Reterritorialising the Caribbean: Marching alongside Earl Lovelace

Maria Grau Perejoan

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Reterritorialising the Caribbean: Marching alongside Earl Lovelace

Tesi Doctoral

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RETERRITORIALISING THE CARIBBEAN: MARCHING ALONGSIDE EARL LOVELACE

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Summary

This study revolves around the figure of Caribbean writer Earl Lovelace. The thesis demonstrates that the current emphasis on the deterritorialisation of the Caribbean region and focus on transnationalism has meant that cultural products produced within its geographical boundaries are sidelined in favour of what is produced beyond them. The study vindicates the relevance of the narratives produced by Trinidad-based writer, Earl Lovelace, as it argues that these offer a perspective which is either absent or less promoted in the postcolonial literary field.

In the first chapter, "Arts and Politics in the Caribbean", the relevance and power of writing as well as the centrality and paramount role of writers in their societies, and particularly in the Caribbean context, is foregrounded. The idea that art is devoid of sociopolitical effect and that the writer or any artist cannot strive for social change is rejected; instead, the figure of the writer as an intellectual is defended as one of the main actors with the responsibility to offer alternatives to the dominant narratives and in so doing contribute to the advancement of his or her society. Importantly, the necessarily collective dimension of social struggles, a crucial aspect that recurs throughout this dissertation, is here introduced.

This first chapter explores the contribution of some of the most relevant West Indian intellectuals who have aimed, with their works, at bringing unrepresented issues and peoples to the surface, thus contributing to the transformation of Caribbean society. A crucial aspect in this transformative task has been seeing the diverse nature of the region as a highly enriching feature that allows for the creation of a new future. The figure of the self-defined West Indian 'cultural worker' or intellectual, Merle Hodge, is highlighted, as it is argued that the similarities and connections with Earl Lovelace

make it impossible to study the latter without making close reference to her work. In fact, Hodge's fiction and scholarly writings, as well as an interview conducted by the researcher on November 2013, which is included at the end of the dissertation, have been instrumental in the study completion.

The second chapter, "Postcolonialism and/in the Caribbean", is divided into two sections. The first one is devoted to observing the current privileging of postcolonial texts, which accords with received notions such as 'universality'. At present, only those postcolonial texts which carefully measure their difference are appreciated, so that the only difference encouraged is that which does not cross the line of unfamiliarity and can be easily incorporated into the so called 'universal' – Western – norms. The discussion is organised along three main 'relational factors' that determine postcolonial texts' eligibility in the Western literary field: location, topics and language. These three 'relational factors' are first analysed in the postcolonial literary field in general and subsequently in the West Indian literary field in particular.

The second half of the chapter revolves around the use of theoretical approaches to analyse West Indian literary texts. It argues that even though Western academia holds transnationalism as the most appropriate and encompassing approach to deal with Caribbean literature, its applicability is limited to those writings produced in metropolitan spaces. The focus on transnationalism as the most appropriate approach to analyse postcolonial texts is questioned, as it inadvertently privileges routed over rooted cultural products. As a consequence, the Caribbean is seen as the deterritorialised culture *par excellence*, the social importance of national literatures is devalued and non-diasporic West Indian authors are sidelined. Instead, in this dissertation a national approach, currently on the wane, is vindicated, particularly for

peripheral nations. Nationalism, not understood as a static and purist notion but instead as one that is inclusionary and fluid, is defended as an approach that attends to the social and political well-being of the citizens of peripheral nations. In fact, due to the transnational nature of the Caribbean region itself, it is possible and most desirable to see the Caribbean as both an intercultural and transcultural space and to recognise that the nation-state is a reality. All in all, it is argued that the use of the two approaches side by side is the most appropriate theoretical frame through which the full range of writings coming from the Caribbean literary field can be analysed.

The third chapter, entitled "Earl Lovelace: The One Who Stayed", revolves around the exceptional figure of Trinidadian writer Earl Lovelace. First of all, the chapter analyses the circumstances that explain why Earl Lovelace has been one of the few West Indian writers to have remained and built a writing career in his home-island. The failure of the majority of postcolonial governments of the region, and in particular the Trinidadian one, to understand the centrality of the arts in the development of the region is pointed at as one of the main reasons which explains the scarcity of West Indian-based writers and artists in general. The lack of institutional support in the promotion and dissemination of culture, together with a history in which the West Indian artist has been criminalised and subsequently non-legitimised, helps explain the connection in the West Indian psyche between being an artist and living abroad – a connection which still holds true in the region.

Within these contexts, the different route chosen by Earl Lovelace is analysed through reference to his five novels, *While Gods Are Falling* (1965), *The Schoolmaster* (1968), *The Dragon Can't Dance* (1979), *The Wine of Astonishment* (1982), *Salt* (1996) and *Is Just a Movie* (2011), his collection of essays *Growing in the Dark* (2003), and the

interview conducted by the researcher on November 2013, which is included at the end of the dissertation.

The figure of Trinidadian writer Earl Lovelace serves to reclaim the importance of Caribbean-based writers. Lovelace's alternative journey distinguishes him from the majority of West Indian writers. To start with, he has made the extremely political choice of staying in Trinidad and has thus rejected the pull towards migrating, which is still a staple for the West Indian artist. However, his choice is not without consequences. As a result, he has been labelled a regional and national writer and his writings have been excluded from the mainstream postcolonial literary field. His decision to stay in the region, together with the fact that his work is not tailored for a Western readership but offers context-based narratives in which Creole language is present are pointed out as the main reasons behind his being sidelined.

This thesis foregrounds Lovelace's writings as an extremely important intervention in the Caribbean, as they prove that the Caribbean nation is also a place where people can build a life. With his life choice and in his writings Lovelace contests the representations which establish the perceived impossibility of residing in the Caribbean and the pervading idea of the region as a non-place populated by non-people who have created nothing – a construct which ultimately contributes to maintaining the region dependant on Western approval and tutelage. Furthermore, Lovelace's narratives prove that the reality of the national space is complemented by the transnational character of the region. As a Caribbean-based writer, he offers the kind of discourse that transnational approaches claim are limited to texts produced in metropolitan spaces. Thus, Lovelace's texts demonstrate that the transnational

dialogue needs the local and national perspective to be able to offer a complete picture of the Caribbean literary field.

Like many other West Indian creative writers, Lovelace has theorised on Caribbean culture and literature. Aware of the historic roots of the ills of the region but optimistic about the possibilities of constructing a new society, he has emphasised that the heterogeneity of the region is its most enriching characteristic and one that allows for the creation of a new future together. Lovelace has argued that the diverse and heterogeneous nature of the region, as its real heritage, not only needs to be valued, but it needs to be seen as a precondition which allows for the creation of a new beginning for the region or a 'New World'. Importantly, Lovelace's crucial concept of the 'New World' – which, according to the writer, has the Caribbean at its centre –, can only be collectively constructed.

Finally, the fourth chapter, entitled "Translating the Caribbean and Earl Lovelace's Works", looks back at the collective dimension of social struggles to incorporate the figure of the literary translator. While the Trinidadian author argues that the construction of a 'New World' for the region can only be accomplished through the collective involvement of the different communities, this study argues that in order to reverse the trend that sidelines non-diasporic, context-based Caribbean writings which use Creole, a similar collective endeavour is needed. This collective endeavour includes a variety of cultural agents: writers, intellectuals, activists, publishers, critics, scholars and translators alike. Indeed, ethically and politically motivated translations of West Indian literary texts can also participate in the critical network that contributes to the collective dimension of social struggles. Through their artistic renditions of a source text, literary translators can help spread these narratives' symbolic force.

This chapter focuses on the analysis of the use of Trinidadian English Creole as a crucial aspect in the translation of Earl Lovelace. It is argued that the different Creoles of the region which distinguish and enrich West Indian literature demand, first of all, that the translator should be capable of distinguishing and understanding Creole. Translators must recognise that the use of Creole alongside Standard English offers the West Indian writer the option of consciously or unconsciously encoding multiple meanings. Since West Indian texts can contain a level of ambiguity which might escape non-Creole speakers, the translator needs to also be able to distinguish Creole even when this is not orthographically represented. This study contends that the translator of West Indian texts, as its most intimate reader, cannot continue to disregard Creole, because failure to decode opaque areas for non-Creole speakers may produce impoverished translations of West Indian texts. Moreover, it is argued that since any translation of Lovelace's texts should highlight the cultural and linguistic diversity of the region, translators should resist the pull to standardise the text. Finally, translating Earl Lovelace's texts into Spanish is highlighted as an action which contributes to the reinforcement of a much needed dialogue between the linguistically-differentiated parts of the Caribbean region, namely the English-speaking and the Spanish-speaking regions, and beyond.

As a conclusion, this study seeks to render more visible and accessible the currently less-attended literatures from the postcolonial world. In the case of the Caribbean, it calls for the urgent need for Caribbean-based writers to also receive critical attention, in particular those from the younger generations who started writing after transnational approaches gained momentum, and whose works have been even more sidelined than Lovelace's. Those younger authors who have neither succumbed to leaving, have not been deemed eligible by mainstream publishing houses, and have been virtually

ignored by the Western critical establishment. Yet their narratives, like so many in other postcolonial nations, cannot continue to be ignored.

Furthermore, the analysis of the exceptionality of West Indian writer Earl Lovelace serves to exemplify the necessity that postcolonial scholars contribute to reversing the imbalance that privileges routed over rooted narratives in the postcolonial literary field. In this way, with their works postcolonial scholars are seen as marching alongside writers such as Lovelace to change the world for the better.

and so
if you see me
looking at your hands
listening when you speak
marching in your ranks
you must know
I do not sleep to dream, but dream to change the world.

From "Looking at Your Hands"
Martin Carter (1951)

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INTRODUCTION

1. Objectives: Routes and the Condition of 'Visitor'

At the Symposium "Decolonial Aesthetics from the Americas" celebrated at the University of Toronto in October 2013, participants were asked to recount their life stories from what organisers termed 'a decolonial perspective'. Diverse and interesting were the stories of those of us united on that occasion but the one I could most relate to was postcolonial scholar Walter Mignolo's story. He explained that he pursued his undergraduate studies in his home-country, Argentina, and subsequently moved to Paris for his graduate studies. At the time he believed that his displacement from the South (Argentina), to the North (France), would 'enlighten' him, since Paris was the place one would go to 'get civilised'. Once in Paris, though, he felt he was only another *sudaca,* he unexpectedly felt victim of the prejudiced and homogenising

metropolitan view, and he started to question his previous assumptions about Paris and Europe in general, and the civilising mission his moving to the North presumably entailed. Mignolo's story made me reflect on my own life story. I travelled in exactly the opposite direction to Mignolo's. I did my undergraduate degree in Europe (Barcelona), and then went on to continue with my postgraduate education in Trinidad and Tobago, where I pursued an M. Phil in Cultural Studies with a thesis entitled "Earl Lovelace's The Dragon Can't Dance: An Annotated Translation into Spanish" – where the seeds of this dissertation are to be found. I moved from Europe (North) to the Caribbean (South) in what could be called a 'decolonising journey'. My displacement, the reverse of Mignolo's, made me aware of the privileges with which I was endowed, and made me question previous assumptions that up until then were common-sensical. If Mignolo became another *sudaca*, I became *whitey* and, with time, I sometimes turned into *redz* or *chauvine*; and along with the epithet I would be called, my perspective also changed, evolved and enabled me to see the place in which I stood in the 'colonial matrix of power'.[1]

I would like to believe that my uncommon and different route – since Mignolo's life story can arguably be seen as more common among scholars – places me at a different position from that of the usual Western scholar. My different route might seem quite appropriate to analyse the Caribbean writer explored in this dissertation: Trinidadian novelist Earl Lovelace. As I will argue at length, Lovelace has taken in many ways a different route to the majority of his Caribbean counterparts, a fact which has not only

[1] 'Colonial matrix of power' is a term used by Walter Mignolo to refer to the global coloniality which characterises modernity. According to Mignolo, the 'colonial matrix of power' is articulated through four main spheres of activity: the struggle for economic control, the struggle for the control of political authority, control of public sphere and "control of knowledge through education and the subordination of existing forms of knowledge" (Mignolo, 2000: 36).

distinguished but also enriched Lovelace's works. Hopefully my different route also distinguishes and enriches this dissertation.

I would like to begin by stating that in providing my perspective over a culture in which I was not born, I have been very careful in trying not to fall into inaccuracies, reductions or stereotyped conceptions. My perspective has been informed by what Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe referred to as the condition of 'visitor'. In a conversation with Caribbean-British writer Caryl Phillips, Achebe explains that outsiders can write about other cultures; in particular he argues that outsiders can write about Africa, but need to do so from their condition of 'visitors':

> We should welcome the rendering of our stories by others, because a visitor can sometimes see what the owner of the house has ignored. But they must visit with respect and not be concerned with the colour of skin, or the shape of nose, or the condition of the technology in the house. (qtd. in Phillips, 2011: 206)

Achebe foregrounds and welcomes the perspective of a visitor but, at the same time, warns that the visitor needs to enter or 'visit' the culture with respect and without prejudices or narrow-mindedness; otherwise works written by 'visitors' could add to the damaging visions being constantly reproduced in the West.

My different route as well as the awareness of my condition of 'visitor' have shaped this dissertation enormously. These two crucial factors have made me aware of the dangers existing in Western academia as regards postcolonial literatures. I have been made particularly aware of the privileging of diasporic postcolonial writing. In this sense, postcolonial scholar Elleke Boehmer has argued that postcolonial writing will eventually be divided into two strains of interest: a metropolitan approach, located largely in the West, and whose focus lies on literatures written in English, or other European languages, mainly by migrant, and therefore more easily accessible writers;

and on the other hand, a more context-based line of study, more focused on particular vernacular and cultural regions (Boehmer, 1995: 249).

The privileging of the first strain of interest, which is currently used to define postcolonial literature in general, is a reality. Aware of the focus on diasporic cultural products, this study seeks to work for the advancement of the second strain of interest, which nowadays can be said, to a great extent, to lie concealed within the field of Postcolonial Studies. This study is not interested in those literatures that easily fit Western universities curricula; instead, it gives visibility to an island-based author whose narratives do not "accord well with political and critical agendas in Western universities" (Boehmer, 1995: 249); and are most frequently regarded as opaque, dense or less readable by Western academia.

This study contributes to furthering the visibility of non-diasporic, context-based cultural products in the current postcolonial literary field. It is centred on Trinidadian writer Earl Lovelace, one of the very few writers from the West Indies who has consciously rejected the option of exile. All in all, the intertwining of different routes that characterise this dissertation seeks to aid in reversing the extant trend in the Western literary field that sidelines non-diasporic postcolonial writing.

2. Methodology

Inevitably, the focus on the aforementioned second strain of interest of postcolonial writing shapes the methodological approaches employed in this dissertation. The focus on Earl Lovelace's narratives, context-based texts written by a Caribbean-based writer in a national linguistic medium, conditions the applicability of critical theories. As a

result, throughout this dissertation there are instances in which, on the one hand, theoretical approaches currently being favoured by Western academia are interrogated and sometimes rejected, and on the other, approaches which currently seem to be on the wane are recovered for their relevance in the West Indian context.

As regards critical theories, it must also be noted that the applicability of Western theories outside of the traditions and cultures from which these arose is questioned. As Elleke Boehmer recognises, critical theories based largely on the once – or still – colonizing metropolis might not always work to analyse post-imperial writing. Postcolonial critics should look more deeply into the culture from which a text stems in order to adjudge the extent to which a certain body of theory can be applied. As Boehmer reminds us, criticism must address itself to the particularity of different textual situations (Boehmer, 1995: 248).

This study is grounded on the conviction that postcolonial critics and scholars should move beyond a dependency on metropolitan theory and complement it with the use of theoretical paradigms which may be more appropriate to the problems of the Caribbean region, and can thus be applicable to context-based narratives such as Lovelace's. Focusing on the West Indian literary context, the issue of the applicability of Western theories in the Caribbean has been discussed by West Indian scholar Gordon Rohlehr. Rohlehr urges the critic to be aware of the context in which writers are inscribed and warns her that

> [o]ne will have to study the Caribbean people and…listen to them, before one can learn to make important or relevant critical statements on the new writers. The critic's business is first to understand the contexts out of which the work that he is examining grows. Our context is simply not Leavis's. (Rohlehr, 1996: 330)

Rohlehr does not reject the applicability of Western theories such as the ones proposed by British literary critic F.R. Leavis, but argues that Caribbean Studies scholars should be aware of the distinct reality or realities of the region and value these theories' applicability accordingly.[2]

Another crucial aspect that shapes this study in terms of methodology is the recognition that, alongside the creative writer, scholars and critics can play a paramount role in social struggles. Scholars, critics and creative writers can be seen as collectively engaged in offering alternative constructions that question mainstream literary representations of the non-West. This way, contrary to scholars who remain enclosed in their ivory towers and regard the scholar's commitment as a violation of "axiological neutrality", as French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu argues, the figure of the scholar and the critic is here proposed as an indispensable figure in social struggles (Bourdieu, 2003: 18). Bourdieu argues that the critic and the scholar are part of a complex institutional framework which authorises, enables, empowers and legitimises literature and its producers, that is, its writers. In this sense, the French sociologist argues that

> [e]very critical affirmation, contains, on the one hand, a recognition of the value of the work which occasions it, which is thus designated as a worthy object of legitimate discourse… and on the other hand an affirmation of its own legitimacy. All critics declare not only their judgement of the work but also their claim to the right to talk about it and judge it. In short, they take part in a struggle for the monopoly of legitimate discourse about the work of art, and consequently in the production of the value of the work of art. (Bourdieu, 1993: 35-6)

[2] On the one hand, it can be argued that Rohlehr might have clearly opposed Leavisite notions such as seeing literature in terms of "universal values". On the other, Rohlehr's observation could also be read as a direct reference to Trinidadian literary critic Kenneth Ramchand, whose critical stance relied strongly on the aforementioned scholar. Jamaican scholar Edward Baugh explains that in the 1970's Leavisite criticism was in its heyday in the world of English studies and Ramchand, having studied at the University of Edinburgh, leaned heavily on F.R. Leavis to analyse West Indian writings (Baugh, *Confessions of a Critic* 2006: 18).

This study responds to the recognition by many postcolonial scholars that the current trend privileging context-based writing produced by migrant writers needs to be reversed. It is my claim that postcolonial scholars and critics have the responsibility to help redress the imbalance that privileges non-diasporic writing, to ultimately offer a more complete picture of postcolonial writing. In this sense, Chelva Kanaganayakam states that postcolonial critical practice on literature can play a crucial role in the relation between the production of literature and its reception and popularisation. The Tamil Canadian critic has argued:

> Literary criticism, particularly about writing that is not readily available internationally and deals with relatively unfamiliar historical and political contexts, carries an additional responsibility: the critic has a crucial role to play in filtering this writing for international consumption in mediating the significance of that literature. (Kanaganayakam, 1998: 52)

Thus, the postcolonial critic can play a crucial role in the international consumption of postcolonial literature which is not favoured in the Western literary field. In a similar view, Indian-American scholar Pavithra Narayanan argues that critics and scholars hold the responsibility to work on writers whose voices are

> seldom, or never, heard within debates about the direction of postcolonial studies, in postcolonial research and coursework (in order to expand) the discipline of postcolonial studies, but also because every name unfamiliar to the reader reveals… the role of scholars and teachers who select, include, exclude, and determine who will be read in their classes. (Narayanan, 2012: 11)

Narayanan stresses that the role of scholars and critics in the advancement of less favoured writing can be twofold. Critics and scholars can contribute to making audible those voices which are sidelined in the Western literary field through their choices to include these writers in their theorising as well as in the curriculum of their subjects.

Focusing on the critic and scholar in the West Indian literary field, it must be first noted that one characteristic of the theorising of West Indian literary texts is the fact that many of the scholars or critics who have theorised about West Indian culture, are at the same time creative writers themselves.[3] Edward Baugh explains that when the Department of English of the University of the West Indies held the first conference of West Indian literature in 1981,[4] it was decided that it would be entitled "Critical Approaches to West Indian Literature" because by then a respectable body of critical analysis was emerging. Baugh argues that in that first conference it already became clear that

> some of our major creative writers – notably Brathwaite, Harris, Walcott and Lamming – had already been theorizing, theorizing and differentiating the Caribbean, and in ways that would turn out to be signs of things to come. Small wonder that, for instance, the proponents of the notions of Postcolonial theory should find the writers just named to be among the sources of that theory, as witness Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) and their *Post-colonial Studies Reader* (1995). (Baugh, 2005: 3-4)

Baugh further explains that the aforementioned West Indian writers were not only among the few to commence theorising on West Indian culture, and their theorisings used in pioneering works on postcolonial theory, but they even anticipated some of the major issues that with time would distinguish West Indian Literature.

For Trinidadian scholar Jennifer Rahim, the fact that many of the foundational theorists and critics of Caribbean literature and culture are also creative writers has enormous value. Rahim argues that as a consequence of the convergence in the West Indian literary field of the figures of the creative writer and its theoretician, "literary

[3] This will be clearly seen throughout this dissertation, as many of the West Indian critics who are at the same time creative writers are studied: Dionne Brand, Edward Kamau Brathwaite, Erna Brodber, Martin Carter Wilson Harris, Merle Hodge, Barbara Lalla, George Lamming, Earl Lovelace, Kei Miller, Marlene Nourbese-Philip, Caryl Phillips, Jennifer Rahim, Derek Walcott, Elizabeth Walcott-Hackshaw.
[4] This was the first in what was to be a series of annual conferences. The 2014 edition marks the 33rd anniversary of the event.

scholarship is prevented from becoming esoteric and rootless, as thought and practice, concept and method are shaped by cultural production itself" (Rahim, 2013: 17). Rahim foregrounds that the close knit connection between literature and its theorising is seen by many as an ideal situation because it prevents the two disciplines from distancing and becoming dissociated.[5]

Many of the different circumstances here explained converge in the figure of Earl Lovelace. First of all, it must be noted that he also belongs to the group of creative writers who have theorised on Caribbean culture and literature. Moreover, the interest on the aforementioned collective dimension of social struggles is further reinforced since both in his fictional and non-fictional texts he regards the collective involvement as a precondition for the improvement of the region. Lovelace holds the firm belief that the construction of a New World, a new starting point for the region, can only be a reality when the different ethnic communities in the Caribbean come together and are able to see each other afresh. In particular, he argues that his task as a writer is to seek "to find a way to speak for everybody and to speak through everybody" in order to contribute to the task of collectively creating a new beginning for the region (Lovelace, *Earl Lovelace Fiction Writer* 2003: 21). Consequently, in choosing to analyse his texts the critic and scholar not only contributes to their advancement and visibilization, but he or she also contributes to the creative writer's goal. In fact, Lovelace has also emphasised the responsibility of the scholar alongside that of the writer. For Lovelace, the writer points toward the future, while the group acts as the repository of the past, and, for its part, the critic

[5] In fact, this is such a pervasive characteristic in West Indian theory and criticism that even the same critics who are here included to explain this phenomenon, Edward Baugh and Jennifer Rahim, also exemplify this feature since they are also creative writers themselves – they are both renowned poets.

> situated in the present, has to call forth both positions. She has to be alert, aware. She has to think what is possible, what can be achieved. She has to do what we all have to do — the best we can by understanding some of the issues, by embracing risk and courage and truthfulness. (Lovelace, 2004)

Lovelace recognises that critics contribute, alongside not only the creative writer but also the group, to the task of offering a new beginning for the region. He acknowledges the great responsibility of the critic in the social struggles and maintains that, in fact, “Postcolonial critics have their hands full” (ibid.). In light of the historical circumstances of the region, Jennifer Rahim also argues that the scholar and critic’s role in the Caribbean should also be foregrounded:

> If history has, to various degrees, unhoused all the peoples that compose Caribbean civilization, the task of literary theory and criticism is to co-partner with its creative writers in constructing a house with rooms enough for all of us. The critic’s mandate is therefore not merely to elucidate the text but also challenge and so deepen the humanization of worlds. (Rahim, 2013: 40)

For Rahim, scholars and critics together with creative writers should cooperatively work towards the same aim, namely to put their respective works at the service of what she refers to as a “humanizing (r)evolution” (ibid, 39). Rahim argues that scholars and creative writers can be said to co-partner in this humanising objective, that is, as postcolonial scholar Allison Donnell argues, these two bodies of writing do not simply represent “joint [but] joined efforts” (Donnell, 2012: 84) towards this humanising mission, or in Lovelace’s words, towards seeing everybody’s common “humanness” (Lovelace, 1998: 167).

3. Structure

This is not a typical thesis. This is a political thesis. It is also an academic thesis, but above all it is a political work. In this thesis the emphasis is on the one hand on the collective dimension of social struggles, and on the other on the reterritorialisation of the Caribbean. The evolution of some crucial aspects which are discussed at length throughout the study explain a certain recurrence. The collective dimension of this study which can be seen, as its title explains, as part of a collective march, makes necessary the incorporation of more actors as the study evolves, in the manner of a real march. This is why, in this study every repetition also entails a difference and a step forward in the collective fight for social advancement.

The study is divided into four chapters. In the first one, “Arts and Politics in the Caribbean”, the relevance and power of writing as well as the centrality and paramount role of writers in their societies, and particularly in the Caribbean context, is foregrounded. The idea that art is devoid of sociopolitical effect and that the writer or any artist cannot strive for social change is rejected; instead the figure of the writer as an intellectual, is defended as one of the actors with the responsibility for offering alternatives to the dominant narratives and in so doing contribute to the advancement of his or her society. Importantly, the necessarily collective dimension of social struggles, a crucial aspect that recurs throughout this dissertation, is here introduced. The section then moves on to analyse Trinidadian scholar, creative writer and activist Merle Hodge. It is impossible to study Earl Lovelace without also making close reference to the figure of Hodge, who has hugely contributed to the advancement of Trinidad and the region as a whole.[6] The chapter closes with a discussion of the figure

[6] The study also includes an interview with Merle Hodge conducted by the author on November 2013.

of the Caribbean intellectual and its connection with exile and displacement, experiences which have shaped and continue to shape the West Indian literary field.

The second chapter, “Postcolonialism and/in the Caribbean”, is divided into two sections. The first one is devoted to observing the current privileging of postcolonial texts which accords with received notions such as ‘universality’. The discussion is organized along three main ‘relational factors’ that determine postcolonial texts’ eligibility in the Western literary field: location, topics and language. These three ‘relational factors’ are first analysed in the postcolonial literary field in general and subsequently in the West Indian literary field in particular. The second half of the chapter revolves around the use of theoretical approaches to analyse West Indian literary texts, in particular texts which belong to the second strain of interest established by Boehmer, that is, context-based texts written by non-migrant writers. The focus on Transnationalism, which is currently favoured by Western academia as the most appropriate approach to analyse postcolonial texts, is questioned, as it inadvertently privileges routed over rooted cultural products. As a consequence of the focus on the transnational, the Caribbean is seen as the deterritorialised culture *par excellence*; the social importance of national literatures is devalued and non-diasporic West Indian authors are sidelined. Instead, in this dissertation a national approach, currently on the wane, is vindicated, particularly for peripheral nations. Nationalism, not understood as a static and purist notion but instead as one that is inclusionary and fluid, is defended as an approach that attends to the social and political well-being of the citizens of peripheral nations. All in all, it is argued that the use of the two approaches side by side is the most appropriate theoretical frame through which to analyse Caribbean literary texts.

The third chapter, entitled "Earl Lovelace: The One Who Stayed", revolves around the exceptional figure of Trinidadian writer Earl Lovelace, the main focus of this study. First of all, the chapter analyses the circumstances that explain why Earl Lovelace has been one of the few West Indian writers to have remained and built a writing career in his home-island. After that, the different route chosen by Lovelace is analysed through reference to his five novels, *While Gods Are Falling* (1965), *The Schoolmaster* (1968), *The Dragon Can't Dance* (1979), *The Wine of Astonishment* (1982), *Salt* (1996) and *Is Just a Movie* (2011), his collection of essays *Growing in the Dark* (2003), and the interview I conducted on November 2013, which is included at the end of this dissertation. The chapter closes with Lovelace's crucial concepts of the New World – which, according to this writer, has the Caribbean at its centre –, which in his view can only be collectively constructed, along with the necessity for reparation in order to settle accounts and create a new beginning for the region.

Finally, the fourth chapter, entitled "Translating the Caribbean and Earl Lovelace's Works", looks back at the collective dimension of social struggles to incorporate the figure of the literary translator as another intellectual who can also contribute to the task of advancing context-based texts such as Lovelace's, and to the task of constructing a new future for the region. This chapter focuses on the analysis of the use of Trinidadian English Creole as a crucial aspect in the translation of Earl Lovelace. In the chapter I argue that the different Creoles of the region which distinguish and enrich West Indian literature demand, first of all, that the translator should be capable of distinguishing and understanding Creole, and secondly they demand that the translator resists the pull to standardise the text. Finally, translating Earl Lovelace's texts into Spanish is highlighted as an action which contributes to the reinforcement of a much needed dialogue between the linguistically-differentiated

parts of the Caribbean region, namely the English-speaking and the Spanish-speaking regions, and beyond.

The dissertation closes with an outline of the main points analysed, and an enumeration of possible future lines of research. Overall, my research seeks to render more visible and accessible the currently less-attended literatures from the postcolonial world. The analysis of the exceptionality of West Indian writer Earl Lovelace serves to exemplify the necessity that postcolonial scholars contribute to reversing the imbalance that privileges routed over rooted narratives in the postcolonial literary field. Importantly, this study is born of the conviction that postcolonial scholars should be, with their works, marching alongside writers such as Lovelace to change the world.

4. A Note on Terminology: Caribbean, West Indian, Antillean and Trinidadian

Traditionally the term 'Caribbean' has been used for the region in its widest geographical sense, and the term 'West Indian' has been reserved for the Anglophone territories. The less commonly used term 'Antillean', synonymous of the former, has been preferred by few authors, among them St. Lucian poet and playwright Derek Walcott.[7] Bearing this in mind, it must be noted that, first of all, the difference between 'Caribbean' and 'West Indian' has become blurred with time; and secondly, the theorising of the region has evolved, according to Jamaican scholar Edward Baugh, in terms of 'the Caribbean' rather than 'the West Indies' (Baugh, 2010: 6).

[7] See for example his Nobel acceptance speech entitled "The Antilles: Fragments of and Epic Memory".

On the one hand, Caribbean migration to English-speaking Metropolitan areas would explain cases such as those of Junot Diaz and Edwidge Danticat, which according to Jamaican scholar and writer Kei Miller, destabilise the convention of using 'West Indian' for the literature from the English-speaking Caribbean (Miller, 2012: 8). For Miller, Junot Diaz, a Dominican-American writer who writes in English, and Edwidge Danticat, a Haitian-American writer who also writes in English, prove that these terms have become unstable. This is why in the introduction to his PhD dissertation, entitled "Jamaica to the world: a study of Jamaican (and West Indian) epistolary practices", Miller explains that at times he uses the terms 'West Indian' and 'Caribbean' interchangeably. On the other hand, Baugh points out that the current tendency to use 'Caribbean' instead of 'West Indian', responds to a feeling that the former is "the more accommodating term, the more indigenous, the more metaphorically enabling, suggesting in itself the protean vibrancy of the Caribbean sea" (Baugh, 2010: 5). It can thus be argued that the term 'Caribbean' best illustrates the move away from divisions heir to a colonial past, which according to Martinican scholar Édouard Glissant, undermine "the full realisation of a common "Caribeanness" (qtd. in Glover and Munro, 2013: 85).

Finally, since this research focuses on an author from Trinidad and Tobago the term 'Trinidadian' is necessarily also used alongside the terms 'West Indian' and 'Caribbean'. Trinidad can arguably be defined as one of the islands within the Caribbean region which most differs from its neighbours. In this sense, Peepal Tree Press editor Jeremy Poynting observes that Trinidad is significantly different

> in its ethnic make-up (in the way that its fairly balanced representation of Africans and Indians in the population has – unlike in Guyana – allowed changes of government by political parties dominated by one group or the other); in its history of governance (Spanish, French, British) and the way this

> is reflected in language, religion and culture; in the comparative brevity of the period of slavery and the size of the free coloured group at emancipation; and in its long (and continuing) experience of immigration from elsewhere in the Caribbean. (Poynting, 2013: 75)

All these aspects that distinguish the twin-island nation, most of which will be expanded on in the course of this dissertation, should not be read as ignoring Trinidad and Trinidadian people's Caribbean character. Even though Trinidad is always the focus of Earl Lovelace's writings, the nation works as a microcosm for the region as a whole. This way, Glissant's insight as regards Martinique could similarly be applied to Lovelace's use of Trinidad: "One is not Martinican because of wanting to be Caribbean. Rather, one is really Caribbean because of wanting to become Martinican" (qtd. in Pouchet Paquet, 2006: 12). Thus, the term 'Trinidadian' should not be understood as sidelining but rather as complementing the island's regional character.

1. ART AND POLITICS IN THE CARIBBEAN

The first chapter of this study is divided into two main parts. First of all, it is argued that arts and writing in particular can play a paramount role in the present world. Although self-doubt is described as a staple for Caribbean writers, ultimately, writing is defined as a revolutionary tool which holds the potential of breaking with silences and creating liberating and empowering spaces. The focus in this first part moves to the connection between art and activism in the West Indian literary context, to then analyse the figure of Trinidadian writer Merle Hodge who can be said to best exemplify the figure of the West Indian-based writer and activist. As for the second part of this section, the figure of the intellectual is analysed particularly in its connection with exile. Exile, either metaphorical or physical, is described as a necessary condition for the intellectual. The section closes with an exploration of the

historically close knit relationship between the figure of the intellectual and exile in the Caribbean, and in particular with the birth of the West Indian novel and exile.

1.1. *Is Just a Movie?* and the Fragile Condition of Arts

Economics is a function of culture.
(Lamming, 1999: viii)

The creative act in all its forms plays a paramount and indispensable role in every society. The power of the arts, currently underestimated in a world guided by the oppressiveness of the rule of the market, is foregrounded as a key factor in the social struggle. In the present circumstances of a world which values what is economically profitable and where art is gradually being pushed aside and regarded as an aspect societies can make do without, this dissertation insists on the revolutionary and transformative power of the arts.

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu explains that the field of cultural production is dominated by the logic of economic profit – particularly short-term economic profit. He argues that not only is the field exclusively oriented towards commercial ends, but it is also subject "to the verdicts of those who dominate mass media production" (Bourdieu, 2003: 70). These circumstances have led Bourdieu to argue that cultural production as practised today actually negates culture; a battle must therefore be fought to put an end to the perpetuation of the current economic and social conditions of cultural production which ultimately threaten culture (ibid., 71).

At the same time, Bourdieu foregrounds the value of cultural products – threatened in the current circumstances – which do not aim at economic but symbolic capital. Bordieu argues that artists as

> [c]ultural producers hold a specific power, the properly symbolic power of showing things and making people believe in them, of revealing in an explicit, objectified way the more or less confused, vague, unformulated, even unformulable experiences of the natural world and the social world, and of thereby bringing them into existence. (Bourdieu, 1990: 147)

For Bourdieu the confused and vague experiences that make up reality are explained in cultural products thanks to their symbolic power. Thus, it can be argued that the concept of symbolic power grants cultural products their transformative thrust. In this sense, and focusing on literature in particular, Trinidadian writer Merle Hodge argues that when fiction draws upon one's own world,

> [it] helps us to first make sense of our world, for it shows us underlying patterns and connections which give our reality a satisfying order. For fiction (and perhaps all art) casts a redeeming and enhancing light back upon the reality from which it springs, endowing it with meaning, credibility and authority. It also allows a people not only to know its own world but to take it seriously. (Hodge, 1990: 206)

Bourdieu and Hodge agree on the paramount role of the symbolic power of arts. For Hodge, the crucial role of fiction responds to the fact that when it recreates one's reality, it gives shape, order and meaning to one's own world – what Bourdieu refers to as symbolic power. Particularly, Hodge argues that fiction plays an essential part in the process of self-identification in any society because it throws back at a community images of itself and in so doing this reality is endowed with meaning, credibility and authority. In fact, when fiction offers a representation of people who have hardly ever been able to see themselves reflected as agents and not objects in fiction, it allows fiction to have the aforementioned transformative role, and even the task of writing becomes, according to Hodge, a guerrilla activity (Hodge, 1990: 206).[8]

[8] References to war metaphors will be a constant. See for example, writing fiction seen as a guerrilla activity, the power of fiction to fight battles, or the many fronts open in the field of cultural production.

It must be noted that the power of the arts can also be put at the service of the dominant, which, as Bourdieu has argued, threatens the existence of culture. In this sense, Merle Hodge reminds us that the immense political power which allows writing to have the potential of being revolutionary, has also worked to legitimise imperialism. During colonial times, writing served to maintain a society's oppression and instil a sense of, in Earl Lovelace's words, "second-classness" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 163) to colonial subjects. Hodge warns that the power of writing is such that it has been used as "a prime weapon of political conservatism. That is why it was important for us to study the literature of the British Isles during the colonial era" (Hodge, 1990: 206).[9]

However, not only do current circumstances in the field of cultural production seem to question the indispensable dimension of arts, but the fact that its beneficial effects are not always immediate or easily verifiable has also contributed to questioning the usefulness of the arts. In fact, the arts in general can be said to suffer from an inherent fragility which complicates fully appreciating their invaluable role. As such, at least in the Caribbean, a tendency to question the importance of their role in society, even on the part of the artist themselves, is a persistent myth. In *Intellectuals in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean* (1992) British scholar Alistair Henessy actually argues that doubt and self-questioning, together with challenging accepted verities, are among the burdens Caribbean intellectuals have to bear (Hennessy, 1992: xi). The inherent fragility of arts in the region will be demonstrated by reference to four writers, either Caribbean or of Caribbean descent, who have been pushed, at some point in their

[9] Hodge points out that currently West Indians do not consume their own fiction and West Indian society is "occupied by foreign fiction" (Hodge, 1990: 206). That is why, in such circumstances creative writing becomes for her, "a guerrilla activity", a way of counterattacking foreign fiction which portrays a reality in which West Indians cannot see themselves reflected and therefore feel alienated.

lives, to call into question the usefulness of writing. The experiences these writers have gone through have made them doubt over the use of writing and temporarily they might have thought that writing was derisory, particularly when the society it stems from is faced with urgent needs. These four different Caribbean writers, Caryl Phillips, Dany Laferrière, Edwidge Danticat and Dionne Brand, admit to having endured the intellectual's burden of questioning the usefulness of art and their own roles as artists in society.

Caribbean-British writer Caryl Phillips is the first example of an artist who at some point in his career has found himself at odds with the idea of the social importance of art. Phillips explains that this was his first reaction upon seeing the state of Sierra Leone during a visit to establish a PEN office in the country. He could not discern the benefits of the mission and needed Sierra Leonean writer and secretary of the local branch of PEN Mike Butscher to dispel his doubts. Phillips hoped Butscher

> might enlighten me as to what role he imagined writers might play in a country whose average annual income is a mere US$470 per person, making it the poorest country on earth, and in which life expectancy is 34.5 years according to the UN Human Development Report, 2003. Since my arrival in Sierra Leone I have been wondering about the relevance of writing and writers in a nation whose social and economic infrastructure appears to be permanently close to collapse. (Phillips, 2011: 289)

Butscher, in fact, allayed his fears when he reassured Phillips that "[i]n a bad, bad situation like this […] we need to hear from writers. It is writers who remind people who they are and where they come from" (Phillips, 2011: 300). Butscher reminded Philips of the connection between the creation of a PEN office, and the improvement of the nation. Phillips recognised that a Sierra Leonean PEN office would, in fact, stimulate and support Sierra Leonean writers writing and publishing. In the end,

Phillips regained his faith in the necessity of fiction, and he could clearly see that it is precisely in countries like Sierra Leone, which are barely functioning and whose history has not been fully recorded and made public, where writing is most necessary for the advancement of the nation.

Haitian-Canadian writer Dany Laferrière also questioned the benefits of literature at some point in his literary career. In his case, it was the 2010 earthquake in Haiti which served to test his faith in the centrality of literature. Any hint of self-doubt regarding his role as a writer disappeared in 2010 when he was in in Port-au-Prince for the literary festival "Étonnants Voyageurs" and during which time he witnessed the earthquake that struck the capital of the nation. Laferrière took as his endeavour to give his view:

> People are screaming in pain all around you. Children are running in the streets. Some people start talking about the end of the world. But writing, for me, was as important as taking care of the injured [...] It's not all authors who get a chance to test literature and their relationship to it. I no longer ask myself if it has any use. (qtd. in Jaggi, 2013)

The reaction of Laferrière at seeing his city falling down in front of his own eyes was to write. Such a reaction reassured his belief in the power of writing. His witnessing the earthquake and its aftermath not only eliminated any doubt he might have had about the usefulness of writing, but it also allowed him to reassert the central and urgent role of literature; a role that adds to that of doctors and nurses in a society that has been physically as well as psychologically shaken. Laferrière was glad to be in Port-au-Prince to be able to send his reports and in this way complement those coming from foreign journalists. As a writer and director of the aforementioned Haitian literary festival, Michel Le Bris asserts that these reports from foreign journalists

simply mirrored their fears and prejudices (Le Bris, 2010: 29) in arguably one of the most misunderstood Caribbean nations.[10] In contrast to these prejudiced accounts, Laferrière's writings offered a perspective which sought to bear witness to the courage of the people in dealing with the earthquake and even help them regain their sense of pride. As opposed to the great majority of reports sent by foreign journalists, his writings gave testimony to the dignity and solidarity of the Haitian population in the midst of a country in ruins. This would explain why when Laferrière's memoir of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, entitled *The World Is Moving Around Me: A Memoir of the Haiti Earthquake* (2013), was published in Haiti – where he waives his royalties, allowing local publishers to sell his books "for the price of the paper" (qtd. in Jaggi, 2013) –, his signing in Port-au-Prince lasted 12 hours. Laferrière's portrayal of the event and the dignifying account of their reaction was empowering for the Haitian population. The writer recognises that his writings touched everybody, and he could feel that those lining up for his signature: "were very poor people, who recognised themselves in the book" (ibid.). Thus, Laferrière saw the potential of art, particularly his writing, when it throws back at a community images of itself.

For Haitian-American writer Edwidge Danticat, doubt and self-questioning are two staple burdens for most artists. Apart from claiming that doubting the usefulness of the

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[10] In this regard, on the 15th January 2014 the *Col·legi de Perdiodistes de Catalunya* (Journalists Association of Catalunya) organised a seminar entitled *"Haití 4t aniversari del terratrèmol: ha millorat la informació sobre el món?* (Haiti 4th Anniversary of the Earthquake: Has World News Coverage Improved?) with the participation of various journalist who had covered the 2010 earthquake for Catalan media. Some of the opinions of the jorunalists present at the event were riddled with colonial ideology, as is the case of the journalist who covered the earthquake for TV3 (Catalan public TV channel), who maintained that it was not possible to carry out proper work in the country because "it was not a civilised [sic] country". Another opinion also worth mentioning was that of the journalist who covered the 2010 earthquake for the Catalan newspaper El Periódico de Catalunya, who, when asked why the reports sent from Haiti were full of stereotypes, argued that stereotypes are the reality of the country – which complicated her job as a journalist – therefore she was only portraying the reality. Not realising, though, that she was not portraying the only reality that exists in Haiti, and that stereotyped reports contribute to the version of Haiti that is constantly being reproduced in the West and which ultimately justifies the status quo.

writing career is also part of an artist's life, Danticat states that for writers it is common not to acknowledge the importance of one's role, and to wonder if other professions would have actually been more useful. Hence, she wonders whether

> it might have been simpler, safer to become the more helpful doctors, lawyers, engineers our parents wanted us to be. When our worlds are literally crumbling, we tell ourselves how right they may have been, our elders, about our passive careers as distant witnesses. (Danticat, 2010: 19)

Danticat acknowledges that the effects that her work as a writer in a society such as Haiti's can be easily overlooked. Thus, at some point writers might succumb to the temptation of seeing themselves as passive and in her case – as she is a diasporic writer – also distant witnesses. However, once she overcomes this impulse – inherent to the condition of artist – to negate her role, she goes on to beautifully describe in detail the paramount role artists play in society. Danticat equates the role of writers to that of the ancient Egyptian artists who created pieces of memorial art which would prevent slaves from having to be buried alive next to wealthy men and women. Through this comparison, she recognises art's crucial value and asserts that art holds the power to avoid deaths. Thus, to Danticat, each piece of art has the potential of being a "stand-in for a life, a soul, a future" (Danticat, 2010: 20).

Finally, Trinidadian-Canadian writer Dionne Brand, also admits at having questioned the value of poetry at certain moments in her life. Particularly, Brand explains that at times pressing issues seemed to overshadow the importance of writing:

> I've had moments when the life of my people has been so overwhelming to bear that poetry seemed useless, and I cannot say that there is any moment that I do not think that now. At times […] it has been more important to figure out how a woman without papers in Toronto can have a baby and not be caught and deported; at times it has been more helpful to organise a demonstration in front of the police station at Bay and College Streets. Often there's been no

> reason whatsoever to write poetry. There are days when I cannot think of a single reason to write this life down. (Brand, 1998: 196)

Brand feared that poetry seemed not to be the answer when she felt directly confronted with the hardships of reality. Instead, Brand considered direct political actions and demonstrations to be more helpful in such circumstances. However, she then admits that in the long run "it's been a relief to write poetry, it's been just room to live" (Brand, 1998: 196). Brand recognises that writing poetry has been the only response to the sometimes overwhelming reality and so for her direct political action and poetry are seen as complementary mechanisms to cope with a reality which is not always easily bearable. It can be argued that the distinction that Brand establishes between poetry and direct political action could find an equivalent in postcolonial scholar Homi Bhabha's notion of the dual responsibility of the committed intellectual. According to Bhabha, two possible forms of activity which involve redefining larger political concepts coexist in the figure of the committed intellectual. Bhabha therefore asserts that committed intellectuals

> have a responsibility to intervene in particular struggles, in particular situations of political negotiation, but that is not to say that there is a way of intervening by actually changing the 'object' of knowledge itself, by reformulating the concept of society within which certain demands are made. (Bhabha, 1990: 220)

Bhabha attacks the immediacy with which it is felt that theoretical ideas should be translated into political action and for him, the intellectuals who carry out the kind of activities, whose effects are only seen in the long run, are in no way less relevant. Therefore, the fact that a particular theoretical position, a piece of poetry, a novel or any literary piece does not immediately translate into political action, does not test its political relevance. Together with activities with a more direct and immediate political

objective, Bhabha argues that these "two coexistent kinds of activity" (ibid.) equally contribute to redefining larger political concepts. Similarly to Brand, Bhabha argues that the two types of activities are seen as complementary in its aim at fighting injustice and proposing counter-discourses to the hegemonic practices.

All in all, these four writers have at some point doubted the usefulness of art, but ultimately they have all recognised the paramount importance of art and artists in every society. They have recognised that arts and literature are much more significant than they might seem. Art is not just art, and as echoed in the title of this section – which makes direct reference to Earl Lovelace's latest novel *Is Just a Movie* (2011) – neither is a movie just a movie. The title in Trinidadian English Creole plays with the recurrent myth of questioning the relevance of art. Throughout the novel the paramount role of indigenous artistic manifestations and in the artist in the roots in Trinidadian society is asserted. In particular, the title refers to the episode that opens the book, in which the two main characters, Sonnyboy and King Kala, take part in a foreign cinema production. In this movie their only role, as local actors, is to simply die, while the rest of the cast, being brought from America, have more prominent roles since "they is the stars, the ones that have lines to speak" (Lovelace 2011: 21). The more experienced Trinidadian actors agree to the idea of simply dying, but the two protagonists, also members of the Black Power movement, refuse to be part of a production in which their role is "just falling down and dying just so" (ibid., 25). Unlike the rest of the actors who resign themselves to their undignified roles, they want to show their best selves and die with an exquisite choreography. They hear a voice inside of them shouting, "*No. No. No. No, I ain't falling so*. I can't follow them. I ain't dying so, No, man. Um-um. No" (ibid.).

Sonnyboy and King Kala reject the idea that their role in the movie is not valuable, just as the authors included in this discussion also reject the idea that their writing is derisory or useless. Similarly, they can be seen as cultural producers whose works make no concessions to the current market demand, and in this way secure the survival of culture. They refuse to conform to the dictates of a society that values immediate economic profit and instead recognise the importance of the symbolic profit their acting and their writing has the potential to produce.

1.2. *Creating Dangerously*

Writing is not only useful and transformative in extreme situations, but every society, regardless of its state, needs its writers to help make sense of its reality. As has been argued, writing gives value to one's own world and helps articulate one's own reality. It is the writers' personal response to events they witness or get to know about, how they make sense of and explain those events to themselves and their societies. This writing which seeks to be transformative has been described as a necessarily dangerous endeavour by many Caribbean writers. In *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work* (2010) Edwidge Danticat claims that the unifying principle among all writers is to create dangerously. Danticat dares writers to

> [c]reate dangerously, for people who read dangerously. This is what I've always thought it meant to be a writer. Writing, knowing in part that no matter how trivial your words may seem, someday, somewhere, someone may risk his or her life to read them. (Danticat, 2010: 10)

For Danticat, the writer has no other choice but to create as a revolutionary act that breaks with the silences and in so doing, both the writing and reading become

dangerous undertakings. Danticat argues that dangerous writing is that writing which is passionate, fearless and involves unearthing submerged memories. For her, to create dangerously is "to create fearlessly, boldly embracing the public and private terrors that would silence us, then bravely moving forward even when it feels as though we are chasing or being chased by ghosts" (Danticat, 2010: 148). Thus, she describes dangerous writers as those who write in spite of fear, and whose writings expose untold stories. Danticat beautifully defines the writer's duty by saying that "[a]ll everyone is obligated to do is to tell the story that you feel you cannot not tell" (qtd. in Brown, 2010).

Another Caribbean writer who has also described the dangerous dimension of writing is Jamaican writer Kei Miller, who also asserts that the task of the writer is to bring to the fore those stories that had been silenced throughout history. Commenting on the spaces that writers are in charge of creating, Miller suggests that

> we must always be desirous of creating spaces in which people might meet themselves, and are even able to say back to us: thank you for giving ourselves back to us, because sometimes in this world we have had to live without our selves for long stretches of time. (Miller, *Writing down* 2013: 150)

The creation of spaces first makes reference to the spaces between poems in his readings, but then Miller expands this into the spaces writers ought to fill in their societies. Miller makes reference particularly to the case of societies in which its members had to live without themselves for a long time, as is the case of Caribbean people. Miller is thus suggesting that the writer's take consists of creating liberating and empowering spaces for society's silenced members. For Miller, good writers are the ones who tell the half of the story/history that has never been told. This idea is

taken from Jamaican writer Lorna Goodison's poem "Mother, the Great Stones Got to Move":

> Mother, one stone is wedged across the hole in our history
> and sealed with blood wax.
> In this hole is our side of the story...
>
> It is the half that has never been told, some of us
> must tell it.

Goodison's poem, as Miller recognises, completely rewired him as a poet and made him realise what his role as a writer was. The poem convinced him immediately that he was one of the 'some of us' whose dangerous endeavour was to tell the other half of the story that has never been told (Miller, *Kei Miller: An Appreciation* 2013).

Finally, Dionne Brand recognises the dangerous and honest dimension of poetry. Brand closes her collection of essays *Bread out of Stone* (1994) with this reflection on the dangerousness of poetry: "If I can take a second. Shaking the gravel from my shoes. Poetry is here, just here. Something wrestling with how we live, something dangerous, something honest" (Brand, 1998: 196). Brand reaches the conclusion that poetry is dangerous and honest after equating her role as a poet to the role she set herself to play in a family picture taken when she was only four. In this old picture, she is holding a shac-shac[11] so that her little sister would not cry, and her eyes – the poet's – are still, almost knowledgeable. The young Brand in the picture is not only watching out for her little sister, who is crying, but also for the other two members of the family who appear in the picture: her cousin, who is frightened, and her big sister who is sad. By looking at all of them and particularly at her little sister's eyes, Brand

[11] A rattle-type musical percussion rhythm instrument made of something hollow and spherical, such as a very small calabash, containing a number of seeds, with an attached handle, or a large seed pod such as that of a flamboyant tree; when shaken the seeds make a sound. (Winer, 2009: 806)

recognises the responsibility she feels towards her people, her feeling of being called upon to act. As in that old image, in her poetry Brand has fought to watch out for her people, to make room for her people. Poetry has been a weapon of resistance, a revolutionary tool to fight for herself and for them, a dangerous and honest way of confronting the powers that be.

1.3. Art and Activism in the West Indian Cultural Field

Dangerous artists, that is, artists who believe in the capacity of art to change societies have established, through their stance, a strong connection between arts and activism. For example, for Dionne Brand, as previously argued, art and activism go hand in hand, namely, being involved in political activism and poetry are seen as equally transformative for the poet.

Before focusing on the West Indian context, South African writer Nadine Gordimer's notion of the 'essential gesture' (Gordimer, 1988), which can be seen as intimately connected to the relationship between art and activism, needs to be foregrounded. Gordimer contends that it is the writer's responsibility to make an 'essential gesture' and be more than just a writer. She argues that writers have a responsibility in the transformation of society, so much so that their basic 'essential gesture' is to lift out of a limited category something that reveals its full meaning and significance only when expanded through the writer's imagination (ibid., 298). Among the writers who accept the responsibility or 'essential gesture' of transformation, Gordimer further distinguishes between two groups of writers:

> those for whom writing is a revolutionary activity no different from and to be practiced concurrently with running a political trade union or making false passports for someone on the run, and those who interpret their society's demand to be 'more than a writer' as something that may yet be fulfilled through the nature of their writing itself. (ibid., 291)

Gordimer distinguishes between those writers who can be described as activists simply because of the questions tackled in their writings, that is, those for whom fiction is a form of activism; and those for whom political action accompanies writing, that is, those for whom writing is complemented by their involvement in activist action – as in the case of Brand. For Gordimer, this latter interpretation is possible depending on the society within which the writer functions (ibid.).

In the case of the Caribbean, it has been argued that the historical circumstances of the region have inevitably shaped the function of the writer in its societies. Accordingly, Jamaican writer Olive Senior claims that the creative act in the West Indian context cannot be disconnected from society, or simply be regarded as a transcendental act without consequences. Senior argues that "[t]o say you are doing art for art's sake is an indulgence of metropolitan societies" (Senior, 2003: 28). Instead, Senior can be said to similarly ask Caribbean writers for an 'essential gesture', since she feels that in the Caribbean those who have the privilege of being able to write should give something back to their societies. It could be argued that for Senior writers in the Caribbean region should contribute to a gradual reversal of the alienating and damaging effects inflicted over centuries of colonial domination. In this sense, Trinidadian writer and scholar Jennifer Rahim acknowledges the power as well as the great responsibility entailed in writing in the Caribbean. Rahim points directly to the individual responsibility of each writer and warns over the double-edgedness of writing when done irresponsibly:

> I feel the writer is strangely involved in the externalization of consciousness; the writer is involved in mirroring a kind of consciousness for people and if that is done irresponsibly, I think, you are just about adding to the damage rather than contributing to illumination or healing or recreation. (Rahim, 2003: 61)

Irresponsible writing, that is, writing which does not aim at illuminating, healing, teaching, or inspiring, can lead to the legitimisation of the aforementioned inherited sense of second-classness in the Caribbean. For this reason, Rahim believes that writers are to go into the process of writing with a great deal of reverence and anxiety.

It can be argued that in the Caribbean context, many are the writers who fulfil their responsibility or aforementioned 'essential gesture'. The focus here is on Trinidadians C.L.R. James, John la Rose and Merle Hodge (further analysed in the subsequent subsection), and Barbadian George Lamming, all of whom can be cited as examples of West Indian writers whose political engagement has complemented their creative writing. These three writer's political engagement clearly has had an effect on their literary lives. This way, Trinidadian-Canadian writer Marlene Nourbese Philip claims that two paramount figures in West Indian culture, C.L.R. James and John la Rose, consciously sacrificed in part their literary life by making the choice to participate actively in political life. Nourbese Philip argues that John la Rose

> fully understood the demands of literature, and like C.L.R. James he made a choice to keep the door open to an active public life propped wide open and to step through it with vigour knowing that this would prevent him from living the full literary life that was his for the taking. (Nourbese Philip, 1992: 152)

Both Trinidadian writers based in England, James and La Rose were extremely engaged in politics and consciously chose to write non-fiction texts and to devote their time to political action instead of developing their literary lives. The figure of C.L.R.

James will be further analysed in detail, but in the case of La Rose, Guyanese writer Wilson Harris analyses La Rose's political engagement in a different light from that of Nourbese Philip. Harris defines La Rose as 'an artist of politics' and explains that

> [p]olitical activism sometimes tends to appear arid as the years pass. Politics divorced from potential for innermost imagination and change becomes a matter of surfaces rather than breakthrough and depth. This is something I believe that John feels deeply and it explains, in some degree, the nature of his vocation as a peculiar artist of politics. A strange expression but one that seems to me right for him. (Harris, 1991: 65-6)

By describing La Rose as an 'artist of politics', Harris stresses the imagination and originality with which he handled his political involvement, and which allowed him to not neglect his artistic side. Unlike Philip, Harris does not read La Rose's stance as a sacrifice, but believes that La Rose's activist side carried a peculiar artistic component which turned him into an 'artist of politics'. Thus, for Harris, La Rose might had ceased to write fiction, but maintained his artistic practice through his activism.

Caryl Phillips introduces the issue of location as a determining factor in the West Indian writer's engagement with society. Phillips seems to wonder if West Indian writers who are based in the region feel forced to engage with political struggle with more intensity than diasporic ones. He turns his attention to Barbadian writer George Lamming, who can be said to have started his writing career in England but then resettled in the Caribbean. Phillips explains that when he lived and wrote from the West Indies he felt the frustrating desire for values in the society to change and the subsequent need to be involved in political struggle. Phillips wonders if it is the Caribbean-based writers' urgent need to be actively engaged with the region that does not allow them to continue their careers as creative writers. He seems to point at this political involvement as being the cause of some Caribbean-based writers' scarce

literary production. He therefore seems to suggest that Lamming's turn away from fiction writing could perhaps be a consequence of his resettling in Barbados.[12] As such, he explains that

> I have begun to wonder about the situation of the Barbados writer, George Lamming, who seems to have turned so much of his energy from writing towards political activity. I suspect this is the result of having once more made his home in the oftenstifling sociocultural climate of the modern-day Caribbean. (Phillips, 1992: 222)

It must be noted that conditions for writers in the Caribbean are not the same as those in North-America or Great Britain, and that settling in the Caribbean does influence writing, mainly due to the generalised lack of infrastructures to support the arts in the West Indies. However, the writer's political involvement in the region does not explain the scarcity of Caribbean-based writers. One the one hand, as Phillips recognises, the need to contribute to the political struggle is not a condition exclusive to the Caribbean region. Phillips actually claims that the political struggle to be faced living in the Caribbean is almost as frustrating as the struggle of living and writing in Britain. On the other hand, Phillips' hypothesis that the activism of island-based writers overshadows their artistic side is also proved wrong by the fact that two out of the four aforementioned West Indian writers posed as examples, C.L.R. James and John La Rose, developed their professional lives and thus stopped writing fiction in England and not in the Caribbean.

Therefore it can be argued that the political involvement of Caribbean-based writers does not prevent them from continuing with their writing careers. Even though, as will be explained in detail, the conditions in the region do not favour the arts, the political

[12] Gorge Lamming has not written a work of fiction since his 1971 novel *Natives of My Person*.

involvement of the artists cannot be said to account for the writer's lack of literary production.

1.3.1. Merle Hodge: a Caribbean Intellectual and 'Cultural Worker'

The exceptional case of Merle Hodge closes this first subsection. In the context of present day Trinidad and Tobago, where this discussion will be eventually centred, Merle Hodge is a remarkable case of an intellectual or, as she self-defines, 'cultural worker'. Hodge plays a crucial part throughout the study, since her fiction and scholarly writings inform this study and the similarities and connections with Earl Lovelace make it impossible to study the latter without making close reference to her work.

The term 'cultural worker' that Hodge prefers to use to define herself comes from a group of Caribbean intellectuals involved in the cultural development of the Caribbean region called "Intellectual Workers for Regional Sovereignty of the Caribbean Peoples", which was chaired by George Lamming during the Grenada Revolution (Hodge, 2013). The Grenada Revolution, one of the most important post-independence movements in the region, was led by Maurice Bishop and took place from March 1979 to October 1983, when Bishop and most of his cabinet were murdered and American troops invaded the island. Unlike the rest of West Indian governments, Bishop's government saw the urgent need to promote arts in the region and, in addition to the aforementioned George Lamming, garnered the support of many intellectuals from the region such as Edward Braithwaite, Merle Hodge, Earl Lovelace and Jan Carew, to mention just a few. Going back to the term 'cultural worker', Hodge argues that

Lamming, in choosing the term intellectual worker, wanted to stress the actual involvement of Caribbean intellectuals. Therefore, the word worker placed alongside the word intellectual can be said to emphasise the idea of a Caribbean intellectual who works for the cultural advancement of the region.[13]

Like Lamming, Hodge is another writer who has also been actively politically engaged. The case of Trinidadian Merle Hodge is thus another example of a writer whose political involvement with the region has complemented her artistic production. However, while Lamming can be said to have received much critical attention, it can be argued that, comparatively, Merle Hodge has received less. Perhaps this imbalance can be explained by the fact that they belong to different generations, and secondly, whereas Lamming started his writing career in England, Hodge has never been a diasporic writer.

As a scholar and academic in addition to being a creative writer, Hodge acknowledges that writing is not and never has been at the centre of her life (Hodge, 2013). Throughout her creative writing career, she published just two novels, *Crick Crack Monkey* (1970) and *For the Life of Laetitia* (1993), and a number of short stories. She describes the relationship between herself as a writer and herself as an activist as 'a visiting relationship'. The term refers to one of the different family structures that can be found in the Caribbean milieu and which Hodge has explored in her lecture "We Kind of Family- The Women's Movement & Family in the Caribbean in International

[13] It must be, even if briefly, noted that Lamming considers the development of a new society as a collaborative effort in which intellectual workers play a key role. According to Lamming, intellectual workers, in rejecting to be, through their work, supportive of the material interest of the dominant ruling group, contribute to a revolutionary future. Lamming criticises that frequently intellectual workers refuse to value the significance of their work in the political arena, and in so doing become compliant with the political status quo.

Year of the Family".[14] As she describes it, "the visiting relationship or non-residential union [consists of] a man and a woman [who] may have a sustained relationship, going on for years, without living together" (Hodge, 1994: 3). Hodge describes her visiting relationship, as applied to the writing of her novel in progress, in an explanation that deserves being quoted at length:

> Every morning I get up and say I am going to visit… now a major character in there perhaps the main character – I don't know, the thing writes itself after a certain point in time – is a woman called Gwyneth. And every now and then I say before I do anything else again, I will just visit Gwyneth (because I don't get to sit down and write in long stretches). I hope I have managed to write about half of it now. I know what I am going to write next, but I really need to just sit and get it done, you know. I just enjoy going into it and I am getting a good chance because it is taking me so long that I know that when it is finally done it will be the most polished it can be because I started to write this in 1991 and I am still going back to what I wrote originally and changing things and polishing things and improving things. In a way is not a drawback when you take a long time to write something. (Hodge, 2013)

Hodge's relationship with writing equals the relationship she has established with Gwyneth, the main character in her novel,[15] i.e. a long-term, stable relationship but one to which she is not committed full-time. Hodge values the type of relationship established with Gwyneth/literature positively, as she believes that the twenty-two years spent thus far writing the novel have actually allowed her to write as polished a product as possible. At the same time, though, she admits that since she is involved in far too many political activities, she is not getting much writing done (Hodge, 2013).

[14] Like anywhere in the world, in the Caribbean a variety of family patterns can be found. However, unlike elsewhere in the world, Hodge asserts that in the Caribbean the pressure is on abandoning the traditional Caribbean family networks, such as the visiting relationship in favour of the Western nuclear family (Hodge, 1994: 6). Thus, family patterns, as any feature of Caribbean culture, exemplify the lack of value conferred to any of the set of arrangements put in place in the Caribbean in favour, instead, of Western cultural models.

[15] At the 30th Conference on West Indian Literature (2011) held in the University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago, Merle Hodge read from her novel in progress. She announced that it would revolve around the *Shouters Prohibition Ordinance*, the prohibition of the Spiritual Baptist faith of Trinidad and Tobago from 1917 to 1951 by the British Colonial Government on grounds of non-tolerable practices and its association with magic and sorcery.

Hodge seems to be suggesting that she regrets how sometimes her activist side inadvertently overshadows her writing.

Writing, together with academic life and active political engagement in the region, have been the three major projects to which she has committed. Among the topics she has dealt with primarily in her academic writing, we find Caribbean culture, Caribbean family, Caribbean language, women's issues and education, and above all the firm conviction that "Caribbean development can take a turn for the better, but only when we find a way to foment our cultural revolution" (Hodge, 2004: 5).

She has taught in different parts of the Caribbean (Jamaica, Trinidad and Grenada) at secondary and tertiary levels. Now retired, she developed much of her professional life in the University of the West Indies, Saint Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago, where she lectured on West Indian Literature, African Diaspora Literature, and Academic and Creative Writing. Out of her experience of teaching language arts for twenty-five years at different educational levels came the textbook *The Knots in English: A Manual for Caribbean Users* (1997). As Hodge poses in the preface, the manual addresses

> the specific problems which people in the "English-speaking" Caribbean have with learning the official language […] [because] the majority of us are not, of course, English-speaking. We are a Creole-speaking people. We have a language of our own, and English is another language that we have to learn. (Hodge, 1997: xi)

Hodge asserts that West Indians, as primarily Creole speakers, are not always able to distinguish English from Creole, because both languages share more or less the same vocabulary. As a consequence, Hodge asserts that there are many people who think they are talking English not realising that they are actually speaking Creole (Hodge,

2013). The manual, focusing on the areas of English that differ from Creole grammar, aims at spreading language awareness. As a result, when the Caribbean English-speaker is made aware of the consistency and structure of Creole, he or she is then able to distinguish between the two codes. The benefits of language awareness are double-fold, as it will not only help in the acquisition of English,[16] but at the same time, contribute to the value attached to such an integral part of Caribbean culture (Hodge, 2013).

One of Hodge's major accomplishments as scholar is her doctoral thesis, entitled "Earl Lovelace and the Evolution of Voice in the History of the Novel in Trinidad and Tobago" (2007), which comes under the field of literary linguistics. A discipline in which two areas traditionally dissociated, linguistics and literature, are combined. Literary linguistics, the analysis of the language of literary texts is defined by Jamaican linguist Barbara Lalla as an "interdisciplinary analysis that throws light equally on the properties and functions of language and literature" (Lalla, 2005: 55). Part of the great value of her dissertation stems from the focus on language, because as Trinidad-based linguist Valerie Youssef asserts, language has most frequently escaped "the net of attention within cultural studies, which focuses more readily on literature and the arts than on language" (Youssef, 2009: 59). The disregard towards language entrenched in the discipline of Cultural Studies is particularly relevant in the Caribbean due to its complex linguistic situation. In the introduction Hodge inscribes her dissertation, more specifically, within a relatively new tradition

> of applying Creole linguistics to the study of West Indian literature. This movement in West Indian literary criticism began to establish itself in the last

[16] Since Hodge recognised the importance of being aware of the structure of Creole, when she coordinated the English language program at UWI, St. Augustine, she introduced the teaching of English in comparison to Creole, so that people would be aware of the areas of possible interferences.

> quarter of the twentieth century, facilitated by the expansion of scholarship on language in the Caribbean and related speech communities that had been taking place since the 1960s. (Hodge, *Earl Lovelace and the evolution of voice* 2007: v)

Her doctoral thesis makes use of Creole linguistics to analyse the evolution of language use in Trinidadian novelists, in particular Earl Lovelace. She argues that understanding what constitutes Creole is an unavoidable condition for critics dealing with West Indian literature, especially after the expansion of the field of Creole linguistics. Consequently, Hodge's dissertation can be read as a way to contest the myriad of critical works dealing with West Indian literature in which the use of Creole was either not spotted or described as a misuse of a language, or seen as distorted English.

As for her direct political engagement, Hodge went to work in Grenada when Maurice Bishop became Prime Minister in 1979. She was appointed Director of the Development of Curriculum and her task was to develop and install a socialist education programme (Lawrence, 1986: 224-5). She has held membership on several bodies such as The Trinidad and Tobago Commission for UNESCO, where she served for two terms. Hodge explains that even though she is no longer in the Commission, she, together with some present and fellow former commissioners, has formed a committee whose main project is to introduce comparative religion in school. The committee has held lengthy consultations with teachers and has worked on curriculum development among other actions in order to accommodate teaching children about each other's religion in the curriculum:

> We have so many religions and there is so much ignorance and so much prejudice about religion that are not the mainstream ones. That is ongoing, is another thing that not everybody is going to just accept it like that, a lot of work to be done there. (Hodge, 2013)

The project of introducing comparative religion in the curriculum also addresses the lack of value placed on indigenous cultural manifestations. Trinidad and Tobago is a multi-faith country which still holds those religions which are not African-based and which were usually introduced and imposed during colonial times above all others. Although she suspects that such a project will not receive immediate acceptance, Hodge recognises its importance as part of her struggle to contribute to the region's cultural revolution.

