vermin. ... sixty nappy-headed, runny-nosed, foul-smelling ragamuffins. Sixty black faces. Some staring on me, gaping as idiots do...their fickle minds would start wandering... at that school for scoundrels I had learnt to despise. (pp. 49-50)

Levy does not leave Hortense unresolved on these colonial psychological issues. Hortense traverses the Borderlands of a foreigner living in Motherland where she is forced to re-evaluate and challenge the myths of her small island Maddaland versus that of small island Motherland. In so doing, Hortense experiences the inbetweenity of moving from deculturalisation, to identity crisis, to alienation, and finally to the psychic wholesomeness of smadditization. Levy creates the character’s geographical exilic Border Crossings which



transforms into the Borderlands of The Caribbean Literary Seas. In this psycho-literary space there is discomfort, cultural alienation, confrontation, rehabilitation, resuscitation, personhood, and eventual sanctuary.

al-Din et al. (2018) say of colonial discourse in literature that it plays a significant role in legitimising and perpetuating Western ideologies biased toward the White coloniser. By Levy humanising all the characters that have internalised these ideologies, by her deconstructing imperial narratives, reversing binaries, inverting stereotypes, and writing-back against oppressive generalisations, she provides a profound opportunity for decolonial psychological intervention **in** literature and **of** literature. Most pointedly, by her pitting of small island colony against small island coloniser, and by the recasting of Motherland and Maddaland, Levy (re)creates migrant decolonial moves that can contribute to a liberatory psychology that challenges dominant psychology, canonical literature, culture, education and power. She uses *The Jamaican Voice* to restore the historical identity and Voice of the marginalised subaltern silenced through coloniality. By Levy creating characters who are the antithesis of the stereotypes found in Western colonial literature, she heeds the advice of bell hooks (2003) regarding the centrality of voice and audience in writing becoming tools of activism and liberation.

The character Gilbert too experiences this small island versus small island decolonial psychology corrective when he encounters and confronts the coloniality of power. Gilbert's encounters even more emphatically rub salt in the wound of his realisation that Motherland is not a home, but a place of rejection and dehumanising racism. This is instantiated when he confronts racist army officials who refuse to treat him as equal; or by the demeaning difficulties he experiences with his juniors who sabotage him, as well as refuse to believe that as a Black man he has any skills including even knowing how to drive. Gilbert must endure rabid racism from his White landlord, Queenie's husband, who returns home from war and is

disgusted to find a Black couple living in his house. Countless British neighbours and strangers physically and verbally assault Gilbert leading him to wonder why he was not welcomed in the Mother country but was instead a spectacle to be gazed upon? He, with pitiful irony, wonders to himself: “How come England did not know me?” (Levy, 2009, p. 94). This sad realisation makes him long for anyone to look at him instead of gaping, and he even tragically longs for strangers to think nothing of and be indifferent to him. Gilbert’s battle to belong and be seen as an equal, and even to be recognised as superior in some ways, followed by his eventual wisdom that this will never happen, represents a full-on confrontation and confluence of both the coloniality of being and power in the Motherland.

There is a defining decolonial moment in *Small Island* when Motherland is compared to StepMotherland via a comparison of the veiled racism with which the American Army treats their Black soldiers based in Britain versus the raw racism of the British army toward British Black soldiers. It is a wonderful parody on how the shine of the Motherland (army) dulls when compared to the new StepMother. StepMother’s food and facilities seem better (p. 85), and ‘Negro’ West Indian soldiers are allowed to mix with white personnel (p. 86). In fact, “Paradise, we all decided, America is Paradise” (p. 85). That is, until Gilbert realises that unlike the West Indian soldiers (and Black US soldiers) on British soil, ‘Black American’ soldiers are in fact subject to Jim Crow laws when back home in StepMotherland. The truth is that the American army is actually extremely strict about keeping Black folks apart (p. 124), and in StepMotherland “West Indians thinking themselves as good as any man” would be lynched (p. 88)! The decidedly smadditized psychological view projected by this comparison is that both Motherland and StepMotherland are inferior to Maddaland - a nation in which her own children experience self-respect and their sense of belonging is nurtured.

The decolonial narrative common to contemporary Caribbean psycho-literary representations of migration from and to Motherland, StepMotherland, and Maddaland, is that the coloniality of power is confronted, and yes even reversed! In the Introduction it was noted that although we recognise the three elements of coloniality (being, knowledge, power) as separate, they are enmeshed. With this in mind, the next section is a continuation of the investigation into how decolonial reading and writing psychologically, epistemologically, and ontologically confronts the coloniality of power imbricated with other elements of the colonial matrix of power.

## **5.2. Education, Religion, Political-Economy: Entangled Noose of Coloniality**

Embedded in Nicole Dennis-Benn's (2016) Novel *Here Comes the Sun* is the contradiction that what is good for the American and European tourist is bad for local Black folk. For instance, Dennis-Benn writes that the heat of the sun is worshipped by tourists. They expose their white bodies by prostrating themselves on the beach. The sun's rays are intensified by the reflective white sand and darken their bodies. In contrast, she says that Black locals hide from the same sun. They smother their black bodies in bleaching cream, cover them in a layer of plastic and then a layer of clothes to conceal the plastic. The heat of the sun's rays combined with the plastic covering intensifies the bleaching effect and whitens their skin.

Throughout the novel the writer flogs this metaphor and the imagery of the inherent duality of the hot sun's potential to be either life-giving or destructive...dependent upon the rejection of coloniality. This imagery and theme, which casts the natural elements of Jamaica as either oppression or as release, is an apt metaphor for the possibilities that lie in using the Indigeneity of Mother Earth and Maddaland, to seek liberation through decolonial psychology. This psycho-literary study makes connections between how the novel portrays

this paradox and relates it to decolonial psychology. One striking observation that arises from making this connection is that decolonial psychology is readily available to any Jamaican, including subalterns, given that they can all access nature and Indigenous knowledge.

Because the study is based on literature and critical analysis of the ways that decolonial fiction reshapes psychology through new perceptions and knowledges, this section is dedicated to examining how characters, settings, language, and imagery challenge education, religion, economic, and political dominance used in the service of the coloniality of power.

Dennis-Benn (2016) presents readers with the effects of nature and Indigeneity on (de)coloniality by setting the story in a severe drought where characters start their day in “cool and damp mornings—the way it usually is before the sun makes its appearance, sucking all possibilities dry” (p. 68). Immediately she hints to the reader that, in the postcolonial world, with each sunrise comes either renewed decolonial possibilities or the inevitable destruction of coloniality because “With the sun comes that heat” (p. 76). Dennis-Benn expounds upon this theme by introducing the Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern character “Delores (who) fans herself with an old Jamaica Observer (daily newspaper). Her bright orange blouse is soaked with sweat, like someone threw water and drenched her under the armpits, across the belly, all the way down to her sides” (p. 77). The Feminist Subaltern refuses to be deterred from making her daily living, unlike the “Two other vendors who couldn’t take the heat, so they packed up their things and went back home” (p. 77). Like Delores’s sweat, this scene drips with the theme of Ni Indigenous psychology of resilience and confrontation of the coloniality of power. The Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern’s disdain of the other vendors quitting because of the oppressive Jamaican sun is a scene symbolic of the character’s refusal to be beaten by environmental circumstances over which she has no material control. She has harnessed an internal psychological mindset that is customised and linked to her understandings of her situated exterior, and this makes her a

maverick: ‘Delores, sucked teeth. ‘Dem really aggo give up a day’s work because ah di heat? Ah nuh Jamaica dem born an’ grow? Wah dem expec’? (p. 77).

Delores’s understanding that to achieve her ambitions means reconciling with what it means to be a Jamaican, including her body surviving the geographical reality of the natural fierce heat of the Jamaican sun, reverberates with Nettleford’s (1993) decolonial ideas that the body (not the Cartesian mind) and its geography is the centre of knowledge. In another scene the reader receives a sample of the importance of Nettleford’s ontological conceptualisation, as Delores’s wisdom - born of her confronting the Jamaican reality - makes her smadditize. In this extract Delores sees and claims power and an economic and territorial stake in her harsh world. Here, the reader can observe Delores chatting with another market seller, a Rastafarian, who has also resisted the ferocious Jamaican sun to make his living from the tourists drawn to the island’s heat in the luxurious hotels, but defeated by it in the local market:

‘Yuh see people come in yah from mawnin?’ she asks John-John in defence. ‘Sun too hot.’ She doesn’t tell him that she hasn’t been in the mood to do the regular routine - linking hands with tourists, courting them the way men court women, complimenting them, sweet-talking them, showing them all the goods, waiting with bated breath for them to fall in love, hoping they take a leap of faith and fish into their wallets. John-John shakes his head, his eyes looking straight ahead. ‘We cyan mek di heat do we like dis, Delores. No customers mean nuh money’ John-John says. His jaundiced eyes swim all over Delores’s face. ‘Wah we aggo do, Mama Delores?’

‘What yuh mean, what we g’wan do? Ah look like ah know?’ Delores fans herself harder, almost ripping the newspaper filled with the smiling faces of politicians and well-to-do socialites... ‘Well, Jah know weh him ah do. Hopefully

him will sen' rain soon,' John-John says. 'Believe you me,' she says to John-John, who squats to diligently paint one of his wooden birds. 'Tomorrow g'wan be a new day. Yuh watch an' see. Ah g'wan sell every damn t'ing me have.' (Dennis-Benn, 2016, pp. 80-81)

In this one fecund scene, decolonial readers can see a symbolic interplay between political-economy and Ni resilience; Ras Tafari (Jah) indigenous spiritual resilience; subaltern wisdom; knowledge born of particularity; and finally, the determination of a Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern character whose steely psychology makes her declare that she will not be beaten by her current circumstance. She will rise with the sun and “sell every damn ting she have” to the neo-colonial tourists just as she regularly does anyway (p. 81)! She will confront and defeat the coloniality of power. The strategies of survival exhibited by the Rasta and Subaltern Feminist are examples of the decolonial Ni psychology that allows characters to successfully navigate their own Jamaican world using intimate and Indigenous knowledge of its realities.

Dennis-Benn's characters fight the oppression that their own circumstance and home has burdened them with in the form of an antinomial sun that “glows on a colonial mansion” (p. 81), yet “sneers” on a humiliated Black Delores girl child (p. 83). It is the same sun that dries the land “barren” (p. 88); yet “casts Margot in gold” as she prostitutes herself to the old white man who can further her career; the same sun that then sets when the old man turns out to be impotent (p. 146). This sun midway through the book causes “Everything to wilt in the drought, but (also) get bigger and plumper by the day” (p. 150). It is the sun that dries the skin of Clover, Thandi's rapist, so that he has “... skin an ashen black that makes it look like it has been dried in the sun” (p. 152). This scorching sun makes characters wonder “when will this drought end?” (p. 170), while simultaneously making the reader wonder when and how

the characters will get a reprieve from their oppression? It is in this space of wondering and questioning that the reader is given an opportunity to generate thoughts that potentially will move beyond traditional Euromerican epistemology and psychology.

The novel ends with the destruction of the rural River Bank community which is then replaced by hotels built for the burgeoning Tourist Industry. Coloniality/the colonial matrix of power continues unabated throughout the book - but does this mean that the Jamaican Ni psychology of defiance is dead? Dennis-Benn's decolonial writing answers the reader's wondering not with a Westernised cinematic feel-good ending that would be an ending uncommon in the real lives of the formerly colonised. Instead, Dennis-Benn answers by portraying the accessible Ni spirit of Delores and other "indomitable women...standing in their living space like the sun itself" (p. 221). By using this imagery Dennis-Benn hints that the Ni spirit/psychology - typified by the nimbleness necessary to counter the dexterity of coloniality - has relocated itself to the fresh site of the next struggle (Ford-Smith & Sistren, 1987). Appropriate to this spirit, in one of the final scenes, both the author and the sun make a pronouncement about the "indomitable" psychology of decolonial characters that refuse to be defeated (p. 221):

women saunter to the river with pails on their heads—women who march together to the river that is miles from where they live, only to see that it's blocked off by cement and working tools (being used in the relentless production of capitalism). They return to their towns, each one with her neck held straight to balance her pail and what appears to be the weight of the world on her head. The sun is peering above the hill, just the cap of its head rising. The sky is a clear violet blue sprinkled with leftover stars and half of a moon. (p. 291)

The novel ends with the same Indigenous wisdom and decolonial psychology with which it began; the grung wisdom is imparted through the symbolism of a Jamaican sun that can be either destructive or life giving. Dennis-Benn seems to imply that the characters and the critical readers have a choice of psychological resilience based on one's own interpretation and Indigenous knowledge or situational understanding even – perhaps especially - when a good ending is not possible.

Finally, the ultimate confrontation with the coloniality of power in *Here Comes the Sun* is projected through the blatant, unrelenting sun imagery of the novel's last pages where Thandi's sun 'comes' down over The Caribbean Literary seas - "From where she sits Thandi looks out at the ocean glistening in the sunset... The sea is liquid gold as the sun dips on the horizon" (p. 269). It is at this final meeting of sun and Caribbean sea - sea-change (Wynter, 1970) - where we all, writer, reader, researcher, and activist can contemplate what the sun's arrival really means for a decolonised life and psychology? In the final stages of the novel, Dennis-Benn's descriptions of the sun's heat and dualistic effect on the Islanders is as arresting and unyielding as Delores's Ni spirit when she confronted the sun in the market scene of the opening pages:

Juliette sneers when she sees Thandi slump as though physically wounded. 'Ask yuh sista, she'll tell yuh. An' yuh know what she tell the girls weh work fah har? Girls like me? Yuh know what she tell anyone who would listen? She tell dem seh it's all fah her sister, who g'wan be a doctor. Her precious, perfect Thandi, who can do no wrong. Her dainty, stuck-up Thandi, who, in my opinion, will one day kick dirt in har face as soon as she reach somewhere, because she wouldn't want to associate wid har own color.' 'Enough!' Thandi clamps her hands over her ears. She stoops down, resting on her haunches as though cowering from the sun. (p. 307)



It seems that the decolonising quality of *The Caribbean Literary Seas* (as a place where one can see one's self clearly, a place of introspection, contemplation, and confrontation that may or may not elicit turmoil before ultimately providing a sanctuary) is intensified by what Dennis-Benn describes in the next scene as a catalytic Sun:

She looks around the large bedroom, where daylight has crept through the shutters, and touches her neck... She wraps herself in her robe and makes her way to the sunroom—the only place in her home where she feels like herself. Whatever that means... Margot sits on one of the wicker sofas in the sunroom and gazes at the panoramic view of the sea. It's a wonder to look at from up here. The view is more beautiful in the sunlight that usually streams in through the glass in enchanted beams. But lately the sky has emptied itself of everything, including stars. Like the ocean, it's deep and brooding, roaring over the city as if God has played a trick on mankind, the sea and sky switching places. It threatens to swallow Margot... Margot had built this room so that they could watch the sunrises and the sunsets together. But she has hired people to populate her property; people whose presence has kept her afloat—Cudjoe, an older man who used to be a farmer but turned yardman after his crops died in the drought, and Desrine... As Margot stands on the pool terrace, the sun, which hasn't shown itself in days, makes its way from behind the soft, dove-gray clouds, bright and unflinching. (pp. 326-330)

In what Jamaican's could call a 'last lick'<sup>33</sup> style commentary/comparison, the decolonial reader observes Margot gazing at the shimmer of a type of over-regimented sea, a swimming pool, which may represent a very unsatisfying, modern, Westernised substitute for the vast, open, liberatory Caribbean sea. After her ambitious career in the tourist industry has Margot discovered that all that glitters is not gold when bathed in the sun's shimmering rays?

The rectangular pool shimmers before Margot. Everything glitters in the new sunlight, just like Margot had always thought it would. Except for her lone, grainy figure on the water's surface, dark in the face of the sun." (pp. 326-330)

The evolving sun imagery reaches a crescendo that invites the reader to critically delve into the coloniality of power. When cross referenced with imagery from other Jamaican Literature, *Here Comes the Sun* provides insight into how exploitative development can eat a community alive. For example, authors Nicole Dennis-Benn and Kei Miller use common images of Jamaican life to capture how the coloniality of power devastates communities and ravage people's very 'being'. Both authors choose poignantly tragic images of the gouging of the Indigenous land, to depict the gouging of the soul of peripheralised rural communities. The authors share with the reader what they deem as an unmistakable conclusion - that because of the coloniality of power, for subaltern communities, the beauty of Jamaica is "not the paradise" (Dennis-Benn, 2016, p. 38) that it is for colonisers:

---

<sup>33</sup> In a Jamaican children's game of tag, the 'last lick' is the final touch or hit in which a player tries to strike their opponent and then speed off as victor of the game.

Down there is the Caribbean, though not the bits you might have seen in a pretty little brochure. We are beyond the aquamarine waters, with their slow manatees and graceful sea turtles, and beyond the beaches littered with sweet almonds. We have gone inland. Down there is a dismal little valley on a dismal little island. Notice the hills, how one of them carries on its face a scar—a section where bulldozers and tractors have sunk their rusty talons into its cheeks, scraped away the brush and the trees and left behind a white crater of marl. The eyesore can be seen from ten or more miles away. To the people who live in this valley, it feels as if they wear the scar on their own skin—as if a kind of ruin has befallen them. (Miller, 2017, p. 1)

‘This is no paradise. At least, not for us.’ ‘Yuh t’ink I don’t know? Trus’ me, I an’ I see di struggles of di people every day. Dem look at people like you an’ see where dem job went. Yuh can’t blame dem. But yuh also can’t say yuh not thankful fah what Jah give we.’ ‘So River Bank is what God give we?’ A bitter chuckle escapes Margot. ‘Stolen land?’ ‘Correction. We are di stolen people. Dis is our temporary land. Jah wouldn’t give us what ’im didn’t intend fah us to ’ave. Him soon move we again to a bettah place. Maybe back to Africa.’ (Dennis-Benn, 2016, p. 38)

The bulldozers appear overnight. They stand in place like resting mammoths, their blades like curved tusks. It’s as though they landed from the sky or were washed ashore. One by one they begin to knock down trees in the cove and along the river. They also take a chunk of the hill, cutting down the trees that cradle the limestone, which they chip away. Their big engines grind two-thousand-year-old tree trunks—trees the ancestors once hid behind, crouching in search of freedom. The workmen, imported from overseas, gather the fishing boats and load them on a truck. The men

fold the earth in ways Thandi would have thought impossible. Bits and pieces of rock scatter as trees are uprooted. When they collapse, the earth shakes. A huge silence follows. Thandi always knew that the sky would fall.” (Dennis-Benn. 2016, p. 276)

The gouging and destruction depicted by these two authors is the literary embodiment of the coloniality of power that this thesis examines for fresh understanding of the ways in which it is reinforced through religion, education, and socio-political economics. These stories suggest that global capitalism undermines the wellbeing of the rural Jamaican way of life first through the plantation economy and then later through the tourist economy.

Grosfoguel’s (2011) exhortation can help with analysis of the implications of this theme:

To call the present world-system ‘capitalist’ is, to say the least, misleading. Given the hegemonic Eurocentric ‘common sense,’ the moment we use the word ‘capitalism,’ people immediately think that we are talking about the ‘economy’. However, ‘capitalism’ is only one of the multiple entangled constellations of colonial power matrix of, Capitalist/Patriarchal Western-centric/Christian-centric Modern/Colonial World-System. Capitalism is an important constellation of power... (Grosfoguel, 2011, pp. 14-15)

Grosfoguel’s (2011, p. 15) “constellation of the colonial power matrix” is referred to throughout the selected novels and it imposes colonial ways of thinking, acting, and living that Jamaican decolonial authors reveal as religious, educational, socio-political, and economic entanglements. Together these threads of capitalism form a noose that strangle characters who seek to escape racism, colourism, patriarchy, homophobia, and the constraints of imposed heteronormativity. The intersectional oppression (Crenshaw, 1989; Hill-Collins,

2002) depicted in much of Caribbean Literature, shows how devastating and impossible it is to disaggregate these forces of coloniality. To substantiate this statement, next, I will look more closely at the individual forces of coloniality - education, religion (the Civilising Christian mission), politics, and economics - with the proviso that they, in actuality, work in tandem.

### ***5.2.1. Religion: Belief can Kill, and Belief can Cure***

The imposition of Christianity in order to convert the so-called savages and barbarians in the 16th century; followed by the imposition of the “white man’s burden” and the “civilising mission” in the 18th and 19th century; the imposition of the “developmentalist project” in the 20th century; and more recently, the imperial project of military interventions under the rhetoric of “democracy” and “human rights” in the 21st century, have all been imposed by militarism and violence under the rhetoric of modernity saving “the other” from its own barbarisms (Grosfoguel, 2011, p. 26).

From the onset, *Here Comes the Sun* establishes the reality that Civilising Christianity<sup>34</sup> is an authority and an enforcer of coloniality in Jamaica. At the beginning of the book, we witness Delores comparing the authoritative tone of the male tourist haggling with her to the “booming voice that can be heard every noon offering a prayer for the nation on Radio Jamaica” (p. 14). This comparison cunningly invites a comparison between the

---

<sup>34</sup> This thesis makes a clear distinction between Christianity (religious faith) and the ‘Christian Civilising Mission’. The Christian Civilising mission is regarded here as a specific force of coloniality, a stated tool of imperialism and power. The thesis section, **Colonial Education a Panacea of the Masses**, expands on the adaptation of the Christian ethic to the secular and capitalist goal of colonisation.

patriarchy, hubris, and bullying manner of a tourist who speaks for his wife and the commanding nature of the religious imprimatur which governs the nation through its daily radio broadcasts. Right away it can be inferred that this is a nation in which Civilising Christianity and patriarchy is the default voice of authority.

Interwoven into this same scene are images representing the dehumanising commodification of the Jamaican heritage; and the racist sexualisation and stereotyping of Black people; all being sold like cheap nothings to a tourist who comes across as a neo coloniser:

Her husband, who snaps pictures nonstop, surveys the table of the Rastas with their long, oversized penises, the smiling women with tar-black faces and basket of fruits on their heads, the grinning farmer carrying green bananas in his hands, the T-shirts with weed plants and a smoking Bob Marley with IRIE written in bold letters, the rag dolls wearing festival dresses that look like picnic tablecloths. (p. 14)

This scene should not only leave the reader feeling revulsion for coloniality, it facilitates engagement with the complexity and situatedness of the Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern who actively participates in the neo-colonial transaction:

‘If yuh buy three items yuh get a discounted price, all these t’ings are quality,’ Delores says, seizing the opportunity. ‘Yuh wouldn’t get dem anyweh else but right yah so.’ The man takes out his wallet and Delores’s heart leaps in her throat. ‘Give me two of those in a large, the tank in a small.’ He points at the T-shirts. Once he makes his purchase, his wife, as though given permission to grab as many local souvenirs as possible, purchases a woven basket— ‘For your mom’—more bracelets with Rasta

colors— ‘For Alan and Miranda’—and a couple of the rag dolls decked in festival dresses— ‘For the girls.’ By the time they’re done, they have bought half of what Delores had. Only Delores can sell this many souvenirs in a day, because, unlike the other hagglers, she knows she has a gold mine at home—a daughter she has to support—one who is going to be a doctor. (p. 14-15)

In that moment Delores is a maverick, savvy salesperson who outwits the neo coloniser by repurposing the capitalism of his own country. While the tourist thinks he is getting the better of her by using his powerful U.S. currency to buy racist treasure to carry home, the true victor of this decolonial scene is Delores. She has a long-term plan, and it is she who is ‘Colonizing in Reverse’ commandeering tourist wealth to develop and create her own family wealth. Each cheap trinket obviously means nothing more to her than bait does to an angler. Her interaction with the arrogant tourist is an insurgent investment into her real “gold mine” (p. 15), her daughter’s future as a doctor.

It is noteworthy that Dennis-Benn chooses to dominate the scene with the language of colonial economics. The effect ratchets up the exploitative, capitalistic quality of the interaction between the local and the foreigner. The understated humour and side reference to the sexualised Rasta Fari that comes through in the description of the carvings for sale harken back to the particularity of *The Jamaican Voice* that names, shames and claims; as well as it reminds us that there is an omnipresence of Indigenous spirituality - even in commercial daily life! Taken together these decolonial techniques comprise a homespun intersectional psychology used by the Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern to overcome and advance her socio-economic plight.

The racist exchange is transformed through counter-discourse when the reader experiences Delores’s feminist Ni spirit in which the encounter becomes one of Maroon like

resistance. Like Ni, Delores uses her local knowledge to out strategise the patriarchal bore. He is maneuvered into ‘signing a treaty’ and has no idea that he is doing so. The insurgency of this scene is reinforced a few pages later when Miss Ruby explains to Thandi - and the reader - “It’s true. Delores cheats tourists out of their money with cheap souvenirs she sells for triple the price in Falmouth Market, and Margot works long hours at the hotel. They do it for her (Thandi)” (p. 19).

Once Dennis-Benn creates the setting of a country awash with coloniality and dominated by a national Christian Civilising authority, she then creates intricate story layers that reveal the role of religion as an enforcer of colonial heteronormative values. One example of this is provided in a scene where Thandi mulls over the distinguished married parents of her schoolmates, associating their marriage with respectability. In her mind she negatively contrasts what she views as the correctitude of marriage against the lifestyle of her own single mother and father (who has deserted her) and all the common law unions in her village. The role of religion as colonial enforcer of heteronormativity is even more apparent when Thandi dramatically completes her rumination by thinking about Verdene, a lesbian, who lives in her neighbourhood. She thinks to herself: “It is known and has been known in River Bank’s history that Verdene Moore is the Antichrist, the snake every mongoose should have hauled off the island and eaten alive; the witch who practices obscene things too ungodly to even think about” (p. 23).

Several observations can be made regarding Dennis-Benn’s choice of metaphor. Starting with her reference to Verdene as a snake that should have been hauled off the island and eaten alive. The extent of the community’s viciousness and hatred for Verdene, and therefore lesbianism, can only be fully understood when this reference is contextualised using Jamaican history and knowledge, as I do next.



The mongoose was first imported into Jamaica by the colonial government to exterminate the cane rats that were ravaging their sugar cane plantations and costing colonial sugar planters vast amounts of money. The original nine imported Indian Mongooses, known for their powers of reproduction and wild roaming, soon colonised every inch of the island. While they did lessen the numbers of the cane rats, what was more defining of this ill-thought-out colonial solution to the threat to the plantation economy, was the wanton irreversible destruction this predator caused to the natural, indigenous island habitat. For while in India the mongoose did not climb trees, in Jamaica they adapted and became tree climbers not only voraciously devouring ground laying turtles and birds to the point of near extinction, but taking to the trees and eating what they found there as well. They killed the once plentiful indigenous lizards, land crabs, wild fowls, snakes, farm animals, insects, ground crops, fruit trees, and provisions. The bloodthirsty animals then turned to devouring fish from the canals. What they did not eat they killed by spreading diseases they brought with them to the island (Willis, 1898). It was as though their voracious appetite could not be assuaged, mirroring the greedy destructive colonisers who brought them there. The psycho-literary researcher may then ask -What is Dennis-Benn trying to get across to the reader by using this comparison?

Given the fact that a reader would require an intimate knowledge of Jamaican history to contextualise the excerpt using this backstory, it seems reasonable to assume that Dennis-Benn was trying to specifically reach a Jamaican audience with insider knowledge. Also, given that this is an historical tale widely taught to school children, it would mean she intended to reach a wide-cross section of Jamaicans and not merely a select few. Using hooks's (2003) theory (regarding the importance of audience) to scrutinise the author's seeming intention to reach a specifically Jamaican audience, allows me to interpret this as a decolonial act of epistemic disobedience. The author appears to be decentring European

knowledge, traditional literary references, and even audience. It would seem that she is ensuring that historical knowledge is fully accessible and utilised by all classes of Jamaicans as an effective means of creating new decolonised understanding. This decolonised understanding can only come through reflection, humanising of the lesbian character, and hopefully, rejection of the exaggeratedly unfair and gratuitously unkind comparison of a fellow Jamaican to the destructive coloniser. The absurdity of a Jamaican using the analogy of a failed coloniser solution, that once wreaked havoc despite its original aim of protecting colonial interests, cannot be lost on the critical reader. It is for the reader to decide what to make of all the elements of this scene. The author appears to ensure that they can do so using positional knowledge. Further to this, Dennis-Benn tilts the scale, or should I say rebalances it, in favour of the reader being clear that the violence of homophobia is the true destructive predation imported by the coloniser and not Verdene's lesbianism.

I argue that the author makes her decolonial point by specifically choosing to have Thandi's thinking about Verdene and marriage take place while she is standing in a prestigious catholic school. The school is called St. Emmanuel - Emmanuel, meaning God is with us, which is the same name used for the schoolteacher in another selected decolonial novel *Augustown* (Miller, 2017). In that novel the teacher was the personification of the Christian Civilising Mission. The use of the Christian name 'Emmanuel' in both novels, as well as Dennis-Benn's choice of a church school setting do not seem to be coincidences. Like the intention of the teacher scenario in *Augustown*, in the *Here Comes the sun* (2016) scenario it seems that the author is placing before the reader for their consideration, the reality that educational privilege and the reinforcement of heteronormative values represent an intersection of religion and education as forces of coloniality. In the case of *Here Comes the Sun*, this notion of colonial religious reinforcement is strengthened by the author repeatedly presenting it in many other scenes which I now describe.

For instance, Verdene is subjected to gross abuse and terror from Christians in her community because she is a lesbian. Church goers regularly pass her gate on a Sunday and hurl rocks at her home. In one heart-breaking scene a mother:

stops to make the sign of the cross as she passes by Verdene's house, instructing the reluctant young man (her son) to do the same... "The blood of Jesus is upon you!" she had yelled with crazed eyes. It was as though she dared Verdene to say something. But Verdene remained on her veranda, stunned silent. (p. 62)

This bible-carrying Christian and all the other churchgoers feel, not only comfortable, but virtuously justified in their violence aimed toward Verdene, because the Christian Civilising society they live in has taught them that homosexuality is a sin of the worst kind, a sin so great that lesbians are not equal to other humans. In a similar scene the reader is made to witness the ugliness of this Civilising teaching when Verdene meets Delores and says "I was in the area. Just came to say hello" (and) Delores grimaces. "Who told you we're on any level for dat kind of thing?" "You never used to mind me." "Well, that was before I knew yuh was the devil" (p. 229).

Another exchange that conveys to the reader that the Christian Civilising church has taught society that homosexuality is a sin to be violently repudiated is one where an old woman witnessing Verdene being assaulted in the market responds by barking:

'Yuh mek Eve bite di apple,' Miss Gracie says, the accusation like the jab of a needle. 'Now tek it back! Tek it back an' go to hell weh yuh come from, yuh serpent!' She flings the apple at Verdene, hitting her in the head. Verdene drops her basket and runs, aware of the crowd stirring again with victory. (p. 232)

The novel continues to portray homosexuality as such a sin that it warrants the callous butchering of dogs, tossed into Verdene's yard, their blood smeared on her home, to remind her that she is not accepted or acceptable:

Verdene had woken up that Sunday morning to the slaughtered animal's blood trailing her walkway to the veranda. The blood was smeared across the doorposts and columns. And on the veranda grill and the gate. The blood of Jesus be upon you! was scrawled on the wall on both sides of the house. (p. 61)

This seems to be a deeply ironic statement, for to say someone's 'blood is upon you' can be interpreted as saying you have killed somebody. However, 'the blood of Jesus' is also a deeply Christian phrase referring to the healing powers of Jesus' (real and metaphorical) blood that 'washes away' our sins. This decolonial interpretation renders the scene epistemically disobedient and radical.

In an insurgent twist typical of Dennis-Benn's decolonial writing, it can be interpreted that Verdene is being portrayed as a Jesus-like figure. This scene is blatantly reminiscent of the Jewish Passover described in the biblical verses of Exodus:

And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Exodus 12:7)

For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Exodus 12:12)

And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Exodus 12:13)

Passover is the precursor to the Christian Easter in which Jesus's 'last supper' was a Passover meal. Both Passover and Easter are symbolic of a cheating of death through faith, with Easter being a celebration of Jesus's resurrection. And so, Verdene seems to be a Jesus-like, resurrected, cheater of death in this scene.

After one of many dog slaughtering incidents, Verdene must declare her own humanity to get help cleaning the remains. She pleads: "I want to live in peace. I want to be treated like a human being" (p. 159). The disturbing imagery and language of *Here Comes the Sun* keeps the reader focused on the pain caused by homophobia that reflects, in intensity and focus, the strength of the Civilising Christianity as an enforcer of the coloniality of power. In one instance, the book portrays being a lesbian as a sin so abhorrent that a mother (Delores) sells her own child for sex because she believes it can cure her of this suspected 'abnormality' (p. 190).

The ultimate evils of capitalism powered by the Civilising Christian Mission is portrayed when the child is sex trafficked to a tourist. The potent symbolism of this scene is only matched by the symbolism of Delores's mother's homage to capitalism, illustrated when the grandmother steals the money (earned from the sex trafficking of her own grandchild) and then uses it to send Delores's brother to America. The intersection of these forces of coloniality - religion and economic exploitation - are so potent that they result in the madness of one character, Grandma Merle, and breeds hatred so deep that it breaks up an entire family.

There are many other scenes in the novel exemplifying the Christian Civilising indoctrination and preaching of homosexuality as a grave sin. For instance, Homosexuality is portrayed as a sin so unforgivable that Delores, on seeing her daughter Margot beam at being complimented by the lesbian character Verdene, then abuses Margot in what almost appears to be a Christian baptism:

...made the girl scream. She wanted to teach her a lesson. Delores held Margot down in the water and pinched and pinched. The little girl wailed under Delores's thumb and index fingers all over her body. Delores made sure to warn her. 'Neva tek compliments from anyone else, yuh hear?' Delores said. 'Especially not from another 'ooman! That's sodomite ways!' (p. 235)

A contemplation of this scene in conjunction with the biblical passage "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." (English Standard Version Bible, 200, Revelations 1:5), makes this scene all the more poignant and, as a bonus, seems to support the Faithful Witness methodology.

In one scene the reader is shown that Delores honestly believes that her daughter Margot being a lesbian is a sickness or a demonic possession. In this scene Delores explains to her one daughter Thandi why she prostituted her other daughter Margot:

Delores lowers herself into a chair. 'Yuh sistah was sick. Possessed. Did she tell yuh 'bout dat? Ah bet she neva mention dat. Ask har 'bout Verdene Moore. She was di cause ah har sickness. Dat Verdene did something to dat chile. Put di devil in har. Mek she tell 'bout dat.' (p. 288)

Cruel and violent homophobic reactions are depicted in an assortment of situations that are oppositional to, and a glaring dichotomy between, the ostensible Christian ethics of love and kindness, and the ethics espoused by Civilising Christianity. Dennis-Benn repeatedly make these contradictions so blatant and discordant that it prompts the critical questioning of what the true mission of the church is?

Again and again the author depicts the savagery with which homosexuality is condemned as the worst of all sins in the Jamaican Civilised Christian society. This explains why in the tale coloniality penetrates the Jamaican psyche on a large scale with ordinary people, in ordinary situations, being unable to escape the Christian Civilising mission. By the novel's graphic and repeated portrayal of barbaric homophobic acts, by its detailing the extent to which homophobia has invaded the Jamaican psyche, Dennis-Benn is using the *Psychology of Literature and Psychology in Literature* (Chase, n.d.).

The Novel represents being gay in postcolonial Jamaica as such an atrocity that even the rumour of homosexuality can lead a "good Christian woman" (p. 141), "Kensington to make a sign of the cross" (p. 142) and clutch at her Bible while denouncing Novia who is rumoured to be gay declaring "But if yuh say she is what she is, then it's a sin. An abomination. I don't want to be around it" (p. 144). Homosexuality is illustrated in *Here Comes the Sun* as the most burning of all religious aberrations. So much so, that Kensington is unimpressed by what would normally be considered a cardinal colonial virtue; that being the light skinned beauty possessed by the suspected lesbian Novia. Homosexuality is described as anathema to Jamaican values so entrenched that even when Margot tries to recruit prostitutes to pretend to be lesbians, they tell her "Me nuh inna di sodomite t'ing" (p. 136). Later, when Margot plots the downfall of her nemesis Novia, she realises that the worst possible harm she can inflict is to make people believe that Novia is a lesbian.

In an ironic twist that bolsters the theme that homophobia is widely spread through the Civilising Christian beliefs, even the “kinkiest” prostitute (p. 166), Sweetness, proved difficult for Margot to recruit for her plot to ‘tarnish’ Novia as a lesbian. When Margot asks Sweetness what was so wrong with the request to pretend to be a lesbian:

The girl shakes her head. ‘God wrong wid it.’ ‘So that’s the new thing now? Hookers who clutch dem pearls an’ dem Bible ah talk ’bout God? When since yuh tun Miss Gracie? Any other night yuh willing to bend ovah, skin up, an’ get dung pon all fours, an’ now yuh ah talk ’bout God? Yuh even go as far as have a threesome...’ ‘I’m not dat way’... ‘Me is not like dat. Not because me agree mean dat me go dat way.’ Her eyes are burning into Margot, their radius expanding, pleading, a blue streak of terror inside each iris. ‘Me is not like dat a’tall.’ ‘Nothing wrong if you are,’ Margot says, meeting the girl’s frightened stare, identifying what exactly she sees beyond the dread. (pp. 168-169)

To ram home the point, Dennis-Benn writes that eventually Sweetness must get drunk to have sex with a lesbian and is so remorseful and repulsed that in the end she gives up her lucrative contract as a prostitute working for Margot. The homophobia of this scene is mixed with a seemingly kind Caribbean Feminist Subaltern resistance when Margot in this quote declares “nothing wrong if you are” (p. 169). This again harkens back to both the messiness of decoloniality and to the way characters meander between values and psychologies that are critically relational.

Building on this theme, the story continues with Margot, an atheist, being petrified to sleep with Verdene, fearing that homosexuality is a bedevilment. The almost overkill of instances of cruel homophobia is not the end point in this decolonial tale. Dennis-Benn



subverts this discourse by showing that in a country where lives are virtually governed by religion, and despite her own Christian Civilising indoctrination, the character Margot eventually allows herself to love Verdene! These are subaltern feminist acts of resistance. But... they also reflect the messiness of decolonial psychology in true life; for the irony is that unlike the atheist, ‘in the closet’ character Margot, the openly lesbian character Verdene is not immune to Christianity. In one scene Verdene “... adjusts the tray on the small night table and reaches for the Holy Bible (just for a little Sunday devotion like Ella taught her), which is kept there like a secret inside the drawer” (p. 56).

Verdene has a complicated angst regarding her own homosexuality and Christianity that has been a lifelong source of sorrow and anxiety. From the moment when she was discovered having sex with her female college roommate, through to blaming herself for her mother’s illness, until she is exiled to London, Verdene feels that being a lesbian is a curse and she longs for a Christian absolution:

She slams the bottle down on the table. But how could Margot not call? How could she not call? Had she been religious, this would’ve been a prayer, a litany of pleas and questions. Verdene tilts her head back and laughs at the notion of Jesus listening to her harp over a woman. Haven’t I learned my lesson? Verdene has always been the one to push women away with her aggressive need for them to fulfil her, to pour their souls into the gaping hole inside her—a cavity with no bottom; she chased them and backed them into corners with her yearnings, her dependency on them to make her feel whole—the way Aunt Gertrude said Jesus is supposed to. On bended knees, a seventeen-year-old Verdene had bowed her head as Aunt Gertrude’s priest anointed her. Aunt Gertrude had told him about the incident with Akua at the university. The priest placed his holy hand on Verdene’s head, his grasp like a skullcap as he prayed

away Verdene's sin. The same priest married her and her husband four years later. A firm squeeze on Verdene's right shoulder during her wedding reception was the priest's way of saying he approved of her salvation—that God had intervened and healed her. Made her whole. (p. 162)

Of course, given the perniciousness of the coloniality of being, enforced by the Christian Civilising mission, Verdene never receives the absolution she longs for. Time and time again she is reviled by her community. To illustrate this, her complete rejection is dramatically described in tandem with the author giving commentary on the impending devastation of the River Bank community. Verdene decides to attend a community meeting called out of desperation to discuss the development that is about to obliterate the town. Profoundly juxtaposed against the community's fight against the capitalism that is about to devour it, is Verdene's attempt to assert her right of belonging and being. Both the community and Verdene are fighting for their humanity. They both attempt to confront the coloniality of being and power:

'This is my community too. I was born and raised here just like you.' She glances around the room. 'Just like all of you.' One by one people take their hands from their jaws or lolling heads to look. They become animated in their disapproval again, Verdene's presence seeming to revitalize their spirit. 'Yuh crazy?' Macka asks Verdene. 'Why yuh t'ink yuh can come in here an' stan' up like yuh own di place?' 'This problem concerns me too.' 'It might do yuh more good to leave.' Macka moves closer to her like he's about to do something. 'I'm not the one to blame,' Verdene says. 'Why don't you focus your energy on those who are responsible?' 'You're a

bigger devil,' Delores says. 'Worse than the devil driving us out of our country.' (p. 278)

This last line represents the ultimate destructiveness of the lateral violence<sup>35</sup> inherent in the coloniality of being and power working in tandem and unleashed on both River Bank and Verdene. It is instructive that while Verdene fights back and is smadditized, the community, who refuses to recognise her humanity, is defeated:

Verdene walks up to the bar and stays, her body stiff with determination. Realizing she's undeterred by their bullying, and sick with their own troubles, everyone returns to clutching their bottles of liquor to wet their parched mouths and throats, completely drained and powerless as they were before. (p. 279)

*Here Comes the Sun* masterfully implores readers to wake up to the destruction of coloniality, showing clearly how it is enforced through a colonial interpretation of Christianity. Taken together all the novel's homophobic scenes can repel a reader. However, a psycho-literary decolonial reading of this novel using grung wisdom and a localised understanding can unearth these besieged, peripheralised main characters as victorious heroines. They are all in one way or another Ni. They are indefatigable Caribbean Black Feminist Subalterns who learn from the very harshness that oppresses them, using subaltern

---

<sup>35</sup> Lateral violence, also called horizontal violence, is displaced bullying, anger, or non-violent hostility directed towards one's peers within a marginalised or oppressed community rather than towards the oppressors of the community.

techniques and psychologies to keep surviving and self-engineering their own personhood (Nettleford, 1993b). In this section the selected decolonial texts have shown how the Christian Civilising Mission can kill the soul. But Jamaican grung wisdom tells us that just as belief can kill, so can it cure.

Although the Jamaican literature presented here goes into great detail about the Christian Civilising mission as an enforcer of coloniality, it also unveils what Mashau (2018) alludes to as an imperative of reimagined (de)coloniality. Mashau perceives that in addition to the three units of decoloniality, i.e., knowledge, being and power, investigation of a fourth concept is called for, which is the decolonising of faith. According to Mashau, decoloniality is not only a political or economic project, but should also be a faith project.

I derived from Mashau (2018) that the union between Empire and the historical mission of the church does not only justify studying how religion has been exploitive but suggests that an in-depth psycho-literary analysis on how decolonised representations of faith could contribute to liberatory psychology is needed. Perhaps this lacuna was created because of the overwhelming success of the Christian Civilising mission's discouraging the questioning of Christianity by deeming religious interrogation a lack of faith. I attempt to address this gap by observing the decoloniality of faith from a perspective that embraces Indigenous religion as a form of knowledge that can contribute to liberatory psychology (detailed in **Confronting the Coloniality of Knowledge**). To lay the groundwork for a better understanding of this, I will start with a psycho-literary analysis of the dangerous intersection between religion, violence, the justice system, and power.

### ***5.2.2. There is no Such Thing as Justice. It's 'Just This'***

In two of her short stories, Lorna Goodison portrays the intersecting of the oppressive Civilising Christianity with the arbitrary injustice meted out to poor Black people in Jamaica. She also portrays the decolonial psychological modes of resilience these victims of injustice

use to subvert their powerlessness. In *For my Comrades in Three Piece Suits*, young Black political activists are labelled as “arch-terrorists” by the courts (Goodison, 2012, p. 189). Some comrades are gunned down by the police who spray their car with bullets. One comrade is harshly sentenced to fifteen years in the general penitentiary which “even a psychopathic dog-heart” considers hell (p. 192). The locked-up comrade finds peace by dreaming that he is a (Ni) maroon warrior moving through lush bushes. He dreams that his “soul” escapes his body and flies free over the skies of Kingston (p. 193). It is noteworthy that Goodison sets the unlawful imprisonment scene using the Civilising Christian imagery of hell and depictions of a soaring soul. At the same time, she has the character employ a liberatory psychological technique in which he visualises an Indigenous mode of resistance to withstand his powerlessness to systemic injustice. This rendering seems to represent an unsettling, or even a rejection of, the religious enforcement of the coloniality of power by decolonial storytelling and Indigenous psychology.

In the second story example, called *God’s Help* (Goodison, 2012), the character Georgie stands on a corner drinking beer and is arbitrarily grabbed up, along with fifty other people, by the police searching for a criminal. Although innocent, Georgie could be locked up for years without charge and his only crime is that “Him poor and him no know no politician” (p. 81). His heavily pregnant, unemployed wife, Sylvie, is taken by a friend to church to seek assistance. Goodison imbues the scene with images of the coloniality of power and its entangled enforcer - the church male authority, looked up to by the poor as a refuge from injustice. The reader is even given hints of the nature of the colonial entanglement of evangelical missionaries when during the service the local pastor announces that “foreign evangelists would be using the word of God in their capacity as ambassadors of truth and democracy” (p. 83). Sylvie approaches the sententious pastor for a free food package, and just as she expects, he attempts to chastise and humiliate her by telling her “gracelessly and

grudgingly that God helps those that help themselves” (p. 88). The oppressive coloniality of the Civilising church and the pastor’s judgement over her is resoundingly rejected when smadditized, Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern, Sylvie, turns and walks away from the pastor, refusing to take the free parcel even though desperately in need of it.

Like *By love Possessed* (Goodison, 2012), *Augustown* (Miller, 2017) too provides examples of how injustice, supported by the Civilising Christian Mission and enforced by Babylon (the police), incorporates the colourism and attendant classism that are pervasive in Jamaican life. Miller provides a pithy depiction of the alliance of these colonial forces in the scenario of an undercover reporter investigating the miracle of human flight performed by the Black revivalist and grass roots movement’s high priest, Bedward. The reader witnesses the reporter fulfilling the discriminatory mandate of his job by purposely using hurtful and unfair descriptions about the subaltern community in his article. Miller also shows how entrenched the Jamaican colourist, classist, social rules are when he illustrates that these rules make the middle-class undercover reporter easily and immediately identifiable:

Who other than uptown people used language such as he was using?...But if the colour of William Grant-Stanley’s skin, and the near straightness of his hair, and the clear Kingston twang of his accent, which sounded nothing like the music of a St. Bess patois, and the expensive cut of his suit; if all this did not already make him conspicuous, it hardly helped that he would take out his notebook, glancing to his left and to his right, scribble things in it, and then put it away only to take it out again a moment later. Eventually he just kept the notebook in the middle of his open Bible for easy reach. Still, no one called him out on his sham. (pp. 59-60)

The evolution of the Christian Civilising Mission into an instrument of the violent and militaristic oppression of the colonality of power is persuasively depicted in these Goodison (2012) and Miller (2017) stories. These stories reveal the fusion of religion, politics, and the capricious police brutality that results in the lives of poor Black Jamaicans being plagued with injustice and powerlessness. Yet these stories do not end in defeat. They also depict a reimagination of power by those on the outskirts of society. Subaltern characters create a psychology of insurgence when faced with the utter powerlessness of the marginalised; they summon up an almost reckless defiance typical of characters in contemporary decolonial Jamaican storytelling. For instance, I examine the story of the Rasta character Clarky (*Augustown*) to exemplify the resilience of Ras Tafari as a form of decolonial psychology (the **Confronting the Coloniality of Knowledge** chapter refers).

But here, in cohesion with the current discussion, I will focus on Clarky's story as an intersection of the forces of the Christian Civilising Mission and the police brutality that produce the **There is no such thing as justice. It's 'just this'** powerlessness that locals overcome using Indigenous psychology. This intersection is explicit in the scene where Ma Taffy and Gilzene discuss Clarky's arrest:

'I guess them never have nothing to keep him in jail for' Sister Gilzene finally added. 'If they never have nothing to keep him for, then they shoulda never did hold him in the first place.' Sister Gilzene shrugged. 'Taffy, you know how these police boys stay. I imagine them did just want to rough him up a little. And they think that every Rastaman with a cartful of callaloo (Jamaican spinach) really selling ganja.' 'But look how they send him back, Gilly. Look how they make the poor man walk back to his house without...' 'Yes yes yes, I know,' Sister Gilzene broke in quickly, 'without his handcart.' In this way she made it clear what still could not be mentioned. Ma Taffy

opened her mouth but closed it again. ‘Without his handcart,’ she agreed. So they would not talk about Clarky’s impressive mane of dreadlocks which had been shaven from his head. It was as if Sister Gilzene, like all of Augustown, shared a little in the man’s shame and did not know how to face it, how to give it words. (p. 30)

The excruciating pain of Clarky and Kaia’s (school child whose head was shorn by the teacher Mr. Saint-Josephs referred to in the **Naming and Shaming** section) dreadlock shearing symbolises the dehumanising injustice inherent in the religious inspired violence meted out by Babylon. This pain is best represented in the searing anger of the character, Bongo Moody, who gives faithful witness to the event:

Bongo Moody is shaking now. He tries to speak but both his eyes and voice have become moist with tears. Whatever has broken inside him has not only unleashed anger, but also sadness and a specific pain. ‘Jah know! Jah know!’ he keeps on saying, and nothing more. And perhaps this is right—the way he is cocooning himself in a world in which only he and his god, Jah, know and understand things. And besides, what does he really need to explain? For which of the Rastamen in front of him has not been persecuted in the same way Clarky was, or at least known someone who has been? Which one of them does not know a similar story, maybe of a Rastaman riding on his bicycle, of batons knocking him off and into the road where he bruises his body; of police searching his pockets for ganja seeds and leaves; of being thrown into jail, of having these Babylonian officers hold his head tight in the grip of their fat arms and having his locks cut off? And which of them has not listened to Babylon laughing its keh-keh-keh laugh? (p. 103)



What these scenes appear to portray is that poor Black Jamaicans, especially Rastas, are regularly subjected to the Christian Civilising inspired coloniality described by Grosfoguel (2011); and so, for them there is no justice, it's 'just this' - whatever is dished out must be fatalistically accepted. Miller shows how teachers are, like the police, potential brutal enforcers of the Christian Civilising coloniality when he depicts the Rasta child shorn of his locks by a teacher who is a potent symbol of Christianity. As mentioned earlier, the teacher's name is Emanuel, meaning God is with us, and Saint-Josephs - considered a pious believer as well as the patron saint of the universal church and happy death. Is Miller sardonically implying that cutting of the identifying locks of Rastafarianism signifies a 'God protected pious, happy death' of indigenous religion in submission to the 'universal' Western religion?

If so, this impression is fleeting. In this same scene Miller seems to reverse the Civilising Christian victory by illustrating the strength of liberatory psychology and Indigenous insights when the author has Creolised religion confront the coloniality of power. For, as Bongo Moody declares of his Indigenous faith: "Jah know! Jah know!" (p. 103) and understands the pain of poor Black people. Within this Indigenous religious declaration there is offered a genuine psychology of comfort for his community. There is also embedded a statement of epistemic disobedience. This simple proclamation carries the spirit of the grung wisdom that the community can easily identify through the soundbite; as if to say this is our knowledge, our psychology, that the 'I and I' know. We know... Our knowledge... Our psychology...Jah know!

A critical look at the form of Christianity described earlier in this section reveals that it promulgates the Civilising Mission. Although it is described as soothing the distress of oppressed poor Black communities, unlike Indigenous religion, it is also said to provide a false comfort intended to control and contain them. Similarly, another description of a false

source of comfort that masks control is to be found in the colonial education illustrated in the Jamaican Literature scrutinised next.

### ***5.2.3. Colonial Education a Panacea of the Masses***

In 1835, in the wake of the formal end of slavery in the West Indies (in 1834), the British commissioned a report from one John Sterling based on racist presumption and an assumed maintenance of pre-emancipation hierarchies. Reflecting the thinking that the formerly enslaved had to be urgently educated in Christian values since they would no longer be under the direct control of their masters, Sterling warned that “if measures were not taken to keep the mass of people within the civilising reach of British influences and values, society would surely collapse” (Tiffin, 2001, p. 41). He advised that institutions were needed that would adapt the Christian ethic to secular goals. He also recommended that parochial values be replaced through the socialising of universal values. It was recommended that these institutions structures, objectives, and operations be shaped, supervised, and continually evaluated by the rulers of the colony (Tiffin, 2001). These exact imperatives were echoed by Joseph Chamberlain, some 60 years later, when he insisted that the British had to carry their civilisation, justice, law, religion, and Christianity to the territories to remove parochial politics. The history of education in the Caribbean is one of persisting anglo-control, anglo-orientation, and imperialism, specifically because it was designed for the promulgation of colonial control (Tiffin, 2001).

Given the stridency of these objectives it is not surprising that even 25 years post-independence, a 1988 report showed that coloniality endured in education via syllabi, curricula, textbooks etc. (Tiffin, 2001). Colonial education lingered in post-independent nations that adopted Cambridge exams, used English as the language of instruction to correct “broken English” Creole, and for many years used the Bible to teach children to read (p. 41).

In addition, children were taught by rote, learning ‘by heart’ and emotionally absorbing “English” literature (Tiffin, 2001, p. 41).

Decolonial Jamaican stories that reveal how education embodies the dehumanising consequences of coloniality do so by depicting and examining practices linking back to the imperatives of colonial control. For example, *Lionheart Gal* (Ford-Smith & Sistren, 1987) depicts a granny who teaches her grandchild English poems by rote (emotionally absorbing) learning (p. 136). Another story in the collection depicts children starting the school day by reciting the Christian ‘Our Father’ prayer. Yet another short story, *Grandma’s Estate*, is centred around the cancerous colourism of middle-class Jamaican school life (Ford-Smith & Sistren, 1987). The story recounts the inner thoughts of a school going teenager who is captivated by the trappings of StepMotherland but is feeling stuck in Jamaica. We get the impression that her romanticisation of StepMotherland makes her initially look down on her Motherland British education. She is oblivious to the coloniality that underpins them both:

At St. Andrew High School for Girls, my fantastic American future was balanced by a curriculum steeped in the British past. Looking back I realise that our education attempted to inculcate in us the rationalism of the European Intelligentsia. (p. 217)

Despite being immersed in modern day coloniality, the teenage character is still politically aware enough to understand the colonial damage that her school setting reproduces. She is able to spot that the school seating is colour coded; with White Girls sitting together, Brown and Black middle-class girls sitting together, and the few Black working-class girls sitting separately. Honor Ford-Smith uses the decolonial writing style of autobiography and faithful witness to impart an authentic first-hand testimony of colourism in education. The teenage character fleshes out, through lucid reflection, the received categories

of hierarchy, race, shade, middle-class values, knowledge, and heteronormativity that her religious school inculcates in its students:

There was nothing in our education which confronted the needs of the private world. We never spoke about class or about relations between men and women, or about the real world...Our education did not unravel the veiled irrationality which had entwined our past history with unmentionable contradictions. (p. 218)

Most of the *Lionheart Gal* autobiographical collection of short stories continues in this same vein, elucidating the nexus of religion, colourism, and education that produces the coloniality of power. A final example is seen in the story *Red Ibo*, which says that Jamaicans generally accuse “free place”, i.e., poor black, fee subsidised children (p. 224), of bringing down the tone of a school resulting in the “colour coded” classroom where children were seated according to race and shade (p. 185). These stories confirm the view expressed in this study that the colonial school is a site where children are taught their life-long immutable place in society. The classroom is a site of indoctrination of the coloniality of power.

In the next section’s detailed discussion of Ras Tafari, the Dennis-Benn (2016) character, Maxi, symbolises a subaltern character who questions the colonial content of the school’s curriculum. For purposes of this section’s discussion, we examine the wisdom of the same character to glean the role Christian Civilising schools play in eradicating criticality from society. In the story, Maxi would not stop challenging the coloniality of the school and so the “high yellow” headmaster, who did not want him influencing other children in the school, expelled him (p. 9). This is an explicit example of the school system as enforcer of coloniality. But not only are colonial imperatives enforced in Maxi’s generation, even worse, Dennis-Benn shows that these values have no finitude and are conveyed across successive

generations. This is clear when Margo - who witnesses and is influenced by her former schoolmate Maxi's brilliance coming to naught in adulthood - remains deaf to his decolonial intellectualism. She absorbs the realities of the coloniality of knowledge and power and insists that her younger sister Thandi should excel in school as a means to success:

'Max, stop wid dis foolishness. Unlike certain people I know, Thandi 'ave ambition.'  
 'Certain people.' Maxi grimaces. Again he runs his hand over his faint mustache. 'I an' I did know weh me want long ago. An' it didn't have nothing to do wid weh dem teach inna school. Dem creating robots outta our children, Margot. Is di white man's philosophy dem learning. What about our heritage and culture?' He kisses his teeth.  
 'Ah Babylon business dem ah fill up di children's minds wid. Yuh sista, Thandi, is a sweet girl. She know har book. But as ah say, when pot boil too long di wata dry out an' di bottom aggo drop out.' (p. 10)

In this telling scene we witness Margot's ambition, informed by the values of capitalism, being contrasted to Maxi's values that are informed by Indigenous Ras Tafari 'I and I' wisdom (discussed in more detail later in the next section of this thesis). Both characters were subjected to a colonial education system, but the one who remained in it long enough to be indoctrinated by it is now reinforcing these values with her younger sister. The story suggests that the Jamaican education system creates foot soldiers who continue to enforce coloniality within the larger society when they graduate. The reality that education is a robust enforcer of coloniality is made clear to the reader.

Dennis-Benn keeps repeating the theme that the more a child is integrated into the colonial education system, the greater they are rewarded in the capitalist system. Characters genuinely believe that education is their only escape from poverty and their own blackness.

Sadly, as Maxi's Indigenous sagacity teaches, the foundation of colonial education is unenlightened, racist, and oppressive and so will only bring liminal emancipation and not lasting liberation. This is a cascading truth revealed by decolonial analysis of Caribbean stories. For example, none of the female characters in *Here Comes the Sun* (2016) seem to end up truly free or happy except for Thandi who is the only one who jettisons the path on which coloniality was steering her. Before she finally flees the colonial path there is a scene in which Thandi is introspecting about her decision to bleach away her blackness as a means to bolster her education. The reader is let into her inner thoughts which reflect the destructive coloniality of being and power inflicted upon her by her education. The reader continues to be exposed to how widespread the connection between damaging colonial education and ambition is in a scene where community mothers uphold Thandi, the colonial schoolgirl, as an example for their children:

To their young daughters sitting between their legs on the veranda, whose nappy hair they rake wide-toothed combs through and whose scalps they grease with Blue Magic, they point. 'That's how yuh should be. Like Thandi. Now she's well on her way going to dat good school. See how neat her uniform is? Everyt'ing 'bout har jus' neat. An' she always pleasant.' (p. 25)

Dennis-Benn, with characteristic tragi-irony, reinforces this theme by having Thandi use her school supply money (that her sister has given her from her earnings as a prostitute for tourists) to buy the skin bleach.

One of the very real take-always from a psycho-literary analysis of *Here Comes the Sun*, is that education, in enforcing coloniality, serves yet another purpose - that of offering an illusion of escape to the masses who are taught to believe that a colonial education will

help them lose the blackness and class stigma that imprisons them in poverty. Colonial education is a panacea to the masses that circularly reinforces, and is reinforced by, the coloniality of power. For before Thandi is truly liberated in the end, she has to countenance continually being kept in line by the educational system. When she finally decides to take a chance on pursuing her dreams and happiness outside of the pre-destined colonial route her family has chosen for her, she: “Feels the future slipping away from her. Having light skin and going to medical school seem distant dreams, and even the results of her exams promise little in the way of hope.” (p. 291). Thandi’s thoughts reveal that the strength of the coloniality of power is in its ability to brainwash students that there is only one path to happiness and success. As the earlier scene between Maxi and Margot reveals - this one path is defined by the values of capitalism.

In yet another scene that binds capitalism and education, it is callously disclosed to Thandi that her education is funded by her sister’s prostitution ring, ironically referred to as empire:

‘I got a scholarship.’ (Says Thandi) ‘Ha!’ Juliette laughs. ‘Yuh neva realize dat a scholarship is for a year? Ministry of Education nuh dat generous, m’dear. Is di empire dat fund yuh precious scholarship.’ (p. 307)

Thandi is easily compared to the character Gina in *Augustown* (Miller, 2017). Both characters are bright young girls whose escape (from their blackness, poverty, and the inevitability of their lives being destroyed by sex) is supposed to come through colonial education. Both assimilate the manners, language, and even the code-switching accents appropriate to children being educated in their classist, prestigious, Civilising Christian high schools. Kei Miller not only uses the character Gina to highlight the coloniality of the

Jamaican school system, his descriptions of the wealthy upper-class characters, Mr. and Mrs. G, also exemplify the colourist prestige that accompanies light skin. Like the characters in *Lionheart Gyal* (1987), this married couple accentuates Miller's depiction of the complex colourist rules and how they play out in the education system. The reader explicitly sees the rules at play when they are told that Mrs. G's light skin is seen as advantageous but over qualifies her as a teacher in a poor black school. Her being 'half-white' means that expectations of her are high, and at the very least means that she should be a principal.

These selected novels are representative of the decolonisation of postcolonial literature because they not only describe colonialism, but show the reader that there has not really been an end point of colonialism. They strikingly lay out that its enforcers continue to operate in contemporary times. Yet, these decolonial novels also reveal a powerful liberatory psychology, for with all the odds set against them, characters such as Thandi and Gina escape from their circumstances. These decolonial novels evoke the feeling that characters achieve psychological liberation through the triumph of Indigeneity and decolonial resilience over the coloniality of being, knowledge, and power. Because *Here Comes the Sun* and *Augustown* do not shy away from portraying the carnage caused by coloniality and show how escaping its subjugation is virtually impossible; because these stories show how coloniality is operationalised through an education system that keeps characters anesthetised to danger; they are ultimately decolonial tales with a message to decolonial psychology. Next, the final psycho-literary analysis of this section, **Confronting The Coloniality of Power**, will consider distinctions between colonialism and coloniality and why this distinction is important to decolonising education, and consequently, decolonising psychology.



#### ***5.2.4. Colonialism or Coloniality?***

If there is any single sample of decolonial Jamaican writing that identifies the interaction of social class, colour, and education as enforcers of the coloniality of power, it is the poem of Olive Senior:

##### ***Colonial Girls School***

Borrowed images

willed our skins pale

muffled our laughter

lowered our voices

let out our hems

dekinked our hair

denied our sex in gym tunics and bloomers

harnessed our voices to madrigals

and genteel airs

yoked our minds to declensions in Latin

and the language of Shakespeare

Told us nothing about ourselves

There was nothing about us at all

How those pale northern eyes and

aristocratic whispers once erased us

How our loudness, our laughter

debased us

There was nothing left of ourselves

Nothing about us at all

Studying: History Ancient and Modern

Kings and Queens of England

Steppes of Russia

Wheatfields of Canada

There was nothing of our landscape there

Nothing about us at all

Marcus Garvey turned twice in his grave

‘Thirty-eight was a beacon. A flame.

They were talking of desegregation

in Little Rock, Arkansas. Lumumba

and the Congo. To us: mumbo-jumbo.

We had read Vachel Lindsay’s

vision of the jungle

Feeling nothing about ourselves

There was nothing about us at all

Months, years, a childhood memorising

Latin declensions

(For our language

– ‘bad talking’ –

detentions)

Finding nothing about us there

Nothing about us at all

So, friend of my childhood years

One day we’ll talk about

How the mirror broke

Who kissed us awake

Who let Anansi from his bag

For isn’t it strange how

northern eyes

in the brighter world before us now

Pale? (Olive Senior, 1985)

“In her poem, ‘Colonial Girls’ School,’ Olive Senior finely satirises the way in which the colonial education system in Jamaica promoted alienating icons of physical beauty, irrelevant versions of historical understanding, and disempowering geographies of belonging.” (Donnell, 1999, p. 117). What Donnell summarises in this statement is Senior’s decolonial genius at laying out destructive, reprising coloniality. In this poem she does not simplistically catalogue the injustices of colonialism, she reworks and presents the mundane

realities of Jamaican schooling into the purposeful, ominous system of ongoing colonial enforcement that it actually is. At first, Senior employs language that conjures submission and servitude. Then as she conveys a worsening coloniality, she cunningly undermines hegemony by using Jamaican cultural and historical references that validate the richness and integrity of the psychology of Creolity. The poem shows how an education steeped in coloniality erases identity and inflicts conformity by denying Indigeneity, resulting in shame and ultimately imposing imperialism. The poem, though, is also an elegy to decolonial heroes and the liberatory psychology that defines them.