Hodge is also co-founder of Women Working for Social Progress (Workingwomen) and member of the Board of the non-governmental organization Advocates for Safe Parenthood and Reproductive Rights (ASPIRE). She does a lot of work facilitating workshops with parents about handling children peacefully, among other issues.

Recently Hodge has also become one of the five commissioners on the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago Reform Commission. As part of the overall project to reform the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago, The People's Partnership – the political coalition in government – promised the creation of such a Commission, and the widest possible consultation as a pre-requisite to constitutional reform. As a member of the commission, Hodge volunteered to translate the existing Constitution into "plain English" (Hodge, 2013). The specialised jargon and obscure syntactic structures that characterise legal language make it impossible for the average reader to understand the Constitution. Thus, in order to actually undertake the widest possible consultation Hodge saw the need to first make the Constitution available to a reader who has at least a high school education level, thus allowing a wide segment of the population to participate in the process of reforming the Constitution. In carrying out such a task, Hodge is dealing directly with an issue of major concern in present day Trinidad:

governance. In fact, Hodge resents that the population has little impact on policy and decision making and believes that the political system in place is disconnected from the population. She argues that the system does not ensure that politicians be accountable, nor does it ensure that they see about their people instead of seeing about themselves. Overall, it could be argued that Hodge contributes to facilitating the involvement of the population in those matters which prevent the Caribbean from developing its full potential as a region.

Thus, Hodge is an example of an intellectual who has been engaged with her community as a creative artist and as a political activist. Unlike the academic intellectual discourse which is generally "hermetic, jargon-ridden, [and displays] an unthreatening combativeness" (Said, 2005: 18), Hodge's discourse does not hide her revolutionary stance and is conducted in such a way that the majority of West Indians can understand. In fact, not only can the majority of West Indians understand, but one of her latest endeavours has been the translation of the text which contains the rights and duties of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago into plain language. Hodge can be said to assume an attitude Gayatri Spivak wishes all intellectuals should take:

> There is an impulse among literary critics and other kind of intellectuals to save the masses, speak for the masses, describe the masses. On the other hand, how about attempting to learn to speak in such a way that the masses will not regard as bullshit. When I think of the masses, I think of a woman belonging to that 84% of women's work in India, which is unorganized peasant labour. Now if I could speak in such a way that such a person would actually listen to me and not dismiss me as yet another of those many colonial missionaries [...] (Spivak, 1996: 56)

As a self-defined intellectual and cultural worker, Hodge can be said to grant agency to subaltern groups – to use Spivak's term – through her work, be it literary, scholarly or neither, as in the case of the translation of the Trinidad and Tobago Constitution. In

all her undertakings Hodge aims at empowering these groups of subalterns and granting them agency. All in all, Spivak's contestation of the postcolonial intellectual's claim that he or she can speak for those who were denied a voice of their own can be arguably said to take a new dimension with the figure of Merle Hodge.

1.4 The Intellectual, Exile and Writing

This second half of the chapter offers, on the one hand, a concise description of the figure of the intellectual, in which the writer can be said to be included. Secondly, the close relationship between the intellectual and exile is established. Exile is not understood as necessarily physical but also as a metaphorical condition intellectuals should be endowed with in order to be able to unearth submerged stories and offer alternative courses of action. The two last sections analyse some of the particularities of Caribbean intellectuals, among them the fact that they are mostly creative writers, as well as their close connection to issues of movement and displacement due to the historical circumstances of the region. Finally, this section closes with the connection between exile and the birth of the West Indian novel, a connection which not only shaped but continues to shape the West Indian literary field in the twenty-first century.

1.4.1. An Approximation to the Figure of the Intellectual

In the previous section addressing the artists' potential to work as political agents, the notion that dangerous writers are, at the same time, intellectuals has already been advanced. In his article "The Public Role of Writers and Intellectuals" Edward Said

argues that the two figures, despite the writer's separate origin and history, have shown signs of amalgamation:

> During the last years of the twentieth century the writer took on more and more of the intellectual's adversarial attributes in such activities as speaking the truth to power, being a witness to persecution and suffering, and in supplying a dissenting voice in conflicts with authority. (Said, 2005: 19)

Said explains that the easiest way of demonstrating this amalgamation is by simply observing the names of some recent Nobel Prize winners: Nadine Gordimer, Derek Walcott, Wole Soyinka, Gabriel García Marquez, Gunter Grass, Bertrand Russell or Rigoberta Menchú. According to Said, each name "trigger[s] in the mind an emblematized region, which in turn can be seen as a sort of platform or jumping-off point for that writer's subsequent activity as an intervention in debates taking place very far from the world of literature" (ibid., 20). As Said recognises, writers have engaged with their works in debates which were seen as traditionally reserved for the figure of the intellectual. As a result, writers and intellectuals can now be seen as playing similar and complementary roles. Importantly, the intellectual is thus also seen as a creative agent and can construct reality as an artist or scholar or both – as is the case with many Caribbean writers.

Various scholars have discussed the figure of the intellectual throughout time, and many and heterogeneous have been the definitions used to describe such a crucial figure. It seems pertinent to offer a succinct outline of the characteristics that are most significant for this dissertation. Among the most important traits that define intellectuals and consequently writers is that their ideas challenge conventional wisdom. The intellectual invites society to see the obvious in a new light and question what is presented as common sense. As British scholar Harry Goulbourne claims, the

intellectual is a person emmershed in "an endless search for a more perfect image of the real or for the simplest paradigm in which to construct a clearer picture of the forces and issues which confront us" (Goulbourne, 1993: 21).

Contrary to the reductive definitions which describe the intellectual as part of a cultural élite, disconnected from his or her own society, the democratic character of the intellectual is seen as an inescapable and necessary reality. Thus, long-time definitions which leave the non-educated out of the perimeter of the intellectual, and the idea of the intellectual living apart, in an ivory tower are discarded. Instead, Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci's notion of the 'organic intellectual' is particularly relevant. The Gramscian notion of the 'organic intellectual' emphasises the democratic character of the intellectual. According to Gramsci, intellectuals are the representatives of the people who speak for the voiceless masses, and try to legitimise the worldviews of silenced groups (Gramsci, 1971). Following from this, Edward Said's definition of the intellectual, which incorporates the Gramscian democratic dimension, focuses on the intellectual's ability to be critical. In *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994), Said stresses the intellectual's critical sense, one which forces him or her to not accept conventional thought. Moreover, Said's intellectual is willing to manifest his or her refusal openly:

> There is no question in my mind that the intellectual belongs on the same side with the weak and unrepresented - Robin Hood, some are likely to say. Yet it's not that simple a role, and therefore cannot be easily dismissed as just so much romantic idealism. At bottom, the intellectual in my sense of the word is neither a pacifier nor a consensus-builder, but someone whose whole being is staked on a critical sense, a sense of being unwilling to accept easy formulas, or ready-made cliches, or the smooth, ever-so accommodating confirmations of what the powerful or conventional have to say, and what they do. Not just passively unwilling, but actively willing to say so in public. (Said, 1994: 17)

Said also defends the necessity to be publicly uncomfortable with governments and corporations. The intellectual is an individual endowed with a faculty to represent and articulate a message or opinion to, as well as for, a public. This faculty, Said recognises has an edge as

> [it] cannot be played without a sense of being someone whose place it is publicly to raise embarrassing questions, to confront orthodoxy and dogma (rather than to produce them), to be someone who can not easily be co-opted by governments or corporations, and whose *raison d'être* is to represent all those people and issues that are routinely forgotten or swept under the rug. (Said, 1994: 11-12)

For Said, independence, adopting unorthodox attitudes and bringing to the fore unrepresented issues and peoples necessarily characterise intellectuals. Related to Said's definition is American sociologist C. Wright Mills's concept of the independent artists and intellectual. According to Mills, they are among the few to be equipped to resist and fight stereotyping, as well as to offer a fresh perception which

> involves the capacity to continually unmask and smash the stereotypes of vision and intellect with which modern communications swamp us. These worlds of mass art thought are increasingly geared to the demands of market politics. That is why it is in politics that intellectual solidarity and effort must be centred. If the thinker does not relate himself [or herself] to the value of truth in political struggle, he [or she] cannot responsibly cope with the whole of lived experience. (Mills, 1967: 299)

Mills claims that for the independent intellectual and artist to function effectively in a democratically responsible society he or she must be involved in the political struggle to overcome and question what is being portrayed as the truth, but which is in fact only stereotype. Thus, Mills stresses the inescapable connection between politics, art and thought. Further on, he maintains that it is a matter of sheer necessity for intellectuals, whether scholars or artists, to escape mediated and stereotyped

representations, circulated by the media, which aim at maintaining the status quo. Similarly, Said claims that the intellectual needs to go against the "mainstream-media-government orthodoxy" (Said, 2005: 24). Thus, Mills and Said urge the intellectual to provide alternative discourses which unmask those sanctioned and promoted by the powers that be.

To sum it up, this concise definition of the intellectual has sought to foreground the close knit connection between the intellectual and creative activity. The figure of the intellectual which is of interest to this dissertation is that of one who aims to publically fight orthodoxy and stereotyping, and to challenge imposed silences by representing people and issues which have been ignored in mainstream discourses.

1.4.1.1. The Intellectual and Exile

> Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience. (Said, 2000: 147)

Exile is, for some scholars, the condition that characterises the intellectual. Voluntary physical exile has been regarded as a condition with the potential for being constructive, one in which the intellectual sets him or herself at a vantage point. This is the case of British-Caribbean writer Caryl Phillips, who asserts that being in exile, temporary or otherwise, can allow a "politically determined, clear-sighted and brave writer […] to gain an often extremely penetrating sociocultural vision" (Phillips, 2011: 230-231). Importantly, many scholars have argued that this condition of exile does not need to be physical. In *Exile and Creativity: Signposts, Travelers, Outsiders, Backward Glances* (1982), Susan Rubin Suleiman argues that exile "designates every kind of estrangement or displacement, from the physical and geographical to the

spiritual" (Suleiman, 1998: 2). Similarly, for Kenneth Parker exile is understood as a condition from which one speaks. Parker problematizes the notion of a writer in exile, understood only as physical exile, and claims that "there are more significant borders that we cross, imagining our homelands, than the borders that are described by the passports" (Parker, 1993: 77). Exile is to be understood as much more than the actual crossing of borders; it can actually entail a more metaphorical crossing which has the potential of being more powerful than the physical one. This would be the case for example of writers in Haiti during the Duvalierist regime when, as Michael Dash argues, literature was the expression of internal exile and it reinvented itself as a kind of moral daring (Dash, 2010: 32).

For scholars Julia Kristeva and Edward Said, exile can be read as both real and metaphoric. Both claim that the intellectual needs to be in or have gone through some kind of exile in order to be able to offer a counter-discourse that challenges the status quo. For them exile involves a condition of marginality, but can also be interpreted as a way of occupying an advantageous position. In order to analyse the relation between the intellectual and exile, Kristeva's notion of the 'dissident intellectual' and Said's notion of the 'exilic intellectual', which can be seen as complementary in many ways, will be used.

Kristeva claims that it is impossible to write without some kind of exile, because this is what gives the intellectual the liberty to go beyond the established without "sinking into the mire of common sense" (Kristeva, 1986: 298). Thus, she considers exile a form of dissidence because first of all, it involves cutting links, that is, uprooting oneself from a country, a family, or a language; and thus it offers a vantage point for a clearer perspective. Kristeva asserts the impossibility of writing unless the intellectual

is a stranger to his or her own culture. Exile is an essential condition that enables the intellectual to "attempt to bring about multiple sublations of the unnameable, the unrepresentable, the void" (ibid., 300). The condition of exile, thus, allows the intellectual to bring forward what has been silenced or undermined or not deemed as appropriate.

If Kristeva considers exile a necessary condition for the intellectual to write, Edward Said maintains that the condition of exile is actually a model for the intellectual. The 'exilic intellectual' that Said describes stands as an always marginal figure outside the comforts of privilege and power, but enjoys the freedom of crossing barriers beyond the conventional and the comfortable. Thus, being an 'exilic intellectual' does not only involve the condition of marginality but also the pleasure of being liberated. For Said, experiencing exile is a "unique pleasure… a process of discovery in which you do things according to your own pattern, as various interests seize your attention, and as the particular goal you set yourself dictates" (Said, 1993: 62). The intellectual is also in charge of unearthing the forgotten, making connections that were denied, and citing alternative courses of action (Said, 1993: 22). Making use of the freedom that exile brings about, therefore, the intellectual will not be pleasant to the government or corporations but, on the contrary, he or she will raise those questions that are embarrassing, and will represent all those forgotten people and issues. As a consequence, Said argues that in a society intellectuals can

> be divided into insiders and outsiders: those on the one hand who belong fully to the society as it is, who flourish in it without an overwhelming sense of dissonance or dissent, those who can be called yea-sayers; and on the other hand, the nay-sayers, the individuals at odds with society and therefore outsiders and exiles so far as privileges, powers and honors are concerned. (Said, 1994: 52)

Said acknowledges that since the intellectual is a daring and unpleasant figure to the government, he or she is endowed with the mission of offering alternative courses of action that question the common-sensical ones. As a result, being an 'exilic intellectual' or 'nay-sayer' is not without consequence; as a result of their critical stance, intellectuals fall out of the favour or privilege of government and corporations.

Thus, the independence and distance that exile, whether physical or metaphorical, grant the intellectual allows for an advantageous position from which to question what is considered common-sense, represent what is 'unrepresentable' and in this way propose alternative courses of action.

1.4.2. The Caribbean Intellectual

> The only possible realization in the West Indies is art. (Walcott, 1996: 55)

After having exposed these complementary views as regards the figure of the intellectual in general, and the intellectual's connection to exile, the section closes with a brief comment on the postcolonial intellectual followed by an analysis of the particularities of the Caribbean intellectual, and finally the connection between the Caribbean intellectual and exile.

The figure of the postcolonial intellectual can arguably reflect similarities to its Western counterparts, but it can also bear considerable differences. As Alistair Henessy asserts, "although intellectuals everywhere share similar concerns and face comparable problems, there are particular imperatives and constraints conditioning the behaviour of those in the Third World" (Hennessy, 1992: 7). First of all, among the

particular imperatives and constraints which condition postcolonial intellectuals, the issue of location needs to be briefly foregrounded. Against the current idealisation of actual physical exile, subsequent sections will sustain that transnationalism has been privileged as the almost sole focus of Postcolonial Studies, and as a consequence, metropolitan-based intellectuals, writers and scholars have been given precedence over those who have retained a national base. Consequently, postcolonial intellectuals based in the West most frequently come to represent the figure of the postcolonial intellectuals, while those who have remained in their homelands do not rank as high as their diasporic counterparts. Secondly, crucial concepts such as the Gramscian notion of the 'organic intellectual' might not suffice to explain the postcolonial intellectual. As Jamaican scholar Rupert Lewis argues, the concept of the 'organic intellectual' cannot solely be used to analyse Guyanese scholar Walter Rodney because

> Gramsci's ['organic intellectual' is] based on a class paradigm which is centred on a vision of Italian and European socialism, while Rodney seeks to understand the complex of relationships between Africa, Europe and the Caribbean and to examine their consequences of decolonisation. The centre of Rodney's vision is Africa and the Caribbean, thus Gramsci's privileging of class cannot be done at the expense of race. (Lewis, 1998: xvi)[17]

Gramsci's theories are not to be dispelled but the specificities of the Caribbean should be incorporated in order to be able to fully explain the figure of the Caribbean intellectual. As such, Walter Rodney, whom is credited with having helped shape a Caribbean intellectual tradition, needs to be analysed through the interconnected conditions of class exploitation and race oppression, a paradigm not present in the twentieth century Europe form which Gramsci was writing.

[17] The figure of Walter Rodney, here only included to exemplify the specificities of postcolonial intellectuals, will be further analysed in the section which analyses Lovelace's refusal to identify with the figure of the West Indian intellectual (see section 3.6.1.).

Focusing on the figure of the West Indian intellectual, it must be noted that C.L.R. James has been regarded by many as the West Indian intellectual *par excellence*. This can be due to the fact that central to James's works is destabilising and contesting Western visions of the history of the West Indies. Overall, James's writings can be interpreted as a thrust towards placing the West Indies as agent and not object of its own history. In fact, James's intellectual position perfectly fits with Said's definition of the intellectual, since his works aim at unearthing issues and peoples that are routinely forgotten and misrepresented. James's works were not interested in the West Indian black middle class to which he belonged because "they were busy trying to shape their lives according to the British ideas of principles and behaviour" (James, *Autobiography*: n.d.). Instead, James was interested in the common people "the people who had human passion, human energy, anger, violence and generosity […]They shaped my political outlook and from that time to this day, abroad and home those are the people with whom I have been most concerned" (James, 1938: v).

In his renowned *Beyond a Boundary* (1963), James recounts the West Indian appropriation of a quintessential symbol of Englishness such as cricket. In the final lines of the book he asserts that "[c]learing their way with bat and ball, West Indians at that moment had made a public entry to the comity of nation" (James, 1963: 261). By 'that moment' James makes reference to the affection with which West Indian cricketers were received in Australia. The Australian tour in 1961 was a turning point for the West Indian cricket team as it was led by its first appointed black captain, Frank Worrell. Moreover, this statement which closes the text can also be extrapolated into meaning that the extreme elegance and fair play that characterised the West Indian style of play proved the West Indian quest for self-government possible.

In his previous book *The Black Jacobins* (1938), James narrates the revolt of the slaves in the French colony of Saint Domingue – the only successful slave revolt in the history of the Western hemisphere – and the subsequent establishment of the state of Haiti. In the foreword to the 1980 edition, James writes:

> I was tired of reading and hearing about Africans being persecuted and oppressed in Africa, in the Middle Passage, in the U.S.A. and all over the Caribbean. I made up my mind that I would write a book in which Africans or people of African descent instead of constantly being the object of other people's exploitation and ferocity would themselves be taking action on a grand scale and shaping other people to their needs. (James, 1938: v)

James's account of what he considered the most outstanding event in the history of the Caribbean aims at reversing the coloniser's perspective which historically misrepresented people of African descent. The account of the Haitian revolution serves to assert the capacity of people of African descent to forge their own freedom through revolutionary means, and thus be the subjects of their own history. George Lamming has praised the work for reclaiming the agency of African descendants and having contributed to debunking historical myths, that is, "making available to all the results of certain enterprises undertaken by men who are still regarded as the descendants of languageless and deformed slaves" (Lamming, 1960: 119).

It must be noted that the Caribbean intellectual –and writer– did not emerge in the Caribbean region but in the metropole. During James's time (1930s), the conditions in the West Indies, as will be further explained in the next section, did not allow for intellectuals and writers to remain in the region. This was, in fact, recognised as an inescapable reality West Indians had to endure. James claims that by the time he decided to leave Trinidad for England in 1932, "[p]eople knew I would be going; they were expecting me to go because if you were going to do anything of that kind [be a

writer] you had to go abroad" (James, *Autobiography*: n.d.). In "Inhabiting the Metropole: C.L.R. James and the Postcolonial Intellectual of the African Diaspora" Anuradha Dingwaney Needham states that in deciding to settle in England "James is not the exception but the rule… at this historical juncture the métropole was perceived as the definitive site for launching the case against colonial rule" (Needham, 1993: 292). Among the other Caribbean intellectuals, contemporaries of James who centred the project of anticolonialism in the metropole, Needham lists Ras Makonnen, George Padmore, and Eric Williams from the British-ruled Caribbean, and Aimé Césaire, René Maran, and Frantz Fanon from the French-ruled Caribbean.

During James's times many Caribbean intellectuals tackled the issue of their own role in the struggle against colonialism in their writings. Frantz Fanon was probably the best-known from among them and his writings foreground the role of the native intellectual who gives value to a past riddled with colonial lies – in this sense, C.L.R. James would be the epitome of the native intellectual. In his evolutionary schema towards nationhood, Fanon emphasises the revolutionary role of the writer, whom he defines as "an awakener of people" who feels "the need to speak to their nation, to compose the sentence which expresses the heart of the people and to become the mouthpiece of a new reality in action" (Fanon, 1961: 179). For Fanon cultural expression could not be divorced from the larger struggle for the liberation of the nation. Thus, the intellectual played an important role in presenting alternatives, too often marginalized or pushed aside.

Another instrumental writer from the Francophone Caribbean was Aimé Cèsaire, who also asserted the importance of intellectuals and writers in the political struggle for

representation and cultural sovereignty. In his renowned *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* (1956) Césaire foregrounds the power of words:

> Words? As we handle quarters of the world, as we marry delirious continents, as we break down steaming doors, words, oh yes, words! but words of fresh blood, words which are tidal waves and erysipelas and malarias and lavas and bush-fires, blazes of flesh, and blazes of cities… (Césaire, 1956: 99)

This beautiful excerpt from his revolutionary *Notebook* argues that words are powerful and have the capacity to transform and turn societies around. Thus, Césaire also considers that writers, as intellectuals, are in charge of the transformation of their societies.

As has been advanced at the beginning of the section, it can be argued that one of the specificities of Caribbean intellectuals is the fact that many of the scholars or critics who have theorised on West Indian culture, are at the same time creative writers themselves. In fact, Jamaican poet and Professor Emeritus of English at the University of the West Indies Edward Baugh has pointed to this remarkable aspect of the West Indian intellectuality. According to Baugh, many of the really original and seminal West Indian statements of theory have come from creative writers who are outside the academic discipline of literary criticism (Baugh, *Confessions of a Critic* 2006: 22). Baugh explains that the theorisings of most West Indian intellectuals – such as Brathwaite, Harris, Walcott or Glissant – do not offer prescriptive approximations or

> a quick fix from which we have to re-awaken to the brutal realities around us in the Caribbean…but they are fraught and plangent with a deep awareness of those ills and their historical roots, and of the capacity for healing that is as real as those ills. (Baugh, *Literary Theory and the Caribbean* 2006: 12)

The essays by the Saint Lucian Nobel laureate Derek Walcott can be said to prove Baugh's point. See for example Walcott's acknowledgement that "[t]he truly tough aesthetic of the New World neither explains nor forgives history" (Walcott, *The Muse* 1998: 37). Walcott's deep awareness of the ills of history signalled by Baugh is also exemplified in the following quote, where it is argued that the Caribbean complexity gives way to a new Caribbean sensibility, which is

> not marinated in the past. It is not exhausted. It is new. But it is its complexity, not its historically explained simplicities, which is new. Its traces of melancholy are the chemical survivals of the blood which remain after the slave's and the indentured worker's convalescence. It will survive the malaria of nostalgia and the delirium of revenge, just as it survived its self-contempt. (ibid., 54)

Walcott is aware that out of a past marked by slavery and indentureship and riddled with brutalities, a new culture has emerged. In fact, the possibilities of the region to construct a new culture and dealing with the diversity that characterises the Caribbean are two of the crucial and interconnected issues which have been most tackled by West Indian intellectuals. Apart from the aforementioned Derek Walcott, George Lamming, Wilson Harris and Edward Kamau Brathwaite have also addressed the potential for creativity of the Caribbean in their writings. Most intellectuals have seen an enormous capacity for such in the heterogeneous nature of the region. Lamming recognises that even though the heterogeneity of the region might have actually posed a challenge for the region, ultimately this heterogeneity is praised as a blessing for cultural workers:

> The challenge of diversity and the peculiar nature of our own diasporic adventure could be made a fertilizing soil and the crusading theme of political discourse. Indeed, this diversity has been an abundant blessing for cultural workers in all the arts in the Caribbean: Creative conflict is the dynamic which drives the Caribbean imagination. (Lamming, *The Sovereignty* 2004: 36)

Similarly, Guyanese writer Wilson Harris argues that the heterogeneity of the region is its most enriching characteristic. Harris believes that the "inescapable partiality" (Harris, 1987:12) which defines Caribbean identity is empowering as it allows the Caribbeans "to speak through a variety of masquerades" (ibid., 50). For Harris, Caribbean culture is privileged and should be defined as open and transformative, rather than static and imitative, multi-racial, rather than racial (qtd. in McWatt: 2011: 37). Thus, Harris posits that the artist and intellectual should be concerned with transcending barriers and categories that define the Caribbean and Caribbean identity.

Barbadian poet Edward Kamau Brathwaite argues that the task of the Caribbean artist and intellectual is to offer an inside vision of the Caribbean which incorporates the diversity of the region, that is, to "make ourselves visible within our own light and image" (Brathwaite, 1974: 54). Brathwaite introduced the notion of creolization, which has been instrumental in Caribbean studies. Creolization provides "an alternative to the [imposed] European cultural tradition" that takes into account "the non-European traditions of Africa, Asia and the Amerindians" (ibid., 115). Brathwaite defines creolization as a totally "new construct" resulting from the "cultural process – material, psychological and spiritual –" by which disparate cultures interact with and respond to each other (Brathwaite, 1971:11). For Brathwaite, creolization involves "many possibilities… and many ways of asserting identity" (ibid., 310) because due to different historical circumstances creolization unfolds differently in different islands. As Baugh asserts, through the process of creolization, identity, whether of an individual or group, culture or nation, "is not a given, static entity, a core or bedrock, but, rather, flux, process, production, negotiation, an endlessly repeated but varying invention, re-invention, self-invention, discovery, re-discovery, performance" (Baugh, 2010: 10). Similarly, Jamaican-British Cultural Studies scholar Stuart Hall argues for a

definition of identity in the Caribbean which recognises the diverse nature of the region. Due to its historical circumstances, Hall argues that the concept of identity in the Caribbean is made up of different experiences. Thus, for him it is necessary that a definition of identity

> recognizes that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute "what we really are;" or rather – since history has intervened – "what we have become." We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about "one experience, one identity," without acknowledging its other side – the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute, precisely, the Caribbean "uniqueness." Cultural identity, in this… sense, is a matter of "becoming" as well as of "being." It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. (Hall, 1990: 225)

Hall argues that Caribbean identity escapes limiting definitions and cannot be defined through the use of old world concepts because these cannot explain an identity that is made of many different identities. Its "uniqueness" turns Caribbean selfhood into a fluid notion, which incorporates the many identities that compose the Caribbean.

Finally, Derek Walcott's famous speech pronounced on the occasion of his being awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1992 probably best summarises the West Indian intellectual stance as regards Caribbean culture and identity. Walcott, engaging with the suppressed history of the region, acknowledges that Caribbean culture is a diverse and hybrid culture like no other. Aware of the pain of Caribbean history, he sees it as the pieces of a vase once broken, due to a brutal past, now being reassembled into a new form produced out of the contact of different peoples – African, Asian and European – that testifies to ancestral places and proposes a new and stronger culture. Walcott is able to see what was positive in West Indian history, namely, that something beautiful and new was created out of a hellish history:

> Break a vase, and the love that reassembles the fragments is stronger than that love which took its symmetry for granted when it was a whole. The glue that fits the pieces is the ceiling of its original shape. It is such a love that reassembles our African and Asiatic fragments, the cracked heirlooms whose restoration shows its white scars. This gathering of broken pieces is the care and pain of the Antilles, and if the pieces are disparate, ill-fitting, they contain more pain than the original sculpture, those icons and sacred vessels taken for granted in their ancestral places. Antillean art is the restoration of our shattered histories, our shards of vocabulary, our archipelago becoming a synonym for pieces broken off from the original continent. (Walcott, *The Antilles* 1998: 69)

This section has referred to some of the most relevant figures from the first generations of West Indian intellectuals, who aimed, with their works, at bringing unrepresented issues and peoples to the surface, thus contributing to the transformation of Caribbean society. All these views prove that West Indian intellectuals, always aware of the ills of history, have emphasised their role as transformative agents. A crucial aspect in this transformative task has been seeing the diverse nature of the region as a highly enriching feature that allows for the creation of a new future, which escapes static and simplistic definitions.

1.4.2.1. Exile and West Indian Literature

Exile and diaspora have been a condition for the West Indian intellectual and writer.[18] Alistair Henessey argues that, in the Anglophone Caribbean, “the diaspora is now a fact of life and any consideration of West Indian intellectuals needs to examine the interplay and interaction between homeland and diaspora” (Henessey, 1992: 9). In fact, the notion of home or belonging has never been unproblematic in the West

[18] In the previous section, it has already been argued that Caribbean intellectuals such as C.L.R. James, George Padmore, Aimé Cesaire or Frantz Fanon were forced to leave for the metropole.

Indies, as Kamau Brathwaite's question in his poem "Postlude/Home": "Where then is the nigger's/ home? […] Will exile never/ end?" (Brathwaite, 1981: 77).

First of all, due to the historical circumstances of forced displacement, the African-descended section of the population – the majority of West Indians – have been defined as exilic or diasporic individuals. Caryl Phillips argues that as diasporan Africans, West Indians have already undergone an exile. The experience of the Atlantic slave trade whereby millions of Africans were forced to leave everything behind and start somewhere else continues, according to Caryl Phillips, to be a painful one. Phillips claims that "[o]ur displacement on arrival in the Americas was profound and it caused a psychic wound which, for countless millions of peoples of African origin, continues to fester" (Phillips, 2011: 309). As a diasporic writer himself, Phillips asserts that this forced migration is "the one border crossing – the one migration – that I regret having participated in" (ibid.). In a similar vein, Stuart Hall has also recorded the diasporic nature of the West Indian person in his famous observation that "African-Caribbean people are already a people of a diaspora" (Hall 1990: 235). Hall's idea of "the New World presence" has been articulated as "itself the beginning of diaspora, of diversity, of hybridity and difference, what makes Afro-Caribbean people already people of a diaspora" (Hall, 1990: 235).

According to Canadian scholar Rinaldo Walcott, West Indian authors who have settled outside the West Indies, like the aforementioned Caryl Phillips, are doubly diasporic because they have been part of two distinct dispersals:

> The central conundrum of dispersal, especially Caribbean dispersal, is that it is at least a twice-removed dispersal. The first dispersal is from the 'original' homeland (Africa, India, etc.) and … the second dispersal [is] from the Caribbean to Europe, North America and so on. (Walcott, 2011: 501)

Thus, a double sense of displacement characterises Caribbean diasporic writers, whose removal from the Caribbean is superimposed to an earlier uprooting from Africa or India. It must be noted that Rinaldo Walcott also identifies the East Indian descended West Indians – the other major ethnic group in the region – as exilic individuals. In fact, it could be argued that with the exception of the very few Amerindians who were not exterminated, the rest of the communities that make up the ethnic composition of the region were at some point forcefully or voluntarily displaced to the Caribbean, and are therefore exilic.

Trinidadian-born scholar Carole Boyce Davies distinguishes three levels of displacement: a first major flow "via the Middle Passage and enslavement" and indentureship, followed by a "series of secondary movements across the Americas for economic and familial reasons" (Boyce Davies, 2013: 99). These moves include continental America as well as migratory destinations in and around the Caribbean, for example that of the 100,000 West Indians who migrated to work on the construction of the Panama Canal. Finally, Boyce Davies signals a tertiary migratory flow that started with World War I and continued in the wake of World War II to North America and Great Britain.[19]

As a consequence of the many forced and voluntary displacements endured by peoples of the region, Jennifer Rahim argues that "travel and transnational belonging have always been consonant with Caribbean-ness" (Rahim, 2003: 40). In fact, a significant connection between the exilic nature of the West Indies itself and the birth of the West

[19] Within this tertiary flow, Boyce Davies underlines the large influx of former workers in the Canal to Metropolitan centres.

Indian novel can be established. A connection that, as will be analysed, has contributed to the region's relation with art, and its artists.[20]

The Fifties saw the movement of many Caribbean writers to Britain, where they would find their voices and make a living writing, an impossible endeavour in their native region at the time. This is the case of Trinidadian-born writer V.S. Naipaul, who recounts how his ambition to write books could not be accomplished in his native Trinidad. Trinidad, then part of the British Empire, did not provide adequate conditions for a writer to make a living from his or her art. Naipaul explains that

> [y]ou need publishers, editors, designers, printers, binders; booksellers, critics, newspapers, and magazines… and of course, buyers and readers… This kind of society didn't exist in Trinidad. It was necessary, therefore, if I was going to be a writer, and live by my books, to travel out to that kind of society where the writing life was possible. This meant, for me at that time, going to England. I was travelling from the periphery, the margin, to what to me was the center; and it was my hope that, at the center, room would be made for me. (Naipaul, 2002: 506)

Naipaul felt he was travelling from the periphery or margin (Trinidad), where little room was made for him or any other West Indian writer, to the centre (England) where everything that Trinidad lacked, was available. Naipaul recognises that his journey to the centre made his ambition of being a writer possible.

Contrary to the romantic or naive idea that a writer may choose to live anywhere, Caryl Phillips recognises that when a writer chooses to settle in a new locale it is very seldom a decision arrived at through romance. Instead, Phillips contends that the relationship between where a writer lives and how he or she is able to develop his or her talent is a very delicate one that may cause the writer a great deal of soul-searching

[20] See sections 3.1.3. and 3.6.3.1.

and heartache (Philllips, 1992: 219). This is precisely what George Lamming's seminal analysis of the writer-in-exile, *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960), deals with. In his famous collection of essays, Lamming describes his experience as a West Indian writer and a colonial subject in physical exile. Lamming explains that from 1948 to 1958 the novel, as an imaginative interpretation of West Indian society by West Indians, emerged. This decade saw the emergence of texts from West Indian writers whose raw material was for the first time the very landscape they inhabited. These new writings offered alternative and transgressive discourses; discourses that reversed the conventional colonial perspective, particularly, Lamming states, in relation to the representation of the West Indian peasant or what Lovelace will call 'the ordinary people':

> The West Indian novelist did not look out across the sea to another source. For the first time the West Indian peasant became other than a cheap source of labour. He became, through the novelist's eye, a living existence, living in silence and joy and fear, involved in riot and carnival. (Lamming, 1960: 39)

As for what it is that accounts for these emerging writers – as Lamming himself – to leave their homeland, Lamming declares that in the West Indies the function of the native writer was jeopardized by the West Indian colonial middle-class. This middle-class had internalised the values transferred through a British Colonial education that established imported culture as the only valuable and true culture. Consequently, this class would sneer at any literary piece produced on native soil and discouraged any writing produced by West Indians about the West Indian experience because it could never emulate what was produced on foreign, preferably British, soil.

Lamming describes the West Indies as an atmosphere too oppressive for native writers, one where they could not have a function because those who read and taught

reading not only actively discouraged their writing but even questioned the native's right to write (Lamming, 1960: 2). Another West Indian writer also in exile in England, Andrew Salkey, laments the cultural impoverishment of a region which left writers with the choice of going into voluntary exile or remaining in the bleak conditions of the West Indies, namely they could "emigrate or vegetate" (Salkey, 1972: 29). Naipaul, Lamming and Salkey's generation of writers felt compelled to leave the West Indies and head for England because it would offer significant educational, professional, and, more specifically, publishing and writing opportunities. These factors were responsible for precipitating the physical exile of the West Indian writer, precisely at the time when the West Indian novel set in West Indian soil and written by West Indian writers was born. Thus, at that point displacement was a necessary stage of development for West Indian writers to make writing altogether possible. In fact, as will be further explained, the situation in the West Indian region has not arguably improved enormously.

Furthermore, the movement that started in the Fifties, what Caryl Phillips has described as the "exportation of Caribbean writing-talent to the large cities of North America and Europe" (Phillips, 1990: 220) continued throughout the twentieth century and can be said to still continue in the twenty-first century. Consequently, as Canadian scholar David Chariandy notes, "[a] significant body of Caribbean literature, from the 'boom years' onwards, has been written by migrants and their descendants living outside of the Caribbean itself" (Chariandy, 2011: 245).[21] The either single or doubly exilic nature of Caribbean writers has inevitably moulded Caribbean literature. Martin Munro, a scholar specialising in Francophone-Caribbean literature, argues that

[21] The terms "boom years" or "boom period" in Caribbean literature make reference to the time span 1950-1965 that saw the emergence of writers such as George Lamming, Derek Walcott, Sam Selvon, Wilson Harris, Edgar Mittelholzer etc.

"economic factors have engendered a distinctly exilic sensibility, one that emerges time and again in Caribbean writing" (Munro, 2007: 254). Munro explains that this exilic sensibility is frequently present in major works of Caribbean literature and thought. Many times these works become investigations into the reality of migration and "into living in a place without a settled history" (Munro, 2007: 255). As a result, West Indian literary criticism has focused on concepts such as 'exile', 'diaspora', 'identity', 'dislocation', 'displacement' and 'fragmentation', 'loss', 'home' and 'belonging' (Chariandy, 2011: 245).

On a final terminological note, it must be recognised that the discourse of diaspora is a multifarious one and some writers have expressed their preference in the use of exile over diaspora and vice versa. Others have even expressed a reluctance to identify with either of the two terms. This is the case of Trinidadian writer Sam Selvon, who left Trinidad in the 1950s to never re-settle in his homeland but who, at the same time, argued that he never thought of himself as an exile: "I don't like the word exile, I feel that when someone tells you that you are exiled that means you are banished from your land. I just feel that I am living abroad, you know. I am living abroad as a writer" (qtd. in Thieme and Dotti, 78). In a paper delivered at a visit to Trinidad in 1978 Selvon claimed that "[t]his island [Trinidad] is my shadow and I carry it with me wherever I go, and my roots are the same as a mango tree or an immortelle (Selvon, 1986: 11). Another West Indian writer, who even though she divides her time between Jamaica and Canada, has also refused to be defined as a diasporic writer is Olive Senior. According to British scholar Allison Donnell, Senior, who is committed to "the recovery and recognition of indigenous knowledge, history and culture" (Donnell, 2006: 96), does not identify herself as a diasporic writer.

British postcolonial scholar Paul Gilroy distinguishes between the terms diaspora and exile in that the latter, he argues, tends to have cosmopolitan associations attached that the word diaspora doesn't (Gilroy, 2000: 122). Interestingly, though, Barbadian-Canadian writer Austin Clark has also contributed to the debate over the use of the terms exile and diaspora by arguing that he is not in exile in Canada. According to Rinaldo Walcott, Clarke values Lamming's *The Pleasure of Exile*, but he takes a more narrow view of what it means to be in exile: "His [Austin Clarke's] sense of life in Canada is one conditioned by choice and racism, but his place in the Americas is one conditioned by slavery, colonization and racism" (Walcott, 2011: 506). Thus, Clarke considers himself a diasporic and not an exilic writer in the Americas. Clarke's distinction can be said to intersect perfectly with Martin Munro's notion of the 'original exile' of slavery. This 'original exile, as a unique experience of exile, is distinguished from "[a]ny further movement into exile from the islands [which as a consequence] does not take place against the background of a solid, rooted sense of self and place, but in the context of a fluid, unfixed, relational, and itinerant sense of belonging" (Munro, 2007: 254).

2. POSTCOLONIALISM AND/IN THE CARIBBEAN

The first section of this second chapter seeks to explain the general reasons behind the privileging of certain writing in the postcolonial literary world, and particularly in the West Indian literary world. The discussion in this first section will be informed by the recognition that politics and power are major players in the field of cultural production. As Trinidadian scholars Barbara Lalla and Jennifer Rahim assert, it is no longer possible "to pass off culture as simply a matter of commonalities, interests and values as if politics and power were innocent of influencing what gets defined and circulated as valid culture" (Lalla and Rahim, 2009: 4).[22] A second section will then focus on how the current emphasis on transnationalism and post-national theories has

[22] It must be noted that retired University of the West Indies professor Barbara Lalla is originally from Jamaica but has spent most of her professional life in the St. Augustine campus (Trinidad) of the University of the West Indies.

affected the West Indian literary field, and more specifically authors who cannot be read strictly within this theoretical frame.

2.1. Privileging in Postcolonial Writing

2.1.1. The Pitfalls of Universality

The concept of universality has been used as a testing threshold to evaluate texts from the so-called periphery or the non-Western world in order to grant them literary recognition. Since a text would first need to be deemed universal in order to enter the Western literary world, the two crucial questions that arise are who is entitled to evaluate a text's universality and what characteristics are deemed universal.

As regards the agents holding this power to assess the universality of a text and grant literary recognition, French scholar Pascale Casanova argues that this is exercised according to the norms of "the great consecrating nations".[23] Casanova asserts that universality is "what they [the great consecrating nations] – and they alone – declare to be acceptable and accessible to all" (Casanova, 2004: 154). Thus, works from outlying areas are reduced to those nation's own categories of perception which they, in holding the monopoly of universality, according to Casanova, "mistake [sic] as universal norms" (ibid.). Casanova further argues that writers who do not come from these nations and aspire to enter what she calls "the republic of letters"

> must […] yield to the norms decreed to be universal by the very persons who have a monopoly on universality. More than this, they need to situate themselves at just the right distance from their judges: if they wish to be noticed, they have to show that they are different from other writers – but not

[23] Casanova's term "great consecrating nations" can be said to refer to Metropolitan nations.

> so different that they are thereby rendered invisible. They must be neither too near nor too far. (ibid., 156)

Non-Western authors must conform to the norms established so that their texts comply with the call for universality, but, at the same time, they must carefully balance their difference. As Casanova explains, they must situate themselves exactly at the right distance from their judges, otherwise they risk being regarded as opaque, dense or not readable and thus not fit for promotion. In this sense, in *The Post-Colonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (2001) Graham Huggan asserts that “difference is appreciated, but only in the terms of the beholder”, and only when “diversity is translated and given a reassuringly familiar aesthetic cast” (Huggan, 2001: 27) is it welcomed. Huggan recognises that there is a metropolitan demand for otherness, however this is only accepted provided that it is inscribed within certain limits. Under threat of becoming invisible for the Western literary field, the only difference promoted is that which does not cross the line of unfamiliarity, and which can therefore easily be incorporated into the so-called universal norms.

Due to the demands to adapt their texts to Western norms that are concealed under the concept of universality, this idea has been utterly rejected by many non-Western authors. This is the case of Kei Miller, Chinua Achebe and Dionne Brand, three postcolonial writers who have opposed this epithet on the grounds that it actually discriminates against their writings and themselves as writers, and seeks to force their work to conform to European and North-American norms. First of all, Kei Miller dismisses the word universal because he argues that it discriminates against people like himself. Miller explains that

> [i]f you come from a small place, you always read work that is written to universal people, but universal people never look anything like me, they never speak anything like me and universal just becomes this word that privileges what the status quo is already. (Miller, *Interview with Kei Miller* 2013)

Miller recognises that the so-called universal texts can be said to alienate and even leave behind people like himself, who come from small places in the margins. In fact, he perceives such texts as a reminder that from a hegemonic perspective there is nothing universal about him. Dionne Brand is also aware of her non-universality and identifies the fact that her work is not by a white person as the reason for her fiction being automatically seen as 'other'. Brand sets a clear divide between white literature and non-white literature, and argues that non-white literature needs to prove its universality, whereas white literature is immediately universal simply because it is written by white people. She argues that only those

> works written by writers who are not white are called upon to prove or provide universality. While literature is never called to commit itself in this way, but all other literature must abandon its specific projects to fit into the understanding of white literature as the expression of white sensibility. White critics have a preoccupation with rationalizing, homogenizing meanings into white cultural codes which are, of course, loaded with historical relations of power. Universal, therefore, means white. In that context, I do not care about what is universal. I write about what is specific. (Brand, 1990: 272-3)

Brand distinguishes between white and non-white literature, the former being universal whereas the latter must abandon its specificities, thereby conforming to white norms, in order to be admitted as universal. Brand shows no interest in what is universal because she discerns that behind appeals to universality lies a homogenizing mission laden with traces of an imperial ideology.

Brand, like Miller, has no ambition to reach a universal audience, or becoming a universal writer. They have come to understand that a postcolonial or non-white (or both) writer who aims at being a universal writer inevitably runs the risk of leaving his or her people behind since universality entails tailoring one's texts to a Western audience. This is why, writing from the African context, Nigerian author Chinua Achebe also rejects appeals to universality. He realises that in order to achieve literary recognition in the West postcolonial authors are expected to strive for universality. He asserts that

> It is only others who must strain to achieve it […] As though universality were some distant bend in the road which you may take if you travel out far enough in the direction of Europe or America, if you put adequate distance between yourself and your home. I should like to see the word "universal" banned altogether from discussion of African literature until such a time as people cease to use it as a synonym for the narrow, self-serving parochialism of Europe, until their horizon extends to include all the world. (Achebe, 1988: 52)

Due to the circumstances which still govern the literary world, Achebe refuses to use the word 'universal' until the works of Western writers are no longer indiscriminately described as such. He makes the case that since striving for universality actually means steering one's writing in the direction of European or North American standards, no postcolonial author should have this as their objective.

The imperialist tone of the concept of universality has not only been criticised and rejected but has led Martiniquais scholar Édouard Glissant to declare that in the current circumstances it should be altogether abandoned. In his *Poetics of Relation* (1997) he proposes instead the notion of 'tout-monde' which, he explains, is not based on homogeneity but on diversity. Glissant claims that the baroque – the opposite to the concept of classism which he identifies with the universal – no longer constitutes a

derragement but has turned into “a ‘natural’ expression of whatever scatters and comes together”, and envisages the ‘tout-monde’ as the horizon of the ‘chaos-monde’ that characterises our world. He observes that

> the age of classism (of deepening an internal unity, raised to the dimensions of a universal itself postulated) is past, no doubt, for all cultures […] The barroque is the favored speech of these cultures, even if henceforth it belongs to all. We call it barroque, because we know that confluences always partake of marginality, that classicisms partake of intolerance, and that, for us, the substitute for the hidden violence of these intolerant exclusions is the manifest and integrating violence of contaminations. (Glissant, 1997: 91)

Glissant argues that classicism, the age in which it was believed that literature promoted values that would then become universal in character is over. Instead he contends that the baroque, which can be identified with creolization, should be the current approach. Glissant proposes this notion that values from any world culture to participate in the crossroad of values. This very idea is what Glissant refers to as ‘tout-monde’ and for him it constitutes a nobler, higher and more generous project than trying for a value to acquire a world at large value (Glissant, 2002: 136).

2.1.2. The Field of Cultural Production: Relational Factors

Even though Glissant’s concept of ‘tout-monde’ best explains the cultural reality of our world, the field of cultural production can still be seen as holding to the exclusionary concept of universality. In fact, it can be argued that since universality continues to influence the present literary world, there exist a set of relational factors connected to the concept of universality which might function as agents of censorship.

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the field of cultural production helps systematise the discussion that follows. In *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993) Bourdieu describes that the production, circulation and consumption of symbolic goods is governed by a set of social conditions, and argues that the fundamental stake in literary struggles is the power to validate authors and texts. Hence, the literary field of cultural production is defined as

> the site of struggles in which what is at stake is the power to impose the dominant definition of the writer and therefore to delimit the population of those entitled to take part in the struggle to define the writer […] In short, the fundamental stake in literary struggles is the monopoly of literary legitimacy, i.e., inter alia, the monopoly of the power to say with authority who are authorized to call themselves writers; or to put it another way, it is the monopoly of the power to consecrate producers and product. (Bourdieu, 1993: 42)

Bourdieu recognises that the power to consecrate writers and legitimise texts is carried out by a complex framework of interconnected factors. He maintains that works of art should be understood "as a manifestation of the field as a whole, in which all the powers of the field, and all the determinisms inherent in its structure and functioning, are concentrated" (Bourdieu, 1993: 37). Bourdieu urges the scholar to examine the relational factors that come into play in the creation, circulation and reproduction of products in the literary field.

This discussion will be informed by Bourdieu's urge to understand works of art not as isolated phenomena but as cultural goods conditioned by a set of relational factors as well as forces of economy. Moving from the general to the more specific, three of the major factors which explain the creation, circulation and reproduction of cultural production will first be identified in the postcolonial field, followed by an analysis of how these relational factors condition the West Indian literary field in particular. The

three major factors that will be foregrounded are location, topics and language. These three relational elements, which have the potential to work as agents of censorship, will explain why certain authors have been favoured by the West – and therefore promoted and defined as universal – whereas others have become invisible.

2.1.2.1. Location

Location is the first relational factor that will be analysed as having the potential to work as an agent of censorship, and the discussion will be illustrated with the opinions of three Indian intellectuals. The choice of India can be explained by the fact that, as Huggan explains, India is a central player in the global "alterity industry" (Huggan, 2001: 68). Thus, the role of India in the postcolonial literary world can be said to be a pivotal one.

In the introduction to his anthology of Indian writing co-edited with Elizabeth West *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing 1947-1997* (1997), Salman Rushdie, probably the most renowned Indian writer of our time, claims that "*Literature has little or nothing to do with a writer's home address*" (Rushdie and West, 1997: xv; italics in the original).[24] Unlike Rushdie, this study argues that literature has much to do with a writer's home address; particularly issues such as publication opportunities, or being able to live off of one's pen, as well as promotion and dissemination can arguably be said to depend on a writer's home address.

[24] The refusal to acknowledge the significance of location in writing can be read as a disclaimer for prospective critics. Rushdie might, not unreasonably, expect critics to argue that the anthology privileges diasporic Indian writing since it actually consists of mostly diasporic authors.

For Indian scholar Makarand Paranjape, migrant or diasporic writing has taken over the task of representing postcolonial writing, so much so that he asserts that the diaspora almost overshadows the motherland. The fact that only diasporic writing is made visible – to the detriment of non-diasporic writing which is almost completely excluded from the postcolonial literary field – can plausibly be said to be one of the main points of the dissertation and will be discussed in subsequent sections. The problem resides in the fact that diasporic writing, and with it one way of seeing, has been privileged. Focusing on representations of fictional India, Paranjape argues that "the 'reality' of India could not be wished (or washed?) away in the sweeping tide of migrant ontology that seemed to have taken over the postcolonial consciousness" (Paranjape, 2000: 237). Paranjape does not discriminate against diasporic writing, neither does he consider it less valuable, but he certainly criticizes the privileging of migrant writing because he argues that migrant and non-migrant writing offer different perspectives, and "India seen from afar can never be the same as India seen from near" (ibid., 238). Thus, he states the need to reverse the existing imbalance that focuses mainly on diasporic or migrant authors that are more easily accessible from the West, and proposes to do so by working on and for the more local literatures in order to offer a more complete picture of the diverse postcolonial world.

In *What are you reading? The World Market and Indian Literary Production* (2012) Indian scholar Pavithra Narayana analyses how location influences why certain intellectuals and writers are privileged in postcolonial discourses. She explores the reasons that explain which authors and critics make the cut in Western Academia and are thus promoted, recognized and absorbed as part of the critical and literary canons in postcolonial literatures. Narayanan argues that the scholars and writers who dominate postcolonial discourses are intellectuals located in the First World and

writers whose works are produced in a transnational space. Consequently, those located and/or published in postcolonial countries are excluded from postcolonial discourses in Euro-American academic institutions (Narayana, 2012: 7). The more specifically national postcolonial writing is not promoted because it offers a vision not mediated or legitimised by the West and its primary aim is not to accommodate a Western readership. Narayanan, therefore, states that if

> institutional mechanisms and academic practices of defining, evaluating and expanding knowledge do not change, intellectuals, along with publishers and literary agents, will continue to be inadvertent agents of censorship for voices from the global South. (Narayana, 2012: 8)

Narayana argues that the task of redressing the current imbalance involves the many participants in the literary field. This way, Narayana introduces a crucial aspect for this study that will be further explored, namely the necessarily collective dimension of the task of redressing the aforementioned imbalance. In this regard, Boehmer argues that the lack of critical acclaim surrounding non-migrant writing perpetuates the divide between the Third and First Worlds and thus blocks the development of literatures in Third World countries:

> Crudely put, the promotion of post-colonial migrant writing may offer another instance of the appropriation by Europe and America of resources in the Third World […] The promotion or appropriation of the literature keeps in place a cultural map of the world as divided between the richly gifted metropolis and the meagrely endowed margin. (Boehmer, 1995: 238)

For Boehmer, the privileging of diasporic writing exemplifies how the West still controls the resources of the Third World. As a result, the cultural gap created by such a phenomenon can be seen as yet another form of neo-colonialism.

2.1.2.2. Topics

As regards the topics or subject matter that should be tackled in order to be publishable and promoted, critics and writers agree on the point of Western demands for mediated versions of the place represented. It can be argued that the promotion of postcolonial texts depends on them being tailored for Western readers, thus, only those products that aim at decoding difference are worthy of investment.

Trinidadian-Canadian writer Marlene Nourbese Philip recognises that publishing as well as reviewing and criticism are by no means unbiased activities but highly political and ideologically-influenced acts (Nourbese Philip, 1992: 163). In her essay “Publish + Be Damned,” Nourbese Philip locates other aspects involved in promotion and publishing as having the potential to act as agents of censorship. Commenting on the books that make the cut in Canadian culture, Nourbese Philip recognises that

> [w]orks by writers from cultures other than the dominant one often succeed in the publishing world of this culture, not only because they may be well-written, but also because they satisfy certain ideas already in existence in the dominant culture. Authors like V.S. Naipaul and his nephew Neil Bissoondath are both examples of writers who catapulted to fame on the savage and, at times, racist critique of the "Third World”. (ibid. 162)

For Nourbese Philip, the writers who are promoted are those who offer a user-friendly version of the Third World. She argues that sometimes these writers even express the view of the colonized mind that despises all except that which is considered valuable from the coloniser’s perspective. The kind of views on the non-Western world advanced in their writings accounts for their promotion, as these writers “provided that they have some ability, are guaranteed an immediate entré into the literary scene in whatever metropolis they happen to reside” (Nourbese Philip, 1992: 191). Among

them, Nourbese Philip identifies two authors of West Indian origin who have lived most of their lives in Great Britain and Canada respectively, V.S. Naipaul and Neil Bissoondath. Their works decode difference in such a way so as to accommodate the First World readership and conform to the hegemonic stereotypes on foreign, mainly Third world cultures. In the case of V.S. Naipaul, this attitude can be seen in the following excerpt:

> The island blacks will continue to be dependent on the books, films and goods of others; in this important way they will continue to be the half-made societies of a dependent people, the Third World's third world. They will forever consume; they will never create. They are without material resources; they will never develop the higher skills. (Naipaul, 1972: 250)

From his 1972 collection of articles *The Overcrowded Barracoon*, this excerpt illustrates Naipaul's identification with the hegemonic vision of Third World peoples. In particular, this excerpt claims that West Indian society, depicted as a sort of doomed society, is not capable of creating anything new or developing its own culture. It is precisely this type of belief which has led Edward Said to accuse V.S. Naipaul of having allowed himself "quite consciously, to be turned into a witness for the Western prosecution in the trial against the Third World" (Said, 1992: 53). In fact, Said believes that writers such as V.S. Naipaul, who present themselves as members of courageous minorities in the Third World, do not actually have any interest in addressing the Third World. Said argues that

> Naipaul's accounts of the Islamic, Latin American, African, Indian and Caribbean worlds totally ignore a massive infusion of critical scholarship about these regions in favour of the tritest, the cheapest and the easiest of colonial mythologies about wogs and darkies. (ibid.)

For his part, in *London Calling: V.S. Naipaul, Postcolonial Mandarin* (1992) Rob Nixon proposes that it is Naipaul's particular condition of being an outsider with the knowledge of an insider which allows him to buttress racist ideas about the Third World.[25] Since Naipaul can be said to derive from the so-called Third World, he

> can be invoked, with the help of bold generalizations, as someone with a personal knowledge of 'those kinds' of places and peoples, a knowledge that only an insider could hope to command; at other times, the appeal to his authority focuses on his apparent ability to be an involved outsider everywhere. (Nixon, 1992: 18)

For Nixon, Naipaul's condition of involved outsider has further legitimised Naipaul's readings of the Third World. As a displaced literary figure, he is seen as free from any national affiliations and in a sort of permanent exile which supposedly allows him to offer an impartial representation, which ultimately, though, legitimises a set of ideological interests that coincide with that of the Western world.

While V.S. Naipaul is, to use Said's words, one of the most blatant advocates for the Western cause, his nephew Neil Bissoondath – precisely because, as his uncle, he too is seen as an insider – can also be placed on the front line of this metaphorical trial. For Nourbese Philip, Neil Bissoondath's vision is that of "the truly colonized mind, trained and schooled to despise all that has produced him except what the colonizer considers valuable" (Nourbese Philip, 1992: 191). The views expressed by a successful writer located in the West, in this case Canada, who is racially marked but has internalised a colonial logic, can conceivably be damaging not only to his community but to any other racialized subjects. In fact, Dionne Brand affirms that

[25] Such as defining the former colonies as 'barbarous,' 'primitive,' 'tribal,' 'simple,' 'irrational,' 'static,' 'without history,' 'futureless,' 'bush,' 'philistine,' 'sentimental,' 'parasitic,' and 'mimic' (Nixon, 1992: 6).

Bissoondath's role in the Canadian debate on cultural appropriation has served to perpetuate colonial representations of race. As Brand explains,

> [i]n producing a Neil Bissoondath to denounce the cultural appropriation critique, the white cultural establishment produces a dark face to dismiss and discredit all the other dark faces and simultaneously to confirm and reinscribe that colonial representation so essential to racial domination. (Brand, 1994: 129)

Brand argues that Bissoondath's defence of the idea that voice can be appropriated is particularly significant because he is presented as a representative of a Third World minority and presumably as someone conscious of colonial representations of race and stereotyping. Thus, as a non-white writer, he cannot, supposedly, be accused of being conditioned by his race alignment. However, as Brand emphasises, the reality is that Bissondath's views on an issue such as cultural appropriation seem vested in the colonial representation of race. Ultimately, Bissoondath's writing reflects Rahim's aforementioned concept of irresponsible writing which not only does not contribute to illuminating or healing but justifies and validates colonial discourses.

Focusing on the United States, in *What is World Literature?* (2003) David Damrosch argues that foreign texts will rarely be translated,[26] and "much less widely distributed, unless they reflect American concerns and fit comfortably with American images of the foreign culture in question" (Damrosch, 2003: 18). Hence, for foreign works to circulate in the United States, either in translation – the few that are actually translated – or in their original language, they must offer mediated visions that conform to the stereotyped view of the given culture of origin. Focusing on India, Shashi Deshpande

[26] Statistics from 2007 show that only about 2% of books published in the US and UK are translations, as opposed to Germany (13%), France (27%), Spain (28%), Turkey (40%) and Slovenia (70%) (Flood, 2014).

warns the Indian writer expecting to receive Western praise that the range of themes that would win the approval of the American market would be noticeably limited to

> for example, the theme of the immigrant experience [which] is a safe bet. Or, if set in India, it needs to be an India that is attractively different, yet not different enough to create problems for the American reader. The complexities of Indian social/cultural life are out, but stereotypes and images that this reader is comfortable with are welcome. (qtd. in Narayana, 2012: 119)

Deshpande argues that if the Indian writer chooses to represent an India that is too different from the ones the American readership is accustomed to, he or she runs the risk of becoming invisible and not making the cut in the mainstream Western literary scene. Texts by Anglophone Indians are welcomed provided that, as Huggan argues, the diversity portrayed in them "is given a reassuringly familiar aesthetic cast" (Huggan, 2001: 27).

2.1.2.3. Language

Also in terms of language, any representation of otherness is marketed and promoted provided that a Western readership is accommodated. Paul Gilroy explains that the Western culture industry is prepared to make investments only in certain types of otherness. These investments have a very limited scope since, as Gilroy describes, their eligibility is conditioned upon these cultural products offering a "user-friendly, house-trained, and marketable 'reading' or translation of the stubborn vernacular" (Gilroy, 2000: 242). The promotion or investment in postcolonial literatures is partly limited to writings from the West by migrant or diasporic writers which are moreover written exclusively in a European language. Thus, if texts hold any traces of non-

European languages that might force the reader to become aware of linguistic diversity – a trait that characterises the majority of postcolonial linguistic contexts – these ought to be decoded so as to offer a user-friendly version for the Western reader and thus be eligible for promotion.

In the case of India, the almost exclusive focus on Anglophone writers is illustrated as well by Indian scholar Pavithra Narayana. In spite of India's rich linguistic diversity – with its twenty-four recognised official languages – there still exists a significant disparity between English-language and regional-language writing with respect to international visibility. The two instances when India has been the guest country at the Frankfurt Book Fair serve to exemplify the lack of interest in non-Anglophone writers by the literary world market and Western academia. At the 1986 edition of the book fair, the first time that India was the guest country, only Anglophone writing was featured. Twenty years later, and once again very little writing from non-Anglophone authors was included (Narayana, 2012: 77). Thus, it could be argued that although the situation has slightly improved, the poor representation of non-Anglophone writers is still tacit. Moreover, only few translations of Indian texts written in other Indian languages have entered Western academia in recent times.

Focusing on the US context, at the 2014 Jaipur Literary Festival, Indian-American author Jhumpa Lahiri denounced the fact that for a literary text to enter the US market, it had to be written in English. She expressed her distress at the lack of translation and the lack of energy put into translation in the US and argued that "there is so much literature that needs to be brought forward which now [with the focus solely on literature written in English]… it's getting even less exposure" (qtd. in Flood, 2014).

However, the scarcity of translations from regional languages into English has not prevented acclaimed Indian writer, Salman Rushdie, from asserting that

> [t]he prose writing – both fiction and non-fiction – created in this period [1947-1997] by Indian writers working in English, is proving to be a stronger and more important body of work than most of what has been produced in the 16 'official languages' of India, the so-called 'vernacular languages'. (Rushdie and West, 1997: x)

According to Rushdie, who is both an Anglophone and a diasporic writer, the invisibility of non-Anglophone Indian prose writing in the Western world is due to its lack of quality. Rushdie's generalised negative appraisal of most of what has been written in fifty years in more than twenty different languages is either unrealistic or leaning towards the prejudice that the English language is superior to the so-called 'vernacular languages'. Ultimately, Rushdie's "wild assertion" (Loomba, 1998: 206) can be said to help justify the meagre interest in regional-language writing and the disparity in the representation of Anglophone and non-Anglophone Indian writers.

In the case of India the existing hierarchy between regional languages and English, that is, between non-European languages and the European colonial language, is, as has been argued, well-established. However, in other parts of the postcolonial world or the global South, English is also given prominence over other European languages. This is the case of the Puerto-Rican literary field. Within this context, Puerto-Rican-American scholar Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert analyses Puerto Rican writer Rosario Ferré's turn to English as a response to

> the siren song of a multicultural, postcolonial book market which has opened a niche for a certain type of female Caribbean writer whose work can be *consumed*, appropriated into a configuration where it serves the narrow purposes of theory, reassuring the reader that he or she understands the

> Caribbean without having to penetrate its multifarious realities. (Paravisini-Gebert, 1998: 162)

Ferré's decision to write a novel in English, unlike all her previous novels which were written in Spanish, can be seen as going hand in hand with offering a simplified portrayal of the region. Having analysed Ferré's texts, Paravisini-Gebert concludes that her simplified portrayal of the region, which responds to the expectations and demands of Western readership for an otherness which is nonetheless accommodating, together with her adoption of English, grants her entrance to the postcolonial literary world. As Sylvia Molloy claims in her article "Postcolonial Latin American and the Magic Realist Imperative: A Report to an Academy", Spanish and Portuguese are European languages but "they may be a little less European than others" (Molloy, 2005: 373). Languages exist in a hierarchy and Spanish, which, according to Molloy is not considered a metropolitan language, ranks lower than English. Therefore Ferré's choice of a more highly-regarded language such as English helps the writer enter a much coveted world. Moreover, taking into consideration the low percentage of translations published in the Anglophone world, writing in English opens the text to a wider audience. In fact, Paravisini-Gebert further explains that Ferré's change of linguistic medium did actually prove to be successful, since her novel written in English, *The House on the Lagoon* (1996), was a finalist for the National (i.e., American) Book Award.

Before moving into analysing the West Indian literary field, a final element which can be said to be directly connected to the two last factors, language and thematic concerns, is the issue of audiences, that is, who are postcolonial texts written for? Do authors write with their metropolitan audiences in mind? How much do they adapt their texts for a Western readership? Chinua Achebe explains his perspective by

drawing an analogy that examines the relationship between a master singer and his or her audience; even if one's audience is small, that should not prevent any postcolonial writer from writing without tailoring his or her work to accommodate a foreign audience, namely a Western audience:

> A master singer arrives to perform in a large auditorium and finds at the last moment that three quarters of his audience are totally deaf. His sponsors then put the proposition to him that he should dance instead because even the deaf can *see* a dancer. Now, although our performer may have the voice of an angel his feet are as heavy as concrete. So what should he do? Should he proceed to sing beautifully to only a quarter or less of the auditorium or dance atrociously to a full house? (Achebe, 1998: 61)

From Achebe's parallel the issue arises of whether it is possible to write without excluding anyone as well as, by extension, the aforementioned concept of universality. It can be argued that since there exist no universal texts, sections of audiences will somehow always be excluded.

2.1.3. The West Indian Literary Field: Relational Factors

This section will discuss how the three major relational factors previously outlined come into play in the case of the West Indian literary field. More specifically, in the case of the West Indies, it will be argued that literature is deemed eligible when it is written from the diaspora, tackles topics that the Western reader is quite familiarised with or can easily identify as 'Caribbean', and, finally, is not written in any of the different Creole languages – or at the very least limits the use thereof.

Since those literatures written in English mainly by migrant writers can be said to monopolise the postcolonial literary field, this section will try to answer questions

concerning the representation of the Caribbean, namely: What images of the Caribbean do privileged writers reflect? Do Caribbean-based writers offer different perspectives in their works? Is the diaspora almost the sole representative of the Caribbean?

2.1.3.1. Location

The West Indies is no longer that place which artists historically had to leave to pursue their career. The circumstances that defined mid-twentieth century Caribbean society and culture, which Lamming defined as a "lonely desert of mass indifference, and educated middle-class treachery" (Lamming, 1960: 41), have gradually changed. Although many critics and writers maintain that the conditions still require a great deal of improvement, the West Indian writer can now function in his or her society without having to leave.[27] However, what explains that it is only a minority of writers who decide to say?

First of all, it must be noted, as Caryl Phillips explains, that West Indian writers continue to migrate because of the discouraging conditions.[28] Phillips interprets the "exportation of Caribbean talent", which started in the 1950s and extends to the present times, as a deterrent to the region ultimately benefitting from this talent. Phillips argues that

> writers do need a people to feed off, they do need to grow and develop by nibbling at the table of a particular society, and it is possible that this continued exportation which has been going on to the present day, has in some ways

[27] This point will be further analysed in sections 3.1.1. and 3.1.2.

[28] The circumstances which explain such conditions will be disclosed in section 3.1.

> prevented the region from fully realizing the promise of the Fifties. (Phillips, 1990: 220)

As previously argued, the Fifties saw the emergence in Europe, and to a lesser extent in North America, of a first generation of West Indian writers. A generation whose portrayal of the Caribbean, unlike the majority of previous portrayals, sought to empower the West Indian community. The unrealised promise of the Fifties, to which Phillips refers, can be connected to the West Indian writer's inability to write from the region. Phillips wishes that the task started by the pioneers of the mid-twentieth century, could be more widely practised on Caribbean soil. Thus, he would like to see West Indian writers have the possibility of building a writing career in the region because this would actually be a step forward in the development of West Indian arts and in the overall development of the region.

However, the reality is that the great majority of West Indian writers are not island-based writers and this cannot be disassociated from the fact that location plays a critical role in the privileging and promotion of West Indian writers. As British scholar Allison Donnell argues, the preference for certain West Indian authors over others is explained by whether these authors have or have not retained an island base, that is, whether they are diasporic or non-diasporic writers. Donnell argues that the focus is on the former, which is to say, the cosmopolitan rather than the rooted, the traveller rather than the dweller (Donnell, 2006: 78). Two key factors, which help further explain why location matters, need to be addressed here. First of all, the matter of publication, and secondly, the amount of critical attention received. In terms of the publication question, Peepal Tree Press[29] founder and managing director and scholar, Jeremy

[29] British publishing house specialising in Caribbean and Black British fiction, poetry, literary criticism, memoirs and historical studies.