This one dynamic poem encapsulates why a colonial education must be eliminated to make room for diverse ontologies, epistemologies, and psychologies comprising of expanded liberatory possibilities and alternative ways of existing. *Colonial Girls School* is an overt commentary on how untransformed colonialism and postcolonialism in education evolves into unending oppression/coloniality that occupies the psyche. By making this unapologetic socio-political statement the poem becomes an act of social activism by the author. Arguably, Senior's style of social activism is a necessary step to transforming storytelling into psychological praxis. Senior's activist poem reveals how decolonising education starts with the identification of the invisible coloniality within education. By squaring up to coloniality in education, Senior sets the tone for how decoloniality can take place in postcolonial literature and psychology. I chose to end this section on the coloniality of power by highlighting this poem to embrace Senior's activism, tone, and bold style of confrontation as a theoretical point of departure for the concluding section of the coloniality of knowledge.

However, before moving to Chapter 6, it is necessary to make a last point regarding the contemporary coloniality of education that provides a fitting segue into discussions about the coloniality of knowledge - the coloniality inherent in education has morphed beyond the overt and easily identifiable forms discussed in the work of Dennis-Benn (2016), Ford-Smith

& Sistren (1987), Miller (2017), and Senior (1985). The modernised coloniality of education is creatively and forcefully captured in the decolonial short stories of Alexia Arthurs about which I will quickly comment.

This study's psycho-literary analysis of Jamaican Literature has so far portrayed education as an enforcer of the coloniality of power. But it is Alexia Arthurs's (2014) writing that uncovers a radical way to upend the dated and one-dimensional postcolonial trope wherein education (even a decolonised education!) is represented as a route to escape oppression. In this chapter the creative writing of Dennis-Benn (2016) and Miller (2017) already debunked the common notion that education was a sure-fire route to liberation for the extremely poor subaltern. They put up for critical consideration, the reality that coloniality in education undermines the self-worth of students by stunting their smadditization. Both of their novels make clear that oftentimes Jamaicans view(ed) the disjuncture between their true self and the colonial identity - they had to assume to assimilate into prestigious educational institutions - as a necessary and small sacrifice to make for economic freedom. This commonly held view was also the basis for emigrating Jamaicans to feel that education in Step/Motherland was a guaranteed way to break free from socio-economic hardships in Maddaland.

But Arthurs (2014) offers an even more audacious view. She posits that the pursuit of decolonial education in StepMotherland, falsely upheld as emancipation from colonial education in Maddaland, can actually lead to further oppression! In the problematised liberatory psychology that Arthurs illustrates in her short stories, it is not merely the content of the colonial education system that oppresses characters, but perversely, it is also the relentless pursuit of decolonial education that traps Jamaicans who end up spinning fiercely on a capitalist hamster wheel to attain it.

A clear example of this insight can be seen in *Bad Behaviour* (Arthurs, 2014) when the lead character Pam is trapped in a capitalist debt cycle; imprisoned in the labour force as a modern-day slave. Pam is ostensibly working for money to educate and better herself, but her real dilemma seems to be that she is striving for mere emancipation, when true decoloniality should mean striving for liberation. For Pam true liberation is unachievable because she is immersed in the capitalist exploitation of the coloniality of power. The following scene illustrates this neo-colonial trap:

For a long time after Pam came to America, it seemed that she was eternally in school. At first, for years, she studied on a part-time basis for her bachelor's degree. After all, she hadn't come to America to clean and cook for white people and take care of their children. After marrying Curtis, she went to school to become a registered nurse. It had taken longer than necessary because she had to attend part-time. She needed an income, so she was still cleaning for white people and taking care of their children. (p. 55)

This is an exceptionally vivid and creative example of the illusive and elusive nature of coloniality that survives colonialism. Here, coloniality is more complex than has been represented in postcolonial literature and even in some decolonial writing. This modern version of the coloniality of education is far more abstract and imperceptible than the colonial education described by Senior et al. above. This abstraction makes it more difficult for those trapped within its clutches to ever recognise it or break free. The reader's potential awakening to the colossal difference between material colonialism and the amorphous coloniality illustrated in Arthurs's short story is the crux of what may be accomplished with the decolonising of postcolonial literature and psychology. This aroused, adaptive

consciousness is a new frontier of true decolonial liberatory 21<sup>st</sup> Century writing and the affiliated liberatory psychology.

In its entirety this chapter can show readers that respecting a variety of routes to the self-engineered being, obtaining knowledge, and Indigenous wisdoms are elements that will truly open up colonial education systems. We can summarise the insights of this chapter's decolonial stories through the character Maxi's declaration that the education system needs to include grung wisdom to directly confront the coloniality of power (Dennis-Benn, 2016). Through Maxi's discernment the reader is afforded the idea that intellectualism does not only take place in a university (yes, even in Step/Motherland). Via psycho-literary analysis Maxi assumes a role as mouthpiece for an anti-capitalist decolonial education because he is projected as Indigenously knowledgeable, intellectually gifted in grung wisdom, unapologetically rural, and not at all modern or cosmopolitan. As a 'drop out' of the colonial education system he is characterised as best positioned to be an activist who can confront the coloniality of knowledge and power. The final analytical chapter of this thesis will expand on the conclusion that grung wisdom taken from the perspective of subalterns, such as Maxi, can expand decolonial psychology. Specifically, I will now look at how decolonial literature confronts the coloniality of knowledge using Indigenous psychology, ontology, and epistemology.

## Chapter 6: Jah Know! Jah Know! - Confronting the Coloniality of Knowledge

### 6.1. Racism, Ra'schism', and RasTafari as Resistant Being 'I And I'

The systematic dehumanisation of Black people at the hands of Whites, violently sanctioned and enforced by the state, is easily identifiable in postcolonial representations of systematic racism in Caribbean literature. But it is Decolonial Literature that extends our nuanced understanding of the psychological pain inherent in coloniality by exploring what I regard as Black characters presenting with **Ra'schism'**, as differentiated from White racism. I coin the psycho-literary term Ra'schism' in Jamaican Literature to articulate Fanon's conceptualisation of the "massive psycho-existential complex" of Black people affected by the coloniality of being (Fanon, 2008, p. xvi). Fanon asserts that "it is normal for the Antillean to be a negrophobe" (p. 168) having "breathed and ingested the myths and prejudices of a racist Europe and assimilated its collective unconscious" (p. 168). Black people, declares Fanon, can assert a self-hating "split" personality (p. 165). This Section will examine plots where **'Ra'schism'** is defined as the racial cognitive dissonance induced in Black characters by coloniality. This split in consciousness is a racial 'schism' that accommodates, or results in, the contradiction of Black people being capable of loving themselves and other Black people while still reviling blackness, **blackness** in this instance being what Fanon describes as the lived experience of Black people, framed by slavery's system of classification and enforced by Christianity. The psycho-social dimension of this lived experience (blackness) was always formed by the gaze of the White (Mignolo, 20013, p. 175).

This thesis regards colourism as a signifier of Ra'schism', and psycho-literary analysis shows that it abounds in Jamaican Literature. To borrow phrasing from the narrator in *The Book of Night Women*, Caribbean Literature emphatically depicts that a Black person's



very body is an enemy when puberty sets in and adulthood visibilises the threat of the Black adult body (James, 2014). The only two things that mattered for adult slaves was “how dark a nigger you be and where the white man choose to put you...where one had to do with the other and your ranking was assigned from the highest to the lowest” (p. 45). According to James (2014) slavery and colonialism resulted in Jamaican Black people “creating more rankings himself than massa” (p. 45). So far, all the deconstructed texts have instances of Ra’schism’ expressed through colourism. For example, the main female characters of *Here Comes the Sun* (Dennis-Benn, 2016) can be said to be besieged with Ra’schism’ because despite loving each other, they have destructively internalised colourism and actively hate any signs of blackness within themselves or each other. In another example we see that Mr. Saint James, the ambitious schoolteacher in *Augustown* (Miller, 2017), loved himself enough to ambitiously want to keep improving his lot in life, yet he was permanently destroyed by his hatred of any blackness that he saw in himself and others. Shockingly, his hatred of blackness lead to a psychic split so profound that it resulted in him looking in a mirror and believing himself to be the whitest of White men!

Another perfect example of Ra’schism’ is exhibited in *Small Island* (Levy, 2009), where light-skinned Hortense is allowed to live inside with her father’s relatives, but her dark-skinned grandmother lives outside and is treated like a servant. Hortense loves her grandmother, but like her adopted family, hates her grandmother’s blackness. So wide and separating is her racial ‘schism’, that Hortense’s grandmother is forced to call her own granddaughter ‘Miss Hortense’ and her grandson ‘Massa’ (p. 30). In fact, Hortense internalises the disgusting colourism that permeates the Jamaican colonial school system where teaching lighter skinned children is seen as more prestigious than teaching dark-skinned children; so, even though she is an educator who loves children, Hortense cannot dispel her Ra’schism’ and the disdain it breeds in her for poor Black kids.

Yet another example of Ra'schism' is evident in *How to Love a Jamaican* (Arthurs, 2014), where Kimberly's grandmother, a Black woman herself, hated the blackness of her son-in-law (p. 12). Arthurs also incorporates this Ra'schist' psycho-literary phenomenon in Doreen, a Black woman who is confident enough to sacrifice and educate herself; who for most of her life avoids situations and men who can't love her as she deserves; is protective of other women who she feels are discriminated against for their physical features; and yet is revealed as someone who expresses a schizoid dislike of blackness when she considers settling down with a White man because "the world found biracial children more beautiful than black children." (p. 118). There are many other examples in Jamaican literature of Black people who love Black people while hating blackness, but what is germane to a decolonial reading of this selected literature are the psychological smadditizing modes of being that dislodge such 'Ra'schism'.

One very potent antidote to Ra'schism' in Jamaican Literature is deployed from the Indigenous philosophy of Rastafarianism, which although already discussed, I will briefly recap here with a different emphasis. Rastas believe in the intrinsic unity of humanity. They believe that Jah (God) lives within people and refer to themselves as 'I and I', indicating the alignment of the self with the spirit or being within and use the phrase as a sign of equality and the oneness of all people. For Rex Nettleford, Rastafarians "daring to declare God in one's own image, the only revolutionary African diaspora group to do so, was a quantum leap forward in terms of sense of self and sense of place" (Niaah, 2011, p. 52). Nettleford believed Ras Tafari exercised a creative imagination in philosophy, which taught Jamaicans and the Caribbean about their own being and humanity (Niaah, 2011).

In earlier sections I have proposed that the literary ontological re-alignment symbolised by the Rastafarian 'I and I' depicts the mobilisation of Jamaican tools of decoloniality (The Jamaican Voice, Creolity, Indigenous spirituality, Patwah etc.). I now

expand this thought by proposing that once mobilised, the Jamaican psychological tools of decoloniality cleave together the psychic brokenness/splits within characters affected by both Ra'schism' and racism. Rastafarian communal philosophy negates the individualist Cartesian philosophy (I think, therefore I am) that posits that the mind is the centre of thinking that results in one singular, individualistic 'being'. This negation rests upon the belief that Jah resides inside the collective being of each person and provides a unified, dynamic, supernatural power, the collective enormousness of which, can heal any 'ism' or 'schism'.

Fanon, like Nettleford, contradicts the Eurocentric individualistic assertion and conceptualised the body, its location, and the sum of its experiences as the centre of knowledge, and not the mind. Their ideas are wonderfully summarised by Walter Mignolo's (2007) writing that advocates that: it is the who, what, where, when and why, that produces knowledge and being and not mere thinking devoid of lived reality (Cartesian philosophy). Appearing to be in cohesion with Fanon's, Mignolo's, and Nettleford's decolonial thinking, Jamaican Literary Ras Tafari characters are positioned as philosophers and epistemic agents. In the selected decolonial stories Ras Tafari leadership and elders make knowledge and contribute intellectually to the social development of their rural communities. In the novels Rasta characters and their grung poetics invert the idea that knowledge is only made in academic settings such as universities etc. They obliterate the idea that elite education, or colonial education is the sole producer of knowledge. The powerful Rasta narrative that runs through this psycho-literary intervention debunks the dominant negative characterisation of the marginalised in a classist society.

The inspired Ras Tafari imagination and philosophy, to which Nettleford and the other theorists refer, is replicated in the decolonial Jamaican writing that is at pains to give context and describe experiences that determine the complexity of characters and their

decisions. In decolonial novels the psychology of the ‘**Resistant Being**’<sup>36</sup> is actualised by a seamless melding of lived reality, *The Jamaican Voice*, and Jamaican culturally influenced epistemology (reflected and produced) in Jamaican Literature. The depiction of Rastas and their Indigenous Rastafarianism in Jamaican Literature is one psycho-literary form of the Resistant Being that confronts the coloniality of knowledge and heals Ra’schism’.

To understand the might of the Rasta Resistant Being, one only has to look at various portrayals of Rastas within these novels. One common portrayal of Rastas is as reviled social pariahs. By way of illustration, the grandmother in *Lionheart Gal* thinks of Rastas as the “souls of violence” and locks herself in her house if she sees one pass her veranda (Ford-Smith & Sistren, 1987, p. 222). In another instance of this type of portrayal, in the novel *Augustown*, the teacher Mr. Saint Josephs is repulsed by Rastas who he declares are “dirty bush Africans with the slither of snake locks, untidy, unhygienic broom sellers and madmen” (Miller, 2017, pp. 70-72). The Ra’schism’ that is embodied in the grandmother and Mr. Saint Josephs is combated by the creation of the Ras Tafari Resistant Being psychology that characters exhibit in these decolonial Jamaican stories. I will now discuss these two psycho-literary ideas (Ra’schism’ and Resistant Being) in more detail and provide support for the inclusion of the essence and strategies produced by these concepts in a Liberatory Psychology imaginary.

Nettleford unpacks Ras Tafari philosophy as an inventive attempt of a people to reform their own institutions, to meet new demands, or to withstand new pressures (Bolles,

---

<sup>36</sup> This term is intended to capture the Fanonian psychology that asserts that humans not only have a moral justification to resist their coloniser, but also stand a better chance of successfully healing colonial wounds if they resist abuse rather than absorb it.

2011). For Nettleford, Ras Tafari is an “anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist force in the matrix of social change” (Phillips, 2010, p. 161). According to Nettleford, Ras Tafari celebrates self-determination, defiance, and a refusal to be racialised into nothingness. Ras Tafari is an example of the Resistant Being that Nettleford refers to as smadditized. Readers can observe smadditization leveraged in Jamaican Literature by decolonial characters such as: “Negus, the beautiful Rastafarian that epitomised true working-class brotherhood, defying patriarchy by never expecting women to serve him” (Ford-Smith & Sistren, 1987, p. 229). Or by wise-beyond-his-years Rastafarian Maxi who, as a student, questions the coloniality of knowledge when:

Once he told a teacher that she was ignorant for believing Christopher Columbus discovered Jamaica. Max asks ‘Wha’ ’bout di indigenous people who were here first?’ He was always book-smart, using words no one had ever heard used in everyday conversations: indigenous, inequality, uprising, revolution, mental slavery. He skipped classes to read books about Marcus Garvey, telling anyone who would listen that real history was in those books. The principal, Mr. Rhone, a high yellow man from St. Elizabeth, grew concerned about Maxi’s rebelliousness, fearing it might influence other students, and expelled him. (Dennis-Benn, 2016, p. 9)

In *Augustown* the reader encounters the quintessential decolonial Ras Tafari that upends Ra’schism’. Miller (2017) dramatically sets a tone of insurgent decoloniality in his novel by having Ma Taffy lovingly hold the head of Kaia, whose dreadlocks have been butchered by his teacher. The reader can feel the tenderness in the scene that radiates a love of Black people AND blackness. To comfort the child, as if by regathering his chopped-up

sense of self, she uses faithful witness to tell the story of Alexander Bedward, the high priest of the Rastafarian religion. In this way Ma Taffy rejects Ra'schism' and confronts the coloniality of knowledge proclaiming:

The story of Bedward, is not the one they been telling you. Is not the story of some fool-fool man who get it into him head that him could fly. And neither is it the story of a clumsy baff-hand<sup>37</sup> man who fall out of a tree. You hearing me, child? The story of Bedward is something completely different—is the story of a man who try his best to do something big, and to reach higher than any of we did think a man like him could ever reach... (Miller, 2017, p. 88)

This authentic tale related by a grandmother intending to heal the Ra'schism' of a Rasta child (reviled by his Black teacher for his blackness) feels like an offering to the critical reader from an activist author. The story seems to represent a salve for the coloniality of being as well as a confrontation of the coloniality of knowledge by the Resistant Being, Bedward. If this scene with Ma Taffy, reclaiming history, giving power to the marginalised, and making visible the dehumanising consequences of coloniality, is not already a clear indication of the decolonial nature of Miller's Ras Tafari tale, then the reader is left in no doubt that it is a story of redemption for the Subaltern community by the narration:

Look, this isn't magic realism. This is not another story about superstitious island people and their primitive beliefs. No. You don't get off that easy. This

---

<sup>37</sup> Accident prone. Graceless. Clumsy.

is a story about people as real as you are, and as real as I once was before I became a bodiless thing floating up here in the sky. You may as well stop to consider a more urgent question; not whether you believe in this story or not, but whether this story is about the kinds of people you have never taken the time to believe in. (Miller, 2017, p. 92)

*Augustown* is a decolonial story invoking the power and truths of those who are ‘othered’. It uses the potency of oral tradition to set the record straight, and to connect power dynamics to racialised bodies. It becomes a faithful witness tale about the re-remembering, and smadditizin psychology of the ‘I and I’ Rasta child Kaia and his community. The story confronts the coloniality of knowledge and provides a psycho-literary case study on the healing of Ra’schism’ using alternative Indigenous epistemology, philosophy, and psychology. The strategies of loving re-membrance and Resistant Being in this case study are ones which seem to fit into a Liberatory Psychology imaginary.

Even sub-plots make use of the portrayal of the Ras Tafari Resistant Being and the ‘I and I’ communal spirit to reinforce decoloniality. In a side story Miller tells the arresting tale of Ian Moody a street urchin who washes cars in the market and meets a gentle Rastaman Clarky. On the first day that they meet, Ian observes the humble Clarky selling oranges in the market: “He had never had a father, but today Ian thought Clarky was the kind of man he would want to become one day. Everything the Rastaman did had a strange beauty to it” (Miller, 2017, p. 97). For six years the two work side by side, until one day a police officer picks a fight with Rasta Clarky, beats him up, carries him to jail, tortures him, and then “A day later, Clarky walked back into Augustown without his dreadlocks, but he carried about him still this oozing, thick, grey, infectious feeling” (p. 99). This time the palpable Ra’schism’ of one Black man hating the blackness of another doesn’t just result in the

breaking of his spirit but also kills his body, for Clarky, haunted by the incident, eventually commits suicide. Still, Miller does not allow Ras Tafari to be defeated. The reader is shown that there is only one way for the traumatised Ian to heal himself, to heal the psychological trauma of witnessing the ravaging of his own and his friend's humanity - and it is to become a Resistant Being Ras Tafari:

After that, Ian Moody turned fully to Rastafari. What else could he have done? What other (appropriate) offering could he have given to his dead friend but his life? He joined the bobo shanti (Rastas) and moved into Armagiddeon<sup>38</sup> Yard—a fenced-off compound that sat on top of Dread Heights. He now calls himself Bongo Moody, and he is a man who walks around with the weight of the body that had fallen into his arms. He feels he is always carrying it with him. Clarky. That is the shape of Bongo Moody's hurt. And so the day of the

---

<sup>38</sup> According to the Book of Revelation in the New Testament of the Christian Bible, Armageddon is the prophesied location of a gathering of armies for a battle during the end times which is variously interpreted as either a literal or a symbolic location. The term is also used in a generic sense to refer to any end of the world scenario. In Islamic theology, the Armageddon is also mentioned in Hadith as the Greatest Armageddon or Al-Malhama Al-Kubra. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armageddon>



autoclaps<sup>39</sup> has come like a finger scratching at the scab of himself and exposing his deepest wound. (Miller, 2017, p. 100)

In writing a story about the healing of Ian's 'being', that had been splintered by a Black man's hatred of blackness, Miller depicts the potential of the Resistant Being Ras Tafari, and the 'I and I' psychology to restore wholeness to humanity. This restoration to wholeness is also apparent in the smadditizin of Ras Benedict who passionately wants to protest the similar violation, the shearing of the schoolboy's Kaia's locks: "That's why Rasta must stand up to Babylon," says Ras Benedict dangerously. He is an ex-convict who found the light of Rasta while in prison..." (p. 104).

Ras Benedict's smadditization highlights a Jamaicanised psychology of resistance, the nature of which Fanon diagnosed as necessary for the healing of colonial wounds (see section intro, footnote 36). The value of these storylines is not to be found in Ras Tafari proselytism and conversion, but in how they offer an alternative that serves to dispel Western epistemological privilege. The Author's literary decolonial activism ensures that the Reader witnesses a Resistant Being that confronts the colonality of knowledge. Miller's social

---

<sup>39</sup> Tragedy built on the backs of a series of tragic moments. The onomatopoeic 'autoclaps' has competing etymologies. The narrator offers several derivations, but perhaps suggests that it is a noun meaning: An unexpected, often unpleasant sequel to a matter that had been considered closed. In German, *achterklap*" (Grant, 2016). The Autoclaps is synonymous to the apocalypse.

activist writing provides the reader with a wealth of examples of how decolonial knowledge and Resistant Being psychology can minimise the effects of epistemic colonialism. The author's creation of a Rasta character who practices Resistant Being psychology is a major act of epistemic disobedience. It can reasonably be argued that in these novels the Rastafarian rejection of Eurocentric knowledge, philosophy, and psychology constructs a pluriversal world that refuses to submit to Westernised epistemic superiority; it is a world of Indigenous psychological healing. This epistemic disobedience, revealed through psycho-literary analysis, can prove inspirational for future/additional investigation into other sources of Indigenous knowledges to be included in Liberatory Psychology. In summary, this section explores how decolonial social activist writers create marginalised characters who rise up to challenge the coloniality of knowledge and establish themselves as knowledge makers and generators of Indigenous epistemology.

## **6.2. Creolised Religion Healing the Colonial Wounds. Faithful Witness, Biography, Autobiography**

In the early chapters of his novel Miller contrasts the violent power of the gangster, Soft-paw, with the Indigenous 'obeah'<sup>40</sup> powers of an old woman, Ma Taffy, whom the gangster considers a relic of times past:

Soft-Paw is therefore part and parcel of this new Augustown, and he knows enough of its past to think that soon this place will no longer have space for little old women like

---

<sup>40</sup> Obeah is a Jamaican Creolised system of spirituality. Obeah is believed to have healing practices, developed by the West African enslaved, that syncretizes Afro-religious traditions and beliefs with some Christian symbols.

Ma Taffy, women with this higher science and obeah knowledge. This new Augustown will deal in bullets because bullet is stronger than obeah. Bullet is stronger than Anancy stories<sup>41</sup> and all that old-time wisdom. So, this old woman had better learn how to mind herself! (p. 38)

As it turns out, Soft-paw's disdain of Ma Taffy's Indigenous wisdom and power is as illegitimate as his life is short. For while Ma Taffy lives to oversee many a miracle and triumph of the Obeah higher-science and old ways over the violence of the new ways - the victory of Indigeneity over coloniality - Soft-paw dies the tragi-poetic death of one who has lived a violent life and is killed by it:

'You remember Soft-Paw? Him was the first real badman from Augustown. Marlon was him rightful name. And him had a talent to just creep up on you and you don't hear a thing. We all did think that it was Babylon that would kill him one day, but it wasn't. It was him own people that do him in, throw the body over there in Mona Dam with concrete block chain up round him' (p. 178)

---

<sup>41</sup> Anancy is a tricky spider in the Jamaican folklore originating from the Akan African culture that survived the transatlantic crossing. This mischievous fictional spider always gets his way using inventive cunning and creative genius. Anancy's exploits are beloved by Jamaican children who are often taught values, morals, and social codes based on the Jamaican Indigenous culture and grung wisdom embedded in these fables. "Anancy stories are studied as a decolonized expression of an afrodescendant Caribbeanness that struggles to survive in an imperial context." (Araya, 2014, p. 1)

By depicting old Ma Taffy's survival over the seemingly powerful young gangster, Miller (2017) creates a disruption of the colonality of violent power; concurrently validating the power of the Jamaican wisdoms that Ma Taffy espouses at every turn. Like Soft-Paw, violence has sneakily 'crept up' on the community, but a return to Indigenous high-science defeats it. Though both characters are from the alterity, one has chosen to adapt to, and dies because of, the violence of colonality. The other chooses the liberatory Creolity of Obeah and survives the violence of colonality. Miller sets the reader up to understand that while life on the fringes is hard and there is no justice, actors do not have to be fatalistic and accept that it is 'just this'. This powerful decolonial literary representation of the victory of Obeah over colonialism seems apropos to Grosfoguel's (2011) call for the decolonisation of postcolonial stories that inspired this thesis. The term Obeah first appeared in colonial literature in reference to Nanny of the Maroons using its powers to defeat the British and secure a land treaty in 1740 ("Obeah", n.d.). It is also said that another Maroon leader, Tacky, used Obeah so successfully in a 1760 slave rebellion, that it spurred the passage of the first anti-Obeah law in Jamaica ("Obeah," n.d.). Such postcolonial stories introduced readers to Obeah, but novels such as Miller's (2017) heed the call to decolonise postcolonial stories by presenting the Jamaican Creolised spirituality (Obeah and Ras Tafari), subaltern psychology, and way of existing, as directly challenging the colonality of knowledge, being, and power.

In another instance of decoloniality, Indigenous Prophet Bedward's miraculous flying and the excitement he generates within his grass roots church delinks the community from colonial Civilising Christianity, and re-connects them directly to their ancestors and African heritage:

Aunt Mathilda whistled. ‘You know,’ the old woman said, ‘once upon a time you used to hear these kinds of things all the while. Yes. All the while. But is plenty years now I don’t hear of such a thing—like him is a true Flying African.’ Norah was sceptical. She sucked her teeth. ‘You really hear of people floating before?’ Mathilda drew her head back and narrowed her eyes as if hurt by the lack of trust in her niece’s voice. ‘At my age,’ she said haughtily, ‘I did know people who did live on bucky estate as slave, and you hear all kinds of things. True true things that you might never believe.’ ‘Sorry,’ Norah whispered. ‘I never mean...’ and the sentence trailed off. Mathilda nodded. ‘The old people used to talk these things. They say many of us was born with the ability to fly, but we lose the gift when we started eating salt. Is like the salt weigh us down. That’s why bucky master make sure to feed us salt fish and salt pork and all them things, so that those of us who could fly would lose the gift. But sometimes a man or woman might go into fasting and when-time they lose all the salt from them body, then that time they would start to float. And some of them did float all the way back to the Motherland. Back to Africa. They call them the Flying Africans. Mm-hm. That’s what the old people would call them. And it sound to me now like the Shepherd have the same gift’. (p. 56)

Through this scene Miller insinuates that the power of Africans not only ebbs with their transatlantic journey away from their Mother Land<sup>42</sup>, but continues to recede as Black

---

<sup>42</sup> “Mother Land” is used here to refer to the continent of Africa from which the enslaved were stolen. Not to be confused with “Motherland” which in this thesis is a sardonic reference to Empire/Britain.

people absorb more and more of the coloniality of Maddaland. This is arresting imagery that Miller builds upon by playfully contrasting it with the American astronauts landing on the moon:

‘Mama! He flying for true.’ When Norah turned around, it seemed to the little girl that her mother’s eyes were a little wet. Norah lifted her daughter up into her arms so that she could get an even better view of things. ‘Yes, baby. You right,’ Norah whispered. ‘Bedward flying for true.’ Irene watched fascinated as the procession went by. She was impressed by the high, bouncing walk of the preacherman. She had never seen anything like it, and would never see anything like it again, though she almost did: many years later, after the roof collapsed and the rats had gouged out her eyes, she sat there in the front room of her house while her three nieces and Sister Gilzene gathered around the black and white television set. It was 20 July 1969, and two Yankee fellows were about to step out of a rocket and onto the moon. (pp. 57-58)

Ma Taffy is a repository of Jamaican history and wisdom, and she gives Faithful Witness to one Jamaican event that is often not believed - the flying Black preacher man. Later, having been blinded, she is unable to unequivocally say she witnessed another televised American event - the flying White man’s landing on the moon, which is also often not believed<sup>43</sup>. The humour of this breaks the tension and tragedy of both Ma Taffy’s grisly

---

<sup>43</sup> This refers to rumours and conspiracy theories that the moon landing was a hoax. Many books chronicle these theories and conspiracies (Pennekamp, 2017). It was believed that the landing was staged to show the US as the victors in the ‘space race’ against its Cold

fate, and the fact that her Indigenous powers and miracles are long lost along with her sight. The astronaut's 'small step for man' is comically juxtaposed against the high, bouncing walk of Bedward; and also astutely gives contrast between the real power of the decolonial preacher and the false power of the American hero who is attempting a modern-day colonisation of the moon.

Miller authenticates events using Faithful Witnessing and the autobiographical handing down of the tale between characters. It is in this way that the effective use of Jamaican Creolised spirituality surmounts the colonial Christian Civilising mission and is rendered authentic by oral culture. In *Augustown* (2017) there is a distinctive amalgam of faithful witness, Christianity, auto/biographical stories of Jamaican heroes, and Ras Tafari interpretation of biblical scripture and prophesy. The result is that the novel presents the reader with an empowering epistemology, ontology, and psychology that is driven by the Creolisation of religion and storytelling. The reader is witnessing a confrontation of the coloniality of knowledge even while the author paradoxically conveys the notion that colonialism is unending.

These scenes have such an intense evangelising quality that perhaps it is fair, albeit very speculative, to say that the author is himself moving within some sort of reflexive (de)colonial Borderlands, taking characters and readers along with him. I earlier declared that the author's personality type, based on traditional psychological analysis, is not relevant in a decolonial reading (see Chapter Two, **Psychology 'of' Literature**). However, the speculation

---

War USSR enemy. Symbolic of the dominance of capitalism over communism, the alleged fake landing can be viewed as symbolic of the hollowness of capitalism and American supremacy.

taking his reflexivity into account, seems appropriate and justifiable given that it is not based on personality type, but on the fact that it is possible to tell a great deal about an author from the psychological analysis of a story's character and plot (Paris, 1997). Paris (1997) holds that the reader can speculate from the author's habitual literary creations, recurring preoccupations, choice of rhetoric, and tendencies to glorify characters based on the strategies and resolutions they use, and that these devices are most similar to the author's own ideas about appropriate solutions and defences. Paris (1997) also states that fiction frequently manifests the author's inner conflicts; and that the telling of a story is psychologically motivated by the author's experiences and positionality and so too is the reader's response. This makes it reasonable for the reader to evaluate inferences about an author based on their stated biographical data. This evaluation can confirm an author's efforts and intentions (through their writings) to reinforce their perceptions of the best solutions to the good and evil of the world (Paris, 1997). In summary, Paris's (1997) position is that it is helpful for the reader to have some information on the author's biography, positionality and reflexivity. Valuing reflexivity and positionality in epistemology is consistent with decolonial psychology (Kessi et al., 2021).