Poynting, admits that Caribbean-based authors are at a disadvantage in terms of access to metropolitan publishing houses compared to those based in the UK or North America. This imbalance is of much concern to him as he recognises that the different perspectives these two sets of authors provide are simply not interchangeable. As a result, he claims that some priority ought to be given to hearing the voices of those who are writing from within. He argues that

> As long as I'm the driving force, Peepal [Tree Press] will stay committed to writing coming out of the region. It's very easy to publish diasporic writing, and it's easier for diasporic writers in an environment where they can develop with exposure, peer review, and writers' groups. It's all much harder in the Caribbean, where books need to be published whose primary audience is the people in the region. (qtd. in Lee: 2006)

Poynting argues that due to the biases of metropolitan publishing, the diasporic perspective is privileged over that of writers who are island-based. Moreover, he argues that since diasporic Caribbean-heritage writers have become more deeply rooted in their countries of settlement, the differences of perspective between these and Caribbean-based writers becomes more marked (Poynting, 2013: 76). Bearing all this in mind, Poynting aims to offering a more complete picture of the West Indian literary field, one that also takes into account the non-diasporic voices.[30]

The limited level of critical attention received by island-based writers also reflects the privileging of diasporic Caribbean writers. Allison Donnell poses as an example the extremely unbalanced critical reception of two novels by Trinidadian authors, both dealing with understanding and representing Trinidad, V.S. Naipaul's *A Way in the World: A Sequence* (1994) and Earl Lovelace's *Salt* (1996). Naipaul's success is explained, as Donnell argues, by the fact that his text can be read productively within

[30] It must be said that despite Poynting's best intentions, he recognises that even Peepal Tree Press shows a bias toward the diasporic over the intra-Caribbean (Poynting, 2013: 76).

the Black Atlantic movement, in which migrant writers are emphasised. The lesser attention afforded to Lovelace's novel is explained by the general lack of consideration given to the Caribbean region as a site of possibility. Donnell describes Lovelace's novel as far more interested in roots than routes, and argues that the novel radically deconstructs the idea of the nation as ethnically or culturally homogeneous. However, his geographically bounded narrative does not fit well with the Black Atlantic model and has thus been less critically attended (Donnell, 2006: 87).[31]

It can be argued that a parallel situation has occurred with non-diasporic scholars or scholars who have made a conscious effort to publish mostly through Caribbean publishing houses, journals or magazines. In the introduction to *Critics on Caribbean Literature* (1978) Edward Baugh admits that critics of Caribbean literature have had and still have the choice between metropolitan and local publishing venues, and asserts that a lot was and still is at stake for a critic who commits to publishing in a "little magazine" (Baugh, 1978: 11). The case of Guyanese Trinidad-based scholar Gordon Rohlehr, and his commitment to local publishing, is an example of a West Indian critic who has given up the opportunity of reaching a wider readership in favour of reaching "the audience that matters the most" (Baugh, 1978: 11). For scholars such as Rohlehr the decision to publish in local periodicals like the Trinidadian newspaper *Tapia*, a magazine founded by Trinidadian economist Lloyd Best, as well as local publishing houses, particularly in the decades following independence, was meant to develop a body of critical texts from West Indian soil targeted at a West Indian audience. The publishing of scholarly articles in the region sought to share the transformative pull of the literary pieces featured in their articles. In this sense,

[31] The issue of location and its connection to the Black Atlantic model here introduced will be further developed in the next chapter, due to its importance in the West Indian literary field.

Rohlehr can be viewed as a Gramscian 'organic intellectual', an intellectual "who seek[s] counter-hegemonic publishing spaces to not only acquire course materials but also publish their own work" (Narayanan, 2012: 8). However, at the same time, publishing in regional periodicals, magazines or publishing houses may explain, at least in part, why Gordon Rohlehr is generally not included in the canon of critics of West Indian literature in First World academic institutions.

2.1.3.2. Topics

In terms of the topics valued for publication, first of all, it must be noted that those texts which do not assume any previous knowledge of the socio-political history of the region are preferred. Mainstreamed writings are those which focus on a limited range of topics in order to conform to the hegemonic stereotypes of the region and portray the Caribbean as an exotic, festive, disorganized society. In this sense, Trinidadian writer and journalist Raymond Ramcharitar, in an article dated 20th August 2014 in *The Trinidad and Tobago Guardian*, "White Girls Rock Caribbean Literature", argues that

> a frightening amount of contemporary Caribbean art [contains the tropes expected by the metropole such as] (primitivism, "festive" consciousness, disorder) which suffuse regional/Trini cultural orthodoxy, and are reproduced endlessly. (Ramcharitar, 2014)

Ramcharitar regrets the continuous repetition of tropes found in a lot of Caribbean contemporary art and expected by the Western cultural world. He argues that these tropes are found not only in art but also in Western academia. He poses as an example a lecture by Milla Riggio – according to Ramcharitar a US academic of some repute –

which took place in Trinidad. Riggio identified Trinidad as "a 'festival' society, one which was 'organic', and which should be proud of its disorganization" (Ramcharitar, 2014). Thus, these old tropes are present not only in a large amount of contemporary Caribbean art, but also among Western academics who contribute to the continued dissemination of images which define the Caribbean region from a hegemonic perspective.

In order to clearly identify the topics valued for promotion, Jeremy Poynting offers a comparison of two novels written in the same year which portray the region from two different perspectives. He compares *Black Rock* (2009) by diasporic writer Amanda Smyth and *The Island Quintet* (2009) by Trinidadian-based writer Raymond Ramcharitar. First of all, it can be argued that the mere fact that *Black Rock* is written by a diasporic writer, already means it has a greater chance of being more successful than *The Island Quintet*, the non-diasporic novel. In terms of content, Poynting explains that *Black Rock* offers a simplified version of Trinidad, described as a tropical exotic place and devoid of any actual historical contextualization, whereas *The Island Quintet* "forgoes the familiar tropes of Trinidadian exotic; it demands the readers make their own judgments; and it assumes a basic knowledge of social and historical context" (Poynting, 2013: 77). Poynting further explains that Smyth's novel was on Oprah Winfrey's list of twenty-five 'must read' books of the summer, it was reviewed in *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *Elle* and the *Independent on Sunday* and named one of the book chain Waterstone's New Voices. Instead, Ramcharitar's novel, precisely because of the aforementioned characteristics that make the novel a work of value, was excluded from mainstream metropolitan publication and therefore less visible and less successful.

Bearing all this in mind, it could be argued that books such as *Black Rock,* which offer hegemonic visions of the Caribbean, are undoubtedly not aimed at the region itself. It could be assumed that since these books are tailored for and aimed at a non-West Indian readership, they cannot speak to the region nor would it make any sense for West Indians to seek to see themselves and their region reflected in these cultural products. However, Poynting argues that even though little is known about the pragmatics of readership in the Caribbean, he suspects that a book such as *Black Rock* "by virtue of the prestige it carries (Oprah no less), may also be the book by which Trinidad is invited to know itself" (Poynting, 2011: 31). Poynting seems to be pointing at the irony that a book which perpetuates the alienating vision mainstreamed by the West is the one in which, due to the wide impact of the Western cultural market, Trinidadians might probably seek to see themselves reflected.

As a consequence of the preference towards dehistoricised and stereotyped narratives, some Caribbean writers have denounced the demands of metropolitan publishing houses that they adapt their writings for a Western readership. Guayanese-British writer David Dabydeen has recognised the pressure on the part of mainstream metropolitan publishing houses to stop 'folking up' the literature "or else you perish in the backwater of small presses, you don't get published by the 'quality' presses, and you don't receive the corresponding patronage of media-hype" (Dabydeen, 1990: 12-3). In fact, it can be argued that this pressure towards mimicry, which Dabydeen recognises Caribbean writers are asked to conform to in order to enter the mainstream Western literary world, is in fact a requirement for any non-Western writer wishing to publish in a mainstream publishing house. Thus, non-Western or so-called ethnic writers who do not produce simplified texts in which the Western reader can see his or

herself reflected, are likely to see their chances at pursuing a successful writing career severely diminished.

This pull towards mimicry or homogenisation is undoubtedly not a new phenomenon in the Caribbean. In these lines from Derek Walcott's poem "Another Life", the poet describes his recollections as a child in the Caribbean:

> from childhood he'd considered palms
> ignobler than imagined elms
> the breadfruit's splayed
> leaf coarser than the oak's,
> he had prayed
> nightly for his flesh to change,
> his dun flesh peeled white by her lightning strokes!
> (Walcott, 2004: 6-7)

These lines signal the longing for the landscape that surrounded the poet to resemble the landscape of the books he read as a child. The poet longed for his landscape to change, for the palms and breadfruits to turn into oaks and elms. Walcott can be said to signal a kind of homogenising pull similar to that described by Dabydeen. Thus, the current pressure on the Caribbean writer to minimise the appearance of palms, breadfruits, mangoes and any Caribbean trope which results in a simplified and decontextualized version of Caribbean literature, is particularly relevant if we take into account that the first generation to take possession of Caribbean landscapes imaginatively was, in fact, Walcott's.[32]

In a similar vein to the view expressed by Dabydeen, Kei Miller maintains that there is a growing campaign against the folk and folk culture which leads, ultimately, to the

[32] Baugh explains that Walcott, like the Caribbean writers of his generation, felt the "Adamic privilege of 'naming' their island and their region, their landscape and climate, 'the several postures of [his] virginal island'" (Baugh, 2011: 94).

impoverishment of Caribbean culture. Miller further contends that Caribbean tropes or national heritage stereotypes can still be possible topics for imaginative treatment. He argues that "mediocrity certainly does not lie in the setting of a village, or in the use of patois or in the subject matter of slavery" and wonders: "Can we not allow the folk to hold an iPad in one hand, and a mango in the other?" (Miller, *Writing down* 2013: 21-3). In fact, Caribbean tropes can be treated in innovative ways, as proven by writers such as Shani Mootoo, Nalo Hopkinson, Jennifer Rahim, Kevin Baldeosingh or himself – just to mention a few. In their texts, topics like Caribbean flora, the Creole syncretic religion Obeah, mythological characters like the douends and carnival ole mas characters like the Midnight Robber or stickfighters are explored in imaginative and innovative ways. As Jeremy Poynting argues, the appearance of these national tropes does not impede their characters from confronting all the complexities of modernity. He advances the idea that national clichés are not dead metaphors and can be reinvented, subverted and treated imaginatively as proven by Trinidadian writers Baldeosingh and Rahim:

> In Kevin Baldeosingh's epic, *The Ten Incarnations of Adam Avatar*, one of Adam's incarnations is a stickfighter (another potential 'national heritage' stereotype), yet one subverted by the fact that the character in Baldeosingh's novel is a woman […] Jennifer Rahim's poem 'Douens', in *Between the Fence and the Forest*, arrives at the image as a condensation of her sense of a society looking both ways. (Poynting, 2011: 77)

Poynting argues that Baldeosingh's use of the figure of the stickfighter subverts the traditional gender roles in Trinidadian society. The stickfighter is a figure associated with carnival who takes part in combat competitions with long wooden sticks. Traditionally the art of stickfighting has been reserved to men, thus by creating a female stickfighter the traditional figure is adapted into an egalitarian modern world in

which women can also be included. All in all, by depicting a female stickfighter, Baldeosingh is contributing to the evolution of indigenous traditional artforms and to their advancement in modern times.

Similarly, Rahim's poem "Return of the Douen" shows how the trope of the douen has the capacity of being reinterpreted in such a way so as to work as a metaphor for the state of Trinidadian society. Part of Trinidad and Tobago folklore, the douen, is "the spirit of a child who died before baptism […] and wear[s] large hats, ha[s] backward-pointing feet, under a soft hooting cry, and often leads children to wander off" (Winer, 2009: 310). In the poem, the poet, who identifies herself with the figure of the douen, holds a short conversation with a person she has not encountered for a long time. The poem starts with these lines:

> "You remembered!
> I didn't think…"
>
> (I never forget a face.)
>
> "A lot has happened
> Since I last saw you.
> You have been hiding,
> Haven't you?
> What's with the hat?"

And it closes:

> "You haven't said a word.
> Still shy I suppose.
> Wait a minute!
> When did we move
> What happened to your feet? They're on all wrong!
> What is this country? Changed?
> Everything!"

"Take it easy my friend.
Welcome to poetry."
(Rahim, 2002: 52-3)

In the exchange between the douen/poet and the interlocutor the latter shows distress at the state of the country and at seeing his or her old-time friend. It could be argued that the interlocutor is only capable of finding certainty and stability abroad or inside a gated community somewhere in the East-West corridor.[33] The interlocutor relates the image of this old-friend/douen to the dangerousness and instability with which he or she defines the country. A dangerousness which, in its turn, is the natural state of the poet/douen, as well as the natural state of poetry. Thus the poet/douen interprets and celebrates the instability which defines her and the country as being potentially creative.

Trinidadian-Canadian writer Shani Mootoo has also reformulated and reinterpreted a trope such as the Caribbean garden in her writings. According to North American scholar Sarah Phillips Casteel, in Mootoo's first novel *Cereus Blooms at Night* (1996) the Caribbean garden is explored as a site capable of containing contemporary discussions of Caribbean identity. Such a space is reread and reimagined, and it becomes a space "in which to explore the mutual interdependence of place and displacement, roots and routes" (Phillips Casteel, 2003: 13). Phillips Casteel argues that the garden, far from being static and monolithic, is an unstable and dynamic space in Mootos's text. In the novel placelessness is not celebrated, as we will see current trends tend to promote, but is understood as an ongoing and always provisional process, with place and displacement functioning as factors in a necessarily complementary relation. All in all, Mootoo's exploration of the Caribbean garden not

[33] The East-West corridor is the area that extends from Port of Spain, the capital, westwards up until approximately Arima. It is the most urban and populated part of the island.

only proves that Caribbean tropes can still be possible topics for imaginative treatment, but it also points towards defending that place and displacement, roots and routes, the national and the transnational can also be explored as interdependent and entirely non-oppositional subject matters.

2.1.3.3. Language

As already noted, the choice of medium in postcolonial writing influences enormously the degree of recognition received by writers. Thus, choosing a linguistic medium or mediums becomes a very political decision for most postcolonial writers. Merle Hodge argues that creative writers' responses to their language situation have been mainly affected by considerations such as language attitudes towards the official language versus the native language/s as well as their potential readership (Hodge, *Earl Lovelace and the evolution of voice* 2007: v).

In the case of the West Indies, due to its complex linguistic situation, language can be said to play a crucial role in the region's literature. Canadian scholar Joanne Akai explains that West Indian writers, as primarily Creole speakers, have not had the same relationship with English as monolingual English speakers. According to Akai, this is reflected in many West Indian texts, which "constitute an intricately woven textile of the Creole and English languages, and of Creole and English narration traditions" (Akai, 1997:175). This way, as Akai recognises, language enriches and distinguishes West Indian literature from other literatures in English (Akai, 1997: 175).

Merle Hodge asserts that Creole is the medium which most accurately describes the West Indian people's experience although using it is not without its challenges.

Despite the fact that it is the medium that most faithfully records people's worldview, the tradition of writing novels or short stories in the West Indies is shaped by the culture of the official language, English (Hodge: 1998, 47). Thus, what has been most common in the West Indian writings that have made it in the West is a kind of literature that uses a language that is shaped for a non-West Indian audience. Creole is limited to phrases or sentences that give the exotic flavour expected by the Western reader, but its presence is almost unnoticed and certainly unobtrusive to the English-speaking reader. In general, therefore, it can be argued that the preferred texts have been those which use very decreolised versions of the different Creole languages thereby creating the impression that these are simply dialects of English or worse, deformations of the Standard language.

The pressure exerted on writers by mainstream publishing houses to stop 'folking up' West Indian literature, as earlier highlighted by Dabydeen, can also be applied to the use of Creole. Olive Senior maintains that, in general, Creole literary texts are less acceptable as publishable cultural products. Senior has made extensive use of Creole in her works and argues that "mainstream publishers don't like Creole and they are not very interested in the subject matter" (Senior, 1996: 5). Another instance of non-acceptance or even derision towards Creole can be seen in the critical appraisal in North America of Dionne Brand's works which make use of Creole.[34] Leslie Sanders, York University scholar, explains that the reviewers of Dionne Brand's first books complained about the parts written in Trinidadian English Creole and labelled them as incomprehensible (Leslie Sanders, personal communication, Nov. 16, 2013). These two instances potentially prove that when Creole is not mediated to suit Western

[34] The appraisal of Brand's use of language will be further discussed in section 4.4.5.1.

audiences, it is generally seen as an obstacle and not a feature which distinguishes and enriches West Indian literature.

Paravisini-Gebert suggests that the privileging of Standard English in West Indian literary texts may be well rewarded. To illustrate this view, she questions whether Jamaica Kincaid's critical acclaim has anything to do with the absence of Creole in her texts. In this regard, Jamaican writer and scholar Opal Palmer Adisa has argued that the Caribbean writer's decision to consciously refrain from using Creole can be interpreted as suggesting that "people are incapable of speaking for themselves or that the nation language is incapable of expressing the full breadth and range of emotions and ideas" (Adisa, 1998: 19). Bearing this in mind, can it be argued that Kincaid's choice to not reflect the Creole language situation is synonymous with her mistrust of Creole usage in the literary sphere? Adisa's interpretation certainly appears to be appropriate when one considers the overall abscence of Creole in printed media. However, – regardless of the implications and advantages of not using Creole for the Caribbean writer – in the case of Jamaica Kincaid, the absence of Creole is explained by another set of circumstances. According to Merle Hodge, two different factors should be taken into account:

> Certainly the decision (if conscious decision there was) not to attempt realism in creating dialogue for the Creole-speaking characters is a judicious one. An artist cannot successfully use a medium that s/he does not completely control. It is very likely that Kincaid's competence in her native language has succumbed to amnesia induced not only by the passage of time, but possibly also by the deliberate distancing of her adolescent years. (Hodge, 1998: 53)

First of all, in choosing to distance herself from her homeland she also became distanced from her mother tongue. Thus, as a result of her choice of her choosing to live abroad and having done so for most of her adult life, Kincaid argues that she no

longer speaks nor understands Creole. In *My Brother* (1997) Kincaid states that “I had lived away from my home for so long that I no longer understood readily the kind of English he [Kincaid’s brother] spoke and always had to have him repeat himself to me” (Kincaid, 1997: 8). In an interview with scholar Gerhard Dilger, Kincaid further explains when she says: “I don’t even know how to speak English Patois anymore” (Kincaid, 2004: 85). Secondly, Hodge interprets Kincaid’s novels as sitting on a cusp between fiction and essay, and argues that in such a context Creole speech would simply have looked idiosyncratic and distracting. Kincaid’s decision, therefore, can be seen as her seeking to distance herself from her homeland and its language as opposed to her complying with the rules of the Western literary industry which does not consider Creole suitable for literature. On the other hand, however, Hodge points out that Kincaid’s register of English for both dialogue and narration displays such fine-tuned precision and educatedness, that not using a “spontaneous, unself-conscious, uncut” medium such as Creole is understandable so as not to establish a contrast between the two codes, which would then create a focus that is not part of the writer’s theme (Hodge, 1998: 53).

A final point that deserves to be commented on, however briefly, is the use of Creole in criticism and scholarly texts. At the 30th Conference on West Indian Literature that was held in 2011 in the University of the West Indies, Saint Augustine Campus, Trinidad, island-based Jamaican scholar Carolyn Cooper argued that it was high time for critical texts to also be written in Creole. Whereas creative writers have engaged, in different ways and to varying degrees, with the use of Creole in their texts, there is no parallel to be found in critical and scholarly texts. Cooper argued that in the same way West Indian literature gradually incorporated Creole – and not without many critical voices against its use –, its use in scholarly articles should be encouraged.

Cooper has actually started to write articles in Creole, at least, in her blog "Jamaica Woman Tongue". Probably taking into account the smaller readership of a solely Creole monolingual blog, as well as the lack of tradition of reading texts written in Creole with a distinct and established phonetic system, Cooper offers three versions of her articles. Aware of the ground-breaking position of her initiative, Cooper includes the following note before her articles:

> Two spelling systems are used for the Jamaican language below. The first, which I call 'chaka-chaka', is based on English spelling. The second, 'prapa-prapa', is the specialist phonetic system designed by the Jamaican linguist Frederic Cassidy. It has been updated by the Jamaican Language Unit at the University of the West Indies, Mona. After the two Jamaican versions, there's an English translation. (Cooper)

Thus, her opinion articles on Jamaican culture and politics appear first in two different spelling systems of Jamaican English Creole, followed by their translation into Jamaican English. Cooper's decision to use two spelling systems to represent Creole is both unusual and daring, and can be said to aim at also advancing the use of Creole on the page and the phonetic representation of Creole. In fact, the phonetic representation of Creole has been and continues to be a cause of debate among West Indian writers and scholars.[35] Among its detractors, Merle Hodge has argued that no Creole spelling system has "really sat into the general consciousness of writers or anybody else" and consequently she has discouraged its use (Hodge, 2013). However, it could also be argued that the only way for a spelling system to gain recognition would be to start using it as Cooper does in her blog. This way, options such as Cooper's could be read as a first step towards spreading the use of Creole in formal contexts, and ultimately towards the normalisation of the phonetic representation of Creole.

[35] This will be further explained in section 4.2.4.

2.2. Transnational and National Approaches: Complementary and not Oppositional

In the section dealing with the push towards leaving the folk behind versus the innovative use of Caribbean tropes by contemporary writers, Shani Mootoo's exploration of the Caribbean garden has been signalled as an example of the latter. In Mootoo's novel *Cereus Blooms at Night* (1996) the inventive use of the Caribbean garden serves to prove that place and displacement, roots and routes, the national and the transnational can be explored as interdependent and non-oppositional concepts. This section seeks to develop on the importance, regardless of Western academia's current trend, of not discarding the national approach.

Academia holds the more national-oriented approaches as outdated and regressive, whereas transnationalism is enthusiastically held as the most appropriate and inclusive approach for dealing with Caribbean literature. For instance, Rinaldo Walcott argues in favour of transnationalism as the most appropriate critical stance because it "offers a more dynamic conceptual palette, one that requires that we think about globalism, postcoloniality, diaspora, and a range of other concepts simultaneously" (Walcott, 2013: 228). Rinaldo Walcott's stance serves as an introduction to the theories of some of the most famous advocates for transnationalism and the post-national that will be discussed in this section.

As the title advances, this second half of the section makes the case that the national alongside the transnational approach can contribute to the analysis of Caribbean literary texts. Particularly, in a world in which inequalities persist – regardless of, or precisely due to globalisation – the national approach cannot be relegated to a secondary position and regarded as obsolete and limiting. Instead, it should be revalorized as a very pertinent approach that attends to the social and political well-

being of the citizens of peripheral nations. In fact, not only should these approaches be seen as complementary but they should also not be considered in any way antagonistic. As Jennifer Rahim maintains, simplistically adhering to polarized Caribbean cultural or intellectual models, can be dangerous (Rahim, 2013: 28). Considering the transnational and the national approaches in terms of opposing categories may actually have implications that will be here explored. Finally, it will be argued that the dismissal altogether of the national approach, would actually be counter-productive, as the purely transnational would not suffice to explain the whole range of cultural products emerging from the Caribbean literary field. In fact, the applicability of transnationalism is limited and does not fully encompass Third World literatures which are not produced in Metropolitan spaces.

2.2.1. The Dangers of the Deterritorialisation of the Caribbean

Related to the focus on transnationalism is the key issue of the deterritorialisation of the contemporary world. In *Modernity at Large* (1996) Arjun Appadurai defines the concept of deterritorialisation as applying to, among other things, "ethnic groups, sectarian movements, and political formations, which increasingly operate in ways that transcend specific territorial boundaries and identities" (Appadurai, 1996: 49).

Many scholars have claimed the benefits of deterritorialsation in the current globalised world and in particular in the Caribbean. Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc's study of twentieth century emigration from different Caribbean nations to the United States claims that the nation-state has now expanded into a deterritorialised nation which encompasses the diaspora. They argue that "[t]he

nation's people may live anywhere in the world and still not live outside the state. By this logic, there is no longer a diaspora because wherever its people go, their state goes too" (qtd. in Cronin, 2003: 79). For these authors, diasporas do not exist because transnational communities are also part of the nation-state; and as a consequence, the nation-state is no longer identified with a specific geographical place.

Many Caribbean scholars and writers have defended a deterritorialised conception of the Caribbean, that is, a vision of the Caribbean which extends beyond its geographical boundaries. The extension of the Caribbean into North-American and British urban centres is put forward by Edward Baugh, who asserts that "parts of London and New York and Toronto are extensions of the Caribbean" (Baugh, 2010: 7). For example, Bahamanian-Trinidadian Toronto-based writer and scholar Christopher Campbell argues that the boundaries of the Caribbean are so permeable that for him, Toronto can be a Caribbean space, as is the Caribbean itself (Christian Campbell, personal communication, Dec. 2, 2013). In *The Repeating Island* (1996) Caribbean scholar Antonio Benítez Rojo goes even farther when he claims that

> to persevere in the attempt to refer the culture of the Caribbean to geography […] is a debilitating and scarcely productive project […] There are performers who were born in the Caribbean and who are not Caribbean in their performance; there are others who were born near or far away and nevertheless are. (Benítez Rojo, 1996: 24)

According to Benítez Rojo, being Caribbean is not assigned by having geographically lived or been born in the area. Thus, for the Cuban scholar, geography holds no connection to Caribbeanness. For her part, Carole Boyce Davies defines the notion of "Caribbean Spaces" as "plural island geographies, the surrounding continental

locations as well as Caribbean sociocultural and geopolitical locations in countries in North, South, and Central America" (Boyce Davies, 2013: 1).

It can be argued that all these views extend the notion of the Caribbean or the Caribbean space to, at least, encompass those particular areas of metropolitan countries, usually urban areas, where a Caribbean diaspora has settled and where certain versions of Caribbean culture have been preserved. Bearing all these views in mind, this dissertation subscribes to the notion that Caribbean space and Caribbean culture cannot be limited to mere geographical confines and what is done within them. Certainly, as Jennifer Rahim claims, "Caribbean-ness embraces both the nation within and beyond borders" (Rahim, 2008: 41). However, it must be noted that the emphasis on the deterritorialisation of the region and on transnationalism, has actually resulted in the cultural works produced within its traditional boundaries being sidelined in favour of what is produced beyond them. As has been argued in the previous section, the postcolonial literary field favours Caribbean diasporic writers, which have become almost the sole representatives of the region. In this sense, Barbadian-connected scholar Elaine Savory argues that

> [w]herever you live in the world, if you live in a space which is connected to the Caribbean and you recognize Caribbean cultural sovereignty, you write within Caribbean space […] Our divisions, if set out oppositionally, or to privilege one identity over another, only weaken our communal capacity to share and to go home to work alone in a fully creative way. (Savory, 1998: 171)

Savory recognises that within the notion of a Caribbean space, there exist diverse identities and divisions which are scarcely productive but, rather, debilitating for Caribbean culture as a whole. This privileging to which Savory makes reference could

be interpreted as alluding to what is produced within certain geographical confines, namely the aforementioned privileging of migrant literature.

Needless to say, the different perspectives put forward by diasporic and non-diasporic writers are equally relevant for the Caribbean literary field. After having lived in North America, Africa, Europe and South America, Carole Boyce Davies recognizes that "[f]rom each location, the Caribbean is something else, takes on different meaning (Boyce Davies: 2013: 37). In the same way, the perspectives advanced by island-based writers are not interchangeable with those put forward by diasporic writers. Therefore, it can be argued that the imbalance produced by the privileging, as Makarand Paranjape has previously argued,[36] needs to be redressed in order to strengthen "our common capacity to create", to use Savory's words. Unless this imbalance is resolved, as scholar Sarah Phillips Casteel argues in "A Lexicon of the Caribbean Spatial Imaginary", Caribbean culture risks becoming the universalising metropolitan perspective connected with deterritorialization. Phillips Casteel argues that a reverse phenomenon to that of the 1950s seems to be currently taking place in the Caribbean literary field:

> If the generation of writers that established Caribbean literature in the 1950s struggled to assert a sense of location in the face of a colonial complex that universalized the metropolitan perspective, the challenge now may be to prevent the Caribbean from itself becoming generalised as an emblem of the global deterritorialization of cultures. (Phillips Casteel, 2011: 481)

Metropolitan culture, once regarded as the universalised perspective of the postcolonial literary field, is now being replaced by Caribbean culture, which is understood as the quintessential example of this so-called universalised perspective. The danger of defining Caribbean culture as the deterritorialised culture *par excellence*

[36] See section 2.1.2.1.

is that Caribbean culture might be diluted into a culture devoid of specificities. This can be seen, for example, in the view expressed by American scholar James Clifford when he declares that "[w]e are Caribbeans in our urban archipelagos" (qtd. in Puri, 2004: 2). As Allison Donnell explains, Clifford seems to suggest that the Caribbean person is given an emblematic status as the metropolitan migrant. Hence, Donnell wonders if "Caribbeanness has become an identity reconstructed in the moment of 'culturalism' without historical or geographical bearings" (Donnell, 2006: 84). Moreover, Donnell also recognises that Clifford's sentence is loaded in that in the enunciation the politics of location and identity are centred in the 'we', meaning Westerners. For her part, postcolonial scholar Shalini Puri interprets Clifford's statement as illustrative of the extent to which the Caribbean has entered into postcolonial discussions of hybridity and argues that it contains

> something of the arrogance of Columbus's claims to Discovery in our own metropolitan relationship to hybridity discourse, for the latter has flourished, and been theorized and contested by the "natives" for at least a hundred years, yet our own breathless rhetoric often celebrates it as the New World of Theory or the promise of El Dorado. (Puri, 2004: 3)

Puri suggests that Western theories on hybridity seek to re-invent and appropriate Caribbean discourses of hybridity and promote only a deterritorialised vision of the region. Puri argues that the way metropolitan discourse has incorporated the Caribbean in their discourse "has often been in the form of proof of metropolitan claims for cultural hybridity, or a figure for them" (Puri, 2004: 2). In this sense, Donnell argues that the appropriation into Western tradition of two central figures of Caribbean thought and letters, Derek Walcott and C.L.R. James, serves to exemplify the appropriation of Caribbean discourse. As Donnell explains, Derek Walcott "is often championed in the mainstream media as 'the best poet writing in the English

language' and C.L.R James is introduced as a 'world-class Marxist theorist'" (Donnell, 2002: 71). Donnell interprets the lack of reference to their geographical origins as an act of appropriation which promotes the idea of the Caribbean as a deterritorialised space, and one which reinforces the emphasis on dislocation over location.

2.2.2. Why Is the National Approach Still Important?

Against the current trend which privileges the transnational approach, it can be argued that the national approach is still valid and necessary. In fact, it is not incompatible to see the Caribbean as an intercultural and transcultural space whilst recognising that the nation-state is a reality. This reality cannot be theorised away, particularly in a context where, as Lalla and Rahim very fittingly argue, "participants in the geopolitics of cultural exchange remain far from equal, and the power plays that attend individual, communal and global relations have not disappeared even as the globe has become more integrated" (Lalla and Rahim, 2009: 2). Therefore, the transnational dialogue needs the local and national perspective to be able to offer a complete picture especially of peripheral areas such as the Caribbean.

In the light of widespread disillusionment with the concepts of nation and the national, this dissertation maintains that these notions still need to be taken into account. Argentinian scholar Walter Mignolo acknowledges the necessity of working within a framework that encompasses the transnational as well as the national approach. Mignolo first argues for the need to "look for transnational alliances and to build international communities that transcend the shortcomings of nationalism" (Mignolo,

2000: 187). However, he then adds that "acting at a transnational level could end up in an abstract demand for justice, which ignores regional interests and (a celebration of travelling theories and a reproduction of subalternization of knowledge)" (ibid.). Mignolo recognises that, as postcolonial scholars Arjun Appadurai (1996) and Partha Chaterjee (1997) have already outlined, both nationalism and transnationalism entail their own respective shortcomings. Thus, despite the relevant pitfalls of each approach, these scholars recognise that both approaches can be used together productively. Nationalism can be a form of countering globalization, while transnationalism can work towards empowering those at the margins, particularly in metropolitan societies.

Focusing on the shortcomings of transnationalism, British scholar Neil Lazarus criticises the privileging of the migrant subject over the non-migrant subject. Lazarus argues that the subjects addressed under the labels of exile and diaspora by prominent advocate of transnationalism Homi Bhabha, although very numerous, cannot be regarded as paradigmatic of "postcoloniality" (Lazarus, 1999: 137). In fact, as Lazarus explains, in considering these subjects the "true" postcolonials, "hundreds of millions of people all over the world who – whether or not they would declare themselves *nationalists* – are manifestly centered in their national identities" (ibid.) are left out of the concept of "postcoloniality". Lazarus does not deny that diasporic or migrant subjects complicate the issue of nationalism, however he is critical of the dismissal of the concept of nation.

A crucial point which has been widely criticised is transnationalism's failure to recognise the reality of the nation-state as a stable place. In this sense, Jennifer Rahim argues that the potential undermining of the legitimacy of the nation space as a fixed

space is "transnationalism's Achilles heel" (Rahim, 2004: 39). In *The Caribbean Postcolonial: Social Equality, Post-Nationalism and Cultural Hybridity* (2004), Shalini Puri also points to the relevance of the nation-state and claims that displacements and migrations do not erase the reality of nation-states in peripheral regions. Puri claims that it must not be forgotten that

> [d]espite the increasing mobility of people across national borders […] only about 2.5% of the world's population migrates across national boundaries. Contrary to those who invoke the appearance of "the Third World in the belly of the First" as a sign of the demise of nation-state, centre and periphery, I suggest that those migrations to the First World testify to the continuation, and possibly the intensification, of national inequalities – inequalities which only a tiny fraction of the world's population can attempt to mitigate by migration. (Puri, 2004: 7-8)

These migrations cannot be seen as evidence of the transcendence of the nation-state as a stable reality. Instead, the reality of the nation-state needs to be foregrounded, and the idea that the immigrant is the prototype of the human condition in the postcolonial world, as transnationalism seems to claim, should also be rejected. As Puri argues, undermining the reality of the nation-state risks abandoning the urgent task of the social and economic reconstruction of peripheral nations, a task which affects between 97.5% or 95% of the world population[37] – particularly in peripheral nation-states – who are not migrants.

In order to stress on the reality of nation-states, Allison Donnell argues that just as in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread and of Nationalism* (1983), where Benedict Anderson proposes that the nation is an "imagined political

[37] Some scholars have offered slightly different percentages, which are nonetheless very low. For example Wimmer and Glick Schiller argue that 5% of the people of the world are migrants (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002: 326).

community" (Anderson, 1983: 49) created by the investments that national subjects have in its production,

> then so too we may argue that the migrant is a fantasy, the product of people's desire to identify outside and beyond nation-states, the product of a willed collective identity that can bring together the rich and the poor, the Western and the non-western; the university professor and the slum dweller in a utopian postcolonial self-identification. (Donnell, 2006: 86)

Donnell points out that both migrants or transnational subjects and transnationalism on the one hand, and the nation-state and nationalism on the other, are realities that should be equally seen as constructs. Therefore, Donnell argues that transnationalism can be considered as imagined because it too encompasses diverse experiences which vary enormously depending on their "economic, national and often phenotypical status" (ibid.). Moreover, Anderson also explains that "the nation is imagined as a community because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson, 1983: 16). Shalini Puri reads the inclusion of the phrase characteristic of political economy, "actual inequality and exploitation," as epitomizing "in miniature a common formalist move by which the critique of nationalist rhetoric and its totalizing epistemology often displaces the question of actual social inequality with and between nation-states" (Puri, 2004: 20). Puri seems to suggest that, when viewed from the perspective of transnationalism, the reference to the economic circumstances – which are ignored by many critics – is symptomatic of the refusal to acknowledge the enormous social and economic consequences of negating the reality of the nation-state.

2.2.3. Inequality in Cultural Exchanges

In the chapter entitled "Global Villages and Watery Graves: Recrossing the Black Atlantic" included in her *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History* (2006), Allison Donnell traces the origins of a disproportionate focus on diasporic writers to what she refers to as "the Black Atlantic moment", that is, the decade of the 1990s which saw the rise in popularity of diaspora studies and transnationalism. At the centre of what Donnell refers to as the Black Atlantic moment is Paul Gilroy's study *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) which sought to contest absolute and essentialist notions of origin, nation, belonging and citizenship. As a central organising symbol, Gilroy employs the image of the Atlantic and its slave ships as "mobile elements that stood for the shifting spaces in between the fixed places that they connected" (Gilroy, 1993: 111). Gilroy argues that the history of the Black Atlantic provides a means to re-examine the problems of nationality, location, identity and historical memory (ibid, 16). According to him, "the expressive cultures of the Black Atlantic" are dominated by a mood of restlessness that reclaims the negative meaning associated with enforced movement:

> What was initially felt to be a curse – the curse of homelessness or the curse of enforced exile – gets repossessed. It becomes affirmed and is reconstructed as the basis of a privileged standpoint from which certain useful and critical perceptions about the modern world become more likely. (Gilroy, 1993: 111)

In Gilroy's work the notions of diaspora and exile are affirmed in opposition to the static and essentialist notions of nation and belonging characteristic of modernity. Gilroy also argues that black diaspora cultures reveal the nation's artificiality as a bounded and holistic cultural entity, and posits that the "nationalistic focus […] [is]

antithetical to the rhizomorphic, fractal structure of the transcultural, international formation I call the black Atlantic" (Gilroy, 1993: 4). Thus, for Gilroy, the transnational and the national approaches are completely at odds with each other and black Atlantic cultures cannot be defined through a national approach but only through a transnational one.

Allison Donnell recognises the importance of Diaspora discourses such as Black Atlanticism because these have opened up new critical pathways particularly "to articulate a politics of identity which takes account of the mobility of peoples and cultures across a postcolonial world" (Donnell, 2006: 83). Similarly, Jennifer Rahim also acknowledges the value of the theories of one of the most prominent advocates for transnationalism, Homi Bhabha, in that it destabilises static notions of the nation. Rahim argues that Bhabha, by giving primacy to the discursive life of the nation and the practices by which ideas of national belonging are circulated, "is undoubtedly very productive in demystifying the idea of the nation as some (pre)-fixed, consensual entity, and reveals its symbolic, temporal, and politically manipulated nature" (Rahim, 2008: 39).

However, after underscoring the value of these discourses, Donnell also admits that unwittingly, these discourses have closed down other pathways. In particular, Donnell asserts that

> the anti-foundationalist politics of postcolonialism appear to have generated a preference for dislocation over location, rupture over continuity, and elsewhereness over hereness […] migrancy is a condition of being that somehow describes the identity issues of the twenty-first century for postcolonialists. (Donnell, 2006: 83) [38]

[38] Similarly, Neil Lazarus criticises the one-sidedness treatment of Homi Bhaba's favoured categories of exile, migration and diaspora. Lazarus argues that Bhabha "fails to address the material circumstances of the vast majority of migrants from the peripheries of the world system to the core capitalist nations.

Gilroy's methodological approach serves to analyse postcolonial cultural products emerging from metropolitan spaces, but inadvertently leaves behind those emerging from peripheral nations. As Shalini Puri argues, Gilroy's approach tends "to frame transatlantic hybridity as a resource for metropolitan minority reconstruction rather than also as a way of organizing analyses of struggles for peripheral reconstruction" (Puri, 2004: 29). Thus, Puri also contends that transnational theories and post-nationalist theories of hybridity privilege metropolitan centres as the objects and sites of political action. She reads the focus on diasporic experience as problematic because, as she argues, post-national discourses have substituted the study of the Third World for the study of the First World diasporic and minority experiences (Puri, 2004: 39).

Focusing on the Caribbean and in particular on Caribbean literary products, Trinidadian-born scholar Sandra Pouchet Paquet offers a view similar to that of Gilroy. In "The Thematics of Diaspora and the Intercultural Identity Question" Pouchet Paquet argues that the transnational approach responds to the demands currently made of Caribbean literary culture. Like Gilroy, she privileges the transnational over the national approach as she argues that Caribbean literary culture

> enjoys transnational affiliation rather than national solidarity. It shifts the focus away from the ideal national literature as rooted and self-determining to focus instead on hybrid cosmopolitan experiences that tend to blur, if not erase, the physical boundaries of the nation state. (Pouchet Paquet, 1998: 229)

Pouchet Paquet not only shows preference for Caribbean literature that enjoys 'transnational affiliation' but proposes that Caribbean Literature which enjoys 'national solidarity', that is, which is rooted within geographical borders should be sidelined. Pouchet Paquet shows interest only in those Caribbean cultural products

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He fails to register in any plausible manner the political, economic, and social dimensions of the lives of these millions of peoples" (Lazarus, 1999: 137).

which are produced in a sort of borderless space and which, therefore, call into question the reality of the nation-state.

Jennifer Rahim analyses a stance such as Pouchet Paquet's as having to do with the scholar's positioning. Rahim argues that those who view and analyse the Caribbean from its extended diaspora "may be anxious to disseminate constructs of Caribbean-ness that are supportive of their own theoretical and social agendas, which may be differently invested in notions of nomadic and global identities" (Rahim, 2008: 41). For this reason, approaches such as those of Gilroy and Pouchet Paquet, which sideline national literature, place all the focus on the transnational, and view both approaches as oppositional could be, according to Elleke Boehmer, read as examples of the privileging by "Western academy and liberal literary establishments [of] migrant writing which accord[s] well with political and critical agendas in Western universities" (Boehmer, 1995: 236).

Gilroy's or Pouchet Paquet's position can be problematized because geographical location still remains important and worthwhile in the Caribbean. At a time of mass globalization it is necessary to take into consideration the national approach because after centuries of disdain Caribbean culture is still vulnerable to erosion. It can be said that the region is still struggling to reconstruct its history, validate its culture and offer a version of Caribbean culture from within that is both unmediated and empowering. Jennifer Rahim proposes that in Caribbean literary discourse, the national writer and the nation

> remain highly relevant categories for those whose primarily living space is the island, and this does not detract from the importance of a regional or trans-regional sensibility, nor does it underestimate the place of travel in the experience or construction of the national. (Rahim, 2008: 42)

The validity of these categories for those who have remained in the region is also underlined by Jeremy Poynting. Poynting defends the soundness of the national approach, particularly as it refers to Trinidadian literature because

> [t]here is a Trinidadian nation and a population rising in numbers who are struggling to maintain lives and create meanings out of both the inheritance of the past, in which Trinidadians had little scope for directing their own affairs, and the consequences of fifty years of independence when a succession of governments elected in general by one or other ethnic group made better or worse fists of managing, but only marginally transforming, the colonial inheritance. (Poynting, 2013: 78)

Poynting reflects on the inescapable reality that there actually exists a Trinidadian nation and a growing population that needs to come to terms with both a remote and a recent past which have not been fully dealt with. In fact, this is not an isolated phenomenon in the region because, as Rahim points out, apart from Haiti (1804), the Dominican Republic (1844), and Cuba (1898), "the nations of the Caribbean have a long way to go before attaining a century of independence, not to mention the Anglo-Caribbean's brief romance with the idea of a West Indian Federation" (Rahim, 2008: 42).[39] Since no post-colonial Trinidadian government has really brought about a new system that has completely put away colonial remnants, Poynting concludes that no one but Trinidadian writers, and particularly writers based on the island, will tell Trinidadian people truths about themselves.

Devaluing the social importance of national literatures which do not straddle different worlds favours the transnational and diasporic character of Caribbean literatures. This theoretical turn away from nations has an implicitly metropolitan bent, favouring texts

[39] Rahim is referring here to the short–lived political union of West Indian islands, known as the West Indian Federation, which was born, as Harney explains, in 1958 and collapsed in 1962 due to internal political conflicts (Harney, 1996: 19).

and experiences of exile over writers "who have stayed and whose works have embedded themselves in their island and region" (Donnell, 2006: 77).

All in all, Donnell argues that the emergence of the Black Atlantic model signalled a phase of neglect of writers working in the Caribbean. In particular, Donnell claims that due to the preference for diaspora studies and the transnational approaches brought forward by the Black Atlantic model,

> writers such as Brodber, Hodge, Senior and Lovelace, who retained an island base in terms of the focus of their work, were (and remain) far less discussed and critically attended to than Kincaid, Danticat and Phillips among others whose work spoke to the critical demands of diaspora criticism more loudly and clearly. (Donnell, 2006: 86).

For Donnell, as a consequence of a disproportionate focus on Caribbean migrant literature, those writers who have stayed in the region have been disregarded. In fact, it can be argued that the current situation under which non-diasporic writers are less attended to, is connected to the circumstances that existed at the beginnings of West Indian literature. As explained previously, West Indian literature written by indigenous authors did not start in the region. It was writers who found it necessary to go into exile in the so-called 'mother country' in order to make a living from their writing who birthed the West Indian novel. This 'unnatural birth'[40] together with the current privileging of diasporic writing helps explain the connection in the West Indian psyche between being an artist and living abroad. In fact, it can be argued that the presence of artists in the West Indies has not yet been normalised or valued although this representation would represent an extremely important step for the development of Caribbean culture.

[40] I am using a concept which resonates with the birth of the Anglican Church in England, but which I metaphorically use to signal the quite uncommon phenomenon of a national literature being born outside of its geographical borders. This phenomenon will be further discussed in chapter 3.

2.2.4. The Caribbean Nation as Hybrid

As previously argued, current cultural discourses are highly sceptical of the use and validity of the concept of nationhood and nationalism in today's world. Homi Bhabha is one of the most prominent scholars who has argued that the hybrid character of the modern world makes it necessary to think beyond the idea of nation or a national culture "as an empirical sociological category or a holistic cultural entity" (Bhabha, 1994: 201). Similarly to Bhabha, Gilroy claims that nationalist perspectives are found inadequate particularly when it comes to understanding modern black political culture. For Gilroy, nationalism is based on conceptions of purity and homogeneity, and promotes a "continuing aspiration to acquire a supposedly authentic, natural and stable 'rooted' identity" (Gilroy, 1993: 30).

Although European nationalism, traditionally defined as static and exclusivist, formed the template for the different postcolonial nations, the concept did not develop in the exact same manner in different parts of the postcolonial world. In *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (1993), Partha Chatterjee argues that the specificities of the different colonial circumstances do not allow a simple transposition of European patterns of development, such as that of nationhood (Chatterjee, 1993: 7). Chatterjee questions modern regimes' claims of universality, and instead argues that in the postcolonial world numerous fragmented resistances to the hegemonic project of nationalist modernity appeared (ibid., 13). Chatterjee proposes "new forms of the modern community, which […] the nationalist experience in Asia and Africa has done from its birth, but, much more decisively, to think of new forms of the modern state" (ibid.). Chatterjee's proposal seems to be pointing towards new forms of the modern state which are defined by their hybrid character.

Focusing on the Caribbean, in *Nationalism and Identity: Culture and the Imagination in a Caribbean Diaspora* (1996), Stefano Harney argues that the complexity of the nationalist discourse in multicultural, multiracial Third World and New World nations like Trinidad and Tobago challenges the flexibility of some of the theories on nationalism put forward (Harney, 1996: 6). Most of these theories which posit that purist discourses are characteristic of nationalist projects, do not apply to the Caribbean context. Shalini Puri focuses on the discourse of hybridity in Postcolonial studies and argues that in the case of the Caribbean, these discourses undo "the generalized claim that hybridity and the nation state are opposed to one another and enable a broader questioning of invocations of a 'global village' and the death of the nation-state" (Puri, 2004: 6). Puri does not deny that racist and purist discourses have been available to Caribbean nationalisms, but contrary to the homogenising and exclusionary idea of nationalism, she argues that invocations of cultural hybridity have been crucial to Caribbean nationalisms. She argues that the Caribbean

> has some of the earliest and richest elaborations of cultural hybridity. The sheer number and nuance of the Caribbean's account of hybridity, its diverse sources, modalities, and consequences, are unparalleled in any other region of the world. As an archipelago whose culture was forged in the crucible of colonialism and slavery from what Derek Walcott has called a "shipwreck of fragments," discourses of hybridity have been central to the Caribbean's political culture. (Puri, 2004: 2)

Puri claims that while, as Bhabha argues, hybridity can disable the nation, in many Caribbean nations discourses of hybridity are, in fact, an enabling condition for the nation. In fact, this can be clearly seen in the independence rhetoric of the first Prime Minister of independent Trinidad and Tobago. In one of his most famous speeches, Eric Williams recognises the hybrid character of the Trinidadian nation:

> There can be no Mother India for those whose ancestors came from India […] There can be no Mother Africa for those of African origin, and the Trinidad and Tobago society is living a lie and heading for trouble if it seeks to create the impression or to allow others to act under the delusion that Trinidad and Tobago is an African society […] There can be no Mother China, even if one could agree as to which China is the mother; and there can be no Mother Syria or Mother Lebanon. A nation, like an individual, can have only one mother. The only Mother we recognize is Trinidad and Tobago, and Mother cannot discriminate between her children. (qtd. in Puri, 2004: 48)

Williams's discourse of hybridity is, in fact, what brings cohesion to the new independent nation of Trinidad and Tobago. Certainly Williams's is an invocation of a hybrid Trinidad, in which the concept does not threaten but unifies the nation-state, but as Puri recognises it also insists on "the need for a fairly traditionally imagined unitary national subject with a singular allegiance, even as the sternly disciplining tone testifies to popular desires for non-unitary or nonexclusivist identifications" (Puri, 2004: 48). Therefore, it must be acknowledged that the Williams type of discourses aims at a hybrid but, ultimately, also homogeneous nation.[41] Nonetheless, Trinidad and Tobago can arguably be an example of a postcolonial nation, which from its birth was characterised, in Chatterjee's words, by "a new form of modern state".

2.2.5. The National and the Transnational in the Caribbean

> Knowledge about myself comes to me in fragments.
> (Jennifer Rahim, 2007: 145)

The refusal to acknowledge the national approach is particularly problematic in the case of the Caribbean region. The divide between national and transnational

[41] Puri also lists some of the mottoes of Caribbean nations such as "Jamaica's motto 'Out of many, one people,' Guyana's 'One people, one nation, one destiny,' Trinidad's 'Together we aspire, together we achieve' and Haiti's 'Unity is strength'" (Puri, 2004: 48).

approaches is not and never has been clear cut in the region. In fact, as has just been argued Caribbean nations such as Trinidad and Tobago have been from their inception defined in terms of diversity and hybridity.[42] Derek Walcott makes reference to the hybrid origin of the region in his famous Nobel acceptance speech, in particular he explains that the ideal Caribbean city

> would be so racially various that the cultures of the world – the Asiatic, the Mediterranean, the European, the African – would be represented in it […] Its citizens would intermarry as they chose, from instinct, not tradition, until their children find it increasingly futile to trace their genealogy […] its mercantile area would be a cacophony of accents, fragments of the old language. This is Port of Spain to me, a city ideal in its commercial and human proportions, where a citizen is a walker and not a pedestrian, and this is how Athens may have been before it became a cultural echo. (Walcott, *The Antilles* 1998: 74)

Walcott compares Port of Spain to Athens, which is to say that for him the city is representative of the melange of cultures and identities which have made up the region. Walcott's idea of the perfect Caribbean city serves to illustrate the idea that in the Caribbean region cosmopolitanism and transnationalism have been present right from its birth. This is why, as Donnell argues, the kinds of transcultural and intercultural work that Gilroy sees as deconstructing the nation can actually be seen as constructing it – that is, as with respect to the Caribbean nation (Donnell, 2006: 87).

Donnell proposes a reterritorialisation of the Black Atlantic experience through the revalorisation of the concept of roots. Her proposal is one in which, contrary to what the current intellectual milieu asserts, routes or migration are not necessarily seen as a liberatory experience and a virtue in themselves, or in which rootedness is seen as static or monolithic. Donnell maintains that several West Indian-based or rooted authors can also offer representations of their communities which are rooted and at the

[42] I refer here to the birth of the societies established at least since the European interference started.

same time routed. In fact, she argues that these authors offer a challenge to the Black Atlantic model that is "more open in its geographical and historical indices to both the flows and returns of peoples and that moreover allows for an acknowledgement of the way in which these flows have been rooted, as well as routed" (Donnell, 2006: 112). These authors, among whom Donnell lists Jamaica-based Edna Brodber and Trinidad-based Earl Lovelace, offer a particular kind of located cosmopolitism which can be bound and spatially defined, but which is not static. Their works can be labelled as national narratives which nonetheless are not defined by the notions typically used to define national perspectives, thus they are neither purist, static nor stable.

2.2.6. Rootedness and Nationalism in the West Indian Cultural Milieu

So far this dissertation has vindicated the value of the concepts of rootedness and nationalism as vital for the Caribbean region. It can actually be argued that within the West Indian cultural milieu, many scholars and creative writers have seen the need to assert the validity of these two crucial notions. Yet they have also acknowledged the necessity to redefine and review them so as to move away from reductionist, exclusory and essentialist definitions.

In the West Indies the traditionally held interpretation of rootedness is frequently perceived as limited to the African diasporic component of Caribbean culture. Such a reductionist approach to the notion of rootedness, which leaves out other ethnic groups, has been recurrently used to engage with texts by West Indian writers. This is the case of Earl Lovelace, George Lamming and Edward Kamau Brathwaite, whose texts, Jennifer Rahim argues, have been mistakenly thought to promote black

nationalism and privilege the black diasporan section of the West Indian population (Rahim, 2013: 23). However, the reality is that the notion of root models or rootedness, often associated with narrow-mindedness and the privileging of a particular ethnic group, has been widely questioned by these West Indian writers. According to Gordon Rohlehr, works by Lamming and Brathwaite have proven to be part of "an unremitting effort to understand the complex webs of culture and identities that have emerged out of the various diasporas – that have contributed to the making of Caribbean civilization" (Rohlehr, 2007: 406). In the case of Lovelace's texts, these have also resisted reductionist approaches towards the notion of rootedness. Sandra Pouchet Paquet claims that Lovelace's texts reflect "a model of identity that valorises the heterogeneity of Caribbean cultures, by embracing their multiple origins and challenging an Afrocentric politics of privilege and purity" (Pouchet Paquet, 2008: 69). The texts by these writers, traditionally associated with the concept of rootedness, have shown that their concept of rootedness is inclusionary and accommodates the different ethnic groups of the region. Thus, they have challenged and contributed to destabilise limiting definitions of the notions of rootedness applied to the West Indies.

As regards nationalism, the scholars analysed distance themselves from approaches which are essentialist, myopic and founded on the idea of a pre-fixed, consensual entity in the Caribbean. In the same manner, these scholars actively oppose root models synonymous with the privileging of a particular ethnocentric politic at the expense of other ethnic groups. In this sense, Kei Miller, who is from a younger generation to the aforementioned writers, advances a very interesting idea. His approach could be said to align with Rahim's refusal to simplistically adhere to

polarized categorizes.[43] In the case of Miller, his stance towards the two categories in question, that is, between the national and transnational approach is an ambivalent one. Miller asserts that he feels national and at the same time antinationalistic:

> I always write as a national, I come from Jamaica and I write from the place that I come from. I don't believe in nationalism and I think writing has to resist nationalism because nationalism creates boundaries and it says who is in and who is out. But I think that you have to write from the place that you come from and you have to be true to those influences so I am both fiercely national but antinationalistic. (Miller, *Interview with Kei Miller* 2013)

Miller rejects the ideas traditionally associated with nationalism and the concept of rootedness. He discards the purist, static and limiting characteristics related to this concept and any rigidly defined national identities. He believes that national writers should challenge exclusivity and defy the homogenising and exclusory tendencies of the nationalistic discourse.[44] In a similar vein, Christian Campbell, another writer from Miller's generation, also calls traditionally held definitions of nationalism into question. Campbell recognises that at a very early age he was familiar with the troubles and limitations of nationalism, but he also argues that his idea of the Caribbean is broad, which could be read as neither exclusory nor static:

[43] See section 2.2.

[44] The issue of nationalism, its exclusionary bent and the urge to set limits over what is and what is not Jamaican is of paramount importance to Miller. As an academic and writer in August 2014 he felt the responsibility to answer publicly in his blog – followed by a subsequent exchange of letters – to a statement made by Jamaican PM Damion Crawford. Crawford expressed his distress at the percentage of atheism and agnosticism rising in Jamaica, connecting it to criminality and defining it as un-Jamaican. Key Miller responded to Crawford in the following terms:

> You are concerned – as many seem to be – about the secularization of Jamaica. I, on the other hand, am concerned about this rhetoric of the 'un-Jamaican'. By your definition whatever is in the minority is Un-Jamaican, and in your own words these 'un-Jamaican' things need to stop. By your definition, Rastafari is Un-Jamaican; JLP (those 'dutty labourites') – are Un-Jamaican right now (though they could become Jamaican by the next election); Agnosticism in particular and lack of belief is Un-Jamaican. All these things need to 'rhatid stop'. The cultural fascism that you endorse, whether wittingly or unwittingly, you think will lead to a strengthening – a fortification of traditional Jamaican values. The cultural diversity which I see as strength, you see as weakness. (Miller, 2014)

> I know that I must also make trouble for the nation. My heritage gave me an innate sense of the broadness of the Caribbean and the many Caribbeans — "broader than Broadway," as Barrington Levy would put it. It grounds me in my ability to fully draw on the spiritual resources of all the Caribbeans. It's all mine. (Campbell, 2011)

Campbell's stance resembles Miller's claim to being an antinationalistic national writer. Campbell recognises both that the Caribbean is broader than Broadway – as the Jamaican reggae singer Barrington Levy sings, – and that he holds the responsibility of writing to fight for and shake the traditional conceptions associated with the nation. In so doing, he also acknowledges the reality of the nation.

It could be argued that what the aforementioned writers of an older generation have in common with Miller and Campbell is that their literature can be identified with Frantz Fanon's idea of a 'literature of combat'. A literature that "moulds the national consciousness, giving it form and contours and flinging open before it new and boundless horizons" (Fanon, 1961: 193). Thus, they can be said to assume the responsibility of offering a vision of the Caribbean which expands its horizons and rejects static, purist and homogenising notions of Caribbean-ness.

In their introduction to *Beyond Borders: Cross-Culturalism and the Caribbean Canon* (2003) entitled "A Window of Possibilities" Barbara Lalla and Jennifer Rahim recognise that nationhood is a slippery issue, as it may be restrictive, limiting and characterised by statism. Notwithstanding its limitations and pitfalls, Lalla and Rahim defend the possibility of a healthy nationalism because

> the Caribbean's vulnerability to cultural estrangement and erosion by external forces is not to be underestimated […] The safeguarding of traditional cultural forms and expressions is necessary for their survival and can nurture a healthy nationalism and regionalism grounded in supportive ancestral moorings; however, a solely museological approach to culture is myopic and runs the risk

> of framing culture as a static rather than dynamic phenomenon. Indeed, the very cross-cultural nature of the Caribbean's genesis makes pure folly of such an approach. (Lalla and Rahim, 2009: 3)

The kind of healthy nationalism the two Trinidadian scholars propose also rejects statism and particularly the notion of purity; a notion which has never been applicable in the case of the Caribbean, as it has been defined from its inception by its multicultural and cross-cultural character. In fact, as Jennifer Rahim argues, the Caribbean is located in between worlds, thus "securing ties may perhaps not even be desirable, given that the DNA of the Caribbean is inescapably an aesthetic hybridity that is attributable to many ancestors" (Rahim, 2013: 18). The healthy nationalism proposed by these scholars draws from the different ancestral homes which once met in this new space that is the Caribbean but also avoids nostalgic visions of remote pasts.

As has been shown, in the Caribbean being grounded or rooted in a specific nation-state does not imply cultural homogeneity or statism. Donnell provides some literary examples to prove that Caribbean paradigms for national construction were not based on absolutist notions but on transversality (Donnell, 2006: 87). This is the case of Sam Selvon's novel *An Island is a World* (1955), which, as Donnell argues, discusses the absence of any absolutist version of nationalism in the Caribbean. Mostly set in Trinidad, the main character of the novel, Foster, asserts that

> I used to think that […] we'd be able to fit in anywhere, with anybody, that we wouldn't have prejudices or narrow feelings of loyalty to contract our minds […] I used to think of this philosophy as being the broadest, the most universal, that if it ever came to making a decision on an issue involving humanity itself, that we'd be able to see the way clearer, unbounded by any ties to a country or even a race or a creed. (Selvon, 1955: 106)

Selvon represents a Caribbean reality that rejects ethnic boundaries and absolutes. Donnell posits that the novel is, at one level, situated in a transnational and transcultural Trinidad – “Black Atlantic even – *avant la lettre*” (Donnell, 2006: 87). Foster’s philosophy is not the result of being a subject en route, but it is precisely his rootedness in his home-island of Trinidad that has allowed him to see the nation as a fluid and non-exclusory notion At the same time, Donnell reads Foster’s perspective as betraying the “Black Atlantic paradigm which may provide a redemptive philosophy for those subjects within… absolutist nations whose national constitutions developed very different” from the Caribbean milieu (Donnell, 2006: 88). It is precisely when Foster moves to England that he realises the necessity of holding on to a nationality, understood as a static and homogeneous entity:

> So I feel now, that all those idealistic arguments we used to have at home don’t mean a thing. You can’t belong to the world, because the world won’t have you. The world is made up of different nations, and you’ve got to belong to one of them, and the hell with the others. (Selvon, 1955: 107)

In England, Foster is faced with the demand to identity with a static notion of nationality, which is opposed to the notion of nationality espoused in his homeland. He feels forced to leave his “Black Atlantic – avant la lettre” sense of belonging behind, because his stay in England makes him realise that “[w]e have a task to build up a national feeling” (Selvon, 1955: 106). Importantly, *An Island is a World* can be said to first seek to prove that in the Caribbean, nationalities have not traditionally been consistent with narrow and absolutist definitions. Secondly, the novel can also be said to defend the peripheral nations’ need to build a national identity to counter hegemonic nationalisms such as English nationalism. All in all, according to Donnell’s analysis, Selvon’s novel proves that the Black Atlantic paradigm cannot, for all its complexity, explain the circumstances and historical evolution of the region. In fact,

Donnell, so as to demonstrate the impossibility of applying the Black Atlantic paradigm in the Caribbean, asserts that

> the kind of 'cultural insiderism' that Gilroy in his Black Atlantic paradigm implies as endemic to nation states possibly never took hold in the Caribbean where an 'ethnically homogenous object'[45] may have been the dream of certain groups but the achievement of none. (Donnell, 2006: 89)

Therefore, the Caribbean can be defined as a simultaneously national and transnational space, because the reality of the national space is complemented by the transnational character of the region. As it transpires in these different scholars' views is the fact that notions related to the nation are still worthwhile. It can, thus, be argued that it is premature to dismiss notions such as nationalism and the nation, because in many cases, these are still temporary but necessary steps in the struggle for liberation.

In "On National Culture" Frantz Fanon criticises those who wish to skip the national period and who argue that "[n]ational claims…are a phase that humanity has left behind" (Fanon, 1961: 198). Fanon's context is that of post-World War II in which the fight for independence in the colonised world was unfolding. In this context, Fanon defends the national project as a way to achieve independence and both political and cultural sovereignty. Fanon's discourse, and his defence of the concepts of nation and nationalism, can be said to be still valid and unavoidable in our global context. The present circumstances do not allow for the dismissal of these ideas because, as British scholar Terry Eagleton argues, this could be seen as "premature utopianism" (Eagleton, 1992: 24). Eagleton asserts that taking into account the political structures of the present, notions such as nationalism, sexual politics or social class are, at least provisionally, valid concepts. Eagleton recognises that "[t]o wish class or nation away,

[45] (Gilroy, 1993: 3)

to seek to live sheer irreducible difference now in the manner of some contemporary post-structuralist theory, is to play straight into the hands of the oppressor" (ibid., 23). Thus, to reject such notions can actually entail being co-opted into a larger, official culturalism. In this light, Édouard Glissant admits to the limitations of nationalism, but at the same time maintains that the notion is a way of reducing "the danger of being bogged down, diluted, or 'arrested' in undifferentiated conglomerations" (Glissant, 1997: 142).

2.2.7. Globalization aka Americanization

It has already been argued that the most currently favoured post-nationalist discourses which negate the reality of the nation-state, have not only privileged metropolitan centres as the objects and sites of political action, but have also substituted and relegated to a lesser position the study of the Third World for the study of First World diasporic and minority experiences. This section introduces yet another shortcoming to post-nationalistic discourses, as it suggests that these inadvertently hide the ascendance of hegemonic nationalisms, in particular American nationalism.

The present world, described by many as a globalised and post-national world of unseen movements of peoples, is, in fact, one in which globalisation discourses seem to conceal the hegemonic nationalism of the United States. Pierre Bourdieu explains that globalisation universalises and seeks to extend the economic and cultural model most favourable to the dominant powers, in particular to the United States, "by presenting that model as a norm, an imperative, an inevitable development, and a universal destiny, so as to obtain universal allegiance – or at least universal resignation

– to it" (Bourdieu, 2003: 80). In this way, globalisation can be read as non-hegemonical countries conforming to the dictates set by the dominant powers.

It must be noted that in the context of this globalised world, the same forces which promote post-national discourses which denounce nationalist agendas, particularly as relates to peripheral nations, are at the very same time responsible for the rise of US hegemonic nationalism. The promotion of deterritorialisation inevitably favours the interests of the dominant powers. In this sense, Jennifer Rahim argues that

> the world is witnessing the enforcement of a hegemonic nationalism, a la Americanism, as the sign of planetary supremacy […] [which] is taking place at the same time that postmodern discourses seek to institutionalize migrant mobility and borderless-ness as the privileged signs of a fluid global stage where rooted nationalism is challenged by the "new" value ascribed to the "de-territorialized," international citizen. (Rahim, 2006: 41)

Rahim seems to point at the paradox that post-national theories disregard the local and national, which leads them to the assertion that the condition of the migrant is liberatory, while at the same time using these theories to privilege American nationalism. As a consequence, the growing widespread disillusionment with the concept of nation is simultaneous with American nationalism reaching a hegemonic status. Bearing this in mind, Stephen Shapiro wonders "to what degree does post-nationalist criticism reinforce the current reconfiguration of American hegemony under the different conditions of the inter-millennial phase" (qtd. in Donnell, 2006: 82). In such a context, in which anti-nationalist and globalisation discourses are promoted as universal destiny, and US hegemonic nationalism safeguards its planetary ascendance, it could be argued that post-nationalist discourses may seek to reinstall US global authority.

The consequences of the planetary ascendance of hegemonic nationalism are not only political and economic but also cultural. Hegemonic nationalisms, that is, the nationalisms of the dominant powers, like the US, are criticised by Edward Said because he argues that they are defined in terms of “the affirmative mischief of exceptionalism… [and] natural superiority” (Said, 2004: 50). In fact, this reiteration of the superiority of the United States, according to Allison Donnell, is not only visible in military operations throughout the world disguised as saving missions, but also in the new demands for cultural representation articulated through discourses such as the Black Atlantic (Donnell, 2006: 82). Discourses such as the Black Atlantic – described as liberatory and empowering –, although valuable and useful to analyse and theorise diasporic postcolonial writings, have disregarded the local and the non-migrant. Thus, these discourses have contributed to the perpetuation of the dichotomy sharply unveiled by Elleke Boehmer between “the richly gifted metropolis and the meagrely endowed margin” (Boehmer, 1995: 238).

In order to legitimise, even if in a covert manner, hegemonical nationalism, Shalini Puri has signalled that post-national discourses have defined the difference between First and Third world cultural products as being respectively unconscious and conscious. Puri argues that in post-nationalist theories of hybridity, which implicitly privilege metropolitan centres, there surfaces something which she refers to as a “national unconscious” (Puri, 2004: 19). The term ‘national unconscious’ comes from Frederic Jameson’s observation that national allegorical structures are not so much “absent from first-world cultural texts as they are unconscious” (Jameson, 1986: 79). Puri interprets this ‘unconsciousness’ in first world national discourses as another example of the refusal to accept the reality of nation-states in peripheral areas while ‘unconsciously’ asserting Western nation-states – particularly the US – as realities.

Bearing all this in mind, when peripheral nations resort to nationalism, this arguably can be regarded as a suitable option which bolsters their resistance to a globalised system working to their detriment. In this sense, in their introduction to *Global Neo-Imperialism and National Resistance: Approaches from Postcolonial Studies* (2004) entitled "Why Do They Call It Global When They Mean American?", Belén Martín Lucas and Ana Bringas López claim that due to the current resurgence of imperialism hidden under the mantle of globalization, "[r]esistance to economic, political and cultural neoimperialism has given a predominant role to nationalistic discourses at a time when many thought nationalism to be dead" (Martín Lucas and Bringas López, 2004: 8). They recognise that in the present global context, where imperialism and anti-imperialism have returned to the forefront, nationalist discourses continue to be highly relevant. Thus, nationalism is defended as a valid discourse in order to counter the current neoimperialist thrust disguised as globalisation.

In conclusion, the dangers of discarding the national approach on the grounds that it is an obsolete and limiting approach have been here laid bare. Throughout the course of this discussion the positive aspects of both the transnational and national approaches have been problematized and pinpointed. Ultimately, it has been proved that these two approaches are complementary rather than opposed, particularly as applied to the specificities of the West Indies. As such, while transnationalism can contribute to empowering those at the margins, particularly in metropolitan societies, the less in vogue national approach can work to counter globalization. Nationalism, not understood as a static and purist notion but an inclusionary and fluid one, can be said to attend to the social and political well-being of the citizens of peripheral nations. Therefore, it can be argued that the applicability of transnationalism is limited to the cultural products produced in metropolitan spaces, but only a combination of the

national and the transnational approach can analyse the cultural products created by West Indian-based writers.

It has also been argued that favouring transnationalism and seeing Caribbean culture as the deterritorialised culture par excellence leads to the privileging of diasporic cultural products. Thus, refusing to acknowledge the reality of the nation-state is counter-productive for rooted cultural products which are sidelined. As a consequence, and at least provisionally, nationalism is considered a valid notion, particularly for peripheral nations, as in the case of West Indian nation-states like Trinidad and Tobago, which still have a long way to go to establish themselves as fully sovereign nation-states.

3. EARL LOVELACE: THE ONE WHO STAYED

3.1. An Exceptional Literary Figure

Trinidadian writer Earl Lovelace is one of the few writers to have remained in the region and certainly the only one from his generation who earned a living from his writing. This first section will analyse the reasons why Lovelace is one of the few who stayed in the Caribbean. It will analyse what explains the trend whereby a West Indian who wants to be a writer – or any type of artist for that matter –, is inevitably pushed to migrate; a trend which was established long ago and which extends to the present times. First of all, one of the main causes which needs to be analysed is the fact that, incomprehensibly, more than fifty years after independence, the conditions in terms of both governmental and societal support make it very difficult for writers to stay.

3.1.1. Metropolitan Promotion

For the West Indian writer, staying has meant not being surrounded by an infrastructure that supports and values the creative arts. West Indian governments have not promoted the arts unless these could be monetised. In general, governments have not seen the benefits of supporting the arts and have limited assistance to tourist-oriented artforms (Hodge, 2004: 2). In this sense and due to the exilic nature of the majority of West Indian writers to date, it is important to note that the bleak picture regarding the fostering of the arts within the region is in striking contrast to the promotion of diasporic writers abroad. Merle Hodge explains that many diasporic West Indian writers are regarded by the countries where they live as citizens of those countries and promoted accordingly:

> Americans think Jamaica Kincaid is American, Canadians think that Shani Mootoo is a Canadian writer – I don't know to what extent she considers herself a Canadian writer –. They are given the kind of promotion that a Canadian writer would get in Canada, and an American writer would get in America, which is something we don't necessarily have here. We don't have the mechanisms here for promotion of national writers. (Hodge, 2013)

As Hodge explains, it can be argued that the promotion of West Indian authors as writers from the countries they have migrated to is connected to the relationships the different waves of diasporic writers have established with their host countries. This is why, before analysing in detail the case of Dionne Brand, which is similar to that of Kincaid and Mootoo, the discussion will first outline the differences among these different waves of West Indian diasporic writers.

Caribbean scholar Evelyn O'Callaghan refers to a new body of writing which she does not consider exile-writing but bicultural or transcultural. O'Callaghan argues that writers such as Derek Walcott, Caryl Phillips, David Davydeen or Jamaica Kincaid

> have a quite different relationship with the mother country or metropole or imperial center than did the West Indian authors who migrated to England or the United States in the 1950s […] the protagonists of the newer texts, as much as their authors, are at home in the center; or, put another way, they are as homeless there as in any other place. (O'Callaghan, 2001: 78)

George Lamming, himself part of the group of West Indians who migrated to Britain in the 1950s, also distinguishes a new generation of West Indians in Britain who have a different relation with the West Indies:

> My generation were in England and had no particular quarrel with not being of it, for the simple reason that we never broke our deepest sentimental links with where we had come, that the Caribbean remained alive in you in England. And when you speak of 'home', that was home, even after thirty or forty years. That remained home, and also carries with it the fantasies of being buried at home. West Indians would tell you the one thing I don't want is for my bones to be laid here in this place. I can't be sure of it, but I doubt very much that young British black has a comparable sense of home. (Lamming, *George Lamming with Caryl Phillips* 2004: 197)

Lamming's generation maintained a strong relationship with the Caribbean which they identified as home. In fact, Lamming argues that the first waves of migrants were not identified as British nor did they wish to be so. Another example from the same generation is Jamaican poet Louise Bennett. Bennett, who only migrated from Jamaica in the early 1980s, also maintains that her cultural identity always travelled with her: "Any which part mi live – Toronto-o! London-o! Florida-o! a Jamaica mi deh! (qtd. in Morris, 2004: 75).

However, for the new generation of West Indians in Britain and North America the relationship with the Caribbean is not as clear-cut. On the one hand, as Lamming points out, the newer generations' sense of home is not the same. This different identification with the Caribbean is reflected in their writings, which gradually lost their Caribbean echoes; and, in the UK, these authors' works were eventually referred to as black British writing.

On the other hand, it must be argued that as of recently there exists yet another type of West Indian diasporic subject who, due to the advances in technology and travelling, has a much different relationship with his or her home culture than that of previous generations. This is the case of Jamaican writer Kwame Daves, who in the essay "Writing Home Away from Home" recognises that exile for a Jamaican writer of his generation – he was born in 1962 – is no longer the same because as he explains: "I am in Jamaica a lot. I read the papers weekly online, I am in touch with my family, I am invested in the culture, and I listen to the music" (Daves, 2007: 52).

Focusing on the issue of Western validation, as has already been pointed out, the more recent generation of Caribbean writers is usually promoted as authors from the nation where they reside, and as hinted at the beginning of the section, a case similar to the two mentioned by Hodge is that of Dionne Brand. The same way Mootoo and Kincaid are promoted as Canadian and American writers respectively, West Indian Canada-based writer Dionne Brand is promoted as a Canadian author. Brand exemplifies Jeremy Poynting's description of a new type of Caribbean writer:

> By the millennium, an increasing volume of Caribbean writing was being written by authors who had spent almost all their adult lives in Britain or North America, or were born there, and who were no longer just hustling for survival

> on the margins but becoming established in the universities of the USA, Canada and the UK. (Poynting, 2011: 24)

Brand's writing can be identified with this growing volume of Caribbean writing. For one, she has spent more time living in Canada than in Trinidad. She has lived in Canada since the age of seventeen (she is now sixty-one) and has become established in various universities, with a current appointment as Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Guelph. Although the Caribbean has long been the central theme of many of her writings, most of Brand's latest works are no longer set in Trinidad or the Caribbean region but in Canada or different spaces.[46] In this sense, Brand's case is different from, for example, that of Haitian-American Edwidge Danticat, another writer who also belongs to these newer generations. Similarly to Brand, Danticat left Haiti at the age of twelve but, as Trinidadian scholar Elizabeth Walcott-Hawckshaw explains, "[Haiti] is a place that she continually returns to in her work and life […] [and] has always been Danticat's subject" (Walcott-Hackshaw: 2008, 72). It could be argued that Brand's decision to move the focus of her work is connected to the fact that, as scholar Leslie Sanders asserts, she no longer identifies as a Trinidadian or Caribbean writer (Leslie Sanders, personal communication, Nov. 16, 2013). By denying her Caribbeanness, Brand might actually be resigning from her position as 'native informant'.[47] According to Huggan, native informants are the persons in charge of decoding cultural otherness in their work (Huggan, 2001: 27). The condition of native informant, also referred to as 'the missionary approach' by Caryl Phillips, "dominates the thinking of some publishers and many critics" (Phillips, 1992: 221).

[46] Brand's latest work of fiction, *What We All Long For* (2005), revolves around a group of young second generation Torontonians, and her latest book of poetry, *Ossuaries* (2010), is the narrative of an activist in perpetual state of movement, unceasingly crossing borders. Both have received awards in Canada, the former has been distinguished with the City of Toronto Book Award (2006) and the latter with the Griffin Poetry Prize (2011).
[47] Term first introduced by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (see Spivak, 1999).

An additional pressure for the writer, this condition could be defined as indicative of the responsibility that the so-called ethnic or non-Western writers are expected to assume, whether or not acknowledged, in order to explain their people and their country of origin to the West. Interestingly, though, Huggan argues that many writers who think of themselves as global migrants are repositioned as 'native informants' interpreting on behalf of their original (birth) cultures. As a result, these writers "may still be seen, in spite of themselves, as more or less reliable commentators, and as both translators and exemplars of their own 'authentically' exotic cultures" (Huggan, 2001: 26-7). In fact, failure to translate one's own 'exotic' culture may be a cause of frustration for Western readers accustomed to writings tailored to their expectations. This can be seen in the reaction of some of Dionne Brand's lecture attendees in which, Sanders recounts, Brand was introduced as a Caribbean writer, though she did not mention the region at any point. Some of the attendees were disappointed by the lack of reference to the Caribbean (Leslie Sanders, personal communication, Nov. 16, 2013), and might have felt that Brand failed to perform the role they expected her to, that is, the role of the native informant. At the same time, her not wanting to be identified as a Caribbean writer could be interpreted as an attempt to overcome this imposed burden of having to disclose otherness, and ultimately to reject the role the West expects from a so-called ethnic writer.

In this sense, it is interesting to recall Canadian scholar Smaro Kamboureli's stance as regards the labels ascribed to these so-called ethnic writers. In her introduction to *Making a Difference: An Anthology of Multicultural Literature* (1996), she describes her choice of labels:

> I did not want this anthology to be an instance of tokenism […] By holding on to the 'otherness' of writers […] in relation to the dominant culture's self-

> image, tokenism assigns a single meaning of cultural differences [that] masks the many nuances of difference. […] I have attempted to avoid such pitfalls by considering the contributors to this anthology as Canadian writers, and not as representatives of cultural groups. (qtd. in Huggan, 1996: 3)

This could also be interpreted as Kamboureli adopting a position similar to that of Brand's. Thus, in considering the contributors as simply Canadian writers, Kamboureli aims to help the so-called ethnic writer to be relieved of continually having to perform the role of native informant.

The stance of writers and scholars regarding the use of certain labels for writers is a deeply political issue which may influence how a writer is marketed. A writer's decision to accept or reject his or her natal origins, to embrace the place where he or she is based, or the identification with a hyphenated identity are not innocent decisions and can have wide-ranging implications. Edward Baugh comments on two Caribbean writers who have also expressed their disconnection from their homeland in different ways, Trinidadian V.S. Naipaul and Jamaican Mutabaruka. Naipaul's self-professed uprootedness and homelessness, previously analysed in this dissertation, is interpreted by Baugh as an instance of the "fascinating uncertainties of identity" in the context of diaspora and exile (Baugh, 2010: 9). Mutabaruka, for his part, considers himself "an African-centred writer" who writes about "things that confront black people especially" (Baugh, 2010: 9). Baugh interprets the writers' distinct positions as precisely "markers of their Caribbeanness, both consequences of and responses to Caribbean history" and asserts that "[t]hey too embody what it means to be Caribbean" (ibid.). For this critic, theirs are different identities Caribbean writers may want to subscribe to for different reasons. In the case of Mutabaruka identity is located in the ancestral homeland, and in Naipaul's, his rootedness, as argued earlier, may

have contributed to granting him an impartial as well as inside/r voice in postcolonial matters.

A final example of self-definition concerns St. Kitts-born writer Caryl Phillips. Evelyn O'Callaghan explains that Phillips was one of the featured writers in a seminar organised by the British Council under the title "The Contemporary British Writer". In the course of the seminar, Phillips's geographical affiliation found itself at the heart of a discussion between O'Callaghan and one of the organisers of the event. The debate closed with the aforementioned writer's assertion that he would be honoured to be considered a West Indian author. For O'Callaghan this incident proves that labels matter "because of the issue of power which certain labels either mask or confer" (O'Callaghan, 2001: 75-6). In this sense, the issue of self-identification and labels can also be related to the question of seeing Caribbean identity in terms of its transnational dimensions, as well as to the tendency to disregard Caribbean nation-states as places of possibility.

3.1.2. Governmental and Societal Support

The lack of societal and governmental support in the Caribbean is probably one of the most important impediments faced by writers in the region. Even if it could be argued that the mechanisms put in place by First world nations such as the UK, US or Canada to support 'their' writers cannot be implemented in small Caribbean countries, the virtual non-existence of public support complicates the flourishing of any national or regional literatures enormously.

The lack of public initiatives which would be highly beneficial for the development of literature has been recurrently criticised by Caribbean writers. Olive Senior contrasts the situation of the Caribbean with that of Canada, the country where she resides for part of the year and where, according to her, writing can flourish thanks to the government's recognition of the arts as an important part of the development of national identity and the nation in general. According to Senior, unlike any of the West Indian governments, the Canadian government provides for the sustenance of the arts through public support of writers and publishing (Senior, 2007: 157).

Merle Hodge also complains about the utter lack of support for Caribbean writers within the region. Focusing on the case of Trinidad and Tobago, Hodge is particularly taken aback by the fact that in spite of the many available resources, a simple measure such as establishing a national writer's prize has never been undertaken. In fact, to prove the lack of interest in literature of this relatively well-off country, Hodge explains that two of the poorest countries of the region, Cuba and Guyana,[48] established a national writer's prize a long time ago. However, no Trinidadian government has ever seen the need to promote writing through relatively easy to implement measures such as subsiding literary competitions and local publishing firms (Hodge, 2013).

Another West Indian writer who has also expressed frustration at the lack of public support is Caryl Phillips. Raised in the UK, Phillips recounts that he decided to settle in St Kitts in order to get on with his work at a time when he needed to take a long sabbatical from Thatcher's Britain. He argues, however, that he did not find a better situation in the Caribbean:

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[48] Cuba's *Premio Nacional de Literatura* and Guyana Prize for Literature were established in 1982 and 1987 respectively.

> I found myself yearning for […] some kind of affirmation of my values. In short, I began to resent the lack of interest in the arts. Poetry, theatre, music, literature, painting; these activities were not encouraged or cherished, except by the odd eccentric individual […] On St. Kitts, the sole government concession to the arts is the cable-television network with fourteen channels of American programming twenty-four hours a day. (Phillips, 1992: 222)

For a completely different set of reasons, Phillips' displacement did not quite ameliorate his writing conditions. From the conditions encountered in the Caribbean, he mostly felt resentful of the absence of recognition from society, and the lack of support from the government, whose sole contribution was the introduction of American cable TV. Interestingly, Merle Hodge also points at American Cable TV as one of the few concessions or else 'methods of subjugation' introduced by the Trinidadian government. She describes its arrival in Trinidad and Tobago, in the same year independence was achieved, in the following manner:

> Before our culture could shake off centuries of British domination and begin to assert itself as a viable foundation for our development, we found ourselves facing lethal over-exposure to another strong-armed, over-confident and over bearing metropolitan culture, one that deploys methods of subjugation far more sophisticated, far more effective than those of our previous colonizers. Independence and television came to Trinidad and Tobago in the same year, and this has been likened to the introduction of a Trojan horse. (Hodge, 2004: 3)

This Trojan horse, which is present in most of the Caribbean region, certainly does not contribute to overturning the lack of interest in the arts on the part of both the society and the government. Instead, this piece of modern technology, which could serve as an instrumental tool of dissemination of Caribbean culture, maintains the idea that art and reality are to be found elsewhere – a key idea which has been widely contested by creative writers but which, unfortunately, still holds true in the contemporary Caribbean setting. Consequently, as Hodge argues, for West Indians, real and

meaningful life is not located in the world they themselves inhabit. According to her, Cable TV has served "as a conduit to pipe the American Dream directly into our minds and hearts – like an intravenous transfusion" (Hodge, 2004: 4). She explains that the fact that West Indian society does not consume its own fiction has contributed to sentencing West Indian culture to the realm of the unrecognised and unavowed:

> Our fiction is, of course, part of the culture that we have built here, so that our alienation from this fiction is just part of our relationship to this culture, as well as part of the reason why we do not recognize our culture […] Again a chicken-and-egg situation: because there is little demand for West Indian literature here in the West Indies, and/or resulting from this low demand, the most unlikely place in the world to find the works of West Indian authors is the shelves of West Indian bookstores. (Hodge, 2004: 3)

Hodge argues that if West Indians consumed their own fiction and were able to see themselves reflected therein the benefits would be manifold. Above all, it would contribute enormously to the validation of their immediate worldview thereby subverting the idea that the arts, particularly literature, are something exclusively centred around or coming from a foreign land.

Phillips and Hodge assert that the various post-independence governments of the region have not seen the value of investing in the arts, and in general the attitude towards writers has been one of total indifference (Hodge, 2004; Phillips, 1992). Most governments did not take the measures necessary for creating an infrastructure that promotes and disseminates culture on a national scale as this was not considered a priority. Instead, the sole interest of West Indian postcolonial regimes has been to encourage the mercantilisation of culture. As Hodge argues, they have sought economic profit from national artforms such as calypso, steel pan and carnival, but have not had paid any attention to literature:

> At the moment the notion of indigenous culture informing national development converts into governments promoting those of our performing arts which have the potential to attract revenue via the tourist industry. The portfolios of Culture and Tourism are often combined into one ministry. (Hodge, 2004: 4)

Trinidadian postcolonial governments have not valued creative artists – unless their artforms could be monetised as in the case of the performing arts. Government intervention has embraced certain cultural forms like calypso and Carnival because of their marketability and potential to attract and be consumed by tourists. However, in the region as a whole, the potential long-term cultural benefits of the arts in general and literature in particular, have been mostly disregarded. Hodge is very critical of the role politicians have played and continue to play in the lack of promotion and development of the arts. She regrets the current state of the arts and thinks that West Indian politicians have not yet been able to understand the role of writers in national development (Hodge, 2013). Ultimately, Hodge argues that in failing to see the benefits of investing in the arts, governments have not been able to work towards the achievement of cultural sovereignty. For Hodge, the real development of the region is jeopardised by the government's inability to appreciate the paramount importance of art, and as she explains, "Caribbean development can take a turn for the better […] only when we find a way to foment our cultural revolution" (Hodge, 2004: 5). Thus, for Hodge fostering the arts is a condition *sine qua non* for regional development, and it is only when they are supported, promoted and valued, that the region will be fully sovereign.

3.1.3. Publishing Houses

The publishing world in the West Indies is not now, nor has it ever been, prominent. First of all, it is important to note that both before and after independence magazines played a vital role in the promotion of West Indian writers. In the decades before independence, British scholar Kate Quinn explains that the primary outlets for writers to place their work were the local newspapers and 'little magazines'. Among them were the Trinidadian publications *The Beacon* (1931-33) and *Trinidad* (1929-30), *Bim*, established in Barbados in 1942, *Kyk-over-Al* (1945-62) in British Guyana, and *Caribbean Quarterly* and *Jamaica Journal* founded in Jamaica in 1949 and 1961 respectively. These magazines, Quinn argues, "provided not only a means for writers to be remunerated for their work, but also a stimulus to creation and a sense of a wider literary community" (Quinn, 2008: 28-9). After independence, apart from new journals which emerged as organs of activist groups such as Jamaica's *Abeng* (1969), Trinidad's *Moko* (1968) and *Tapia* (1969), strictly literary journals also emerged. Jamaica's *Savacou* and Trinidad's *The New Voices,* like their pre-independence counterparts, also provided a space for publishing Caribbean writers of the time (Quinn, 2008: 28). Jennifer Rahim has acknowledged the importance of *The New Voices* in the development of her writing career. This Trinidadian bi-annual literary review, founded and edited by Anson Gonzalez, made a space for writers writing from the Caribbean. Rahim explains that "[b]efore *The New Voices* took an interest in my work, I had not formulated the idea of myself as a writer" (Rahim, 2003: 54). Thus, the importance of these magazines in the region has been immense, as they provided a platform for writers and allowed them to see that they had something to offer.

Nowadays, publishing in the Caribbean is limited to a few small publishing houses.[49] As Gail Low argues in "Local and Metropolitan Publishing", Caribbean-based publishing houses do not usually publish fiction and literary works because they are perhaps more 'high risk' ventures than textbooks and scholarly publishing (Low, 2011: 622). This is why, as Quinn points out, the Anglophone Caribbean landscape is generally characterised by a continued dependency on external publishing firms. Quinn highlights the irony of still having to re-import one's own national literature from metropolitan publishing firms. For her part, Jennifer Rahim interprets this model of publishing, or rather, what she refers to as a 'publishing dilemma', as the metropolitan sanctioning of Caribbean voices (Rahim, 2003: 60). The predicament faced by the West Indian writer can be explained by the fact that, as Quinn argues, no Trinidadian – or other island-based – publishing house has "the resources to lure established writers away from advances and royalties" (Quinn, 2008: 32). It cannot be denied that this problem is partly due to economic reasons, however, accessibility is another important factor that should also be taken into account. Books published in the Caribbean are still not readily available outside of the island where they are published. Small Caribbean-based publishing houses have not been able to establish circulation routes outside of their home islands. Thus, with all the comparative advantages metropolitan houses can offer to the Caribbean writer, these remain the primary outlet for Caribbean literature.

With regard to metropolitan publishing houses, it must be acknowledged that small metropolitan independent presses are of extreme relevance to the region. This is the case of Mango Publishing (London), Sandberry Press (Toronto), Sister Vision

[49] Currently three local publishing houses could be foregrounded as some of the most relevant ones: Ian Randle Publishers in Jamaica, Lexicon in Trinidad and The UWI Press.

(Toronto), Akhashic (New York) but, most of all – particularly for Trinidadian literature –, Peepal Tree Press, a small independent Leeds-based metropolitan publisher which is part-subsidized by Arts Council England and which occupies "a niche in publishing Caribbean writing and publishing work that may not be deemed commercially viable by larger multinationals" (Low, 2011: 622). Peepal Tree Press founder Jeremy Poynting, conscious of the current imbalance between diasporic and non-diasporic writing, has repeatedly expressed his intent to focus on works by Caribbean-based writers and thereby facilitate the bridging of this gap. This small firm must be recognised in particular for its contribution to the publication of Caribbean authors who offer unmediated versions of the region and who are, therefore, not considered commercially viable by the larger Metropolitan publishing houses.

It must be noted that the publishing conditions surrounding West Indian texts align with Pierre Bourdieu's structuring of the literary field in principles of hierarchization. According to Bourdieu, every field is structured around an axis in which autonomous and heteronomous producers are situated at opposing poles. (Bourdieu, 1993: 40-52). Bourdieu's framework is composed of an autonomous principle which looks inwards and within which producers show "interest in disinterestedness […] in the sense of refusal to economic interest" (Bourdieu, 1998: 85), and a heteronomous principle which looks beyond the field and is influenced by market forces. While producers in the autonomous pole of the axis cherish symbolic value, those in the heteronomous pole are regulated by the prospect of economic success. Those in the autonomous pole do not seek immediate commercial success preferring instead, in Bourdieu's terms, to gain 'symbolic capital' defined as the "capital with a cognitive base, which rests on cognition and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1998: 85).

From the autonomous axis, success is measured by recognition from agencies of consecration such as critics or publishers in the literary field. Publishing houses at this end of the scale value the accumulated prestige and status acquired thanks to the publishing of works that have no instant economic success. In the West Indian literary field, Peepal Tree Press would be one such example. It can be said to be governed by the autonomous principle, in as much as it is less commercially oriented, works within a longer-term system and, most of all, aims at gaining symbolic capital, unlike the mainstream publishing houses whose interest lies in generating short-term economic profits.

3.1.4. Migrating: A Staple for the West Indian Writer

The precise conditions surrounding the genesis of Caribbean literature, namely, the fact that West Indian literature did not start on West Indian ground, help address a question which has arisen in the course of this dissertation: the connection in the West Indian psyche between being an artist and living abroad. The persistence of this association can be related to the tendency towards migration which is still so strong that it is seen almost as a staple for the West Indian person. Traditionally the Caribbean has been viewed as a peripheral, small and inferior place, in contrast to the centre, first identified with the UK, the so-called 'Mother Country', and later with North America. The perceived impossibility of residing in the Caribbean, and the pervading idea of the Caribbean as a non-place populated by non-peoples who have created nothing are two of the most frequent notions behind this ideological construct. Both have been either affirmed or, for the most part, contested by Caribbean writers.

In the novel *An Island is a World* Sam Selvon offers his own perspective on the debate between centre and periphery. Despite being most famous for his migrant tales – particularly *The Lonely Londoners* (1956)[50] the first novel in the trilogy featuring Moses, the symbol of the first West Indian Immigrants in Great Britain – *An Island is a World* is set mostly in Trinidad some time before independence. In an interview Selvon said that he held this novel in great esteem, and when asked which of his out of print novels he would like to see reprinted, he chose *An Island is a World*, adding that it is

> a book I would like to rewrite very much. Of all the books I have written I would like to rewrite that one, because I think that I never got to grips with what I was trying to express in that book. But when you ask me which book reflects some of my personal thoughts, I would say *An Island is a World*. (qtd. in Thieme and Dotti, 1990: 73)

Selvon expressed an ambivalent attitude towards the quality of the writing but nonetheless he firmly believed that what he was trying to express in the novel was significant, which explains why he would want to rewrite it.

In the novel, the distinction between centre and margin is crucial and the islanders have a definitive sense of living on the periphery:

> The word, in reality, consisted of the continents – the world was London, New York, Paris and the big cities one read about every day in the newspapers. Who was interested in a few thousand people living on an island […]? Of what material loss would it be to the world if the island suddenly sank under the sea? (Selvon, 1995: 211-12)

The islanders' feeling of being outside, in the margins, is set against life in big Western cities, the centre of the world. However, regardless of this generalised feeling

[50] *Moses Ascending* (1975) and *Moses Migrating* (1983) complete Selvon's Moses Trilogy.

of inferiority, Selvon seems to be asserting that the island is their centre, a place where life can also be contained in all its largeness and which too can work as “a place of intellectual, emotional and cultural exchanges” (Donnell, 2006: 122). In this light, the main character Foster, having resettled in Trinidad after a three-year stay in London, is capable of seeing a different image of Trinidad on his return. For him, Trinidad was a mere dot on the globe, but he “saw himself in the dot […] and he transmitted thoughts into the universe. He was lying down on the dot and thoughts radiated from him like how RKO introduce their films with a radio station broadcasting into space. (Selvon, 1955: 1). Foster offers a view which reverses the relationship of inferiority and the dependence of the Caribbean towards the metropolis. He feels that even from this small place, a mere dot, he can still feel so big that sometimes he could even “give the globe a blow with his fist and he shattered it” (ibid.).

This issue of the smallness of the Caribbean islands is one which frequently appears in the discussion. It can be seen, for example, when Foster, before leaving for England, wonders why another character, Father Hope, would come back to preach in a remote village in Trinidad after his studies in England. Foster argues that “I would have thought that someone of your capabilities would be crushed by the smallness of the place” (Selvon, 1955: 73), to which Father Hope responds that “[p]eople are the same all over the world […] An island is a world, and everywhere that people live, they create their own worlds” (ibid.). Father Hope’s utterance from which the novel draws its title, seems to assert that one place, regardless of its size, is as good as another and therefore an island such as Trinidad can also be a place where one builds a life.

The prevailing practice of migration is articulated in Jennifer Rahim's poem "Return of the Douen".[51] The poem consists of a conversation between the poet/douen and an old acquaintance of hers for whom migration is accepted as a sign of normality. The old acquaintance asks her the following:

> "So you're not married.
> Still in the country?
> Too much bush for me.
> Is there electricity?"
> (Rahim, 2002: 53)

The interlocutor or old acquaintance seems surprised that the poet/douen has not left the country. Not leaving and not getting married seem to be equal causes for suspicion or, at the very least, intrigue. The interlocutor on the one hand, who seems to have migrated or moved to the city – and who is probably now married – sees himself/herself incapable of living in the country. The reasons for this are described using tropes which portray the country in a manner similar to that of a foreigner who has never set foot on the island. More specifically, Trinidad is referred to as a rural and backward place that has not yet been 'civilised'. Thus, Rahim, can be said to criticise the outdated mind-set or belief system which establishes Trinidad, or any other Caribbean island, as a place from which one had better flee.

Perhaps not by chance, the interlocutor's version of Trinidad coincides perfectly with the Naipaulian vision of the country. Naipaul's texts have widely articulated what Rahim has defined as "the apparent incurable psychic and spiritual paralysis of diasporic people" (Rahim, 2008: 44). In fact, V.S. Naipaul himself asserts that his vision of Trinidad "came from living in the bush […] it came from a fear of being swallowed up by the bush, a fear of the people of the bush, and it's a fear I haven't

[51]This poem has already been quoted in section 2.1.3.2.

altogether lost. They are the enemies of the civilization which I cherish" (qtd. in Katukani, 1980). His perception of Trinidad corresponds with the hegemonic understanding of the Caribbean, which he helps legitimise through his inside view of the region. In fact, Naipaul, as well as the interlocutor in the poem, simply gives voice to the idea that historically the Caribbean is a place where you do not stay. The terms Naipaul uses to describe Trinidad find a direct referent in Rahim's poem. In both depictions Trinidad is rendered as an uncivilised, frightening place (bush), populated by frightening people (douen-like people).[52]

Jamaica Kincaid is another West Indian writer who has expressed a similar view as regards her homeland. Jennifer Rahim suggests that, among Kincaid's novels, this is most clearly articulated in her novel *My Brother* (1997).[53] The text narrates the story of Kincaid's brother, Devon Drew, who died of AIDS at the age of thirty-three. In the novel, in which Kincaid's life is recurrently compared to that of her brother, the writer firmly states that had she stayed in Antigua, she would have died just like her brother. Kincaid establishes an inextricable link between staying in the island and dying, a conviction that she held since childhood because "only people in Antigua died [...] people in other places did not die and as soon as I could, I would move somewhere else, to those places where the people living there did not die" (Kincaid, 1997: 26-7). Throughout the novel, Kincaid wonders

> what his life must be like for him, what my own life would have been like if I had not been so cold and ruthless in regard to my own family, acting only in favour of myself when I was a young woman. (ibid, 68-9)

and states that

[52] See section 2.1.3.2. for an explanation of the figure of the douen.
[53] This idea was brought to my attention by Jennifer Rahim at a personal communication, University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago on November 29th 2013.

> it frightened me to think that I might have continued to live in a certain way, though, I am convinced, not for very long. I would have died at about his age, thirty-three years, or I would have gone insane. (ibid, 89-90)

It is clear that for Kincaid staying in Antigua would have been lethal. She is convinced that in the same way that her brother could not live openly as a homosexual, it would have been impossible for her to become a writer in the Caribbean:

> His homosexuality is one thing, and my becoming a writer is another, but his truth is not lost to me: I could not have become a writer while living among the people I knew best, I could not have become myself while living among the people I knew best […] And his life unfolded before me not like a map just found, or a piece of old paper just found, his life unfolded and there was everything to see and there was nothing to see; in his life there had been no flowering, his life was the opposite of that, a flowering, his life was like the bud that set but, instead of opening into a flower, turns brown and falls off your feet. (ibid, 162-3)

The life of her brother, represented by an unopened, decaying, fallen flower, was marked by his feeling compelled to hide his sexual orientation so as to not be ostracised by Antiguan society. Kincaid explains that she, on the other hand, was able to avoid ostracism and flower into a writer by migrating to North America:

> I could never write these things in the place I'm writing about. I mean, I need to be away from it and to hold it closely in my mind. The reality of it is overwhelming. I've always found my reality in this place crippling […] I come from a small place where no one looks so perhaps I look and get damned for it. (Kincaid, 2004: 87)

Being a woman or a homosexual, or even wanting to be an artist in a society that is generally sexist, homophobic and unappreciative of the arts, can certainly push people to abandon the region and look for more welcoming spaces abroad. However, the views expressed by Naipaul and Kincaid can be interpreted as representations which comply with the hegemonic view of the Caribbean and ultimately contribute to

maintaining the region's dependence on Western approval and tutelage. The reality, however, is that life beyond the Caribbean region is neither free of prejudices nor abundant in all that the region lacks. In this sense, the more ambivalent view put across in the novel *Cereus Bloom at Night* by Shani Mootoo is particularly relevant for this dissertation. The novel, set in the fictional island of Lantanacamara, which could be said to represent Trinidad, deals with the issue of gender identity in the Caribbean. One of the main characters in the novel, Tyler, who relates the story of the Ramchandin sisters, is a male nurse who returns to his island home to work in a retirement home after his studies in "the Shivering Northern Wetlands" (Mootoo, 1996: 6). The arrival of Mala Ramchandin at the Alms House – where Tyler has recently started working – makes him wonder

> how many of us, feeling unsafe and unprotected, either end up running far away from everything we know and love, or staying and simply going mad. I have decided today that neither option is more or less nobler than the other. They are merely different ways of coping, and we must each cope as best as we can. (Mootoo, 1996: 90)

In the novel, Mootoo describes staying and leaving as different but equally noble options. Mootoo's text

conveys the idea that leaving one's home island in order to be free from constraints that do not exist abroad, also means leaving behind what you most love, and probably encountering other limitations which do not exist in one's homeland. In the novel, the Ramchandin sisters exemplify these two courses of action: Asha Ramchandin runs away, and Mala Ramchandin stays in the island, and – for the majority – later goes mad. However, through the figure of Mala – affectionately known as Pohpoh –, the novel seems to suggest that it is possible to stay and find an alternative way of dealing

with a reality which is far from resembling a ‘Paradise’ – the name of the village where the story is set. This alternative, however, will not be understood by the majority of the society.

Similarly, Tyler, the male nurse who takes care of Pohpoh, finds his way in a society where he does not seem to fit in. Pohpoh’s arrival grants him the opportunity to do his job (he had not been allowed to deal with residents before Mala’s arrival because of his femininity) and it is through her that he eventually finds love. The novel seems to argue that those who are seen as incapable of fitting into society can find different routes and alternative ways to live in the island as well. All in all, Mootoo’s text does not condemn the island as a place where life cannot exist, but from a critical and non-idealised perspective, suggests that staying is also a possibility.

3.1.5. Staying as Also a Possibility

In a similar manner, for the Caribbean writer the decision to stay or to leave can be seen as different but equally noble ways of coping with reality. However, the decision to stay is complicated by the aforementioned factors and also entails being relegated to a secondary position in comparison to diasporic writers.

Even though the reality is that the great majority of West Indian writers live in the metropolis, a few authors have made the choice to stay in the region and this should not be overlooked. As previously argued, being a creative writer in the Caribbean is complicated by a set of unfavourable conditions. Some writers however have felt that it is their responsibility to remain in the West Indies and have made a conscious decision to stay in the region, thereby proving that it is possible to survive against the

odds. In a similar vein, some writers have sought to use their texts as a means to oppose the traditional view of the Caribbean as a place where one cannot stay and live a full life. Their writings have aimed to prove that life does not exist abroad exclusively. This is the case of Trinidadian scholar and writer Jennifer Rahim, who addresses the issue of deliberately choosing to stay at home in her story "Sea":

> My home is an island. It is a place where I actually live. Not the place I visit for two weeks. Not the place I very much long to be, dream in its language, try to keep it real. My home is not something I take with me in a suitcase like a roti-skin, a bottle of pepper sauce, a sweet bread, a breadfruit that has been cut up and frozen, a sea shell that no longer has the magic as when it lay on the beach that was its home. No. My island is the place where all these things are with me everyday in more quantities than I could ever want; so much so, I forget to remember they are part of the place I call home […] It is not the place I dream to leave for fear that my life would never know itself − not any longer […] An Island is the kind of place that will pass you through that kind of fire. I imagine not everyone knows the hell of coming to believe that your life can only happen somewhere else – in another place that can contain you in its largeness. (Rahim, 2007: 139)

In this excerpt, which opens the story, Rahim passionately defends her willingness to stay home.[54] She acknowledges her island – and it could be extrapolated to the region as a whole – as a place that can also contain life in all its largeness. Rahim recognises that this archipelago is also a "real place where many people freely choose to live and die to make a world […] even in the height of postmodern esoteric excursions into the notions of the citizen as an unanchored globe-hopper" (Rahim, 2008: 42). The story can be interpreted as a call for the recognition of those who have retained a Caribbean base. In terms of representation, Rahim contends, to paraphrase Makarand Paranjape,[55] that Trinidad seen from afar cannot be the same as when seen from near. The story can

[54] I believe that Rahim's creative writing serves to exemplify the claim that "where the critics and theorists fear to tread, writers go boldly" (O'Callaghan, 2001: 79). Rahim's stance as a creative writer is understandably bolder than her stance as a critic, as both excerpts of the story "Sea" and the poem "Return of the Douen" attest.

[55] See section 2.1.2.1.

be interpreted as a critique of the privileging of transnationalisms because these "undermine the reality of place and the locatedness of home" (Rahim, 2013: 32). She also challenges the depiction of the Caribbean produced by writers such as Naipaul and Kincaid who portray it as a place where life cannot exist and which, at its best, can only be a temporary vacation spot given that it is a "non-place populated by non-people" (Rahim, 2006: 40). In opposition to the glorification of travel which has now become popular, the text seems to remind us that staying at home in the Caribbean is also a possibility which is crucial in allowing the writer to represent the Caribbean from a particular vantage point. Rahim reclaims the fire and largeness that the island and the region are also capable of containing when one chooses to resist the constant pull to leave.

3.1.6. Is Staying Any Better?: Improvements

> [Writers living in the Caribbean] have more company. (Earl Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013)

Some of the challenges and conditions to which writers in the West Indies are exposed have been presented in the previous sections. It has been argued that for the West Indian writer the choice of staying is a very political one, carrying far-reaching implications. However, current circumstances can be said to have improved and as of late certain initiatives which point to a better future for those who decide to stay can be identified.

First of all, it must be noted that even though it is impossible not to generalise when talking about the West Indies, the different islands present diverse situations.

Comparing Trinidad to Jamaica (the two larger islands), Rahim laments the fact that Trinidad has not been able to enjoy a similar level of energy and network of communication among writers or the overall "ability of the Jamaican writing community to establish itself" (Rahim, 2003: 64). She further argues that more should be done in Trinidad so that writers could find space where they could share their voices with purpose and confidence (ibid., 65).

Though current circumstances do not make it easy for West Indian writers to stay, one factor which has contributed to the emergence of new generations of West Indian writers is that these now have many different models of West Indians writers to look up to – as stated in the epigraph by Earl Lovelace. The writers that have emerged after George Lamming, Sam Selvon, V.S. Naipaul, Edgar Mittelholzer, Una Marson or Roger Mais, now have the example of this earlier generation to draw upon. The latter, who are now regarded as great figures and whose worth is undoubtedly understood, did not enjoy this privilege. Thus, Caribbean authors have a great foundation on which to build because they are supported by the literary tradition of the region. In fact, Lamming was already able to foresee in the 1960 that his generation of writers would be claimed by the next as "an item on the list of possessions" (Lamming, 1960: 38).

One such example can be seen in the case of the Guyanese-British writer David Dabydeen, who acknowledges the support of his predecessors. Dabydeen argues that because of the level of excellence of their writings, they also pose a challenge to emerging West Indian writers (Davydeen, 2004: 234). He recognises that the *Windrush* writers[56] have influenced him and opened paths for people like him:

[56] *Windrush* writers refers to the generation of West Indian writers that migrated to Great Britain throughout the 1950s. These include, among others, the writers mentioned in the previous paragraph.

> They achieved. Forget their themes or forget their concerns. The very fact that they achieved meant that it was relatively easier for us to publish because there was already Derek Walcott, there was already George Lamming, there was already Sam Selvon, there was especially V.S. Naipaul. However much we criticize Naipaul, let's not forget that he opened up a lot of doors, indirectly, to people like myself. (ibid.)

Regardless of the contents of the writings by the aforementioned authors, Dabydeen recognises the achievements of the first major generation of West Indian writers from the so-called boom years. He feels there is a body of writing from which he can benefit and to which he has a certain responsibility. Kei Miller, an even younger writer than Dabydeen, also recognises the paramount role of previous writers:

> We walk very casually through doors that have been wrenched open for us, not always understanding we couldn't have done this before. So there is a way in which the Louise Bennetts and the Earl Lovelaces and Linton Kwesi Johnsons and my father's own godfather, Vic Reid – these people created a space in which my own work now resides and makes sense and is read, and I give thanks to them for that. (Miller, *Writing down* 2013: 134)

Similarly to Dabydeen, Miller acknowledges that these early Caribbean writers have opened paths for future generations. Miller seems to agree with Lamming, who has already drawn attention to the pioneering role of this initial wave of writers, "the first builders of what will become a tradition in West Indian imaginative writing: a generation which will be taken for granted" (Lamming, 1960: 38). Of importance for this dissertation is the fact that Miller's list of writers incorporates two of the few writers based in the region, Trinidadian Earl Lovelace and the late Jamaican Vic Reid. For writers emerging within the Caribbean, the existence not only of a tradition but of a legacy of West Indian writers who have remained, is also extremely relevant. This proves to future generations of aspiring authors that it is possible to remain in the West Indies despite the odds.

Olive Senior has also expressed optimism as regards the future of Caribbean-based writers. She admits that the resources for nurturing writing in the Caribbean were very limited in the past but considers the prospect for upcoming writers to be brighter when she explains that

> suddenly many good things seem to be happening that are rooted in developing the home space and making it exciting and uplifting – literary competitions and prizes, festivals, writing courses, the use of social media in book blogs etc. There seems to be a wider awakening to the need to develop a Caribbean space that nurtures writing and other arts and the good fortune to have individuals emerge at this moment who have the talent and ability to make things happen. Like the folks behind the Calabash and Bocas Lit Fest, publications like *Small Axe*, *ARC* or the *Caribbean Review of Books*, or blogs like Anansesem or Repeating Islands (qtd. in Haynes, 2014)

The Calabash and Bocas Literary Festivals, in Jamaica and Trinidad respectively, are fairly recent world-class events that work towards the advancement of West Indian literature. Calabash was founded first in 2001 and ten years later the region saw the establishment of Bocas. Bocas has a general prize for Caribbean literature and an award named The Hollick Arvon Caribbean Writers Prize, which is the region's only prize that seeks to open doors for emergent writers living and writing in the Anglophone Caribbean.[57]

As regards publishing houses, Senior also welcomes the creation of the new imprint Peekash Press, a Caribbean-focused project launched by Peepal Tree Press and Akashic Books, which are two of the foremost publishers of Caribbean literature. They have jointly published *Pepperpot: Best New Stories from the Caribbean* (2014), an

[57] The Hollick Arvon Caribbean Writers Prize allows emerging Caribbean writers living and working in the Anglophone Caribbean to devote time to advancing or finishing a literary work. It is sponsored by the Hollick Family Charitable Trust and the literary charitable trust the Arvon Foundation, in association with the non-profit organisation the Bocas Literary Festival. The Prize will be offered annually, initially for the next three years, and across three literary genres: fiction in 2013, non-fiction in 2014, and poetry in 2015 (NGC Bocas Literary Festival, 2012).

anthology consisting entirely of brand-new stories by authors living in the region (not simply authors from the region). This collection, the editors explain, gathers the very best entries to the Commonwealth Short Story Prize, including a mix of established and up-and-coming writers from islands throughout the Caribbean (Peekash, 2014).

To conclude, it must be noted that although the region has come a long way from the colonial period, when everything West Indian was discouraged, and despite recent signs of improvement in the condition of artists, there is still a long way to go before they are accepted, valued and supported.

It can be argued that due to the current privileging of diasporic writing, the non-diasporic work of a writer such as Earl Lovelace needs to be re-valued. The next sections will analyse the figure of Earl Lovelace, a writer whom, against the odds, decided to stay and write from the Caribbean. Unlike Merle Hodge, the other Trinidadian writer from the same generation who neither succumbed to leaving the island, writing has been the central task of Lovelace's life. Taking this into consideration, the next sections analyse crucial questions such as how staying has shaped Lovelace's writing, whether being a non-diasporic writer has influenced his career and how he has been received in the Western literary field and in the region.

3.2. Life and Works

Born July 13, 1935 to working-class parents in Toco, northern rural Trinidad, Earl Lovelace was the fourth of seven children. He was sent to his mother's grandparents' house in Tobago, where he was brought up in a family which consisted not only of his grandparents but also two aunts and five cousins. Growing up in this extended family

allowed him to experience one of the most common family structures in the Caribbean, which he says provided him with “a wider sense of family” (qtd. in Sankar, 1998: 40). In his maternal grandparents’ Methodist household, calypso, carnival, Orisha and all the cultural forms that were connected to Africa were viewed as instruments of the devil (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 9). Thus, his stay also made him realise that in this household – as in many others in the Caribbean –, “everything black was bad” (qtd. in Sankar, 1998: 40).

At the age of eleven he rejoined his parents and siblings in Toco, but soon the family moved to Port of Spain, to the neighbourhoods of Belmont and later Morvant, on the outskirts of the capital (Sankar, 1998: 40). To then go on to secondary school, he attempted to win a scholarship – also known as a college exhibition – which would grant him access to one of the prestigious secondary schools of the island:

> I was expected to win an exhibition. I remember when I was eleven I felt I could rule this country. But I failed the exhibition – twice. The whole world fell in. That supposed failure closed off that option, that particular route to training or education. (qtd. in Sankar, 1998: 38)

Not winning a much coveted scholarship marked his life tremendously. Yet, what was first seen as a failure, would later be re-evaluated and come to be seen as an enormous gain. In time, Lovelace argues that failing to win the scholarship was a source of “eternal gratitude” (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 2) because it granted him a privileged perspective from which his writings benefited enormously. Lovelace admits that this single event meant that the “pleasant middle-class existence” (ibid.) he was heading for was then interrupted. Instead, he attended a free secondary school and soon had his second stroke of luck. A misunderstanding between him and his sister caused him not to leave the country:

> My sister left for London and promised to send for me. And I would have gone, if she had. But I was lucky; she never did. There was a mix-up. Years later she asked me: Why didn't you come? I didn't know. I do not know. Luck. Perhaps. (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 223)

After finishing secondary school, he worked as proofreader for the *Trinidad and Tobago Guardian*. A voracious reader as a youth, he wrote occasionally, but it was his second job as a forest ranger which would propel him into his writing career. In fact, his stay in Matura, an isolated village in north-eastern Trinidad where he worked as a field assistant for the Department of Forestry between 1954 and 1956, marked the start of his writing career. Lovelace explains that "I started writing at that time. You were alone then. I decided I would read and write every day" (qtd. in Sankar, 1998: 41). He then moved to the remote village of Rio Claro, in the South of the island, where he worked as an agricultural officer and continued writing, because "I thought the most important thing to do – the only thing I could do – was to write" (ibid.). His first success in the literary world arrived in 1962 when he was awarded first prize in the Trinidad and Tobago Independence literary competition sponsored by British Petroleum (BP) for his debut novel *While Gods Are Falling*. He argues that "it was very useful having won that prize, so I was published from here. I am probably one of the few people to get published living in Trinidad or in the Caribbean for that matter" (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013). He admits that his writing career took a turn toward the professional thanks to the BP award which allowed him to continue writing from his home island.

As will be further argued, having stayed in Trinidad distinguishes Lovelace from the majority of West Indian writers, but at a point in time he also felt the need to temporarily leave his homeland. Lovelace explains that

> I did want to go outside of Trinidad, which I did. But then I found that I wanted to live in Trinidad or live in the Caribbean at least. I don't think I ever thought about going away to live abroad permanently. (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013)

Despite being resolute in his decision to stay and write from the Caribbean, Lovelace has lived abroad temporarily on several occasions. In the late 1960s he lived for a period of time in Washington DC, which he has argued, offered him the chance to reflect on "our shallow middle classness which is both stultifying and inhibiting" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 62).

Shortly after independence, in 1967, Pouchet Paquet explains that Lovelace began writing for the *Trinidad and Tobago Express*. At the age of thirty-two he was a rising national figure. He had just published his first novel, had recently returned from a year study at Howard University in Washington DC and was waiting for his second novel, *The Schoolmaster* (1968), to be published (Pouchet Paquet, 2006: 2). At the time Lovelace was also actively engaged in the Black Power movement in Trinidad which took central stage in 1969-70. The movement grew out of the widespread discontent with the economic and cultural conditions of the region. Lovelace explains that the movement emerged "out of a sense of dissatisfaction – that, despite political independence and wider access to education, the society had not changed radically" (Lovelace, *Reclaiming* 2013: 72). West Indian scholar Dennis Benn explains that the movement succeeded in mobilizing large sections of the mass base and focused on the

> question of imperialist economic domination of Trinidad and Tobago […] and the Caribbean in general […] and the related condition of black dispossession and social and political deprivation […] At the cultural level, it also aimed at

> the rejection of European cultural domination and the 'white bias' of the existing social order. (Benn, 2004: 253)[58]

Lovelace supported the protests against the advancement of neo-colonial economic conditions that perpetuated the dispossession of large sections of the black population. He has explained that he even led a march in Rio Claro, south-eastern Trinidad (Lovelace, *Reclaiming* 2013: 73). In the cultural sphere, the movement also protested against the undermining of all those types of local cultural forms whose origins could be traced to Africa. Lovelace's support of the Black Power movement was made clear in the *Express*, where he was editorial writer, columnist and reviewer. He wrote pieces such as "At War with the System" published in *New Beginning* in 1971,[59] where he argues that "society has not ceased to assault us" and he exhorts the people to rise up and continue a tradition of resistance that dates back to slavery, colonialism and indentureship (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 126). Lovelace believes that the Black Power aimed at reclaiming a sense of dignity for black people, and he further describes the movement as

> the consciousness that moved some Trinbagonians of African and East Indian descent to struggle for dignity, justice, social and economic power from a society that had been organised to deny them from the period of enslavement, through colonialism, down to the period of self-government and independence (Lovelace, *Reclaiming* 2013: 72)

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[58] According to Dennis Benn, one example was the attack on the Roman Catholic cathedral in downtown Port of Spain during the height of the protest (Benn, 2004: 253). This attack by members of the Black Power would later on be portrayed in Lovelace's novel *The Dragon Can't Dance*.

[59] The New Beginning Movement (NBM) published *New Beginning*, a magazine edited by Bukka Rennie until 1978. According to Millette, the NBM was founded by C.L.R. James with the aim of undertaking political work on his behalf (Millette, 1995: 338). However, Gordon Rohlehr argues that the NBM draw its inspiration from C.L.R. James but Bukka Rennie, a veteran of the Sir George William University uproar of 1969 in Canada, and Ainsley Mark, a University of the West Indies lecturer in Economics, were its guiding spirit (Rohlehr, 2008: 15).

It is significant that the movement sought to engage West Indians of East Indian descent as well and encourage them to join in the fight against racial discrimination. As Benn argues, “there was a consistent attempt to emphasise the class dimension of the movement and to define its objectives to cater for the needs and interests of both the African and East Indian segments of the mass base” (Benn, 2004: 253).

From 1971 to 1974, Lovelace was based in Baltimore, where he lectured in Creative Writing at the University of the District of Columbia (1971-1973) and was Visiting Novelist at the Johns Hopkins University (1973-1974), where he also obtained a master’s degree in Creative Writing (Rohlehr, 2008: 16). Living in the USA allowed Lovelace to participate in American social and political life, as he had done in Trinidad during Black Power. Many years later, in a lecture given in Washington, D.C. in 1998, he fondly remembered his time spent in the US during the Black Power movement in the 1970s and how the discussions which took place there influenced his outlook (Lovelace, 2008: 163). British scholar Bill Schwarz has also argued that Lovelace’s involvement in the diasporic political life of urban black insurgency offered him the opportunity “to divest himself of a prior colonial formation in which black was anything but beautiful” (Schwarz, *Being* 2008: 10). On his return to Trinidad, Lovelace became active in the theatre with “several significant successes: *My Name is Village*, a musical drama staged in 1976; *Pierrot Grinnard*, also a musical drama in 1977; and *Jestina’s Calypso* in 1978” (Pouchet Paquet, 2006: 5). These three plays would later be published under the title *Jestina’s Calypso and Other Plays* (1984).

Lovelace is also one of the many intellectuals from the region who supported Bishop’s government in Grenada. His involvement with the Grenada Revolution or the People’s

Revolutionary Government in Grenada (PRG) was particularly evident in his participation in the Conferences organised by the "Intellectual Workers for Regional Sovereignty of the Caribbean Peoples" (Pouchet Paquet, 2006: 6). The group, chaired by George Lamming, comprised people involved in the cultural development of the Caribbean region. By the end of the PRG, Lovelace had published his most renowned novel to date, *The Dragon Can't Dance* (1979), which was an immediate success and was later serialised in the *Express* where he had worked. The importance of serialising the novel is explained by the circumstances in Trinidad at the time. Though the potential readership within the region was now larger than ever before there did not exist a generalised habit of reading West Indian literature in Trinidadian society or any other West Indian society. However, as Kevin Baldeosingh acknowledges, Trinidadian society is a "newspaper-reading society" (qtd. in Quinn, 2008: 34). Therefore, in serialising Lovelace's *The Dragon Can't Dance* they sought to engage Trinidadians who were more in the habit of reading the readily available newspapers. Lovelace explains that Keith Smith, the editor of the *Express* at the time, was the person behind the idea, and he has expressed his satisfaction with the successful result of the initiative (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013).

Lovelace worked as an English lecturer at The University of the West Indies, Trinidad Campus, where in 2002 he received an honorary doctorate of letters. In spite of the difficulties involved in accommodating him as a creative writer in its programmes, Lovelace was part of the faculty of The University of the West Indies for ten years. Even though he was in his forties and at the height of his writing career, he started working as a temporary teacher assistant at UWI, and admits that he wondered "what kind of contribution could I be asked to make in the capacity of teaching assistant?" (Lovelace, *Earl Lovelace manuscripts:* n.d.) Eventually, though, he would be

appointed temporary lecturer of Creative Writing and even run the extension programme "Arts and Indigenous Traditions":

> This was a course which was based on the idea that the indigenous traditions were perhaps the true repository of our traditions and values and response to enslavement and colonialism in the Caribbean landscape, the objective was to work with Best Village groups to look at […] traditions and women portrayal, etc. (ibid.)

Seeking to revalorise the indigenous traditions would, in fact, become a constant of his career, as will be further argued when analysing his texts. In 1982 he published his fourth novel, *The Wine of Astonishment*, which Pouchet Paquet argues "confirmed his growing reputation as an outstanding talent" (Pouchet Paquet, 2006: 5).[60] With his fifth novel, *Salt* (1996), Lovelace would win one of the highest awards he has received to date, the Commonwealth Writers Prize. In the late 1990s he was a visiting lecturer at Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts, USA, and, in 1998, he joined the faculty of the English Department at Pacific Lutheran University, Washington, USA (Verdel, 2014). These temporary working stays abroad teaching in different USA universities attest, as will be later explained, to the difficulty of living from his writing career in the Caribbean. This is why in his unpublished essay "The Humanities, Creative Arts and the Artist in the University" he argues that "the writer in the Caribbean has had to roam and go out into the world" (Lovelace, *Earl Lovelace manuscripts;* n.d.).

Lovelace has also authored the short story volume *A Brief Conversation and Other Stories* (1988), the children's story *Crawfie the Crapaud* (1997) and a collection of essays, *Growing in the Dark (Selected Essays),* edited by University of the West

[60] *The Wine of Astonishment* was written before *The Dragon Can't Dance* but published afterwards (Lorraine Nero, personal communication, March 5, 2011).

Indies scholar, creative writer and friend Funso Ayiejina. His most recent work is his novel *Is Just a Movie* (2011), which won the OCM Bocas Prize in 2012. As for prospective projects, Lovelace has explained that he is working on various projects: an autobiography, a non-fiction book and a novel which, in Lovelace's own words, "is there somewhere nearby. I should start it very soon" and which deals with the issue of reclaiming rebellion (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013).

3.3. The Dangerous Dimension

Lovelace forms part of those writers who accept the responsibility of the aforementioned "essential gesture" (Gordimer, 1988) which can transform their societies. This gesture or responsibility to be more than a writer is not only performed through his writings but also through his active involvement in the political life of the region. For Lovelace, writing and political action are two revolutionary activities which are intimately related. Lovelace can be said to be an activist in two different spheres: the sphere of direct political action and the literary sphere.

The aforementioned support of the Black Power movement in Trinidad and the Grenada Revolution exemplify Lovelace's political activism. However, his involvement is not limited to these two movements, as he has also been deeply engaged in other issues at a national level. Regarding the overall fight for political justice, he has been, on the one hand, generally involved in village councils, and the more specific issue of reparation has been one of his major concerns. Lovelace has been one of the most prominent spokespersons for the National Joint Action Committee (Sankar, 1998: 38), a Trinidadian organization which has sought to bring

the issue of reparation to the centre of the current political scene. Lovelace believes that the region still needs to do some accounting, and argues that "[w]e have never addressed the facts of our past history. We have talked about them, but as a community, we never sat down and looked at them with a perspective to settle accounts" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 100). For Lovelace, reparation, as it will be further developed, is one of the preconditions that will allow for the building of a new society in the Caribbean.

As regards his activist involvement in the arts in the region, he has supported and contributed to the Best Village competition of Trinidad. Founded in 1963, Best Village is an annual competition aimed at promoting the arts at the village and community level. The emphasis of the festival has been on the promotion of folk art, that is, "those arts that have struggled for their survival under colonialism and stand now as what we might identify as our indigenous traditions" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 18). Lovelace has not only been involved in actual productions for the competition – his play *My Name is Village* won the 1976 award for Best Play (Quinn, 2008: 24) – but he has also defended the continuation of the programme on the grounds of its highly beneficial role in the promotion of the arts of Trinidad and Tobago. For him, Best Village has the capacity to work as "an agent for the cultural liberation of the entire society" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 21). Lovelace sees an enormous value in the programme because it seeks to promote and disseminate indigenous folk artforms that can counter the invasion of foreign, namely American, cultural elements that, according to him, inundate the West Indian region and further justify the need for fiction (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 18).

Although he can certainly be identified as an activist both because of his writings and his direct political involvement, Lovelace refuses to be identified as such. His idea of an activist of the region is that of Clive Nuñez, a famous trade unionist who was one of the Black Power leaders (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013). His refusing the label of activist might be due to the fact that although he recognises he has been involved in and supported diverse political struggles, he does not see his involvement as comparable to that of a figure such as Clive Nuñez, who does identify himself as a West Indian activist. However it could be argued that even if his literary work was perceived as his only source of activism, Lovelace could still be considered an activist as well as a dangerous writer. Earl Lovelace belongs to that group of artists who create dangerously – the principle that unifies writers according to Edwidge Danticat. As previously explained, dangerous writing is passionate and fearless and unearths submerged stories. Earl Lovelace recognises the paramount role of fiction and believes in the central and urgent role of the artist in every society. Just as Merle Hodge argues at the beginning of this dissertation,[61] Lovelace also believes that artists make sense of and explain the world to society:

> Just as society needs to produce engineers and priests and so on, it should feel the need to produce artists and writers. A society that is serious should see that the writers and artists are there to see the development of the place, someone to give them back themselves. (qtd. in Sankar, 1998: 42)

Lovelace's faith on the power of writing also coincides with that of Dany Laferrière. For Laferrière, as previously explained, writing has the power to help people get back on their feet even in extreme circumstances such as the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Both authors attest to the idea that literature holds a central role in the development of any country. Lovelace also believes that he has a mission as an artist towards his society:

[61] See section 1.1.

> We must seek out our strengths and our beauty. We must promote hope. For too long have we subjected ourselves to the brutal and negative "culture" of self-denigration, mauvaise langue[62] and mamaguy[63] […] The artist must take up the challenge of seeking out the positive values and hopeful values that his sensitivity and vision afford him to see, that his talent allows him to present. (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 64)

The idea of offering a new perspective of this New World is extremely relevant in Lovelace's writings. He believes that the artist's role must be that of representing society from a fresh perspective and celebrating newness. A newness which, as will be further explained, engages all the constituent ethnicities that make up this fledgling nation. He is convinced of the possibility and necessity of creating something afresh, and of the wealth inherent in the multiracial and multi-ethnic composition of the nation and the region. Lovelace believes that all the different ethnic groups in the nation need to come to terms with the past in order set each other free and be able to create something of their own together. He is convinced that the artist must help with the task of finding a way "to release sections of our population from guilt, from shame, from the feeling of injustice and victimhood" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 100). Against some pessimistic views, and from an always critical standpoint, Lovelace sees in the Caribbean, the centre of the New World, and a land full of possibilities.

Moreover, it could be argued that Lovelace is doubly dangerous. In Trinidadian English Creole – a variety of Caribbean English-lexicon creole, which is one of the two languages spoken in Trinidad, the other being Trinidadian English, a variety of Standard English – the word 'dangerous' also refers to a highly skilled, brave and daring person. In this sense, his works reflect an uncommon and daring insight in his use of the language, in his refusal to shape his writings for a non-Trinidadian or West

[62] Critical, slanderous talk (Winer, 2009: 589).

[63] Tease someone; deceive; try to get something by flattery, esp. by saying exaggerated comments or compliments (Winer, 2009: 561).

Indian readership and in the need to uphold and reclaim the role that resistance and rebellion have played in the making of West Indian society.

3.4. A Writer of Independence

> How can we be historyless? Are we dropped out of nowhere? Have we not come from civilisations? And have we not endured and created? Artists must tell us that. (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 99)

Many scholars have argued against the term postcolonial. Some have criticised its unspecified and undifferentiated scope (Tiffin and Lawson, 1994: 233), while others have argued that it is riddled with contradictions and qualifications (Loomba, 1998: 16). In "Woman Against the Grain: The Pitfalls of Theorizing Caribbean Women's Writing" Caribbean scholar Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert seems to argue that postcolonialism has placed colonialism at its centre, and thus elevated it to a superior position. Paravisini-Gebert holds that in many postcolonial approaches,

> agency – however challenged, however deconstructed – rests with the colonizers and their traditions […] the postcolonial subject is perceived as always functioning in a configuration in which the colonizer's traditions, now apparently relegated to "post" condition, retain their centrality throughout. (Paravisi-Gebert, 1998: 161).

In a way similar to Paravisini-Gebert, Lovelace rejects the label of postcolonial writer under which all writers from once colonised regions are grouped. He believes that the term suggests that colonialism marks the start of the history and culture of the region, as if colonialism alone could define the history of the Caribbean. Lovelace asserts that to him the label 'postcolonial writer' does not mean anything because it conflates with colonialism, and therefore he believes that postcolonial writers are those who follow

the “coloniser’s path to the bitter end” (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013). For Lovelace, it is in the interest of the Western world that writers follow the terms set by postcolonialism, terms which he relates to the idea of not having created anything in the Caribbean:

> There is the sense that we have gone nowhere when we hear this term. Postcolonialism is like standing at the station not knowing what train you’re catching. You just see them coming, stopping and going back. Some are even going past the station not even bothering to pick up the people! (Lovelace, 2004)

With this metaphor Lovelace seeks to illustrate the need to let go of the constraints of a past that can neither fully explain nor define the Caribbean.

V.S. Naipaul, the most famous Trinidadian-born writer and recipient of the 2001 Nobel Prize for Literature, could be identified with Lovelace’s idea of a Postcolonial writer. One of the clearest examples of this can be found in his *The Middle Passage: Impressions of Five Societies – British, French and Dutch – in the West Indies and South America* (1962). Written two years before independence, this non-fictional text was commissioned by the then Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago of the time, Eric Williams. After ten years in England, where he had started his writing career, Williams invited Naipaul to visit his homeland to record his impressions of the changing society (Mustafa, 1995: 77). Prompted by this visit, Naipaul wrote this book of travel essays where he recorded his impressions of different areas in the Caribbean: Trinidad, British Guyana, Jamaica, Martinique and Surinam. In the text in question, Naipaul articulates one of the most recurrent myths of the region when he proclaims that “the history of the islands can never be satisfactory told […] History is built around achievement and creation and nothing was created in the West Indies”

(Naipaul, 1962: 29). This famous and controversial statement has been widely discussed and differently interpreted. Some scholars have argued that Naipaul's views on his homeland, the region and even the postcolonial world cannot be read literally. This is the case of Nicholas Laughlin, who refers to Naipaul's views as a specifically Trinidadian manifestation called picong. The Trinidadian term picong is defined as "[t]easing, ridicule, or insult, esp. in semi-formal or ritualized exchanges, e.g. between calypsonians" (Winer, 2009: 692). Laughlin argues that "Naipaul's anti-Caribbean posturing can be read as a manifestation of a very Caribbean behaviour, a role-playing mode that is distinctly if not uniquely Trinidadian" (Laughlin, 2011: 67).

Lovelace has interpreted Naipaul's view in an ambivalent way. On the one hand, in an essay entitled "Culture and Environment" Lovelace argues that Naipaul was not speaking to West Indians but to the British. For Lovelace, "he [Naipaul] was saying that the British had not created anything in the West Indies" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 8). However, Lovelace has also interpreted the recurrent Naipaulian vision of the apparent incurable psychic and spiritual paralysis of postcolonial peoples as "the view from someone who lived outside, from a point of superiority […] by someone who didn't live in the society and understand the difficulties" (qtd. in Sankar, 1998: 42). *The Overcrowded Barracoon* is another example in which Naipaul unmistakably performs his role as what is described by Edward Said as "a witness for the Western prosecution in the trial against the Third World" (Said, 1992: 53). In this collection of essays Naipaul claims that "nothing was created in the West Indies […] these small islands […] will never create" (Naipaul, 1972: 250). Naipaul believes – at least literally – that the region is condemned to perpetual mayhem and dependence. This is a view which is not only pessimistic but portrays the Caribbean as a doomed society. According to Lovelace, this notion, also espoused by other writers, is advanced to

temper the optimism of West Indians regarding the New World. By claiming that these societies have not produced and will not produce anything, they actually argue

> that indeed the colonial enterprise was a blessing to bring the savage tribes into the world; and far from eclipsing what the Europeans have done in this region we have to be careful that we do not return to the jungles of our past. (Lovelace, *Earl Lovelace Fiction Writer* 2003: 10)

In contrast, Lovelace has sought to prove in his writings that West Indians have created a rich Creole culture of which they can be proud, and which came out of the interaction of the different cultures that were brought to the Caribbean. Lovelace asserts that West Indians "must begin to focus on what we have done, created, achieved as we have confronted the experience of oppression in the Caribbean and we need to examine our own creativity and achievements to value them" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 36). As a result, instead of the term postcolonial writer which focuses on what came after colonialism, Lovelace proposes the term 'writer of independence'. For him, writers should be concerned with independence, or some idea of regionalism. Lovelace believes that the Caribbean itself has been sidelined, with Caribbean history never being fully addressed, and to define the Caribbean as postcolonial is to continue the colonial line:

> The whole thing has to be looked at afresh. We need to clear the ground for a new beginning. There is the sense that once free from colonialism, I now become a finished project. None of us is the finished project. We are all unfinished projects. We need to envisage a communal project: what is it to be truly human. We were always involved in that but colonialism got in our way. (Lovelace, 2004)

Lovelace argues that the emphasis should be placed on what happened in the region once it became independent, that is, how the region has managed its historical circumstances so as to build a new society free form colonial constraints. He contends

that there was only a very short period when independence was emphasised and West Indian society is still an unfinished project.

As King Kala, the calypsonian and one of the Black Power leaders in the novel *Is Just a Movie* claims, “[f]or just a moment, we in Black Power had parted the silence that curtained the biggest issue in this land – the dignity of Blackpeople, opportunity, equality, what was to be done, how to go on” (Lovelace, 2011: 20). King Kala explains that only the Revolutionary Government in Grenada managed to break the silence on how to build a new society in that very short period right after independence when the issue was really discussed. This silence, Lovelace claims, was a long one indeed and went all the way back to Emancipation. After having received a letter from the Culture Ministry of Grenada’s Revolutionary Government inviting him to visit the island and get involved as an artist in the cultural transformation of the region – an episode which might well be autobiographical –, King Kala attends Maurice Bishop’s talk in Trinidad. The Grenadian Prime Minister’s address makes him feel “hopeful that here at last in the Caribbean was a group of persons prepared to tackle the silence that had continued from emancipation” (ibid., 217).

Lovelace recognises that Independence alone cannot create a nation with which the different communities can immediately identify. He thus questions Independence in the following way:

> The problem of independence is to discover that it has not achieved independence. So if you focus on independence you will begin to see all the flaws in the independence that we have had […] Where are the West Indian intellectuals who are talking about independence? People tend to think these things come from heaven somewhere? But somebody had to have started it. Where did it come from? (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013)

He criticises the West Indian's inability to see that after Independence the country had to be built collectively in order for different communities to set each other free. For Lovelace West Indians had gone through a kind of amnesia which did not allow them to see that they needed to continue to fight to achieve human rights and dignity. As he explains, "Black people had forgotten we had a right to [human rights, and] we had refused to forfeit [dignity] with Independence" (Lovelace, 2011: 287). The character Clayton Blondell from *Is Just a Movie* is an example of a West Indian who is unable to recognise that Independence needs to be constructed. King Kala is taken aback to know that Blondell believes that Independence had failed him: "Failed him? We haven't even begun. Failed him? What you expect? To find a ready-made country. This is something to build" (ibid., 203).

Lovelace also argues that he identifies with the label 'writer of independence' because it defines those writers that look at the region afresh and seek to contribute to the communal project of creating a new society. He believes that one of the central tasks that he has to face as a writer is "to make us see who we really are" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 231). Again King Kala could be said to perform the role of the 'writer of independence'. Although he is a calypsonian, he considers himself a poet, but he explains that since "poetry don't have no real following here in this island" (Lovelace, 2011: 17), he sings his poems which offer a new beginning for the region:

> *I was reborn to a new vision.*
> *I had to find new histories to write, ignored heroes to celebrate.*
> *I began afresh to sing.*
> *I became the poet of the revolution*
> (ibid., 23; italics in the original)

Writing at the height of the Black Power movement, King Kala self-identifies as the poet of the revolution. As a West Indian writer, he believes that he is in charge of introducing newness to the region and this way, advance the creation of a starting point for the region.

For Lovelace being a writer of independence has nothing to do with a writer's location (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013). Hence, it is not contradictory for West Indian diasporic writers to be writers of independence. Lovelace regards the communal project West Indian writers of independence are to embark on as one which all Caribbean authors can contribute to, regardless of where these are based. Against visions such as those advanced by Naipaul, Elleke Boehmer asserts that not all migrant writing "foregrounds and celebrates a national or historical rootlessness" (Boehmer, 1995: 240). Even if a writer lives temporarily or permanently abroad, as proven by the case of Jamaican writer Olive Senior and many others, he or she can be a writer of independence.[64]

3.5. On Staying

3.5.1. Lovelace's Exilic Condition

Exile has been previously analysed as one of the conditions which characterises the writer, as an intellectual. Exile, understood not necessarily as a physical state but also as a metaphorical condition, grants the intellectual and the writer a privileged and

[64] As previously explained, Senior lives in Canada but she is strongly engaged with Jamaica, which is the centre of her work. Senior is committed to "the recovery and recognition of indigenous knowledge, history and culture… [which] proves that location does not set the limits of commitment or belonging to a place" (Donnell, 2006: 96).

necessary position from which to speak. This is acknowledged by Jamaican writer Kwame Daves, who argues that writers need to be metaphorically exiled in order to scrutinise and question their culture:

> Writers must always be both at home and away from home. That distance and closeness is what will create the tension and the space to make art […] But even when I was in Jamaica, I wrote of Jamaica as someone looking in – someone discovering it so that I would not take anything for granted. (Daves, 2007: 52)

Whether in his homeland, Jamaica, or in the US, where he currently resides, Daves's approach does not change. He maintains that the writer needs to be metaphorically exiled from his or her homeland, that is, he or she needs to feel close and at the same time apart from his or her homeland in order to make art.