Hence, it is relevant to note that the two authors most extensively referenced here are Nicole Dennis-Benn and Kei Miller. Both authors are Black, gay, Jamaicans who have migrated to Step/Motherland and openly speak about the oppressive homophobia and classism they experienced in their formative school years in Jamaica (Dennis-Benn et al., 2018). Although, admittedly, it is a fine line to walk between judging an author's personality type as opposed to simply reflecting their positionality, this biographical data seems to fit with Paris's (1997) theory that authors' psychologically motivated responses to their own conflicts are reflected, and often repeated, in their works. This also shores up my speculation that the scenes seem replete with decolonial themes and author 'proselytism'. Noting the



author's positionality and reflexivity is one example of the epistemic disobedience that this study wishes to endorse as a source of Liberatory psychological praxis and epistemology. Their epistemic disobedience is also responsible for the wonderful idiosyncratic, Creolised amalgam of the Ras Tafari Resistant Being, Christianity, and the ongoing evils of coloniality that are to be found in the Borderlands of The Caribbean Literary Seas. The following excerpts provide the reader with a psycho-literary example of this mishmash:

Bongo Moody clears his throat and tries again to speak. He speaks slowly from his place of brokenness. 'I not a fool. I know Babylon have their tricks and evilous ways. I know what Babylon do to Jesus and Bedward and Marcus. And I know them don't respect wi Nazirite vows. I know them want to rob we of wi strength like Samson and Delilah. But Jah know, Jah know, I did think them things was in the past. I did think them things stop happen. But look like Babylon still up to the same shit.' 'My bredda,' the eldest Rastaman says to Bongo Moody. 'You right that Babylon will never change, and dem will always try to downpress the light of Rastafari. But I still don't understand what happen to the I'. (pp. 103-104)

In fact, this excerpt of Jamaican Creolised religious thinking is an apt psycho-literary example of the type of real-life critical relationality that people, and not just researchers, use as they wend their way between ideological decisions that end up inspiring social activism. Another instance can be seen in this excerpt:

'March!' a younger bobo shouts, wanting to be part of this excitement. The word lingers in the air. They all seem to contemplate it. Life, of course, is often shaped by such things—the word that is not only said, but that lingers; the sentence that is not

only spoken, but pronounced—these syllables that stick in the air until everyone feels their stickiness, these syllables that grow out from a mere utterance into something tangible, like the woman who turns to her husband one morning and says, ‘It’s over,’ or the field slave who whispers to the stalk of cane he is about to cut a simple word: ‘freedom.’ A march? The word sticks. No one can find an objection. The bobo shantis go back into Armagiddeon Yard to retrieve their flags and then, just like that, they proceed to march through Augustown. And this is how it starts. (p. 104)

Miller (2017) is unrelenting in psycho-literary representations of the use of Creolity and faithful witness as liberatory psychological weapons against oppression. The general picture that he paints for the reader is consistently as dramatic as is the following scene depicting insurgent Ras Tafari Creolised resistance:

The march of the bobo shantis falls well outside the regular rhythms and patterns of Augustown. It breaks the monotony of things and will live on in the collective memory as a happening as strange as it is spectacular. The procession is first seen coming down from Dread Heights. Word goes round fast: The bobo dreads marching! The bobo dreads marching! All over Augustown there is the rattling of latches being unbolted and windows and doors and shutters being flung open. People either look out or go into the streets to see the bobo shantis pass. When the initial excitement evaporates, it is replaced by something even stronger—a sense of awe. The bobo shantis are not making a sound. No chanting, no singing, no nothing. There is something in this solemnity that humbles everyone, something beautiful and terrifying. The bobo shantis wear long beards and priestly gowns. Around their necks are draped shawls in the colours of Ethiopia—red, green, and gold. Their dreadlocks

are piled on top of their heads and then hidden under tight turbans which rise towards the sky. The procession looks like something from Egypt—like a delegation of high priests on their way to meet Pharaoh. The bobo dreads are carrying banners as well—flags, again in the colours of Ethiopia, or with drawings of the Lion of Judah on them...The march of the bobo shantis becomes the march of Augustown—another inching, another ‘trodding’ towards some place they have been trying to reach for over a hundred and fifty years...(pp. 106-107)

Next, this vividly painted scene historicises coloniality, gesturing to the reader that true liberation from coloniality is elusive and modernised:

Queen Victoria had signed the paper that gave them back their freedom. Their feet felt strange with this knowledge that they could go wherever they wanted to go, though some of the old people said that where they really wanted to go was across the large sea... This place was no freedom, and Massa Day was not done. Massa had only changed his name. He was no longer ‘Busha’ or ‘Buckra’ or ‘Massa.’ He was now ‘Boss’ or ‘Miss’ or ‘Sergeant.’ Sometimes Massa even changed his skin from white to black, making this whole freedom thing complicated. There was further to go; a longer journey ahead... (pp. 107-108)

Miller continues to ferry the reader back and forth between shores in a literary space of theoretical encounters - *The Caribbean Literary Seas* - moving between acceptance of hegemony and resistance to it. As was theorised in the introduction, in these Borderlands although ‘the salt’ of the colonial Christian Civilising Mission is not completely removed, it is diluted to a useful level with Indigenous spirituality. Miller (2017) inspires a restorative

consciousness that features the ultimate Creolised spirituality that fuses biblical references, colloquial idiom, and resolute Ras Tafari protest:

They bank their faith in proverbs. They say, Stone by stone de wall fall. Or, Every dog have him day and every puss him four o'clock. Or, Every day devil help tief but one day God a guh help de watchman. And so they march, waiting for their Jericho, for the wall to fall, waiting for their four o'clock, waiting for the Day of the Watchman. And when Augustown sees the bobo shantis, they cannot resist the solemnity of it all, those flags unfurling, the Lions of Judah rippling into life as if at any moment, if the breeze were just strong enough, they might just throw their heads back, leap off of the fabric and roar. One by one the residents of Augustown file in behind the bobo shantis, their heads held high, marching with an uprightness that can be traced back to that very first march, as if even now there are still large hampers on top of their heads. (p. 108)

The building to a climax of religious Creolity comes with the joint Ras Tafari and Christian protest singing that seemingly signals spiritual and psychological liberation:

Bongo Moody seems to have a greater sense of purpose. He positions himself directly in front of the school gate and pulls his djembe drum out of its bag. His hands begin to fall lightly on the goatskinned instrument, and he pulls the crowd into the hollow of its sound. He has a fine singing voice, and he makes it ring out over the schoolyard. Hear the words of the Rastaman say Babylon yu throne gone down, gone down Babylon yu throne gone down... And then they hear it: another voice, right alongside the drumbeat, but even louder. This new voice is coming from somewhere else,

somewhere at once closer and much further away. From a house close by, but also from the past. It is a beautiful soprano, almost birdlike, but it swells... Fly away home to Zion, fly away home! One bright morning when Man work is over Man will fly away home. (pp. 109-110)

Then finally, the pinnacle of the decolonial story is told. The Black preacher, Bedward, enlightens his people and makes an explicit connection between their blackness, their suffering, and their impoverishment, which has electrifying subaltern appeal. He makes the decolonial intersectional connection between politics, race, and culture. He is charismatic and his vision of an empowered Black people is positively bedazzling. This is not the church service of the colonial Christian White god, where power is allotted along a continuum of shade and class. In his hypnotic sermon, Bedward tells his people that their oppression is over, and that the day of judgment will see his people rise up to miraculous heights of freedom and prosperity just as he will miraculously rise up and fly. He whips up the crowd, unifying them just as he merges Christian Jesus with local Black heroes and revolutionaries until their combined embodiment is evident in him, their Black prophet. The religious belief that was once killing them is now a Creolised cure! God is not just for the brown, the wealthy, the high class, and the powerful; he is a God of justice and not “just this”. Like Jesus, he, and they, shall all ascend above poverty, politics, injustice, powerlessness and even race:

‘And I know all of you did come to church just like me, with a heavy stone resting on yu heart. It is always like that with we. We is a forever cast-down people who need to be lifted up. We is a forever righteous people seeking refuge in de strong tower of de Lord...’ ‘Now doctor come to tell we that de two pickney that dead last week—that

dem dead from one big, highfalutin' something they calling 'dysentery.' Yes? But what I am here to tell you this morning—what I never say last week but what we all know deep in we heart—is that those two pickney, those two wonderful lickle angels, dem was murdered!... 'Murdered!' he repeated and shook his head. 'Murdered by this country! Murdered by de government. Murdered by de governor man himself.' 'Mmmmm!' 'Listen to what I telling you, my children! No pickney who born with high colour in this country, or who born to sit in high chair, who born to high-society people—none of dem not deading from no dysentery...' 'Oh, no!' 'Dem not deading from no mosquito bite...' 'No, sah!' '...or from rat bite or from drinking dutty water, or from whatever else dem tell we dat that fi wi pickney always be deading from. Fi we pickney dead because dem born low—dem born so low to de ground that de grave just reach cross fi dem and pull dem in just so.' Bedward clapped a hand to his lips and shook his head as if he had surprised himself. It was a gesture the church was used to, but it was still effective. The church too was silent, each man and woman shaking his or her own head and contemplating their collective lowness. Bedward let this feeling swell in the church and then said in a small voice—a whisper, really—'But blessed is we who born low and live low, for we shall be lifted up!' Now it was time for an Amen! 'I said, WE SHALL BE LIFTED UP!' More people now: 'Amen!' 'That is why I come this morning with my heart so soft, soft as a feather I telling you, so soft because I know in my spirit that de time of lifting is nigh! WE SHALL BE LIFTED UP UP UP UP UP UP! Like de blessed saviour who dem put on de cross, tinkin dem was putting him down, but dem end up lifting him up, up, up, all de way to de Father's arms! I need somebody to say Amen!' Everyone now was shouting Amen! and Hallelujah! and some people were standing on their feet, waving the pieces of cloth they had brought with them for such moments. Bedward wiped his

shiny face with a rag. ‘I glad to see de church pack this morning, and I know so many of you is out here because news of a miraculous thing has come to you. Yes? Well, let me tell you now, from my own mouth, de stories you been hearing...dem is true.’

‘Amen!’ ‘God is doing a new thing, my children! A miraculous-take-we-out-of-Egypt-and-part-de-Red-Sea thing! A redemptive-dip-we-in-de-water-and-pull-we-out-clean thing! Gawwwwd is doing an uplifting thing. A lift-we-out-of-dungle-and-high-into-de-clouds thing! We don’t have to wait and wait and wait and sing Sankey till we dead. Dat time is now on de horizon. I telling you dis morning, it is nigh!’ ‘Yes, Lord!’ ‘December thirty-first, my children. December thirty-first. Dat is de day. Tell de people dem all bout. Shout it from de mountain top. December thirty-first. Come ye all to Augustown, and there shall you see a demonstration of de mighty powers of Jehovah Gawwwd. December thirty-first. If you born low and black and poor, den dat is de day of glory. But if you born high and white and with a gold spoon into yu mouth, well, den dat is de day of terror and judgement and weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Oh, glory to God!’ ‘Yes!’ ‘I going to rise up to heaven, my children. Yes. Yes! Dis same black, low-born, and low-rated man you see stand up in front of you with de heap of chain wrap round him belly, him same one, me, Alexander Bedward, Shepherd of Augustown, I going to rise up into de skies like Elijah and moresomever, I staying dere for three days! Three days will I walk bout in heaven and shake hands with Moses and Abraham and sit down with Jesus. And when-time I come back, I coming with lightning in my hands and dis wicked town name Kingston shall see a ruination worse dan earthquake or fire. Oh, blessed be dename of our God!’ William Grant-Stanley was writing furiously in his notebook, but no one paid him any mind. Bedward continued, ‘My children...if you have righteousness into yu heart, now is not a time to fear. Now is a time to be joyful. Now

is a time to walk with your head hold up high. Dis thing that is nigh, dis thing that is close at hand is a blessed thing. A wonderful thing. For you remember that Bredda Sam Sharp did try to rise up out of Babylon, but it never did work out fi him. And when I was just a lickle boy of six years old, Deacon Bogle try again to rise, but dem take him to yonder gallows and heng him. But dis time, dis time it going to happen. Dis time, all de black and white rascals of dis country, should be fraid. Dis time, all de big money people of dis country should be fraid! Dis time, Governor Leslie Probyn who sit down as comfortable as Miss Thomas puss up dere in King's House, him should be fraid, fraid, fraid! But you, O righteous and downtrodden people—you have nothing to fraid for. A low-born blackman is going to rise up over Babylon. So tell me now...oonoo ready?' (pp. 62-65)

This lengthy scene is a monumental one. It is one of the more striking scenes in the novel that defines the text as socio-political activist writing. It displays very adroit features of Psychology **in** Literature as well as Psychology **of** Literature. It gives the reader insight into the power of religion to either further crush those existing in the alterity...or to liberate them by virtue of their very same alterity. It has now been made clear. Civilising Christian Belief can kill. Creolised Belief can cure. Prophet Bedward so systematically lays out the coloniality of being; the interwoven history of race, class, politics, and economics; the implications of winning the fight against the acceptance of racial inferiority; that in this one Creolised religious epiphany he captures and captivates the subaltern poor of Maddaland. He confronts the coloniality of knowledge.

As if this teachable moment is not emotive enough, in the very next scene, Miller provides yet another decolonial psycho-literary analysis for the reader. He gives social commentary on the coloniality of education, setting side-by-side for comparison, the power



of the written word and the oral. He contrasts faithful witnessing with colonial newspaper reportage. He stirs up tropes of education and propaganda in a scene where witnesses to Bedward's flying are reading about community events in a national newspaper. Sadly, they at first seek affirmation of themselves and events through the reportage of a brown outsider who obviously does not respect them and who, more significantly, has not seen what they have seen with their own eyes! This scene leads us to understand the depth and psychological destructiveness of internalised coloniality, and in particular, the coloniality of knowledge.

On the surface is the inference that coloniality induces the community to reject Indigenous knowledge and epistemology in favour of the very colonial written authority that they are seeking liberation from. However, a deeper, decolonial questioning shows that this is not so. The contradiction inherent in their deference to the 'outsider's' reporting results in an unexpected empowering Creolity and decolonial moment. It facilitates an incursion into the Borderlands where the community that starts off feeling validated because they are finally visible to the nation (by virtue of the colonial newspaper reportage) ends up smadditizin themselves! By finally believing what they know to be true over the printed word (which in the past represented prestige and authority to them), they are able to combine both forms of knowledge - the colonial and the positional - and end up affirming themselves. The 'salt' of coloniality is reduced to a useful level. The small subaltern community gains confidence and they retain power over their own story, and the interpretation of it, via Indigenous knowledge, psychology, and philosophy:

In Augustown back then, there were many kinds of stories: Bible stories and Anancy stories; book stories and susu stories<sup>44</sup>; stories read by lamplight and stories told by moonlight. But always there was this divide between the stories that were written and stories that were spoken—stories that smelt of snow and faraway places, and stories that had the smell of their own breath. It had been believed—in an unsaid sort of a way—that a story would never be written about Augustown, but this all changed with the advent of the flying preacherman. The people added to their taxonomy of stories a new kind: the newspaper story. And this seemed to fall somewhere in between what was written and what was spoken, for as they waited for 31 December to come, they would gather each night in the churchyard and someone would roll out the Jamaica Gleaner and, like an Anancy storyteller, would read to them the story of themselves. It hardly mattered that these stories were mostly negative—that they were being mocked. It mattered only that they had been noticed and written about. Bedward himself would be among his flock as these newspaper stories were read out each night. He was comfortable now, floating back and forth above the crowd like a ministering angel. And perhaps it was this nightly demonstration of his flying power that made the reading of these stories such a jovial affair, because Augustown knew something that these newspaper people did not know; they could see what the rest of Jamaica refused to see. (p. 75)

It is vital that this community smadditizes to combat the nefarious intention of the reporter, which is to confirm that the Bedwardites are anarchists who threaten the hegemonic

---

<sup>44</sup> Gossip.

powers of the larger nation. His skewed reporting would then be used to justify the Governor's military obliteration of the threat to national security - which is how the Governor presented the tiny Augustown community that more accurately had become a direct threat to the socio-economic and political status of the neo-colonial brown elite and the business community. The convergence of the coloniality of Civilising Christianity, capitalism, racism, colourism, and state sanctioned violence is brilliantly exposed in a conversation between the British Governor and a local brown businessperson. Catastrophic Ra'schism' makes the brown businessperson disparage his Black countryman when turning to a White British colonial master to control (using military violence) a poor Black community in order to maintain the colonial status quo. In this scene coloniality is palpable. Ra'schism' is palpable. The brown man seeks to defeat the blackness he hates and remain close to the whiteness that grudgingly assigns him power in his own beloved country! It is the ultimate sickening convergence of the coloniality of being, knowledge, and power:

'Your Excellency,' said Mr. Azaar. 'I'm not worried that Bedward is going to fly. Of course I'm not. But what he has set off is very dangerous—dangerous to this country's economy and dangerous to our morality. And all under your watch. You mark my words, Mr. Governor, something else is brewing under it all. Some kind of uprising, some kind of rebellion. Just walk outside and you can feel it in the air.'

'Gentlemen, I have the advantage of having lived in many colonies. So believe me when I tell you this: that feeling is always in the air.' Azaar lifted his fist as if to bang it on the table again, but caught the warning flash in Probyn's eyes. He relaxed his hand and adjusted his tie again. 'So you're saying that's it, then? All these black hooligans and no-gooders gathering together in Augustown and plotting God-he-knows-what, leading astray the few good Christian workers we have in our stores, and

the only response from King's House is to shrug—to turn your hands up in the air and say, so it guh? That's what you're saying?' Governor Probyn looked directly at Mr. Azaar but made no reply. His face had become its cool, sweatless mask again. While the three men in front of him grew red and anxious and bothered, Probyn stared them down, unflappable. Mr. Azaar tried again. 'Mr. Governor, sir. Let me talk plain. You don't like me. You see me as a brash little uncouth man. I know that. Of course I know that. And to be honest, I couldn't give a flying fuck what you Limeys think of us. After you leave this bloody island, I'll still be here. But what I'm telling you is much bigger than whether you like me or not. Something dangerous is brewing on this island, and it has to be stopped. And if you want to stop it, sir, then you have to stop Bedward. Mark my words. If you don't stop it, then worse things are going to be written about your governorship than what that American fellow wrote in that book. Trust me.' And Richard Azaar shrugged magnificently as if depositing the weight of the world in the governor's lap. 'Sir, I've taken enough of your time. Good morning, Mr. Governor.' Richard Azaar nodded his head and left the office. Mr. Delgado and Mr. Thompson hastily shook the hand of the governor and ran to catch up with him. (pp. 73-74)

Miller assumes the mantle of social activist author when he decodes the underlying coloniality inherent in the newspaper's extremely negative reporting of the events in Augustown. He globalises coloniality by depicting the governor sweepingly dismissing this event as just another instance of the same Black disobedience that he has witnessed in his travels between colonies. Miller meaningfully hints to the reader that it is the very local, situated Black power, and liberatory psychology, which the governor dismisses that will be his downfall. Miller yet again draws a comparison between the colonial authority of the

written word over that of oral culture. By the end of this scene coloniality is clearly projected through the perception that in the hands of an empowered Black people the white colony will be destroyed. The most racist and vituperative language that can be used to project an image of the Black community as threatening, inhuman, and unworthy of self-rule, is employed by the journalist who symbolises coloniality:

Augustown, a scene of wilder fanaticism than before, a scene of religious revelry which degenerates into orgies and reduces those who take part in them into corybants almost below the level of rational human beings. (p. 77)

...so long as it appeals to their febrile religious emotions and erotic impulses...For Bedward and his like deal in the primitive stuff of religious emotionalism. Fervid gesticulation, frenzied dances, wild shouts and cries, vague utterances of presumable terrible import—all these appeal to undisciplined, uninstructed people (pp. 77-78)...orgiastic revival of primitive superstitions (p. 78)... in front of the ‘prophet,’ a woman mad with fanatical zeal rushed at him and held him by the collar. (p. 79)

In a separate scene that globalises coloniality, the reader can see that although it would be more contextually consistent to refer to the local Christian’s pilgrimage to Augustown as a ‘journey to Jerusalem’, on two occasions Miller has characters engage in an orientalist description of this pilgrimage as a ‘journey to Mecca’. One reference is made by the toady, Mr. Azaar, describing to the governor the Black people flocking to Augustown by saying “all of them marching to that dirty little village as if it was some kind of Mecca” (p.73). The second reference is a narrated description by the national newspaper reporter describing the same gathering : “On his way from Augustown, questions put to ‘Pilgrims to

the new Mecca' elicited the fact of their great faith in Bedward" (p. 80). The same journalist goes on to condescendingly report:

The whole affair shows lack of education in the poor people who follow blindly much as though they lived four or five hundred years ago in the "witch doctor" superstition of African wilds. (p. 81)

Mercifully, Miller does not leave the reader with such wounding colonial imagery. He reimagines events from the Augustown community's angle of vision and psychology. He leads us and them to bathe in the restorative aquamarine Caribbean Literary Seas using the healing powers of localised psychology, epistemology and memory, Indigeneity, and Creolised spirituality. By globalising coloniality Miller effectively sets up the decoloniality of the novel as consistent with the theoretical foundation and framework of this thesis (see the introduction to this analytical chapter)... and so, this community's 'Indigenous tributary' of grung wisdom swells the volume of the 'global literary seas' which carry the story to other shores. As the author and readers bathe in the decolonial Caribbean Literary waters, "colours are clear, individuals are seen, and the connection to their community whole is obvious" (intro to analysis section refers). The next set of excerpts are apt:

When Master Bedward come out, I feel something big trying to rise out of my little body, and I think everybody was feeling it too—like we never had so much love for anything before. Him was just so big and black and beautiful in them shining white robes, white as if them did wash in the cleanest river. The deacons lead him over to the big saman tree that I believe is still there, and then they let him go. Bedward allow

himself of float up to the tallest branch, and then he hold on and smile down like he was proud of all of we. (p. 85)

...and that this man would lead a great religion and it would be a blessing unto millions. (p. 89)

...and that in the years to come he became the greatest preacherman in Jamaica. Bedwardism became one of the most important religions across the island, and for thirty years people came from all around the Caribbean to Augustown to hear this man preach. He famously said, There is a white wall and a black wall, but the black wall is growing bigger and will crush the white wall. He was dearly loved by the black peasants of the island, but was sorely hated by the governor and the upper-class rascals who were mostly white and who worried over his stirring oratory and the crowds he inspired. (pp. 90-91)

He declared he was going to heaven to gather bolts of lightning in his calloused hands and he would bring them back down with him to that island where he would smite the white wall, the white upper-class rascals who, even though slavery had ended, were still oppressing the poor black folk. From every parish in the island and also from overseas, from Panama and from Cuba, people came; they journeyed to Augustown to see this great thing happen, and the governor was gravely worried. (p. 91)

You might stop to consider this: that when these dreadlocked men and women, when these children of Zion, when these smokers of weed and these singers of reggae, when they chant songs such as, 'If I had the wings of a dove,' or 'I'll fly away to Zion,'

these songs hold within them the memory of Bedward. Such songs, sung at the right moment, can lift a man or a woman all the way up to heaven. Call it what you will—‘history,’ or just another ‘old-time story’—there really was a time in Jamaica, 1920 to be precise, when a great thing was about to happen but did not happen. Though people across the length and breadth of the island believed it was going to happen, though they desperately needed it to happen, it did not. But the story as it is recorded, and as it is still whispered today, is only one version. It is the story as told by people like William Grant-Stanley, by journalists, by governors, by people who sat on wide verandahs overlooking the city, by people who were determined that the great thing should not happen. Look, this isn’t magic realism. (pp. 91-92)

...she is right now, risen up there in the heavens, in a section of the night sky that overlooks the vast sands of the dry river and the poui trees and the zinc fences and the lanes that run in untidy directions; that overlooks Kintyre and ’Gola and Dread Heights and Armagiddeon Yard. Up there is sky... Up there is the Lion of Judah, the black god, Marcus Garvey, Bedward, Emmanuel-I, Selassie-I, Jah Rastafari. And these are just the things we have names for. (p. 182)

Psycho-literary analysis surfaces all the beautiful vivid images, alternate knowledges, psychologies, and philosophies that are embedded in this local tale. The reader can see that the decoloniality inherent in these stories are handed down through the wisdoms and powers of the once peripheralised community and are not allowed to fade. The strength of this tale is kept alive, and its ‘Ni’ energy relocates to the new colonial battle site in the future. Alluded to in these selected novels, as well as in this thesis, is the fact that decolonial liberation is not so much a hit-or-miss event, but is a process that IS happening, and happening gradually. It is



transferred through all the characters that function as counter-archival sources who contradict biased documentation such as newspaper reports. These characters use Indigenous Psychology, Creolised Spirituality, Faithful Witness, Epistemic Disobedience, Oral Storytelling, Autobiography and Biography:

The great philosophical question goes: if a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear, does it make a sound? But this is a troubling question, exalting one kind of being above all others. What then of the ears of snakes, or wood frogs, or mice, or bugs? Do they not count? What then of grass, of stone, of earth? Does their witness not matter? If a man flies in Jamaica, and only the poor will admit to seeing it, has he still flown? The cleaning woman waits. Every now and then she peeks into the classroom. She is waiting for the teacher to leave, but also—unknown even to her—she is waiting, as he is, for something else. Always—always—there are witnesses. (pp. 112-113)

‘I suppose so. Yes. But it won’t just be me alone down there in that hole.’ ‘Why? Somebody else going to dead?’ Years later, Lloydisha will wonder if she really had asked this question, and she will shiver when she thinks of how prophetic it turned out to be. Sister Gilzene, however, is not gifted in such a way. She cannot see the future beyond her own death, so she answers, ‘No. Nobody else going to dead. But you best believe that other things goi be down there in that hole. Some things that should be there, like worms. And other things that shouldn’t be there. Like old-time stories. Like history.’ ‘History?’ Lloydisha asks, her voice full of disbelief. Sister Gilzene nods. ‘Of course. Every time a person dead, a part of history go and dead with them too. Well...unless... I ask if you want to hear a story. Maybe you can keep it for me, and keep it from the hole where they going to bury me soon. But you cannot be selfish

with it, Lloydisha. If I tell you, you have to make sure it don't die with you either.'

Lloydisha feels her head swelling. (p. 117)

'Long time ago there was a man right here in Augustown, and when I think bout it now, maybe him was the first prophet of Rastafari. But back then nobody was Rasta. Back then we was Bedwardites.' 'You talking bout Marcus Garvey?' Lloydisha asks quizzically. There are so many Rastas in Augustown and she has heard them talking and reasoning about the prophet, but the name she knows is Marcus Garvey. Sister Gilzene smiles. 'Yes. I suppose that is what people will tell you, but that is not the man I talking bout right now. I talking bout another fellow. His name was Alexander Bedward, and him did have a church right here in Augustown.' (pp. 117-118)

The old woman tells her story and the little girl, Lloydisha, listens...it is the little girl, Lloydisha, who brings everyone back to themselves. She runs out into the streets and shouts, 'She drop dung and dead! The old woman dis drop dung and dead!' Ten days from now the old woman will be buried in Bedward Cemetery. Her tombstone will read: Gilzene Beatrice Philips, Songstress, 28 September 1905–11 April 1982. And hers is the first death on the day of the autoclamps. (pp. 118-119)

As was alluded to throughout this section, Civilising Christianity has a symbiotic relationship with education and together they are forces of coloniality. Miller elaborates on this collusion by making Augustown Primary the site of the catalyst event - Kaia's head shearing. The school is also the centre of the Babylon on which the Resistant Being Rasta community marched. Miller describes a Jamaican education system that mirrors the colourism of society. A society where an expectation of advancement means understanding

and absorbing the alienating coloniality that relies upon forgetting oneself and Indigenous knowledge. *Augustown*, like the other selected novels, demonstrates a marked epistemically disobedient, decolonial psychology. The plot's structure and psychology veers away from Western literature in which, according to Paris (1997), one of the most frequent patterns of action are education plots with flawed characters who are redeemed through learning extremely self-effacing behaviour. Such Western plots do not show psychological growth, yet create an illusion of education (Paris, 1997). An example of Miller's smadditized decolonial characters who are the antithesis of standard Western education plot characters can be seen in the following excerpts:

The boys from the community were therefore unattractive to her. Sometimes they accused her: 'You think you better than we! Don't it? Bright gyal from the ghetto.' And Gina would nod. 'I don't think I better than you. I know it.' (p. 152)

'But why spend time with these lessons, Auntie?' Gina would complain some evenings, bored with school and trying to use Ma Taffy's own logic against her. 'All of this is just whiteman knowledge.' 'True,' Ma Taffy would agree. 'That is true. But if you learn whiteman knowledge even better than the whiteman, then one day you will know how to use the tools of Babylon against Babylon.' (p. 146)

Like Nicole Dennis-Benn, Kei Miller asserts that education and Civilising Christianity are projected in Jamaican society as a means of escape from poverty, hardship and even blackness. Yet in the end Miller makes abundantly clear that it is the Indigenous knowledge and psychology, the Jamaican epistemology, Resistant Being, understandings, and knowledges that liberate the subaltern characters of *Augustown*.

In summary, for intellectual ease the three main tenets of the decolonial conceptual corpus (knowledge, being, and power) are used in these analytical chapters as an organizational framework. It can be concluded that in practice these forces are all interwoven and an effective way to resist them is to do so with a range of intersecting decolonial psychological moves. I have focused my efforts in depicting enactments of (de)coloniality within Jamaican novels with the direct intention of showing how critical psycho-literary analysis, commentary, and storytelling become potent social activism. These stories provide a sanctuary where writer/reader/researcher activists commune through reading, writing, confronting, questioning, transgressing, being inspired by, learning, and healing along with others also suffering and resisting the psychic pain of coloniality. The Caribbean Literary Seas provides a psycho-literary haven for general readership and for like-minded social-activists who need to periodically re-energise as they fight against the relentless colonial power matrix.

In chapters 4, 5, and 6 I attempted to build a nuanced, complex, and hopefully compelling case for showing how the reading and writing of decolonial Caribbean literature reimagines race and identity such that it contributes to a liberatory psychology. Taken together, these chapters have outlined all the (de)colonial concepts, theories and moves that I attempt to bring to life in a sample of my own creative writing in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 7: A Decolonial Creative Writing Sample**

### **Excerpt From the Original Novel**

#### **What is Black and White and Red All Over?**

**by Alicia Levy-Seedat**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The following tale should be read as a form of presenting the findings of this thesis. I have chosen not to present this story with any additional explanation or notes so that it can be read without ‘noise’ in the hope that the reader will be encouraged to overlay their own interpretation, experience, insights, and knowledge over mine and take from this story, or leave behind, what they wish. However, at the end of this study I have included an Appendix that consists of a section of this story with accompanying decolonial critique and commentary. The writing in the Appendix is taken from a draft journal article that unpacks some examples of the potential and pitfalls of combining literary writing with annotations.

**“Gardening in the tropics, you never know what you’ll turn up”**

**(Olive Senior, 1994)**

"Lawks Miss Taylah you fair and pretty eee? Is long time I don't see you. How you do?" The shriveled street seller beamed at Taylor when she ran up for her daily handful of jaw breaking 'Bustamante backbones' - the pitch black, boiled, coconut sweets aptly named after Jamaica's first post-independence Prime Minister, Sir Alexander Bustamante. 'Busta' was a trade unionist known for his steely railing and unbreakable grit. "Fine 'tank' you Miss May. 20 cent's worth please!"

The old woman dug into her plastic bag and gave Taylor the same size bulging handful that she gave her every time, regardless of whether Taylor asked for twenty cents worth or ten cents worth. When the dried-up woman handed it to her she held the child's soft

hands, caressing them and rubbing the red skin as though it were silk. Miss May looked up longingly into Taylor's face for the usual smile that briefly connected them. A smile that lifted the old lady's heart and stature. Something in Taylor knew that she should put her whole heart into giving that smile and allowing the crackling caress - as tomorrow she may yet only have five cents. After this endurance, she ran off to her friends, stuffing the sweets deep into the folds of her homemade denim shorts. "Hey, what's this?" she wondered. There tucked in the crease was ten more cents along with instantly formed dreams of another handful of bustas! So back around the corner she galloped.

"Listen old neggah pickney, you tink a poor old neggah like me have tings to give away? The busta dem is 50 cents for two so just 'gweh' from here and don't waste mi time!" spat Miss May down at a little boy smiling up at her. "Please mammy, I only have forty cents. Can I just have one then?" simpered the little black Oliver Twist with the aching hope only a child can have while looking tyranny and hate in the eye. "Mammy? MAMMY? Is who you calling Mammy? Not even if your father was a gorilla could I be your mother you ugly child! Go ask yu real neggah maddah for the next ten cents and come back!" This response seemed vomited all over the little boy's frozen face. The words drenched his sharply pressed khaki school uniform.