As Jamaican writer Olive Senior states so beautifully, for the writer, home is not "where the heart is; it is the place where the heart is not" (Senior, 2007: 160). For Senior, the artist's exploration of home, that place which gives impetus to art, translates into exploring the areas unknown to him or her:

> Wandering in that unknown terrain in order to acquire the necessary perspective is the writer's mandate or duty. To do so, the writer has to reject complacency, conformity, comfort or the template, separate him or herself from the known, in psychological terms, and find her way back home. And the thread that leads one back home becomes the writing itself which is inexhaustible, like Anansi's magic thread. (ibid.)

Senior also believes in the need to distance herself from the known as a condition for truly writing about one's homeland and finding a way back home. Home is signalled by Anansi, the traditional African folk-tale character who, according to Senior, owns all stories and is "the trickster and creative genius who organizes chaos in order to

generate change" (ibid., 162).[65] Thus, stories do not exist in isolation but are part of a "thread in a huge family web that weaves back and forth through history, through time, through space […] [and] it is the writer's duty to follow these threads wherever they lead" (ibid.,160). Senior therefore believes that for writers to explore their homeland, they need to follow the threads woven by Anansi that may lead them to unknown areas.

Similarly, Lovelace also considers tackling what is unknown as the way to represent one's society. He argues that for the novelist, the only honest way to portray reality is by taking up the challenge to shorten the distance between the opposing sides, between self and what is perceived as 'Other':

> As a novelist, I know that the only way the novelist can know the character he [/she] creates is by putting himself [herself] in that person's place and that anything we say about the other is what we are really saying of ourselves, because we have no way of knowing the heart of the other except through searching our own heart. (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 231)

In the case of Lovelace, the necessary distance from that which is known is experienced within his homeland. His exile, unlike Senior's and Daves's, has not been so much physical as metaphorical. He found the distance necessary for detachment at the heart of the creative process at home. Lovelace's metaphorical exile is clearly articulated in his writings, in which his homeland is explored with the distance necessary to offer a fresh perspective. Lovelace can be identified with Said's definition of the exilic intellectual who confronts orthodoxy and dogma and offers alternative courses of action that question the common-sensical ones.[66] Lovelace's

[65] Anansi can generally be described as a "trickster spider, a traditional African folk-tale character, who overcomes others by cunning rather than physical strength. Although he can be greedy, selfish and reckless, he is often admirably clever" (Winer, 2009: 19)
[66] See section 1.4.1. for an explanation of the term 'exilic intellectual'.

writings highlight silenced or undermined voices which have been forgotten or misrepresented.

In his essay "From the I-Lands" Lovelace argues that at some point in his life he felt and saw himself as an outsider and this prepared him for looking closely and addressing his environment. One example of such estrangement took place very early in his life when at the age of three he went to live with his maternal grandparents in the neighbouring island of Tobago:

> Tobago is very different from Trinidad in terms of population. It is more African, black. Trinidad is more mixed. As a child I did not feel Tobagonian. I was something of an outsider there. Trinidad was bigger, grander; I claimed my Trinidadian paternity. When years later I returned to Trinidad, talking with the accent of a Tobagonian, the first thing an arrogant little Trinidadian boy said to me was, "Hey, Baje," calling me a Barbadian. I realised that if I was a stranger in Tobago, this place, Trinidad, was not as fully mine as I had thought; I was a stranger here also. (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 2)

Lovelace experienced feeling like an outsider both in Tobago and on his return to Trinidad. He argues that his reception on return, was also crucial for him to gain the necessary distance to make art. The writer believes that being physically exiled from Trinidad, even though only in the nearby island of Tobago, prepared him for offering his vision of the New World.

Another instance of detachment would take place later in his life when he worked for more than ten years as a forest ranger and agricultural assistant in rural parts of the country. In this case, he took distance from the urban space, which he believes allowed him to look at the ordinary people afresh. His direct involvement with what he calls 'the ordinary man' would become one of the avenues that granted him the necessary distance to analyse his homeland from a first hand and an exilic perspective

simultaneously. All in all, aside from brief periods of time spent in the US either studying or lecturing, Lovelace has been able to find the detachment necessary for creation within the nation, a fact which distinguishes him from the majority of West Indian writers.

3.5.2. Lovelace's *Anomalous* Condition

> Writers left with work in briefcases […] We are exiled into silences. (Lovelace, *Earl Lovelace manuscripts:* n.d.)

As the case of Earl Lovelace serves to exemplify, building a writing career in the region has been complicated by many circumstances. Apart from the aforementioned disconnection between being an artist and staying in the region, it has been argued that one of the things which most complicates staying is the lack of public support. The different governments of the region have failed to see the use of promoting the arts as a crucial part of the overall development of the region. Thus, full-time creative employment has been virtually impossible for West Indian artists.

Lovelace recognises that the artist has been and still is an anomaly in the Caribbean (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013). One of the main reasons that led Lovelace to assert that in the region the writer is an anomaly is the lack of institutional support. In an acceptance speech delivered on the occasion of being awarded an honorary degree at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine, and which was later published under the title "Requiring of the World", Lovelace's insight on the circumstances at the time is enlightening:

> For the colonial West Indies, the BBC provided an outlet for our writing. What do we have in independent West Indies? For the work we have to do, we need our artists, the young ones especially, writers and painters and filmmakers and theatre people. It is quite short-sighted and unfortunate that a region that routinely honours its creative artists on occasions like this has not been able to find a permanent space for a single one of its writers who even they have identified as distinguished; and that a country with the abundance of resources of this one does not offer a single literary or any other artistic prize or any other form of support for its young artists. (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 232)

Lovelace regrets the lack of support particularly as it pertains to the new generations of artists who have not been allotted a place in postcolonial Trinidad and Tobago. He underscores the irony that no independent postcolonial West Indian government supports or has ever supported its writers, though even the public British media did during the colonial era.[67] Lovelace resents the fact that circumstances for West Indian writers have not significantly improved, and argues that "[w]e have not institutionalised our presence in such a way as to make it beneficial or possible for people to live here" and asserts that "the university has not really made a place for writers […] [and] the society has not made a place generally for writers" (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013). He acknowledges that to reverse the circumstances of the region is not an easy task and for such a stagnated situation to really change, many factors would have to be taken into account.

Kate Quinn argues that the rise to power of the first Prime Minister of independent Trinidad and Tobago, himself a distinguished man of letters, was first seen as a promising sign in the nation's cultural circles. However, it soon became clear that Eric William's administration would not bring the necessary provisions for cultural

[67] Lovelace might be referring here to the BBC radio program Caribbean Voices, which under the editorship of Henry Swanzy stimulated literary production in the West Indies in the 1940s and 1950s (Tiffin, 2001: 61). To this aspect we should add the fact that, as previously argued, British, American and Canadian governments can be said to currently support Caribbean writers based in their respective geographical confines.

development to accompany economic development in the construction of the new nation (Quinn, 2008: 23). The promotion and dissemination of the arts at a national scale did not rank very high in terms of the government's priorities and the initial favourable impression among West Indian writers and artists soon gave way to disillusionment. This is clearly articulated in Lovelace's novel *Salt*, in which Ethelbert B. Tannis, a party member and Williams's supporter – who will fall out of grace with the leaders of the party once he criticises the paralysis of the government – resents the Prime Minister's unfulfilled promises, particularly as regards the promotion of the arts in the region:

> You didn't read the speeches he make in '55? You didn't read the books he write? You didn't hear his lectures? You didn't hear him thumping his chest throughout the Caribbean? Greek city states! Athens of the Caribbean! Where is Athens now? Not a good library in the blasted island. (Lovelace, 1996: 191-2)

After making speeches where he proudly described Trinidad as the Athens of the Caribbean (Palmer, 2008: 255), once in power Williams was unable to fulfil his promises. The arts community was soon made to realise that the promotion of arts did not rank high in Eric Williams's government.[68] The first government of independent Trinidad failed indeed to implement the measures necessary to improve the state of the arts in the region. In fact, the country still feels the effects of such a failure because, as Kate Quinn argues, the "roots of contemporary shortcomings in cultural provision may at least partially be traced to the style of cultural policy-making that evolved under the Williams administration" (Quinn, 2008: 24).

[68] The novel not only points at the cultural sphere, but it also criticises the absence of land reforms, an issue that will be brought in section 3.4.3.2.

Apart from the lack of institutional support, Lovelace has argued that he felt he was building his career in a place where there had never been any artists before. In the previous section the fact that there was a tradition of West Indian writers on which to build was pinpointed as playing a significant role in the improvement of conditions for subsequent generations. It was established that West Indian writers have had a great literary foundation on which to build. However, Lovelace asserts that there exists virtually no tradition of writers staying in the region and argues that "[t]he artist at home has had to make himself in a place out of no tradition" (Lovelace, *Earl Lovelace manuscripts:* n.d.). Lovelace already had a literary tradition to build on, but one which consisted solely of diasporic writers.

Lovelace also acknowledges that his decision to stay has not been exempt of difficulties. Throughout his career and even as an established writer, Lovelace could not make a living from his creative work and had to resort to maintaining a side job next to the creative activity. As previously explained, he first worked as a civil servant at the Agricultural division for ten years, then worked as a writer and sub-editor at a Port of Spain daily, the *Trinidad and Tobago Express*, and as a lecturer at the University of the West Indies and visiting lecturer at various US universities. Lovelace has expressed his disappointment for having had to resort to all these side jobs and not being able to write full-time in addition to his frustration at the lack of understanding in the Caribbean of the need to facilitate and support the writers of the region.

Prime Minister Eric Williams, in large part responsible for the disheartening situation faced by writers in the region, recognised the fact that island-based writers "[had] to be *content* with the status of part-time writers and lobbyists" (qtd. in Quinn, 2008: 26; my italics). Lovelace, an example of the necessary part-time position for island-based

writers, has expressed a different opinion. He explains that when he was at the pinnacle of his career he lived in a state of anxiety, despite being acclaimed both at home and abroad. He had already published his third and fourth novels – *The Dragon Can't Dance* and *The Wine of Astonishment* – a book of plays, and was working on his fifth novel, yet he explains that "[l]iving in the country I was a romantic, the blurb on a book jacket says Lovelace has lived in Trinidad in a remote village contentedly with his wife and children. I wasn't *content*" (Lovelace, *Earl Lovelace manuscripts:* n.d.; my italics). Lovelace recognises that the anxiety of not being able to live off his creative work had a negative impact on his writing and even his gardening. He recalls that "I planted, I remember Efebos wife gave me some soya beans to plant and I planted a set, they didn't grow. And I planted another set, they didn't grow. I planted all and not a single one grew" (ibid.). Lovelace's anxiety, provoked by circumstances in which he felt he could not continue creating and at the same time make ends meet, had an unproductive effect on all spheres of his life.

In his works Lovelace portrays the frustration experienced by himself and writers in the region in general who, regardless of their notoriety or talent, cannot make a living from their creative activity. Such writers, who, like him have had to resort to maintaining a side job abound in his works. For example, in *Salt* Shabine Villaroel, the leading poet of the island, is described as someone who has to work as a reporter in order to make a living and who, similarly to Lovelace, "was angry with the country for the neglect that had forced him to do reporting to help out with his own living" (Lovelace, 1996: 79).

3.5.3. *Do, Die or Run Away*

Although when Lovelace started his writing career – given it was by then the mid-twentieth Century – it was no longer necessary "to get out" (Lamming, 1960: 41)[69], rejecting exile was – and still is – an unusual option. In fact, as Elleke Boehmer explains, the benefits for migrant or diasporic writers are many; by migrating, diasporic writers are able "to secure for themselves a different, more comfortable location in the wider neo-colonial world" (Boehmer, 1995: 238). The more comfortable location – North America or Great Britain – involves, unlike the Caribbean, being able to turn creative writing into a full-time job, and being surrounded by an infrastructure that supports and values the creative arts.

The unusual nature of Lovelace's route in terms of location is confirmed by fellow Trinidadian writer Merle Hodge who does not seem to understand how he has managed to pursue a writing career in Trinidad. Hodge argues that he is an exception because "I don't know of anybody apart from Earl Lovelace – and I am not sure how he does it –who makes a living out of writing" (Hodge, 2013).[70] Lovelace has broken the norm – which has in fact existed right from the very beginning – that establishes that one cannot make a living out of writing in the Caribbean. For Lovelace, the fact that it has become normative for Caribbean writers to live and write from abroad is a key aspect of regional literature that needs to be addressed. Lovelace considers that it is shameful that [w]e've grown up seeing our writers being taken care of elsewhere" (qtd. in Sankar 1988: 43).

[69] "That is the phrase which we must remember in considering this question of why the writers are living in England. They simply wanted *to get out* of the place they were born" (Lamming, 1960: 41).

[70] Although Hodge is also a writer who has stayed in the region, as I have previously explained, she argues that writing is not and has never been in the centre of her life –which distinguishes her from Lovelace.

In an essay entitled "Why I Chose the *Express*" written in 1967, Lovelace argues that he chose to write for the *Trinidad and Tobago Express* newspaper because of its role in the development of the country. As the first locally owned newspaper, Lovelace believed that this press could contribute to the building of a new country in the context of independence, by facilitating the task of "solv[ing] our own problems and provid[ing] for our own welfare [because] [n]o one else has the ability or the willingness to do it for us" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 61). He further argues that in a Trinidad which had recently achieved independence, he saw three options: "do, die or run away" (ibid.). First of all, although ironically described as a morbid attraction, death is dismissed. Running away is also rejected though Lovelace recognises that by running away "one's physical survival can often be ensured by it" (ibid.). Ultimately, Lovelace feels that he has a responsibility to participate in the collective task of creating a new future for the country, which therefore leaves him with the option of 'doing'. He chooses to do and not to run away, but he is nonetheless aware that his physical survival as an artist is complicated as a result of his staying.

Like Lovelace, Walcott has also discussed in his oeuvre the issue of staying, as a writer, in the region. Although a St. Lucian by birth, Walcott was for a long time based in Trinidad, where, as previously explained, he was deeply engaged with the development of theatre. Walcott has been one of the few writers to live in the region for a long time, and now divides his time between Saint Lucia and the United States.[71] He has criticised the traditional vision of the Caribbean as a place where one can go on vacation or have a temporary residence but not as a place where one can live permanently. He has argued that "[s]o many people say they 'love the Caribbean,'

[71] Derek Walcott, together with other West Indian writers such as Olive Senior or Lorna Goodison complicate the distinction between writers who have stayed and those who have left. These three writers exemplify the fact that, according to Donnell, many writers have "dual (at least) residency" (Donnell, 2006: 86).

meaning that someday they plan to return for a visit but could never live there, the usual benign insult of the traveller, the tourist" (Walcott, 1993: 20). However, Walcott has also claimed that staying in the region has not been without its difficulties. Some of these are described in his poem "Schooner Flight":

> If loving these islands must be my load,
> out of corruption my soul takes wings.
> But they had started to poison my soul
> with their big house, big car, big-time bohbohl,
> coolie, nigger, Syrian, and French Creole,
> so I leave it for them and their carnival—
> I taking a sea bath, I gone down the road.
> (Walcott, 1977: 4)

The persona in the poem feels overwhelmed by the political situation in the region, particularly in Trinidad. It is clear that the setting of the poem is Trinidad, not only because of the references to the different ethnic groups (coolie, nigger, Syrian and French Creole) which describe Trinidad's particular ethnic composition; but also because of the reference in a previous line to Wrightson road, one of the main roads in Port of Spain. The persona in the poem expresses the need to leave the island out of a deep feeling of frustration in what can be very clearly identified as Trinidadian English Creole. The line "I gone down the road," in Trinidadian English Creole, is an example of the level of ambiguity which may be opaque to non-Creole speakers, that is, the line's full range of meaning is only available for those readers with a knowledge of Creole.[72]

Coincidentally, Earl Lovelace makes reference to the exact same sentence "I gone down the road" whilst explaining his use of the two linguistic codes present in the island – Trinidadian English Creole and Trinidadian Standard English. For Lovelace,

[72] This aspect will be dealt with in the section 4.2.3.

the complex linguistic situation of the region allows the West Indian writer to play with the versatility of language:

> Sometimes it is two different things […] It requires more versatility: 'I gone down the road' [Trinidadian English Creole] versus 'I went down the road' [Trinidadian Standard English]. It has a meaning, we gone and we ain't sure where we going and you can't be sure when we are coming back. (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013)[73]

Lovelace argues that in Trinidadian English Creole the sentence takes on a different meaning. Thus, Walcott's 'I gone down the road' should be read with the uncertainty that surrounds the sentence. The anxiety experienced in Trinidad prompts the persona to leave without him knowing where he is going or when he will be back. In this sense, Walcott's choice could probably be related to that of the persona. As previously stated, he lives in the region intermittently, and may therefore have experienced the same anxiety which made the persona leave. This, however, is not incompatible with having a sense of responsibility toward the place which, he argues, makes him go back in the end:

> It may be a very blatant Methodist morality that I have, but it's very difficult for me to justify desertion in terms of the people that I'm from. I think I would suffer a great deal from that kind of escape. So even if I get very bitter and despondent about the politics, the changes in the Caribbean – the fact that there has been a profound political betrayal of a people – I always go back. I try to return not with a sense of desolation, but with a sense of participating in something collective. (Walcott, 1996: 54-5)

Walcott feels a sense of responsibility which does not allow him to desert his land. Although going back is not easy and at times the feeling of disenchantment is almost

[73] Uncertain of how Lovelace would have transcribed the Creole and since, as Hodge previously argued, there is no institutionalised spelling system for Creole, I have included the languages in brackets, according to the way he pronounced the two sentences in the interview.

unbearable as regards the historical evolution and the state of the region, ultimately he always returns. As is the case with Lovelace, Walcott believes that he has a responsibility as a writer of the region, and acknowledges that his staying and being part of a collective project has been done consciously.

It must be noted that although he has remained resolute in defending his decision to stay, he explains that "being here has not been all that wonderful […] it has both been wonderful and not all that wonderful. But remaining is what I wanted to do, it is what I want to do and it is what I have done" (Lovelace, 2010). In fact, Lovelace's view of his homeland, which is always critical and incisive, has evolved over time. Gordon Rohlehr argues that in the 60s Lovelace's vision of Trinidadian society was hardly any different from that of Naipaul and Walcott. In an essay entitled "Carnival 1969", Lovelace asserted that "Trinidadians were a 'society of nihilists, an anarchist society' that was unable to accommodate 'people of sensibility'; a society that was 'tolerant of mediocrity; one in which ideas, virtue and dignity counted for nothing" (qtd. in Rohlehr, 2008: 12). However, the despair shared with Walcott and Naipaul coexists and eventually gives way to Lovelace's conviction of the need to do and not running away, as can be seen in the character of Walter Castle, the protagonist of his first novel *While Gods Are Falling* (1965). Gordon Rohlehr argues that Castle first chooses escape as the best option out of "do, die or run away". Burnt out from his life in the city, Castle is angry, frustrated and hopeless, and feels the urgent need to escape. He tries to convince his wife to escape from the city because he feels that his existence in Port of Spain is pointless: "When a man doesn't have something to live by, he might as well be dead […] When a man's just moving, just drifting anywhere he's pushed, he's nothing" (Lovelace, 1965: 28). However, as he begins to reflect Lovelace's life choices, he opts for doing instead and his frustration and despair give way to his

involvement in the community. This passage into doing is triggered when some boys from the community are arrested for murder. The incident overwhelmed him with a sense of responsibility and he even convinced other members of the community to get involved. Castle reflects on his evolution in the following way:

> At the outset I had no idea that I would either be in this, or want to be in this, but I went to see one of the boys in the prison, and I thought that I was in some way responsible for what happened, not to the boy alone, but to all the boys in this area, because I have never done anything to assist them. (Lovelace, 1965: 226)

Castle regretted the indifference with which he had lived in the community and goes from “I hate this stinkin’ world and these rotten people” (ibid., 31) to affirming that “this land is mine and the people here are my people, and the things that are done in this city – I am also responsible for them. I am one with the land and I am one with the people” (ibid., 135).

Similarly, the protagonist of *Salt*, Alford George, is initially determined to escape from his home village, Cunaripo. After having studied at the Teachers’ Training College, George returns to Cunaripo but cannot help seeing

> himself bound for *the world* and to look at his stay in Cunaripo as temporary, as a state from which he would graduate in the same effortless way in which one grew old, as a stop, a halt […] And he waited, preparing for his departure into that other world, the world. (Lovelace, 1996: 34)

George cannot come to terms with the idea of his island as a home. For him, the world is elsewhere and his classes, during what he sees as a temporary stay, are aimed at helping “at least a few children escape the humbling terror of the island” (ibid., 55). George begins to wonder whether, after all, “the world was right here” (ibid., 34-5)

and eventually, “it came to him afresh that he had to work to make this island a place where people didn’t have to leave to find the world” (ibid., 90). He decides to make the island his home and thus rejects the idea that it is not important enough a place for him to make his life there. He feels a responsibility towards the place, gets heavily involved in the improvement of the country and ends up taking part in a very metaphorical march that underlines the possibility of creating a new beginning. Thus, George and Castle – as the writer himself – resist the pull to leave their homeland, the strong pull to escape, and decide to remain and to do.

In conclusion, in Lovelace’s writings the island is no longer that place which is incapable of containing life. His texts offer an alternative to the representation of the island as a non-place that cannot be a world for its inhabitants. Going against the image of the Caribbean as a place where life cannot exist, Lovelace’s writings offer a vision of the Caribbean as somewhere where people can also build a life. In this light, Lovelace’s works are an important intervention in Caribbean literary culture and discourse because, as Rahim argues, he has made the island both “the real and imaginative centre from which he sees and speaks to the world” (Rahim, 2008: 43).

3.5.3.1. The Value of Staying

> The day is not yet done (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013)

As has been argued, the reality is that being an artist in the Caribbean is still not valued or encouraged and supported and, as a result, building a writing career is still easier abroad. Proof of this is the fact that younger generations of writers find themselves following the same path taken by their predecessors. If we focus on the

case of Trinidad, Trinidadian-based writer Kevin Baldeosingh asserts that almost every single one of the Trinidadian-born novelists of the younger generation (those under forty-five) live in metropolitan countries, just as West Indian writers did before independence (Baldeosingh, 2007: 48). Baldeosingh argues that, with few exceptions, Trinidadian writers have settled either in Great Britain or North-America just like in the boom years of the 1950s.

As a Grenadian writer based in the US, Merle Collins's stance is relevant to the discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of one's location. Collins has argued that one of the drawbacks for a writer writing from abroad is having to write from memory. Collins identifies what she calls a secondary orality, which is to say the orality practised by Caribbean writers living outside of the region. These writers, according to Collins, are

> writing from an attachment to and from the memory of cultures which are daily being transformed in linguistic and other terms; writing, too, out of the dynamism of linguistic and other changes overseas in Caribbean communities. (Collins, 1998: 37)

Collins does not focus on the many advantages enjoyed by writers in the diaspora. Instead, as a diasporic writer, she examines the downside of writing from abroad and acknowledges that not being in the region makes her less aware of its evolution. However, she argues that she is not "more or less Caribbean" and concludes that although language is shaped according to one's location and the influences of the surrounding culture, the voice which continues to shape and represent home for her is Caribbean (ibid.). Living abroad has provided her with a different perspective which is neither more or less Caribbean but simply different. However, it must be noted that most West Indian authors are writing from the perspective of people who do not live

in the region and this is the very condition which is foregrounded in the postcolonial literary field.

Bearing this in mind, it is argued that the decision to stay and write from the West Indies needs to be re-assessed. First of all, it must be acknowledged that writers such as Lovelace, who have consciously decided to stay, are doubly marginalised. On the one hand, by remaining they have been overlooked by the postcolonial literary world which focuses mainly on the literature produced in metropolitan spaces; and on the other, since the majority of governments in the region have not been able to see the use in promoting the arts, they have also been ignored by their respective governments. Secondly, this double marginalisation has hindered the growth of the number of writers in the region and, as a consequence, the distinct perspective offered by writers working from the region has been less present in West Indian literature. Lovelace himself argues that "being here [Trinidad] is of great value" and he is hopeful that "it will reveal itself as we proceed" (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013). Lovelace's insight as one of the few island-based writers, is valuable because it is not that of someone writing from memory, but from a current experience of life in the region. His texts offer a vision which, though not more valuable, can certainly be seen as unique and less mediated due to the double marginalisation island-based writers endure.

Lovelace also believes that staying has granted him an advantageous position from which to write about Trinidadian and West Indian society:

> My advantage over writers who have migrated is that I am more acutely aware of what is taking place here now. This enables me to address myself to themes in this society with much more confidence and depth; to present a Caribbean perspective on the world; advance our language and sensibility, undermining

> and destroying those negative images of self imposed upon us by a view of history, which has hitherto presented us as objects. (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: vi)

He has been able to see Trinidadian society unfold and believes that he has not only been an observer but also a participant. Both his writings and his direct involvement in many of the political and cultural issues of the region previously discussed are evidence of his social engagement. Lovelace is acutely aware of the tremendous value of being in direct contact with the region. He has argued that the Caribbean "was not a place you knew really, it was a place you were getting to know, and I think it still is" (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013). His decision to stay is connected to the urgent task of contributing to the creation of a new society in which West Indians are able to see themselves afresh. As an author who started writing in the milieu of independence, Lovelace believed that the region needed, and still needs, to get to know its different histories in order for West Indians to understand each other and be able to free themselves. He insists that this is one of the urgent tasks artists of the region need to face, and argues that it is precisely those writers who live in the region that are best able to promote change because of their direct continuous contact with the reality of the nation.

3.5.4. Making up for the Lack of Institutional Support

Due to the lack of institutional support in the promotion and dissemination of culture, Quinn argues that the responsibility of creating artistic spaces fell on individuals, and this was made possible, to some extent, by external agencies and private corporations (Quinn, 2008: 24-6).

In the case of Lovelace, the private corporation British Petroleum can be said to have contributed, in part, to his writing career. Winning the Independence Literary Award sponsored by BP was instrumental, because thanks to the award, Lovelace was able to publish his first novel *While Gods Are Falling* in 1965. Interestingly, and in order to prove the difficulties in being published from the West Indies, Lovelace explains that he won the BP award with a reworked manuscript that had been previously rejected by foreign publishers (qtd. in Sankar, 1998: 41).

The space provided by such an award certainly influenced Lovelace's career. Had this award not existed, Lovelace might have succumbed to the temptation of either leaving his writing career behind or leaving the region altogether. Lovelace might have ended up like the character John De John, a novelist from Matura who appears in his novels *Salt* and *Is Just a Movie*. De John is a West Indian writer who, like Lovelace, has had to cope with the inexistent governmental and societal support but who, unlike Lovelace, has not been able to publish his fiction. In *Salt* John De John is portrayed as an artist "in need of recognition, not to mention support […] who had been writing novels and poems for thirty-five years and wanted a publishing company formed so that he and other writers would get their fiction out into the world" (Lovelace, 1996: 83). De John is also included in a map of Trinidad and Tobago put together by the teacher turned politician Alford George, who is campaigning for a seat in Parliament. He is made visible in this map which consists of overlooked and ignored cultural actors in the island. The map includes "the mango tree in Matura under which the novelist John De John went each day to sit and write out in longhand his *thirty-seven unpublished books*" (ibid., 123; my italics). The figure of De John could be interpreted as symbolic of the fate many writers have had to face in the region, due to its unfavourable circumstances.

Fellow Trinidadian and non-diasporic writer Jennifer Rahim warns of the difficulties of starting a writing career from the Caribbean, particularly as regards publishing. Rahim argues that writers in the Caribbean are tempted to capitulate because of the frustration of "having a manuscript that you have worked on and reworked and reworked and it's still there waiting or begging for a publisher to take it up" (Rahim, 2003: 59). In fact, Lovelace seems to be suggesting that De John's fate could have been his – since he also lived in Matura for a long time (most of the 1970s and early 1980s) – had he not won the BP Independence Award. Moreover, the similarities between De John and Lovelace are further highlighted in his latest novel *Is Just a Movie*. John De John is described again as "the novelist from Matura with thirty-five unpublished novels" (Lovelace, 2011: 191), but he is also described as the novelist whose "current novel […] he had been finishing forever" (ibid.). Apart from reemphasising the difficulties of publishing from the Caribbean, both the fictionalised and real novelist have taken a very long time to finish their last novel. The exact number of years that it took De John to write his latest novel is not specified but in the case of Lovelace, fifteen years elapsed between *Salt* (1996) and his latest novel, *Is Just a Movie* (2011). This shared literary infertility can also be analysed as a factor related to the difficulties of trying to live off one's pen in Trinidad.

If British Petroleum was partly responsible for providing Lovelace with the opportunity to build a career in the Caribbean, in the case of Derek Walcott, it was the Rockefeller Foundation that supported his artistic involvement in the region. Walcott, apart from developing his writing career within the region, was also the driving force behind the Trinidad Theatre Workshop which he co-founded in 1959 and directed until 1976 (Walcott, 1996: xiv). The void in the dramatic scene, due to the lack of institutional support in Trinidad, was temporarily filled by a grant received from 1966

to 1968 from the Rockefeller Foundation. A grant that allowed Walcott to continue the task of developing and promoting theatre in the island.

3.6. Lovelace's Different Route

3.6.1. A West Indian Intellectual?

Unlike the majority of West Indian intellectuals, Earl Lovelace has taken a route which allows him to be able to relate to the ordinary people in the Caribbean and portray the nation in a way he would not have been able to had he followed the usual path. This is why Lovelace has a hard time identifying himself with the figure of the West Indian intellectual. When asked if he considers himself a West Indian intellectual, he answers saying the following:

> Well I would imagine so. I would think that yes but then again… I would consider myself a West Indian intellectual in the sense that I have been thinking from ever since about the concerns of the Caribbean. The West Indian intellectual, however, is another kind of person. (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013)

Although dubious at the beginning, doubts soon give way to an outright refusal to be identified with the figure of the West Indian intellectual. Refusing this label – as he had refused the label of activist – also points to his conviction of having followed a different route. It is due to his unorthodox journey that he does not identify himself with any of the terms traditionally used to define creative individuals. In the case of the term 'intellectual', he refuses to identify himself with a certain type of West Indian intellectual which he equates with an elitist class detached from their societies and consequently unable to transform them. Instead, Lovelace poses Guyanese scholar

Walter Rodney as one of the most original West Indian intellectuals. Already mentioned in the section dealing with the specificities of the postcolonial intellectual, Rodney, in Lovelace's opinion, could be interpreted as someone who is able to adapt his discourse to the Caribbean reality. In *Walter Rodney's Intellectual and Political Thought* (1998), Rupert Lewis argues that Rodney contributed to the development of an intellectual culture linked to the self-emancipation of the working people (Lewis, 1998: xiv). According to Lewis, Rodney made the political choice to put himself at the service of his people from both an academic and political standpoint:

> Rodney's short adult life was a challenge to the apparently normal trajectory of secure tenure as a university professor with an international reputation as a historian and development theorist and with numerous options for good positions in North America or Europe. (ibid., 11)

A renowned historian and political activist, Guyanese born Walter Rodney studied at The University College of the West Indies,[74] Jamaica, and contributed to the black consciousness social movement in the 60s in the Caribbean. George Lamming argues that unlike the majority of West Indian intellectuals, Rodney "achieved in a remarkable way that fusion of the scholar, activist, ordinary man of the people" (Lamming, 2002: 193). Lewis explains that Rodney wrote as a Marxist historian in the tradition of C.L.R. James. In fact, James regarded him as one of his intellectual sons:

> Walter [Rodney] grew up in an atmosphere where for the first time a generation of West Indian intellectuals was able not only to study the revolutionary and creative works that had been created in Europe but also to benefit from and be master of what had been done in the same tradition in direct reference to the Caribbean…He was able to look upon the revolutionary

[74] The University College of the West Indies was established in 1948 as a college part of the University of London, and in 1962 it achieved University status (Lewis, 1998: 13). The institution went from being the University College of the West Indies, a college in relation to an English university, to being the University of the West Indies, a regional university with its three campuses: Mona (Jamaica), St. Augustine (Trinidad and Tobago), and Cave Hill (Barbados).

> ideas, perspectives and analysis of the Caribbean as something natural, normal, fixed, written and beyond dispute. (qtd. in Lewis, 1998: xvi)

As C.L.R. James claims, Rodney critiqued the application of colonial and middle class frameworks of analysis to Caribbean history and political evolution. Lewis asserts that Rodney's Jamesian model of political thought, which bears an important connection to Lovelace's route, revealed his confidence in the capacity of the ordinary people and manifested itself in different ways (ibid., 81). Thus, Rodney can be said to have taken a different direction to the majority of West Indian intellectuals. He felt no distance between himself and the ordinary people and he was at the service of his people. George Lamming has also foregrounded Rodney's exceptional positioning and his ability to 'ground' with people. Rodney rejected the kind of elitism and alienation typical of West Indian intellectuals and, according to Lamming, "always moved and behaved as a man who had come from the class of the majority. In the way you could spot others as being what you might call middle class – he was not" (Lamming, 2002: 193).

3.6.2. Not a Scholarship Winner

Lovelace feels close to an intellectual such as Rodney, but feels distanced from traditional West Indian intellectuals. One of the things that makes him feel this detachment is his education. An important fact that informs Lovelace's refusal to identify as a West Indian intellectual is that most often these have been scholarship winners. Even though, at first sight, this might seem quite unimportant, not having won a scholarship marked Lovelace's trajectory enormously:

> I think that the biggest thing for me is that most of the people have followed a certain path, which is to say educated in the West Indies' idea of its elitism, a kind of elitism, and continued along wherever they went to school and then deciding on how the Caribbean should be. (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013)

Not having been a scholarship winner and consequently not having attended a prestigious secondary school has differentiated him. Quinn argues that Lovelace belongs to the stream of post-independence anti-elitist engaged intellectuals – like Rodney – who attempted to disassociate themselves from the classical 'scholarship boys' (Quinn, 2007: 22). The term 'scholarship boys' refers to those West Indians whom thanks to the colonial education and scholarship system studied in prestigious secondary schools in the region and then left the West Indies for the metropolis. After having been trained at the headquarters of colonialism and imperialism, these 'scholarship boys' would later become the local intelligentsia. Lovelace is critical of the way in which these island scholarship winners, who later became regional politicians, led their societies into nationhood. As Rohlehr argues, many of these members of the local intelligentsia "would have grown away from their communities, and had become too paralysed to transform the colonies they now governed into truly independent nation-states" (Rohlehr, 2008: 16). In fact, George Lamming argues that the failure of the West Indian Federation was in part due to the cultural displacement of its political leaders. He believes that Grantley Adams, Norman Manley and Eric Williams[75]

> were the brilliant products of an epistemological formation which was in profound discord with the concrete and novel realities which now challenged the imagination. They were the casualties of an inherited tutelage which was colonial in essence and thereby placed an overwhelming constraint on the concept of liberation. (Lamming, *The Sovereignty* 2004: 25)

[75] First Prime Ministers of Barbados (and the short lived West Indian Federation), Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago respectively.

The detachment Lamming identifies in the West Indian leaders of the time, which could be seen as the cause of what Rohlehr refers to as the post-colonial political paralysis, is clearly articulated in Lovelace's novels *The Wine of Astonishment*, *Salt* and *Is Just a Movie.* In *The Wine of Astonishment*, although set in colonial Trinidad, the character of Ivan Morton exemplifies the figure of the West Indian educated who feels alienated from his own community and who, when in charge of the community's social and political wellbeing, remains unmoved by the injustices that afflict his people. Morton comes from a large working class family who struggled to provide him with an education for him and who put all their hopes in him. Morton is not only his parents' hope but the hope of the whole village, and even though he does not succeed at winning a college exhibition he goes on to study at the Teacher's Training College in Port of Spain to become a teacher. Morton is seen as the one person in the community with the opportunity to "qualify himself and rise to take up the greater burden to lead his people out of the hands of Pharaoh" (Lovelace, 1982: 40). The community expects that his education will turn him into a Moses-like figure and he will, thus, contribute easing the plight of his people. After completing his studies, he starts teaching at the Bonasse Roman Catholic School and becomes the man the community turns to for advice and help in political matters. Coming from a Spiritual Baptist family, he had had to convert to Catholicism in order to have a career in teaching, because as the leader's wife and narrator of the novel, Eva, explains: "We have no Baptist school for him to teach in. We have no college to send him" (Lovelace, 1982: 42). In fact, not only did the congregation of the Spiritual Baptists have no school or college, but they hardly had a space where they could meet. Like many other African-based cultural elements, such as stickfighting or drumming, the

Spiritual Baptist faith was banned and made illegal until 1919.[76] This is why with the arrival of the first elections in which everyone above twenty-one years could vote, Bee, the leader of the Spiritual Baptist congregation of the village, supports and even campaigns for Ivan Norton. Bee believes that with him as a representative, the village will have a man in the Council to fight for their cause and change the law that criminalises Spiritual Baptists. For the Baptist leader, Morton, as a member of the community, is the best candidate for Bonasse: "This is the man! Born right here, a man of knowledge and understanding to represent the people" (Lovelace, 1982: 84). However years pass and the community grows tired of waiting for Ivan Morton to not only legalise their faith but also look after the wellbeing of his people. The community, through the voice of Eva as its mouthpiece, does not understand

> what preventing him from seeing that we is people who need a decent health office […] who want jobs for our children […] I trying to understand what make him turn out so, or if is a curse put on blackpeople that the very one we choose as leader should turn his back on us. (ibid., 133-4)

Eva first voices the community's inability to understand Morton's passivity towards his own people. However, as the narrator and collective voice of the village, she comes to realise that Morton turned away from his community "because he couldn't be black like one of us ordinary Bonasse people and be a man too, because the world wouldn't let him" (ibid., 134-5). Morton, once seen as the hope of the village, is now considered the product of the colonial education system, a system that has taught him to alienate himself from his culture and feel contempt towards his community. Education gave Morton a more acceptable self image, it taught him to internalise colonial ideology, and he was even made to believe that "[w]e can't change our

[76] The Spiritual Baptist faith was outlawed from 1917 to 1951 by the British Colonial Government on grounds of non-tolerable practices and its association with magic and sorcery (Thorpe, 1986: vii).

colour…but we can change our attitude. We can't be white, but we can act white" (ibid., 13).

The novel foregrounds the complex role education has played in the Caribbean, particularly as regards its alienating mission which created 'civilised' subjects who would later turn their backs on their communities. As a very disappointed Bee argues, Morton has received an education that has made him disregard his people and his culture and has even made him incapable of functioning within his own community. Bee recognises stupidness, contempt and impassivity as some of the outcomes of the colonial system of education, which forms the future leaders of the nation:

> Look at them! So civilize they forget where they come from. So civilize they looking at you as if you is nothing, as if your dreams and hopes and life is nothing […] That's what wrong with this generation of niggers who went to school. Get so blasted civilize they get stupid. Stupid! (ibid., 14)

Another example of the political paralysis characteristic of the foreign-trained local intelligentsia is found in *Salt*. Lovelace's fifth novel offers a critical view of the first government of independent Trinidad and Tobago. The figure of Eric Williams – although his name is never mentioned –, as the leader of the PNM (People's National Movement) and first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago from independence until his death (1962-1981), is analysed in the text. The first PM and his government serve to exemplify the 'scholarship boys'' inability to take the necessary action to create a new beginning. In the novel, the members of the local intelligentsia arrive in Cunaripo, the village where the story is set,

> to promise a new world and to present its candidates for the lections: doctors of medicine, of dentistry, of theology, of philosophy, winners of public speaking contests, attorneys at law, masters of debate, historians, archaeologists. Like a troupe of magicians, each one with a top hat, a black cape, a silver-topped

> cane, a briefcase, eyes shielded from the light by a pair of dark shades, and one ear wired with a hearing aid. (Lovelace, 1996: 34)

These members of the local intelligentsia come to present themselves as future political leaders already dressed and attired to both impress and set themselves apart from the rural community. The reference to Williams's attire is made clear by the allusion to his characteristic and always present dark shades and hearing aid.

Williams is also portrayed in Lovelace's latest novel, *Is Just a Movie,* as a mysterious, powerful and at the same time admirable figure. For Aunt Magenta, calypsonian King Kala's aunt, the might of the Prime Minister is such that he is even considered capable of invoking a storm. As such, when she sees a storm approaching, Aunt Magenta exclaims: "Don't tell me they get the PM vexed again" (Lovelace, 2011: 309). Moreover, Williams is further described as possessing an aura that combines the mysteriousness and local knowledge of a leader of a Creole African-based religion, and the awe and respect of a scholar educated at the core of the Empire. Williams is presented as a man "people say was an Obeah-man, Shango-man, Shouter Baptist leader and Oxford University doctor all rolled in one" (ibid., 84).[77]

Salt examines the government formed by this 'troupe of magicians', with Williams at its head, once they win the first elections of independent Trinidad and Tobago. One of the members of the rural community, Ethelbert B. Tannis, a Williams' supporter for more than twenty years, is critical of the evolution of Williams's government. Tannis explains that with the support of the population of Trinidad who marched alongside

[77] Lovelace recognises that although Williams was said to have been baptised as a Spiritual Baptist, he did not embrace nor affirm the African-derived religion openly. Instead, Williams became a practitioner of the religion "in a kind of subterranean way", that is, Lovelace regrets that Williams did not have the confidence to bring his embracing of the Spiritual Baptist faith out, and this way assert its validity (Lovelace, *Earl Lovelace Fiction Writer* 2003: 14).

the government, they managed to recover the land in Chaguaramas where the American military base was located. However, this daring and promising initiative, which seemed to foretell a future devoid of injustice, is interpreted as an action which only created false expectations:

> And what he [Eric Williams] do? What happen to the Base? That was the time to talk about a new land development and land settlement policy […] And is true, he say a few things. But then he end up giving slogans […] He end up saying Massa Day done without taking the action that would bring Blackpeople liberation. (Lovelace, 1996: 192)

As part of that national elite educated in prestigious secondary schools and later trained in one of the most reputable universities in the world (Oxford no less), Williams is criticised for not taking the steps required to create a new beginning for Trinidad and Tobago. Although Williams' independence rhetoric seemed to aim at a radical transformation of the nation, for Lovelace, the government failed to introduce the necessary measures to achieve such a transformation. In *Is Just a Movie,* the calypsonian King Kala also describes race and the unsettled accounts of history as factors which continue to play a primary role in post-independence society. The novel explains that, once the PNM had won the elections, "things didn't change, at least not quick enough for some people. Opportunity still had to do with the colour of your skin, with a history that try its best to make you shame for the brutality somebody else inflict on you" (Lovelace, 2011: 84).

Williams' independence rhetoric is also portrayed in *The Dragon Can't Dance* as powerful but ultimately deceitful. In the novel the character Fisheye, who is a

badjohn[78] and an integral part of the steel pan movement from Calvary Hill, is moved when he sees the thousands of people united in Woodford Square, a square in downtown Port of Spain, where the PNM and Williams, as its leader, held their meetings, and which was baptised the University of Woodford Square.[79] On witnessing the hopefulness with which people received all the promises of a new beginning for the nation, Fisheye associates the movement created by the PNM with that of the steel and wants to also “become part of it, this wonderful thing that was going to fight colonialism, was going to stand up for the people, was going to create jobs and make us a nation” (Lovelace, 1979: 66). However, all these hopes and dreams remain unfulfilled and Fisheye ends up feeling deceived because he can’t understand what people really gained when the PNM won the elections. He argues that people continued to be discriminated against, in terms of race, and foreign culture still set the standard in the nation: “white people were still in the banks and in the businesses along Frederick Street. The radio still spoke with a British voice” (ibid.). Thus, Tannis, King Kala and Fisheye all end up feeling disillusioned and deceived by the first government of independent Trinidad led by Eric Williams, a government which was made up of a local intelligentsia incapable of fulfilling their promises and creating a fresh start for the nation.

It is not strange that Lovelace refuses to identify with the traditional concept of the West Indian intellectual, namely with figures such as Eric Williams or the fictional Ivan Morton. Intellectuals who, as Gordon Rohlehr observes, “had absorbed foreign

[78] “A man willing to use violence and who like being known as a dangerous person; a ruffian” (Winer, 2009: 37).

[79] Williams stated that “Somebody once said that all that was needed for a university was a book and the branch of a tree; someone else went further and said that a university should be a university in overalls. With a band-stand, a microphone, a large audience and slacks and hot shirts, a tropical subject for discussion, the open air and a beautiful night, we have all the essentials of the university” (qtd. in Palmer, 8).

education only to become aliens in his home communities" (Rohlehr, 2008: 16). Instead, Lovelace feels privileged for not having been awarded a scholarship, and thus having taken a different path which did not distance him from the ordinary Caribbean people. In fact, Lovelace considers himself a self-educated person and does not believe "organised education has influenced him that much" (qtd. in Dance, 1984: 148).

It can be argued that the alternative route followed by Lovelace is somehow portrayed in his novel *Salt* through the character of Michael, Bango's nephew.[80] Against the generalised view which held winning a college exhibition as an opportunity for a better future life, Michael showed no interest in passing this examination. At fifteen, Michael

> had kept on going to school in order to play cricket and be with his friends doing school gardening, taking time out from these important exercises at the appointed day each year to sit the school-leaving examination and fail it with a calm that announced and emphasized that his future lay elsewhere, that he was Bango's nephew and the grandson of Pappy King Durity who up to the age of eighty-one was still going from district to district to dance bongo and to sign hymns at the occasion of a death and who, according to my mother, didn't care if Good Friday fall on Christmas Eve once he had a rum to drink and cuatro to play and a woman to caress. (Lovelace, 1996: 49-50)

For Michael, as well as for Lovelace, "[s]chool seemed to be school for an exam. Learning was something different. It never seemed to be that learning and school fit together" (qtd. in Sankar, 1998: 39). In the novel the narrator explains that Michael was afflicted by a (metaphorical hereditary) disease which did not allow him to see the value or importance in what he was being taught in school. As was the norm in Michael's family, he saw the value in the world that surrounded him, and in the folk

[80] What differentiates Lovelace's route from Michael's is the fact that while Michael had no interest in obtaining a college exhibition, Lovelace at first attempted – unsuccessfully – to win a college exhibition, and initially his two unsuccessful attempts were seen as failures and a cause of frustration.

traditions that had been passed from generation to generation. Therefore, not winning an exhibition was a conscious refusal of a type of education which aimed at saving and rescuing the few who could internalise the 'proper' knowledge that would redeem them from their 'darkness'. This darkness was indeed created by the colonial system in order to legitimise their control, and allowed colonisers to argue that they were bringing the light of their civilization to save their colonised subjects (Fanon, 1961: 169). As Lovelace argues, for the colonisers to take control of the colonised, "the colonizers had to establish as darkness the culture of the African and to do so they had to legislate darkness" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 3). In fact, as late as 1919 the Afro-Caribbean religions of the Shango and the Spiritual Baptists, also known as Shouters, were banned, as were certain dances and the beating of drums, and this until well into the twentieth century. As Lovelace explains, every single African institution was banned or made illegal or illegitimate (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 3).

Is Just a Movie presents another instance in which the devastating implications of winning a college exhibition are foregrounded. In the novel, Aunt Magenta believes that failing an examination and therefore not being the recipient of a college exhibition is cause for jubilation for any child in her hometown of Cascadu. She regrets seeing in the list of names of children who passed the examination the name of one of the children from Cascadu. Aunt Magenta feels sorry for Dorlene, the girl who has won the Common Entrance Examination – by then no longer called a College Exhibition examination. She realises that winning entrance to one of the prestigious high schools (St Joseph's Convent) will distance her from the reality of Cascadu. Thus, Aunt Magenta realizes that schooling "will take her away and keep on taking her away if she unlucky enough to pass another one, and she will go completely if there is another one after that" (Lovelace, 2011: 90). She feels sorry for her because "[s]he will not

know the bush teas and the songs and the dances. She will live on the edge of the world that is her world" (ibid., 189-90). Aunt Magenta realizes that schooling will not only distance Dorlene from her world but it will eventually detach her from her own reality and force her to feel she can only belong elsewhere.

Thus, Michael and Aunt Magenta represent resistance and the conscious refusal to be indoctrinated into a schooling system which defined indigenous cultural traditions, particularly African-derived cultural traditions or artforms as darkness, and which ultimately sought to alienate students from their own society.

Interestingly, *Salt* also offers a perspective from the opposite side of this alienating schooling system through the eyes of one of the very people who was partially responsible for the system of injustice that it perpetuated. Bringing the light of civilisation to those who lived in the darkness was the initial aim of Alford George, the protagonist of *Salt*, who before turning temporarily into politics, was the teacher of the College Exhibition class at Cunaripo Government School. After nineteen years as a teacher in this public school in rural Trinidad, and teaching his students what he was made to believe was worthwhile, he eventually realises the implications of preparing children not to live in the island, but to escape. He realises that he is "contributing to a system that gave all its rewards, put all its prestige towards training a few students for escape. Failure was not to escape. To fail to escape was defeat" (Lovelace, 1996: 76). When he became conscious of the exclusory and absurd nature of such a system, the objective of his classes changed radically. Alford George goes from emphasising all that is foreign as proper knowledge, to teaching them what would

> root them in their world. He introduces his class to literature by having his students tell and discuss Anancy stories. He made them sing and discuss the structure and consent of calypso. He got his footballers and cricketers to chart

> and calculate the angles of their passes and strokes. He discussed with them the circle, the globe, the ball, the leather, thread. He moved from geography into history into civics. He took them hiking past the rivers […] He got villagers to come and talk to them about medicinal herbs and plants […] He invited a Shango leader to come in and talk to them about the Orishas. He had a pundit come and talk to them about Hinduism and an Imam explain Islam. (ibid., 88-9)

George turns his emphasis towards exposing his students to the type of knowledge that connects them to their world. In particular, he focuses on those undervalued native artforms which were at the heart of the darkness they were supposed to be weaned from in school, but which were, as Lovelace recognises, "the darkness into which we had our light" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 223). Those artforms which up until then were not taught in the school, come to constitute the basis of George's classes. Consequently, the folk traditions created in Trinidad and the different cultural elements which were transported from the respective ancestral homelands and now form part of Trinidad and Tobago's multicultural society gained entrance to George's remodelled classes.

3.6.3. The Grassroots Connection

As previously stated by C.L.R. James and George Lamming,[81] the West Indian writer had already started to include those at the base of society as the subjects of their writings. However, in the case of Earl Lovelace his connection to grassroots culture and ordinary people stands out in that it is unusual. Lovelace explains that the fact that previous writers such as George Lamming, Sam Selvon, Vic Reid, Edward Kamau Brathwaite and C.L.R. James had already started to include the ordinary people in

[81] See sections 1.4.2. and 2.1.3.1.

their writings made him feel more secure, but he argues that they did not come "with as much direct experience of them as I believed I had" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 4-5). The distance that had characterised the traditional West Indian intellectual's approach to certain sections of society does not characterise Lovelace's. He believes that "I have had the advantage over other writers that I dived among the people as one of them, and I really have respect for them, and insight" (qtd. in Sankar 1988: 42). Lovelace immersed himself in environments he would not have had the opportunity to experience had his route been the usual one. His journey is one which is very much intertwined with that of the ordinary people with whom he identifies and this is closely connected to his life choices. He explains that when he lived in rural Trinidad working as a forest ranger he felt an outsider in the beginning, but he gradually started to feel a freedom that he had never experienced in the urban community he came from (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 4). He argues that the village played a crucial role in helping him understand his society and himself (ibid., 8).

In comparison to the urban Trinidadian community with its aspirations to middle class status, the rural community made Lovelace understand that the brutal histories of slavery and colonialism did not erase creativity, and emphasised that the ordinary people were the principal creators in the New World (ibid., 103). This is one of the key elements that Lovelace chooses to foreground in his writings. Lovelace argues that

> it soon became quite clear to me that my task lay in validating the lives of these people, because they were indeed the salt of the earth. They represented meaning and possibility; moreover, in validating them, I was validating myself. I was one of them. (ibid., 4)

Lovelace's writings place the ordinary people and their cultural manifestations at the centre. His writings seek to validate the folk community with which he identifies.

Lovelace sees himself as connected to grassroots culture, and believes his energies as a writer have to work towards public service for this section of Trinidadian society. Not being part of the Trinidadian elite, he does not feel that there is a distance between himself and what he calls the 'ordinary people':

> By ordinary people, I mean those who are not the elite by property, education or privilege and status […] I mean, in fact, those who might be said to have struggled against colonialism, affirming themselves as people through maintaining and establishing religion, cultural practices and by warring against attempts to dehumanize them or place them as a lower order of human beings. (Lovelace, ibid., 102)

His connection and identification with what he refers to as 'ordinary people' grants him a perspective which is not traditionally held by West Indian writers. He recognises that this unusual standpoint has made him aware of certain issues which he would not otherwise have been able to distinguish or relate to:

> My knowledge had made me mistrustful of anything said that was negative about these people. To get past me you had to prove your assertion. I examined everything. I took nothing for granted, no matter how sweetly or patronisingly coated. (ibid., 5)

He asserts that the insight gained thanks to his first-hand experience enabled him to write about the ordinary people from an inside perspective. His experience helped him get rid of ideas like 'slave', 'ex-slaves' or 'Anancy story' as an expression of 'poor slave', all of which were rooted in colonial education (ibid.).

In a way, as was argued when discussing fellow Trinidadian writer Merle Hodge, Lovelace also seeks to grant agency to the subaltern – to use Gayatri Spivak's term. He manages to speak "in such a way that such a person [subaltern] would actually listen to me and not dismiss me as yet another of those many colonial missionaries"

(Spivak, 1996: 56). In this sense, Lovelace could be said to be very different from the members of the Hard Wuck Party that appear in *Is Just a Movie*, who "were not perturbed […] to be described as a group of intellectuals who spoke a language people could not understand. 'Since when do we have to apologise for intelligence, for intellect, for insight'" (Lovelace, 2011: 140). Instead, he reaches a large section of West Indian population, in particular the ordinary people – the focus of his works – who could be identified as the subalterns, and who he identifies as the principal creators in the New World.

3.6.3.1. Native Artists: Artists at the Roots

Lovelace declares that the current place of West Indian artists in the region can be traced back to the genesis of Caribbean culture. He argues that the artists who have made a difference or that have carried on the rebellion have been the artists who work at the grassroots level. However, as previously noted, these same artists were despised and their artforms made illegal by the colonial authorities. Lovelace explains that the cultural forms which are now the basis of national culture were proscribed under colonialism. He recalls that

> once everything was banned, singing etc. – all the activities from the base –, these people didn't have that standing in their society. So the panmen and the calypsonyan – you know that the calypsonian catched their arse for a long time? –, the artists became kind of outcasts. (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013)

In Trinidad, indigenous artforms such as calypso and steel pan were criminalised by the colonial regime. Everyone who participated in or associated with Trinidadian

cultural manifestations became an outcast. The calypso "The Outcast" by the calypsonian The Mighty Sparrow, records the marginalisation of calypsonians and steel pan players:

> Calypsonian really catch hell for a long time
> To associate yourself with them was a big crime
> If your sister talk to a steelband man
> The family want to break she hand
> Put she out, lick out every teeth in she mouth
> Call she outcast
> (qtd. in Lovelace, *Reclaiming* 2013: 71)

As Sparrow's calypso describes, the condition of outcasts was not only limited to steel band players and calypsonians but was also applied to those who got associated with them. Gordon Lewis explains in *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought* (2004) that cultural manifestations such as calypso and the steelpan had to struggle against the hostility of both white colonial officialdom and middle-class Creole respectability (Lewis, 2004: 21).

In his latest novel *Is Just a Movie*, Lovelace explains that the emergence of the steelpan movement was marked, right from the beginning, by the criminalisation of its inventors and musicians. The steelpan, said to be the only instrument created in the twentieth century, was born in the 1930s in Trinidad, more precisely in Laventille, a hill overlooking the capital, Port of Spain and mainly populated by African-descended people at the bottom of the economic ladder. In Laventille, after the banning of the African skin drum, people untrained in acoustic engineering, as Trinidadian scholar Ancil Neil points out, discovered that it was possible to create musical notes from a sunken oil drum (Neil, 1987: 26). It is interesting that the history of what is now national instrument of Trinidad and Tobago is remarkably similar to that of the

Spiritual Baptists, who also endured criminalisation and persecution from the colonial government. This is why Lovelace asserts that both the Spiritual Baptist church and the steelband have gone through similar experiences in their respective histories and "stand now and forever as the everlasting monument to human endurance and human dignity" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 37).

Lovelace's novel *The Wine of Astonishment* portrays the suffering and hardships endured by the Shouter Baptists in the fictional town of Bonasse as a result of the passing of the "Shouters Prohibition Ordinance". First of all, the congregation is forced to move out of the village and relocate "high up on a steep hill and hidden behind half-dead mango trees" (Lovelace, 1982: 32). Secondly, they are constrained to hold more subdued services characterised by quieter praying and singing instead of bell ringing and catching the power. Moreover, the novel depicts how the numbers of Spiritual Baptists decreased dramatically because conversion to more accepted churches such as the Roman Catholic or Methodist Church brought many social and economic advantages to the convert. It is also important to note that as regards their legal status, Spiritual Baptists became *de facto* criminals with the passing of the Prohibition. The novel illustrates how practitioners of the religion who wanted to be true to themselves and their faith actually had to infringe the law. Along with the Spiritual Baptist Church, the steelband movement that emerged in the 1930s empowered, and continues to empower, ordinary people and has helped them overcome the negative self-image caused by the degradation and rejection they had been subjected to by the ruling and upper classes of the society.[82] In fact, the novel closes with the recognition on the part of the Spiritual Baptists congregation that the

[82] It must be noted that for some years now Desperadoes steelband, the steelband landmark of the hill, no longer rehearses in the Hill but in a space around the Queen's Park Savannah. This unfortunate displacement of the steelband due to the crime situation has as a consequence preventing Desperadoes from having the same potential of fortifying the community of Laventille.

Spirit had been reassembled in the Trinidadian musical percussion instrument made from discarded steel oil-drum:

> In the next yard there, with bamboo for posts and coconut branches for a roof, is a steelband tent, and in this tent is the steel pans, and playing these pans is some young fellows, bare-back and with tear-up clothes […] I listening to the music; for the music that those boys playing on the steelband have in it the same Spirit that we miss in our church; the same Spirit; and listening to them, my heart swell and it is like resurrection morning. I watch Bee, Bee watch me. I don't say nothing to him and he don't say nothing to me, the both of us bow, nod, as if, yes, God is great, and like if we passing in front of something holy. (Lovelace, 1982: 146)

The novel is thus proposing that the very same Spirit the Spiritual Baptist worshippers have been catching is now also present in the steelpan movement. Trinidadian culture has now further expanded to embrace a new form of folk-based communion: the steelband.

The spirituality embedded in the steel pan movement is also portrayed in the novel *Is Just a Movie*, where Sonnyboy's father, one of the creators of the steel pan in Laventille is described as being claimed by a spirit, by "a pan jumbie" (Lovelace, 2011: 43). As previously explained, *Is Just a Movie* depicts how steel pan players were brutalised by the police. Lovelace gives an account of "the first steelpan notes in creation" (ibid., 49) in which the notes that are so beautifully described as "flying out like flocks of birds from the nest of the pan" (ibid.) are then diluted by the "police siren wail and the sound of scuffling and the metallic clang of pans hitting the ground and after a while screams and grunts and the animal panting of men running" (ibid., 50). Lovelace bemoans the fact that due to the criminalisation of the steel pan movement, "[t]he day of the creation was the day of humiliation" (ibid., 51).

Naturally, the outcast status of those involved in the steel pan movement is also portrayed in *The Dragon Can't Dance*, the "quintessential Carnival novel" (Aiyejina, 2008: 105). However, the novel explains that their criminalisation did not stop the steelband from growing. Fisheye, at the centre of Calvary Hill steelband, proudly explains that

> schoolboys from the Hill drawn to the music, discerning in it the repository of their warriorhood and living, had begun to flow into the steelband tent, even fellars going to college, unable to resist the call, the shout to the warrior in them, that no latin [sic] or math or the promise of respectability had quelled, were beginning to slide in, quietly, some of them, so their parents wouldn't know, so their teachers wouldn't see them; some came bold, put out of their homes by parents who said. [']I don't want no hooligans in this house,' going to live at another relative who maybe understood a little better the magic tug of the steelband. (Lovelace, 1979: 57-8)

Boys and men were attracted to the steelband tent, the place where the band rehearsed the tunes for Carnival. Aware that respectability lay somewhere else, namely in the high school or university where native artforms such as steel pan were excluded, they either secretly or boldly embraced the movement. Fisheye was delighted to see that these men and boys could still see the movement as a reminder of their origins and their legacy of resistance. They could relate it to the promise of personhood which they had been denied for many years and the continued practice of oppression of native artforms through their illegalisation.

In conclusion, Lovelace's novels describe the severity of the discrimination levelled against indigenous artforms such as the steelpan, as well as the ostracisation suffered by their practitioners. The different cultural artforms that emerged in the region were banned and their champions, far from being considered artists, became social outcasts. Lovelace reaches the conclusion that there was "never a relationship between being

here and being an artist, a *valued artist* and here" (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013; my italics). This was later aggravated by the fact that the first major generation of West Indian writers emerged abroad, a trend that was due to the unfavourable conditions in the region and which has never reverted. The focus on diasporic writers which began in the 1990s has even further exacerbated the situation for writers that stay in the region. As has been previously argued, due to the favouring of transnationalism, Caribbean culture has been described as the deterritorialised culture *par excellence* and the cultural products produced in metropolitan spaces have been the object of a comparatively disproportionate focus. As a consequence, those who have refused to leave the region, in spite of the unfavourable conditions, have been sidelined. All these factors explain why the West Indian psyche continues to associate artists with foreign (First World) countries and why practising art is seen as a phenomena which can only exist outside of the region.

3.6.4. Aesthetic Route

The final trait that will be discussed in terms of the unconventional route taken by Lovelace is his aesthetics. The two distinguishing features of his writing which will be foregrounded are the use of the collective or communal narrative voice – a technique used in his latest novels – and the formal influence of Trinidadian indigenous traditions on his writing. The first can be related to his impulse to collectively create a new beginning in the region, and the latter also represents a dominant thematic thread in his work.

C.L.R. James, for many – and certainly for Lovelace – the quintessential Caribbean intellectual, recognised that he and his West Indian contemporaries George Padmore and Grantley Adams could only become writers by going abroad. James explains that the literary tradition which informed their work was further conditioned by the fact that "all of us had the European training; all of us wrote in the definitive tradition of English literature. For us in the thirties there was no literature otherwise" (James, 1996: 164-5). However, writing in 1969, James asserts that the two Trinidadian writers Earl Lovelace and Michael Anthony are "native writers in the sense that their prose and the things that they are dealing with, spring from below, and are not seen through a European-educated literary sieve, as some of the finest writing in the West Indies up to today has been" (ibid., 165). James' statement may be indicating that Lovelace's alternative route has shaped his writings. Unlike writers from James's generation Lovelace had the contributions of a first generation of West Indian writers to call upon as well as his position as a Caribbean-based writer in direct contact with what he refers to as the 'ordinary people'.

British scholar Bill Schwarz has been critical of C.L.R. James's use of the term 'native writer' to refer to Lovelace because he argues that it is "a heavily weighted term, resonating with older, colonial perceptions" (Schwarz, *Introduction* 2008: xxi). Moreover, Schwarz has found James's suggestion that Lovelace's prose is free from the influence of European literary precursors to be a dubious statement (ibid., xi). Although Lovelace's prose is not free from European influences, it must be noted that Lovelace's route has indeed distanced him from most of his West Indian predecessors as well as from the European tradition that was their major influence. This is why it could be argued that his choice is also reflected in his stylistic signature which,

according to Rohlehr, is distinct from "the foreign-educated and -oriented ruling elite's imported aesthetics" (Rohlehr, 2008: 17).

Lovelace himself recognises that his oeuvre advances a Caribbean aesthetics which does not depend on "anybody else for validity" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 21). This can be seen in his novel *Salt*, which Lovelace believes "breaks much more from the European order that most things that I've read from the Caribbean […] It isn't like, to say, a lesser level of music. If you want you might call it a symphony (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 21). Lovelace's works – particularly his last two novels, *Salt* and *Is Just a Movie* – attempt to reflect the symphony of different 'musics' that make up Caribbean identity. This metaphor, which makes reference to the collective nature of Caribbean identity has also been used by Stuart Hall, who refers to the different voices that form Caribbean identity as its different 'musics' (Hall, 1995: 14). A crucial feature of Lovelace's texts is that they seek to encompass the diverse voices found in the region. One of his primordial aims is to demonstrate the common humanity that exists across the different communities so that they can build a new future together. This leaves a mark on his aesthetics, as can be seen in his choice of narrative voice which stresses the collective construction of a new society. His two most recent novels *Salt* and *Is Just a Movie* can be interpreted as communal acts of storytelling or collective narrations given Lovelace's technique of privileging many different narrative perspectives. As Hodge argues, in *Salt* – and it is also the case in *Is Just a Movie*, which was published a posteriori – relaying people's stories is a means of exposing the common humanity of the country's ethnic groups (Hodge, *Earl Lovelace and the evolution of voice* 2007: 308). Both novels are organised in chapters whose titles reflect their focus on representing the different voices from the community. Hodge explains that each chapter "draws upon the consciousness of a different

character (or more than one) and minutely captures the distinctive personality and worldview of the character or character's focus" (ibid., 292).[83]

As a result of this communal approach towards the story, Hodge contends that ownership is not in the hands of a single character but of the entire community. For Hodge, Lovelace's technique "is based on a philosophy of collective ownership of the narrative and the right, indeed, the obligation of all persons to tell their own stories" (ibid., 317). The story can be said to be democratically represented by the rich diversity of voices that appears in his novels. These voices reflect the multiplicity of national perspectives which move across not only ethnic communities but also across historical periods. Aiyejina argues that Lovelace attempts

> to collapse the reader and the narratee, the protagonist and the narrated, and the storyteller and the storyhearer into one participatory entity, as in a storytelling session in which the teller and the audience are transformed into a collaborative team, blurring the distinction between the narrator and the narratee, and the narrated. (Aiyejina, 2008: 108)

The collective ownership of the story mirrors the process of communal construction, and the subsequent joint ownership, of the nation. The narrative voice, therefore, is deeply connected to Lovelace's vision of creating a new beginning for the region, which is seen as a necessarily shared endeavour.

Furthermore, due to the collective ownership of the story there are instances in which one is unable to clearly identify the narrator. Hodge supports this idea when she claims

[83] This way, in *Salt* we find chapters entitled: "Bango", "Locha", "Adolphe Carabon: The Birthday Party", "Ethelbert B. Tannis", "Miss Myrtle's Story" or "Florence" to mention a few. In *Is Just a Movie*, although the narrator is mostly the calypsonian King Kala, as the first chapter titled "I, Kingkala" asserts, many of the other chapters are entitled with the names of other members of the community: "Dorlene", "My Aunt Magenta", "Sweetie-Mary tells Her Story", "Evrol", "Claude's Belonging" etc.

that the "telescoping of voices" in *Salt* sometimes makes the identity of the narrator impossible to discern (Hodge, *Earl Lovelace and the evolution of voice* 2007: 288). To prove this point, Hodge analyses the changes in perspective in the opening scene of the novel. She explains that the novel begins with a page of narration apparently in the omniscient perspective, followed by the sudden introduction of Bango's nephew, Travey, as the speaker (ibid., 288): "This was one of the beginnings of the story that Uncle Bango sat down that year to tell, that had me looking out for him to complete each Saturday when he stopped by our house" (Lovelace, 1996: 3-4). Firstly, Hodge points out that it is unclear whether the opening voice is Travey's or that of a third person. Moreover, Travey introduces Bango's voice which is unmistakably signalled by quotation marks: "'Watch the landscape of this island,' he began" (ibid., 5). However, once the quotation marks are closed, the train of thought is unbroken and "Bango's dialogue slides into third person narration, still his story, and all this is, arguably, relayed to us by Travey, the first person narrator" (Hodge, *Earl Lovelace and the evolution of voice* 2007: 288).

The second feature of Lovelace's Caribbean aesthetics that needs to be foregrounded is his use of the indigenous traditions of Trinidad and Tobago, which Aiyejina argues, has a two-fold aim since indigenous traditions "form valuable sources *of*, and sources *for* his aesthetics" (Aiyejina, 2008: 104; my italics). As such, not only are Trinidadian traditions present in Lovelace's narratives, but these also inform his writings at a higher level. In *The Dragon Can't Dance* the novel's third-person narration can be related to the artform of calypso. Lovelace has stated that because of the constant presence of calypso, its rhythm and repetitions have entered Trinidadian speech. As a result, the calypso artform has formally shaped his novel *The Dragon Can't Dance*, as he admits that "If I consider my novel *The Dragon Can't Dance*, I think of the whole

book as the movement of calypso" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 94). Bearing this in mind, Aiyejina explains that the novel

> is executed in a style that acknowledges the calypsonian as the master of ceremonies, as a documenter and articulator of events and sensibilities as they relate to him as an individual participant in the human dramas around him, and as they affect the community as a whole. (Aiyejina, 2008: 110).

Aiyejina argues that the calypsonian presides over the narrative in the same way he[84] presides over Carnival as his calypsos are heard, danced to and played by steelbands (Aiyejina, 2008: 109). The position of the calypsonian in the novel as well as his engagement with the community is well illustrated in the prologue. The last lines reflect the rhythm of a chorus in a calypso song:

> Dance! There is dancing in the calypso. Dance! If the words mourn the death of a neighbour, the music insists that you dance; if it tells the troubles of a brother, the music says dance. Dance to the hurt! Dance! If you catching hell, dance, and the government don't care, dance! Your woman take your money and run away with another man, dance. Dance! Dance! Dance! It is in dancing that you ward off the devil. Dance! Dance! Dance! Carnival brings this dancing to every crevice on this hill. (Lovelace, 1979: 13-4)

Aiyejina identifies the call-and-response pattern of a calypso chorus in the closing of the prologue. He argues that the text can be re-interpreted as a calypso in which the word 'Dance' signals the choral refrain while the remainder are the lyrics sung by the calypsonian.

Incidentally – and this might serve to prove how distinct Lovelace' Caribbean aesthetic is from the Western tradition –, the prologue was not well received by the editor at first. Needless to say, due to the inexistent publishing industry in the region,

[84] There is no doubt that here the calypsonian is a male figure because, apart from the fact that calypso is still a male-dominated music genre, the calypsonian in the novel is a man, Philo.

this was a person from a Metropolitan publishing company. Lovelace recognises that the prologue "was almost a poetic addition […] to the story that begins more concretely" and sees the editor's suggestion that it be omitted as being due to "the poetic nature of the language as opposed to the beginning of the novel with the characters and the movement and so on…" (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013). However, Lovelace also argues that the language employed in the prologue sums up the general linguistic style of the novel. Thus, if he had not included the prologue, which served to illustrate the centrality of the rhythm and language of calypso, an integral part of the narrative would have actually been lost. The editor's comment, which Lovelace explains was eventually removed, might be informed by her initial inability to recognise Lovelace's distinct aesthetics and the importance of the prologue in introducing calypso as the artform that shapes the novel.

Another indigenous tradition which also informs Lovelace's works formally is possession. Spirit possession is one of the fundamental features of the Orisha and the Spiritual Baptist faiths, the two main Afro-Caribbean religions of Trinidad and Tobago. In the ritual of spirit possession, people transcend their materiality by becoming spirits and the deities manifest themselves through the bodies of the initiated (Fernández Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, 2011: 82). In *The Wine of Astonishment*, the story as well as the church can be seen as communal property. Eva, the wife of the Spiritual Baptist leader, is the character chosen as a narrator to retell what happens to the almost one hundred community members mentioned in the novel. According to Hodge, Eva "does not so much retell episodes told to her, as yield to the voices of those who witnessed the action" (Hodge, *Earl Lovelace and the evolution of voice* 2007: 276). Eva's role, in yielding her voice to the different characters, has been interpreted as a reflection of the phenomenon of possession characteristic of Afro-

Caribbean religions. Aiyejina likens the narrator to the medium in African-derived religions "who loses his or her own voice and inherits the voice and manner of the possessing deity" (Aiyejina, 1996: 13). Therefore, throughout the novel the character Eva functions as a multi-vocal narrator who is regularly possessed by the spirit of other characters. 'Narrative possession' is not only put into action in *The Wine of Astonishment*, but for Aiyejina *Salt* also "employs a multi-vocal, sublimated first-person narrator who is regularly possessed and deployed by other characters to reiterate their versions and the consciousness of their stories" (Aiyejina, 2008: 117). The narrator, therefore, is constantly ridden by "Bango's stories and the memory of the ancestors lodged in them" (ibid.).

3.7. The Nation

3.7.1. A National Writer

> Perhaps colonialism is something not to overcome but to be fought in all its incarnations, and nationhood not something to be achieved but something to strive for constantly. (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 159)

Lovelace is part of a middle generation of writers that started writing in the milieu of independence. In this context the Trinidad he represents is already very different from that of the earliest generation of West Indian authors in terms of its relationship to the colonial powers and the people's sense of nationhood. As previously explained, Lovelace yielded to the social climate and decided to become immersed in the process of nation building.

Bill Schwarz suggests that "the fact that Lovelace became a published writer after Independence is not merely a literal, or chronological, matter. It is a properly historical

issue, which goes to the heart of his fiction" (Schwarz, *Introduction* 2008: xv). His writings are embedded in the political and cultural frameworks of the day, and aim at offering a vision of the Caribbean as a place which is just as much a part of the world as any other. His work, which is not concerned with translating the Caribbean reality for a foreign audience, looks inwards and places the Caribbean centre stage. As a non-diasporic writer, Lovelace offers a national perspective in a national medium/s and has no intention of adapting his fiction to a foreign, or more specifically Western, readership.

As previously discussed postcolonial writers who do not tailor their writings for a Western audience are frequently deemed as opaque, dense or inaccessible. This is explained by the fact that the metropolitan demand for otherness is only regarded acceptable provided that it is inscribed within certain limits and does not cross the line of unfamiliarity. Going beyond these limits means one runs the risk of being regarded as less readable and becoming invisible to the Western literary field. [85] In fact, this might explain why at a recent conference on English Studies one of the most prominent Spanish Caribbeanists today expressed her surprise at the writer chosen for discussion in this dissertation and described Lovelace's writings as 'very dense'. Similarly, it might also explain British scholar John Thieme's appraisal of *The Dragon Can't Dance* as "Lovelace's most *accessible* and *readable* novel" (Thieme, 2011: 62; my italics). Bearing in mind that not only *The Dragon Can't Dance* but also *The Schoolmaster* and *The Wine of Astonishment* have long been part of the syllabus for the CXC[86] exams, it can be argued that views such as Thieme's are actually indicative of a desire to universalise Western perspectives. His statement can be interpreted as

[85] See section 2.1.1. for an extended discussion on this topic.
[86] Caribbean Examinations Council: the examining body that provides educational certifications in the Caribbean region.

suggesting that some of Lovelace's novels are too context-based for a Western reader with limited knowledge of Trinidad and Tobago to understand.

Apart from the fact that Lovelace's narratives are context-based narratives which are not shaped to meet Western expectations, his texts are also ignored because he is not a diasporic writer. Lovelace has chosen to stay in Trinidad and he belongs to that group of postcolonial writers who "retain a national focus, who don't straddle worlds, or translate as well [and consequently] do not rank as high in the West as do their migrant fellows" (Boehmer, 2005: 239). The result of being a full-time resident of Trinidad is that Lovelace is less known in literary circles outside the region than his migrant counterparts. Schwarz argues that Lovelace's reputation in the West is underwritten by a marked ambiguity. He is considered a recognised author outside the Caribbean but at the same time he is received as a 'regional' or 'local' author. On the one hand, Lovelace

> wins international prizes; he is published by prestige houses; he has access to smart venues for his readings in cities across the Anglophone world. On the other, outside the Caribbean many an intellectual well versed in contemporary literature won't have read him, or maybe won't have come across him. His works are seldom available in bookstores […] his reputation is subsumed by his being received as a regional – a Caribbean – author. (Schwarz, 2008: xiii)

Lovelace's reputation as a regional or local writer explains why it was only in 2008 that a volume of critical articles on his work was produced. In fact, two volumes of criticism on his work were published in that year: a collection of essays entitled *Caribbean Literature After Independence: The Case of Earl Lovelace* edited by Bill Schwarz, lecturer at the University of London and funded by the University of London's institute for the Study of the Americas; and a selection of the papers presented in the 2005 Conference held at the University of the West Indies, Saint

Augustine campus, to celebrate Lovelace's seventieth anniversary. The latter appears in *A Place in the World: Essays and Tributes in Honour of Earl Lovelace at 70* and was edited by University of the West Indies scholar Funso Ayiejina. Trinidadian scholar Rhodha Bharath's review of the two volumes in *The Caribbean Review of Books* foregrounds and celebrates the occasion of the publications by stating that "[u]nless the name is Derek or Vidia, there aren't many Caribbean authors likely to have two books of criticism published about them in the same year" (Bharath, 2009). Bharath argues that this degree of attention in the Anglophone Caribbean literary field has been limited to the two Nobel Prize winners, Derek Walcott and V.S. Naipaul, who have been widely discussed at home and away. In fact, it can be argued that the privilege of seeing two books of criticism published in the same year is even more remarkable because up till then not a single critical volume on Lovelace's work had ever been produced. The publications are significant because Lovelace is neither a West Indian Nobel prize winner, nor a diasporic author, but an island-based writer.

When applied to writers the terms regional or local are not innocent because, as Schwarz agues, these are made to bear the mark of a colonial past that is not thrust upon writers who are described as universal (Schwarz, *Introduction* 2008: xiii). An example of the latter would be Lovelace's fellow Trinidadian writer, V.S. Naipaul. Naipaul – who has famously refused to be identified as a Caribbean writer – secured himself a place as an international writer by moving to England. His move to the metropolis stripped away his regional and colonial past, whereas Lovelace, having remained in Trinidad, will always be classified as a regional writer (ibid).

Lovelace can be said to disrupt the conventional dichotomy established between what is local as opposed to what is representative of the world or universal. He challenges

the hierarchical colonial construct which affirms that England "is – providentially – not 'a region' at all but a historical site of cultivation where literature and civilisation happen" (ibid.); a construct which the current disproportionate focus on diasporic cultural products partly reproduces. In Postcolonial Studies, as a consequence of the privileging of transnationalism, England, as well as the various European and North American metropolitan centres, holds the monopoly as sites of culture. Notwithstanding, for Lovelace, the Caribbean should be seen as just as important a place in the world as any other because "[n]obody is born into the world. Every one of us is born into a place in the world, in a culture, and it is from that standpoint of the culture that we contribute to the world" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 152). In a conference organised by the ATCAL, the Association for the Teaching of Caribbean, African, Asian and Associated Literatures, Lovelace tackles the issue of being seen as part of the world. He wonders "What then is the world? Who qualifies for the world? Who decides what is the world? Is there a world? Is there one world? Why are we not automatically part of the world?" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 150). Lovelace interprets the exclusory label as the perpetuation of the colonial order. Against the recurrent myth which negates the region's capacity to contain life, Lovelace argues that life no longer exists abroad exclusively. Thus, one of the recurrent characteristics of Lovelace's text is his insistence on seeing the world as 'local'. His writings seek to question where and what 'the world' is. As Rahim asserts, his writings display a preoccupation with the integrity of the place and offer a perspective of the world as something which

> is never an elsewhere, or nowhere, but always here, a real location with real people. The nation, then, is the legitimate space from which its inhabitants learn about themselves, and so speak about themselves to themselves and to the world. It is the location from which one begins to "see," to "create," even as

> the regional and the universal remain simultaneous engagements. (Rahim, 2003: 43)

The nation, in Lovelace's texts, is a real and legitimate place from which individuals can build a world in which to fully live their lives. A world which, in the case of the Caribbean, as my argument goes, can be identified as regional and universal, as national and at the same time transnational.

3.7.2. Discourses on the Nation and Nationalism

The arts, and literature in particular, have a tremendous potential to participate in the building of alternative nationalisms. The role of literature in the anti-imperialist struggle is emphasised by Edward Said, who argues that

> in the decades-long struggle to achieve decolonisation and independence from European control, literature has played a crucial role in the re-establishment of a national cultural heritage, in the reinstatement of native idioms, in the re-imagining and re-figuring of local histories, geographies, communities. (qtd. in Lazarus, 1999: 141)

Lovelace's writings have played and continue to play the crucial role of re-establishing a national cultural heritage which brings to the surface the oppressed and undermined indigenous cultural manifestations.

Lovelace's writings offer a vision of the nation which transcends limiting approaches and articulates a clear refusal to identify with bourgeois nationalism. Frantz Fanon's distinction between bourgeoisie nationalism and an alternative nationalism is in order here. For Fanon, bourgeois anti-colonial nationalism "has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists, prosaically, of being the transmission line between

the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the mask of neo-colonialism" (Fanon, 1961: 125). Thus, Fanon distinguishes between a bourgeois nationalism and a nationalism which is anti-imperialist and internationalist. For Fanon this alternative nationalism is described as "nation liberation which leads the nation to play its part on the stage of history" and further argues that "[i]t is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows" (ibid., 199). Fanon does not refer to a nationalism which stays aloof from other nations, but one which seeks to expand the very horizons of the concept.

It can be argued that the nationalism advanced in Lovelace's works is in tune with Fanon's alternative nationalism. Lovelace opposes bourgeois nationalism because of its lack of interest in transforming the nation. Lovelace's writings offer a critical view of the previously described paralysis of the 'scholarship boys' who became the local intelligentsia that led the nation into independence. This local intelligentsia can be identified with the national bourgeoisie for whom, as Frantz Fanon foresaw, "nationalization quite simply means the transfer into native hands of those unfair advantages which are the legacy of the colonial period" (Fanon, 1961: 152).

Lovelace coins the term 'bacchanal elite' to refer to "an elite that is familiar with the region in a way in which the colonial elite was not, but has no culture beyond entertainment to fight for or to advance and that can only have money as its god" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 105). This Trinidadian elite or national bourgeoisie has only sought to promote a national culture which refuses to valorise the majority of artforms created by the ordinary people thereby perpetuating the colonial practice of alienating West Indians from their culture. Thus, it is the local intelligentsia, part of this 'bacchanal elite' which has found itself at the head of the country, who is

accountable for the aforementioned lack of promotion of the native artistic manifestations that could not be commercialised. Lovelace argues that refusing to identify with the native artforms and with the ordinary people, who, according to him, have been the real creators in the New World, "leaves us with no content, totally frozen in a world, the arch consumers, consuming what we have no hand in producing, a flat and soulless people" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 105). Thus, the 'bacchanal elite' seems to promote one of the ideas which has been most espoused by writers such as V.S. Naipaul, that is, the persistent myth that nothing was created in the region because West Indians are incapable of creating.

For Funso Aiyejina the character of Miss Cleothilda in *The Dragon Can't Dance* can be said to exemplify this idea of the 'bacchanal elite'. Miss Cleothilda, a mulatto woman who lives in the yard in Calvary Hill – a Port of Spain slum – where the novel is set, only embraces her community or is the first to shout 'All o' we is one' during Carnival. However, once the Carnival season is over, she "was ready again to take up where she had left off […] anxious to re-affirm her position in the Yard, lest the wrong impression prevail too long after her relaxation for Carnival" (Lovelace, 1979: 133). Miss Cleothilda's acceptance of her community is therefore seasonal, and during the rest of the year she "adopts a hostile, superior, and unaccommodating attitude towards the less privileged members of her community" (Aiyejina, 2003: xv).

Lovelace's literature also identifies with Fanon's concept of 'literature of combat'. Already introduced in the section which analyses the concepts of rootedness and nationalism in the West Indies,[87] 'literature of combat' can be further defined as literature which assumes the responsibility of offering a vision of the nation which

[87] See section 2.2.6.

expands its horizons and rejects static, purist and homogenising notions thereon. In this sense, Lovelace's texts embrace an alternative concept of nationalism since they validate the heterogeneous nature of the nation and promote a nationalism which welcomes diversity as one of the main elements that will allow for a new beginning.

The transnational character of the nation and the region is reflected and appreciated in his novels. His texts offer discourses on the nation which acknowledge and place at its centre the cosmopolitan nature that characterises the region.[88] Lovelace's literature proves that the reality of the national space is complemented by the transnational character of the region. Thus, the nationalism advanced in his texts can be identified as regional as well as universal. For Allison Donnell, Lovelace, as a rooted writer, illustrates the fact that due to the reality of the Caribbean, being in one location and being grounded or rooted in a specific nation-state does not imply cultural homogeneity or statism. Even though Lovelace's fiction is unquestionably national in character, Donnell argues that his works offer a kind of located cosmopolitanism (Donnell, 2006: 112). Indeed, even though his work is clearly national and almost exclusively set in Trinidad and does not straddle worlds, his vison of Trinidad is not homogeneous or essentialist, but, as Jennifer Rahim argues, "his vision embraces a regional and international self-understanding" (Rahim, 2008: 54).

Lovelace's works serve to challenge and destabilise restrictive definitions of the notions of nation and nationalism. Nationalism, currently reduced to being understood

[88] It must be noted that although the focus on Lovelace's writings is the nation, for him the nation works as a representation of the Caribbean region. In his lecture "Welcoming Each Other: Cultural Transformation of the Caribbean in the 21st Century" Lovelace asserts that "I am using Trinidad and Tobago to represent the Caribbean" (Lovelace, 2003: 166). Lovelace continues a long tradition in the Caribbean literary field where, as Rahim argues, "the fictional constructions of his island-space, like George Lamming's San Cristobal and V.S. Naipaul's Isabella, function as microcosms of the wider Caribbean" (Rahim, 2008: 38).

as an exclusive and repressive force opposing the now popular transnationalism, can also offer welcoming and fluid definitions of the nation. As Benedict Anderson argues,

> [i]n an age when it is so common for progressive, cosmopolitan intellectuals […] to insist on the near-pathological character of nationalism, its roots in fear and hatred of the Other, and its affinities with racism, it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love. (Anderson, 1983: 129)

Earl Lovelace's fiction certainly falls into Anderson's category of national cultural products which inspire love. His texts describe a Trinidad in which the different 'Others' or ethnic communities are presented as being capable of embracing each other and creating a new nation together. One of the central traits in Lovelace's writings is that they offer an optimistic view of the possibilities of the nation. Lovelace sees the enormous possibilities entailed in the building of the nation and has argued that "national independence was to be the place in which we would seek to repair the relationships destroyed in colonialism and link us to one another so that we could begin creating for our welfare and delight" (Lovelace, 2008: 185). Thus, his writings offer an inclusive concept of the nation and have the ability to, as Jennifer Rahim argues, contextualise belonging without becoming entrapped in static or closed self-understandings (Rahim, 2008: 42).

3.7.3. A New World[89]

> Are we people living away from our homeland or homelands or are we people who have come from somewhere else, creating a New World, a new space, providing a new challenge? (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 105)

[89] Lovelace's use of the term is always capitalised.

Lovelace's optimistic vision of the nation is articulated through the concept of the New World. His idea of the New World can be defined as the space to create a new beginning "out of the shambles of history" (Rohlehr, 2008: 9). Seen as a fresh starting point for the region and the nation, the idea of New World advanced in Lovelace's texts welcomes the different ethnic communities that have come together in the Caribbean and seeks to release its population "from guilt, from shame, from the feeling of injustice and victimhood" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 100) in order to have a creative future. In this sense, Earl Lovelace is an example of the many creative writers of the region who have also theorised on West Indian culture. Lovelace's theorising on the New World can be identified as that theorising which, as Edward Baugh argues, does not offer "a quick fix from which we have to re-awaken to the brutal realities around us in the Caribbean [...] [but offers] a deep awareness of those ills and their historical roots, and of the capacity for healing that is as real as those ills" (Baugh, *Literary Theory and the Caribbean* 2006: 12).

Gordon Rohlehr argues that the concepts of a new world and newness have informed Caribbean thought for decades. Rohlehr provides some examples to prove that in at least the last five decades, "the word 'new' kept appearing every time scholars, thinkers, and politicians sought to define perspectives for the region" (Rohlehr, 2008: 9). One such example is George Lamming's and Wilson Harris' production, in the mid-1950s, of a series of radio programmes entitled New World of the Caribbean. These consisted of readings from emerging West Indian writers which "provided for the writers and novelists a means of participating in the definition of Caribbean nationalism alongside the statesmen, politicians, and intellectuals of the age" (ibid., 10). Another example was the New World Movement, birthed by a group of economists and political scientists from the region that "introduced new voices, a

whole new vocabulary, and new paradigms that challenged" (ibid., 11) the political context of the region, particularly the Trinidadian context.[90]

Within this context, Lovelace's conception of the New World is also synonymous with opportunity and newness. For Lovelace, the Caribbean is the nucleus of the New World, and Trinidad is one of its centres "by virtue of being a meeting ground of so many peoples (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 226). Due to the heterogeneous dimension of the New World, Lovelace believes that as a New World writer, he is concerned with "all those who comprise this New World" (Lovelace, *Earl Lovelace Fiction Writer* 2003: 8). Therefore, he concludes that his task is "seeking to find a way to speak for everybody and to speak through everybody in a kind of way" (ibid., 21). In order to do so, Lovelace argues that the artist must transcend the "limits of race, class and gender to become all people" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 100). Although it must be noted that "his artistic perspective is understandably more intimately engaged with the experience of New World Africans" (Rahim, 2008: 49), Lovelace's writings are concerned with how the different groups address the New World enterprise, which he sees as a necessarily collective one. As such, his novels – in which the protagonists are usually New World Africans – nonetheless offer a collective portrayal of the different communities. Lovelace's texts seek to give the different ethnic communities the chance to speak for themselves, and he tries to represent people as fully as he can "without trying to be patronizing" (Lovelace, *Earl Lovelace Fiction Writer* 2003: 11). Lovelace maintains that the real heritage of the Caribbean includes everyone who has made the island home and everything that they brought with them. To him, the diversity of races should be seen as the Caribbean's real heritage and

[90] Among them, Trinidadian economist Lloyd Best, Guyanese economist Clive Thomas, and Guyanese political scientists David de Caires and Miles Fitzpatrick.

> the only way we will see this, as our great New World legacy is if we see ourselves afresh; if we see that all of us here are heir to everything brought here by everyone European and African, Indian, Chinese, Syrian, Portuguese, tout monde, languages and food and festivals and song, – everything, our own. (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 231)

Lovelace's idea of the New World includes the African and South Asian diasporas, as well as the Levantine, Chinese and European descendants that constitute Trinidad's particular ethnic blend.[91] The transnational nature of the Caribbean is seen as the region's real heritage and its recognition and acceptance a precondition in order to create a new beginning, a new starting point that embraces and gives value to the heterogeneous nature of the region. Lovelace also uses the term 'tout monde' to stress on the New World's collective dimension – a term introduced by Edouard Glissant and already discussed and defined in opposition to universalism – to emphasise the New World's collective dimension. Glissant describes the concept of 'tout-monde' as the values from any world culture which participate in the crossroad of values. For Glissant, this crossroad is considered a nobler, higher and more generous project than trying to acquire a world at large value (Glissant, 2002: 136).[92] Hence, Lovelace and Glissant define 'tout-monde' as the heterogeneity that characterises the region.

Importantly, Lovelace's alternative construction of the New World does not dwell on the past but proposes a new path forward for descendants of the different ancestral homelands. Lovelace declares that the coming together of different peoples, out of the different ancestral moorings, has given form to an idea of Caribbean-ness which does not draw on ancestral homelands solely. Lovelace does not deny that "race and ethnicity remain legitimate sources of social identification" (Rahim, 2008: 49) and

[91] As Stefano Harney claims in *Nationalism and Identity*, apart from Trinidad "[n]o other country is as truly multiracial and integrated in the Caribbean, except Guyana. The other English-speaking Caribbean nations are essentially African-majority islands" (Harney, 1996: 46).

[92] For an extended discussion on Glissant's concept of 'tout monde' see section 2.1.1.

ancestral connections are necessary to define oneself, but he also asserts that these should certainly not be seen as the only sources of identification. In this sense, the concept of identity proposed by Stuart Hall in his article "Negotiating Caribbean Identities" intersects perfectly with Lovelace's concept of the Caribbean identity in the New World. Hall argues that "identity is not in the past to be found, but in the future to be constructed" (Hall, 1995: 14). Thus, Lovelace proposes that apart from having rescued the past, the task of the artists and intellectuals is now to rescue the future (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 231). This, more specifically, means to promote a new future built collectively by all the different ethnicities which have come to define Caribbean-ness or, as Hall puts it, "the different musics out of which a Caribbean sound might someday come" (Hall, 1995: 14).

As a writer of independence, Lovelace feels the necessity to work towards the different communities getting to know themselves and one another afresh. For this reason, one of the prevalent themes in Lovelace's narratives is the West Indian's need to understand who they are and to see themselves in a fresh light, as agents and not objects. Lovelace describes the New World as the "arena in which the world's peoples have the opportunity of coming together in new relationships, away from the often stifling traditions and narrowness of the old world" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 1). He believes that the multi-ethnic society of Trinidad can productively achieve a new society removed from "ideas of slave and slave master and nigger and coolie" (ibid., 100). Lovelace's mission, as that of King Kala the narrator and calypsonian in *Is Just a Movie*, is to "show people who they really is. I show them that they bigger and more grand, that they have more heart and guts and stones than what people give them credit for. I show them what nobody else show them" (Lovelace, 2011: 18-9).

Lovelace explains that the historical circumstances of the Caribbean and in particular Trinidad, continue to be seen, as Alford George the protagonist of *Salt*, describes, "from the perspective of our loss, characterising ourselves as ex-enslaved, ex-indentured" (Lovelace, 1996: 122). Significantly, in *Salt*, the teacher turned politician Alford George, chooses the theme "Seeing Ourselves Afresh" as the motto for his election campaign. George realises that "[w]e need to look at ourselves afresh. We need to look at ourselves with a new curiosity. The truth is that we do not know who we are. And we will never know until we see ourselves with new eyes" (ibid.). As part of his campaign, George devises as propaganda campaign to persuade citizens to vote for him. He chooses to use a folded sheet of paper with a picture of himself, a list of his accomplishments, the party's symbol, and a

> [m]ap of Trinidad and Tobago with information on the numerous rebellions attempted by the enslaved, the laws passed against them (to show what they were up against), the riots (note the characterization, he said) of the indentured. He gave population figures, the breakdown by race, location of population, major resources, the beaches. He listed steel bands and steel-band yards and calypso tents and calypsonians and masquerade camps and poets and painters […] Shango churches, Hindu temples, mosques, friendly societies, sporting clubs, best village groups, choirs, dance groups, village councils, their chairmen and secretaries. (ibid., 122-3)

This map, which occupies the middle page of the pamphlet, includes crucial socio-historical and cultural information on the nation, most of which was largely unknown to its citizens. The list is made up of cultural manifestations, historical facts, and revolts which were covered up, undervalued or dismissed to deny people the value of any of their manifestations and protests and even their own worth as human beings. This new knowledge allows citizens to see the value in their cultural manifestations

and recognise their numerous displays of resistance to unjust systems.[93] The importance of rebellion is emphasised since, as Lovelace has argued, "the natural 'new beginning' and hope for another direction for our region lay in reclaiming rebellion as a starting point" (Lovelace, *Reclaiming* 2013: 69). Resistance and rebellion are found in the map either in direct reference to the rebellions of enslaved Africans and the riots of indentured Indians or as regards their creation and practise of native cultural manifestations. Lovelace claims that all the myths that served to deny people their personhood had to be debunked with the philosophical support being found "in the activities of the very people, and in the […] folk culture not [understood] as a rural culture conceived in the context of an agrarian society or as having to do with the nature of the seasons but as resistance" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 5). Thus, the map contributes to the task of them really seeing who they are, defining themselves and acknowledging their achievements that came out of rebellion. No longer portrayed as passive figures with no agency, the map recognises the diverse forms of resistance demonstrated by citizens in the region. In fact, the map contributes to Alford George's overwhelming victory in the elections, as he actually wins a seat in Parliament with the highest number of votes ever polled for a candidate.

3.7.3.1. The Challenge of a New World

> We had gone forward to right where we had begun. (Lovelace, 2011: 183)

Lovelace is no escapist and recognises that the ongoing process of collectively building a New World has posed a challenge for the region. The heterogeneity of the

[93] Lovelace explains that in the West Indies alone there are ninety-nine recorded rebellions (Lovelace, 2003: 172).

nation has proved to be a source of richness and, at the same time, a stumbling block. Lovelace is aware that members of different ethnic communities have conjured ancestral homelands as superior and held on to their respective pasts as their only identity. This refusal to collectively build a new beginning for the region is explained by the adverse historical circumstances during not only colonial times but also after Independence. As Rahim argues, the unfortunate transferral of the distortions instituted under colonialism to the era of Independence has stood in the way of the collective effort of creating a new beginning for the region. According to her, Lovelace is aware "of the debilitating pitfalls that mitigate against transformation, such as the paralysis of nursing the losses of displacement, entrenchment in pseudo-superior epistemologies of self, and nostalgic returns to ancestral identities and homelands" (Rahim, 2008: 37).

Lovelace argues that West Indians have had opportunities to establish a new starting point for the region – Independence being the last of a list of previously unsuccessful opportunities which also includes Emancipation and Federation.[94] Lovelace claims that "National Independence was to be the place in which we would seek to repair relationships destroyed in colonialism and link us to one another so that we could begin creating for our welfare and delight" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 185). However, after Independence the different ethnicities which compose the nation did not come to terms with their horrific past and set themselves free. Instead, Lovelace argues that

[94] Lovelace asserts that Emancipation did not produce the beginning of a new and free society but it "emancipated people to nothing" and was only "an act of bad faith" (Lovelace, Personal Interview 2013). As for Federation its short life did not allow for the completion of a regional new beginning, which Lovelace argues "would have gathered everybody together" (Lovelace, Personal Interview 2013). The reasons behind the failure of Federation are to be found, according to Lovelace and Jamaican writer Edna Brodber, in British hands. For Brodber, Federation is ironically described as the British government's "parting gift" (Brodber, 2011: 9), and Lovelace argues, in a similar light, that the British managed to outmanoeuvre Williams and Manley into disagreement over the terms of Federation (Lovelace, Personal Interview 2013).

Independence asked Trinidadians to agree to inequality as part of the society. He points directly to Eric Williams's government as being responsible for the state of the country and questions what independence really meant in Trinidad:

> Williams said that we want to build a country or society without distinction of creed, colour or, he said, previous condition of servitude. It is very tough to ask somebody who had this previous condition of servitude now when they are entering an independence situation, to carry that with them without any kind of reparative means. So what we see then is that this whole line that led to independence, and independence itself, really did not address a history that we had –and it was kind of ironic that Williams himself was a historian. All of that is an important thing to move forward. (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013)

Lovelace makes reference to William's famous "Massa Day Done" speech delivered in 1961 in which, according to Lovelace, Williams seemed to have forgotten that it was precisely because of this previous condition of servitude that people were in the state in which he had found them (Lovelace, *Reclaiming* 2013: 71). For Lovelace, the PNM (People's National Movement) government led by Eric Williams had a number of opportunities "to redress the questions of justice, the question of liberating people to develop themselves" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 13), but, as Alford George in *Salt* comes to realise, "Each time they had backed away, out of fear, out of arrogance" (Lovelace, 1998: 188).

Since the conditions for the creation of a new starting point for the nation were not put in place, the different ethnic groups have turned inward. Lovelace warns against the tribalism that has established itself in the nation and which does not draw communities closer but "asks you to identify with a glorious past […], [a] Tribalism which takes us back, it seems, to fundamentalist positions, kings and royalty, etc." (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 191). This idea is clearly articulated in his latest novel *Is Just a Movie*, in which the character of Clayton Blondell portrays the New World African who

rejects the idea of the different ethnicities needing to come together to build a nation. Blondell claims that "[h]ere every creed and race see bout itself" (Lovelace, 2011: 181) and holds on to his African-ness as the sole defining feature that informs his identity. In an exchange between King Kala, the calypsonian and narrator of the novel, and Blondell, King Kala asks him:

> "'Tell me… how do you return to being African in this place with so many mixtures?'
> 'Return? You have never not been African.'
> 'Look, we can't give up the future for a past.'
>
> 'And you can't have a future without a past.'"
> (Lovelace, 2011: 180-1)

Blondell sees himself as solely defined by his African-ness and feels detached from the rest of Trinidad's ethnic groups. Moreover, apart from not recognising the heterogeneous nature of the nation, Blondell's vision of Africa is not of the ordinary people, but of the monuments, the sphinx, the pharaohs, the pyramids, its sculptures etc. Lovelace has criticised the unproductiveness and misconception of holding on to such an elitist vision of Africa. As he has expressed in his essay "In the Voice of the People", now that Africans in the New World can celebrate Africa, it is unfortunate that they would not celebrate the history of the ordinary people in Africa and the diaspora, but they would choose to celebrate the history of the elites instead. Lovelace, as a New World African, cannot understand why during Emancipation or Independence celebrations,

> [w]e deck ourselves out in princely garb […] It is as if we need to construct for ourselves another elitism to pit against the bogus one, as if we need to don the robes of this elitism in order to find respect for ourselves. In Trinidad, what our Emancipation Support Committee constructed was a little sphinx at the

> gateway to the African village. And yet I want to insist that it is the ordinary people stripped of rank that have created and struggled here for a New World. (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 105-6)[95]

Lovelace regrets that instead of actually celebrating the Afro-Caribbean or Creole artforms created by the ordinary people in the New World, Africans in the New World have opted for celebrating an elitist vision of African culture and civilisation. Thus, as King Kala explains, "when at last we had the opportunity to claim Africa we would want to do so at the expense of all we had created here in the Caribbean" (Lovelace, 2011: 181).

King Kala realises that it is very difficult to compete with Blondell's grandiose vision of Africa. King recognises that when he invokes Carnival and calypso as symbols of West Indian achievement, these seem "small, light before the monuments of his Africa" (ibid.). Blondell sees New World creations such as Carnival as pure frivolity, and dancing and singing humorous calypsos as useless activities. In this regard, Lovelace explains that the sense of joy in humorous calypsos should not be seen as trivial because, as one of the most important Trinidadian artforms, calypso reflects a duality which "is rooted in our psyche, and might owe much to our need, in the circumstances of our history, to cultivate a sense of joy even as we hit out at injustices" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 169). In the calypso "What is Calypso" calypsonian Kevin Pope – Mighty Duke –[96] explains the duality in the musical genre:

> What is calypso?...
> It is a feeling which comes from deep within

[95] The episode of the construction of the sphinx is also recorded in the novel. John de John, the unpublished novelist of Matura, tells King Kala that Clayton Blondell is the person commissioned to construct a representation of the sphinx monument for the Emancipation Day celebrations in Port of Spain (Lovelace, 2011: 181).

[96] Calypsonians usually adopt stage names, which are known as *sobriquets* in Trinidadian English Creole. In this case Mighty Duke is the sobriquet for Kelvin Pope.

> *A tale of joy or one of suffering*.
> It's an editorial in song
> Of the life that we undergo,
> That and only that, I know
> Is true calypso.
> (qtd. in Liverpool, 1986: 7; my italics)

This duality is, in fact, institutionalised in calypso, for in the Calypso Monarch competition during Carnival, calypsonians are required to sing a party song to make people dance and a more serious song that analyses the state of Trinidadian society, which is called a social commentary (ibid.).[97] In the novel Blondell cannot see the enormous gains that Carnival, as a West Indian cultural manifestation, brings into its community. He is unable to see that "celebration was not just mindless fun, it was rebellion, it was community, it was creativity […] the mas[98] […] was fortifying a community, was holding up a people their system had set about to waste down" (Lovelace, 2011: 225). Blondell, therefore, is blind to the fact that in the poor areas of the nation, such as Laventille hill, where the novel *The Dragon Can't Dance* is set, "Carnival it is that springs this hill alive" (Lovelace, 1979: 11).[99] The novel is critical of the irony that after independence native cultural manifestations that were once kept submerged by colonial authorities, would now be sidelined in favour of an ancient and elitist view of the past.

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[97] On the one hand, it must be noted that The Mighty Duke actually won the Calypso King Crown in 1968 with the aforementioned calypso in the category of social commentary. On the other hand, Blondell's refusal to see the use of humorous calypsos might be based on the calypsonian Black Stalin' – known for his strong political calypsos – refusal to sing for some Carnival seasons the humorous type or party song claiming, as Blondell in the novel, that he would not do it "while there was injustice and hunger and oppression" (Lovelace, 2003: 169).

[98] Term used to refer to the masquerade, that is, to playing a Carnival character during Carnival.

[99] In the chapter 'Up the Hill' from his most recent novel *Is Just a Movie*, Poynting argues that Lovelace "enacts a dread and sorrowful requiem on Laventille as the once disorderly but fertile ground whose people birthed steelband, a regular supply of calypsonians and the development of carnival marking. It is now the dead, nihilistic place where the narrator Kangkala arrives at a wall graffitied with 'the likeness of a pistol' and the obscenely transgressive inscription (in a country where mothers are sentimentally sacred), 'Everybody muddercont'" (Poyinting, 2013: 77-8). In fact, Lovelace's sorrowful requiem on the hill is based on real circumstances, such as the fact that even the flagship steelpan band Desperadoes has recently deserted the hill.

Blondell is not alone in refusing to subscribe to a notion of the New World which embraces the heterogeneity of the region. King Kala realises that in his exchanges with Blondell, the latter's vision of Africa is gaining ground and he, Kala, is increasingly being looked at with suspicion by the listeners. As King Kala explains, after independence, when the calypsonian argues that it is time to work towards constructing a future together, everybody starts to seek public ethnic recognition. King Kala asserts that "everybody was finding his own ethnic harbour and those of us left outside were suddenly nowhere" (Lovelace, 2011: 186). The novel argues that by endorsing Blondell's vision of Africa, one could actually find "a secure place as an African" (ibid., 183), whereas King Kala's New World African-ness did not have such a place. King Kala, as an African who claims the West Indies as his homeland, seems to be holding on to a less secure identity and thus he seems to belong nowhere.

Not only was King Kala's vision of West Indian identity less secure from the African perspective, but his New World vision was not accepted among other ethnicities either. In the novel, West Indians of Indian and Chinese origin also turn to their ancestral homelands for a more secure sense of identity:

> Carlos Nan King spearheaded a move to have the day the Chinese arrived in Trinidad declared a public holiday to match Indian Arrival Day and Emancipation Day […] Romesh had become one of the school of home-grown Hindu holy men barebacked and wearing dhoti like Mahatma Gandhi and in the absence of the river Ganges cleansing themselves in the Manzanilla sea. (ibid, 186)

In his afterword to the article "Earl Lovelace's New World of the Caribbean" Gordon Rohlehr describes Lovelace as "a man gifted with double vision […] whose meaning lies not in the serious moral text of reparation, but in a recognition of the duality of things, and in a huge laughter that transcends the simple moral message" (Rohlehr,

2008: 32). In fact, Rohlehr argues that the true strength of Lovelace's texts lies in "the subversive picong that he applies to character, rhetoric, action, and situation" (ibid.). This can be seen in the aforementioned quote, in which the reference to the Manzanilla sea as the place where Hindu holy men cleanse themselves can be interpreted as them not being able to escape the reality that they cannot do so in the Ganges even if their sense of identity lies in India. Consequently, they cannot escape their being both Indian and West Indian. Moreover, the same place where Hindu holy men cleanse themselves could be used by Spiritual Baptists to baptise new members. Thus, it also serves to prove, as Lovelace claims, that "we are closer to each other than we often care to admit" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 9). Finally, another example of the double vision in Lovelace's novels can be found at the end of the chapter devoted to Blondell. The calypsonian recognises that "Clayton didn't pose just an abstract challenge, he had attracted to his attention Dorlene Cruickshank, the most beautiful woman in Cascadu and the bright spot of my world" (Lovelace, 2011: 186). Not only does Blondell pose a challenge to King Kala's vision of the New World, but Blondell is also his rival in love affairs and eventually steals Dorlene from him.

3.7.3.2. Reparation

Before examining in detail the complex matter of reparation, mainly through the analysis of his novel *Salt*, it must be noted that Lovelace has also argued that for the new generations of Trinidadians born in independent Trinidad and Tobago, tribalism and the favouring of transnational identities are two of the major concerns which currently hinder the creation of the New World. In an address to the matriculating

class of NIHERST[100] in 2000, Lovelace reflected on the new generation's approach towards the concept of the New World, arguing that unfortunately young generations of Trinidadians are no longer inspired "by a call to nationalism, [but] by tribalism or the global village or the technological revolution or all at once" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 195). He recognises the trend in post-colonial Trinidad to be indifferent to the construction of the nation, which is mistakenly seen as an already accomplished endeavour and a thing of the past. Instead, Lovelace explains that those belonging to generations born in Independent Trinidad and Tobago are called to either identify with their ethnic background or to be global village citizens. The emphasis on the routed subjectivities at the expense of the rooted ones, as has been previously argued, can be counterproductive for peripheral nations such as Trinidad and Tobago. It foregrounds the individual against the collective and ultimately perpetuates a neo-colonial status quo and hegemonic nationalisms. Lovelace recognises the dangers of globalisation and argues that it "can swallow you up and diffuse you and make you a lonely individual in a vast global world" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 191). In fact, for Lovelace globalisation is "colonialism christened with a new name" (Lovelace, 2011: 265).

Lovelace argues that the New World is still an ongoing project which needs to take place, first of all, within the nation and in a collective manner. He argues that everyone should see the richness inherent in the task of building a future together and that the idea that each ethnic tribe should be concerned with its own self interest is one that has been used to temper West Indians' optimism for the New World. Against such an idea, which is depicted by Blondell in the novel,[101] Lovelace's writings seek to reveal the other side of the coin, that is, his texts do not seek to half-heartedly call for the

[100] National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, Port of Spain.
[101] "Here every creed and race see bout itself" (Lovelace, 2011: 181).

creation of a future built communally, as Lovelace argues has often been the case, (Lovelace, *Earl Lovelace Fiction Writer* 2003: 10). Instead, they highlight the rich possibilities of collectively constructing a new beginning for the nation.

For Lovelace, the issue of race or tribalism should be approached differently in order to stop it from preventing the nation from dealing with important issues. He argues that race should not be viewed "with the eyes of those who employed race to serve as a vehicle for privilege and status and to determine who was master and who was servant" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 230). Instead, as previously argued, the diversity of race should be viewed as the great New World legacy. Everyone and everything brought into the Caribbean should now be seen as belonging to everyone (ibid., 231). In fact, Lovelace holds the firm belief that, as human beings, the different communities strive to achieve the same goals and that "there is a quality of goodwill towards the others expressed by every community here" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 10). Thus, if everyone realises that

> we are preparing for our future and not for our past […] we might just discover that the tribes said to be in contention are seeking what we have been always seeking – the same things: a sense of belonging, psychic ease, the valuing of our contributions, a space in which to grow and the natural acknowledgement of our worth and dignity as human beings. (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 230)

For Lovelace the only possible way to overcome the challenges posed by the creation of a new beginning for the region is through reparation. Lovelace hopes for a future in which the different communities appreciate each other and in which Trinidadians are able to embrace each other. The novel *Salt* posits that the different ethnic groups in the country are all part of "an ongoing wrestling between human frailty and God's grace. A cycle of violation and restoration, of injury and healing as the lot of mankind"

(Lovelace, 1996: 172). For him, in order to view race or tribal differences from another perspective, far from those established during colonialism and for human relations between the different ethnic groups to really take place, the nation needs healing. For Lovelace, reparation is a precondition for the healing of the nation.

Reparation has been an issue that the writer has engaged with both in his writings as well as in his direct political action. Lovelace has been involved with the Caribbean movement for reparation, and is actually one of its most prominent spokespersons in Trinidad (Sankar, 1998: 38). Reparation is not understood as punishment but as a matter that needs to be attended to so as to "call each other to account, to set each other free. Not to punish each other" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 6).

In his essay "Welcoming Each Other: Cultural Transformation of the Caribbean in the 21st Century" Lovelace argues that reparation is needed in order to help the region overcome an institutionalised sense of secondclassness and facilitate understanding between the different groups (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 163). For Lovelace, the tense relationships established from the beginning between the groups account for the existing feelings of resentment, competition, victimhood, shame and guilt. He argues that it is only when "we retrace our steps and understand how we have arrived here" that Trinidadians will be able to start anew (ibid., 167). Lovelace explains that in Trinidad's heterogeneous society these unresolved feelings are explained by the fact that

> People are not now and have not been one homogeneous mass but are differently related to each other, and […] people are those who have been abused and those who have abused, those who are landed and those who are landless, those who are privileged and those who are exploited; people have had problems with each other that derive from power relations. (Lovelace, 2008: 49)

Only when the nation addresses these issues can Trinidadians talk "about commitment to a common responsibility and a shared future" and about authentic emancipation and empowerment (ibid.).

In this sense, and from his condition as a dangerous writer, his writings and in particular his novel *Salt* tackle the lack of measures put in place to deal with the indignities that characterised the past. In the novel, the story of Bango after Independence mirrors that of his grandfather Jojo after Emancipation. At the age of thirty Jojo experiences the arrival of Emancipation and with much hope and expectation begins to think of settling down in a place of his own. Jojo seeks to become a New World African and feels the need to "look towards the future. [...] [because what] he had woken up into was a new world [...] He had to try to put aside the depth of this loss he had lost and find a way in his mind to claim this new world as home" (Lovelace, 1996: 172-3). However, he is confronted by the colonial authorities' refusal to allow such a new beginning. After centuries of enslavement, Africans were emancipated without the colonial authorities considering any kind of compensation necessary, though, paradoxically, European landowners were compensated. For Jojo, Emancipation and its lack of measures for creating a better future for themselves doomed them to a sense of secondclassness. As Bango explains: "They had given planters money for the losses they would suffer from having now to cease enslaving people, but for the enslaved who had lost their life, family years, they had nothing to give" (Lovelace, 1996: 180).

Thus, after Emancipation, the colonial authorities refuse to grant any kind of compensation and, as explained in the novel, the more adventurous are simply allowed to squat land. Jojo recognises that "to squat their land now was to accept the status

they had imposed upon him" and decides to fight for compensation, to fight for a beginning and a new start (ibid., 182). He refuses to squat land as he believes reparations in the form of land, among other measures, should be collectively retrieved. He argues that "everybody had worked. Everybody was entitled" (ibid.) to a piece of land and decides to start a fight for collective reparation which he will pass on to his descendants. This is the fight that more than a century later, his grandson Bango will also wage against Alford George, the parliamentary representative from his village Cascadu, when he refuses to accept George's private offer of land.

Reparation had not been forgotten by Jojo's grandson. In the same way that his grandfather had refused to squat land, Bango now, shortly after Independence, refuses to be given government land non-publicly. He argues that it can only "be done openly, in full accord with the community. The community itself has to work its way towards making reparation" (Lovelace, *Earl Lovelace Fiction Writer* 2003: 16). Both grandfather and grandson, like Lovelace himself, believe that the New World can only be built "on the principles of reconciliation and reparation" (Rohlehr, 2008: 25) and with the involvement of all members of society.

Bango argues that reparation is an unresolved issue which needs to be addressed. It was not dealt with after Emancipation (his grandfather's time) nor is it being tackled now after Independence. Bango explains that

> unless we want to doom ourselves to remain forever locked into the terrors of the error of our stupidity, we try to repair the wrong by making reparation: so many lands, so much land, so you could face again yourself and restore for yourself and the one you injure the sense of what it is to be human. (Lovelace, 1998: 168-9)

Bango argues that everyone, on the basis of his or her humanness, is entitled to a compensation which will allow for the healing of the nation. Bango's demand for reparation is according to Rahim "on the basis of his shared humanity with his white victimizer" (Rahim, 2008: 48). He declares that brutaliser and brutalised need to pursue the full restoration of their personhood as human beings. This is why the demand placed before Alford George starts with him asserting everybody's humanness:

> Understand form the start,' he said. 'I ain't come here to make the Whiteman the devil. I not here to make him into another creature inhabiting another world outside the human order. I grant him no licence to pursue wickedness and brutality. I come to call him to account, as a brother, I ask him to take responsibility for his humanness, just as I have to take responsibility for mine. And if you think it is easy for either one of us, then you making an error. This business of being human is tougher than being the devil, or being God for that matter. And it doesn't matter whether in the role of brutalized or brutalizer. (Lovelace, 1998: 167)

Bango recognises that it is on the grounds of their shared humannity that a new beginning should be considered. The different ethnic groups, regardless of whether they were once brutalised or the brutalisers, need to settle accounts in order to get rid of the feelings of resentment and guilt. Just as Lovelace argues, it needs to be recognised that "[a]s humans we need to find solidarity with the struggles of people to maintain and uphold human dignity" (Lovelace, *Growing* 2003: 172) and thus allow for the healing of relationships between the communities.

All in all, Bango, just like his grandfather, chooses to remain landless and continues to hold on to reparation as the only way to move forward into a new beginning. This is why each Independence Day, he continues to enact his claim for reparation in the form of a march which he leads and which consists of children from the different ethnic

communities dressed as little soldiers, all following along behind the flag of Trinidad and Tobago. His call for reparation is staged through this march for national unity and the healing of relations between groups. When Bango first started it it was seen as a lonely venture that people could not really understand, but by the end of the novel it begins to grow and is increasingly embraced by the community. Thus, Lovelace seems to suggest that more and more the need for reparation is being understood in the community as the only way to create a new beginning for the region. According to him, through his march, Bango is saying

> that we have to march for this reparation and liberation forever, because unless we get this thing solved, we really can't as a place go on to the rich possibilities in our future. We could go on as tribes. We could go on as groups. But for the whole place to really benefit, to find our way, we have to settle accounts with our past and with our fears. (Lovelace, *Earl Lovelace Fiction Writer* 2003: 16-7)

Through this march, both Bango and Lovelace advance the task of the West Indian native intellectual and artist. Namely, the collective task of rescuing the future of the region; a brighter future which welcomes and values the heterogeneous nature of the region in order to create a new beginning, a New World

4. TRANSLATING THE CARIBBEAN AND EARL LOVELACE'S WORKS

4.1. Collective Endeavour

The collective dimension of social struggles, which is of great importance and has been discussed at length throughout this dissertation, takes on a new dimension in this chapter. This final chapter argues that the collective dimension, very much in tune with Lovelace's politics, should be reflected in any translation of Earl Lovelace's narratives.

The figure of the literary translator is foregrounded as an intellectual that holds the potential to contribute to the advancement of Caribbean narratives through his or her ethically and politically motivated translations; particularly, those narratives which

offer representations of the region that go beyond mainstream Western expectations and which do not seek economic but cultural profit.

Throughout this study, both the potential transformative power of art and the intellectual's role in social struggles have been established. In this regard, in *Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market 2* (2003), Pierre Bourdieu claims that intellectuals, by which he means artists, writers, and scholars, are indispensable to social struggles. For Bourdieu, social struggles need to produce critical networks in order to contribute to the collective enterprise of political invention. He emphasises the collective dimension of social struggles when arguing that the

> whole edifice of critical thought is in need of critical reconstruction. And this work of reconstruction cannot be effected, as some have thought in the past, by a single great intellectual, a master-thinker endowed with the sole resources of his singular thought, or by the authorized spokesperson for a group or an institution presumed to speak in the name of those without voice. (Bourdieu, 2003: 21)

Bourdieu declares that the reconstruction of critical thinking is a necessarily collective endeavour which should not be limited to the academic sphere but which should actually go beyond this "small world" (ibid.). Edward Said also stresses that the aforementioned absence of any master plan, "enables intellectual performances on many fronts, in many places, many styles" (Said, 2005: 27). Thus, intellectuals from their respective fronts can help to create the social conditions required for the collective production of "realist utopias" (Bourdieu, 2003: 21).

This dissertation argues that, as part of this collective struggle, one of the fronts within the field of cultural production where the intellectual's participation is also of great value is the field of literary translation. Like writers and artists, who according to

Bourdieu, "give *symbolic force*, by way of artistic form, to critical ideas and analyses" (ibid., 25), translators can contribute to the strengthening of this symbolic force through their artistic renditions of source texts.

Bourdieu also warns that the independence of cultural production and circulation in the literary and artistic world is currently being threatened because "the economic and social conditions in which it can develop are profoundly affected by the logic of profit" (ibid., 71). Bourdieu claims that the hard-won independence of the field of cultural production is being threatened by the incursion of a commercial logic into not only the production but also the circulation of cultural goods (ibid., 67). The French sociologist proposes that everyone involved in the various stages of production and circulation – artists, writers, scholars, publishers, gallery directors and critics alike – should mobilise against the economic forces that adhere to the law of immediate profit (ibid., 76). All of these actors, to which literary translators could be added, should work as "autonomous cultural producers" in order to defy and challenge the practice of homogenous cultural production oriented towards exclusively commercial ends (ibid., 81). Bourdieu asserts the need for these cultural producers, who are "so rare, useful and precious", to maintain their independence from market constraints so as to help with the development of non-hegemonic discourses (ibid.).

With specific reference to the West Indian field of cultural production, translators can contribute to the collective endeavour of offering representations of the Caribbean which go beyond the prescribed hegemonic depictions most frequently promoted in the postcolonial literary field. In this sense, Bourdieu's distinction between mainstream publishing houses that are interested in generating economic profit and the

less commercially oriented ones was previously established.[102] Publishing houses governed by the autonomous principle should work alongside ethically and politically engaged literary translators. These, along with writers and scholars, are key actors in the collective endeavour of offering a more complete representation of the Caribbean which acknowledges native cultural manifestations and allows West Indians to see themselves reflected in fiction. The translation of West Indian literature which acknowledges the heterogeneous nature of the region also contributes to the normalisation and valorisstion of the indigenous artforms that have been – and continue to be – undermined and defined in derogatory terms.

In the same way Lovelace argues that the construction of a New World in the region can only be accomplished through the collective involvement of the different communities, this study argues that a collective endeavour is needed to reverse the trend that sidelines Caribbean writing which is deemed as non-eligible by the West. Translators, together with writers, scholars and publishers, can be viewed as actors whose work makes them "architects of a new world" as well (Lovelace, *Reclaiming* 2013: 73). They too take part in the collective construction of a vision of the Caribbean which is non-mediated, self-assured and welcoming. In this sense, they can all be said to be marching alongside Bango in his Independence day march as portrayed in Lovelace's novel *Salt*. Narrators can be seen marching, just as Bango's nephew, Travey – the narrator for most of the novel – who decides to join the march beside Bango and his wife Myrtle with the conviction that "this march of his was for all our own lives and had to be carried on, even if it took us to the very end of time"

[102] Less commercially oriented publishing houses which aim, as opposed to mainstream publishing houses' interest in generating short-term economic profits, at gaining symbolic capital are, thus, also part of this collective struggle. In the West Indian field of cultural production, these publishing houses are the ones that mostly publish writers who would otherwise not have been eligible for the mainstream publishing market. Usually, these writers that do not shape their works for a Western audience but instead offer stereotype-free and unmediated versions of the region.

(Lovelace, 1998: 260). The novel describes how more and more people come to understand the crucial role of the march and the importance of marching towards a new future that can only be constructed collectively. The translator must also be seen as another actor who has come to understand this march and believes he or she can also contribute to the construction of a new future. The translator should join the march alongside Bango, Earl Lovelace, Jennifer Rahim, Allison Donnell, Merle Hodge, Pat Gibbons and Jeremy Poynting. These are all autonomous cultural producers, who have sought from their respective fronts, to contribute to the collective task of presenting a vision of the Caribbean that counters the damaging effects of homogenous cultural products.

4.2. Language in Caribbean Contexts

4.2.1. Why Focus on Language?

The focus on language can be related to two main factors. On the one hand, since language, as it has been argued, functions as an agent of censorship, this section analyses the role of language in determining which West Indian texts are selected for promotion and consequently translation. However, the focus on language is also in response to the fact that both Postcolonial Studies and Cultural Studies, the two disciplines which inform this study, have relegated language – which is inseparable from culture inasmuch as it is the foremost medium through which the culture of a people is conveyed – to a secondary position. This peripheral position is particularly worrisome in the study of literatures coming from multilingual regions such as the Caribbean.

In "The 'Gift' of Translation to Postcolonial Literatures" Simona Bertacco argues that the lack of visibility of language in Postcolonial Studies might be explained by the fact that, "postcolonialism, as a scholarly field, has almost always been studied from within the boundaries of *one* colonial empire, *one* language, *one* cultural framework, and *one* academic discipline" (Bertacco, 2014: 66). This monolingual approach is at variance with the reality of the majority of postcolonial countries which are for the most part multicultural and multilingual by definition. Furthermore, this tendency can actually be traced back to the ninetieth century Europe, namely the time when the concept of nation-state emerged in the old world. During this period it was common for nation-states to impose a single language and consequently attempt to assimilate minority languages. However, as Viv Edwards explains in *Multilingualism in the English-Speaking World: Pedigree of Nations* (2004), even though colonialism attempted to perpetuate the monolingual myth on a global scale, multilingualism remains the norm in the postcolonial world (Edwards, 5: 2004). Thus, it can be argued that colonialism did not accomplish its mission to erase, as Spivak argues, "the countless indigenous languages in the world that were programmed to vanish when the maps were made" (Spivak, 2003: 14). Edwards further explains that in the English-speaking world in particular, although European views of languages were transported to the colonies, "an astonishing diversity of languages lies just beneath the veneer of homogeneity" (Edwards, 5: 2004). This is certainly the case of the West Indies, where, as Trinidad-based linguist Valerie Youssef argues, the disregard towards language in the discipline of cultural studies is particularly relevant due to the region's rich and complex linguistic situation (Youssef, 2009: 59).

One of the pioneering theorists on language in West Indian literary texts is Kamau Brathwaite, whose *History of the Voice* (1984) is considered a seminal work. In the

text, Brathwaite admits the novelty of his work and introduces the instrumental notion of 'nation language', a term which is sometimes used as a synonym for West Indian Creole languages.[103] Kamau Brathwaite argues that he uses 'national language' in contrast to the term 'dialect' because the latter carries very pejorative overtones. He claims that English in the Caribbean can be a revolutionary language but

> it is an English which is not the standard, imported, educated English, but that of the submerged, surrealist experience and sensibility, which has always been there and which is now increasingly coming to the surface and influencing the perception of contemporary Caribbean people. (Kamau Brathwaite, 1984: 13)

For Brathwaite, 'nation language' is the language that brings to the fore the submerged areas of West Indian culture that Standard English cannot represent.

The discipline of Creole linguistics has come a long way from the pioneering work carried out by Brathwaite. Scholars have recognised that the time is ripe for the intertwining of usually self-contained disciplines. As Merle Hodge argues, in the past the field of Creole linguistics was not fully explored, but now it is a well-established discipline (Hodge, 2013). This is why many West Indian scholars have emphasised the need to apply Creole linguistics to the discipline of Literary Studies.[104] The analysis of the language of texts has subsequently been foregrounded as an important criterion for criticism. According to Hodge, this is particularly important in the Caribbean context, because "there are all kinds of things hidden in Caribbean writer's use of language that might escape you if you don't have a clue about the language situation" (Hodge,

[103] 'Nation language' has been interpreted subsequently as taking different meanings. Mervyn Morris argues that by the end of Brathwaite's text, 'national language' is taken to mean "not what we used to call 'dialect' but the whole range of West Indian Language, including Standard English and our Caribbean Creoles" (Morris, 2005: 3). For her part, Barbara Lalla argues that the concept of 'national language' also comprises a total competence that includes code-shifting (Lalla, 2006: 180).

[104] The discipline of Literary linguistics, that is, the analysis of the language of literary texts, is defined by Barbara Lalla as an "interdisciplinary analysis that throws light equally on the properties and functions of language and literature" (Lalla, 2005: 55).

2013). Bearing this in mind, the aim of this section is to emphasise the importance of language in the area and how this diverse linguistic context enriches West Indian literature.

4.2.2. The West Indian Linguistic Context

There exists a general agreement among linguists since De Camp (1971) that the Anglophone Caribbean is characterised by a language continuum. Consequently, the Anglophone Caribbean does not present "a cut-and-dried bilingual situation of two languages confined to separate compartments, but a spread of variations which can more accurately be likened to a continuum" (Hodge, 1998: 47). At one end of the continuum is the official language, that is, the Standard English of each respective island, and at the other are the different English-lexicon Creoles, the unofficial and informal languages.

Within this complex continuum, however, the languages are arranged hierarchically. Linguists have explained that equal respect should be paid to Creole and Standard English, but the reality is that in the linguistic sphere, as in other areas, "culture with a capital C remains something other than whatever we actually practise every day of our lives" (Hodge, 2004: 4) and Creole is seen as a lesser linguistic medium. As Jamaican scholar and poet Melvyn Morris states, "the historical legacy lingers […][and] though there is now greater acceptance of Creole […] there are still, within the Caribbean region, many pockets of hostility to Creole" (Morris, 1999: 7). Among the misconceptions that still seem to hold currency in the region is the idea that Creole is not a full-fledged but a broken language, a corruption of English. This belief was

famously and fiercely contested by Jamaican poet Louise Bennett, popularly known as Miss Lou, as early as the 1960s. In her texts written in Jamaican English Creole – what she refers to as 'Jamaican Dialec' – Bennett denounces the 'unfairity' of such a misjudgement:

> My Aunty Roachy she dat it bwile her temper an really bex her fi true anytime she hear anybody a style we Jamaican dialect as 'corruption of the English language.' For if dat be the case, den dem shoulda call English Language corruption of Norman French and Latin an all dem tarra language what dem she dat English is derived from.
> Oonoo hear de wud? 'Derived.' English is a derivation but Jamaican Dialec is corruption! What a unfairity!
> Aunty Roachy she dat if Jamaican Dialec is corruption of de English Language, den it is also a corruption of de African Twi Language, a oh! (Bennet, 1993: 1)

Bennett criticises the widespread double standard which upholds English as a language that derives from Latin and Old English, whereas Jamaican English Creole is simply seen as a corruption of English. She claims that if the Jamaican language is to be seen as a corruption, then its African roots should also be taken into account, and as the product of a corruption of African languages as well. Importantly, Bennett acknowledges the fact that Caribbean Creoles attest to the survival of Africa in the Caribbean region. Morris explains that there is now a long tradition of linguists who have proven that what was once widely considered corruption is, in fact, a consequence of the derivation of one or more of the West African languages transported to the West Indies (Morris, 2005: 4). Thus, notwithstanding the banning and undermining of every single African cultural manifestation in the region, Creole languages prove, as Kamau Brathwaite argues, that "African culture not only crossed the Atlantic, it crossed, survived and creatively adapted itself to its new environment" (Brathwaite, 1993: 191-2).

The reality is that in the linguistic sphere, Standard English is considered to be at a higher level than Creole. This linguistic prejudice against Creole proves Hodge's point that in general, "Caribbean culture has a very weak self-image" (Hodge, 2004: 2). Furthermore, this can be viewed as part of the existing system of linguistic imperialism which maintains that languages spoken in Third World countries are inferior. In fact, as has been explained before, in the postcolonial literary field texts written in European languages are privileged over those written in non-European languages or which include vernacular languages such as Creole. At a more global scale, this prejudice is part of the overall refusal to accept and value diversity in the world. In the context of language, Catalan linguist Jesús Tusón argues that linguistic diversity contributes to the magnificence of human richness:

> Hay que reconocer la diversidad, y la profunda unidad que en ella se esconde y que hace posible el esplendor de la riqueza humana, de una humanidad en la que nadie tiene el derecho de valer y ser más que cualquier otro y donde nadie podrá jamás aducir razones legítimas para pisotear a sus semejantes y a todo aquello que es obra de los humanos: sus culturas y sus lenguas, muy especialmente. (Tusón, 1988: 121)

Tusón claims that the linguistic diversity of the world ought to be respected as part of our human heritage. Thus, as some of the most important cultural manifestations produced in the region, the different Caribbean Creoles need to be valued. They should be appreciated as part of the veritable cultural tradition of the region – a tradition which, as Lovelace argues, should be inclusive of everything produced in the meeting ground that is the Caribbean.

4.2.3. West Indian Creoles in Literature

Caribbean writers' responses to the linguistic context of the English-speaking Caribbean have varied throughout time. Undoubtedly, the choices involved have been shaped by an education system which, as argued in previous sections, has alienated West Indians from their culture and thus their first language. Hodge argues that West Indian writers' attitudes towards their first language are conditioned by an educational system which might "have produced, at worst, contempt, at best a certain discomfort with the Creole which does not allow one to take it seriously or to see it as having artistic potential" (Hodge: 1998, 48).

An overview of the historical evolution of the use of Creole shows that initially it was not admitted into literary texts. West Indian scholar Maureen Warner-Lewis asserts that West Indian literature has its genesis in the imitation of European literary models. Thus, early West Indian fiction and drama did not accept Creole because writers "judged Creole as unaesthetic, limited and limiting in its expressive and ideational range, and restrictive in its communicability with an international readership" (Warner-Lewis, 2001: 26). In fact, the refusal to include Creole can also be related to these narratives' focus on members of West Indian society who would not use Creole, namely the upper classes. In "Creole Representations in Literary Discourse" Barbara Lalla further explains that early writers either indicated Creole speech by metanarrative comment or, at most, short utterances which worked as "a token of otherness" (Lalla, 2006: 176).

Over time, Creole was gradually given entrance, though always at a lower level as it was most frequently reserved for "minor and undignified characters" (Hodge, *Earl Lovelace and the evolution* 2007: 314). Warner-Lewis explains that when Creole

started to be employed on the page, its use was limited to the speech of uneducated characters with minor roles, whereas Standard English was reserved for narrative voice and for the interior monologues and dialogues of educated characters (Warner Lewis, 2001: 26). At the time the contrast between Standard and Creole served to emphasise the distance between the narrator and the characters.

When West Indian literature started portraying a wider spectrum of society, instead of focusing exclusively on the upper social echelons, Creole became more visible in literary works. West Indian writers have since developed a new literary tradition and now use Creole in distinctly and less hierarchical ways – or non-hierarchical altogether. The Creole voice was eventually admitted on equal terms into the language of fiction and as Hodge states, "the world of the Creole speaker moved from the margins to the centre of the writer's vision" (Hodge, *Earl Lovelace and the evolution* 2007: 315). Creole gained its place alongside the Standard language as West Indian writers sought to faithfully describe the linguistic context in which systematic code-mixing according to the situation is a constant. In the 1950s, with the works by Sam Selvon, Creole became for the first time a possible medium of narration in the novel and short story. Selvon, as he recognises in the following quote, is credited with being the first one to use Creole for both dialogue and narration:

> I think I can say without a trace of modesty that I was the first Caribbean writer to explore and employ dialect in full-length novel where it was used in both narrative and dialogue. I was boldfaced enough to write a complete chapter in a stream-of-consciousness style (I think that is what is called) without punctuation and seemingly disconnected, a style difficult enough for the average reader with 'straight' English. (Selvon, 1988: 63)

Selvon refers here to his novel *The Lonely Londoners* (1956), which, as he rightly acknowledges, signalled a turning point in the use of dialect,[105] since it inaugurated its use not only in dialogue but also in narration. He argues that the broad acceptance with which his first experimental attempt was received – apart from some complaints from reviewers who argued that the language was not comprehensible – allowed him to continue using Creole in his texts. Selvon defended himself from the reviewers' attacks by stating that "I wrote a modified dialect which could be understood by European readers, yet retain the flavour and essence of Trinidadian speech" (qtd. in Fabre, 1988: 66). In fact, he was aware of being read by an audience outside of the Caribbean and moulded his texts accordingly – an issue that will be developed further on.

Further to this, it can be said that Louise Bennett did for poetry what Sam Selvon did for West Indian fiction. Morris argues that Louise Bennett, "is the earliest of our authors to have produced a substantial body of work in a West Indian vernacular" (Morris, 2005: 76). Not only did Bennett, as previously noted, oppose the prejudices against Creole in her writing, but as Edward Chamberlin in *Come Back to Me My Language* (1993) contends, she brought Creole into the foreground of West Indian cultural life, and contributed to the literary credibility of the language (Chamberlin, 1993: 96-7). As such, Bennett also opened the way for many subsequent West Indian writers to use Creole in their work. For example Merle Collins explains that, as regards her use of Creole, she walked both where inclination led her and where previous writers, particularly Bennett, had made it possible to go (Collins, 1998: 34).

[105] Selvon uses the term 'dialect' to refer to the language spoken in Trinidad. I have maintained the use of this term in the fragment that makes reference to Selvon's language, first because it is the term of his choice and secondly because in using the term dialect I believe he is not making a value judgment of the validity of the language, instead he is using the most popular term for Trinidadian English Creole.

Nowadays it is widely acknowledged that Creole enriches West Indian literature and distinguishes it from other literatures written in English. At the same time, though, it must be noted that for some writers the use of Creole is not a conscious decision meant to promote its valorisation. Rather, it is simply seen as a natural way of portraying the West Indian linguistic context in which code-switching is an everyday habit. This is the case of Merle Collins, who argues that West Indian writers' use of Creole is usually unmediated by conscious reflection. From her own experience of contextualising orality in her works, Collins suggests "that the practice is often something which is developed intuitively, a recording of experience fully savoured but not necessarily fully analysed" (Collins, 1998: 38). In this sense, Olive Senior agrees with Collins' view and believes that her use of Creole is also led by intuition. Senior even exclaims: "I just use it!" (Senior, 2003: 34) and describes her relation with language in the following manner:

> My characters arrive with their language. I, personally, am bilingual. I grew up speaking both patois and English. It is not something I have to think about. I just use whichever is the most appropriate language; so do my characters. I grew up in different situations where sometimes Creole was dominant; sometimes Standard English was dominant and I just adapted. (ibid.)