The words also splattered backward on to Taylor witnessing this scene from behind Miss May. She shrank away in confusion. She shook violently. Once to remove the vomited words that covered her. Then a second time to cast off the revolting knowledge that had just hit her.

Her ethic was born in that one moment. An ethic she would never violate except in cases where 'old neggahs' were genuine 'old neggahs'. She would never again be careless with the power her skin gave her. She would never again innocently assume that she controlled the lingering caresses, or that they were loving, and not a longing to possess, if even briefly, her

redness. Now surely it couldn't be that she understood all of this in that instant? Perhaps in that moment, a lifetime of dinner table conversations or casually repeated class rules by elders, friends' parents, and Sunday school teachers had all snapped into place? Perhaps every caress from Miss May over the years had already rubbed it into her.

That 'busta moment' was Taylor's first grown-up thought. She now understood her particular and peculiar superpower. She could magically get her own way, not through any special talent, or effort, or honed discipline. No, it was by the magical effect that her skin colour had in this 1976 jamaica world. How clever and moral this little red jamaican child was! Yep, these were no small thoughts for a small child to have as she slowly opened up the jet black, boiled, hard candy and tossed it into her mouth. Well. They were not so much thoughts, as they were feelings that she was having while she slooowly sucked the burnt sugar, bitter sweetness. After all, everyone knew that a bustamante backbone is too tough to break. You couldn't bite directly into it or your jaw would get stuck or busted! Nah sah! This black ting...If you were to get any sweetness out of it, you would have to with patience, and skill, roll it around in your mouth, gently sucking and sucking until it got smaller and smaller and disappeared altogether.

#

WHAP! WHAP! WHAP! Taylor truly hated the smell of the chi-chi nest but had a compunction to smack it and release the foul odour every time she saw it. The termite nest had attached itself to the stump of a Number 'Leven mango tree in the open land across from her house. WHAP! She was bored sitting waiting for the gang. Her school let out later than theirs but they had chores to do after they got home each day. Pressing their clothes, cleaning, cooking, and all the things that her Eulalie did for her at home. The gang consisted of girls from the tiny squatter camp on the other side of the open land, and had any number of members on a given day. On most days at least three of the main members would show. No

meeting time was set. The fact that they chose to gather in the open land was a convenience, which like their activities and adventures, was unplanned. The open land called out to the girls who liked to flee the dark tiny spaces of their homes and the unending chores that were assigned if a pickney was seen with nothing to do.

WHAP! Menky was the first to arrive sucking an already white mango seed with precious few tufts of hair left at the end of the mango's jawbone. She was the tallest in the group and by far the thinnest. Her tar skin stretched out over long bones with nothing in between. She had the face and angles of a hard life woman and rarely if ever smiled. She looked you in the eye even less, although as prey she could assess any gaze that fell on her without returning it. Taylor wondered how she managed in high school since her thick patwa made no concession to the English that was required for learning. But then, the government school that she went to didn't really expect her to learn. Like most of the gang she was biding her time until the compulsory act of childhood was behind her and she could start the meagre life she was assigned by virtue of being born into Majestic Village.

Menky was quite a contrast to Taylor, who at eight was a few years off from her eventual alluring 6 feet. Taylor still had a flat washboard chest that would only really develop to be juicy and pleasing to the touch after her third child. She possessed grey eyes and a pippy nose; qualifying upper-class distinctions for sure. Yet, she didn't quite have that can't-put-your-finger-upon-it 'Jamaica White' look. The Jamaica White title was fluidly defined by those who longed to be a part of it, but it was rigidly gate-kept by those who were actually a part of it. The militant club members were only too happy to enforce the clear-cut, yet complex, Jamaica White bylaws that kept the riff raff old neggahs out. E.g. fair skin but neggah nose - you are out. Yet fair skin, neggah nose and wealthy family - you are in.

Jamaica Whites gladly supported the weight of the bountiful privilege that this title carried way since the arrival of slave ships to the island. Although fair skinned, Taylor didn't



support the weight of that privilege. Instead, the weight she carried from slave heritage was perched charmingly on her lower back; the well-rounded weight of the genetics brought over on those slave ships. By virtue of this and other can't-put-your-finger-upon-it distinctions she was not quite Jamaica White, she was merely 'red'. Redness was the next rung down on the social ladder. Even so, with the deleterious effects of chemicals on her springy hair, and the refining effects of catholic school on her springy accent, she could have ascended up that one rung yes! Were it not for that self-imposed ethic she had decided upon in her 'busta moment'. she could have stowed away on a passer's visa. For after all, if red was the gold tier VIP traveller's lounge, then Jamaica White was the platinum class and entry was not to be scoffed at!

Menky folded her body down on her haunches beside Taylor. Two ashy knees poking sunward, up and out of the thin frilly cotton dress she wore on most days. It really could only be described as a frock; more suited to a five year old Pentecostal churchgoer than an eleven year old with the angular face of a sixty year old. No one had a memory of what colour this frock started out as, and frankly, on pain of death, no one would be able to say what colour it was now.

The two girls didn't speak because in the gang conversation really only happened in a gaggle which required the three child minimum. WHAP! Pal, the street mongrel dawg, brown with a long mouth, typical of the entire gene pool of all Kingston mongrel dawgs, appeared. BOOF. Unlike Menky's graceful folding, he collapsed at their feet without bending his knees or body. He simply dropped unceremoniously as he always did when he reached where he was going. WHAP! Evadne appeared. WHAP! WHAP! Then Sheryl and WHAP! Finally. Margret. "Waamp" everyone said in greeting. "My parents going prayer meeting later, you want come to my house tonight?" Taylor threw out the suggestion knowing it would get everyone excited since her empty house was the only real house in the group. It

was the equivalent of checking in to a spa for the Majestic girls whose shacks were packed so tightly together that if the wind was right, and it usually was, one could hear the neighbour's constipated PLOP PLOPPING in their toilet during the bread-eating week that preceded the end of the month pay day grocery shopping.

Taylor's home was in Girard Manor, a well-to-do area with a mixture of beautiful old colonial homes ringed by splendid gardens. These homes were mostly lived in, but not owned by, Ministers of Parliament and other jamaican nobility. The Manor residents included the Anglican Bishop and his wife; senior civil servants; wealthy businesspeople and their families; judges and professionals such as doctors, lawyers, or engineers. This free government housing was a left-over benefit of an era fast whittling away. It was the only way that many of its inhabitants like Taylor's dad Mr Winston Graham, head of the Jamaica Railway Company, could afford to stay in Girard Manor. The sense that residency was a vanishing privilege probably explained why its folk took precious and exaggerated care of their mini-estates and, in particular, its manicured gardens.

The Girard inhabitants clung desperately to and polished up yesteryear as though this would fend off the inevitable. The inevitable that came in the form of developers who were rubbing their hands together in glee in between greasing the palms of civil servants. Those hungry-belly officials that nyammed out state resources leaving them cleaner than a fishbone found in a bin at Hellshire - Kingston's popular beach and fast-food nyamming hotspot. They would eventually approve the rezoning that would sweep Girard Manor into the eighties. For now, within the walls of this luxurious free housing were modest furnishings because most that dwelled there did so on modest salaries. The exceptions to the unpretentious décor were found on the insides of the homes of the businesspeople, politicians, and of course the Bishop. Though old, everything inside Taylor Graham's home was always neat and clean thanks to both her kindly, house-proud mum, and the shining powers of their countrified

helper Eulalie. Eulalie saw her duties and dwelling within the old world estate as more of a calling than a job.

#

"Mek we go look some Guinep dung di road no man?" The peach-coloured pulpy globe to which Evadne referred was sucked after teeth tore open the stained skin of the fruit that grew in grape-like bunches. "Oh wait a minitt, Tay, you have anything put up fi we?" This enquiry was really a directive being issued by Evadne who was the de facto leader of the gang. Evadne and her six sisters lived in the Majestic with her elderly aunt and countless cousins. Their dad was a preacher, and he and Evadne's mum resided in 'Merca. No one, including the sisters, really knew which of the fifty states of 'Merca they lived in. Taylor suspected that it was somewhere in the North Eastern United States because the gift barrels of clothes that arrived every Christmas all had clothes suited for winter instead of for the stinging heat of Jamaica.

Case in point, Evadne now had on a purple turtleneck which she wore as though the radiating heat that caused the parched soil under their feet to powder up in the air like smoke was actually a minty breeze. Evadne and her sisters arrived in Majestic Village like six little Russian dolls all packed one inside the other decreasing in size down to Sheryl, the youngest, who was Taylor's age. They were waiting for their parents to send for them to live in 'Merca, and this wait had stretched itself out over three Christmas barrel arrivals.

Evadne fell somewhere in the middle but was always treated with the deference of the eldest child. She had a birth defect that caused her left arm to end in a round fat pad of flesh. The pad was soft in repose, but taut as a medium well-cooked steak when flexed, as it often was, when gesticulating imaginary fingers. Taylor, along with most of the group, knew the texture of this stump well. For when you held hands with Evadne during the singalong games

they played, it was inevitable that after fighting to get beside her this was the hand that she proudly gave the winner to hold as reward.

#

In Taylor's case, she knew this little padded ball even more intimately than the others. When the sisters first arrived, there was a proud fence that stood between Majestic Village and the open land leading to a shopping centre that was beside Girard Manor. Like most town planners, the builders of this fence imagined that erecting a fence to separate settlement shacks from cement houses was also erecting an impenetrable barrier. Both Evadne on the one side, and the alluring plaza on the other side of the fence, ensured that the fence would come down sooner rather than later. The war of the Majestic Village versus the middle-class was well and truly lost on all fronts when Evadne and Taylor met. It was this day that gave a symbolic and literal black-eye to her grand busta moment. On that particularly sunny day, Taylor looked through the fence with the loneliness of a child who had siblings so much older than her that they only came home to feed, fuel and freshen. She was looking longingly at a group of girls playing chinese hopscotch, when one of the girls with a thumpa-hand asked her if she wanted to play. No one from the Majestic had ever spoken to Taylor before and she had never thought to speak to them. So the whole thing caught her by such surprise that her only shocked response was to silently stare.

Evadne, publicly shamed by this haughty response to her generosity, kissed her teeth and said incredulously "but see yah, u think u betta dan me? I am going to show yu who me is!" With that declaration, she clambered up and over the fence. For Taylor this happened in slow motion, and while she was a bit alarmed that the moat to the castle had been breached, she felt more sorry for this thumpa-hand child than frightened by her. That was her first mistake. Evadne's padded ball was made exactly in the same design as a boxing glove and on

the never-again-spoken-of-day of their first meeting, Taylor was walloped without mercy or warning.

Whether because of shock, or because of being beaten silly, Taylor honestly could never remember what happened next. Her understanding of this moment was as malnourished as Menky's girth, and as amorphous as the colour of Menky's frock. Taylor only knew that from that day onward she was a part of the gang. Within months of Evadne showing how it could be breached, the fence had come crashing down with the weight of shack dwellers passing over it to gain entrance to the Manor.

#

Eulalie gazed out the window at the open land crew. She smiled involuntarily when she saw Miss Taylor, then frowned as she saw how dirty she was, blending in perfectly with the Majestic girls in their weird, dirty winter clothes. All the girls had Mrs Graham's imported British bath towels hanging from their heads. Every now and then they would dramatically flip the towels across their shoulders mimicking the sweeping motion they had seen American stars do with their long flowing hair. Menky's towel was the brightest and most ill-fitting because it was a heavy, yellow sheet towel chosen to match the blonde mane of Farrah Fawcett.

As she watched them Eulalie thought to herself, "I don't know why Mistress Graham allows Taylor to be on the streets like this with these dutty neggah pickney dem." Back in Westmorland Parish, her very own daughter, Marvalee, would never be out like that with barefoot dirty black children. Marvalee, with her starched sparkling clothes, didn't need to be outside in the sun hot ruining her high brown complexion. Her fair skin was the only legacy from her 'wutliss' father who worked on a cruise ship contributing nothing to Marvalee's upbringing, and mercifully, was never seen. Eulalie normally took her time, not just cleaning, but shining up the kitchen. However, today was a Wednesday, and every

Wednesday Mr Ralph Brown, the postman, rode up on his bicycle to deliver the post and tease Eulalie with his weekly proposal. Sometimes this proposal was marriage, and sometimes it was a steamy idea planted in Eulalie's head that would dance around her mind when she lay on her cot in the helper's quarters. When she lay, she would squeeze her eyes shut and try to forget these thoughts. Then she would try to squeeze her legs even tighter and clasp her Christian hands to stop them from straying under the threadbare cotton sheets.

Eulalie finished her duties, stopped her gazing and quickly went to her back-room to smooth her wiry greying coils, refold the fat plaits in her fringe, and tuck the side ones back under bobby pins. She tightened the bouffant at the back of her crown with a quick scraping of her burgundy duchess comb. After this, she washed her oily face with its thick ageless skin. She then twisted her uniform back and forth as though it were really a prom dress and not the brown gabardine uniform she always voluntarily wore. She fixed a stern look on her face so that Mr Brown would not for a moment think his idleness was being heard and understood by a church lady like herself. She closed her door and slowly thrust alongside the lush bushes of fiery, bursting, red ginger lilies. She intended to pass through them and time her arrival by the front veranda to just when the letters were slipped into the post box by Mr Ralph Brown.

What on earth is that smell? She must remember to tell Anderson, the mad man gardener, to search through the red ginger lilies and find whatever animal had died there and take it out to burn under a tyre. Eulalie smiled thinking of Anderson with his newspaper sailor hat neatly folded every day while he muttered and laughed to himself. The rumour was that Anderson came from a wealthy farming family. He was from the parish of St. Mary to be precise. A parish said to be the most violent of all the fourteen Parishes, where crimes, small or major, were conducted with a machete in hand.

Eulalie supposed it was Anderson's undiagnosed schizophrenia that led his family to kick him out. Before he was disowned, Anderson had sprouted the family green fingers. It was this talent that guaranteed him a permanent place on Mrs Graham's household staff despite his appalling antics. Capers such as him sitting in the Julie mango tree naked one day and heeding nature's callings in all of its various forms – liquid, gas or solid. In return for her turning a blind eye on these demonic occasions, Anderson adored Mrs Graham. So that whenever she brought home broken pieces of plants, that would mysteriously jump into her handbag while she drove through the affluent areas of upper St. Andrew, Anderson would turn the cuttings around in his crusty calloused hands, smile his smile reserved only for her, and grow them into fat shrubs within weeks.

Eulalie often gazed at, and disapproved of, the two as they gardened together in a companionable intimacy the intensity of which Mrs Graham didn't even share with her husband. Eulalie was made aware of their relationship when she looked out her window one afternoon and saw Anderson and Mistress Graham were working hard taming a very stubborn tangle of orange and red lantanas that looked contained, but plants are deceptive. She watched as Mrs Graham suddenly felt a gardener's joy came over her. The sun was tickling her exposed neck and was just about to viciously bite it the way a sunburn does, when from her mouth overflowed the fullness of her heart and she dramatically announced "The kiss of the sun for pardon. The song of the birds for mirth. One is nearer God's heart in a garden, than anywhere else on earth!" This childhood verse suddenly made sense to her mind and soul and was converted from something pronounced in the monotones of a child's grammars school recital, to a declarative prayer. Mrs Graham looked at Anderson's tiny, deep, twinkling eyes realising he must think her mad; the irony of which made her laugh.

Anderson, caught the spirit and responded as though following a Sunday morning Collect, in which Mrs Graham had just delivered the invocation. He searched through his

memory and let loose from the depths of his heart his own school recitation. " 'Tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Our bodies are our gardens to which our wills are gardeners." On seeing her laugh even louder, he switched his role to that of both petitioner and aspirant, again searching his brain, this time passing over his favourite Othello, choosing Romeo and Juliet. He pushed his chest out with chin up and eyes forward in a perfect schoolboy pose and recited "Come, night; come, Romeo; come, thou day in night; For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back." It was a moment Naipaul himself could not have captured. They only spent one hour apart on these days. It was when she went inside to eat lunch with her family...and he would eat his lunch of leftovers under the huge guangu tree that defined the unyielding, impassible, boundaries of the colonial backyard. There he would slash his machete through the air and curse the imaginary neggah bwoy his fevered brain told him was hiding in the red gingers waiting to violate Mrs Graham.

#

Thoughts of Mrs Graham, Anderson and the ripe smell left Eulalie's mind. She strode on, noting that she needed to ask Mr Graham to get the spray man to look at the chi-chi nest that was swelling up on the side of the Julie mango tree. The nest was as huge as a pregnant belly filled with life about to burst beyond its taut walls. She crossed out of the jungle beside the helper's quarters and walked out on to the freshly manicured lawn at the front of the main house. She re-attached the stern look that had slipped while she thought her busy thoughts. She arrived at the veranda just in time to hear the creak of a bicycle squeaking over the potholed gravel driveway. "Lawks how a man must worship only his one God when a woman walk past him with a backside that mek him want to genuflect behind it?" With this ribald question, Mr Ralph Brown screeched up alongside Eulalie who gave him a brief smile in spite of herself. "You know Missa Brown if you came to Bethel Baptist Church with me you would learn not to say dem heathen-like tings into a church woman's ears." And so it was to



go on back and forth between them for the weekly Wednesday haff-an-hour. This hot flirtation kept spilling out from a man on fire who had waited for this all week. His slick, suggestions penetrating the shy and hesitant invitations encased in the unbroken hymen of Eulalie's ambiguous reprimands.

#

Taylor glanced from afar over at Eulalie and Mr Brown. By now he was leaning against the patio grill with his crotch pointing oddly up at Eulalie. She knew the crew had only about another twenty minutes to squeeze through the red gingers and sneak in a cigarette under the cover of the leafy mango tree. She didn't have to say a word. The gang was also gazing at the couple and readying themselves for the weekly ritual. This week was going to be good. Taylor had managed to nab a 'Craven A 'every single evening from her brother, and by now had one cigarette for every single member of the gang. No sharing.

With speed and skill, they hopped across the ragged posts left behind from the demolition of a Manor that had decayed in the open land. Even sleeping Pal jumped up in one jerked movement, again without bending his knees, and trotted alongside them in stiff legged excitement. They reached the red ginger thicket and one by one parted the fire flowers with a singleness of purpose that made them block out the choking stench that hit them when they opened a hole through to their smoking chamber. Pal had no cigarettes to look forward to and did not have the same single mindedness needed to ignore the noxious gas. Instead, he was captivated by what seemed to him to be a bouquet rather than a stench. He closed in on that smell while the gang climbed the Julie mango tree that nature had pointed in the direction of the wind. They lit up their ciggies with the expertise and posture of old men in a rum bar.

They inhaled deeply and it was just when Menky was holding the first fat bag of smoke in her lungs that Pal emerged with a bloated black hand, rimmed by the pink purple of decay, with white maggots dripping off of its rotting flesh. BOOF. Pal dropped, knees

unbent, at the foot of the mango tree to enjoy his find. She was the first to see the gruesome treasure that Pal was by now gleefully shaking from side to side.

The shock, along with the balloon of smoke in her lungs, knocked Menky out just as though she was one of the sozzled old rum bar men at the drunken hour of midnight. She tumbled out of the tree in a dead faint to cries of "BUMBO!" "BLOODSEED!" "BAXCOVAH!" "BACKSIDE!" "RASS!" Everyone involuntarily offered up an expletive. "Meeeeeenky a weh do you?" The head rum bar man, Taylor, screamed as they all scampered down to help their friend. A couple of the rum bar men dangled the ciggies in their mouths, while the more seasoned clutched theirs in cupped hands protecting their smoking sticks on the mad climb down.

Menky was knocked out cold. Her frock, hoisted up over her head, gave them another distraction from Pal's by now half-eaten titbit. In the perverse way that nature has of aligning seemingly unrelated things, and like the mango tree that had grown into a directional arrow, her hip bones, at that moment, were cut and angled exactly in the V shape of her cheek bones. These V hips pointed Taylor's gaze down between her legs to a wild thicket of tight bumps of hair. The jet-black knots contrasted the absent pale pastel colour cotton panties she herself wore and had expected to meet her gaze. The fright of this tumble, and the spectacle of the missing under-garb, combined with the taut nerves of pickney stealing a smoke, was too much. They all fell apart laughing hysterically. Only Evadne had the sagacity to pull down the frock and check Menky's bony skull to see if it was busted open. She used her round pad to gently brush off the flecks of chi-chis that had showered down all over Menky whose head had brushed open one side of their pregnant belly nest when she fell. The nasty chi-chi smell mingled with, and gave an under note to, the grisly perfume being released by Pal's tearing open the rotted flesh. Slowly Menky opened her eyes. They quickly filled with terror. She sprang up and out of Evadne's arms screaming an ear piercing wail comparable to the shriek

of a woman in the throes of labour in what she would later remember as her 'chi chi moment'.

**Butterfly, butterfly, fly so free. Butterfly, butterfly, land on me! Butterfly,  
butterfly, reach the sky, butterfly, butterfly, say good-bye!**

After her fateful fall from the tree, and panty-less fall from grace in the group, Menky suffered awful nightmares. As was to be expected, she couldn't stop seeing that fetid hand. What wasn't to be expected was that she kept seeing Taylor's neighbour's son, Mathieu Vessel, in her nightmares. In her night terrors he kept picking up that hand and chasing her around and around with it. That first night after her fall, while Taylor slept soundly stroked by Miss Eulalie telling her lovingly to put her "red, copper-colour, mulatto" self to rest, Menky climbed into bed beside her grandmother, who upon feeling the radiating heat of Menky's body, pulled away and sleepily managed to grunt that she didn't know "why dis likkle black pickney don't just sleep on di floor and stop hot up di bed". Gratefully Menkie noted that Grannie didn't actually kick her out of the bed and during the course of the next day even used a gentler than normal tone to make her usual observations about the black pickney.

#

Menky couldn't figure out why Mathieu appeared in her nightmares. It made no sense to her since she had never spoken to him or even seen him close up. And yet her unconscious mind kept playing out this scene, not only night after night, but eventually during the day as well. It started to affect her already miserable performance at school. Menky wasn't unintelligent. Yet her academic failure grew like the perfectly formed pus-filled boil that had once blistered up under her arm, until in souring ripeness, it was mercifully burst open by grannie so that it could drain and heal.

As a small child Menky had the exact blend of neggah features to render her magically invisible. From the moment she was born, a nurse in The Victoria Jubilee Hospital had looked down at her tiny face and scowled at how black it was. She was set aside. The

nurse remarked that “even though it nevah see di sun yet, dis likkle thing is still burnt to a crisp”. That is when the paradox started. When she was first unseen. Neglected. And still close-marked like a star netball player by the staff in their starched uniforms that shone brilliant white against their ebony skin. With the fresh innocence and hopeful instinct of a newborn, she cried her little lungs out. When no one came to nurture or cuddle her, or sometimes even to feed her, baby Menky stopped looking around her expectantly. Baby Menky cast her eyes down and grew silent and expressionless. This look, and outlook, remained with her for her whole life. It was this blank look that became fetishised as exotic and mysterious on the fashion runways where she would eventually be gazed upon with longing. Then too, as she paraded around, something inside her bubbled and grew. Waiting to be burst. To be drained. To allow for the healing of her childhood.

Menky had the misfortune of looking like a tall, thin version of her mother and grandmother, ensuring that she never stood a chance of having a fortune any different from theirs. They both loved her but having never experienced bountiful love themselves were unable to give it. Instead, their love took the form of feeding her and making sure that she didn't die. That was it. She kept growing taller and taller like a child's first grade experimental project. Like a bean wrapped in moist white cotton, that twisted up and outward from a dark place searching for the light that it would never feel since the effects of dark versus light was the point of the project. As she grew, her skin stretched over pointy joints and bones. Her thick lips and nose were the only parts of her body that could retain deposits of fat. Her skin stretched until it was so tight that it was shiny even without the benefit of moisture. So there she was. A combination of looks that meant her fate was sealed, unseen, yet close-marked, from the post-natal ward and throughout her whole life.

One of the people that close-marked her was Mathieu Vessel. Son of Member of Parliament Vessel. He had spotted her over the years when she and the gang played over in the open land. Really, he had no idea how Taylor Graham was allowed, or why she wanted to play with, these black urchins. But it was amusing to watch how well she blended in with them as they played. Taylor could speak like them and move her hands and head and feet in the same Majestic rhythm as them. Over the years he was fascinated to see Taylor transform her very essence, code switching between the urchin in the open land, to the sophisticate that effortlessly mingled at the appropriate uptown parties they both attended as they hit puberty. Even though Taylor was red and dressed differently, she would chameleon into one of the black urchins, synchronising her body language in a way that made colour disappear. Then skilfully, she did the same at the uptown parties where her not-quite-white colour and homemade clothes weren't noticed. Her body language and accent camouflaged her seamlessly. He grew bored with gazing at Taylor and transferred his interest to more suitable prey.

#

On the first afternoon that Menky became visible to him, he sat behind the fence that separated them and he alternated between eyeing the gang and watching a line of chi-chis trailing their way across the lawn to the foundation of his house. They too were hidden in plain sight amongst the grass. It was only upon close inspection that one could see that there were thousands of them. The grass that seemed so serene on the surface, was actually teeming with the pests marching and writhing their way into the house. He absentmindedly crushed any that crawled on his shoe or came near him. Although his focus was usually on Taylor, today he started to watch the weird looking tall urchin in the misshapen frock. She never looked up, but with the instinct of a seasoned hunter he could tell she was watching him too. Watching him like an animal watched its natural predator in order to ensure there

was always distance between them. This made him laugh and he grew excited. He did not get a chance to do anything about that excitement because at that moment he heard the lunch gong reverberating and calling him indoors.

He strolled across the grass, blithely crushing chi-chis and enjoying their stinky smell as he went along. He wondered how he would get the tall black one with the boyish hips into his room. In the dining room, his father was already seated in his place at the head of the table. Although his brother's seat was empty because he was out bird shooting, it was unthinkable that Mathieu would take his chair and close the gap to be closer to his parents. Even if they had guests, each person had their set place at the table. Like the seating in St. Helen's church pews, this rule was adhered to with the force of a superstition. Mathieu sat at the other end of the table and his mom appeared, in a whirlwind of Charlie perfume and flowing purple chiffon, to sit beside his father in her demarcated spot.

As soon as she sat, the helper entered with a tray that she placed on the credenza. On it was a terrine that belched up an aroma of thyme and turnip steam when the lid was lifted. It was the usual Saturday afternoon beef soup. Like the British habit of supping tea when the sun was at its blinding height, soup was a jamaican remedy, inducing a cooling sweat on a Saturday. Saturday soup was usually accompanied by a roasted chicken which Mrs Vessel expertly sliced-up with mesmerising precision and speed. She would first amputate the bird's legs, wings and thighs. Next she detached its breast from its back with a sharp cracking of the connecting bones and cartilage. Finally, she would clean the carcass by slicing off the breast meat, fanning out sheet-white, succulent slivers on the serving platter. Mrs Vessel cut-up the bird with professional carving knives. She took special care of these knives and never allowed anyone to touch them or even clean them, though she was loathe to care for, or clean, anything else in the house. Each week after the swift carving she would slow down and with

flourish balance the pieces of juicy flesh on her samurai sword; fastidiously serving each member of the family in the same order. Starting with Mr Vessel and ending with herself.

As she slashed her glinting knives back and forth, Mrs Vessel spoke about an upcoming party that the polo club was to host in Montego Bay. Montego Bay was considered the country's second city. It overflowed with jamaica Whites and duty-free coolies, all of whom were fanatics of the regal sport. She was trying to get Mr Vessel to agree to pay for a top-of-the-range suite at the Half-Moon hotel. That way she could enjoy telling people at the soiree where she was staying almost as much as she enjoyed the party itself. Mr Vessel had not said no, but he hadn't said yes either. Her carefree-as-it-happens-tone was becoming a high pitched whine as she attempted to cajole him into agreement.

Mr Vessel was distracted but the whining broke through his well-maintained-wall-of-indifference-to-his-wife's-nagging. He was enjoying his broth with the fluffy yams and mounds of beef and dumplings so much, that he finally gave in and exploded "lawks woman let my ears eat grass! Juss book di dyam hotel room and done nuh? Call the office and tell my Merna the details." Mrs Vessel, pleased, quickly got up leaving her own serving of soup. She practically ran to the living room phone to make the call to Mr Vessel's secretary before her husband changed his mind. As soon as Mrs Vessel was gone the helper returned with a platter of sliced and buttered hardough bread and a pitcher of sweet cherry juice made from the pulp of cherries that Mr Vessel himself had plucked in that very yard. The girl set everything down and exited again.

Mr Vessel followed the helper out the room with his eyes alone. The orbs, watery and reddened from his pre-lunch whiskey, rolled all over her ripe-juicy-Bombay-mango-breasts. Like his father before him, and his sons after him, Mr Vessel saw it as his right to bed the helper. He bullied and threatened or bribed them into secrecy. It was his right as a fine, upstanding man and servant of the people. In fact, it was tradition and culture, he would have



said to himself if he had bothered to think about it. He could see that this new one was going to be a bit of a challenge though. A game. He could tell because of the way she skittishly avoided him and seemed disdainful. He chuckled at the thought and his laughter turned into a hacking cough. He spat phlegm into his wife's potted fern, casually used his soup spoon to turn the soil over the froth and then dipped the spoon in his wife's water goblet before returning it to his bowl. He would teach this thing to be grateful for his attentions. This-  
 uppity-one-with-her-juicy-mangos. Mathieu watched his dad watch the helper and started to firm up the idea in his head of how he would get that black-boyish-tall-one-back-to-his-room. His mother had now gifted him a time when it would happen. Things were falling into place.

#

The next Saturday Mathieu got up early and had breakfast with his family and waved them off as they left. Mrs Vessel stopped nattering long enough to notice that he was very spirited in his goodbyes and told him "Bwoy don't bodda wid no merryfication and partying into this domicicle yu hear!" She really said this as a knee jerk reaction to her own suspicions about his giddiness at their leaving him alone, and not because she really thought he had enough friends to have an actual party. If it was her other son Dillon then her worried threats would be necessary. He was such a 'ladies' man' was her Dillon. So popular, just like his father, that having a party would be par for the course. Boys will be boys and all that. Quiet Mathieu was unlikely to host a party, but unsupervised he could still do damage to her precious house. She eyed him suspiciously. Then her excitement at the prospect of socialising with the Montego White royalty and attempting to blend in with the pedigreed coolies was too tantalising for her to remain distracted. She quickly forgot about her eldest son and turned her attentions to hurrying Mr Vessel and Dillon to get on the road.

#

Mathieu watched the government vehicle speed down the road and chewed on the bitterness of the last of his mother's perfume, always so heavy in the air that it was more of a taste than a scent. He then let his gaze drift off over to the open land to see if his prey was hanging around there yet. No one was there. He guessed it was still early. He went inside and wondered around the house grinning to himself, his anticipation, fantasy, and pants front growing. He went to sit in the tv room and cursed that although the local national broadcaster was signing on earlier than it used to, there were only stupid children's shows on at this hour. He watched the children's game show host "Miss Lou" holler and laugh and stomp the children in front of her into a frenzy of folk songs and happiness that he could not relate to. He had never played such old neggah games and when he had been exposed to nursery rhymes at pre-school they bore no relationship to these songs. Games that memorialised the simplicity of farming life, or the frivolity of selling market produce, or labourers breaking rocks to mend a road.

He looked at the children's happy faces and the sweaty merry face of their host and thought how stupid, black and ugly they all were. Why didn't she teach them through the refinement of London Bridge burning down, or a bough breaking and letting a cradle fall? What about Georgie Porgy kissing the girls and making them cry? That was more like it. Or how about Peter the pumpkin eater holding his wife hostage in a pumpkin, or Jack falling down and breaking his crown? These were civilised nursery rhymes that children should learn from, not this coarse patwah nonsense. He drifted back to his private school nursery days and started humming the genteel:

"Alouette, gentille alouette,

Alouette, je te plumerai.

Je te plumerai la tête. Je te plumerai la tête.

Et la tête! Et la tête!

Alouette! Alouette!

A-a-a-ah."