Senior asserts that in her process of writing, code-switching comes naturally just as it always did in her everyday life. Although she acknowledges that in using Creole or Patois she is actually saying that the language is good enough to be the language of literature, she argues that she does not deliberately set out to make a political statement (ibid., 35). Be that as it may, the unpremeditated act of using Creole is not incompatible with advancing the language in the realm of fiction – a realm where it has not always been present or where its presence has been limited to an inferior position. Thus, even if its use is unconscious, as Collins and Senior suggest, their

inclusion of Creole can still be seen as a political stance. As George Lamming claims, what was once a major instrument of empire is now a medium that has the potential to create the opposite of the initially desired effect. In fact, he argues that

> it is the very flexible and varying ranges of language, the subtle and explicit manipulations of native rhythms of speech which have won our writers a very special attention. If the metropole directed what is standard and required by the cultural establishment; it is at the periphery of colony or neo-colony that the imagination resists, destabilizes and transforms the status of the word in action. (Lamming, *The Sovereignty* 2004: 37)

As Lamming recognises, it is thanks to resistance to the metropole' s dictates that West Indian literature can now benefit from the heterogeneous nature of language. The relevance of reflecting linguistic diversity in literary texts should be highlighted because, as Joan Anim-Addo argues, this "releases a far reaching network of competing meanings still too little understood" (Anim-Addo, 1999: 8). Thus, texts that use Creole in ways that go beyond the limits expected by Western hegemonic standards, are capable of unleashing meanings otherwise concealed, and of reflecting West Indian culture in all its complexity.

4.2.4. The Representation of Creole

Choosing a written representation of Creole has proven to be challenging for the writer. Creole has long been the language of orality, the language of the calypsonian and of the dub poet, but only really entered the realm of written literature in the 1950s. Since the middle of the twentieth century, the dilemma of representing Creole in literary texts has been faced in different ways. Some writers have opted for adapting the language orthographically and using a different spelling system to represent

Creole, whilst others have rejected the option of adapting Standard English spelling because they see this as a deformation of a language that could have unintended implications.

The difficulty of representing Creole on the page is a theme that has recurrently left its mark in literary texts. In fact, Hodge explains that many West Indian writers have opted for including brief editorial adjuncts to West Indian works that they have either authored or edited. This, for example, is the case of Melvyn Morris's preface to the *Selected Poems* of Louise Bennett; V.S. Naipaul's foreword to his father's work *The Adventures of Gudureva*; and Velma Pollard's afterword to her own collection of stories *Considering Woman* (Hodge, *Earl Lovelace and the evolution* 2007: xiv).

First of all, the use of orthographical markers to represent Creole has evolved over time. As a result, those who have opted for adapting Standard English orthographically in an effort to accommodate Creole have learnt from the initial attempts of others and some of the unintentional consequences of their work. The use of apostrophes has been a major issue in the battleground of the alteration of the spelling system. For example, Hodge argues that altering Standard English by placing apostrophes to indicate what is perceived as a missing sound, together with other devices, has the opposite effect to that intended in that it characterises the language as broken or incomplete (Hodge, *The Writer* 2007: 146). Warner-Lewis further argues that writers have tended "to suppress use of the apostrophe to signal word-initial or word-final consonant substitution" and have instead opted for options such as "*dat* for 'that', *ting* for 'thing', *mout* for 'mouth', and selective use of phonetic spelling, such as *fain* for "find" [or] the nasalized negative *cyan* for "can't" (Warner-Lewis, 2001: 28).

Writers who have opted for adapting the spelling system have not done so idiosyncratically. This has been practised since the middle of the twentieth century through the use of standardised spellings such as the Cassidy phonemic system (1961), in which, as Morris explains, "'equal' would appear as 'iikwal', [and] 'dialec' as 'daiyalek'" (Morris, 1999: 9).[106] Morris explains that even though linguists find this spelling system acceptable and argue that the readership can very easily grasp the unfamiliar but consistent spelling, many writers have refused to adopt this system – or any of the others created – until it gains general acceptance (ibid.). This has been the experience of Merle Hodge, who argues that "unless and until we have an institutionalised spelling system we really ought not to deform English spelling" (Hodge, 2013). She explains that some writers have only adapted Standard English spelling in their first books or have subsequently limited its use a great deal because they realised that this device posed some problems. This is the case of Sam Selvon, Earl Lovelace or even Hodge herself. Selvon did not advocate the deformation of the spelling system, and opposed the use of apostrophes or half-spoken words "because to me those are handicaps to the reader" (qtd. in Ramchand, 1988: 100). In the case of Lovelace, Hodge asserts that the evolution in his texts has also been noticeable with the use of eye dialect having almost completely disappeared from his most recent work.[107] Instead of using a distinct spelling system, Hodge argues that Lovelace makes use of Creole to reflect nuances, realising that "code-shifting invites attention to issues such as class and cultural difference" (Hodge, 1998: 53). Similarly, in her case, she

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[106] Cassidy's spelling system was already mentioned in the section dealing with the three major relational factors that condition West Indian literary text's eligibility in the Western world. In particular, the subsection on language closes with the reference to the use of the spelling system designed by Jamaican linguist Frederic Cassidy in Carolyn Cooper's blog. Jamaican linguist Hubert Devonish explains that the Cassidy (1961) writing system was later elaborated in Cassidy and Le Page (1980) (Devonish, 2006: 89).

[107] Linguistic term which is used as a synonym for the adaptation of the English spelling to accommodate Creole.

has not altered the spelling since her first novel *Crick Crack Monkey* (1970) and argues that now she is "more aware of the nuances, in terms of different characters who have different levels of education or from different social groups so Creole got more English in it or less" accordingly (Hodge, 2013). Lovelace and Hodge exemplify the trend in literary texts, identified by Barbara Lalla, whereby "the representation of Creole (particularly by orthographical means) may actually be muted to preserve subtleties of play between Creole and Standard meaning" (Lalla, 2006: 185).

For his part, Derek Walcott adamantly opposes the orthographical representation of Creole. He criticises the current method of representing Creole orthographically, which he considers "[c]oarsely phonetic […] visually crass, its aural range is limited to a concept of peasant or artisan belligerence that denies its own subtleties of pronunciation, denying its almost completely French roots in the ex-colonies" (Walcott, *A Letter* 1998: 228). Walcott believes that in representing Creole orthographically, the language is disfigured. Moreover, he argues that it limits the range of different pronunciations and underlines the fact that the language's French Creole roots are denied in this orthographic representation. It must be noted that French Creole has been and still is present, as Warner-Lewis explains, in the islands of Dominica and Saint Lucia, where English Creole is the second language, and French Creole is the first language for many people (Warner-Lewis, 2001: 29). In the case of Trinidad, French Creole was also the first language for the majority of the population until it was gradually pushed aside as a result of the British colonial authorities' pressure to install English as the country's first language at the beginning of the twentieth century.[108] Although French Creole is currently practised in mostly isolated

[108] In *Nationalism and Identity* Stefano Harney explains that the presence of French Creole in Trinidad is due to the mass influx of a planter class from French-speaking colonies following a *cédula*, published in 1783 by the Spanish Crown. This 1783 *cédula de población* invited Christian immigrants to settle in

areas of Trinidad such as Paramin, Trinidadian English Creole carries significant linguistic remnants of what was not so long ago, first language of the country. Due to the significant role that French Creole has played in some islands of the Anglophone Caribbean, Walcott sees the dismissal of this pivotal factor as one of the major pitfalls of the scribal representation of Creole. He explains that the West Indian poet is caught in a dilemma over the impossibility of representing his or her language:

> Today the West Indian poet is faced with a language he hears but cannot write because there are no symbols for such a language and because the closer he brings hand and word to the precise inflections of the inner language and to the subtlest accuracies of his ear the more chaotic his symbols will appear on the page […] so his function remains the old one of being filter and purifier, never losing the tone and strength of the common speech as he uses the hieroglyphs, symbols or alphabet of the official one. (Walcott, *The Muse* 1998: 49)

For Walcott, Creole should be represented through the use of the Standard English spelling system, as he argues that the result of doing otherwise, is never a satisfactory one. Walcott refers to two of who he considers to be the greatest poets of the Antillean archipelago, Aimé Césaire and St. John Perse – both from French Creole speaking islands –, who resolved this dilemma without falling into the orthographic transcription of the Creole. Focusing on Césaire's greatest poem *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* (1939), Walcott observes that even though it is not written in what he calls dialect, "for all the complexity of its surrealism, for its sometimes invented words, it sounds, to at least one listener familiar with French Patois/Creole, like a poem written totally in Creole" (ibid.). Walcott does not interpret Césaire's use of the French language as a sign of him abandoning or relinquishing his Caribbean heritage

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Trinidad to help populate the island (Harney, 1996: 12). Obviously, French Creole did not disappear altogether once the British took control of the island in 1841, but Lise Winer explains French Creole "remained widespread until the end of the 19th century; in fact, there were large numbers of more or less monolingual French Creole speakers in some areas well into the 1940s, and widespread bilingualism among its older speakers into the 1960s (Winer, 2009: xiv).

but believes that through the use of French, Césaire, one of that language's great poets, demonstrates that he is not its vassal but its prince (ibid.: 51). Walcott explains that Césaire proves it is possible to extend the Standard language, in his case Standard French, in such a manner that the text sounds indistinguishably Creole to someone who is familiar with that language, and this without having adapted the language orthographically. Walcott also argues that even when Creole is present, though perhaps not represented orthographically, it can be interpreted differently according to the reader's knowledge of Creole. In fact, he introduces a crucial notion in West Indian literature, namely the fact that West Indian texts can contain a level of ambiguity which remains opaque to non-Creole speakers.

4.2.4.1. Ambivalence in West Indian Texts

West Indian texts may contain a level of opaqueness for readers without a knowledge of Creole. This phenomenon can be illustrated through the analysis of chapter 10 in Derek Walcott's poem "Another Life". According to Sandra Pouchet Paquet, the poem illustrates Walcott's struggle as a teenager searching for a way to resolve the conflict between Europe and Africa in colonial St. Lucia (Pouchet-Paquet, 2002: 171). The conflict, as can be seen in the following lines, is embodied by his two grandparents:

> But I tired of your whining, Grandfather,
> in the whispers of marsh grass,
> I tired of your groans, Grandfather,
> in the deep ground bass of the combers,
> I cursed what the elm remembers,
> I hope for your sea-voices
> to hiss from my hands,
> for the sea to erase
> those names a thin,

> tortured child, kneeling wrote
> on his slate of wet sand.
> (Walcott, 2004: 67)

The poet feels compelled to choose between the traditions of his granfathers, one black, the other white. This inner struggle causes the young poet to feel frustrated and angry as seen in the first line. Interestingly, this anger and frustration is conveyed in Creole: "But I tired of your whining, Grandfather". Morris argues that this line is an example of the level of ambiguity opaque to non-Creole speakers. He explains that

> [t]he West Indian reader receives, appropriately, both the Standard English and the Creole sounds: I tired of your whining, Grandfather (I grew tired of your whining, Grandfather) and *A Tie-yad a yu wine-in, Grandfather* (I am tired of your whining, Grandfather). (Morris, 1999: 12)

The line in which the poem's persona addresses his grandparents directly has two potentially different meanings which only the West Indian reader is able to distinguish. This ambivalent meaning accessible only to Creole speakers proves firstly that works of literature communicate "more fully to readers who have learnt in more specific detail about the language and culture in which it is grounded" (Morris, 1999: 14). Secondly, and more specifically, it proves that in the West Indian linguistic context, as Warner-Lewis explains, the two regional linguistic mediums present the writer with the option of consciously or unconsciously encoding multiple meanings (Warner-Lewis, 2001: 28).

This phenomenon should also be deconstructed within the particular linguistic context of the West Indies, which is not always characterised by two distinct linguistic mediums, but by a continuum in which overlappings between the two codes can occur. As Lalla argues, only the Creole speaker can distinguish what items (words, phrases or

sentences) are identical in form and function and which ones share the same form but differ in function (Lalla, 2006: 179). Thus, the Caribbean creative writer can, provided phonological details remains unspecified,

> exploit overlapping features of the two codes in which he or she has competence in order to maintain parallel alternative meanings – a sentence that may be Standard English question or a Creole statement, a verb phrase that may be timeless present and simultaneous description or narrative, or may be past perfective and narrative. (Lalla, 2006: 185)

When the same word form has distinct functions in Creole and Standard, as clearly demonstrated in the case of Creole verbal system, the text offers alternative interpretations for the Creole speaker, which the non-Creole speaker cannot grasp.[109] As a consequence of this partial overlapping between the two codes, texts may be ambiguous only for the reader with a knowledge of Creole, whilst, as Lalla explains, ambiguity might remain covert for the reader who is only competent in English (Lalla, 2006: 180).

4.2.4.2. Creole and Audience

The representation of Creole and the level of ambiguity that might escape the non-Creole reader is deeply connected to the issue of accessibility for non-West Indian audiences. The relationship is particularly relevant when taking into account the fact that the main audience for West Indian literature is not, in fact, West Indian. Merle Hodge argues that although West Indian writers might wish for their communities to be their primary audience, the reality is that West Indian literature is mainly consumed

[109] This will be exemplified in section 4.4.5.1. through the analysis of a text in which the Trinidadian Creole verbal system stands out.

by a non-West Indians. Hodge argues that not only do West Indians not consume their fiction, but they are

> only a small fraction of the Anglophone world, so that when the revolution comes and Caribbean people turn to consuming Caribbean literature, they will probably still constitute an audience too small to sustain the writer. Our audience, therefore, is the larger English-speaking world, which is to say that we write largely, overwhelmingly, for foreigners. This imposes certain kinds of constraints on the use of our native language, which in turn compromises our relationship with our wished-for primary audience. (Hodge, 1998: 48)

Thus, using Creole might actually hinder the understanding of the main readership of West Indian texts, and more specifically those from other speech communities. West Indian writers can be said to walk a tightrope as they try to retain their primary audience and remain accessible beyond their speech community. This is reflected in the work of the two authors that will be examined next, Kei Miller and Nalo Hopkinson. In this regard, it is relevant to introduce what Jamaican linguist and fiction writer Jean D'Costa's has referred to as 'literary dialect'. Jamaican writer Velma Pollard explains that 'literary dialect' makes reference to the language used by a West Indian writer who wishes to satisfy both local and foreign audiences and at the same time offer an authentic representation of the "language culture of his or her community" (Pollard, 1998: 31). Through the use of the 'literary dialect' a foreign readership is able to gain entry to the otherwise inaccessible Creole language.

On the occasion of the publication of Keith Miller's latest poetry collection *The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion* (2014), for which he won the 2014 Forward Prize for Best Collection, the writer reflected on the representation of Creole words in West Indian literature. Miller agrees with Walcott's description of the dilemmatic position characteristic of the West Indian poet. The Jamaican poet believes that his

poetic practise is affected if his non-Creole speaking audience does not understand the Creole words he uses. Aware of the difficulties and limitations of integrating Creole into his work, Miller claims that

> it might be more accurate to write 'Mi case!' in Jamaican creole, but written like that, a foreign audience might not be able to see that it is a form of 'Make haste!' […] But you know, your poetics and your politics can sometimes argue with each other – and those arguments are fruitful. Recently I've been more concerned that this sort of poetic embrace which I'm committed to, this attempt to welcome other audiences, should never lead to a sort of pandering. And also, sometimes the way that language alienates is part of the poetic effect you want to achieve and obviously there are so many times in this book where I want to play with this effect of alienation by language. (Miller, 2014)

Miller avows that he has been torn between representing his language in such a way that his poetry is not closed to a foreign audience and, at the same, ensuring that it is not debased in order to reach non-West Indians. In this sense, he acknowledges that he has learnt from Tony Morrison to write to a "place with integrity, not compromising for the larger audience but still including them in a way" (Miller, *Interview with Kei Miller* 2013). Miller is aware that his middle ground position on language – namely his decision to be inclusive but not too accommodative – might, nonetheless produce an alienating effect on readers from other linguistic communities. However, he interprets this playfulness as a quality which can potentially enriching his work and appreciates the hidden ambiguities that can only be decoded by readers familiar with the Creole language.

The level of accessibility of her texts is also a concern for speculative fiction writer Nalo Hopkinson. In a fashion similar to Miller's approach to the use of the Creole language, Hopkinson also welcomes the non-Creole and foreign audience though she does not tailor her writings for the latter. As regards the written rendering of Creole,

Hopkinson explains that for the benefit of all her readers – Canadian as well as Caribbean readers who do not speak an English-lexicon Creole such as Haitians, whose Creole is French-lexicon based – she deliberately sticks to the more conventional spellings. In this regard, she explains that after publishing her novel *Midnight Robber* (2000),

> Kamau [Brathwaite] wrote to tell me that he regretted that I'd spelled "maaga"[110] as "meagre," but that he understood why I'd done it. I'm always trying to strike a balance between sinking as I can into my tongue and rhythms, and retaining as wide as possible a comprehensibility. (Hopkinson, 2005: 104)

Brathwaite is benignly critical of Hopkinson's representation of Creole, which might be seen as leaning towards the more Standard end of the continuum so as to accommodate non-West Indian readers. In previous sections it was explained that non-West Indian critics and reviewers have criticised texts which sought to reflect the linguistic situation of the region because they have deemed these texts incomprehensible.[111] Brathwaite represents the opposite perspective, that of the West Indian scholar and writer who argues that these representations might also be deceiving for a West Indian readership. Nonetheless, Brathwaite also understands the use of representations that accommodate non-Creole speakers, probably because he is aware that West Indian literature's major audience is a foreign non-Creole audience.

Miller and Hopkinson agree that in not opting to use 'Mi case!' and 'maaga' – forms which are more faithful to the Creole and therefore not as close to the Standard English pronunciation – they can accommodate non-English-based Creole speakers. Their stance, which can arguably be seen as the most common for West Indian fiction

[110] Adjective used for persons or animals which means thin, skinny, bonny and hungry-looking (Allsopp, 1996: 376).
[111] This is the case of the first texts by Dionne Brand and Sam Selvon, as explained in sections 2.1.3.3. and 4.2.4. respectively.

writers, seeks to find a balance between representing Caribbean language adequately and, at the same time, being understood by non-Creole speakers. Nonetheless, the alienating effect which Key Miller admits is present in his poetry and the double meaning with which Walcott's poetry can be read, simply reflect the fact that "[t]he differences in pronunciation between Creoles and accepted metropolitan dialects, or subsystems, of English allow for levels of ambiguity opaque to non-Creole speakers" (Warner-Lewis, 2001: 28). Thus, it must be noted that even though writers might try to include non-Creole speakers, the full-range of meaning that may be contained in a West Indian text is only really clear to a Creole-speaking audience.

4.2.5. West Indian Linguistic Heterogeneity

A final feature which distinguishes the linguistic situation of the region is its heterogeneity. The linguistic context of the Caribbean is a heterogeneous one which, importantly, varies from island to island. Even though West Indian writers from different Creole speaking communities can be seen to go through similar challenges, it must also be taken into account that each island Creole has its specificities, and writers write using their own island's Creole. In fact, this is true for the great majority of West Indian writers, with the exception of Nalo Hopkinson, who has admitted that her sense of Creole is a hybrid one (Hopkinson, 2005: 104). Hopkinson's use of Creole could be defined as Trans-West Indian because she grew up in Trinidad, Jamaica and Guyana and has thus inherited these three different Creole languages, all of which she uses in her fiction. She explains that in her novel *Midnight Robber*, her hybrid sense of Creole was put into action:

> *Midnight Robber* allowed me to write it that way because the nation in it was built of people from all over the Caribbean who came together. As I played with the language I discovered that I'd unconsciously created three levels of address and was applying them fairly consistently. (Hopkinson, 2005: 104)

In *Midnight Robber* the characters code-switch according to what nation in the Caribbean they are from. In the novel, Trinidadian, Jamaican and Guyanese Creole-speaker characters allow Hopkinson to use her peculiar Trans-Caribbean linguistic expertise.

However, it must be noted that Hopkinson's case is an unprecedented blend in the West Indian literary field. In general, West Indian writers use the Creole from their particular island. [112] In fact, linguist Maureen Warner-Lewis asserts that comprehension gaps might occur within the different islands in the Antillean archipelago:

> Since these islands are outposts of several metropolitan languages, not only do their Creoles carry different lexical bases, but even Creoles using the same lexical base show variations from island to island with regard to pronunciation systems, intonation patterns, syntax, idioms, lexical inventory, and signifier-referent correspondence. (Warner-Lewis, 2001: 28)

Warner-Lewis argues that some writers, aware of the possibility that even their most immediate audience – that is, speakers of other Creoles with the same lexical base – might not be familiar with their culture-specific terminology, actually provide glossaries. Texts such as Kenneth Parmasad's *Child of the Storms* (1987), Edward Kamau Brathwaite's *Masks* (1968), or Vic Reid's *New Day* (1980) have all included

[112] In this regard, in the West Indian Literature Conference held in 2011 at UWI, Trinidad, Hopkinson commented that in Sam Selvon's texts, all Caribbean characters, regardless of what island they were from, curiously spoke Trinidadian English Creole.

glossaries "to facilitate and include a multicultural audience even within the region" (Warner-Lewis, 2001: 34).

The linguistic heterogeneity that characterises the region emphasises how important it is for the analysis of West Indian literary texts to not fall into homogenising interpretations of Creole which render it as one single language. In this sense, it is noteworthy that although Simona Bertacco acknowledges in her analysis of Dionne Brand's text, *No Language Is Neutral* (1998), that the novelist uses Trinidadian Creole English in her collection of poems, Bertacco nonetheless consults the Jamaican English Dictionary by Cassidy and Le Page for the meaning of the word 'backra' (Bertacco, 2014: 77). Jamaican and Trinidadian English Creoles are both English-lexicon Creoles, which share the same lexical base, but as Warner-Lewis argues, even these show lexical variations. As Winer explains in the introduction to her *Dictionary of the English/Creole of Trinidad & Tobago* (2009), "the local TT [Trinidad and Tobago] lexicon taken as a whole is recognizably different from that of any country" (Winer, 2009: xxi). Due to the linguistic heterogeneity of the region, Bertacco should have made use of a dictionary of Trinidadian English Creole to make sure that the word in question shared the same meaning in the different Creoles.[113]

4.3. Language in Earl Lovelace's Narratives

4.3.1. The Linguistic Context of Trinidad and Tobago

Due to the aforementioned linguistic heterogeneity of the region as a whole, and of the Anglophone part of the Caribbean, the focus here needs to be narrowed down to the

[113] Alternatively, *Allsopp's Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* could have been also used.

linguistic context of Trinidad and Tobago. In this case, the situation is characterised by a continuum ranging from the acrolect (Trinidadian English) to the basilect (Trinidadian English Creole), with intermediate (mesolectal) registers. Trinidadian English Creole (hereafter TrinEC), a variety of Caribbean English-lexicon creoles, is the language of everyday interaction for the majority of the population, whilst Trinidadian English (hereafter TrinE), a variety of Standard English, is the written, formal and official language.[114] Both varieties, although distinct in nature, are lexically-related to English. As linguist Jo-Anne S. Ferreira explains, TrinEC is considered to be separate from TrinE and other Englishes in its morpho-syntax, but similar at the level of lexicon (Ferreira, 1997).

Even though Anglophone Caribbean Creoles are considered English-lexicon Creoles, they contain considerable input from other languages. In the case of Trinidad and Guyana, where about half of the population is of East Indian ancestry, their respective Creoles also contain vocabulary items traceable to that source. Hodge explains that apart from English, East Indian languages are not the only source of vocabulary for TrinEC. Trinidadian Creole lexicon is composed of vocabulary from Hindi-Bhojpuri as well as words from French-lexicon Creole, West-African languages, Amerindian languages, Spanish and other languages, as well as words coined afresh in the different speech communities and English words that have undergone semantic shifts (Hodge, *The Writer* 2007: 144).

[114] This is the linguistic context that characterises Trinidad, the island in which more than 90% of the population of the twin-island nation lives. In Tobago the two languages at the extremes of the continuum are Tobagonian English Creole (TobEC) and Tobagonian English (TobE). On a conversation held on the 4th November 2013 at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad, Dr. Jo-Anne Ferreira explained to me the new terms in use to distinguish between TrinEC and TobEC, which substituted the previous acronym TEC which could make reference to any of the two Creoles.

A final feature of the complex linguistic situation of Trinidad and Tobago which is also reflected in its literary texts is the fact that true language competence entails the intense rule-governed mixing of TrinEC and TrinE at all levels, except for the most formal ones (Youssef, 2009: 74). There is a systematic and constant code-mixing of the two languages depending on the situation. Thus, language competency in Trinidad and Tobago entails fluency in both TrinEC and TrinE and the capacity to mix them when appropriate.

4.3.2. Lovelace's Poetic Use of Creole

As previously argued, Lovelace has sought to offer a portrayal of the Caribbean region which welcomes what was produced by the 'ordinary people' as the real heritage of the region. This obviously includes the language created in Trinidad, TrinEC, which is used alongside TrinE to portray the linguistic reality of the nation. His use of the low-prestige variety should be seen as part of his overall objective to offer a vision of the Caribbean which valorises and celebrates the indigenous manifestations that characterise the region.

In Trinidadian literature, as with others in the West Indies, the narration has been traditionally represented in the standard language, and Creole has only been used for the dialogue of Creole-speaking characters. It has been previously argued that one of the pioneers to go against this trend was Trinidadian writer Sam Selvon, whose novel *The Lonely Londoners* (1956) has been credited with being the first to use Creole not only for dialogues but also narration. Maureen Warner-Lewis asserts that Selvon "dared to make a breakthrough in literary language usage by code-shifting from

Standard English to Creole as a vehicle for introspection […] [and] mastered the art of interweaving in his narrative voices various codes of English as well as Creole" (Warner-Lewis, 2001: 32). Warner-Lewis further asserts that the ease with which Selvon managed code transitions is also a feature of subsequent writers, whose success partly "derives from their gasp of the inner workings of various sectors of the societies they delineate, the psychological accuracy of their characterization, and the aptness and flexibility of their language range" (ibid.). This is certainly the case of Lovelace, whose alternative route, as he argues, has allowed him to give deeper insight into Trinidadian society, and as part of this portrayal he has sought to offer a vivid picture of the linguistic context of Trinidad and Tobago. Lovelace can be seen as one of the West Indian writers who has picked up Selvon's baton as regards the use of Creole in fiction. In fact, Selvon himself recognised that "[d]ialect can do a lot more than I did with it *The Lonely Londoners*" (qtd. in Fabre, 1988: 72). Lovelace's works have followed the path opened by Sam Selvon but have also taken a new turn, displaying a greater complexity in terms of how Creole is used. In Lovelace's texts the narrative voice move effortlessly and imperceptibly between TrinE and TrinEC so that the reader is as little aware of code-switching as in real everyday speech situations (Warner-Lewis, 2001: 33). His narratives also blur the hierarchical distinction between the language of the narrator and that of the characters. Lovelace certainly makes an unapologetic use of TrinEC since he places himself, as a writer, at the same level as his Creole-speaking characters. He argues that

> We [writers] are seeking all the time to express ourselves, and that distance between ourselves and our characters, which previous writers needed or were forced to create because of the distance they felt – we don't have that. Therefore the narrator belongs to the same company as his characters. (Lovelace, 2003: 94)

Unlike other Trinidadian writers,[115] Lovelace does not feel the need to either keep his distance or place himself in a different position to that of his Creole-speaking characters. This feature, which is directly related to his aforementioned collective narrative voice, challenges the single narrative perspective and the monologic narrator. As Aiyejina has argued, the distinction between narrator and that which is narrated is dissolved into a participatory entity, as in a story-telling session in which the story is constructed collaboratively (Aiyejina, 2000: 16).

Finally, another particularity in Lovelace's language is the use of neologisms. Words like 'warriorhood' and 'humanness' are used by the author to signal some of his major concerns. Lovelace makes use of these terms, in the form of abstract nouns, to affirm and validate the Trinidadian grassroots or 'ordinary people' worldview which has survived thanks to resistance and struggle. Hodge offers a classification of these terms according to whether they affirm and celebrate, among other qualities, vitality, dignity and resistance. Thus, the terms 'aliveness' and 'quickness' are associated with vitality; 'tallness', 'personhood' and 'humanness' are associated with dignity; [116] and 'dangerousness' and 'warriorhood' with resistance (Hodge, *Earl Lovelace and the evolution* 2007: 263).

All in all, Lovelace's use of the Creole contributes to the advancement of the language, to its normalisation and expansion beyond the spheres of the informal or, in

[115] This is the case of renowned Trinidadian writer V.S. Naipaul, who has demonstrated a superior proficiency and eminently artistic use of the Creole. However, Naipaul's use of Creole is limited to the dialogue and very rarely used in the narration, establishing, this way, a distance whereby it is impossible to identify the language variety with Naipaul's own language variety (Hodge, 2011: 477).

[116] It must be noted that Lovelace's texts have shown sexist usage of certain terms. Namely, the term "manhood" has been used as synonymous of personhood. Lovelace has afterwards admitted that "I haven't understood the woman's question or the woman's struggle for personhood as fully as I might have" (qtd. in Dance, 1984: 150). He explains that he hasn't been able to include women as part of the ongoing struggle in society (Lovelace, 2003: 17) and has tried to compensate for this short-sighted perspective in his subsequent novels *Salt* and *Is Just a Movie*.

the case of the arts, the oral tradition. As Hodge explains, for the artists of the oral tradition, such as the calypsonian or the dub poet, Creole has traditionally been the natural medium, whereas this has not been the case in fiction, where Creole continues to be seen as somewhat an intruder (Hodge, 1998: 47). Lovelace argues that Creole could gradually become the language of the arts in general instead of being limited to calypso and spoken word. He expresses his optimism about the future of Creole in the arts and argues that "it [Creole] is going to make its way" (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013). Moreover, since Creole, the first language of the majority of Trinidadians, is not recognised as a national language, its inclusion in his texts does not only serve to make Lovelace's works more realistic, but more importantly, it becomes a means of challenging the higher status of Standard English. By using Creole, a full-fledged language that represents a form of resistance, the author gives validity to what had long been considered, and unfortunately is still considered by some today, as a form of 'broken English'. Therefore, its use can be read as part of the enterprise of asserting the validity of Caribbean culture and "extricating Caribbean culture from the realm of the unofficial and unavowed" (Hodge, *Earl Lovelace and the evolution* 2007:5). Thus, Earl Lovelace's poetic use of TrinEC, one that consciously blurs the distinction between narrator and characters, is intended to reaffirm the people's worth and celebrating and elevating their language to a higher status.

4.3.3. Relationship with Non-West Indian Readership

As it has been argued, West Indian texts have had to negotiate how to facilitate accessibility so as to include a non-Creole readership – its major readership – without tailoring its texts for them.

In the case of Lovelace's works, although they are certainly not tailored for a Western audience, to a certain extent they also make some concessions to an external readership. Lovelace has had to deal with the issue of audience which has, as with any other West Indian writer, also conditioned his writing. The extent to which this conditioning has affected both the language employed, and the way Trinidadian cultural references are used in his texts is here analysed.

In terms of language, it can be argued that Lovelace employs some degree of self-censorship as regards the range of TrinEC structures used in some of his texts. Merle Hodge attests that Lovelace sometimes falls short of the full basilectal range and places his characters closer to the mesolectal side of the continuum than they would be in reality (Hodge, *Earl Lovelace and the evolution* 2007: 258). Therefore, according to Hodge, Lovelace is also aware of being read by a monolingual Standard English-speaking audience and tries to communicate in a language that is accessible to as wide an audience as possible. At the same time, it must also be acknowledged that writers use their own Creole as a model. In the case of Earl Lovelace, Hodge argues that he might be transposing into his characters his own "Creole repertoire", that is, the Creole repertoire of the educated (ibid.). Secondly, the use of mesolectal options instead of basilectal ones might also be due to Lovelace's desire to reflect an ever-changing reality. By placing his characters within the intermediate range of the continuum, he is, in fact, simply reflecting modern Trinidadian Creole, a decreolised variety of the language. Therefore, Lovelace's closeness to the mesolectal gamut of the continuum does not contradict his decision not to adapt his fiction to suit the marketable rules established by the Western culture industry. Moreover, even though Lovelace intends to also include Standard English-speaking audiences, this does not mean that a reader

who is not familiar with TrinEC and Trinidadian culture would have, as Hodge argues, the same relationship with Lovelace's novels as a Trinidadian would:

> The text of a Caribbean work of fiction inevitably yields more to a speaker of Creole than to other readers, which is as it should be. The same can be said of other readers and their relationship with the literature of their first language. (Hodge, *Earl Lovelace and the evolution* 2007: 188)

Thus, as West Indian texts which uses Creole – although this is not marked orthographically –, Lovelace's narratives also contain levels of ambiguity which are opaque to the reader who is not equipped with a knowledge of Creole.

Lovelace's attitude generally seems to parallel that of his character Philo, the calypsonian in his novel *The Dragon Can't Dance.* When Philo performed in the calypso tent during Carnival season – a time when the number of tourists increases dramatically in Trinidad – unlike other calypsonians who would offer subdued versions of their calypsos to please and translate Trinidadian culture to the foreign audience, Philo would not adapt his calypsos because "he didn't sing for the tourists then, if they came in the tent to listen, let them walk with a Trinidad dictionary" (Lovelace, 1979: 229). Instead of adapting his calypsos for the tourists to understand, Philo's calypsos fulfil their traditional role. Philo acknowledges the burning need to write and sing about the Caribbean experience without concessions, and in so doing effectively succeeds in fulfilling the traditional role of the calypsonian, the ordinary people's spokesperson. Lovelace, too, performs a similar role through his writing. As West Indian artists, both Philo and Lovelace, calypsonian and writer, choose not to adapt their performances and fictions to please a foreign audience.

In this sense, and moving on to the issue of cultural references, Lovelace stands apart from other West Indian writers whom writing from the metropolis have felt the need to decode difference to a Western readership. These authors have set the metropolitan audience as their primary audience and have shaped their texts to accommodate them. For example, this can be seen in one of the first novels by Sam Sevon, *An Island is a World*. In the novel, the author decides to include the glossing of Trinidadian cultural references which might be unknown to a Western readership. The term "buljol" is glossed to the non-West Indian reader in the following manner:

> Jennifer called him for breakfast. She had made "buljol" – a West Indian dish of salted codfish, one of the poor man's staple items of diet. The fish is soaked until it loses its hardness, and broken up into small pieces. Or roasted and treated the same way. It is served with olive oil and fresh tomatoes and onions, and avocado pears, if they are in season. There is a kind of bread called "hops" and the "buljol" is most enjoyable with it. (Selvon, 1955: 3)

This is an example of an overt glossing of the term 'buljol', which, in fact, almost resembles a dictionary entry. The glossing is not embedded and somehow justified within the context of the reference, instead the explanation seems to directly interpellate the non-West Indian reader. In fact, the explanation, introduced as an insert, interrupts the narrative flow to decode difference to the non-West Indian reader. To Selvon's credit, it must be noted that even though the novel contains a few other instances of this, mostly at the beginning, this is undoubtedly the most abrupt explanation of a Trinidadian cultural term found in the novel. Moreover, as previously commented, Selvon argued that if he had the chance to rewrite any of his works he would have rewritten this one. Maybe he would have modified this overt and quite shocking type of glossing in favour of more subtle or contextualised explanations. Moreover, unlike subsequent writers, Selvon was part of the generation of writers who

birthed the West Indian novel and therefore had almost no tradition to look up to as a West Indian novelist.

Notwithstanding, Lovelace and Selvon have arguably had a very different approach to the adaptation of their texts for non-West Indian audiences. To prove Lovelace's different approach, the exact same cultural reference, 'buljol' can also be found in Lovelace's second novel *The Schoolmaster*, without any type of glossing:

> He is afraid that we change too much, that we become like the people of the towns. He thinks we will go bad, and do little work, and drink much rum, and gamble, and leave the cocoa to rot in the fields. I say to him, Father-priest, life is change […] I do not think he is a bad fellow. Coward…Ah, this buljol and bake is fine tonight. But I can also take a drink of rum for the weather, and because I feel happy inside my heart now that I know the school is to be opened and we already have a schoolmaster. (Lovelace, 1968: 36)

The text does not seek to gloss the reference for a non-West Indian audience in any way. In fact, the reference is not even explained by the context in the preceding or following lines. The context only makes clear that 'buljol' refers to some kind of food but the exact reference is only available to the West Indian audience. Thus, the non-glossing of the term 'buljol' proves that the stance attributed to the calypsonian Philo parallels that of Lovelace.

However, Lovelace's standpoint is not always consistent with the example cited above. Undoubtedly, Lovelace can be said to write, first of all, for a West Indian audience, but he is also aware of being read by a foreign readership which is, in fact, as it has been argued, his main audience. As a result, a similar phenomenon to the one described with his use of language can be detected as regards cultural references. Lovelace's texts do also offer instances in which cultural references are glossed. This is the case of the term 'Baachac' used in *Is Just a Movie*. In the novel the term is used

to refer to a group of children: "Orville a boy who was one of the tribe of Bascombe children, grouped by the town under the single name *Baachac*, a species of destructive brown big-headed ants" (Lovelace, 2011: 233). Although the explanation of the term is both shorter and less abrupt than Selvon's glossing of the term 'buljol', here Lovelace's stance is quite far from Philo's.

However, it must be noted that Philo's attitude is not consistent throughout the novel either, and his refusal to decode difference for the tourist in the tent also needs to be refined. In fact, an analysis of the evolution of Philo's calypsos in the novel will reveal that Lovelace's stance is as inconsistent as Philo's, or rather it would reveal that both their postures are endowed with a dual vision. The extract that was referred to earlier serves to prove the similarities between Philo and Lovelace. A lengthier version of the extract which starts with Philo's calypso will help elucidate the different stances:

> *Since I know myself people beating me*
> *I asking them why they wouldn't tell me*
> *At last I know why, is because I don't cry*
> *Bobolee don't have water in their eye*
>
> *So beat me again*
> *I wouldn't complain*
> *Break off my hands, bust up my shins*
> *'Cause I won't cry, and you know why*
> *Bobolee don't have water in their eye.*
>
> He didn't sing for the tourists so much then, if they came in the tent to listen, let them walk with a Trinidad dictionary. But the MC felt it was a good song and used to explain to strangers that bobolee was a sort of effigy of Judas, fellars got an old jacket and old pants and stuffed it up with straw to beat on Good Friday, and all the boys with big sticks beating it and running behind it, crying: 'Beat! Beat! Beat the bobolee!' (Lovelace, 1979: 229; italics in the original)

This extended version proves that Philo's initial stance is not Lovelace's, since the term 'bobolee' which renders Philo's calypsos partly opaque for tourists in the tent is actually explained in the novel. Although the explanation of the cultural reference is embedded in the context, as it is somehow concealed under the MC's decision to explain the meaning of 'bobolee' for the benefit of the tourists, it is nonetheless included in the novel. The MC's explanation, which ends up being almost like an encyclopaedia entry, though not as abrupt as Selvon's, is a concession to the tourists in the tent and to non-West Indian readers of the novel. Bearing this in mind, it could be argued that Lovelace's stance is different form Philo's, but a deeper analysis reveals that Philo's position evolves as the novel develops. As the word 'then'[117] reveals, Philo combined the writing and performing of political calypsos like the Bobolee calypso, which did not allow him to make a living out of his craft, with humorous calypsos. At the age of forty-two, he started writing humorous calypsos like "The Axe Man" and "I am the Ape Man not Tarzan". The novel explains that with "The Axe Man", Philo

> had found a way in which he could affirm himself and survive. It emphasized for him the necessity to be *role* serious, not real serious, and brought him back to his own affirming irreverence that had seen him through his boyhood. He could see jokes in things again. (ibid., 231)

Philo goes from being real serious to becoming '*role'* serious, that is, he gains the double vision necessary to affirm himself and at the same time live off of his calypsos. Philo's calypsos start dealing with serious matters in a humorous way, as can be seen in Philo's Tarzan calypso, which will win him the Calypso King Crown:

> *I am the ape man not Tarzan*

[117] In "He didn't sing for the tourists so much *then*" (Lovelace, 1979: 229; my italics)

> *This is something you have to understand*
> *Tarzan couldn't be no ape*
> *Anywhere in Africa he land we coulda cook him for dinner*
> *He couldn't escape*
>
> *They just want to make me shame, giving Tarzan my fame*
> *Imagine, this white man swinging from tree to tree I must laugh at that, how could it be?*
> *Is me! I am the monkey man, not he.*
> (ibid., 230; italics in the original)

Through the use of humour Philo appropriates the fallacies which denigrate black men and deprive them of their humanity, and praise the white man for his superiority. Philo's use of humour can be connected to Rohlehr's acknowledgement of Lovelace's double vision.[118] Philo, like Lovelace, is able to recognise that laughter can transcend the moral message. This double vision allows Philo's calypsos and Lovelace's novels to be politically engaged Trinidadian artforms from which they can also make a living. Philo's decision to turn to humorous calypsos and Lovelace's inclusion of a non-West Indian audience allow them to reach a wider audience and consequently live off of their craft. Both West Indian artists have recognised that their primary audiences are not compromised, nor is their political engagement with the region betrayed by using humour and including a non-West Indian readership.

4.4. Translating Lovelace's Narratives

After having analysed Earl Lovelace's language and his stance as regards his non-West Indian audience, this section will first foreground the importance of translation in Postcolonial Studies in general and in the Caribbean region in particular. Once its

[118] See section 3.4.3.1.

paramount importance in both areas is established, the section will close with a discussion of the political dimension of the task of translating Earl Lovelace's narratives. The first section will seek to answer questions such as: How does one undertake the translation of West Indian literature which does not aim at universality? How to translate a West Indian text that is *dangerously* engaged with society and which aims to represent issues and peoples long silenced? And the second section will answer questions such as: What should a translation of Earl Lovelace's texts into Spanish be approached in order to contribute to the writer's *intentio autoris*? In both sections the representation of Creole will be foregrounded as a crucial aspect of the process that allows the translator to be part of the collective invention chain that destabilises what is seen as common-sensical. The section will close with a note on the paramount role of the translation of West Indian texts within and beyond the region.

4.4.1. Translating Postcolonial Narratives

Within the global context of the postcolonial literary field, the translation of postcolonial texts can perform a role of opposition. Assimilative translations in which a foreign text is made familiar to the target-language reader can extend homogenising representations of the postcolonial world, but translations, as will be argued, can alternatively contribute to challenging homogenising and simplistic visions of the non-West.

On the one hand, it must be noted that assimilative translations in which the post-colonial world is decoded for the Western reader are a product of the globalised cultural market. As previously signalled, Pierre Bourdieu has argued that the field of

cultural production is currently characterised by a globalization policy defined by submission to the law of commerce, and is therefore the opposite of what we understand by culture (Bourdieu, 2003: 74). As a consequence, Bourdieu argues that the context of commercial globalisation has precipitated the emergence of a world fiction which offers

> omnibus products that can be consumed by audiences of all backgrounds in all countries because they are weakly differentiated and differentiating: Hollywood films, telenovelas, TV serials, soap operas, police series, commercial music, boulevard and Broadway theatre, all-purpose magazines, and best-sellers produced directly for the world market. (Bourdieu, 2003: 68-9)

Thus, assimilative or simplified products which aim at immediate economic profit are part of this globalised cultural scenario, from which postcolonial texts and their translations do not escape.

In the postcolonial field of cultural production in particular, Spivak recognizes that there exists a restricted permeability of global culture that causes a lack of communication within and among the immense heterogeneity of the subaltern cultures of the world:

> Borders are easily crossed from metropolitan countries, whereas attempts to enter from the so-called peripheral countries encounter bureaucratic and policed frontiers, altogether more difficult to penetrate […] there are satellite dishes in Nepalese villages [but] the opposite is never true". (Spivak, 2003:16)

Since there is an uneven cultural exchange between metropolitan and peripheral countries, the crossing of borders can be a problematic affair. Obviously the field of literary translation is no exception. There is an imbalance in translation traffic, from economically wealthy nations to economically poorer ones. Richard Jacquemond

explains that the unequal global translation flux, "predominantly North-South, while South-South translation is almost non-existent and North-South is unequal" confirms that cultural hegemony is, to a great extent, economic hegemony (Jacquemond 1992: 139).

Within this context, translations of postcolonial texts can also work as tools of neocolonial dominance, that is, these can be used to efface all differences of the source text whether these are linguistic, cultural or of any other kind. These domesticating translations of literary texts between power-differentiated contexts, in which the Western reader recognises his or her own culture in a cultural other, have been used to maintain colonial discourses. These homogenising translations which domesticate the source text to accommodate a Western reader are, for translation scholar Lawrence Venuti, "narcissistic experiences" (Venuti, 1992: 5) which ultimately impose an imperialist mindset. As Gayatri Spivak recognises in her article "The Politics of Translation", generic translations which efface difference ultimately contribute to the perpetuation of the Western vision and add to the "neo-colonialist construction of the non-West" (Spivak, 1993: 181). In fact, this homogenising tendency is not particular to the cultural production or translation field but, as translation scholar Douglas Robinson explains in *Translation and Empire: Postcolonial Theories Explained* (1997), simplifying translations are part of an overall strategy to protect the readership, as members of hegemonic cultures, from true difference. Robinson argues that

> [members of hegemonic cultures] are never exposed to true difference, for they are strategically protected from the disturbing experience of the foreign; protected not only through assimilative translations but also through five-star hotels in third-world countries, and the like. (Robinson, 1997: 109)

It must also be noted that postcolonial texts' eligibility for translation also answers to the dictates of the Western literary world, in that the selection of texts for translation is also conditioned by a set of elements that can function as agents of censorship. Apart from the relational factors of location, topics and language previously analysed,[119] translation scholar Michael Cronin argues that, on the one hand, the stress is on "accessible, readable books which favour a translation strategy of least resistance and maximum naturalization […] [and] target language readability is the sole criterion of assessment (Cronin, 2013: 121). The concept of readability is dependent upon these texts conforming to certain standards, otherwise they are not deemed eligible. In this era of globalisation, as has been argued, cultural products that decode difference to the Western reader, and that are written by migrant writers and use European languages – preferably English – are favoured.

On the other hand, translation can play a completely opposite role in the current field of cultural production, as it also has the potential to be transformative. In *Nation, Language and the Ethics of Translation* (2005), Sandra Bermann mantains that little could be more relevant to nations in the contemporary world "than the range of texts in need of translation and a heightened awareness of the complex negotiations among peoples and languages that translation, in its various modes, reveals (Bermann, 2005: 7). Bermann further argues that "more and better translations of non-English texts could, for instance, clearly help the Anglo-American reader to engage literary worlds and historical cultures that are not her own" (ibid.).

Among the texts in need of translation, postcolonial texts written by non-migrant writers, which are not tailored for a Western readership and are written in vernacular

[119] See section 2.1.2. for an analysis of the relational factors.

languages rank high on the list. Engaged translations of this type of postcolonial text can work to introduce newness and offer versions of the non-Western world which fight the stereotyped visions promoted in the mainstream Western literary world. It must be noted that in such a context, the translator is no longer a passive figure but an active and engaged one, responsible for challenging cultural frameworks, introducing difference into the world and ultimately changing societies. With his or her choices and strategies, the translator can contribute to the destabilisation of the hegemonic control of the translation of literary texts between power-differentiated contexts. The translator can help promote, as Spivak argues, national literatures of the global South as well as facilitate a move away from monolingual, presentist, narcissistic cultural studies (Spivak, 2003: 16).

For translations to challenge the homogenising views currently promoted within the field of cultural production, no single strategy can be implemented in all contexts. Translation scholar Maria Tymoczko explains that the strategies necessary to accomplish engaged and committed translations are to be "selected, invented, and improvised for their tactical values in specific situations, contexts, places and times" (Tymoczko, 2010: 230). Tymoczko further argues that activist translations are not uniform and consistent but

> complex, fragmentary, and even self-contradictory, as translators position their work through a metonymic process to achieve strategic ideological goals, prioritizing particular aspects of the source text for specific activist effects relevant to the immediate context. (Tymoczko, 2010: 16)

Tymoczko asserts that such metonymic processes are essential for translations to be engaged and to participate in ideological struggles. Whatever the strategy, though, the aim would remain the same, namely to create an engaged translation that resists

Western dominant culture values. In this sense, Lawrence Venuti argues that the translator should seek to

> reproduce whatever features of the foreign text abuse or resist dominant cultural values in the source language, yet this reproductive effort requires the invention of analogous means of signification that resist dominant culture values in the target language. (Venuti, 1992: 12)

Thus, in order to reproduce, in the target language, the features the source text seek to resist, it would be necessary to use different strategies to invent analogous means of signification.

4.4.2. An Author Who Does not 'translate as well'

Earl Lovelace is undoubtedly a pivotal figure in West Indian culture, yet one who holds, as previously argued, an ambivalent position in the postcolonial literary field. Many factors could explain why in the value weighting of cultural productions exercised by the West, Lovelace's works have been to some extent left aside. Above all, Lovelace does not fulfil any of the three main requisites necessary for his writings to be eligible for promotion in the West. He is an island-based writer, writes context-based texts that escape the stereotyped vision of the Caribbean, and has made extensive use of Trinidadian English Creole in his writings.

Lovelace's marginalisation responds to the emphasis imposed by transnationalism on routed narratives, with the subsequent sidelining of rooted narratives from postcolonial authors who have rejected the option of migration and have decided to write from their respective homelands. Lovelace's context-based or rooted narratives are not tailored

for a Western audience and, thus, have been described as opaque or less readable from the Western perspective. Instead, postcolonial migrant or diasporic writing, usually a more easily accessible fiction written in English or another European language, has been privileged and promoted.

These unmet prerequisites hinder Lovelace's texts from promotion and consequently, from being translated. Thus, Lovelace can be said to belong to that group of non-diasporic postcolonial writers who "retain a national focus, who don't straddle worlds, or *translate as well*" (Boehmer, 2005: 239; my italics) from a hegemonic perspective. As a result, Lovelace's texts have not been widely translated and have not been translated at all into Spanish.[120]

Translating a postcolonial author like Earl Lovelace, who has chosen to contribute to the continuing political struggle for self-representation with his writings, should be seen as part of a collaborative endeavour towards building counter discourses and redistributing the privilege of seeing and representing. Translations can participate in "shaping societies, nations, and global culture in primary ways" (Tymoczko, 2010: 20).

4.4.3. *Regal Poverty* and Creole

This section will explain what Earl Lovelace has proposed that translators should take into account when translating his work. In a recent interview, Lovelace made two major recommendations to a prospective translator of his novels. First, he suggested

[120] Out of his seven novels, a collection of short-stories and a collection of plays, only his novel *The Dragon Can't Dance* has been translated into Bulgarian, Dutch, French, German, Italian and Japanese.

that the translator ought to be able to grasp 'a sense of the characters', and secondly he expressed his concern over retaining the integrity of the Creole used in his writings (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013).

As regards characters, the protagonists in Lovelace's novels are either Port of Spain slum-dwellers or peasants in rural communities. Lovelace argues that these sections of the West Indian population are, in fact, the royalty of the country. In the case of *The Dragon Can't Dance*, he suggests that the translator should understand that poverty is not the central force in their lives:

> [Poverty] is a factor but for me what it [*The Dragon Can't Dance*] is talking about is that they are seeking to assert themselves as human beings. For me this is important to understand and not to see them just as poor people here but to see them in that other dimension. (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013)

According to the author, the characters living in Calvary Hill[121] might all share a kind of poverty but it is nonetheless a poverty defined as 'regal poverty' (ibid.). In his narratives this regal poverty is recognised either by characters who do not belong to that section of the population or by the narrative voice. In the novel *Salt*, set in rural Trinidad, the character of Sonan Lochan provides an example of the former. Lochan recalls that when he was a child, he would stand in front of his grandfather's store every year to watch the marchers in the Independence Day parade organised by Bango. Watching the march with children from the nation's different ethnic groups present in, Lochan "did not see their poverty. What he saw was something powerful and rhythmic and grand" (Lovelace, 1996: 104). Similarly, in *Is Just a Movie*, the narrator describes Port of Spain slum-dwellers' poverty as "not strong enough to

[121] Calvary Hill is the setting of Lovelace's *The Dragon Can't Dance.* It is a hill overlooking the capital of the country, Port of Spain, mainly populated by African-descended people at the bottom of the economic ladder.

overwhelm the monument of their spirit, or overturn the cathedral of their dreams" (Lovelace, 2011: 64). The emphasis in Lovelace's oeuvre is not on the characters' poverty but on their humanity and the struggles and achievements that make them royal and allow them to be defined as "everlasting monument[s] to human endurance and human dignity" (Lovelace, 2003: 37). In his latest novel, *Is Just a Movie*, the author provides a list of some of the members of the Trinidadian royalty:

> Then what about the ordinary people who resisted the colonial pressure, whose resistance gave us a sense of self, whose artistry for our humanity and whose struggle turned plantations into battlefields for humanness? The stickfighters and the masquerade players, the dragon and jab molassie, the Midnight Robbers, King Sailors and moko jumbie, all those maskers who come out of nowhere to speak for who we are, the caisonian and the creators of steelpan, the dancers of Orisha and the Shouters? (Lovelace, 2011: 324)

Among the elements that make up this list of traditions created in Trinidad and Tobago by the ordinary people, we find some of the cultural artforms that Lovelace has systematically vindicated in his oeuvre. This list of Creole cultural manifestations includes folk traditions related to carnival like traditional masquerade characters, stickfighting, calypso and steelpan and African-derived religions. These are all integrated into Lovelace's work – to varying degrees and according to the thematic focus – with particular emphasis on Carnival and African-derived religions. It is important for the translator to acknowledge that these Creole artforms define the characters and that their presence is of central importance in the source text. Thus, in order to maintain the 'sense of the characters', on the one hand, the translator needs to understand the concept of regal poverty, and on the other, the target text should avoid a generic or simplified portrayal of this section of the population and their artforms.

Secondly, as regards language, Lovelace suggests that a prospective translator should retain the integrity of the Creole (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013). This means two major aspects must be taken into account: his non-hierarchical and unapologetic use of Creole, and his refusal to adapt English spelling to represent Creole. As has been previously argued, the distance between earlier writers and their characters is not present in Lovelace's narratives. Lovelace's unorthodox journey has allowed him to give an insider view of his characters and their reality since he feels he is part of the world he portrays. In terms of language it is therefore crucial not to create a distance between the narrator and the characters of the narrative because as Lovelace makes clear, "once we begin to use the narrator – who is the kind of voice of authority – to speak in a different way than the person who he is speaking about, you already started to put the whole thing in an upsided fashion" (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013). Since the author recognises himself in his characters, retaining this lack of hierarchical is key for the translator.

It is also important to note that Lovelace does not use eye dialect to represent TrinEC, that is, he does not use the more easily recognizable phonetic representations of Creole English. It can be argued that since Lovelace, for the most part, has opted not to adapt the spelling of Standard English to accommodate Creole phonology, the translator should not opt for this kind of deformation to reflect Creole in the target language either. To do so would not recreate Lovelace's language; instead, this would reflect different and conflicting strategies between the source and target text.

Apart from not using phonetic representations of Creole, since TrinEC is a heavily decreolised variety, the translator needs to be equipped with a knowledge of Creole linguistics so as to be able to discover what is hidden in the Caribbean writer's use of

language. As previously argued, the non-orthographical representation of Creole might mislead the translator into believing that TrinEC is not present in the text. Moreover, the two varieties found in Trinidad, TrinE and TrinEC, a variety of Standard English and a variety of Caribbean English-lexicon creoles respectively, although distinct in nature, are lexically-related to English. As linguist Jo-Anne S. Ferreira explains, TrinEC is considered to be separate from TrinE and other Englishes in its morpho-syntax, but similar at the level of lexicon (Ferreira, 1997). Consequently, they are for the most part mutually intelligible languages. This is increasingly the case given the fact that modern TrinEC is a heavily decreolised variety with just a few vestiges of the old basilect which is further away from the Standard.

Generally, the translator must acknowledge that Lovelace's use of Creole seeks to contribute to the advancement of the language in the literary world. Standardisation should therefore be avoided in the target text since his use of the informal language that is held in low esteem is meant to resist dominant cultural values.

4.4.4. Translating Creole

4.4.4.1. The Translator's Equipment

> To know only one of the languages of a bilingual or multilingual society is to have one's access to the knowledge of the overall national reality partly blocked. (Torres-Saillant, 2006: 26)

In her article "Translating into English", Spivak argues that translation is the "most intimate act of reading" because it entails, in Jacques Derrida's words, entering the protocols of a text and the laws specific to it (Spivak, 2005: 93). Spivak argues that

translators should attempt to grasp the writer's presuppositions because these develop into a kind of singular code and inform the writer's use of language. In order to understand this singular code in detail, Spivak adds that translators' knowledge of the language should allow them to "inhabit, even if on loan, the many mansions, and many levels of the host language" (ibid., 95).

In the case of translations of West Indian texts, this intimate act of reading entails being able to distinguish the two linguistic mediums that appear in most West Indian literary texts: Standard English and Creole English. Furthermore, it is also necessary to fully understand the two codes so as to not misinterpret the text or inadvertently omit potential ambiguities.

In this sense, the case of two literary translators of West Indian literature is particularly instructive. These translators (Cavagnoli, 2008; Fruner, 2007) have written essays on their respective translations which underscore the marginal importance that is allotted to Creole by some translators. Their essays comment on their translations of Trinidadian-born authors V.S. Naipaul and Dionne Brand who, like the great majority of West Indian writers, have made use of Creole in their writing. First of all, both translators fail to recognise the inclusion of TrinEC in the source texts. As discussed earlier, this might be due to the fact that TrinEC differs from TrinE in its grammar and phonology though the two share largely the same vocabulary and are, for the most part, mutually intelligible. Although phonologically differentiated as a language, when writers choose not to adapt Standard English spelling to represent Creole, as with the texts in question, Hodge explains that "its scribal representation can easily mislead the uninformed reader" (Hodge, 2011: 470). Thus, the translator, as the most intimate reader, might fail to recognise when Creole is used. As a result, these translators use

terms such as broken English and grammatical errors and misconjugations to describe the use of Creole in their respective source texts. These dismissive views confirm the importance of the long established area of Creole linguistics, which has not only defined the complex linguistic context of the region and identified the different Creoles but has also established that Creole is a codified language system. Referring to Creole in such a disparaging manner, can therefore be said to prove the translator's inability to inhabit the many levels of the host language/s. In the case of the West Indian literary field in particular, Hodge argues that "readers who cannot recognize Creole are at some disadvantage. Their misreading of the text is liable sooner or later to produce inaccurate or incomplete interpretations (Hodge, *Earl Lovelace and the evolution* 2007: xv). In other words, these translators are not aware that due to the interwoven nature of West Indian texts, these might contain a level of ambiguity that is opaque to a Standard English monolingual readership. Inevitably, without a basic knowledge of Creole, translators might fail to grasp the complete meaning of these texts, which can result in incomplete translations.

In her article "A Second Translation: Translating V.S. Naipaul into Italian" (2008) Franca Cavagnoli seems to describe the linguistic context of the region with accuracy. Cavagnoli understands that the characters use "an English that deviated greatly from Standard English and sounds more like the variant of English spoken in Trinidad" (Cavagnoli, 2008: 202). Although she never uses the term Trinidadian English Creole to refer to the language used by some of the characters, her essay proves that she seems to be aware of the complex linguistic situation of the region. However, in her otherwise very interesting article, she also describes the language employed by characters of Indian origin as broken English. Cavagnoli explains that

> in *A House for Mr. Biswas*, the characters of Indian origin, like the mission's school teacher, speak broken English: "How old you is, boy?" (41); also present is the English of the descendents of the African slaves and European colonialists, like Alec: "I don't know, boy. I suppose is because I is a Portuguese or something" (46). (ibid., 203)

The term broken English contrasts enormously with her previous explanation of the linguistic situation in which no value judgement was implied. Cavagnoli seems to be analysing the same phenomenon from two contradictory perspectives: on the one hand, the uninformed and prejudiced view, and on the other, that of the scientifically informed. Used side by side in her argument, these two positions are at the very least puzzling given the opposing perspectives they reflect. This might be due to the fact that the term 'broken English' is arguably in tune with the general attitude of the writer Cavagnoli translates. Naipaul, unlike the majority of West Indian writers, would most probably have agreed with the translator's use of such a backward term. As a writer who has famously argued that nothing was or will ever be created in the region, Naipaul could have easily described the language of some of his characters as broken English. Thus, the translator seems to be ironically trapped between a certain awareness of the linguistic context of the region and the prejudiced view of the author of the source text.

Bearing this in mind, it must be noted that it is important for the translator to be aware of the writer's attitude towards Creole. The case of Naipaul arguably reflects quite an unusual attitude towards Creole in West Indian literature. Caribbean or Caribbean-origin writers who have decided to use their Creole language in their texts, have mostly sought to elevate the language and to show that it too can be a valuable part of written literature. Most writers aim at reflecting the complex linguistic reality of the Caribbean, as well as validating a despised and undervalued language. Though being

aware of Naipaul's unusual attitude towards Creole is important, his *Mandarin*[122] attitude does not exempt the translator from being equipped with a basic knowledge of TrinEC. This is particularly so because Naipaul's refusal to acknowledge the rich culture created in the West Indies does not stop him from using or having used Creole in his texts. Therefore, regardless of Naipaul's approach to West Indian culture, his texts may consciously or unconsciously encode multiple meanings that may only be detected by the translator who is equipped with the basics of the language.

A different and less informed perspective is voiced by Sara Fruner, who has translated Dionne Brand's *At the Full and Change of the Moon* and *What We All Long For* into Italian. In her article entitled "Dig Her Text Deep to Draw My Text Out! Translating-Exploring Dionne Brand's Land" (2007), Fruner underlines some of the translation choices undertaken as regards Brand's use of language. Her article reveals that she is not familiar with the diverse linguistic context of the region and is consequently unable to recognise or understand Creole. The translator refers to the parts of the text written in Trinidadian English Creole as "incorrect English". In particular, Fruner describes the language of the character of Kamena from Brand's novel *At the Full and Change of the Moon*, as displaying grammatical mistakes (Fruner, 2007: 5). According to Fruner, Kamena's language is characterised by "distinctive syntactic marks of his own – marks typical of orality, such as the singular subject followed by the plural verb or vice versa, the nonconjugated or the mis-conjugated verbs" (ibid.). In her essay, she illustrates this with an extract from the novel in which the aforementioned are marked in bold:

[122] The epithet '*Mandarin*' has been commonly used to refer to Naipaul's attitude, as it can be seen in the title of Rob Nixon's study on Naipaul, *London Calling: V.S. Naipaul, Postcolonial Mandarin*. In fact, as argued in section 2.1.2.2., Naipaul claims that West Indians are not capable of developing their own culture.

> A good day was at the end of the moon's rounds when the evening **come** dark… Full moon nights, your mother **slip** away to find the medicine. That last night when you was already put to sleep the singer **sing** a last song and the people of the convoy **make** many speeches… they **bless** the poison your mother **had gather** to send them all home… The whole thing **end** up in punishment… The chopped heads of the copper keeper and the plantine grove keeper, as them **was** the leaders, King and Dauphin, **was** raised on sticks … You **was** still in you mother's belly but you **was** there as we **was** all called… And the heads **was** made to wither on sticks… When your mother **done served** her time… And she **know** the ants… Your mother **did seen** the insect which **come** in the wind… She **did seen** the swarms… She **discover** medicines… And your mother and me and the remaining of us **last** out and **wait**… Until the day I **leave** to find my maroonage and which I did find when I **roll** under the sky. Until Marie Ursule **send** for me… (Fruner, 2007: 5)

Not being equipped with a basic knowledge of TrinEC, Fruner does not understand the functions that these verbal forms actually perform in the text. She fails to recognise that the examples in bold are not mis-conjugated or nonconjugated verbs but verbal forms which are typical of the TrinEC verbal system, which differs significantly from that of Standard English. Since Creole linguistics has long established that TrinEC is not a misuse of a language but a full-fledged, law-governed language, the verbal forms in bold can be analysed as complying with the TrinEC verbal system. First of all, to an uninformed reader, unmarked verbs might seem to perform all functions. However, as West Indian linguist Dennis Salomon explains in *The Speech of Trinidad: A Reference Grammar* (1993), the base or zero forms (unmarked forms) which appear in the text, signal completed action. The verb forms 'come', 'slip', 'sing' and 'make' – to mention just a few – are, in fact, verbs in a perfective tense. Salomon explains that the centrality of aspect in the TrinEC verbal system could have fuelled the aforementioned misconceptions as regards the Creole verbal system, because "just as in English tense is central and obligatory in the verb system but aspect is marginal and optional, so in Trinidadian aspect is central and obligatory, tense marginal and optional" (Salomon,

1993: 100). Another verbal form signalled in the text is the verb 'done served' which includes the particle done, an example of a non-obligatory tense particle which is used to emphasise or reinforce the perfective meaning of the main verb, in this case serve. Finally, the tense particle did in 'did seen' is used to indicate anteriority "when, and only when, [this idea is] not deducible from the operation of aspect upon context" (Salomon, 1993: 100).

Moreover, it must be noted that, unlike Naipaul, Brand exemplifies the strategy of using Creole as a way of validating a scorned language. In this sense, Fruner's translations are skewed because she is not aware of the rationale behind the inclusion of Creole. Thus, her choice of using for the parts of the text in which Creole stands out "past-century-flavoured, dust-veiled expressions and terms" (Fruner, 2007: 8) cannot arguably be criticised per se, that is, it is a respectable option as any other option she might have opted for as a translator. However, what brought her to the conclusion that these expressions were the right choice in the target culture can certainly be criticised. Her decision was not informed by an understanding that there were two codes in the source text. Instead, it was based on the belief that the parts in Creole reflected a misuse of English. Had she been able to distinguish the two codes, and fully understood the text, she might have opted for representing Creole differently.

These two essays can be said to prove that, as actors who are deeply involved in the development of West Indian literature, translators, should also be equipped with the fundamentals of Creole. As Hodge argues,

> [i]t is time that the years of work carried out in the field of Creole linguistics be put to greater use in the literary filed. There are three groups that need to have more concrete, more scientific knowledge of the language: writers using Creole

> as medium; literary critics analysing West Indian literature; and publishers who edit West Indian literature. (Hodge, *The Writer* 2007: 152)

Translators are arguably another group that needs more concrete and scientific knowledge of Creole. Even though, as can be deduced from Hodge's quote, they are not alone in their lack of knowledge of Creole, their role in promoting West Indian literature beyond Creole-speaking audiences is too important for this issue to remain unaddressed. In order to produce a translation which does justice to the writer's use of Creole in the source text, translators must be able to decode areas that would be opaque to non-Creole speakers. Thus, translators cannot continue to overlook the nuances and ambiguities that are indiscernible to the latter and to risk producing impoverished versions of West Indian texts.[123]

4.4.4.2. Translating Creole into Spanish

> I seem to be wanting to tag the Creole onto an English structure or to try to fuse them in a kind of way. (Lovelace, *Personal Interview* 2013)

Bearing the previous in mind, this section explores which variety of Spanish should be employed for translations of Lovelace's texts. The section argues that language in Lovelace's text is such an integral part of his narrative that its complex nature cannot

[123] In the translation into Spanish of Junot Diaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao,* Cuban-American writer and translator Achy Obejas failed to discern the ambiguity of a sentence from Derek Walcott's poem "Schooner Flight" that is used as an epigraph in the novel. In particular, the sentence in TrinEC: "I taking a sea bath, I gone down the road" (Walcott, 1977: 4), which in section 3.5.3. was used to exemplify the level of ambiguity which might be opaque to non-Creole speakers is translated into "Voy a darme un baño en el mar, *me voy por el camino*" (Obeja, 2008: 13; my italics). Obeja's Spanish translation of the second part of Walcott's line appears as an impoverished version of Walcott's poem, since she does not grasp the ambiguity of the Creole and the line in Spanish does not reflect that it is due to the anxiety experienced by the poet in Trinidad, that the persona feels compelled to leave and leave everything behind without disclosing when he will be back, if at all. Thus, 'que se las apañen' o 'ahí les dejo' can arguably be said to be better options in order to recreate the ambiguity of Creole.

simply be effaced by the use of Standard Spanish. It is important to avoid "a sort of with-it translatese", which, as Gayatri Spivak recognises, is often used to translate literatures of the Third World, "so that the literature by a woman in Palestine begins to resemble, in the feel of its prose, something by a man in Taiwan" (Spivak, 1993: 182). Thus, one of the fundamental questions tackled in this section is how to avoid effacing linguistic diversity and the most common strategy of blurring regional markers.

Moreover, since language can be said to be a theme in itself in West Indian texts, a standardised translation of Earl Lovelace's work would actually entail overlooking this altogether. In the case of a Spanish translation, the translator needs to be aware that Lovelace fuses Standard English with Creole. It is also important to remember that in using Creole, the low-prestige variety of the twin-island nation, Lovelace seeks to elevate and extend its use into written literature.

4.4.4.2.1. The Translator's Target Language Competency

In "Varieties of English for the Literary Translator" American translator Michael Henry Heim proposes the use of an unmarked variety. A 'mid-Atlantic English' which "British speakers and American speakers regard as unmarked, that is, neither British nor American" (Heim, 2014: 456). Heim argues that translators should extend their competency of the two main English varieties beyond the layman's, so that they have a thorough knowledge of the two (ibid., 457).[124] Heim proposes that since the

[124] Aware that the status of English variants is complex, Heim proposes literary translators to limit themselves to the two main variants: the English of the United Kingdom and the English of the United States and Canada. (Heim, 2014: 454). As for the variants which emerged in the rest of postcolonial countries, Heim further argues that for example Indian English or South African English, to which Caribbean English could be added, are treated as sub-variants of the English of the United Kingdom (ibid., 466).

differences between the two varieties are mostly lexical, the translator could opt for a 'mid-Atlantic language', which should be read as geographically unmarked by both readers. For example, the mid-Atlantic version of the British 'soft drink' and American 'soda, pop, soda pop' would be 'soft drink', and for the British 'cigarette end' and American 'cigarette butt' it would be 'cigarette butt'. Heim proposes the use of a mid-Atlantic counterpart for Americanisms and Briticisms when possible. In other instances, Heim argues that the translator might want to manipulate the text when there is no available mid-Atlantic option. This would be the case of "[t]he opposition between US 'My uncle is in the hospital' and UK 'My uncle is in hospital' [that] vanishes in the mid-Atlantic 'My uncle has been hospitalized'" (ibid., 458). It must be noted, though, that this mid-Atlantic approach is not always easily implemented in a consistent manner. In fact, this can even be seen in the last example where the mid-Atlantic option is orthographically marked as American, as it uses [z] over the British [s] in "hospitalized".