He zoned out from the merriment on the tv thinking about how when he finally became a Member of Parliament, as was his destiny, he would halt the corrosive spread of this patwah. Bloody uneducated, unenlightened, coarse, nonsense. Children needed a proper education in English that taught values, etiquette and upper-class behaviour. They needed to keep up with the Motherland instead of falling further and further behind as they had done since Independence. He was going to save all these poor stupid black children from the singing and dancing culture that the likes of Miss Lou was rotting their heads with. His own impoverished grades didn't cross his mind while he developed his dream and exalted himself to the position of the Minister of Education.

#

He got up to go and peek out at the open land. Lady Luck was smiling down on him because there, standing alone, was the tall-black-skinny-one. She was probably waiting for the rest of her peasant friends and that Taylor Graham. He realised he didn't have much time and walked out across the lawn toward her. He crushed the chi-chis underfoot with extra zeal. He went around the Graham yard brushing through the familiar red ginger lilies to approach her from behind.

#

As usual, Menky had finished her home duties earlier than everyone else. She only had to do household chores for three people. Her mom, her grannie and herself. She always started early so she could help her mum, a market seller, carry baskets to the main road at the first light. This pre-dawn start ensured that her mom would catch the first bus downtown and

get a good spot at the market entrance. Menky was half reclining, half leaning across what was left of the foundation stumps of the colonial house that had once stood proudly in the open land. Her eyes were closed. She enjoyed the sun on her skin. Her grannie would be horrified that she was doing this. Blackening an already too black skin was blasphemy! Nothing good could come of this pastime. Lost in her reverie, she didn't hear him. It was only because he was right over her and blocking the sun's warmth that she eventually sensed him.

She opened her eyes and involuntarily shivered as though the sunlight had been completely removed and not merely shaded. She jumped up. Mathieu laughed. "Is why yu so frighten? Is only me." Menky looked up at him willing the sunspots blinding her eyes to disappear quickly so that she could fully assess him. Years of habit overcame this sensible instinct and she looked down instead. "You don't have any manners? You don't tell people good mawnin when you see them?" Mathieu continued, smiling while using his authoritative tone intended not to charm, but to dominate. "Mawnin" Menky murmured robotically. "Listen dahlin, I wonder if you can help me out at di house quickly? I need some clothes pressed. Me rushing out to an important meeting and di dyam girl never did what me tell her fi do before she leff on her day off." He sped up his words to give the air of one who really couldn't tarry and had no other interest except to get his clothes ironed and be on his way. "Once you have finished you may have the lunch that they left for me. I won't have time to eat that big chicken and it's too much for me any way. In fact you can carry the whole thing home. I will have to leave and lock up." Mathieus words rattled along with speed and authority, motoring from the companionable patwah to commanding uptown english. Any hesitation fires burning in Menky's gut were doused by the thought of this being a quick transaction. Fantasies of her carrying home a whole chicken to share with grannie and her mother overwhelmed her. They only ever brought home chicken foot and back to cook. This would be a coup!

She was about to open her mouth and agree but Mathieu was already halfway back across the lawn, striding along confident that she would be following him, which she paused, and then did. He disappeared into his house and by the time she got there and stopped at the door he was nowhere to be seen. He shouted from deep inside "COME. COME. Close the door behind you and look in the back room. You will see the clothes and the iron. I am jumping into the shower quickly." Menky, completely awed at being allowed in through the front door and going into one of their private rooms, lost any fear she ought to have had. She hustled through the living room, spinning her head around taking everything in as she followed the direction the voice had come from. Eventually she saw an ironing board in the last room.

#

There on the bed was a shirt so soft and sweet smelling that she felt timid about sullyng it with her freshly bathed sooty hands, or worse, making a mistake and burning it. She bent and plugged in the iron and tested it so many times that anyone would be forgiven for thinking that she had an obsessive compulsive disorder. She quickly touched the point of the iron to the palm of her hand one last time and satisfied that the temperature was just right, she channelled her whole self into ironing that shirt. She felt a heady mixture of luck and pride that she was in this house and should be chosen for this task. She was smiling while she ironed, fantasising that if the young master was happy with her work he might one day recommend that she be allowed to work as the family helper. So focused was she, that for the second time that day she didn't notice him coming until he was right beside her. "It look like you make for dis job man. What a way you press di shirt good!" Back to the soothing patwah. Menky, who never received praise, felt so pleased that she hardly cared that he was only in a towel. She kept on pressing as though the shirt was already not completely wrinkle free. "Alright that shirt never looked so good" came the uptown command "so finish now and

come with me to my parents room. I think there are a few more things there that maybe you can help me with. QUICK."

#

Menky now felt like she would burst with gratitude and beamed under his praise. She thought about how she was going to get to tell the gang about Mr and Mrs Vessel's bedroom. She was doing her best to concentrate on remembering each detail of all that she saw. Surely this would make her the most popular person in the gang for the day. No one had really been able to give details of the house. Taylor was the only one who could go in and out of the Vessel house freely and she never seemed to want to. The only other person who had been inside was little Sheryl on their Independence Day weekend raid.

That dyam-foo-foo-suck-finga-girl. Instead of she comin back from the secret raid with valuables and details of di house, conducted when the Vessels were away celebrating the national holiday, she come back wid dat schtupid Kings High School for Boys tie and the pin dat she started wearing pinned in her pocket all di time. For a millisecond Menky thought about how strange Sheryl's habit was, but put it out of her mind, explaining it away by deciding that the thumb sucking pickney was just weird. She did not process the fact that it was odd that Sheryl had found that tie and pin in a house where no one attended The Kings High School for Boys.

#

Menky entered the boudoir and stood as frozen as the collection of Lalique glass statues on the dresser in front of her. It was heaven! She swallowed the traces of Mrs Vessels Charlie perfume lingering sweetly in the air. All around Menky was a froth of shades of white and peach. From the carpet, to the curtains, to the chenille bed spread. The chaise lounge. Everything frothy and creamy. White and peachy. Pouffy and flouncy. Pouring over

and tucked up. Laced and billowing. That was the bedroom of Mrs Vessel and her beleaguered husband.

Mathieu strode across the expansive room to a dresser draw and opened it pulling out a row of scarves ranging in rainbow colours from light pink to deep purple. They followed each other out of the drawer like scarves would out of the vest pocket of a magician performing a trick. The colourful flourish mesmerised Menky and she wondered if this was what he wanted her to press. Then she worried about how on earth she would keep the iron cool enough to not make any holes in these tissues?

Once again, and for the final time that day, she made the mistake of not paying attention. She did not ask herself the correct question. Mathieu, was by now, sitting on the huge four poster bed and he patted the space beside him and indicated that she must come and sit. "Mek mi show you wah mi want done" he purred. She hesitated. She imagined her freshly bathed black skin sullyng the pale hues. "COME, COME now" he said, reverting to his officious, hurried tone. "I don't have too much time." Menky came and sat beside him so gingerly that her black batty was more levitating over the mattress than actually pressing on it.

With one swooping action he sprung on top of her wrapping all the scarves around her as he pounced. Menky was so bedazzled by where she was and still worried that her blackness would soil the bed, that her brain had become as frothy as the room. It was only when his sickening-naked-future-parliamentarian-member was poking at her crotch, and when he started to tie the scarves around her arms, that her mind came back to her body. What happened next was so frightening to Mathieu that he also experienced what was to be a last for him. This was the last time that he ever underestimated any of his victims. It was to be what he considered his 'always be prepared moment'.

All the years of Menky's back-breaking work paid off and she harnessed the strength of ten men. "POOF". Her super power was born. Her herculean strength met with the years of Mathieu's cosseted lifestyle and rendered him incapable of stopping Menky from heaving him up and off of her. She shoved him up and through the air. He arched away, flying across the room, 'hoisted by his own petard'. He came crashing down against the white bedroom wall. Tangled in the scarves fluttering around her, she fled through the house, flying out into the yard like a beautiful-pinky-purple-peachy-chiffony -butterfly emerging from a cocoon.

#

There was never any mention or recounting of this incident, either by Menky or by Mathieu. It was as though it had never happened. In fact, the only record or evidence that it had taken place was in the firing of the unbeknownst-to-her-how-lucky-she-was-to-escape-a-similarly-plotted-fate-by-MrVessel-juicy-Bombay-mango-breasted helper, who Mrs Vessel swore up and down the streets of Kingston had wickedly stolen all her best silk scarves.



### **No Relation!**

Mr Graham's life was centred around God, family, and work. Usually in that order. However, his time was portioned first to work, then family, and finally, to God on a Sunday. He had long punishing days but coming home to his lovely wife and Children made it all worthwhile. The other sub-category in his life, tucked in between all the three headliners, was exercise. He seemed to remain ageless mostly because he remained the same size, and retained the same posture all of his long, healthy life. On most mornings he joined a group of residents for a brisk walk around the manor grounds, but on a Saturday, like many middle and upper class jamaicans, he walked around the Mona dam. This was a body of water, about three miles in circumference, located beside the flat lands of the University of the West Indies. It was circled by hills and was located in the dip of a valley where there was a lush nestling of homes mostly occupied by university professors and senior university administrators. It was actually very much like Girard Manor, except that it was more sprawling and modest.

There was an informal shift system for walking at the dam. The serious athletes and 'big trousers' businessmen and politicians turned up before sunrise for a jog around the dam in privacy. These high society powerful men would go round and around the dam discussing matters of national importance, while the athletes finished their run almost as soon they got there. The athletes sped around the upper brim of the dam which was raised and then moved to a flat lower field leaving the top of the dam to the 'topanaris' (VIP) reds and brownings who continued trickling in after peak hour traffic. They would use the field to go through calisthenics and stretches. Like peacocks, they danced around strutting their magnificence, attracting onlookers of mostly the female persuasion. Meanwhile, back on the top of the mound, the 'big trousers' men took a longer time to circumambulate depending on - their

pairings, the complexity of their discussions, or the monetary value of the deals they were brokering.

Mr Graham would jog alone at a slow, but still impressive, pace giving the requisite friendly nod to all of them. Quite frequently he would think about how poor black men were sleeping fretfully or hiding in the stifling heat of garrison tin shacks after a long night of blood-letting on behalf of these circulating men; the politicians from opposing parties enjoying camaraderie, chatting, and back slapping in the cool morning air. The banality of this injustice along with the ludicrous irony of all of them going around and around in circles never escaped Mr Graham. He spent his jog thinking about such things and other convoluted aspects of jamaica life. He would start his own circling by whispering his morning prayers, limping along warming up his body. His pace would quicken, he would organise his day and to-do list and thereafter, in whatever time he had left, he would trot and wind his thoughts around a concentric circle of his own philosophical musings. Today for instance, he spotted ‘the Messiah’ Prime Minister and his finance minister laughing it up and Mr Graham thought about how let down he felt by these dashiki wearers. When would he get over the betrayal of the revolution?

For Mr Graham, all values were inextricably linked to a man’s actions. How can a man who has had three wives, none of whom he had been faithful to, be trusted to be faithful to a mere country? He spotted another politician and thought and how can a man who will not recognise his outside child struck by autism, be considered a man who should be put in charge of the country’s health care? Then before he knew it his burgundy gabardine sweat suit was wet with perspiration and his circling was complete. The sun was waking up and greeting the dam waters with its daily glinting kiss. A few more friendly nods and Graham descended down the path to the flats where the athletes were still lifting their bony knees, gyrating their hips, and coolly pretending they weren’t adding extra thrusts each time they

saw a pretty young ting come down the path. He reached his car and standing there leaning into the car bonnet to stretch his hamstrings was Professor Urtica.

#

"Graham my good chap, how on earth are you?" said the Prof in his fine Oxford elocuted accent. The Prof grinned theatrically, raised his eyebrows, pointing his nose in the air and twitched it like a hummingbird before the throat of a juicy hibiscus. He always had the poise of someone who was hearing Johann Sebastian Bach's Air on a G String. He stretched his dancer's arms out along the hood, arched his back, and stretched some other body parts that Mr Graham was not quite sure of because he looked away uncomfortably. He mercifully missed seeing the Prof's dangerously clinging shorts part ways with his tight shirt that rose up and crawled along his back with his graceful arch. The Prof straightened and then with a final dramatic flourish threw his muscular arms up, up, up with his beautifully manicured fingers thrown right back, back, back before they swung down, down, down in equal and opposite force to his feet.

"King my man how are things?" Mr Graham, not usually one to be familiar, greeted the Prof by his first name. This was because the man's surname made his tongue do strange things he did not intend it to do. Mr Graham suffered the terminal jamaican heterosexual male disease of discomfort that overtook him when he encountered Professor R. King Urtica. Graham was nothing if not well mannered, and would always return congeniality shown to him.

"Listen I am so glad I caught you. Why don't you drive behind me up the road to my offices at the University? I am hosting an informal breakfast for the dam joggers and anyone else who cares to join. I thought it would make a festive start to the weekend as well as provide an opportunity for us all to touch base on what we can do to support the party for the upcoming elections. Everyone is going to be there good fellow, and I can't take no for an

answer. Do come along for even half an hour?" Mr Graham processed the invitation at lightning speed trying to figure a way he could escape from it. Although no one could call him a card-carrying member of the JNP, he knew it was important for him to go and be seen to be strategically aligned with the people's party. This was black-man-time-now, and him being a visible 'big trousers' black man meant that he had to show support, albeit while carefully hugging the fringes of such events.

#

Although Mr Graham had more than his fair share of qualifications and accomplishments he always felt somewhat intimidated by Urtica who was a real Renaissance man. He was not only the highly educated University Chancellor, he was the principal dancer for the National Dance Company. He wrote prolifically. He researched prodigiously, and his contribution to the new and independent Jamaican culture was something for all to admire and emulate. Mr Graham constantly found himself trying to sound articulate and worthy of the attention Urtica shone on him. This meant that sometimes his own accent took weird twists and turns, or on some days like today, for no rational reason, Graham sounded more high pitched and enthusiastic than he felt, or was reflective of his very grounded country man nature. Perhaps it was all the stretching that was still folding and unfolding in front of him, or perhaps it was just that he didn't have his wife beside him to steady him. Whatever the reason, he in falsetto, proclaimed such a morning rendezvous to be a gay idea. He immediately then used at least three other synonyms – "jolly, cheery, and zippy" to attempt to smooth over his Freudian slip, and mistakenly slid into acceptance of the invitation he was actually trying to compliment his way out of.

He drove the five minutes from the dam through the university entrance, along the landmark water aqueducts dating back from fairer times, drove around the ring road, and pulled into the asphalt parking lot, all the while chiding himself for his goofy behaviour and

alternately telling himself it wasn't as bad as it seemed. His head was now hot with embarrassment. The parking lot was full of luxury government vehicles, as well as sturdy middle-class ladas - the Russian vehicles common to academics, whose laborious steering wheel was a dream come true to the island's newly popular field of chiropractic medicine.

Mr Graham strode in with long forthright steps, determined to regain his lost composure. He strode into a 'merry', 'frolicsome', 'blithe' (words that belatedly and jeeringly flooded his head to replace the word gay) gathering. The breakfast soiree was mostly filled with middle-aged black men and women, and young earnest university Students. The men of all ages wore white Kariba shirts appropriate for the working day. The women, mostly university lecturers, were dressed more demurely. Plain, almost drab really, cotton A-line skirts and polyester blouses. Many of these women Graham knew from church. Had he not known them for years, he could have been forgiven for mistakenly passing by them unknown. The reason being that here their dark skins were youthful, glistening and radiant; while at church they were powdered white like unrecognisable mummified old ladies.

At church, where he was used to seeing these ladies, sometimes Bishop Kent felt the need to add an extra fifteen minutes to his sermon. Mr Graham would then find small things to zone in on to pass the extra time like a zen master. One of those things was to stare at the unfailing presence of white powder lightly sprinkled on the collar of Mrs Cloister who religiously sat in front of him. It was bizarre that an otherwise impeccably dressed woman could not see the perfectly ringed snow scattering on her chest. He wondered if she had some sort of visual blind spot. This ophthalmic failing, to his mind, would explain why she just couldn't see how freakish it was that her carefully white powdered face did not match the stark black neck on which it sat. That she couldn't see that there was a line of demarcation as pronounced as a hangman's noose cutting that neck from her head was just mad. Coming to think of it, Mrs Cloister was not the only black woman with this absurd blind spot. Many

middle-aged women had the white face/black neck syndrome. It was as if his Eulalie had picked up Mrs Cloister and dipped her headfirst in the vat of bleach water she soaked his white suit shirts in each day. As though she had just dipped Cloister to her neck only, leaving the perfect black neckline. He smiled briefly, thinking of the fortune Eulalie could make if she marketed bleach as a far more efficient way to produce these ghosts than powder. Then she could advise Mrs Cloister on how to submerge her whole body and avoid the weird neck and soiled collars. Perhaps it would catch on for younger women too! Bleaching skin. Ha! now that was an absurdity! Mr Graham frowned moving his thoughts to the other irritation it would solve. That of the constant snapping of the small powder cases these women opened and shut loudly and repeatedly to fix what the tropical heat threatened to wilt just as it did his wife's English garden.

Graham was standing stock still in Urtica's party trying to assess which group of people he would approach to socialise with first. Anyone looking up at the tall man with the serious face would think the gravitas he exuded was a result of deep and profound rumination. Maybe they thought that he was philosophising about the recurring theme of these gatherings - 'How to resolve the scourge of racism and classism left over from colonialism'. The party onlookers would never guess that Graham was thinking about his church sisters. That he was pondering how weird it was that in an otherwise silent church, no one, not even the militant Verger, noticed the interruptions to the solemnity of the service caused by the snapping cases. Or for that matter, that no one advised Mrs Cloister of her embarrassingly soiled church clothes.

By now, all of the socialist party goers were sipping mimosas made with the finest champagne. The revolutionary students were especially quick to use copious amounts of this champagne to heavily dilute the orange juice. The juice that had been freshly squeezed from

citrus grown in the rich jamaican soil, by black farmers, stooped from generations of hard work.

#

One of the first people Winston Graham saw at the university breakfast was Mr Levi Graham. A Millionaire philanthropist of the Catholic Church, someone whom Mr Graham disliked intensely and avoided whenever he could, which unfortunately, like now, was not often enough. Mr Levi Graham was chatting to a group of what looked like young foreigners using his usual obnoxious tone. They were peace Corp workers here to give service to one of Mr Levi Graham's many charities such as his Clarendon orphanage. "Winston my man" Mr. Levi Graham roared in the jamaica White drawl that made him sound like he had hot buttered St. Vincent yam juggling around on his tongue to avoid the burning steam. "Do lend us some of your time. Let me introduce you to a most fascinating group of young public servants. Folks, this is Mr Winston Graham. NO RELATION! NO RELATION!" This last bit was boomed and repeated for emphasis so that no one could possibly make the mistake of not hearing, or of misunderstanding that he and Winston Graham were NOT RELATED. It was a most unnecessary clarification that Levi mentioned at every meeting of the two. As though anyone looking from the short fat white man of English stock to the tall lean black man of the black soil could possibly make such a mistake. Far removed from the intention of the speaker, this refrain ended up serving as a strong tie between the two men for their entire lives.

#

The mouth-watering spread was all Jamaican breakfast foods. It included salt fish and ackee that scented the air with the history of slaves who first fashioned the dish from the poorest quality of dried salted Nova Scotia cod that was flung at them; and which they skilfully transformed into the proud national dish. There was buttery hominy porridge, the

whitish mellow-yellow colour of most of the island's middle-class. The redolence of Blue Mountain coffee also filled the room; its world class bitterness was sweetened by the brown sugar of cane ripened by the same fierce sun that ripened the equally bitter and pungent sweat of the black cane cutters' armpits. The headiness and familiarity of all the smells comforted Winston Graham and made him happy that he came. He blended in easily with all the faces that he knew, and those he knew of. He scanned the room nodding and grinning warmly intending to scarf down food and still make a quick exit.

He gathered that the party comrades were at the government facilities to start the process of strategising around fund raising and ground ops for the election. When freeing black man, the party-was-the-government-was the people! Winston had to hand it to Urtica, whose tenure as chancellor established the University as a site for high quality, nationalistic research, and as a haven for 'is-black-man-time-now' politicians. This culture of seminal, post-independent scholarship would remain entrenched long after the opposition PLP came into power and spitefully ghettoised the university.

#

This august group were now spiritedly debating "the value of local education in throwing off the shackles of colonialism in the development of a socialist independent jamaica". The loudest voices guiding this intellectual revolution were Motherland educated barristers, who on pain of death, would never have their names inscribed anywhere without the letters 'QC', for Queen's Council, behind them; leaving no space for the letters from their first degree qualification at The University of the West Indies on any government document. Other contributing voices delivered fiery rhetoric in Eton accents. Accents that were not used to address the masses in town squares adorned by party colours as bright as the colourful patois that instead blazed through the loudspeaker boxes.



Graham spied the Messiah's arrival and knowing first-hand that none of his informal speeches were less than thirty minutes long, he decided to forgo the black, Blue Mountain coffee he saw being poured into white, porcelain, Royal Blue Dalton cups. The crowds swallowed up the Messiah and Mr Graham slipped out easily while thinking about the meeting he was about to have at the state penitentiary.

#

Kind and loving man that he was, Mr Graham had noted his wife's growing despair at Anderson's fate. He secretly thought her silly to have such deep feelings for this mad man, but it made him sad to see his wife so distraught and he hoped that it would pass. When it did not, he grew impatient and decided to seek closure for her. Even after living in Jamaica for so long, his Irish wife had not come to accept that the fate of a poor black man was carved into the limestone of this island. The arbitrary fate they suffered was, more or less, dependent on how the soft indigenous stone was eroded by natural elements. But carved in stone it was.

Mrs Graham continued to have a white lady's sensibility of what justice meant. She assumed that 'innocent until proven guilty' was the law as well as the right of all men. He needed to gently disabuse her of this silly notion. Her despair at Anderson's detention without charge was getting on his nerves and he wanted her to return to the cheerful disposition that kept his world organised, calm, and familiar while she efficiently arranged the household to spin around him.

Last night when he got home after a particularly troublesome Labour tribunal to find that there was no supper waiting for him, to find his wife was lying in bed looking glumly out the window at her deteriorating garden, he had had enough. He arranged for his wife to visit Anderson to gain the closure she needed, and the return to normalcy of the household that he needed.

#

Maybe it was thoughts about his wife's unhappiness at the plight of a poor black man, maybe it was the loftiness of the accents that were trailing behind him as he snuck out of the power breakfast, or maybe it was his own need to shake off his earlier verbal gaff and the feeling of insecurity of his own deficient education. Whatever it was, his mind ran to Anderson's habit of quoting Shakespeare to his wife and for a moment he thought of the uselessness of such education to a poor black man. Then he heard the Messiah's booming voice in that Eton tone and momentarily felt confused. Unsure of his theory about the inherited advantages of the educational system that was about to be overthrown by the QC's behind him. He was a practical man and his success grew out of that practicality. For instance, right now his characteristically pedestrian style of thinking made him switch from lofty education debates, to strategising about how he could follow this hasty retreat with another one from the penitentiary visit that he was about to guide his wife through. In and out and all would be repaired he thought to himself.

The End

**Chapter 8: Analytical Insights and Provocations,  
Contributions, Limitations, Reflexivity, and Recommendations for Future  
Studies**

**8.1. Findings and Contributions**

Assuming a critical and reflexive stance in this concluding chapter, I intend to focus on two matters. First, to highlight the major analytical insights and provocations that the study may offer for rethinking and reimagining ‘race’ and identity as framed by decolonising psychological thought. Second, to summarise the merits of assuming literature as a terrain of decolonial psychological work. I outline Key Insights, Contributions, Limitations and Recommendations for future studies.

The aim of this thesis was to examine how using a decolonial attitude in the reading and writing of Anglophone Caribbean Literature could reveal fresh insights, new understandings, and knowledge that can bolster liberatory practice and resistance in psychology. The effects of various decolonial practices such as: Indigenous Knowledge and Creolisation; Critical Relationality; Borderlands; Faithful Witnessing; Auto/Biography; Black Feminist Methodology; Positionality; Intersectionality; Border Crossing; and Linguistic and Conceptual Subversions were analysed in fictional Jamaican writing. It was found that these practices creatively incorporated reverberating resistance into Jamaican writing; exposed knowledge and knowledge-making that de-linked from and dislodged Western epistemic hegemony; depicted marginalised characters that experienced profoundly repositioned power; and portrayed the intergenerational humanisation of those who were formerly rendered (hyper)invisible from the times of slavery. The hoped-for effect on the reader was to, at the very least, open their eyes to the possibilities of decolonial thinking and psychology within their own lives and societies.

The introductory chapters focused on gaps and silences in Caribbean literature and identified that postcolonial literature remained masculinised; emphasised the nation state as a means of exerting political sovereignty; essentialised notions of race, gender, and sexuality; and promoted Westernised hegemonic and heteronormative values. In short, Caribbean literature of the past ignored complexity and was sometimes not multifaceted enough to capture the decolonial turn in all its dynamism. These findings compelled this study to examine how a decolonial psycho-literary analysis could counter the limiting, homogenising effects of postcolonialism on Caribbean literature, and could thus potentially inform and contribute to liberatory psychology. Given the range of maverick female characters, fluid sexualities, and reconfigured familial relationships in the chosen Jamaican novels, it was discernible that the limiting effects of postcolonialism has been significantly decreased in contemporary literature. An increasingly creative and wide-ranging view of psychologies was observed in decolonial literature. Based on the decolonial turn evident in contemporary Caribbean literature, modernised tropes, strategies, psychologies, disobedient epistemologies, and knowledges that effectively counter the ever-evolving harms of coloniality were identified. A composite of these fresh insights may provide inventive decolonial moves and concepts for a liberatory psychology archive.

By using textual analysis and pivoting between several Jamaican novels it was determined that Jamaican authors are giving deep consideration to a variety of Indigenous philosophies and knowledges in their writing. One finding and contribution of this thesis is that exposure to Indigenous epistemology allows readers, writers, and researchers alike, to reach outside of the academy for innovative resources and psychologies with which to resist and heal coloniality. In accordance with the aims of this study, examples of Indigenous strategies of resistance and healing were presented so as to add to the arsenal of decolonial psychology resources.

These examples were evident in several decolonial novels, in particular *Augustown* (2017). *Augustown* offers a trenchant understanding and perspective of the Resistant Being Ras Tafari, well beyond the stereotypical iconography globally associated with reggae music and Rastafarianism. Characters such as Gilzene, Ma Taffy, Maxi, and Bongo Moody inspired by Creolity, including Creolised spirituality, ended up smadditized as they emerged from invisibility. By virtue of decolonial novels, such as *Augustown*, enlarging the knowledge base and providing opportunities for penetrating self-reflection, I believe that a reader's ability to look at the world in new and expanded ways can be bolstered.

I found that contemporary novels tend to offer Jamaican philosophy, psychology, and indeed 'Jamaicanness'. as an empirically disobedient alternative to the Western knowledge systems which are falsely presented as universal truth. As a result, repeated instances of inspirational empowerment that readers, writers, and academics can easily relate to, are becoming the norm in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Caribbean writing. It was established that Westernised hegemony is increasingly being aggressively challenged, and in some instances supplanted, by alternative decolonial epistemology, psychology, and thinking.

This psycho-literary reading of Jamaican Literature brought to life, Maldonado-Torres's (2018) assertion that pluriversalism results in providing an array of truths into which many worlds and peoples can fit. The novels promoted the idea that marginalised people are not 'others' on the fringe of someone else's world but are active role players at the centre of their own. These very affirming findings show how a decolonial attitude, in the reading and writing of literature, can potentially provide sanctuary - The Caribbean Literary Seas - which are a Borderland space of confrontation, questioning, reflexivity, communion and renewal for decolonial activists.

Authors endowing characters and events with the 'Ni' Maroon spirit of resistance (often, but not always, feminist) duplicated the decoloniality effects of Rastafari philosophy.

In the course of this investigation I found that by providing information on localised/Creolised gnosis, history, and ontology, Jamaican writing becomes an act of social activism. Another finding is that a decolonial reading and writing of novels provide an entry point into the justification and understanding of the decolonisation of faith - an area that seems to be understated and may be undervalued in decolonial scholarship. The psycho-literary analysis showed that by focusing on other-than-westernised heritage and culture, decolonial writers dignified local knowledge and particularity, visibilised subalterns, and flipped the power dynamic in favour of the knowledge of the marginalised.

The examined writing used the easily understood concept of The Colonial Voiceover (term coined by this thesis) to help dissect the perniciousness of the coloniality of being, knowledge, and power usually enmeshed with the political economy. The Voiceover conceptualisation can potentially contribute to decolonial psycho-literary critique and methodology if it encourages the identification and labelling of localised elements that drown out humanity in any region burdened by coloniality. I went into great detail to show how representations of education and the Civilising Christian mission are instruments of coloniality that enforce arbitrary injustice and violence on powerless, impoverished Black people. The Jamaicanised psychological counters to these evils are thoroughly documented throughout this study. These documented psychological disruptions of coloniality can be counted as a contribution of this investigation's results because they provide writers with a plethora of examples and methods of introducing decoloniality and activism into their work; and these identified conceptualisations can be studied further by liberatory/decolonial psychologists.

Another finding is that hackneyed postcolonial tropes (such as nationhood or mother-daughter relationships), have been reworked by Jamaican writers who provide readers, and consequently psychologists, fresh insights and examples of contemporary thought, identity,

life, and techniques for surviving coloniality. Contemporary Jamaican writers' attempts to position literature as an agent of socio-economic and political engagement, have in so doing, enhanced the multi-disciplinary force of decolonial change. The insurgency that characterise their stories allow Jamaican authors to meet the demands of the many calls (stated in **Chapter 2**) to decolonise postcolonial literature. I found that a decolonial reading of Caribbean Literature freed readers and writers from the restrictiveness of postcolonialism, thereby creating a multitude of opportunities to generate localised psychological perspectives and solutions to the ongoing perniciousness of coloniality.

A contribution of decolonial Caribbean Literature comes through the examples of the insurgency and Indigenous agency of The Caribbean Black Feminist Subaltern (a concept and term coined by this thesis) characters who deepen understandings and admiration of contemporary Caribbean feminism. By observing the Jamaican feminists engage their own coloniality, one may be inspired to do the same, or in some cases one can see that they have already been doing the same. Their victories over coloniality, under severely oppressive circumstances, provide encouragement for others in similar situations to develop new psychological spaces of re-imagination. This connects activism with scholarship and opens up possibilities of representation of the Voice, wisdoms, and concerns of those outside of the academy.

Sadly, in focusing on the ways that Caribbean feminism has been decolonised in literature, I was led to highlight the literary phenomenon of Antirromance Bildungsroman that oftentimes crossed over into portraying the prevalence of child sex abuse. This journey made me only too painfully aware that the coloniality of developmental psychology and sexuality (especially as it pertains to the Black girl child) is in dire need of further intensive research and should really be an area of decolonial expertise on its own. A common theme in Caribbean literature is that poor Black children, especially girl children, are not allowed the

‘innocence’ of exploring or enjoying sexual development in the ways that their White counterparts are. I attempted to portray the coloniality of childhood development and sexuality in my creative writing sample (Chapter 7).

A portion of this study looked at understudied aspects of coloniality in contemporary migration. Postcolonial literature explored distinct phases of migration such as alienation and displacement that then evolved to second and third generation diasporic themes of belonging and acceptance in coloniser nations. A fourth heuristic phase of diaspora was proposed and explored within this study. I suggest that this fourth phase is a modern day understanding of migration in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Caribbean writing that includes the empowering decolonial reclamation of the Maddaland that de-emphasises her failings while depicting all her richness and succour. This positive view of a former colony opens up a radically distinct perspective that displaces the supremacy of Step/Motherland and Western rationality as the de facto frame of reference in psycho-literary academics as well as quotidian thought.