Despite its uneven application, this approach does not overshadow the fact that translators of languages that "consist of more than one recognized national variant […] [as] is the case with a number of languages, especially those spoken by the former colonialist powers" (ibid., 454) should widen their linguistic scope. Translators of languages which were transported to other areas of the globe during colonialism can no longer limit their linguistic competence to their regional variety. In the case of Spanish, which is one such language, the translator is confronted with a situation that resembles that of the translator into English. In fact, in the article "¿Un español midatlántico?" Spanish translation scholar Juan José Zaro argues that Heim's proposal of a mid-Atlantic English should have an equivalent in Spanish. Zaro argues that "la omnímoda presencia en pasíses latinoamericanos de las traduciones hechas en España"

(Zaro, 2014) calls for a revision of the language literary translators make exclusive use of. Zaro notes that it is harder to establish only two varieties of Spanish for the literary translator, though he admits that Heim's is "una propuesta que tendríamos que empezar a considerar en el caso de la formación de traductores, a uno y otro lado del Atlántico" (Zaro: 2014). Hence, the translator's knowledge of the target language – his or her mother tongue – should go beyond his or her geographical variety. The translator's competency should incorporate central features of the main varieties of Spanish that go beyond those characteristic of Peninsular Spanish, the high prestige variety. The translator would therefore help reverse the existing Eurocentricity which is still internalised by many speakers of Latin American varieties who believe that "there is a correct norm from which their variety has deviated" (Mar-Molinero, 1997: 60). These attitudes, according to linguist Mar-Molinero, reflect "centuries of prescriptive educational norms, by the Castilian political elites dominating cultural circles" (ibid., 59).

When translating into Spanish a West Indian author such as Lovelace, or any one of the many other writers who make use of Creole, the translator's knowledge of his or her regional variety, particularly when this is Peninsular Spanish, would not suffice.

Ethically and politically motivated translators cannot disregard Lovelace's use of the different linguistic mediums and translate the text using only a Standard language variety. The translator should resist the pull towards standardising the entire narrative and opting for the high-prestige variety of Peninsular Spanish, so as to not create, even if inadvertently, an imperialist translation of a cultural other.

4.4.4.2.2. No Spanish Creoles

After having established that using only Standard Spanish cannot be an option for the translation of Earl Lovelace's texts into Spanish, this section will analyse the possibilities at the translator's disposal.

For the parts that are unquestionably marked as Creole, one option could be to substitute these with another Creole language. This has been applied in translations of West Indian texts into French. In "A Socio-historical Perspective on French Translations of West Indian Author(s)" Canadian scholar Hélène Buzelin explains that in order to avoid effacing linguistic difference the use of French-based Creole has been one of the strategies used by translators of West Indian texts into French. This is the case of the 2001 translation by Martiniquais Raphaël Confiant and Carine Gendrey of St. Lucian writer Earl Long's *Voices From a Drum* (1996), and Mauritian Ananda Devi's translation in 2000 of Guyanese David Dabydeen's *The Counting House* (1996). Confiant and Gendrey's translations drew on Caribbean French-based Creole and Devis's on Mauritian French-based Creole respectively (Buzelin, 2005: 100-103).

The use of Creole, however, is not an option in translations of West Indian texts into Spanish. Unlike English and French, there exists virtually no Spanish-based Creole in the Caribbean. As such, we are limited to talking about different regional varieties whose differences exist only at the semantic and lexical levels. As linguist John McWhorter claims, no Spanish creoles emerged in the New World due to a particular set of sociohistorical circumstances. McWhorter argues that in plantation societies,

> disproportion of black to white transformed a European language into a creole only in cases where such disproportion set in soon after the establishment of the colony. If instead, there was a long period of demographic parity between whites and blacks, then by the time massive slave importations began, enough

> slaves in the society had been able to acquire a full enough register of the dominant language that subsequent arrivals were able to acquire a similar register from them, despite limited access to Europeans themselves. (McWhorter, 2000: 33)

This is the case of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, which were devoted to small farms where blacks and whites worked together in equal numbers, until their conversion to sugar plantation economies in the nineteenth century, a system which was already established in the Spanish mainland colonies (ibid.). McWhorter further explains that Papiamentu, spoken in Curaçao, and Palenquero, spoken in the rural community of El Palenque de San Basilio in Colombia might have been mistaken for Spanish-lexicon Creole languages. However, Papiamentu and Palenquero have their roots in a Portuguese pidgin and therefore cannot be considered Spanish-based creoles. McWhorter explains that Papiamentu and Palenquero are Spanish-based creoles only synchronically because they actually originated as Portuguese-based diachronically. Thus, these creoles did not arise via the pidginization of Spanish, but through the subsequent relexification of Portuguese creoles, which had themselves developed out of the pidginization of Portuguese. (McWhorter, 2000: 13).

Due to the lack of Spanish-based Creole languages, then, we are limited to Latin American regional varieties of Spanish, easily comprehensible to speakers of Standard varieties. As McWhorter explains, these varieties might display certain phonological and morphological reductions and African lexical borrowings but lack the radical grammatical restructuring seen in creoles (McWhorter, 2000: 9). As a result, and importantly for translation, it can be argued that the opaqueness that West Indian literary texts exhibit in terms of language is not to the same extent found in Spanish-Caribbean literary texts.

The inexistence of any Spanish-based Creole language means that the substituting of one Creole for another Creole is not an option for Spanish translations of West Indian texts. However, in "Traducción y Variedad Lingüística: Hacia un 'Modelo de Reconstrucción Dialectal'" Colombian scholar Jairo A. Sánchez Galvis proposes the translation of Caribbean English into Caribbean Spanish.[125] Sánchez Galvis suggests translating Creole through the use of a Caribbean variety of Spanish, or rather a language which incorporates features form different Caribbean varieties of Spanish. Aware of the distinct linguistic contexts and the fact that his proposal implies substituting a language for a dialectal variety, Sánchez Galvis argues that in rhis case language and dialect can be equated for practical purposes. Since both, he remarks, behave as socially stigmatized languages which are associated with orality and have shared ideological and cultural markers,

> un criollo como el trinitense o el barbadense funciona a efectos traductológicos como un dialecto de su superestrato y puede, por lo tanto, traducirse por cualquier otro tipo de variedad lingüística, manteniendo la práctica totalidad del contenido y matices semántico-pragmáticos del primero. (Sánchez Galvis, 2012: 128)

As part of his 'Model of Dialect Reconstruction', after compiling a corpus of literary texts from both Caribbean English and Caribbean Spanish areas, Sánchez Galvis creates a list of frequent linguistic markers present in the texts from the Anglophone and Spanish-speaking Caribbean areas. This can be seen as a useful tool for the translator of West Indian authors into Spanish, as Sánchez Galvis himself intends it to be; but it must be noted that issues such as the author's use of eye dialect or where in the language continuum the author has decided to place his or her narrative will inevitably shape every translation and ask the translator to determine which features of

[125] *Inglés caribeño* and *español caribeño* in the original (Sánchez Galvis, 2012: 128).

the target language could be appropriate not only for each writer but for each text. However, despite the similarities signalled by Sánchez Galvis, the translator might want to make use of other devices not found in Caribbean varieties of Spanish but found in Creole languages – such as the aforementioned radical grammatical restructuring – in order to translate aspects which they lack.

4.4.4.3. The Collective Endeavour of Translating West Indian Texts

So far it been established that, as regards the source language, the translator of Lovelace's narratives into Spanish needs to be equipped with a basic knowledge of Trinidadian English Creole and that, as regards the target language, the knowledge of the translator's Spanish variety should not suffice, but he or she needs to be equipped with knowledge of other varieties apart from his or her own. Moreover, as previously explained, mainstream publishing houses are governed by a heteronomous principle with the primary aim of obtaining immediate economic profit and a complete disregard for the long term cultural profit of cultural goods. In such circumstances, mainstream publishing houses can hardly be expected to have any interest in fostering translations which demand that the translator be equipped with the type of knowledge of the source culture and languages as well as the target language varieties here exposed.

Due to the oppressiveness of the rule of the market, Venuti explains that for many translators the goal is "to work from contract to contract and move from one foreign text to another, focussing on the delivery of the manuscript and therefore devoting little time to sustained methodological reflection" (Venuti, 1992: 1). The reality is that

most Caribbean texts are translated by translators with a poor knowledge of the culture and languages of the region, as well as limited competence in the varieties of the target language.

Buzelin explains that Betty Wilson and Marie-José N'Zengou Tayo, scholars from the University of the West Indies, have argued that some of the translations of West Indian texts into French showed the translator's limited knowledge of Caribbean cultures and languages. As such, Wilson and N'Zengou Tayo have proposed that "French publishers implement a systematic policy whereby the French translations of West Indian works would be reviewed by Caribbean translators or editors" (Buzelin, 2005: 108). Their proposal, which, as Buzelin points out, could be seen as a bit coercive, needs to be nonetheless foregrounded because it emphasises the need for collective or collaborative translations of West Indian texts. In this sense, Buzelin calls attention to the appearance of innovative collaborative translation strategies that aim "at reactivating the cultural and, more particularly, Creole dimension of the original texts by quite original means" (Buzelin, 2005: 99). In particular, Buzelin refers to a translation project undertaken by the GERB,[126] a translation research group at the Université de Bourdeaux. Buzelin explains that this group set itself the target of producing a translation of Olive Senior's collection of short stories *Summer Lightning* (1987). The translation looked beyond the surface of the text and reflected the linguistic complexity of the source material. Buzelin explains that Senior's prose was approached as "if it were written in an hybrid language, which, at first sight, looked familiar, but in fact, contained many foreign elements" (Buzelin, 2005: 104). As a result, the project emphasises the cultural and linguistic diversity of the region and recognises that West Indian texts are diverse, hybrid texts which necessitate an in-

[126] Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches Britanniques.

depth knowledge of the region's cultural and linguistic specificities. It also highlights the need to include members from the different source and target language communities in order to contribute to the creation of an informed translation. Firstly, the group invited different readers to provide 'inside' knowledge, these included not only French Caribbean readers but also Jamaican readers who were asked to interpret and rewrite the text. In the second stage of the translation process, the group

> produced four intermediate versions –in Standard French, colloquial French, regional Caribbean French and Martiniquan Creole –, from which a final translation, deemed accessible to non-Creole readers and respectful of the letter of the original and its cultural specificity, was created. (Buzelin, 2005: 104)

This final translation was conducted in a collaborative manner and was the combined product of the aforementioned four intermediate versions. It seeks to maintain the cultural specificity of the text in all its manifestations, including the linguistic diversity reflected in the source text. As Buzelin explains, literary translations produced through collective effort allow for the exploitation of "the various semantic, aesthetic, as well as the political potentials of the text" (ibid., 106).

Apart from respecting the integrity of the source text, another key strength of this project is the fact that the resulting product can be defined as a pan-Caribbean collective translation since it incorporates linguistically diverse actors from the French as well as the English-speaking Caribbean.

Bearing all this in mind, a translation of Lovelace's texts into Spanish would surely benefit from a similar collective approach. Translating Lovelace's narratives into Spanish should be conducted by a group composed of members from the source culture and members of the different communities of the target language. In this case

the team would be made up of Trinidadian members who would help to decipher all of the various ambiguities, be they cultural or linguistic, that may not be clear to a reader not familiar with Trinidadian culture or Trinidadian Creole English. It would also incorporate speakers of the different varieties of Spanish, including those from the different Caribbean Spanish communities.

Finally, the importance of the pan-Caribbean dimension of this approach needs to be underscored. In fact, the relevance of this pan-Caribbean dimension is double-fold in that such a translation also contributes to building bridges between the different linguistic communities of the Caribbean. The translation of Caribbean writers can work as a crucial tool to foster cultural exchanges between different linguistic areas of the region. In fact, this is a major unresolved matter in the Caribbean. In spite of the region's common history, the Caribbean is still heir to a set of divisions which goes back to colonial times. Borders, a legacy of European colonialism, continue to hinder people from different areas within the region from getting to know each other. This is why Édouard Glissant has argued that the different European languages spoken in the region inevitably serve to reinforce colonial boundaries and undermine the full realisation of a common "Caribbeanness" (qtd. in Glover and Munro, 2013: 85).

An analysis of the lack of cultural exchange between the different linguistic areas must also take into account the fact that the majority of Caribbean governments have not recognised the paramount role of the arts in the region, particularly in the Anglophone Caribbean. If promoting the arts has not been a priority, it stands to reason that initiatives which would stimulate cultural exchanges between linguistically-differentiated areas would also receive little attention. Aware of this lack of cultural exchange, University of the West Indies scholars Nicole Roberts and Elizabeth

Walcott-Hackshaw have recently published an anthology entitled *Border Crossings: A Trilingual Anthology of Caribbean Women Writers* (2011). In their introduction to the collection of short stories Roberts and Walcott-Hackshaw, argue that "the ever-present language barriers […] have for too long limited the ways in which the Caribbean is read, perceived and interpreted" (Roberts and Walcott-Hackshaw: 2011, vii). Thus, their trilingual (English, French and Spanish) anthology of short stories seeks to enable the dialogue present in these creative works to transcend linguistic borders.

It can be concluded that opening up Lovelace's works to a Spanish-speaking world would be directed to the non-English speaking community in general as well as the Caribbean region itself: such a translation would surely enhance the vision of the region and also work towards reinforcing a dialogue within the region, in this case between the Anglophone and the Spanish speaking areas of the Caribbean. A translation of Lovelace's texts would therefore contribute to breaking what Roberts and Walcott-Hackshaw have termed "the greatest cultural barrier" that we face as a region: "our inability to 'speak' to each other" (Roberts and Walcott-Hackshaw: 2011, vii). Moreover, this necessity of speaking to each other as a region can also be directly connected to Lovelace's narratives. His works have stressed that in order to build a New World together, we must see each other afresh so that we can understand each other and see our common humanity. Thus, in translating his narratives, Lovelace's goal can be extended beyond his own linguistic community, so that Spanish-speaking readers, within and beyond the region, can also see everybody's common humanity through Lovelace's narratives.

CONCLUSIONS

This study is grounded on the assumption of the paramount function of the creative arts in every society, and the symbolic power of cultural products which allows for the arts to actively participate in the full development and advancement of society. It has been argued that the cultural works that do not submit to the law of the market are the ones responsible for securing the survival of culture. However, since the field of cultural production is dominated by the logic of economic profit, symbolic power is, paradoxically, generally not considered a decisive factor.

At present, only those postcolonial texts which carefully measure their difference are appreciated, so that the only difference encouraged is that which does not cross the line of unfamiliarity and can be easily incorporated into the so called universal –

Western – norms. Texts which go beyond certain limits run the risk of being regarded as opaque, dense or less readable and thus not fit for promotion. The aforementioned limits can be directly related to the three key relational factors distinguished in this study: location, topics and language. These three factors work as agents of censorship and explain what cultural products are mostly favoured in the mainstream literary field.

Regarding location, the study has shown that migrant writing has taken over the task of representing postcolonial writing to such an extent that it can even be said to define postcolonial literature. It has also been established that this is facilitated by a privileging of migrant over non-migrant writing. The need to collectively redress this situation in order to offer a more complete picture of the diverse postcolonial world has been one of the main arguments of this dissertation. Secondly, in terms of topics, context-based narratives or the more specifically national postcolonial writing is not promoted because it offers a vision not mediated nor legitimised by the West and whose primary aim is not to accommodate a Western readership. Instead, the texts which enjoy promotion are those which accommodate a Western readership, offer user-friendly versions of the Third World, assume no social and historical knowledge of the region and display no traces of linguistic diversity. In the case of the Caribbean, texts are valued when they depict the region as an exotic, festive, disorganised society, in which Creole is limited to phrases or sentences that give the exotic flavour expected by the Western reader.

Thus, due to the emphasis on migrant writing, this study has sought to reclaim the importance of the nation in the analysis of postcolonial literatures. It has been argued that national and transnational approaches should not be seen as oppositional, but

complementary since nationalism can be a form of countering globalization, and transnationalism can, for its part, work towards empowering those at the margins, particularly in metropolitan societies. The importance and value of discourses such as Paul Gilroy's influential *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* is recognised inasmuch as it has opened new critical pathways for an analysis of identity that takes into account the mobility of peoples and cultures. Similarly, Bhabha's theorising has also contributed to the destabilisation of static notions of the nation and have revealed its symbolic and temporal nature. However, these discourses have also occluded other pathways, because, as Donnell and Puri argue, in favouring dislocation over location, they have helped to relegate non-metropolitan cultural products to a secondary position. In fact, the study has also revealed that the same post-national discourses which discard nationalist discourses are also inadvertently responsible for the ascendance of US hegemonic nationalism. Thus, those who condemn peripheral countries for resorting to nationalism, can be inadvertently serving the interests of the dominant.

Focusing on the Caribbean, this dissertation has demonstrated that the emphasis on the deterritorialisation of the Caribbean region and the focus on transnationalism has meant that what is produced within its traditional boundaries is sidelined in favour of what is produced beyond them. It has been noted that even though Western academia holds transnationalism as the most appropriate and encompassing approach to deal with Caribbean literature, its applicability is limited to those writings produced in metropolitan spaces. Thus, the transnational approach is not capable of analysing the full range of writings from the Caribbean literary field. In fact, due to the transnational nature of the Caribbean region itself, it is possible to see the Caribbean as both an intercultural and transcultural space and to recognise that the nation-state is a reality.

From its inception the region has challenged static, purist and exclusivist notions of nationalism, and, due to the complex webs of cultures and identities that have emerged out of the various diasporas, the region has also been defined by cosmopolitanism and transnationalism. This duality, characteristic of the region, is clearly articulated by Caribbean-based writers such as Earl Lovelace. Lovelace's texts offer a vision of the nation which transcends limiting approaches, since the nation cannot be identified with notions such as homogeneity or purity; instead, the transnational and hybrid character of the nation is reflected and appreciated in his texts. Furthermore, Lovelace's narratives prove that the reality of the national space is complemented by the transnational character of the region. As a Caribbean-based writer, he offers the kind of discourse that transnational approaches claim are limited to texts produced in metropolitan spaces. Thus, Lovelace's texts demonstrate that the transnational dialogue needs the local and national perspective to be able to offer a complete picture of the Caribbean literary field.

If, on the one hand, the figure of Lovelace serves to reclaim the importance of Caribbean-based narratives, his alternative journey distinguishes him from the majority of West Indian writers. To start with, he has made the extremely political choice of staying in Trinidad and has thus rejected the pull towards migrating, which is still a staple for the West Indian artist. Lovelace's decision to stay has been fuelled by his desire to be in direct contact with the reality of the region. Instead of being merely an observer of the reality of the Caribbean, he has wanted to be a participant in order to promote change in the region. Furthermore, Lovelace's first-hand experience has granted him a perspective which could only be attained through direct contact. To some extent, Lovelace has managed to avoid the paralysing and alienating effect of colonial education, which distanced the West Indian subject from the ordinary people

and their cultural manifestations. However, his choice is not without consequences. In addition to his decision to stay in the region he has been labelled a regional and national writer because his work is not tailored for a Western readership and offers context-based narratives in which Creole is present. The result is that his writings have been excluded from the mainstream postcolonial literary field.

Like many other West Indian creative writers, Lovelace has theorised on Caribbean culture and literature. Aware of the historic roots of the ills of the region but optimistic about the possibilities of constructing a new culture, he has emphasised that the heterogeneity of the region is its most enriching characteristic and one that allows for the creation of a new future together. For Lovelace, one of his central tasks as a writer is to make all the different ethnic groupings see the necessity of building a new beginning for the region collectively in order to truly set each other free. He argues that the diverse and heterogeneous nature of the region, as its real heritage, not only needs to be valued but it must be seen as a precondition which allows for the creation of a New World. According to Lovelace, for the different communities to appreciate each other, the nation needs healing, and healing will only take place when the issue of reparation is addressed.

Lovelace's writings are foregrounded as an extremely important intervention in the Caribbean because they prove that the Caribbean nation is also a place where people can build a life. In his writings Lovelace contests the representations which establish the perceived impossibility of residing in the Caribbean and the pervading idea of the region as a non-place populated by non-people who have created nothing – a construct which ultimately contributes to maintaining the region dependant on Western approval and tutelage.

Lovelace's exceptionality also resides in the fact that he has built a career in a place where the writer did not previously exist given that the West Indian literary tradition was composed entirely of diasporic writers. Due to the lack of public and societal support, the artist in the region is an 'anomaly'. In fact, the artist's anomalous position is due to the fact that the different cultural artforms that emerged in the region were banned and their practitioners, far from being considered artists, became the outcasts of society. As a result, there was never a relationship between being in the Caribbean and being a valued artist. This study has contended that the undervalued role of the native artist, together with the birth of the West Indian novel in the 1950s in the Metropolis, and the current privileging of diasporic writers are factors that explain why the artist continues to be an anomaly in the West Indies.

While Lovelace argues that the construction of a New World for the region can only be accomplished through the collective involvement of the different communities, this study argues that to reverse the trend that sidelines Caribbean writing, a similar collective endeavour is needed. This collective endeavour includes translators of West Indian literary texts, because ethically and politically motivated translations can also participate in the critical network that contributes to the collective dimension of social struggles. Through their artistic renditions of a source text, literary translators can help spread its symbolic force.

Since language plays a crucial role in West Indian literature, this study has contended that translators need to be informed about the linguistic mediums of the region because these are more frequently than not reflected in literary texts. In fact, the inclusion of different island Creoles, which are the everyday languages for the majority of the population, not only distinguishes but enriches West Indian literature. The use of

Creole alongside Standard English offers the writer the option of consciously or unconsciously encoding multiple meanings. Since West Indian texts can contain a level of ambiguity which might escape non-Creole speakers, the translator needs to be able to distinguish Creole when this is not orthographically represented. Understanding the possible ambiguities embedded in a West Indian text has proved to be a precondition for the translator of West Indian literature. The translator of West Indian texts, as its most intimate reader, cannot continue to disregard Creole, because failure to decode opaque areas for non-Creole speakers may produce impoverished translations of West Indian texts.

Bearing this in mind, this study contends that when translating Lovelace's texts into Spanish, effacing difference and offering a homogenising translation that domesticates the source text must be avoided; otherwise the translation of Lovelace's works risks becoming a tool of neo-colonial dominance. First of all, since language is an integral part of Lovelace's narrative and his texts offer such complexity in terms of its use as well as its role, Standard Spanish cannot be the only variety used to translate his work. Any translation of Lovelace's texts should highlight the cultural and linguistic diversity of the region. In fact, the pan-Caribbean character of the translation approach proposed should also be inscribed within the aforementioned collaborative frame that traverses Caribbean culture as understood by Lovelace. Such a translation would not only enhance the general vision of the region, but it would also work towards reinforcing a dialogue within the region itself. Moreover, translating Lovelace's texts, and by extension, texts written by non-migrant writers which are not tailored for a Western readership and include vernacular languages, could work to introduce newness and offer versions of the non-West which fight the stereotypes promoted in the mainstream Western literary arena. Ultimately, translations of a collaborative

nature would contribute to the overall collective endeavour of destabilising the imbalance between migrant and non-migrant writers. They would be part of the collaborative enterprise of building counter discourses and redistributing the privilege of seeing and representing.

These conclusions open up new avenues of research. Above all, the urgent need for Caribbean-based writers to also receive critical attention, in particular those from the younger generations who started writing after transnational approaches gained momentum, and whose works have been even more sidelined than Lovelace's. Authors such as Trinidadians Kevin Baldeosingh, Jennifer Rahim and Raymond Ramcharitar, who have not succumbed to leaving, have not been deemed eligible by mainstream publishing houses, and have been virtually ignored by the Western critical establishment. Yet their narratives, like so many in other postcolonial nations, cannot continue to be ignored.

ANNEXES

Within the course of a research stay at the University of Toronto, I conducted a research stay of ten days at the tertiary education in which I worked and pursued my MPhil in Cultural Studies, the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus, Trinidad and Tobago. During this stay I had the opportunity to conduct interviews to writers Earl Lovelace and Merle Hodge. The interviews transcribed here have proved to be an instrumental tool for this study. These texts have informed and enriched my own reflection on the topics under approach. The interview with Hodge has been particularly useful in the definition she provided of the figure of the West Indian intellectual or 'cultural worker' – as she likes to be define herself –, which I developed in the first chapter, as well as for my analysis of the cultural environment in the Caribbean region in the third chapter. As for the interview with Earl Lovelace, due to the uncommonness of both Lovelace's and this study's route, the third and fourth chapters devoted to the figure of Earl Lovelace's and the translation of his texts, make

close reference to this interview. The views conveyed in the latter have not only proved beneficial but have actually become some of the key issues in the two last chapters.

Due to the complex linguistic context of the region, language is an aspect explored at length in the study, as it was in the two interviews. This study has explained that code-switching is a constant, and the two texts here transcribed bear proof of this. In the transcription process, the Creoleness of the texts has been carefully balanced and respected, and the texts have not been generally standardised. It must be noted that I have not distinguished orthographically those constructions more markedly Creole. This decision has been fuelled by both writers' approach to language in their texts, which, as it has been explained, seeks to elevate Creole and not to distinguish the use of the two varieties, TrinEC and TrinE, hierarchically.

1. Interview with Earl Lovelace

This interview took place at Earl Lovelace's house in Cascade, Port of Spain, on 25th October 2013, shortly after the writer had returned from participating in "The Vancouver Writer Fest". Lovelace was so kind as to devote two hours of his time to answer my questions and invite me to some coconut water at his veranda. The interview started and finished at his wonderful veranda accompanied by the soothing sound of the creaking of bamboo poles. The reason which explains why it only started and finished at the veranda is because, as Bango explains in *Salt*, "things here have their own mind [and] rain decide when it going to fall. Sometimes in the middle of the day, the sky clear, you hear a rushing swooping sound and voops it fall down"

(Lovelace, 1996: 5). A sudden and typically Caribbean downpour, which did not allow us to listen to each other, forced us to go momentarily inside to then return to the veranda.

I am indebted to Earl Lovelace for giving me the opportunity to ask him the questions whose answers I could not find anywhere else. In the course of this interview, Lovelace offered his perspective on issues discussed at length in this study such as the traditional notion of the Caribbean intellectual and his role in Caribbean society, the importance of the artist in the region, and the artist's connection with grassroots culture. Lovelace also foregrounded the importance of not being a scholarship winner or rejecting labels such as 'postcolonial', 'intellectual' or 'activist', and instead proposes others such 'writer of independence'. Finally the issue of reparation, which according to Lovelace still needs to be addressed, closes this interview.

MGP: *You are one of the few Trinidadian writers of your generation who has chosen to remain and write form Trinidad. How important is or has been staying for you? Why did you choose to stay?*

EL: I think that there are a number of reasons. I don't think I wanted to go. I mean I went abroad after I had won the BP Independence Award with my first novel – which was very useful so I didn't have to go anywhere for one thing to get published – but I did want to go outside of Trinidad, which I did. But then I found that I wanted to live in Trinidad or live in the Caribbean at least, I don't think I ever thought about of going away to live abroad permanently. Then again, as I say, it was very useful having won that prize, so I was published from here. I am probably one of the few people to get published living in Trinidad or in the Caribbean for that matter, so that was one of the good things about it. I think the value is tremendous really because you don't have to

write from memory, while fiction I think requires memory in a way, it seems to me more than let's say journalism. You need to know what happened yesterday and the day before in order to write about today in writing fiction because it suggests a sense of, you know, this is how things are. The value of staying is that I was able to see everything unfold and be in a way a participant as well. I suppose that is also the thing, being a participant, so I was involved in village councils, in playing football and cricket in the countryside and in the Black Power movement. Those things were very important, and it was not done deal. The Caribbean was not a place you knew really, it was a place you were getting to know, and I think it still is getting to know the society. The whole idea of who are we? What is independence? How have we arrived where we have arrived? These are real questions that a lot of people haven't answered. From outside they have assumed this is the Caribbean, the Caribbean is what it has been represented in history.

MGP*: Would you say that Caribbean literature needs Caribbean voices to explain what the real Caribbean is?*

EL: Right, right, right, and to examine again and to re-examine what it has been about and what it should be about. To explain the inequalities in the societies, to explain the society to itself and in a way to present a different story tan the one presented about what the Caribbean is.

MGP: *And validate a certain culture that was dismissed or undervalued?*

EL: Well, yes, but you might want to begin by wanting to validate but I think you want to understand. Of course you would want to validate what is important to you in any event but I am thinking it is not simply to validate the culture. Although I know in my work one might say I want to validate one thing or the other, it is not so much

validating but seeing its value to this society and to our idea of self and the potential for what we are to become if you want.

MGP: *In Growing in the Dark: Selected Essays you explain that supporting the Black Power movement and being involved in village councils was very important to you. Would you consider yourself an activist?*

EL: When I think about an activist I think about somebody who perhaps has a more narrow political side and I don't know if I have a narrow political side.

MGP: *Why narrow?*

EL: That is a good question to start with, why narrow? I was thinking that when I think about an activist, let's say Clide Nunez for example, who is a trade unionist. I would consider Clive an activist. He has been in the Black Power, in the trade union etc. I agree with you with the term narrow, the term narrow came about because I could think, well I might be involved in a number of things like the village council, the same Black Power and other things, but I don't know I have settled on the way, I don't want to say a structure to replace the one that we have, I haven't settled on something like that. A lot of it is still unfolding for me, I haven't settled on this is the way we will go. Even though I am involved in Black Power, I am not saying this is what Black Power is or should do.

MGP: *I think that the idea of being an activist is maybe the idea of this strong figure always in the street, but maybe you could be an activist by just writing and supporting a cause?*

EL: It is not so much supporting a cause, although there are causes involved that I will support, but it is something more of discovering the cause. It is an involvement that helps you to discover where you want to go.

MGP: *Do you consider yourself a West Indian intellectual?*

EL: Well, I would imagine so, I would think that yes but then again I would consider myself a West Indian intellectual in the sense that I have been thinking from ever since about the concerns of the Caribbean. The West Indian intellectual, however, is another kind of person. I think that the West Indian intellectual is somebody who has been educated generally in… the education of the West Indian intellectual has given him or her a certain language, and a certain awareness of certain causes, whether he is left of right, but the positions have been determined by others than themselves. Let's look at some people who are considered West Indian intellectuals: Marcus Garvey, Lloyd Best…

MGP*: C.L.R. James?*

EL: Well, C.L.R. James is a class in a way by himself. I would not see him as a West Indian intellectual but the West Indian intellectual. I can't see him grouped with some people. The West Indian intellectual is someone who first of all has gone a certain route, he has been a scholarship winner generally in the Caribbean. The central thing is that he was anointed very early as being on that side. I am thinking again of some people who might have been considered West Indian intellectuals. Generally when you think about the West Indian intellectual, you are talking about people siding on the left and I am saying that this left is something that existed before them, that they have not created. Rodney, for example, was a West Indian intellectual, he was perhaps one of the most original, if you want, West Indian intellectuals.

MGP: *Can you think of any West Indian intellectual who is at the same time a creative artist?*

EL: Lamming. I think one might consider Lamming as a West Indian intellectual. I wouldn't put him in a class, although I think he is a Caribbean and West Indian intellectual. There seems to be a difference between West Indian and Caribbean intellectual. I see Caribbean intellectual which is a broader space, I could see James and Lamming fitting inside there.

I am trying to figure out what is my problem [Chuckles] I think that the biggest thing for me is that most of the people have followed a certain path, which is to say educated in the West Indian idea of its elitism, a kind of elitism, and continued along wherever they went to school and then deciding on how the Caribbean should be.

MGP*: And this distinguished them from you because this elitism has nothing to do with you, nor have you been a scholarship winner. However, even though you are not part of the local intelligentsia that decided on how the Caribbean should be, you can be said to having proposed the direction the Caribbean should take in your work.*

EL: Yes, yes, yes but I haven't taken the route that they have generally taken. I think that is the difference and the value. I think it has made me aware of a number of things. One of the things is that I see the whole business of people being brought here enslaved from Africa, people being stripped of name and rank and very ordinary human beings then, no high-ranking people. That is the position that I have. Those are the people I don't want to say I relate to but I see our humanness emerging form that understanding.

MGP*: How would you define yourself?*

EL: Well, I don't know, I think that I will be defined at some point.

MGP*: I cannot think of any West Indian women intellectual.*

EL: Merle [Hodge].

MGP: *Do you think that she would consider herself an intellectual? She is an activist, right?*

EL: Yes, but I am sure she does – but that is an interesting observation. An early writer could have been considered an intellectual. I can't remember her name, I think she is Jamaican. She wrote fiction, she wrote two books. But it is a very important observation. You know who would she be? Susan Craig, she is from Tobago, she lives in Tobago and she was also a scholarship winner. And she has written some interesting books.

MGP: *In terms of staying and writing form here you have said that it was "not a wonderful thing staying but remaining is what I wanted to do" (Lovelace, 2010). Are you referring to the lack of infrastructure and government support for the arts?*

EL: This brings us back again to the whole intellectual question in a way. I don't know what system the government has or the country has of supporting thinkers. Intellectuals get jobs at universities or in CARICOM[127] or some kind of situation like that. But the university has not really made a place for writers, the society has not made a place generally for writers. Yes, tell me what you think about this statement?

MGP: *I think that as Merle Hodge argues, since West Indians do not consume their own fiction, they do not see themselves reflected in fiction, and, as a consequence, the place of the West Indian artist is not acknowledged.*

EL: In my view there are other reasons that explain the place of the artist in the region. I am writing something now called 'Reclaiming Rebellion', and generally the artist in the Caribbean that has made a difference or that carried on the rebellion has been the

[127] CARICOM refers to the Caribbean Community and Common Market of fifteen Caribbean nations. As previously explained, the political integration of the region only lasted four years and came to an end in 1962, but soon afterwards the economic community became a reality with what is known as the Caribbean Community. (Payne, 2008: 166)

artist at the roots. It doesn't mean that it necessarily started at the roots but it means that once everything was banned, singing etc. – all the activities from the base –, these people lost, they didn't have that standing in their society. So the panmen and the calypsonyan – you know that the calypsonian catch their arse for a long time? –, the artists became kind of outcasts. One might talk about [Beryl] McBurnie,[128] or some other more middle class artist, if you want, but I don't know that that middle class artist threatened anything in the society, they could be accommodated and kept in the place at a certain kind of distance.

I am saying, firstly, that the artist is something that had to be created in the Caribbean. It is not the artist plunged on the Caribbean. And the artist emerging form the Caribbean had been firstly those in the calypso and steelband etc. When we begin to develop a concern for the place, artists now begin to emerge perhaps as writers, so you would see James, Lamming, Selvon etc. emerging. The problem now is that these people emerged abroad, so there was never a relationship between being here and being an artist, a valued artist and here. Thus, the artist here – and I see myself in this line – would belong more to that tradition, also to the tradition at the grassroots, the calypso and steelpan and stuff like that, so when people talk about "I am validating the culture", it is not something outside of myself but this is p art of the root, part of what I am involved in.

The whole question of how we began, seeing the artist, and how the artist has been taken care of… The problem is that the artists like the writers and perhaps the painters and so on were left by themselves – the painters had it easier because they have a market place, people want to decorate the house and banks etc. and would want to put up things.

[128] Trinidadian dancer known as the Caribbean's "mother of dance" and founder of the Little Caribe Theatre in 1947 (Schwartz and Schwartz, 2011: 1119).

The artist as writer is an anomaly, because you are in a place which don't have any. So that has made it a little difficult, I think that the place itself, it has to do with what does the place itself want. Often the artist as writer is helping to create a direction and create a concern and not joining a [tradition] that exists already. Well, there were people here before, I left out [Alfred H.] Mendes and [Ralph] de Boissière, these people who had been here for some time. They were part of a growing intellectual grouping with James and these people. It is something one needs to look at quite closely to see.

MGP: *Do you think that nowadays this has changed, and that a writer who wants to remain has it easier than you had it?*

EL: Well, I want to hope so. We have not institutionalised our presence in such a way as to make it beneficial or possible for people to live here. And that has to be addressed. Recently we had Bocas and Bocas is direction, but it is not necessarily the direction for writers living here.

MGP: *Don't you consider the specific award, part of the Bocas Literary Festival, for writers living in the region to be a good initiative?*

EL: I am saying that Bocas is a good starting point, but it has its own focus. Yes, it has this thing for writers living here but it is a complex thing involving many different factors and they have not all come together yet. I think that the people who are here now they have a better chance because there are things that they can do and they have more company if you want. Although there's a whole lot of people outside.

MGP: *In general terms would you say that West Indian diasporic writers are the ones who mostly represent the West Indies outside of the West Indies? Do you believe diasporic writers are being privileged over writers like yourself who have chosen to*

remain? Do you think that the Caribbean is being represented by those who don't live in the Caribbean, by those who are easier to be read in the West and are subsequently more widely promoted and translated?

EL: I am not so sure because Walcott lived in the Caribbean for a long time, I have lived in the Caribbean. For writers who live outside, it is easier for them to make a living, teaching or whatever, and from that position they are able to get published. There is a still a sense that they are not quite representative of the Caribbean. There are some writers who are from Caribbean origin, or even write about the Caribbean but I think people would still want to find out where is the Caribbean. I mean Walcott could have been seen as an authentic representative of the Caribbean because he lived here, wrote about the Caribbean and even when he went away, it was much later in his career. I lived here and I believe I would be considered a writer of the region. What is the question?

MGP: *The question is who represents the Caribbean. Due to the privileging of diasporic writers, I believe national writers like yourself are not included in the curriculum of Western Universities or they are not as widely promoted.*

EL: I am thinking about writers such as Caryl Phillips or Robert Anthony. Some of them relate to the place that they have been domiciled which itself is undergoing some change, or assimilating the people who come from wherever they come from. My concern is that the Caribbean itself has been sidelined, the Caribbean has never been really addressed. When people talk about postcolonial, for example, they are continuing the colonial line. It is not what has happened to these islands since they overcame colonialism. It is two different questions and if the world is interested in the islands or in the previously colonised, then they have to look at them in terms of the movement of independence. The question should be what has happened to the

movement of independence and not what has happened to postcolonialism. Because what is postcolonialism talking about? Postcolonialism is just blunting and has blunted in a way the thrust of independence. Independence itself has a lot of problems. The problem of independence is to discover that it has not achieved independence. So if you focus on independence you will begin to see all the flaws in the independence that we have had. But you focusing on postcolonial. Who are these people who came with this postcolonial thing? Where are the West Indian intellectuals who are talking about independence? People tend to think these things come from heaven somewhere? But somebody had to have started it. Where did it come from? What does the West Indian intellectual have to do with talking about postcolonialism? The West Indian intellectual must be talking about independence, or some idea of regionalism. My question is who authored or began this whole thing of postcolonialism as the line that we should follow: The Western world is raising this question in terms of its own interest. It is not in its interest to talk about independence. It is possible for some writers to be seen as postcolonial, I suppose I am viewed as a postcolonial writer too, but I would want like to see myself as a writer of independence. The thrust where I am going is not about postcolonialism, after colonialism. I understand how they kind of conflate the two things now, independence is like a stepchild of colonialism.

MGP: *I understand. Would you say that the starting point is wrong already?*

EL: Yes, and there is no starting point for the Caribbean. There was a very, very short period when independence was emphasized. By 1970 it was over, and if it began in 1962, no time. One has to look at how the region make its living, one has to look at what happened to bauxite and oil. The oil prices went up and the gas became important and so the government in order to deal – perhaps in a sort of fast way – with

independence, nationalised these industries. But the nationalisation did not last long either, and very soon after they had been denationalising things, so what is the nation?

MGP: *So would you say that these diasporic writers would be 'postcolonial writers' whereas you would consider the national writers as 'writers of independence'?*

EL: Even though they are in the diaspora, they could be seen as writers of the independence. What I am saying is that they group everybody into this thing and therefore it makes it easier for people who are writing not with the immediacy of independence to pass as postcolonial writers, which really doesn't mean anything. There are a number of writers who live abroad too who are writing from their position about independence. I am saying that the umbrella under which they should be functioning seems to me to make more sense to be independence, otherwise they are following the coloniser's path to the bitter end.

MGP: *Would you agree that those who are not writers of independence are the privileged ones?*

EL: I think it is complex. For example, let's take somebody like Edwidge Danticat or Junot Diaz. They are living there, they tailor their living and writing to the place so there are opportunities and so on. They might be privileged in a way but it is as a result of a set of factors. I understand where you are heading. If that is so what then about writers who remain? What is their value? This has to be discussed too, the day is not yet done. I think that being here is of great value, we will discover it and it will reveal itself as we proceed. It also has to do with the West Indian people themselves. What does West Indian people want? What do West Indian politics want? What vision of the West Indies politicians have? I mean, where are we going? These are all questions that a lot of us have to answer. How can writers aid in the process of the

development of the Caribbean? How can they do that living abroad? Writing as a mediator between what they consider their idea of the Caribbean and their idea of the West?

MGP: *And as you were saying Trinidad is evolving and if you haven't lived here for twenty years and you keep representing Trinidad…*

EL: Well, you can do it, you are free to do it, but the point is to what degree can you promote change in Trinidad or a vision in Trinidad? You could probably do it too, but I haven't seen it done.

MGP: *You have explained that you write for your people, about what you have termed the 'ordinary people'. When you write is it this same ordinary man or woman who you envision reading your writings? Would you say a non-West Indian audience shapes your writing in any way? Do you share Philo's view that "if they come to the tent, let them walk with a Trinidad dictionary" (Lovelace, 1979: 229)?*

EL: I think so, I think I am saying so, in order for you to maintain a language you have to use it. A language is a way of seeing as well. If we are to mean anything, what we add, we are adding something in terms of language and people have to spend a little while to understand it. We spend a lot of time understanding standard, turn the other way. It might not be a whole battalion of people immediately, but I think it is useful for people. Let's take the word 'lime', here is another word that suggests hanging out or gathering, but gathering is different from 'lime'. There is a certain value to certain expressions. The people to do it, to keep it alive must be those people writing the literature. And when you lose it you begin to translate yourself and begin to disappear. I think a healthy mix helps to keep everybody alive.

MGP: *Thus, I would say that in your novels you represent the linguistic situation of Trinidad and Tobago. How important has the use of Creole been in your novels? Have you been conscious about it?*

EL: Well, yes, I was conscious about it because this is the way I speak. I am comfortable speaking in that rhythm if you want. Yes, I bring this thing into the language, not only bring it as an orphan but as something that is valued to the language. I think one has to do that.

MGP: *Do you think the role of Creole should be different in society? For example, should Creole be incorporated in education?*

EL: The question for me is: what is Creole? Creole has all kind of roots in it: French, Spanish, African and Indian. We should find a way to admit these influences into the English that we speak. I don't know if I would say teach Creole because I don't know what we are talking about. When I know exactly what people mean when they say Creole, I could probably say yes or no. When you say Creole, what do you mean?

MGP: *The idea of the continuum, with Trinidadian English Creole on one side and Trinidadian Creole on the other side, formal and informal varieties respectively.*

EL: Sometimes it is two different things, it's strange you know. For example, let me see I went down the road [TrinEC] requires more versatility than I went down the road [TrinE]. It has a meaning, we gone and we ain't sure where we going and you can't be sure when we are coming back. It is the idiomatic things, the sense of the language that one wants to get. I seem to be wanting to tag the Creole onto an English structure or to try to fuse them in a kind of way. And that could be useful in schools because that is the language that people use but they cannot use because all the books are not written in that kind of language. I was thinking of somebody dressed up in a jacket and

a tie, our idea of formality. Where the hell is it coming from? And what have we replaced it with? What else do we have? And what is its value and how does it function? Because language also keeps people in the place, because language is not indifferent, once you can master the language. I would think that [it is important] to get a language that we can master and accept at the same time. It must be able to do some things that the other language can't do: 'lime' etc. A little bit it is something to be done, to be engaged, to address. I don't know about the final conclusions.

MGP: *My concern is that one is the official (school and so on) and the other one is the private language though.*

EL: Right, but becoming also the language of the arts. If we talk about spoken word, it could function in that kind of way it function in calypso, it function in rap and it starting to function in fiction writing and stories. Then it is going to make its way.

MGP: *Since you have published in foreign publishing houses, have you ever encountered negative attitudes towards the use of Trinidadian English Creole by editors or publishers?*

EL: Well, I would say no but I remember when I wrote *The Wine of Astonishment*, I was in North America for a little while and I gave this to somebody to type for me – it was a little bit before the computer – and this person corrected the whole grammar, brought back a totally different novel to me. What I did is I had to change it back because that is not what I wanted.

Increasingly I am becoming bolder. I was aware of what I was trying to do. One instance I can remember interestingly was with *The Dragon Can't Dance.* The editor said that she wasn't too sure about the prologue. I understood what she was saying because the prologue was almost a poetic addition or preface to the story that begins

more concretely, if you want. It was because of the poetic nature of the language as opposed to the beginning of the novel with the characters and the movement and so on, but this language surveyed the novel so to speak. So she wrote to me about it and I saw the point actually, and then she wrote back and withdrew the comment. At the same time I was writing back to say I was going to keep it anyhow. But it never came to that.

MGP: *In the 90s in order to bring West Indian literature closer you serialised Dragon in Express? Did this initiative bring positive feedback from ordinary people?*

EL: I know it was quite popular. Actually it was Keith Smith, the editor of the *Express*, who was the person behind the idea. I thought it was well done and some people collected it. In a general kind of way I received feedback. In fact, Keith himself told me he gave the book to a fellow from Laventille who lived nearby, because Keith lived in Laventille. He gave it as a present or something or told him to read this book and it had such a profound effect in this fellow's life that afterwards the fellow, who was not a reader, became a reader and when he went abroad he brought books for Keith and so on. And I think I met the fellow once.

MGP: *In terms of publishing you started publishing abroad because that was the only choice you had?*

EL: Well, it was the only choice and the happy choice as well because having won the prize, part of the prize was that the book would be published. So that was very good, it meant I didn't have to be concerned about a publisher in the same way. It didn't have any publishers here and it is more beneficial in the sense that first of all publishing has to do with marketing. We are talking about established publishers have books in the colonies, or the previous colonies, or Commonwealth. If somebody publishes in Trinidad they would need to organise, you could hardly get it in the Caribbean. So that

publishing abroad has always been beneficial, or better than publishing here. But I don't know that it will necessarily remain that way. You could organise yourself to do things and have connections with publishers abroad. There is a whole lot that can be done.

MGP: *You see this as improving too?*

EL: Today, now it is a different story. Now it is easier to publish in some respect, there are a lot of self-published books and the quality of the writing is another question you have to consider.

MGP: *As far as I know, none of your writings has ever been translated into Spanish. Dragon has been translated into French, German, Italian, Japanese and Dutch. Have you had contact with your translators?*

EL: I went to Tokyo some time and I met the Japanese translator. She was a student who now teaches Caribbean literature so I gave her all the stuff that I had. That was years ago, and she has always wanted to do *Dragon* and she is a poet herself. I understand it was a very good translation and it is doing pretty well in Japan. Actually, just some time ago they asked me to send some comment or something so it is being well-received there. I think I met the person who translated it into French but that was after the translation. And I am meeting you now, after the translation too.

MGP: *What would you expect from the prospective translator of your work?*

EL: I think the language would be one of the things that one would want to find a way to retain the integrity of that Creole that you could say it is used. That is very important. And not to see the narrator as distinct from the people he is talking about. In fact, that is the story with me, you know that I am talking about myself as one of them, in the sense that I am talking in the same language. That is one of the interesting

things of the language we use, once we begin to use the narrator – who is the kind of voice of authority – to speak in a different way than the person who he is speaking about, you already started to put the whole thing in an upsided fashion. So I would think language would be one.

A sense of the characters would be another thing too. One of the things that in *Dragon*, particularly, the people in the yard are the royalty of the hill. You could see them the royalty in mas, the queen of the band, the dragon, the princess etc. In a certain sense, the royalty of the country, and while they live in this 'regal poverty' – in a certain kind of poverty if you want –, poverty is not the central idea of their lives, it is a factor but for me what it is talking about is that they are seeking to assert themselves as human beings. For me this is important to understand and not to see them just as poor people here but to see them in that other dimension.

MGP: *Finally, prospective projects? You mentioned earlier that you are writing about reclaiming rebellion. Is that a novel or the topic for a non-fiction piece?*

EL: Well, I am trying to write it as a non-fiction book but I feel it will influence a lot of stuff. That is one of the things but I have a thousand things to do: an autobiography, and I know a novel is there somewhere nearby, I should start it very soon.

MGP: *About?*

EL: About reclaiming rebellion. I think – and this proves the point that we were talking about being here etc. –, well, actually there is an article on it in *Wasafari*, quite recent, June. Essentially what the article says is that we have to reclaim rebellion as a starting point. That the starting point that we have had is really not a starting point at all, the starting point is a total lie. Emancipation was something that emancipated people to nothing, emancipation was an act of bad faith between the colonisers and the

colonised, extracting their labour to build their own societies. So I trace, in a kind of way, since emancipation to show that that was a bad faith act. From then, we went to crown colony government, crown colony government prepared a certain kind of mulattoish group at power and education and so on and split up a black community. And I deal also with some of the things we are talking about: culture and arts etc.

By the time we get to independence, one of the things that we might have had that would have had made sense and organised us in a kind of way, would have been if we had had federation, because federation would have gathered everybody together and the whole history would have been more apparent. But what has gone into history, that Williams and Manley were in disagreement, I don't believe that was the case at all. I don't think that the British wanted it, I think the British outmanoeuvred the fellars. What it seems to have happened is that independence asked us to agree to inequality as part of the society. So when Williams said that we want to build a country or society without distinction of creed, colour or, he said, 'previous condition of servitude', it is very tough to ask somebody who had this 'previous condition of servitude' now when they are entering an independence situation, to carry that with them without any kind of reparative means. What we see then is that this whole line that led to independence, and independence itself, really did not address a history that we had and it was kind of ironic that Williams himself was a historian. All of that is an important thing to move forward.

MGP: *You have written about reparation. Recently it appeared in the news that CARICOM is trying to organise something? What do you think about it?*

EL: Hillary Beckles has written a good book, *Britain's Black Debt*. He is one of the persons involved. I think that the question has to be raised in the Caribbean. I think that they are going about it the wrong way. I think that the Caribbean has to take

responsibility for some things. And I don't know that the Caribbean leadership could easily just say to Britain or to whoever: "well you did this and so on and so on, and we want reparation". Given the make-up of this society, how are you going to give reparation to a government? If Trinidad, for example, had made some reparative gestures at independence, just say "OK, so this previous condition of servitude, let we deal with it, let us all get together and deal with it". Now after that has been done, now we can go to Britain or whoever and say "well this is what you have done with our resources, you have benefited in such and such way, you add something". A society could accept that, but if you grant reparation via governments in the region, with the inequality in the state itself, then you are giving money to the same rich and the poor people still in the same position. I don't think they are going about it the right way, I think that they need to set the objectives of reparation on many levels: the human, the political, the ethnic, the social. It is a big question, it is the question of the Caribbean, just as the Caribbean was exploited and so on, this question of repairing that, it has equally to be as big. You can't have this question in a little corner.

MGP: *Do you think it is too late?*

EL: No, it is not too late. The beauty of the whole question in the Caribbean is that it is not too late. That all of these questions are to be dealt and can be dealt. And this is one of the questions of being here, to see the things up close and to be affected by the changes and therefore to accept them.

One of the things I have written about in terms of carnival is that we want to show our best selves. Carnival, in a way, is a presenting of our best selves and we start from the costume, to the behaviour, to the generosity in the band, people offering people a drink across ethnic lines, and now that is happening or has happened, and I would like to hope it is continuing to happen. You can't discard that, when talking about reparation

and some of the questions here. You can’t discard some of the efforts – even if they have not been the greatest – the efforts made that led to better relations. The idea of showing ourselves as our best selves: ‘look me!’ is a wonderful idea.

2. Interview with Merle Hodge

This interview took place on 2nd November 2013 in Trinidad. During the course of the interview, Hodge explained that as a 'cultural worker' – the term she uses to define herself – she is involved in so many things that sometimes it is difficult to find time to write. In fact, this interview was conducted through the telephone due to her many commitments. As she explained, on that particular day she had to complete the task she had set herself into of translating the Constitution of the nation for anybody who has at least early high school education to understand. Nevertheless, Hodge was very generous. She asked me to send her my questions, and found the time to prepare them in advance. The interview started with her question: "Do you have the questions in front of you?" – probably a reflection of a life also partly devoted to teaching.

MGP: *Together with Earl Lovelace you are one of the few Trinidadian writers of your generation who have chosen to remain and write form Trinidad. How important is or has been staying for you?*

MH: As far as I am concerned, the option of living abroad is not one that I have ever considered. The fact of writing has never influenced my decision to live at home. I never saw any motivation. I don't think that being a writer was a reason to live abroad. After I had finished studying, I did some travelling. I took advantage of being in Europe and I travelled in Europe and Africa. I really never had any urge to live anywhere else but home. It is also the fact that writing has turned to be in the fringes of my life, it is not in the centre of my life at all. Somebody who wants to be a full-time writer I suppose will automatically choose living abroad. In terms of making a living I am not sure how that works for the West Indians who live abroad. I have never really explored what it means to be a full time writer. It is a closed book to me.

MGP: Have you recognised any kind of evolution or improvement as regard the conditions of the writers who nowadays decide to stay in Trinidad and Tobago?

MH: There's a new kind of job that is called being a consultant. I don't not know of anybody, apart from Earl Lovelace – and I am not sure how he does it – who makes a living out of writing. In any case, people still publish abroad, I am not too sure that not being in a metropolitan country makes any difference in that regard. You send your manuscript to a publishing house and you have a conversation with the editors.

MGP: *In general terms would you say that West Indian diasporic writers are the ones who mostly represent the West Indies outside of the West Indies? Do you believe diasporic writers are being privileged over writers like yourself who have chosen to remain?*

MH: Very interesting phenomenon, our writers being regarded by the countries where they live as citizens of those countries. Americans think Jamaica Kincaid is American, Canadians think that Shani Mootoo is a Canadian writer. I don't know to what extent she [Shani Mootoo] considers herself a Canadian writer. They are given the kind of promotion that a Canadian writer would get in Canada, and an American writer would get in America, which is something we don't necessarily have here. We don't have the mechanisms here for promotion of national writers. Trinidad and Tobago – it is always striking how interesting it is – is a Caribbean country with a lot of resource (the oil and gas and all of that) and we still don't have a national writer's prize. Two of the poorest countries in the region, Guyana and Cuba, have had writer's prizes for a long time. Cuba has 'Casa de las Americas' but in the other parts of the Caribbean there is not a great deal going on to promote writers and help develop writers. I am not even sure that for example the people in the Ministry of Culture can name five Caribbean

writers. What is seen as culture, for the kind of people who are involved in it in a lot of Caribbean countries, is of course just the performing arts.

There is a thing going on in the French Caribbean: they started a conference a few years ago which brings together writers form every linguistic grouping in the region every two years. It is a really big thing. I remember in the last occasion the person who is the equivalent of a very high official, somebody very high up in the system of governance, made a speech to open the thing and he was able to speak about a number of Caribbean writers and I found that admirable, I don't know anybody in our government who would be able to do that. There is a certain awareness that is not there. A lot of the focus is on the performing arts because there's marketability, because of their potential to attract tourism and because that can be monetised. I don't think they have figured out how writers fit in the national development as yet.

MGP: *Would you have preferred to make a living out of only writing, that is to make writing your full time job?*

MH: Writing isn't in the centre of my life. I don't think I could have structured my life to being a full-time writer.

MGP: If you had had the choice, would you have preferred not to lecture at the University of the West Indies and instead devote your time to writing and activism?

MH: I don't think that would have worked. You know that in the States and, I suppose in Europe, there are writers' residences, writers' retreats, I have been to one in States. The idea is that you go there and you have a room and you can write all day. Everybody could only come together at breakfast and dinner, they give you a lunch kit and they don't allow phone calls to come to you so that you just have free time to

write all day, and that was not the most comfortable thing to me. I don't think that I could just write, write and write. In terms of organisation I don't see it as a comfortable thing.

All my activism has been voluntary. There are a number of people working in NGOs who do that as also their livelihood. But once more we are not in a situation where NGOs are sufficiently funded for a large number of people to choose it as their livelihood. My activism went on all the time, that wasn't affected much by having a full-time job.

MGP: *At the 2011 plenary lecture of the West Indian Literature Conference you described the relationship between writing and activism as in a common law relationship. Would you say that this is or has been a balanced relationship?*

MH: I remember vaguely this paper. What I may have said is that for me, myself as a writer and myself as an activist, I don't think I described it as a common law relationship but I suspect that what I spoke of is as a visiting relationship, the activist visits the writer. I am only talking about me, I am not seeing it as a general rule. I need to find it but I do suspect that I spoke of it in terms of a visiting relationship. I may have developed some point about moving to a common law relationship.

MGP: *As regards your activist side, you have been politically engaged in the region for a long time and in many ways: Grenada Revolution, Women working for social action, etc. As of recently, I have been following the news in Trinidad and saw you supporting Dr. Wayne Kublalsingh's cause.*[129] *What do you believe are the most pressing matters that need to be addressed in Trinidad and Tobago nowadays?*

[129] Dr. Waine Kublalsingh is a Trinidadian activist, and until recently also UWI lecturer in Literatures in English, whose most recent cause was the Highway Re-route Movement in 2012. The movement

MH: I think that there is a lot of consensus that it is governance. Things are a mess in terms of the political system, the political culture. We are still unable to hold the political directory accountable, we can't control them. The whole country has realised that this is a problem, and we need to be able to develop a political system that ensures that the people we put there see about us rather than themselves and that we can have more impact on policy and decision making. That is a mess right now. That is perhaps one of the most important things, and everything else would fall in.

For example this business of the gender policy has been battered from pillar to post, and there is just silence from the government right now. The minister who was appointed as Gender Affairs decides to call in all the churches – well, that is a sure case of undermining the whole thing. What are the churches to say? All of them came there and quarrelled. She had a big conference, but she hasn't done any such thing involving NGOs and women's movements. And so it [the issue of gender] is shut down for the time being and we can't do anything to get them to go back to it.

MGP: *I didn't know about that. So she just invited the churches?*

MH: First of all, the current Prime Minister, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, had called somebody who was involved in the women's movement – in the women's movement that I am in in those days – and she was there and she suddenly reshuffled and reshuffled her out, and this is due to pressure from some men she has around her. The Prime Minister has got a gang of men around her who make decisions for her. She removed Verna [St Rose Greaves][130] and she put in a lady who had no idea

intended to pressure the government to reconsider a segment of the highway which had to unite San Fernando to Point Fortin. According to Kublalsingh, the building of part of a highway would affect fragile wetland eco-systems and the surrounding close-knit communities (Baboolal, 2015).

[130] Verna St Rose Greaves was the Minister of Gender, Youth and Child Development who Hodge seems to argue had the necessary experience for the position, since she was connected to NGOs, and was involved in the women's movement. In fact, the decision to remove St Rose-Greaves was met with

whatsoever about gender, in fact, she reshuffled that one out [too] and made her Minister of Local Government. But the one who was put there was caught between a rock and a hot plate because there are two things in the gender policy: the decriminalisation of women's sexuality and the liberalisation of abortion laws, which are the sticky points. The Prime Minister who was there before [Patrick Manning] just shut the whole thing down and he made them sanitise the thing. But anyway this lady, the Minister of Gender Affairs of the time, decided to have a consultation and she invited only people from the different churches. They all railed at her so the gender policy is just lying there now. It is really amazing. There are very few progressive countries where that could happen and just stick there.

MGP: *Now that you have retired from the University of the West Indies, what are the matters you are mostly involved in?*

MH: At the moment I am involved in far too many things because I am not getting much writing done. One of the things I am involved in is the Constitution reform. They formed a commission and I am a member of it. In fact, I told them that this has to be done so I volunteered to do it – and this is what I am trying to finish off to give them today –. This is to say, what I am doing right now, is to translate the existing Constitution into plain English. You know how legal language is and the Constitution as it stands is unreadable, so I have to translate it into ordinary English for anybody who has at least early high school education. I thought it could be done quickly but that has turned out to be quite an operation. But I think it is important.

I used to sit in the UNESCO National Commission for a little while – well, for like two terms – and we had started something in there and a few of us who are now out of

much criticism from non-governmental organisations who believed she was the ideal person to deal specifically with matters concerning children, youth and women's affairs. (Seelal, 2012)

the Commission – including some who are still in – have formed a committee. We have been doing work on trying to get what is called 'comparative religion' into the school, that is, teaching children about each other's religions, because we have so many religions and there is so much ignorance and so much prejudice about religions that are not the mainstream ones. We have done a number of things, we have held large consultations with teachers, curriculum development and that kind of thing. That is ongoing, that is not going to happen tomorrow, that is another thing that not everybody is going to just accept it like that, a lot of work to be done there.

Of course, I get a lot of requests from people to read stuff that they have written. I have started to shed that, it is a killer for me to read and, you know… I don't like to say no. I also do a lot of work facilitating workshops. I am still in a women's organisation and our main purpose is holding workshops with parents about handling children peacefully because people are very devoted to corporal punishment. You know, things like that.

MGP: *Can it be argued that in your novels and stories you seek to reflect the linguistic situation of Trinidad and Tobago?*

MH: Yes, I suppose that is what it is but it sounds a little over self-conscious there 'to seek to reflect the linguistic situation of Trinidad and Tobago'. It is reflected because it is a part of the reality. Of course, I am extremely conscious of it myself, but it is not reflected for its own sake, it is a part of characterisation, it is a part of the cultural environment.

MGP: *How important has reflecting this reality been?*

MH: It's been important to me but there are very few Caribbean writers who don't use Creole, because Creole is a part of the social and cultural environment.

MGP: *Has the use of Creole evolved in your writings?*

MH: Yes, this part of the question is very real. What has happened is that, of course, I understand a lot more about it because it became a study for me.

MGP: *With your PhD dissertation?*

MH: Yes, at PhD level but even in my job at the University of the West Indies generally. I have also written a book, I don't know if you have seen it, *Knots of English*. I have been very aware since I was a teacher in secondary school here. It moved from awareness to academic study because there is a lot of stuff on Creole. Creole is a whole area of studies that involves international conferences ongoing. You could fill out a library with research on the Creole languages of the world. My use of Creole has evolved, one of the things is that I understand now which I did not understand at the time that I wrote *Crick Crack Monkey* is that you really should not deform English spelling in order to try to represent the sound of Creole. There is a spelling system for English Creole but it hasn't really sat into the general consciousness of writers or anybody else. Unless and until we have an institutionalised spelling system, we really ought not to deform English spelling. I have not done that since *Crick Crack Monkey*. But also I am more aware of the nuances, in terms of different characters who have different levels of education or from different social groups, so Creole got more English in it or less or all of that. That is an important tool for writers if we are aware of it.

MGP: *Do you believe Trinidadian education system should be a bilingual system in which Creole is both taught formally and used as medium of instruction alongside Standard English?*

MG: I don't know about Creole being taught formally. There is a thing called language awareness and I think we should all be more aware of the consistency of Creole, the structure of Creole. If we did it in school, it would not be actually teaching it, it would be teaching about it, allowing students to see what the consistencies are and the usefulness of that quite apart from being aware of an important aspect of your culture and seeing it in a different way, valuing it. There is also the fact that it helps people in the acquisition of English. At the moment there are many people who speak in Creole and don't realise they are speaking Creole, they think they are talking English. You have people who phone the radio to quarrel about how this announcer was talking bad according to them. They phone and they make that complain in Creole or in English that is full of Creole interference, without realising, absolutely unaware. In fact, I introduced this into the teaching of English when I coordinated the English language program at University level so that people would be aware of the areas of possible interferences in their own English, so that it would be important for people to be aware of the structure of Creole.

MGP: *Then, do you think that Creole could be used as medium of instruction alongside Standard English?*

MH: It probably is. In my days a teacher wouldn't speak Creole in the classroom, but a teacher was a rare bird. It was only a handful of people who went to high school and Creole was locked off. But I think educated people these days do a lot of code-switching so I don't think that teachers in the classroom stick to English anymore.

Certainly at the early childhood level it would be important not to alienate children by not allowing Creole into the classroom because it would just shut them up. I think that it is used as medium of instruction, in the same way that these days it is used in the Parliament and other places like that, in the pulpit and all those places. This is something that didn't happen at all when I was a child or even into my teenage years, a priest or a parliamentarian – people at those levels – wouldn't go into Creole. But people have recognised now that there is a lot to be gained by code-switching.

MGP: *So you would now hear it in Parliament?*

MH: Oh yes, you don't hear long, long stretches of it, but somebody would go into a Creole expression because it is the best way of conveying a particular idea to us, in this cultural context. They would use individual terms or they would use Creole structures every now and then, it is just peppered with it.

Recently an aunt of mine died. At the funeral in San Fernando, a priest used Creole and it really made what he was saying more kind of… it made a very positive impact I thought. I am sure there were people in the congregation who were not pleased with it but he went into Creole and English, in and out. People are beginning to understand what is to be gained by being bilingual.

MGP: *When you have published in foreign publishing houses, have you ever encountered negative attitudes towards the use of Trinidadian English Creole by editors or publishers?*

MH: No, I have never encountered any of those. What I might have encountered in some cases are misunderstandings, so that I have to explain to people the use of a particular expression, and perhaps find a way of making it clear without being

didactic. I haven't encountered negative attitudes at all, in fact I think that foreign publishing see it as a plus, it is one of the things that makes West Indian literature different from other literatures in English.

MGP: *As far as I know, none of your writings has ever been translated into Spanish. What would you recommend to the prospective translator of your work?*

MH: I don' know of anything that has been translated into Spanish. I don't think so and it is kind of strange. There really is no significant Spanish Creole in the Caribbean. Since there isn't any equivalent Creole in Spanish there, they would just have to use Standard Spanish but they would have to choose a register of Spanish. Because even within Standard English, within Standard French, within any language you have different registers and you would need to choose a register that is very informal and conversational if there are not equivalent expressions, if there isn't any way of creolising Spanish. *Laetitia* exists in Italian and really I am not sure what they did with the Creole parts. Probably they just used Italian and made it as informal as possible or something. It has also been translated into Dutch, but I don't know how they handle that. I guess ultimately the meaning is the most important thing.

MGP: *I have found similar attitudes to the ones you describe in your PhD dissertation regarding some analysis of Sam Selvon's language by non-Creole speakers when researching on translations of West Indians writers who have used Creole in their writings,. Namely, I have read translators who, in the twenty-first century, still define Creole as a misuse of a language, not realising it is a different rule-governed medium. What would you say explains these narrow-minded or ignorant attitudes in nowadays Western Academia?*

MH: These critics are just out of it. It is ignorance, and that ignorance is inexcusable because today there is a lot of scholarship on Caribbean Creoles. My thesis comes under what is called literary linguistics, where you are analysing the language of texts as an important criterion of criticism. In Caribbean literature that is particularly important because of the range of expression that Caribbean people control, it is not monolithic and there are all kinds of things hidden in the Caribbean writer's use of language that might escape you if you don't have a clue about the language situation.

Anybody who is involved in any aspect of literature in the Caribbean: writers, readers and critics – perhaps above all critics – should really be a little more informed and the information is there now; it wasn't there in the time of Selvon but now it is. Those people don't have an excuse now about this foolishness. Anybody who is going to talk about Caribbean literature and critique it has to have a firm grasp of its [Creole] basic concepts.

MGP: *Finally, two years ago I got the opportunity to hear you read form the novel you were writing by then that dealt with the Shouter Baptists Prohibition. What stage are you at now?*

MH: It is a funny thing because that same question that you asked before and I spoke about a visiting relationship, now the same word – and the two things are not connected – only entered my mind right now. Every morning I get up and say I am going to visit Gwyneth – a major character in there, perhaps the main character, I don't know, the thing writes itself after a certain point in time. Every now and then I say before I do anything else again I will just visit Gwyneth, because I don't get to sit down and write in long stretches. I hope I have managed to write about half of it now, I know what I am going to write next, but I really need to just sit and get it done, you

know. I just enjoy going into it and I am getting a good chance because it is taking me so long I know that when it is finally done it will be the most polished it can be because I started to write this in 1991 and I am still going back to what I wrote originally and changing things and polishing things and improving things. In a way it is not a drawback when you take a long time to write something.

MGP: *Would you consider yourself a West Indian intellectual?*

MH: Yes, I suppose so. As part of the Grenada Revolution, George Lamming, who serviced regularly over there, had just formed something that he called West Indian Intellectual Workers and something, something, a grouping that was just about to take off. He put the word 'workers' in because it was not supposed to be an intellectual thing. People who are very involved in the whole idea of how the Caribbean is going to develop and that kind of revolutionary future. So I consider myself an intellectual worker and a cultural worker as well.

MGP: *I like the idea of mixing intellectual and worker.*

MH: Yes, most certainly. You are not using your intellectual development for yourself, but it is part of what you offer to the development of your society.

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