Finally, this study explored The Jamaican Voice as a psychological conceptualisation of the Jamaican decolonised essence or ‘being’. The Jamaican Voice was critically problematised using Fanon’s theories of auto-oppression and Manichean psychology. The Creolity of Patwah as an empowering element of The Jamaican Voice was also fleshed out and the finding was that, in all its complexity, The Jamaican Voice is a vital and potent counter to the coloniality of being. This is especially true when it drowns out The Colonial Voiceover that fills Black characters with the conscious and unconscious colourism and racism that cause self-hatred and hatred of blackness (Ra’schism’). A significant finding of this study is that authors are able to use The Jamaican Voice to enrapture readers in the way that bell hooks advises should be done - so that an audience can connect to calls for activism. Activism which in this instance is intended to expand a liberatory psychological imaginary. Examples of this are most obvious in dramatic scenes of Indigenous resistance in *Augustown*



(2017); the subaltern Jamaican feminism of maverick characters in *Here Comes the Sun* (2018) and most of the novels; the establishment of the importance of positionality and particularity of knowledge and being in *How to love a Jamaican* (2018); the insurgency of Creolisation in all the texts; and the portrayal of connections between subverting coloniality (capitalism) and the empowerment of the marginalised in all the texts. Decolonial literary moves were explored in conjunction with liberatory psychological constructs. This allowed for the communication of the usefulness of the Deployment of Consciousness, Interdisciplinary, Critically Relational, and Intersectional methodology by blending literary critiques of Caribbean writing with decolonial psychology which was coined as psycho-literary analysis.

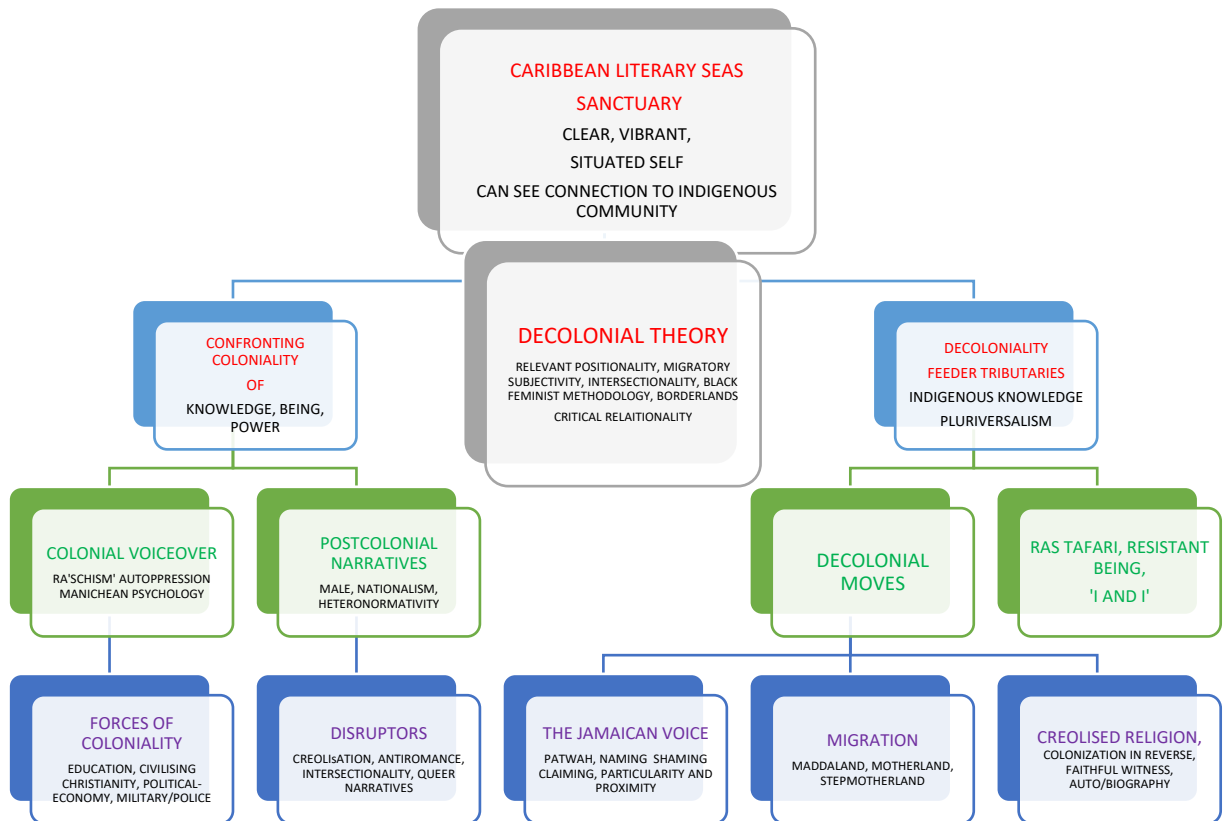
The traditional novel form in literature has always been precisely about placing the intimate, private experiences of people, who might otherwise seem unremarkable, at the centre of the world, thereby revealing how subjective psychological experience feeds off from and into social structures. In this regard, ironically, the Western novel form has always had something subversive about it, and so, decolonial works such as *Augustown* and *Here Comes the Sun* have power not despite being novels but in part because of being novels; whereas earlier postcolonial novels now seem somewhat disappointing not because they are novels, but despite their being novels. This realisation is a quintessential representation of the introductory ‘desalination of The Caribbean Literary Seas’ metaphor and methodology that underpinned the psycho-literary analysis of chapters 4, 5, and 6. In these chapters I showed how ‘the salt’ of coloniality could sometimes be diluted to a tolerable or even useful level when the tributaries of Indigenous streams of knowledges and psychology flowed into (and are added to) the existent subversiveness of the Western novel form.

A decolonial reading of Jamaican literature was found to have the potential to interrupt dominant imperialistic narratives portrayed in other canons. The contributions and

findings of this study seem to point toward the fact that a Caribbean canon can be strengthened by the decolonising of postcolonial Caribbean literature. The study also showed that Caribbean writing is richly endowed with strategies of resistance, innovative knowledge, and psychological praxis. This study’s decolonial reading and commentary of Jamaican writing challenges dominant colonial discourse using the theories and psychological strategies are summarised in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Decolonial Theory and Strategy Summary Chart*



## 8.2. Reflexivity, Recommendations, Future Study

I had proposed that one contribution of this study would be that my own storytelling could make a modest contribution to decolonial resources and archives. Certainly, the more that I looked, the more I saw. A small example of this acquired insight is that as my own understanding of the impact of coloniality grew, the more it was that I started to feel extremely uncomfortable, and even offended, at the term ‘alternative’ when referencing Indigenous knowledges and psychological praxis. I was bothered because I realised the extent to which this very terminology reinforced alienation and othering, as well as the universalisation of Western epistemic superiority. I also started to feel that ‘alternative knowledge’ once proven useful, could be appropriated into the mainstream and attributed to Western intelligence. Given the additive approach that I used to frame my methodology in which “Indigenous literary tributaries feed and bolster global literary seas” (Introduction, Chapter Four), why then would this be problematic? Was it because my own inherent coloniality required that credit be attributed, or was it because I was resistant to Indigenous knowledge being colonised? Such is the messiness of decoloniality that I encountered as one steeped in coloniality attempting to confront coloniality.

As was expected, my own political consciousness was impacted by reading and absorbing the dynamism of the stories, characters, psychologies, culture, Indigeneity and pluriversalism. By drawing on my background in psychology I somewhat naively felt that I could offer theoretical underpinnings and a deeper psycho-social understanding of the novels. I am unsure of how much of Westernised constructs were lurking behind my attempt to contribute to the decolonial turn.

While searching for possible cognitive explanation, cultural context, and understanding of coloniality in literature and in life, it became clear to me that one

psychological decolonial component of writing is purely for the author in which they are their own only audience. In this case there is a catharsis and unfolding of knowledge and meaning which only the author can access and understand fully. I suppose that this is part and parcel of personal decoloniality; since only the author knows the complex backstory needed to completely and correctly analyse the 'whys and wherefores' of how a story and its characters develop as they do, and therefore, only the author can truly discern if conclusions and morals of the tale are canards or are authentic.

No doubt there are many shortcomings to this study, the most easily identifiable one being that only Jamaican writing was examined. However, I hope that these limitations can be mitigated if the contribution of the study is measured against the reality that the decolonial contribution of knowledge is in its particular nuances and situated value. I hope that mitigation will be liberally applied through reading the results in tandem with the intention of the study to be one of many possible additives not found in the limiting Euro-American epistemology. In my defence, I think that by restricting the study to the writings of one Caribbean nation re-emphasised that there are a multiplicity of ways to resist Western imperial intellectualism and be a social activist within one's very own world.

It was made clear that an important hallmark of coloniality is its ability to keep reinventing and remaining current in modern society. The novels offered readers examples of colonialism by new names and in new forms, e.g., Multi-national hotels and tourists could be viewed as the modern version of the plantation and slave master. Bringing this perception out in the open, in some ways, was an invitation to, if not to outright reject, then to at least be circumspect about coloniality in the form of capitalism, modernity, and economic exploitation. These findings make it seem that it is justifiable and useful to continue decolonial psycho-literary investigation into other canons. It follows that other decolonial experimentation, not covered in this study, but encouraged by it, can keep swelling the

archives. Critical Relationality proved a very functional and practical aid for the decolonial attitude adopted in this study, and could justify other studies going even further and being more daring and resolute in experimenting with methods and theories outside of traditionally approved academic modes. One possible avenue of future study could involve incorporating a mixed digital medium, such as blogging, vlogging, or social media posts into psycho-literary commentary so as to not confine adventurous researchers to only using traditional literary text and canons as nodes of provocation.

Jamaica-based literary critic, Annie Paul (2011), analysed how Caribbean writers have interacted with new media and technology over the generations. She found that in the past some Caribbean writers expressed discomfort with technology and viewed it with suspicion or as a valorisation of Americanism. Others, said she, embraced technology, viewing it as a means for Jamaica to move into a hopeful and open future. Paul concludes that if Caribbean Literature is to keep pace with the rest of the world it will have to move decisively away from its mistrust and scepticism of digital media. While I do not necessarily see keeping up with the rest of the world as imperative, I agree with her assertion that allowing a younger, more “wired”, generation to take over as critics, editors, publishers, and authors can only improve Caribbean literature (p. 634). This is precisely because they effortlessly bring a contemporary view and innovation to Caribbean psycho-literary analysis that can energetically and relevantly go ‘toe to toe’ with the ever-evolving coloniality.

One way of embracing contemporary digital media, would be to cross reference, as well as investigate, across mediums. For example, establishing a psycho-literary methodology that incorporates The Jamaican Voice of social media, alongside The Jamaican Voice in literature. This innovation could prove useful in capturing a wider input and audience from a section of the society that may be semi- or completely illiterate; or may capture the voices of those who are not captivated by literature for whatever reason. It would

certainly show that the Voice of alterity is valued. Potentially one way of capturing the Voice of alterity would be to incorporate the thoughts of social personality gurus and popular dancehall artists into literary works. For example, there is a popular social media personality, Shebada, who hosts a YouTube channel wittily entitled 'Happy Corner', which films him at home chatting casually with his viewers about current events. His social commentary is often biting, course, raw and is usually shocking. Shebada definitely provides an authentic Voice of the alterity that transgresses borders of perceived normativity. In fact, he embodies many, if not all, the Jamaicanised ecological moves described in this thesis. Shebada is a Jamaican, gay, Black man who sometimes refers to himself as a woman or girl and speaks openly about sex. Shebada often gives commentary while applying bleaching cream, drinking alcohol, appearing high, or generally recreating non-heteronormative scenarios in his telling of stories. Including a voice such as Shebada's could be a creative exploration that provides an excellent real life performative comparison to that of fictional characters. Of course, this would have to be sensitively and respectfully undertaken with his approval so as not to reproduce the colonial gaze. This is but one example of an endeavour that could provide access across social, colour, and class lines that would otherwise not be easily breached or brought together in academic or literary circles. It could deepen the discussion around bleaching, classism, homophobia, racism, and colourism if his relatable contemporary voice is, for instance, compared to that of the Dennis-Benn Black Feminist Subaltern character Thandi.

Comparing The Jamaican Voice in literature to the live Jamaican Voice of a social icon would in effect break through a literary 'fourth wall' in the same way that actors break through the theatre's 'fourth wall' to engage with an audience and incorporate them into a play. Perhaps, new categories and modes of psychological interpretation could be discovered by this form of decolonial psycho-literary research. In this way we could observe the 'Ni' spirit relocate to the new battle site in real time so to speak. It could prove to be a useful

mechanism for ensuring that both the history and the currency of events are valued and inform each other. This would allow an interface that potentially could deepen understanding, relay attribution, and develop complexity of thought. It could be an inclusive method of investigation considered well outside the academy (in the spirit of Nettleford). If anything were derived from this thesis's attempt at decolonial disobedience it could be that there is justification for incorporating mixed media, musical lyrics, and other oral performative genres as reference points for psycho-literary critiques.

To summarise... I have observed liberatory psychological constructs and decolonial concepts in Jamaican writing. Authors are often social activists who not only provide access to new knowledges, but also create for themselves and readers, sanctuaries of retreat from the coloniality of being, knowledge, and power within The Caribbean Literary Seas - a radical and inclusive psycho-literary concept outlined in the analysis chapter. New terminology has been drawn from/inspired by a variety of methodologies, including black feminism and intersectional theories, to create a practical framework and methodology for decolonial psycho-literary commentary and writing in this thesis. In so doing, this thesis has not only potentially contributed by investigating decolonial insights such as Creolised knowledge and spirituality; but it may also have made inroads by proposing methodology that may be extrapolated for use in critiquing other canons and social science disciplines besides psychology. It is hoped that this study has done what it set out to do - contribute to a decolonial Psychological and Literary archive and imaginary.

THE END

## References

- al-Din, T, Ahmad, I, N., & Abd al-Rahman, A. M A. (2018). From periphery to center: challenging stereotypes and deconstructing binaries in Andrea Levy's small island. *Arts*, 2018 (7). <https://search.emarefa.net/detail/BIM-961177->
- Allen, C. (1998). Creole then and now: the problem of definition. *Caribbean Quarterly*, 44(1-2), 33-49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00086495.1998.11829569>
- Allen, M. (Ed.) (2017). *The SAGE encyclopedia of communication research methods*. (Vols. 1-4). SAGE Publications. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781483381411>
- Anim-Addo, J. (2013). Gendering creolisation: Creolising affect. *Feminist Review*, 104(1), 5-23. <https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.2013.15>
- Annesley, J. (2006). *Fictions of globalization: consumption, the market and the contemporary American novel*. A&C Black.
- Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La frontera: The new mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books.
- Aras, G. (2015). Personality and individual differences: Literature in psychology-psychology in literature. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 185, 250-257. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.03.452>
- Araya, K. A. (2014). Anancy stories beyond the moralistic approach of the Western philosophy of being/Los cuentos de Anancy más allá del enfoque de la filosofía occidental del ser. *Boletín de Literatura Oral*, 4, 43-52. <https://hdl.handle.net/10669/85514>
- Armageddon. (2023, January 2). In *Wikipedia*. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armageddon>
- Arthurs, A. (2018). *How to Love a Jamaican: Stories*. Ballantine Books.
- Baszile, D. T. (2015). Rhetorical revolution: Critical race counter storytelling and the abolition of white democracy. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 21(3), 239-249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414557830>



- Baumeister, R. F., & Vohs, K. D. (2007). Nonconscious processes. In *Encyclopaedia of Social Psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 623-623). SAGE Publications, Inc.,  
<https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781412956253.n372>
- Bauer, L., & Calude, A. S. (Eds.) (2020). *Questions about Language: What Everyone Should Know about Language in the 21st Century*. Routledge.
- Bayat, A. (1997). Un-civil society: The politics of the 'informal people'. *Third World Quarterly*, 18(1), 53-72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436599715055>
- Beard, L. J. (2018). "This Story Needs a Witness": The Imbrication of Witnessing, Storytelling, and Resilience in Lee Maracle's Celia's Song. *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, 30(3-4), 151-178. <https://doi.org/10.5250/studamerindilite.30.3-4.0151>
- Beard, L. J. (2019). Resistance, resilience, and resurgence: tracing the rs in indigenous literary studies. *Revista Ártemis-Estudios de Género, Feminismos e Sexualidades*, 28(1), 8-16.  
<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A616167730/AONE?u=anon~2ba357bd&sid=googleScholar&xid=cf4131ba>
- Becker, M. (1999). Patriarchy and Inequality: Towards a Substantive Feminism, *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1999(1),21-88.  
<https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1999/iss1/3>
- Beers-Fägersten, K. (2007). A sociolinguistic analysis of swear word offensiveness. *Saarland Working Papers in Linguistics (SWPL)*, 1, 14-37. <https://doi.org/10.22028/D291-23494>
- Bennett-Coverley, L. (1966a). Colonization in reverse. Retrievable from <http://louisebennett.com/colonization-in-reverse>.

- Bennett-Coverly, L. (1966b). *Jamaica labrish: Jamaica dialect poems*. Sangster's Book Stores.
- Betemps, C. (2019). Decolonial transnational feminisms: some issues about coloniality within feminisms. *Estudos Feministas*, 27(1), 1-7.
- Bhabha, H. K. (2012). *The location of culture*. Routledge.
- Bhabra, G. K. (2007). *Rethinking modernity: Postcolonialism and the sociological imagination*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230206410>
- Bhabra, G. K. (2014). Postcolonial and decolonial dialogues. *Postcolonial studies*, 17(2), 115-121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2014.966414>
- Biko, S. (1998). The definition of black consciousness. In P. H. Coetzee & A. J. P. Roux (Eds), *Philosophy from Africa: A text with readings* (pp. 360-363). Routledge.
- Bilby, K. (1980). Review of *Caribbean Cultural Identity: The Case of Jamaica*, by R. Nettleford. *Caribbean Studies*, 20(2), 114–116. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25612908>
- Bobak, A. (2020). Decolonizing Global Mental Health through Jamaican Psychiatry. *Mad in America. Science, Psychiatry and Social Justice*. 19. <https://www.madinamerica.com/2020/02/decolonizing-global-mental-health-jamaican-psychiatry/>
- Bolland, O. N. (1998). Creolisation and creole societies: A cultural nationalist view of Caribbean social history. *Caribbean quarterly*, 44(1-2), 1-32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00086495.1998.11829568>
- Bolles, A. L. (2011). Rex Nettleford: Gatekeeper of anthropological research in Jamaica. *Caribbean Quarterly*, 57(3-4), 108-111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00086495.2011.11672421>
- Boyce Davies, C. (2002). *Black women, writing and identity: Migrations of the subject*. Routledge.

- Boyce-Davies, C. (2017). Dislocations, dis-posessions: More movements of the people. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 17(3), 217–227. <https://doi.org/10.1108/qrj-03-2017-0008>
- Bradbury, J. (2017). Creative twists in the tale: Narrative and visual methodologies in action. *Psychology in Society*, (55), 14-37. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2309-8708/2017/n55a3>
- Brathwaite, E. K. (1964). *Four Plays for Primary schools*. Longman.
- Brathwaite, L. E. (1968). *The development of creole society in Jamaica, 1770-1820* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sussex).
- Brathwaite, E. K. (1974). The African presence in Caribbean literature. *Daedalus*, 103(2), 73-109. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20024205>
- Brathwaite, E. K. (2019, February 6). *Caribbean literature*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/art/Caribbean-literature>
- Brewton, V. (2021). Literary Theory. *The Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, ISSN 2161-0002, <https://iep.utm.edu/>
- Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2021, May 7). *Kamau Brathwaite*. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Kamau-Brathwaite>.
- Brown, J. D., & Rosenberg, L. R. (Eds.). (2015). *Beyond Windrush: Rethinking Post-war Anglophone Caribbean Literature*. University Press of Mississippi.
- Brydon, D., & Tiffin, H. (1993). *Decolonising fictions*. Dangaroo.
- Bucknor, M. (2009). Sounding off: Performing ritual revolt in Olive Senior's "Meditation on yellow". *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, 42(2), 55-71. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44030214>

Bucknor, M. A. (2011). 'Grung'/ground(ed) poetics: 'The voice from the bottom of the well'.

In M. A. Bucknor & A. Donnell (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to anglophone Caribbean literature* (pp. 85-92). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203830352>

Bulhan, H. A. (1985). *Frantz Fanon and the psychology of oppression*. Springer.

Canham, H., & Langa, M. (2017). Narratives of everyday resistance from the margins. *Psychology in Society*, (55), 3-13. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2309-8708/2017/n55a2>

Carter, M., & Torabully, K. (2002). *Coolitude: An anthology of the Indian labour diaspora*. Wimbledon Publishing Company.

Césaire, A. (2001a). *Discourse on colonialism*. NYU Press.

Césaire, A. (2001b). *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*. Wesleyan University Press. Originally published in 1939.

Chase, J. (n.d). *How to Use Psychology to Create Compelling Characters*. The Write Practice. <https://thewritepractice.com/psychology-and-writing-characters/>

Chomsky, N. (2008). *The view beyond: Prospects for the study of mind*. The essential Chomsky. The New Press. (Original work published in 1988)

Chua, L., & hooks, B. (1994). bell hooks. *BOMB*, (48), 24-28. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40425413>

Cliff, M. (1990). *Bodies of Water*. Dutton.

Cliff, M. (1995). *Abeng*. Penguin.

Collins, P. H. (2002). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203900055>

Cooper, C. (1995). *Noises in the Blood: Orality, gender, and the "vulgar" body of Jamaican popular culture*. Duke University Press.

- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *The University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1),139-167.  
<https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1052&context=uclf>
- Cron, L. (2012). *Wired for story: The writer's guide to using brain science to hook readers from the very first sentence*. Ten Speed Press.
- Dabhoiwala, F. (2020). Speech and Slavery in the West Indies. *The New York Review of Books*, 67(13), 22-24.
- Damas, L. G. (2006). Recontextualizing the "postcolonial" writer against the postcolonial "francophone". *Writers at the Ends of French Empire*.
- Dauids, N. (2021, July 29). *Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: 'Theory, a kind of idolatry'*. University of Cape Town news. <http://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2021-07-29-theory-a-kind-of-idolatry>
- Dawson, A. (2007). Introduction: Colonization in Reverse. *Mongrel Nation: Diasporic Culture and the Making of Post-Colonial Britain*, 1-26. University of Michigan Press.  
<https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/50682>
- De Kock, L. (1992). An Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. *Ariel: A review of international English literature*, 23(3). <https://dokumen.tips/documents/leon-de-kock-interview-with-gayatri-c-spivak.html?page=1>
- de Sousa Santos, B. (2007). Beyond abyssal thinking: From global lines to ecologies of knowledges. *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, 30(1), 45-89.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40241677>
- de Sousa Santos, B. (2018). *The end of the cognitive empire*. Duke University Press.

- Dei, G. J. S. (2018). "Black like me": Reframing blackness for decolonial politics. *Educational Studies*, 54(2), 117-142.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131946.2018.1427586>
- Dennis-Benn, N. (2016). *Here Comes the Sun: A Novel*. WW Norton & Company.
- Dennis-Benn, N., James, M., & Miller, K. (2018, January). *Jamaican Letters: Past, Present, Future*. Conversation at the Key West Literary Seminar.  
<https://youtu.be/IUC2SqxKJhg>
- Dickens, C. (1861). *Great expectations*. Macmillan.
- Diouf, O. D. (2014). *Pragmatic decolonial moves: African-Atlantic writers within a minor literature* (Publication No. 3618567) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/1530421977>
- Donnell, A. (1999). The short fiction of Olive Senior. In M. Condé & T. Lonsdale (Eds.), *Caribbean women writers: Fiction in English* (pp. 117-143). Palgrave Macmillan.  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-27071-2\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-27071-2_9)
- Donnell, A. (2007). *Twentieth-century Caribbean literature: Critical moments in Anglophone literary history*. Routledge.
- Donnell, A. (2015). "The African Presence in Caribbean Literature" Revisited: Recovering the Politics of Imagined Co-Belonging 1930–2005. *Research in African Literatures*, 46(4), 35-55. <https://doi.org/10.2979/reseafritelite.46.4.35>
- Donnell, A., & Welsh, S. L. (Eds.). (1996). *The Routledge reader in Caribbean literature*. Psychology Press.
- Dovring, K. (1954). Quantitative Semantics in 18th Century Sweden. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 18(4), 389–394. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2745971>

- Drayton, R. (2005, August 20). The wealth of the West was built on Africa's exploitation. *The Guardian*.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2005/aug/20/past.hearafrica05>
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (2015). *The souls of black folk*. Yale University Press.
- Dwivedi, A. V. (2015). Language, identity, and gender: A study of creole in the Caribbean. *Linguistics and Literature Studies*, 3(1), 11-17.  
<https://doi.org/10.13189/lis.2015.030102>
- Elgin, C. Z. (2013). Epistemic agency. *Theory and Research in Education*, 11(2), 135-152.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878513485173>
- English Standard Version Bible*. (2001). ESV Online. <https://esv.literalword.com/>
- Erasmus, Z. (2017). *Race otherwise: forging a new humanism for South Africa*. NYU Press.
- Evans, D. (1993). *Sexual citizenship: The material construction of sexualities*. Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203412398>
- Fanon, F. (2007). *The wretched of the earth*. Grove/Atlantic, Inc.
- Fanon, F. (2008). *Black skin, white masks*. Grove Press.
- Figuroa, Y. C. (2015). Faithful witnessing as practice: Decolonial readings of Shadows of your Black memory and the brief wondrous life of Oscar Wao. *Hypatia*, 30(4), 641-656. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hypa.12183>
- Fine, M. (2006). Bearing witness: Methods for researching oppression and resistance—A textbook for critical research. *Social Justice Research*, 19(1), 83-108.
- Flaubert, G., & Lasfargue-Galvez, I. (2003). *Madame Bovary: 1857*. Hatier.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. Vintage.
- Ford-Smith, H., & Sistren. (1987). *Lionheart gal: Life stories of Jamaican women*. Sister Vision Press.

- Francis, D. (2011). Strategies of Caribbean Feminism: Donette Francis. In Bucknor, M.A & A. Donnell (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature* (pp. 358-369). Routledge.
- Freud, S. (1955). Fräulein Elisabeth von R, case histories from studies on hysteria. In J. Breuer, & S. Freud *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud: Studies on hysteria* (J. Strachey, A. Freud, A. Strachey & A. Tyson, Eds. & Trans.; Vol. 2, pp. 135-181). The Hogarth Press
- Gabriel, D. (2007). *Layers of blackness: Colourism in the African diaspora*. Imani Media Ltd.
- Garvey, M., & Blaisdell, B. (2004). *Selected writings and speeches of Marcus Garvey*. Courier Corporation.
- Gaztambide-Fernández, R. (2014). Decolonial options and artistic/aesthetic entanglements: An interview with Walter Mignolo. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 3(1), 196-212.  
<https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/21310/17389>
- Gilroy, P. (1993). *The black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Verso.
- Gilroy, P. (2019, January 20). *Long Read | Never again: Refusing race and salvaging the human*. New Frame. <https://www.newframe.com/long-read-refusing-race-and-salvaging-the-human/>
- Glissant, E. (1989). *Caribbean discourse: Selected essays*. University of Virginia Press.
- Glissant, É. (1996). *Introduction à une poétique du divers*. Gallimard.
- Glissant, E. (2008). Creolization in the Making of the Americas. *Caribbean Quarterly*, 54(1/2), 81–89. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40655153>
- Goodison, L. (2012). *By Love Possessed: Stories*. Emblem Editions.



- Grabe, S., & Else-Quest, N. M. (2012). The role of transnational feminism in psychology: Complementary visions. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 36(2), 158-161.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684312442164>
- Grant, C. (2016, July 8). *Augustown by Kei Miller review – a vivid modern fable about Jamaica*. The Guardian. Retrieved from  
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jul/08/augustown-kei-miller-review-novel-jamaica>
- Gregory, J. (2021). Statue wars: Collective memory reshaping the past. *History Australia*, 18(3), 564-587. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2021.1956333>
- Grosfoguel, R. (2011). Decolonizing post-colonial studies and paradigms of political-economy: Transmodernity, decolonial thinking, and global coloniality. *Transmodernity: journal of peripheral cultural production of the luso-hispanic world*, 1(1). <https://escholarship.org/content/qt21k6t3fq/qt21k6t3fq.pdf>
- Grosfoguel, R. (2013). The structure of knowledge in Westernised universities: Epistemic racism/sexism and the four genocides/epistemicides. *Human Architecture: Journal of the sociology of self-knowledge*, 1(1), 73-90.  
[https://www.niwrc.org/sites/default/files/images/resource/2%20The%20Structure%20of%20Knowledge%20in%20Westernized%20Universities\\_%20Epistemic.pdf](https://www.niwrc.org/sites/default/files/images/resource/2%20The%20Structure%20of%20Knowledge%20in%20Westernized%20Universities_%20Epistemic.pdf)
- Grosfoguel, R. (2017). A Theoretical Revolution in Time and Space. *Dialogues on Development*, 1, 49-59.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317617842\\_6\\_A\\_Theoretical\\_Revolution\\_in\\_Time\\_and\\_Space\\_-\\_Interview\\_with\\_Ramon\\_Grosfoguel](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317617842_6_A_Theoretical_Revolution_in_Time_and_Space_-_Interview_with_Ramon_Grosfoguel)
- Gutiérrez, R. A. (2011). Introduction. *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 20(3), 439–444.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41305879>

- Gutiérrez Rodríguez, E., & Tate, S. A. (2015). *Creolizing Europe: legacies and transformations*. Liverpool University Press.
- Hall, S. (2020). *Cultural identity and diaspora*. Routledge.
- Hanna, M., Vargas, J., & Saldívar, J. (2016). Introduction. Junot Díaz and the Decolonial Imagination From Island to Empire. In M. Hanna, J. Harford Vargas, & J. Saldívar (Eds.), *Junot Díaz and the Decolonial Imagination* (pp. 1-30). Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822374763-002>
- Harris, W. (1961). *The Far Journey of Oudin*. Faber & Faber.
- Harris, W. (2021). *Palace of the Peacock (Faber Editions): 'Magnificent'-Tsitsi Dangarembga*. Faber & Faber. Originally published in 1960.
- Harrison, S.-M. (2017). Twenty-first-century West Indian fiction. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.013.195>
- Hartman, S. (2008). Venus in two acts. *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, 12(2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1215/-12-2-1>
- Hickel, J (2018, December 19). *How Britain Stole \$45 Trillion From India: And Lied About It*. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2018/12/19/how-britain-stole-45-trillion-from-india->
- Hickerson, C. (2018). *Decolonial narrative techniques in healing novels from Shaugawaumikong, Walatowa, Kawaika, Chimputi, and Calotmul* [Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Irvine]. UC Irvine Electronic Theses and Dissertations.
- Hickling, F. W., & Paisley, V. (2012). Issues of clinical and cultural competence in Caribbean migrants. *Transcultural psychiatry*, 49(2), 223-244. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461512441596>

- Hill Collins, P. (2002). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge.
- Hira, S. (2016). A decolonial critique of intersectionality. Retrieved December 22, 2017, from <https://din.today/a-decolonial-critique-of-intersectionality/>
- Hodge, M. (2011). Language use and West Indian literary criticism. In Bucknor, M.A., & Donnell, A. (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to anglophone Caribbean literature* (pp. 470-479). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203830352>
- Hodge, M. (2013). *Crick crack, monkey*. Waveland Press.
- Hofmeyr, I. (2007). The Black Atlantic meets the Indian Ocean: forging new paradigms of transnationalism for the Global South—literary and cultural perspectives. *Social dynamics*, 33(2), 3-32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02533950708628759>
- Holland, N. N. (1990). *Holland's guide to psychoanalytic psychology and literature-and-psychology*. Oxford University Press.
- hooks, B. (1990). The politics of radical Black subjectivity. *b. hooks, Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics*, 15-22. Routledge.
- hooks, B. (2003). *Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope*. Routledge.
- hooks, B. (2014). *Teaching to transgress*. Routledge.
- Hope, D. P. (2011). From browning to cake soap: popular debates on skin bleaching in the Jamaican dancehall. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 4(4), 165-194.  
<http://www.jpanafrican.org/docs/vol4no4/HOPE%20Final.pdf>
- Hull, J. (2018, April 18). ‘Windrush generation’ scandal overshadows Commonwealth summit. [Video]. Al Jazeera English. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/4/18/the-uks-windrush-generation-whats-the-scandal-about>
- Hume, Y. (2017). “*Nettleford, Rex*”. Online. Scholarblogs.Emory.edu.  
<https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/postcolonialstudies/2014/06/19/nettleford-rex/brackets>

- Ilmonen, K. (2012). *Caribbean Journeys. Intersections of Female Identity in the Novels of Michelle Cliff*. University of Turku.  
[https://www.utupub.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/74833/Ilmonen%20v%C3%A4it%C3%B6skirja%20FINAL\\_www.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://www.utupub.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/74833/Ilmonen%20v%C3%A4it%C3%B6skirja%20FINAL_www.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)
- Iser, W. (1979). The act of reading: A theory of aesthetic response. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 38(1). <https://doi.org/10.2307/430052>
- Jackson, S. N. (2012). *Creole indigeneity: Between myth and nation in the Caribbean*. University of Minnesota Press.
- James, C. L. R. (2013). *Beyond a boundary*. Duke University Press.
- James, M. (2014). *The Book of Night Women*. Simon and Schuster.
- Jessop, D. (2022). *Remittances Underpin the Lives of Many*. *The Caribbean Council*.  
<https://www.caribbean-council.org/remittances-underpin-lives-many/>
- Jung, C. G., (1990). *Psychology and literature* (Trans. by W.S. Dell and C. F. Baynes). From *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*. London: Routledge.
- Kalmanson, L. (2012). Buddhism and bell hooks: Liberatory aesthetics and the radical subjectivity of no-Self. *Hypatia*, 27(4), 810-827. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2011.01224.x>
- Kamugisha, A. (2019). *Beyond coloniality: Citizenship and freedom in the Caribbean intellectual tradition*. Indiana University Press.
- Kennedy, B., Ashokkumar, A., Boyd, R. L., & Dehghani, M. (2021). *Text analysis for psychology: Methods, principles, and practices*. PsyArXiv.  
<https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/h2b8t>
- Kessi, S., Boonzaier, F., & Gekeler, B. S. (2021). Methodologies, ethics, and critical reflexive practices for a pan-African psychology. In C. E. F. Thompson & G. Nicolas

- (Eds.), *Pan-Africanism and psychology in decolonial times* (pp. 123-148). Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-89351-4>
- Kessi, S., Marks, Z., & Ramugondo, E. (2020). Decolonizing African studies. *Critical African Studies*, 12(3), 271–282. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21681392.2020.1813413>
- Kilburn, M. “*Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty*”. (2017). Online. Scholarblogs.Emory.edu. <https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/postcolonialstudies/2014/06/19/spivak-gayatri-chakravorty/edited>
- Kincaid, J. (1996). *The autobiography of my mother: A novel*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- King, R. S. (2002). Sex and Sexuality in English Caribbean Novels—A Survey from 1950. *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 11(1), 24-38. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23019802>
- Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*(4<sup>th</sup> ed.). SAGE publications.
- Kurtis, T., & Adams, G. (2017). Decolonial intersectionality: Implications for theory, research, and pedagogy. In Case, K. A. (Ed.), *Intersectional pedagogy: Complicating identity and social justice* (1<sup>st</sup> ed., pp. 46-60). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315672793>
- Kutzinksi, V. (2001). Improprieties: Feminism, Queerness, and Caribbean Literature. *Macalester International*, 10(1), 18. <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1253&context=macintl>
- Lamming, G. (1991). *In the Castle of my Skin*. University of Michigan Press. (Original work published 1953).
- Lane, L., & Mahdi, H. (2013). Fanon revisited: Race gender and coloniality vis-à-vis skin colour. In Hall, R. (Ed.) *The melanin millennium: Skin color as 21st century*

*international discourse* (pp. 169-181). Springer Science+Business Media.

[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-4608-4\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-4608-4_11)

LaVine, H. L. (2010). *Paradoxes of particularity: Caribbean literary imaginaries* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Iowa]. Iowa Research Online.

<https://doi.org/10.17077/etd.m76wm2sh>

Ledent, Bénédict 2000, “‘Here, There, and Everywhere’: Michelle Cliff’s (Con)versions of Caribbean Identity.” – Martina Ghosh-Schellhorn (ed.), *Writing Women across Borders and Categories*. Hallenser Studien zur Anglistik und Amerikanistik 6. Münster: Lit Verlag, 76 – 90.

Leitch, V.B., (2001). (Gen. Ed.). *The Norton anthology of theory and criticism*. W.W. Norton and Company.

Levy, A. (2009). *Small island*. Tinder Press.

Lugones, M. (1987). Playfulness, “world”- travelling, and loving perception. *Hypatia*, 2(2), 3–19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1987.tb01062.x>

Lugones, M. (2003). *Pilgrimages/peregrinajes: Theorizing coalition against multiple oppressions*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Lugones, M. (2010). Toward a decolonial feminism. *Hypatia*, 25(4), 742–759.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2010.01137.x>

MacDermot, T. (1909). *One Brown Girl and 1/4*. Kingston Printery.

MacDermot, T. (2021). *Becka’s Buckra Baby*. Graphic Arts Books. (Original work published in 1904).

Mahler, S. J. (2017). Theoretical and empirical contributions toward a research agenda for transnationalism. In M. P. Smith & L. E. Guarnizo (Eds.), *Transnationalism from below* (Vol 6., pp. 64-100). Routledge. (Original work published 1998).

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351301244>

- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2007). On the Coloniality of Being: Contributions to the Development of a Concept. *Cultural studies*, 21(2-3), 240-270.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162548>
- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2016). *Outline of ten theses on coloniality and decoloniality*. Frantz Fanon Foundation. [http://caribbeanstudiesassociation.org/docs/Maldonado-Torres\\_Outline\\_Ten\\_Theses-10.23.16.pdf](http://caribbeanstudiesassociation.org/docs/Maldonado-Torres_Outline_Ten_Theses-10.23.16.pdf)
- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2018). The Decolonial Turn. In Juan Poblete (Ed.), *New Approaches to Latin American Studies: Culture and Power* (pp. 111-127). Routledge.
- Maracle, L. (2014). *Celia's Song*. Cormorant Books.
- Martinez-Vázquez, H. A. (2009). The Postcolonizing Project: Constructing a Decolonial Imaginary from the Borderlands. *Journal of World Christianity*, 2(1), 1-28.  
<https://doi.org/10.5325/jworlchri.2.1.0001>
- Mashau, T. D. (2018). Unshackling the chains of coloniality: Reimagining decoloniality, Africanisation and Reformation for a non-racial South Africa. *HTS: Theological Studies*, 74(3), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i3.4920>
- Mendez, X. (2015). Notes toward a decolonial feminist methodology: revisiting the race/gender matrix. *Trans-scripts*, 5, 41-56.
- Middleton, J. I. (1994). bell hooks on Literacy and Teaching: A Response. *Journal of Advanced Composition*, 14(2), 559-564. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20865987>
- Mignolo, W. D. (2007a). Delinking: The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality. *Cultural studies*, 21(2-3), 449-514.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162647>
- Mignolo, W. D. (2007b). Introduction: Coloniality of Power and de-colonial thinking. *Cultural studies*, 21(2-3), 155-167.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162498>

- Mignolo, W., Lockward, A., Vázquez, R., Nerio, T. D., Grzanic, M., Eistrup, M., & Ostojic, T. (2011). A manifesto: *Decolonial aesthetics, 1*.  
<https://transnationaldecolonialinstitute.wordpress.com/decolonial-aesthetics/>
- Mignolo, W. (2013). Geopolitics of sensing and knowing: On (de) coloniality, border thinking, and epistemic disobedience. *Confero: Essays on education, philosophy and politics, 1*(1), 129-150. <https://journal.ep.liu.se/confero/article/view/3593>
- Mignolo, W. D. (2017). Coloniality is far from over, and so must be decoloniality. *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry, 43*(1), 38-45. <https://doi.org/10.1086/692552>
- Mignolo, W. D., & Walsh, C. E. (2018). *On decoloniality*. Duke University Press.
- Miller, K. (2017). *Augustown*. Vintage.
- Mills, C. W. (2010). *Radical Theory, Caribbean Reality: Race, Class and Social Domination*. University of the West Indies Press.
- Moghaddam, F. M. (2004). From ‘Psychology in Literature’ to ‘Psychology is Literature’ An Exploration of Boundaries and Relationships. *Theory & Psychology, 14*(4), 505-525. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354304044922>
- Mohammed, P. (1998). Towards indigenous feminist theorizing in the Caribbean. *Feminist review, 59*(1), 6-33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/014177898339433>
- Moïse, M. (2018). Four: Jamaica Kincaid And Olive Senior Gardening Through History, Cultivating Rhizomic Subjectivities. *Wagadu: a Journal of Transnational Women's and Gender Studies, 19*, 41-51. <https://sites.cortland.edu/wagadu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2018/08/v19-Moise.pdf>
- Moore, A. (2020). Pulping as poetic inquiry: On upcycling “upset” to reckon anew with rape culture, rejection, and (re)turning to trauma texts. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies, 20*(6), 588-595. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708620912802>



- Mootoo, S. (1993). *Out on Main Street*. Press Gang Publishers.
- Morris, M. (2005). *Making West Indian Literature*. Ian Randle Publishers.
- Mudimbe, V. Y. (1988). The Invention of Africa: Gnosis. *Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*, 27(1988), 191-92.  
[https://files.libcom.org/files/zz v. y. mudimbe the invention of africa gnosis pbo ok4you\\_1.pdf](https://files.libcom.org/files/zz_v.y._mudimbe_the_invention_of_africa_gnosis_pbo_ok4you_1.pdf)
- Murray, M. A. (2012). The Caribbean short story: Critical perspectives. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 48(5), 571–573. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2012.705980>
- Murrell, N. S., Spencer, W. D., & McFarlane, A. A. (Eds.). (1998). *Chanting down Babylon: the Rastafari reader*. Temple University Press.
- Naipaul, V. S. (2002). *The Mystic Masseur; & Miguel Street*. Pan Macmillan. (Original work published 1957).
- Naipaul, V. S. (2016). *A house for Mr Biswas* (Vol. 42). Pan Macmillan. (Original work published 1961).
- Nandy, A. (1983). Towards an Alternative Politics of Psychology. *International Social Science Journal*, 35(2), 332-38.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2013). *Empire, global coloniality and African subjectivity*. Berghahn Books.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2018). *Epistemic freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and decolonization*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429492204>
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2020). *Decolonization, development and knowledge in Africa: Turning over a new leaf*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003030423>
- Nettleford, R. M. (1970). *Mirror, Mirror: Identity, race and Protest in Jamaica*. Collins Sangster (Jamaica) Ltd.

- Nettleford, R. M. (1993a). *Inward stretch, outward reach: A voice from the Caribbean*. Macmillan Caribbean.
- Nettleford, R. (1993b). Race, identity and independence in Jamaica. In H. Beckles & V. Shepherd (Eds.), *Caribbean Freedom Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present* (pp. 519-527). Markus Wiener Publishers.
- Nettleford, R. (2003). Ideology, identity, culture. In *General History of the Caribbean UNESCO Volume 5: The Caribbean in the Twentieth Century* (pp. 537-558). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Nettleford, R. (2005). Prologue: Cultural studies - The way forward. *Caribbean Quarterly*, 51(3-4), v-x. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00086495.2005.11672272>
- Niaah, J. (2011). Nettleford and Rastafari's inner landscape. *Caribbean Quarterly*, 57(3-4), 49-63. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00086495.2011.11672416>
- Nkrumah, K. (1965). *Neo-colonialism: The last stage of imperialism*. International Publishers Co.
- Obeah. (2022, August 20).  
In *Wikipedia*. <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Obeah&oldid=1105426237>
- Olson, G. A. (1994). Bell hooks and the Politics of Literacy: A Conversation. *Journal of Advanced Composition*, 14(1), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20865945>
- Palmié, S. (2006). Creolization and its discontents. *Annu. Rev. Anthropol.*, 35, 433-456.
- Palmié, S. (2006). Creolization and its discontents. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 35, 433-456. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.35.081705.123149>
- Paris, B. J. (1997). *Imagined human beings: A psychological approach to character and conflict in literature*. NYU Press.

- Paul, A. (2011). Log on: Toward social and digital islands. In M. A. Bucknor & A. Donnell (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to anglophone Caribbean literature* (pp. 626-635). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203830352>
- Pennekamp, M. (2017). *To the Moon and Back*. University of Arkansas. <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3504&context=etd>
- Phillips, M. A. (2010). In memory of a "Quality Black": Ralston Milton "Rex" Nettleford (1933-2010). *Caribbean Studies*, 38(2), 159-163. <https://doi.org/10.1353/crb.2010.0052>.
- Phillips, M. A. (2011). Tribute to a sage: The life and work of professor the honourable Ralston Milton "Rex" Nettleford, 1933-2010. *Caribbean Quarterly*, 57(3-4), 64-78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00086495.2011.11672417>
- Pillay, S. R. (2017). Cracking the fortress: Can we really decolonize psychology? *South African Journal of Psychology*, 47(2), 135-140. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246317698059>
- Pillow, W. S. (2019). Epistemic witnessing: Theoretical responsibilities, decolonial attitude and lenticular futures. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 32(2), 118-135. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2019.1576938>
- Polk, O. R. (2019). Saidiya Hartman. Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval. *Women's Studies*, 48(6), 652-655. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00497878.2019.1639505>
- Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of power and Eurocentrism in Latin America. *International Sociology*, 15(2), 215-232. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580900015002005>
- Rabaka, R. (2015). *The negritude movement: WEB Du Bois, Leon Damas, Aime Césaire, Leopold Senghor, Frantz Fanon, and the evolution of an insurgent idea*. Lexington Books.

- Ramasubramanian, S., & Miles, C. (2018). White nationalist rhetoric, neoliberal multiculturalism and colour blind racism: Decolonial critique of Richard Spencer's campus visit. *Javnost: The Public*, 25(4), 426-440.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2018.1463352>
- Reddock, R. (2013). Diversity, difference and Caribbean feminism: The challenge of anti-racism. *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies: A Journal of Caribbean Perspectives on Gender and Feminism*, 1, 1-23. <http://hdl.handle.net/2139/15555>
- Reid, V. S. (1949). *New day*. Heinemann.
- Rhys, J. (2001). Wide sargasso sea. In Child, P (Ed), *Reading Fiction: Opening the Text* (pp. 145-151). Palgrave.  
[http://www.novelas.rodriguezalvarez.com/pdfs/ZZ\\_Rhys,%20Jean%20"Wide%20Sargasso%20Sea"-Xx-En-Sp.pdf](http://www.novelas.rodriguezalvarez.com/pdfs/ZZ_Rhys,%20Jean%20)
- Rohlehr, G. (1992). *The Shape of that Hurt and other essays*. Longman Trinidad Limited.
- Rosenberg, L. (2016). *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature*. Springer.
- Said, E. W. (2014). *Orientalism*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.
- Samuel, C. A., & Ortiz, D. L. (2021). "Method and meaning": Storytelling as decolonial praxis in the psychology of racialized peoples. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 62, 1-11.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.newideapsych.2021.100868>
- Sandoval, C. (2013). *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Vol. 18). University of Minnesota Press.
- Santos, R. C. D., Santos, J. C. D., & Silva, J. A. D. (2018). Psychology of literature and literature in psychology. *Trends in Psychology*, 26, 767-794.  
<https://doi.org/10.9788/TP2018.2-09En>
- Saude, S. (2020, October). Teaching and Learning Practices That Promote Sustainable Development and Active Citizenship. IGI Global Publisher of Timely Knowledge.

<https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/global-citizenship-education-and-sustainability-otherwise/92417>

Schmid, J. (2019). Autoethnography: Locating the self as standpoint in post-apartheid South Africa. In Laher, S., Fynn, A., & Kramer, S. (Eds.), *Transforming Research Methods in the Social Sciences. Case Studies from South Africa* (pp. 265-279). Wits University Press.

Seanor, S. E. (2008). From longing to loss: Mother-daughter relationships in the novels of Jamaica Kincaid. [MA dissertation, Florida State University]  
[http://purl.flvc.org/fsu/fd/FSU\\_migr\\_etd-1963](http://purl.flvc.org/fsu/fd/FSU_migr_etd-1963)

Segalo, P. (2018). Women speaking through embroidery: Using visual methods and poetry to narrate lived experiences. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 15(2-3), 298-304.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2018.1430013>

Selvon, S. (2014). *The lonely Londoners*. Penguin UK. (Original work published 1956).

Selvon, S. (2021). *A brighter sun*. Hachette UK. (Original work published 1952).

Senghor, L. S. (1966). Negritude: A humanism of the twentieth century. In Williams, P. & Chrisman, L. (Eds.), *Perspectives on Africa: a reader in culture, history and representation* (629-636). Wiley.

Senior, O. (1985). *Talking of Trees*. Calabash.

Shakespeare, W. (with B. Raffel, B. & Bloom, H.). (2004). *Romeo and Juliet: The annotated Shakespeare*. Yale University Press. (Original work published 1564-1616)

Shebada. Happy Corner Live (mixup Monday) [Video file]. Youtube. <https://youtu.be/mm-KECZPG2U>

- Shell, R. (2016, August 02). *History of Slavery and Early Colonisation in South Africa*. South African History Online. <https://www.sahistory.org.za>.
- Silva, J. M., Fernández, J. S., & Nguyen, A. (2021). “And now we resist”: Three testimonios on the importance of decoloniality within psychology. *Journal of Social Issues*, 78, 388-412. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12449>
- Simpson, H. (2008). The in-between worlds of Olive Senior: An interview. *Wasafiri*, 23(1), 10-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02690050701777878>
- Sindoni, M. G. (2010). Creole in the Caribbean: How oral discourse creates cultural identities. *Journal des Africanistes*, 80 (1-2), 217-236. <https://doi.org/10.4000/africanistes.2563>
- Smith, D. (2015). *The Psychology Workbook for Writers*. Wooden Tiger Press.
- Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples* (2nd ed.). Zed Books.
- Smith, Z. (2020). What do we want history to do to us?. *The New York Review of Books*, 27, 11-14. [https://landmarks.utexas.edu/sites/default/files/zadie\\_smith\\_kara\\_walker\\_what\\_do\\_we\\_want\\_history\\_to\\_do\\_to\\_us\\_the\\_new\\_york\\_review\\_of\\_books.pdf](https://landmarks.utexas.edu/sites/default/files/zadie_smith_kara_walker_what_do_we_want_history_to_do_to_us_the_new_york_review_of_books.pdf)
- Soares, J. (2006). Addressing the tensions: reflections on feminism in the Caribbean. *Caribbean Quarterly*, 52(2), 187-199. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40654570>
- Sperling, D. (2017, December 6). *In 1825, Haiti paid France \$21 billion to preserve its independence -- Time for France to pay it back*. Forbes. Retrieved DATE, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2017/12/06/in-1825-haiti-gained-independence-from-france-for-21-billion-its-time-for-france-to-pay-it-back/?sh=367f4d1f312b>

- Spivak, G. C. (with C. Nelson & L. Grossberg). (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 271-313). University of Illinois Press.
- Spivak, G. C. (2003). *Death of a Discipline*. Columbia University Press.
- Squire, C. (2015). Crisis what crisis? Discourses and Narratives of the 'Social' in Social Psychology. In Parker, I. & Shotter, J. (Eds.), *Deconstructing social psychology* (pp. 33-46). Psychology Press.
- Stó:lō. (2022, July 29). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 04:38, August 6, 2022, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St%C3%B3:l%C5%8D&oldid=1101080807>
- Tiffin, H. (2001). The institution of literature. In A. J. Arnold, V. M. Kutzinski, I. Phaf-Rheinberger, J. V. Arnold, N. M. Houston, & I. Rolfes (Eds.), *A history of literature in the Caribbean: Volume 2: English- and Dutch-speaking regions* (pp. 41-66). John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/chlel.xv.09tif>
- Trotman, A. (1993). A CLR James/Gramsci conversation in hegemony. *The CLR James Journal*, 4(1), 44-69. <https://doi.org/10.5840/clrjames1993413>
- Udofia, J. (2013). The history and shaping of Caribbean literature. *American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1(2), 56-62. <https://doi.org/10.11634/232907811604304>
- Vázquez, R. (2009). Modernity coloniality and visibility: The politics of time. *Sociological Research Online*, 14(4), 109-115. <https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.1990>

- wa Thiong'o, N. (1994). The language of African literature. In P. Williams & L. Chrisman (Eds.), *Post-colonial discourse and post-colonial theory: A reader* (pp. 435-455). (Original work published 1986).
- Wagar, C. (1981). Review of the book *Cultural action & social change: The case of Jamaica; An essay in Caribbean cultural Identity*, by R. M. Nettleford. *Leonardo*, 14(2), 160-161. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1574427>
- Walcott, D. (1948). The sea is history. In *Collected poems: 1948-1984* (pp. 364-367). Farrar, Straus & Giroux. (Original work published 1979)
- Walcott, D. (2002-2003). Epitaph for the young: XII cantos (1949). *Agenda*, 39(1-3), XX-XX. (Original work published 1949)
- Walcott, D. (1986). Derek Walcott, The Art of Poetry No. 37. *Interview with Edward Hirsch. Paris Review*, 101. <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2719/the-art-of-poetry-no-37-derek-walcott>
- Wall, C. A. (1997). "Black women, writing, and identity: Migrations of the subject" by Carol Boyce Davies (book review). *Criticism: A Quarterly for Literature and the Arts*, 39(3), 456-458. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23118132>
- Wallerstein, I. (1995). The end of what modernity? *Theory and Society*, 24(4), 471-488. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf00993520>
- Wambu, O. (2011, March 3). *Black British literature since Windrush*. BBC. [https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/literature\\_01.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/literature_01.shtml)
- Warner-Lewis, M. (2003). *Central Africa in the Caribbean: Transcending time, transforming cultures*. University of the West Indies Press.
- Wellek, R., & Warren, A. (1963). *Theory of literature* (3rd ed.). Penguin Books. (Original work published 1942)



- Wiecha, K. (2010). *Swearing and dialect: On the example of British English dialects*. GRIN Publishing.
- Willis, C. W. (1898). The mongoose in Jamaica. *Popular Science Monthly*, 54, 86-88.
- Wright, R. (2016). *Native son*. Random house. (Original work published 1940).
- Wynter, S. (1968). We must learn to sit down together and talk about a little culture: Reflections on West Indian Writing and Criticism. Institute of Jamaica. *Jamaica Journal*, 2(4), 24-32.
- Wynter, S. (1970). *Black Metamorphosis: New Natives in a New World*. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York. Unpublished manuscript.
- Wynter, S. (2003). Unsettling the coloniality of being/power/truth/freedom: Towards the human, after man, its overrepresentation—An argument. *CR: The new centennial review*, 3(3), 257-337. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ncr.2004.0015>

## Appendix A

### Sample of Creative Writing with Decolonial Commentary

The intention of this creative writing sample is to explore the power of bringing together decolonial psychology and literature - to promote marginalised voices and encourage indigenous modes of psychology, representation, and knowing into narrative storylines and writing practices.

I insert decolonial commentary and historical backstories side-by-side with sections of my short story (in bold) in an experimental attempt at a creative-critical-psychological intervention. I believe that we bring ourselves to stories, and that our being includes our own rhythm that opens a portal to connecting with and understanding stories. Any interruption to this rhythm, caused by switching back and forth between reading commentary alongside a story, is a major drawback to this experimental mode of storytelling. This is in part because the importance of feeling/intuiting the decoloniality of storytelling would seem to develop and progress organically as the free-flow rhythm of the story intensifies without interference.

One of my fondest childhood memories was of myself and my family floating haphazardly in a river that babbled along through an isolated forest high in the mountains of Jamaica. Although we could all have set our feet down at any time and let the river flow around us, we chose to hold hands, lie on our backs, and let it sweep us along in what seemed like an endless moment in time. I imagine there to be an intangible power of abstraction and free flow in storytelling that reveals and teases out the gems of (de)colonial psychology and wisdoms that a tale has to offer. Yet, because we have not always understood or been aware of the extent of the (de)coloniality of our education and knowledge there is value to having access to the history, thoughts, ideas, and knowledge that inspire a story. Presenting a story and commentary together may allow the reader to “put their feet down in the stream” at any time. They have the freedom to read the accompanying commentary or ignore it, in part or in

whole, as they wish. Perhaps this freedom of choice alone makes it an advantageous method over storytelling without decolonial commentary? Perhaps the reality that ‘the river’s’ depth and destination are actually determined by the author is a disadvantage? You be the judge.

<p><b>“Gardening in the tropics, you never know what you’ll turn up”</b></p>	<p><i>“Gardening in the tropics, you never know what you’ll turn up”</i> is a title taken from the first line of a poem by Olive Senior (2005), one of Jamaica’s leading poets and feminist voices.</p> <p>Senior uses the tropical garden as a metaphor for Caribbean feminine resistance; it is “a representation of landscapes and their re-envisioning of the scarred lands historically cultivated by their African enslaved ancestors...a process of ploughing into one’s land and repossessing one’s body.” (Moïse, 2018, p. 41).</p> <p>Using this title lets the reader immediately know that a Caribbean garden is one of the imageries through which the story will evoke deeper meanings of resistance. The implied sense of the unfamiliar and unexpected conjures the idea that ‘you’ are about to encounter epistemic disobedience.</p>
--	--

	<p>According to Samuel and Ortiz (2021), storytelling in psychological research allows the narrator to construct identity in the context of community rather than only in relation to colonial narratives. For a racialised people, storytelling contributes to decolonisation by fostering a sense of community belonging; it helps them construct a deeper collective understanding, meaning and connection to their own experiences that rejects, rather than perpetuates, colonial narratives. For this reason, writing with a sensibility grounded in a Jamaican context offers up particularised themes of decolonial resistance and correctives.</p> <p>Further, introducing the story by quoting from a Jamaican decolonial writer is a celebration of Senior and decolonial writers with the intention of popularising their voices and thoughts. The purpose of this is to "Restore the nation to the people."; which</p>
--	---

	<p>Samuel and Ortiz (4), describe as both a goal and method of decolonial psychology. They claim that decolonial psychology's use of indigenous storytellers(ing) denaturalise(s) and combats the bias in Western psychology that ranks empiricism over racialised perspective and indigenous folk wisdom.</p>
<p><b>"Lawks Miss Taylah you fair and pretty eee? Is long time I don't see you. How you do?"</b></p> <p>The shriveled street seller beamed at Taylor when she ran up for her daily handful of jaw breaking 'Bustamante backbones' - the pitch black, boiled, coconut sweets aptly named after Jamaica's first post-independence Prime Minister, Sir Alexander Bustamante. 'Busta' was a trade unionist known for his steely railing and unbreakable grit. "Fine 'tank' you Miss May. 20 cent's worth please!"</p>	<p>Rigid hierarchy was an enduring sin of colonialism and entrenched internalised 'colourism' – discrimination based on the degree of lightness in skin colour that ensured that the closer to whiteness, meant the closer to white privilege.</p> <p>Colonisers linked skin colour to economic and social class. Colourism, a distortion of the image of people of African descent, still haunts the Caribbean psyche by devaluing members of the Black community. In Jamaica colourism signifies a denial of</p>

	<p>human rights if you are black, and prosperity and leisure if you are white.</p> <p>Class distinctions based on skin colour have been hard to eradicate in Jamaica.</p> <p>Independence resulted in the transference of power from white colonials to the local black bourgeoisie. Today, this manifests as a struggle between the middle- and upper-class Jamaicans who subscribe superiority (consciously and unconsciously) to British/white culture. Painfully, dark skin negatively co-relates with self-esteem in Jamaican children (Dei, 2018; Gabriel, 2007; Hope, 2011; and Lane &amp; Mahdi, 2013).</p> <p>Scientific racism that rationalised Black inferiority was established in the work of psychologists such as Francis Galton, Paul Broca, Herbert Spencer and G.S. Hall.</p> <p>Scientific racism laid the foundation for modern day Western Psychological methodology and epistemology (Samuel and Ortiz, 2021).</p>
--	---

	<p>Transforming mainstream psychology to be of use to racialised people requires the laying bare of colourism of the sort that is exemplified in the decolonial storytelling praxis of this vignette.</p>
<p>The old woman dug into her plastic bag and gave Taylor the same size bulging handful that she gave her every time, regardless of whether Taylor asked for twenty cents worth or ten cents worth. When the dried-up woman handed it to her, she held the child's soft hands, caressing them and rubbing the red skin as though it were silk. Miss May looked up longingly into Taylor's face for the usual smile that briefly connected them. A smile that lifted the old lady's heart and stature. Something in Taylor knew that she should put her whole heart into giving that smile and allowing the crackling caress - as tomorrow she may yet only have five cents. After this endurance, she ran off to her friends, stuffing the sweets deep into the folds of her homemade denim shorts. "Hey, what's this?" she wondered. There tucked in the crease</p>	

<p>was ten more cents along with instantly formed dreams of another handful of bustas! So back around the corner she galloped.</p>	
<p>"Listen old neggah pickney, you tink a poor old neggah like me have tings to give away? The busta dem is 50 cents for two so just 'gweh' from here and don't waste mi time!" spat Miss May down at a little boy smiling up at her. "Please mammy, I only have forty cents. Can I just have one then?" simpered the <b>little black Oliver Twist</b> with the aching hope only a child can have while looking tyranny and hate in the eye. "Mammy? MAMMY? Is who you calling Mammy? Not even if your father was a gorilla could I be your mother you ugly child! Go ask yu real neggah maddah for the next ten cents and come back!" This response seemed vomited all over the little boy's frozen face. The words drenched his sharply pressed khaki school uniform.</p> <p>The words also splattered backward on to Taylor witnessing this scene from behind Miss May. She shrank away in confusion. She shook violently. Once to remove the vomited words that</p>	<p>This is a spoof of some postcolonial literature that 'literary name-dropped' (if you allow me to tongue in cheek customise the term) terms and characters taken from British literature - referred to as English Literature to the arrogant exclusion of world literature written in English. This habit was one of the peculiar ways that established the credentials of the mimic men, who while contributing greatly to the new genre of West Indian literature, still, justifiably or unjustifiable, felt the need to show that they were conversant in 'English Literature'. The term 'Mimic Men' refers to the formerly colonised, who thinking themselves inferior</p>



covered her. Then a second time to cast off the revolting knowledge that had just hit her.

Her ethic was born in that one moment. An ethic she would never violate except in cases where 'old neggahs' were genuine 'old neggahs'. She would never again be careless with the power her skin gave her. She would never again innocently assume that she controlled the lingering caresses, or that they were loving, and not a longing to possess, if even briefly, her redness. Now surely it couldn't be that she understood all of this in that instant? Perhaps in that moment, a lifetime of dinner table conversations or casually repeated class rules by elders, friend's parents, and Sunday school teachers had all snapped into place? Perhaps every caress from Miss May over the years had already rubbed it into her. That 'busta moment' was Taylor's first grown-up thought. She now understood her particular and peculiar super power. She could magically get her own way, not through any special talent, or effort, or honed discipline. No, it was by the magical effect that her skin colour had in this 1976 **jamaica** world. **How clever and moral this little**

to the British, did their best to mimic their ways, thoughts, habits and systems. This term is taken from V.S. Naipaul (1967) book of the same name.

Throughout the story the lowercase is intentionally used for the country name 'jamaica'. I can't explain fully why except

**red jamaican child was!** Yep, these were no small thoughts for a small child to have as she slowly opened up the jet black, boiled, hard candy and tossed it into her mouth. Well. They were not so much thoughts, as they were feelings that she was having while she slooowly sucked the burnt sugar, bitter sweetness. After all, everyone knew that a bustamante backbone is too tough to break. You couldn't bite directly into it or your jaw would get stuck or busted! Nah sah! This black ting.....

If you were to get any sweetness out of it, you would have to with patience, and skill, roll it around in your mouth, gently sucking and sucking until it got smaller and smaller and disappeared altogether.

to say that it feels like a reflexive action.

One reason is as a protest to the nationalism that was problematic in postcolonialism.

Yet, with an admission of my own internalised nationalism, I feel that the country spoken about in these early days of Independence does not really measure up to the 'upper-case' Jamaica of decoloniality.

In my mind it feels like this country described is wearing the short pants of a pre-schooler that has yet to graduate to the long pants of senior school. I say this fully aware of the irony of how this choice of example reveals my own deeply inculcated colonial education.

There are instances in my various stories when I do Capitalise 'Jamaica'. In these instances I hope it is clear why.

The coming-of-age challenges and behaviour of the primary female protagonist mirrors that of a newly Independent postcolonial society. This is also intended to

	<p>reflect that self-satisfied air that sometimes creeps into activist language and is part and parcel of the process of decolonising the mind.</p> <p>This narration is intended to represent the muddy confluence where postcolonialism flows into decolonialism. It is the point at which the child, and the nation, have to figure out what is 'grung wisdom' (see olive Senior, 2005), distinct from mere performance of it. In doing so a clear, vibrant, situated self can hopefully be attained.</p>
--	--